

William Worcestre and the legendary history of Armorica in the fifteenth century



Alexander Falileyev

Celtica 35 (2023), 173–189

DOI: 10.58480/SCS-utaxy-7e4y3

DIAS

Institiúid Ard-Léinn | Dublin Institute for
Bhaile Átha Cliath | Advanced Studies



© School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

WILLIAM WORCESTRE AND THE LEGENDARY HISTORY OF ARMORICA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY¹

ABSTRACT

The late fifteenth-century *Itineraries* of William Worcestre preserve a brief account of the legendary history of Brittany. Although the fragment goes back ultimately to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, it differs from that in several respects. The exact match to the narrative is found in another fifteenth-century document, the so-called Canterbury Roll (previously known as the 'Maude Roll'). The paper shows that this particular variant of the history of the conquest of Armorica was in some circulation in late medieval England, and provides some suggestions regarding the interrelation of the texts containing it.

‘THE MIGRATION FROM the British mainland in the fifth to the seventh centuries that resulted in the Armorican peninsula of north-western Gaul being named “Brittany” is one of the most obscure and tantalizing phenomena of Late Antique or early medieval history’; so stated Caroline Brett in her fundamental article published in 2011 where she discussed various types of evidence and counter-evidence for this movement, or, rather, movements, across the Channel.² More discussions have followed it in the last decade,³ and all of them, past and present, have paid due attention to fragments of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* that relate to the mythical conquest of Armorica by Maximian, king of the Britons. In this paper I would like to draw attention to the textual evidence found in a fifteenth century manuscript, no doubt based on Geoffrey's narrative, which in some respects deviates from it.

The fragment to be discussed here is found in the *Itineraries* of William Worcestre, which are based on the antiquary's own travels in 1477–80.⁴ The

¹The article is based on my paper delivered at the *Fifteenth Century Conference: Disruption* (University of Bristol, 2–4 September 2021) and I am grateful to Professor Helen Fulton for her invitation to share my views at this important event and the audience for the comments. The underlying research was carried out as part of RSF project No. 17-18-01624. I am grateful to Dr Ben Guy (Cambridge) for commenting on the earlier version of the paper and to the anonymous reviewer of it for helpful suggestions. The usual disclaimers apply.

²Caroline Brett, ‘Soldiers, saints, and states? The Breton migrations revisited’, *CMCS* 61 (2011), 1–56, at 1. See now her *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, 450–1200* (Cambridge, 2021).

³See particularly Bernard Merdrignac, *D'une Bretagne à l'autre. Les migrations bretonnes entre histoire et légendes* (Rennes, 2012); Ben Guy, ‘The Breton migration: a new synthesis’, *ZCP* 61 (2014), 101–56; Barry Cunliffe, *Bretons and Britons: The Fight for Identity* (Oxford, 2021).

⁴For William Worcestre see T. D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London, 1950), 18–33 and K. B. McFarlane, ‘William Worcester: a preliminary survey’, in J. Conway Davies (ed.), *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Oxford, 1957), 196–221, reprinted in K. B. McFarlane, *England*

text is found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi MS 210, and was edited for the first time as early as 1778 by James Nasmyth,⁵ while the modern edition of the text with a parallel English translation was published by John H. Harvey in 1969.⁶ The *Itineraries* contain entries of different genres, including personal observations that are of particular importance for the history of late mediaeval Bristol,⁷ records of interviews with his co-travellers, copies of various texts that William made on his journey, and receipts that he received at that time. In the words of John Cramsie:

We know them as *Itineraries*, but Worcestre's notebooks are just that, eclectic and fragmentary aids to memory written on 'folded sheets of paper' carried with him on his travels: mileages and distances, lists of river crossings and castles, a day-by-day diary, the measurements and adornments of churches, lists of saints and noble genealogies, tomb epitaphs, 'information' from local denizens, and extracts from authorities like Gildas or Gerald of Wales.⁸

The language of the document is predominantly Latin, although Middle English and Medieval French insertions also occur, and linguistic code-switching in a sentence is regularly observed.⁹ The passage on the legendary history of the conquest of Armorica is reproduced below from Harvey's edition and with his translation (*IWW* 212–13; sub-division of the text is mine):

Britannia mynor

Maximianus Rex Britonum
Armoricum regnum que nunc
Britannia minor dicitur

Maximian King of Britons conquered
the realm of Armorica, which is now
called Little Britain [Britany (sic! –
A. F.)],

in the Fifteenth Century (London, 1981), 199–224. More recently Worcestre's life and work have been discussed by a number of academics, cf. Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II: c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), 308–41 or Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature* (Oxford, 2007), 93–125.

⁵James Nasmyth (ed.), *Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre* (Cambridge, 1778), 77–378.

⁶J. H. Harvey, *William Worcestre: Itineraries* (Oxford, 1969), henceforward *IWW*. The manuscript is available at <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/mp810zm2076>.

⁷Cf. J. Dallaway, *Antiquities of Bristow in the Middle Centuries; Including the Topography by William Wyrcestre, and the Life of William Canynges* (Bristol, 1834) or Frances Neale, *William Worcestre: The Topography of Medieval Bristol* (Bristol, 2000).

⁸John Cramsie, *British Travellers and the Encounter with Britain, 1450–1700* (Rochester, NY, 2015), 36.

⁹On that see Catherine Nall, Daniel Wakelin, 'Le déclin du multilinguisme dans *The Boke of Noblesse* et son Codicille de William Worcestre', *Médiévales* 68 (2015), 73–92 and most recently – regarding the *Itineraries* – Alexander Falileyev, 'In provincia Russlond: fragments on Novgorod in a XV c. manuscript', *Indoevropskojeazykoznaniye i klassičeskaja filologija* 24 (2020), 756–67 (in Russian, with English summary) and idem, 'Notes on the *Itineraries* by William Worcestre', *Philological Quarterly* 101 (2022), 189–210.

Britannia mynor

conquisiuit ducem eius Imbaldum cum .xv. milia armatorum interemit quod quidem regnum Cornato nepoti Octauij Regis donauit	killed its duke Imbald with 15,000 armed men, and gave the kingdom to Cornatus [Conan], nephew of King Octavius.
repleuitque jstam Britanniam mynorem centum milibus plebanorum triginta milites quos in Britannia collegerat vndecim .xj. milia puellarum nobilium et sexaginta milia ex jnfima [repeated] gente natarum de Britannia euectarum in mari periclitata	He likewise sent into this Britain the Less 100,000 commoners, thirty [thousand] knights whom he had brought together in Britain, 11,000 noble maidens, and 60,000 of the lowest classes born in Britain and shipped across the dangers of the sea.
sicut fuit filius Leonini auunculi Constantini demum Rome interfectus.	He was the son of Leoninus uncle of Constantine and was eventually killed in Rome.

J. Harvey aptly traced this section, which is entitled *Britannia mynor* in the *Itineraries* and glossed in the manuscript in Robert Talbot's hand as *Peti Britayn*, to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (henceforward *HRB*).¹⁰ He referred to *HRB* V.xii as a correspondence to the first section of the text, and to *HRB* V.xiv as matching the second, admitting that the final part does not appear in Geoffrey's text at all (*IWW* 212, nn. 1–3).¹¹ It is noteworthy that the first part of Worcestre's *Britannia mynor*, in fact one sentence, corresponds to a score of lines in Michael D. Reeve's edition of *HRB*, which also contain direct speech.¹² The second section of Worcestre's narrative finds a distant match in *HRB* another twenty lines below. Moreover, this passage of *HRB* is continued by the phrase *Cumque omnia perpetrasset, distribuit eos per uniuersas*

¹⁰For this text, also labelled as *De Gestis Britonum*, see most recently various contributions to Joshua Byron Smith and Georgia Henley (eds), *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Leiden, 2020), with abundant references.

¹¹On Geoffrey's narrative regarding the colonization of Brittany associated with Maximian (Maxim) in its various aspects see Brynley F. Roberts (ed.), *Breudwyt Maxen Wledic* (Dublin, 2005), xliii–lxi; Karen Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Cardiff, 2010), 54–66; Brett, 'Soldiers, saints, and states', 15; Ben Guy, 'Constantine, Helena, Maximus: on the appropriation of Roman history in medieval Wales, 800–1250', *Journal of Medieval History* 44 (2018), 381–405, at 394–7; Jane Cartwright, *Hystoria Gweryddon yr Almaen: The Middle Welsh Life of St Ursula and the 11,000 virgins* (London, 2020), 25–6. The cited works contain abundant further references.

¹²For the sentence in various Vulgate manuscripts of *Historia* see Julia C. Crick, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth, IV. Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), 104 and for a variant version cf. already Jacob Hammer, *Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Regum Britanniae: A Variant Version Edited from Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1951), 96–7. The First Variant Version has been re-edited recently: D. W. Burchmore, *The History of the Kings of Britain: The First Variant Version* (Cambridge, 2019). The quotations and translations below are from Michael D. Reeve (ed.) and Neil Wright (trans.), *Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain* (Woodbridge, 2007) (henceforward *GM*), 105–7.

Armorici regni nationes fecitque alteram Britanniam et eam Conano Meriadoco donauit ‘once all this was organised, he spread them throughout all the regions of Armorica, making it a second Britain, which he presented to Conanus Meriadocus’, the echo of which we find in the first sentence of the description of conquest of *Britannia mynor* by Worcestre. This will be examined in detail below alongside the last phrase in Worcestre’s narrative, *sicut fuit filius Leonini avunculi Constantini demum Rome interfectus* ‘he was the son of Leoninus uncle of Constantine and was eventually killed at Rome’, for which Harvey did not find correspondences in *Historia*. Worcestre’s account turns Geoffrey’s *Conanus* into *Cornatus*, and supplies Maximian with a different pedigree. At face value, we witness here a certain break with the traditional account of the legendary conquest of Brittany as depicted by Geoffrey of Monmouth: it is not only highly abridged and utterly schematic, but also shows certain deviations from the canonical texts of *HRB*.

Now, what are the possibilities for dealing with this account of the conquest of Armorica in Worcestre’s *Itinaries*? Several options offer themselves almost instantly. Firstly, one may suspect that this passage in the *Itinaries* is indeed based on Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *HRB*, but edited by Worcestre, who also himself composed some details and added to the text its final section. This scenario, however, is absolutely improbable as Worcestre is known to be a rather typical antiquary who provided reliable copies of documents that he saw in various places.¹³ Indeed, J. Harvey observed (*IWW* xv) that Worcestre ‘developed to a high degree the faculty of automatic copying: i.e. copying of what he saw (or thought he saw), not what he understood’; therefore, that approach should be dismissed. Moreover, Worcestre’s text itself shows conspicuously that it is a copy: it repeats the word *jnfima* and obviously omits part of the numeral meaning ‘thousand’ from the number of knights whom Maximian sent to Armorica.¹⁴ Furthermore, the antiquary himself testified that he copied his *Britannia mynor* from the chronicle(s) in the book of Master Brewster (*cronice de libro Magistri Brewster*, *IWW* 210) and mentions neither Geoffrey’s name nor the title of his by then classical text. Master Brewster, whose book Worcestre allegedly used, is known to be associated with Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, and this source of information has been noted in Worcestre scholarship.¹⁵ While the life and exploits of the thirteenth earl of Warwick have been the subject of numerous academic articles,¹⁶ Master

¹³On Worcestre as antiquary see Kendrick, *British antiquity*, 18–33, Stuart Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape: Essays in Antiquarianism* (Edinburgh, 1976), 6 et passim, or Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II*, 308–41.

¹⁴On similar manipulations of numbers in copies of late medieval texts see most recently Alexander Falileyev, ‘The Columbinus prophecy: evidence from late medieval Wales’, *Welsh History Review* 30 (2020), 19–45, at 36–42, with further references.

¹⁵Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II*, pp. 339–40.

¹⁶See also a useful book by David Brindley, *Richard Beauchamp: Medieval England’s Greatest Knight* (Charleston, 2001). For manuscripts connected with the Beauchamps see Lynne McGoldrick, *The Literary Manuscripts and Literary Patronage of the Beauchamp and Neville Families in the Late Middle Ages, 1390–1500*, unpublished PhD thesis, Newcastle Polytechnic, 1985, 70–109.

Brewster still remains enigmatic. Thus, Worcestre himself refers to him as an esquire (*armiger*, *IWW* 208 and 210) and also calls him Richard's receiver-general (*IWW* 218). However, as K. B. McFarlane observes, '[t]he name of John Brewster, *valettus*, appears on the retinue-roll of Warwick as Captain of Calais, c. 1419 (B. M. Cotton Roll xiii. 7, m. 3). I have seen no evidence that he was ever the earl's receiver-general.'¹⁷ References to the book of Master Brewster, to my knowledge, occur on several occasions in the *Itineraries* by Worcestre, but only there, and it has not been identified.

Therefore, secondly, one may suggest that William Worcestre faithfully copied his section *Britannia mynor* from the book of Master Brewster that preserved (perhaps partially) a lost version of *HRB*. This way of thinking may at least be taken into consideration, as Geoffrey's text was immensely popular in the Middle Ages, with various redactions available. Worcestre's evidence allows us to see that some other popular medieval texts were extant in augmented versions that have since been lost: for example, it has been shown by Andrew Breeze that on a visit to Exeter in 1478 Worcestre recorded passages from the *Itinerary of Wales* by Gerald of Wales which belonged to Dr Owen Lloyd ('de libro doctoris Ewen', d. 1478), a book now lost, and thus the fragments preserved by the antiquary constitute the only piece of evidence for this record.¹⁸ However, the various redactions of *HRB* have been thoroughly studied, as have their reflections and borrowings in other medieval texts, and much attention has been given to the late manuscript copies of this medieval best-seller, to the effect that this scenario is also improbable. The third obvious possibility to explain the origins of Worcestre's *Britannia mynor* narrative appears most realistic. It is known that portions of *HRB* were incorporated in various forms into a variety of late chronicles and texts, which were also written in Latin. We find these passages or their paraphrases in scores of texts, such as *Flores Historiarum*, the *Polychronicon* by Ranulph Higden, *Annales Londonienses* and *Vita Edwardi Secundi*. Their authors could manipulate passages and offer their own views on their credibility, and this late dispersion of Geoffrey's text has been thoroughly studied.¹⁹ Unfortunately, my search of the texts normally discussed in this connection for a section on the legendary history of Brittany similar to that preserved in the *Itineraries* was in vain.

However, we do find the identical passage elsewhere, as in the fifteenth-century genealogical roll of the kings of England (Christchurch, University of Canterbury, Canterbury MS 1).²⁰ This text, the so-called

¹⁷ McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 200.

¹⁸ Andrew Breeze, 'Gerald of Wales's "Itinerary of Wales" in medieval Exeter', *Notes and Queries* 45.1 (1998), 31–3; for the text see *IWW* 116–21.

¹⁹ Cf. the pioneering research by Laura Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers, 1300–1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946); cf. also Robert Huntington Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles Especially Those of Great Britain and France* (Boston, 1906), 169–236.

²⁰ The text is digitised, with Latin transcript and English translation, in Chris Jones, Maree Shiota, Marie Johnson, Duncan Brown-Shaw and Eve Welch (eds), *The Canterbury Roll*, at <http://canterburyroll.canterbury.ac.nz/>; the quotations are given following this transcript and referred to according to the *sigla* of the edition and corresponding paragraphs in Arnold Wall, *Handbook to*

Canterbury Roll (previously known as the ‘Maude Roll’), preserves exactly the same lay-out and wording of the section on the mythological history of Armorica as in Worcestre’s copy. The whole passage may be presented in the following table (sub-division of the texts is mine):

Worcestre’s <i>Britannia mynor</i>	Canterbury Roll, CRC062/§43
Maximianus Rex Britonum Armoricum regnum que nunc Britannia minor dicitur conquisiuit ducem eius Imbaldum cum .xv. milia armatorum interemit quod quidem regnum Cornato nepoti Octauij Regis donauit	Maximianus Romanus Armoricum regnum que nunc Britannia Minor dictitur conquisivit. Ducem eius Inbaldum cum 15 milibus armatorum interemit quod quid regnum eo nato nepoti Octavii regis donavit.
replevitque jstam Britanniam mynorem centum milibus plebanorum triginta milites quos in Britannia collegerat vndecim .xj. millia puellarum nobilium et sexaginta milia ex jnfima [repeated] gente natarum de Britannia euectarum in mari periclitata sunt	Replevit que istam Britanniam C milibus plebanorum. 30 milibus militum quos in Britannia collegerat. XI milia puellarum nobilium et LX milia ex infima gente natarum de Britannia euectarum in mari periclitata sunt.
sicut fuit filius Leonini avunculi Constantini demum Rome interfectus.	Fuit enim filius Leonini avunculi Constantini demum Rome interfectus.

The match between the texts presented in these two manuscripts is astounding: they follow one and the same pattern, both are very far from the original text of Geoffrey and they even share the same mistake or, rather deliberate substitution (*collegerat*, which is grammatical here, for *colligerentur*). They are in fact virtually identical, and differ only in minor details such as writing numbers in words or numerals; there is just one single non-trivial discrepancy between the texts which is of paramount importance for tracing their prehistory, and will be discussed below. It is also significant that both narratives style Maximian *filius Leonini*, while Geoffrey’s account names his father as *Loelinus*, and *Leoninus* is not attested in *variae lectiones* of *HRB*.²¹ However, *filius Leonini* is found in a number of texts that adopted the story from *HRB*, as in the list of the British kings in the thirteenth century BL Cotton MS Julius A XI, fol. 26v, *Maximus filius Leonini auunculi Helene*, where we find Maximus instead of

the *Maude Roll* (Christchurch, 1919), no pagination. For the complete bibliography see the website of the on-going project.

²¹ *GM*, 104–5. For a variant version see Hammer, *Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Regum Britanniae: A Variant Version Edited from Manuscripts*, 91 and 93. For the genealogy of the character see now the excellent research by Ben Guy, ‘Constantine, Helena, Maximus’, with further references. The anonymous reviewer of this paper aptly explains the spelling of the name by a scribal mistake: the scribe, not familiar with the Welsh-based name *Loelinus*, substituted the more Latinate *Leoninus*.

Maximian as an innovation against *HRB*, and Helen in place of Constantinus in agreement with Geoffrey's text. Maxim instead of Maximian is also attested in John Leland's 'Collectanea', written several centuries later, where we find a more precise match, *Hoc tempore obiit Octavius, rex Brittonum, & regnavit Maximus gener ejus, filius Leonini, avunculi Constantini*.²² This list may be continued, and it is important that the Canterbury Roll in the previous entry (CRC061/§42a) reports that 'Iste Octovius, dux Goweseorum, regni diadema adeptus, sed non linealitur. unicum filiam suam Maximiano, filio Leonini, fratris Elene, dedit in uxorem cum regno suo' ('This Octavius, duke of Gewisse, obtained the royal crown, but not by lineage. He gave his only daughter to Maximian son of Leoninus the brother of Helena in marriage, together with his kingdom.')²³

The identity of the text recorded by William Worcestre with that preserved in the Canterbury Roll invites further research regarding their interrelationship and origins. Clearly, to carry out this task one should go beyond the section *Britannia mynor* copied by Worcestre from the book of Master Brewster and its match in the Canterbury Roll. The next five paragraphs in the latter correspond very loosely to the following nine lines in the *Itinerary*, but then we find another section which has been traced by the editor of Worcestre's text to several chapters of Geoffrey's *Historia* (cf. *GM*, 160–1, 180–1 and 192–3), where distinctively separate stories are related, and which again is nearly identical to that of the Canterbury Roll:

Worcestre, <i>IWW</i> 212	Canterbury Roll, CRC070/§49
Aurelius Rex Britonum combussit oppidum Genorem in Ergyn super flumen Vay in monte Cloart et Vortigernum in castro. Postea vero Hengisto in bello interfecto fecit choream gigantum de montibus Kyldar de Hibernia vsque ad montem Ambri ingeniose deportari ibique in	Iste Aurelius conbussit opidum [sic] Genorem in Ergni super flumium [sic] Waye in Monte Cloart et Vortigerum in castro. Postea vero Hengisto in bello interfecto, fecit Choream Gigantum de Montibus Kyldarne de Hibernia usque ad Montem Ambri ingeniose deportari ibi que in

²²Katherine Lee Hodges-Kluck, *The Matter of Jerusalem: The Holy Land in Angevin Court Culture and Identity*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Tennessee – Knoxville, 2015, 127; Thomas Hearne (ed.), *Joannis Lelandi antiquarii De rebus Britannicus Collectanea*, vol. 4 (London, 1774), 96. For Maximus/Maximian see the discussion in the references collected in n. 11 above.

²³On Octavius (W. *Eudaf*) duke of *Gewissei* in south-east Wales see O. J. Padel, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Cornwall', *CMCS* 8 (1984), 1–28, at 7ff., and Guy, 'Constantine, Helena, Maximus', 395 with further references. Dr Ben Guy aptly reminds me (personal communication) that the text is wrong here: it should say that 'Leoninus' was the uncle of Helen. As the anonymous reviewer kindly reminds me, '[t]he statement that Leoninus was the uncle of Constantine [...] is only a slightly inexact presentation of Geoffrey's theory that Leoninus was a cousin of Helena, Constantine's mother'.

memoriale inter sancrorum Britonum stabilire tandem apud Wyntoniam veneno occubuit sepultus in chorea gigantum.	memoriale interfactorum Britonum stabilire tandem apud Wyntonie veneno occubuit. Et sepultus in Chorea Gigantum. ²⁴
--	---

The next passage preserved in the *Itineraries* again finds a perfect match in the Roll, where it is preceded by a paragraph absent in Worcestre's copy:

Worcestre, <i>IWW</i> 212	Canterbury Roll, CRC072/§51
Arthurus nobilis bellator duodecies dux belli fuit et duodecies victor exstitit triumphatis Saxonibus Pictis et Scotis, et Gwenweber in vxorem ex genere Romanorum Editham subjugatis postea Hibernsibus Island Gothlond Orcades et australibus universis Norwagia Dacia Gallia Acquitania Vasconia redijt Britanniam coronatus in vrbe Legionum in festo Penticostes.	Tempore Cerdicis regis Westsexie, surrexit apud Britones Arthurus. Qui Arthurus nobilis bellator duodecies dux belli fuit et duodecies victor exstitit. Triumphatis Saxonibus, Pictis et Scotis duxit Gwenweber in uxorem ex genere Romanorum editam subjugatis postea Hiberini Osland, Goodland, Orcad et Australibus universis, Norwagia, Dacia, Gallia Acquitannia et Vasconia, rediit in Britanniam coronatus in Urbe Legionum, in festo Penticostes ²⁵

Obviously, both fragments are related distantly to the narrative found in the *HRB* as their editors acknowledged, but the passages are very close in these two copies again. It may be noted that Wall in his edition of the Roll suggested that *Osland* stands for *Ostland*, that is Estonia,²⁶ and admitted that 'Geoffrey of Monmouth does not mention "Osland" in his list of Arthur's conquests, but he includes "Godland" and Iceland'. Elsewhere in his comment on the passage (§51) the scholar recognized that '[t]he scribe has expressed himself badly or misunderstood his authority'. The latter explanation is certainly most credible, and a different emendation of *Osland*, left unaffected in the digital edition of the Roll, is now obvious also in view of what we find in Worcestre's copy,

²⁴ 'This Aurelius burnt down the town of Genorem in Ergni on the river Wye in Mount Doartius, and Vortigern in his camp. After he killed Hengist in battle, he cleverly caused the Giants' Dance from the Mountain of Kildare in Ireland to be brought to Mount Ambri, where he set it up in memory of the slain Britons. Finally he died at Winchester by poison, and he is buried in the Giants' Dance.' (translations from the Canterbury Roll are cited from the website, above n. 20).

²⁵ 'In the time of Cerdic king of Wessex, Arthur rose among the Britons. Arthur, a noble warrior, was commander of war twelve times, and twelve times emerged the victor. Having conquered the Saxons, the Picts and the Scots he led Guinevere, born from the Roman lineage, into marriage. Afterwards, having conquered Ireland, Osland, Goodland, Orkney and the whole south, Norway, Dacia, Septentrional Gaul, and Gascony, he returned to Britain and was crowned in the City of the Legions on the feast of Pentecost.'

²⁶ 'for Ostland = Esthonia, called Estland (Eastland) by the Anglo-Saxons. Its people were formerly called Osti; "Ost" or "Oost" is the Low German form of East.'

where Iceland is given. Moreover, the *tertias comparationis* could be found in a ‘Feudal manual’, as its editor Thomas Wright labelled it, the prehistory of which is obscure and which contains a near identical phrase:

Iste Arthurus, nobilis bellator, duodecies dux belli fuit, et duodecies victor extitit triumphus Saxonibus, Pictis, et Scotis. Duxit Gwenwyber in uxorem, ex genere Romanorum editam, subjugatis postea Hibernis, Islondis, Goodlondis, Ortandis [sic! A.F.], in Australibus universis, Norwagia, Dacia, Gallia, Equitannia, Vasconnia, rediit in Britanum, coronatus in urbe Legionum a festo Pentecostes, ubi cedente Dubricio suo archiepiscopatui, David loco ipsius subrogatur, avunculus Roger.²⁷

It should also be observed that not all passages copied by Worcestre from the books of Master Brewster are identical with those in the Canterbury Roll. Thus, the fragment immediately preceding the section *Britannia mynor* in the *Itineraries* of Worcestre was traced by Harvey to another fragment of *HRB* (V.iv), and indeed this short fragment finds a distant correspondence in a rather lengthy passage, *GM* 92–5, and the match to it in the Roll is rather loose, although at times becoming exact:

Worcestre, <i>IWW</i> 210	Canterbury Roll CRC057/§41
Galli Collobrok id est Walbrok in ciuitate London sortitur nomen a bello comisso per Asclepiodotum Brittannum qui interfecit ibi Allectum Romanum et Luuam (<i>Lunum</i> , Nasmith) Gallum cum tribus legionibus infra vrbem Londoniarum super torrentem que dicitur a nomine Collobrok et quo passus est Sanctus Albanus martyr	Asclepiodotus Britannus peremit regem Allectum Romanum et Livium (<i>Timum</i> , Wall) Gallum, cum tribus legionibus infra urbem London super torrentem qui dictum a nominem Galli, Collebrok, sub quo passus est Sanctus Albanus martir. ²⁸

There is no doubt, therefore, that the sources used by Brewster (from whose book Worcester copied the passage) and by the compiler of the Canterbury

²⁷Thomas Wright (ed.), *Feudal Manuals of English History: A Series of Popular Sketches of Our National History, Compiled at Different Periods, from the Thirteenth Century to the Fifteenth, for the Use of the Feudal Gentry and Nobility* (London, 1872), 125

²⁸‘Asclepiodotus the Briton killed King Allectus the Roman and Luuius the Gaul [recte: Livius Gallus] with three legions below London on the rushing stream which is called by a Gallic name, Collebrok [recte: which is called Collebrok after Gallus’ name], beneath which [recte: under whom] St Alban the martyr suffered.’ Translation from website; corrections offered in square brackets. The anonymous reviewer of this paper aptly questioned *nominem* in this transcription instead of the expected *nomine*. The latter form indeed was used in the transcription of the text by Wall, and this could certainly be the case, see **fig. 1**.



Fig. 1

Roll are sometimes different. This list of parallels might be continued easily, cf. sections on (South)hampton and Gloucester in the *Itineraries* (IWW 210), with eleven lines in the edition of Harvey and a corresponding short paragraph (CRC050/§36) in the Roll.

It is notable also that the Canterbury Roll occasionally contains direct references to the sources of its passages, but those being discussed so far in conjunction with Geoffrey's *HRB* bear no witness to their sources. Nevertheless, a brief look at some of them may trigger further suggestions regarding their provenance. Thus, discussing one of these cases Maree Shiota maintains that 'it is likely that Ranulf Higden's fourteenth-century *Polychronicon*, which narrates a similar version of the tale, was consulted'.²⁹ As we have seen, the scribe of the Canterbury Roll in providing the story of Armorica (and also elsewhere) discussed above did not behave as a creative author: he copied faithfully the text which was later reproduced by William Worcestre as well. With this in mind, it is worth paying some attention, for example, to the following passage of the Canterbury Roll (CRC121/§94; the bold script is added): this depiction of the revolt in Wales of Madog ap Llywelyn (1294–5)³⁰ explicitly refers to Higden's *Polychronicon*:

Cuius etiam Edwardi primi tempore, quidam Madocus Wallensis suscitavit guerram in Wallia. Sed rex adveniens circa festam Sancti Nicolay, cepit insula Anglesyam, edificavit que de novo urbem et castrum de Bello Marisco. Quo tempore succisa sunt nemora in Wallia que prestabant indigenis latibula in tempora belli firmavitque castrum circa loca maritima et cito post captus est Madocus. Et ab illo tempore quieverunt Wallenses a proliis [*sic*]. Et principatum Wallie dedit Edwardo secundo filo suo et comiti Cestrie, **ut dicit Polichronicon. lib° 7, ca° 40°**.³¹

²⁹Maree Shiota, *Unrolling History: Fifteenth-Century Political Culture and Perceptions on the Canterbury Roll*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 2015, 88.

³⁰A. D. Carr, 'Madog ap Llywelyn: the revolt of 1294–5 in Caernarfonshire', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society* 58 (1997), 35–46, cf. Craig Owen Jones, *The Revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn* (Pwllheli, 2008).

³¹'Also in the time of Edward I, a certain Madocus of the Welsh stirred up war in Wales. But the king, arriving around the feast of St Nicholas, captured the island of Anglesea, and there built a new city and castle of Beaumaris. At this time the forests in Wales were cut down, which [had] supplied the natives with hiding places in times of war, and [Edward] strengthened the castles around coastal places, and shortly afterwards Madocus was captured. And he gave the principality of Wales to Edward II, his son, and the county of Chester, **says the Polychronicon Book 7 Chapter 40.**' Wall in his edition prints *Madocius* for *Madocus*.

Wall, in his comments on this passage of the Roll, notes the discrepancies between the texts in *Polychronicon* and the Canterbury Roll. The fragment in the Roll differs verbally from Higden's work in many respects, but not only are identical phrases attested in these two works, but we find them also in the corresponding narrative copied by William Worcestre from the books of Master Brewster, and also in the so-called '*Feudal Manual IV*'.³² There are also comparable phrases where the wording is not exactly the same (cf. *in festo Sancti Nicholai* written by Worcester while three other texts agree in giving *circa festum sancti Nicholai*), and also others showing minor variations. The identical (or very similar) phrases found in all four texts are indicated in the table by italic script:

Polychronicon	Canterbury Roll
Eoque anno <i>Madocus</i> quidam <i>Walensis</i> suscitavit guerram in Wallia die sancti Micliaelis. Idcirco rex Edwardus <i>adveniens</i> Cestriam circa <i>festum sancti Nicholai cepit insulam Angleseyam, ædificavitque de novo urbem et castrum de Bello Marisco. Quo in tempore succisa sunt nemora in Wallia quæ tempore bellico præstabant indigenis latibula, firmataque sunt castra circa loca maritima, et cito post captus est Madocus prædictus et Londoniæ adductus.</i>	Cuius etiam Edwardi primi tempore, quidam <i>Madocus Wallensis</i> suscitavit guerram in Wallia. Sed <i>rex adveniens</i> circa festam Sancti Nicolay, <i>cepit insula Anglesyam, edificavit que de novo urbem et castrum de Bello Marisco. Quo tempore succisa sunt nemora in Wallia que præstabant indigenis latibula in tempora belli firmavitque castrum circa loca maritima et cito post captus est Madocus. [...]</i>
Worcestre, <i>IWW</i>	" <i>Feudal Manual</i> " IV
In festo Sancti Nicholai, <i>Madocus Wallensis</i> suscitavit guerram contra Regem Edwardum primum in vltimus diebus dicti Regis Edwardi, sed <i>rex adueniens cepit jnsulam Angleseyam et edificauit de nouo castrum et villam de Bello Marisco quo tempora succisa sunt nemora in Wallia que præstabant indigenis labitula.</i>	In ultimis diebus istius Edwardi quidam <i>Madocus Wallensis</i> suscitavit guerram in Wallia, sed <i>rex adveniens</i> circa <i>festum sancti Nicholai, cepit insulam Angleseyam, ædificavitque de novo urbem et castrum de Bello Marisco, quo tempore succisa sunt nemora in Wallia, quæ præstabant indigenis latibula tempore belli, firmavitque castra circa loca maritima, et cito post captus est Madocus.</i>

³²Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, ed. by Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, vol. 8 (London, 1882), 280 and 282; *IWW* 208; Wright, *Feudal Manuals of English History*, 148.

From this table it is clear enough that the fragments preserved in the *Itineraries* and the Canterbury Roll (as well as in the 'Feudal manual IV') are quite close but not identical to the extent which might allow us to posit their common source. At the same time all of them show both similarities and verbal discrepancies with the description of the event in Higden's *Polychronicon*. The latter is referred to in the Roll, while Worcestre states that he copied this section, entitled in the *Itineraries* 'Rex Edwardi primi' (sic!), from the book of Master Brewster, and it is highly unlikely that it contained portions of Higden's original narrative, as the text of the antiquary is certainly different from it.

From the chronological standpoint we know certainly that Worcestre copied the section *Britannia mynor* and the other fragments quoted above that are based on Geoffrey's *HRB* in November 1479. The Canterbury Roll found its extant form by 1485, but as Maree Shiota has demonstrated and Jayson Boon formulated, 'the original scribe worked between 1429 and 1433 and is responsible for writing almost the entire Roll'.³³ This gives us the earliest available date for the proto-text, as any dating for the book of Master Brewster copied fragmentarily by Worcestre is conjectural. Thus, the Hundred Years' War passages that the copy contains are dated to 1418–19, but also there is a report of Richard Beauchamp travelling with Henry VI for his coronation in France, an event which took place in December 1431. Incidentally, it does not seem to have contained a mention of Richard's death on 30 April 1439 at Rouen castle, unless Worcestre merely did not copy the corresponding fragment. Since this information was available, Brewster's miscellany must have been written after 1431 at the earliest. Regarding this source of Worcestre's *informacio* Antonia Gransden suggested that 'Master Brewster allowed him to make extracts from a chronicle in his keeping',³⁴ but it is obvious from the text that we are dealing with extracts from chronicles collected in a single book that belonged to Brewster, and there is no indication that it was the Master who allowed William to copy from it, or even whether he was still alive at this time. What is apparent is that Worcestre consulted the book at St. Benet's, Holme (*[i]n monasterio Sancti Benedicti, IWW 208–9*). It has been noted that 'Worcester had a particular interest in Holme; in the fifteenth century it was popular with the East Anglian nobility, and one of its patrons was his own patron, Sir John Fastolf',³⁵ and we have some independent evidence that Worcestre made copies of extracts from the books at the abbey which in his *Itineraries* are not associated with Brewster's book. Thus, his entry on St. Margaret the Martyr (*Beata Margareta martir*) copied *in monasterio Sancti Benedicti de Hulmo (IWW 228)* has been associated with the note in the margin of fol. 10v. in BL Cotton MS Vitellius D. I, also traced to St. Benet's.³⁶ Importantly, Jayson Boon has recently connected one of the passages

³³Jayson Boon, *An Exercise in the Obscure: How History is Constructed on the Canterbury Roll*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 2021, 11 building on Shiota, *Unrolling history*, 10–11.

³⁴Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II*, 340.

³⁵Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London and Rio Grande, 1992), 98, with further references. Cf. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 200.

³⁶Julian Marcus Luxford, 'Saint Margaret of Holm: new evidence concerning a Norfolk Benedictine cult', *Norfolk Archaeology* 44 (2002), 111–19.

in the Canterbury Roll with a thirteenth-century chronicle linked to the same institution, although admitting that ‘the exact source cannot be confirmed’.³⁷ Boon compares CRC066/§44a of the Roll with a ‘geographical’ fragment of the *Chronica Minor Sancti Benedicti de Hulmo* (BL MS Egerton 3142) that was moved from Holme to Hickling Priory sometime after the beginning of the fourteenth century.³⁸ Significantly, he stresses the fact that the latter was not the direct source for the former, but that they are likely to share the same origins.³⁹ This observation brings us back again to St. Benet’s, and very little is known about the library of this Benedictine abbey – Neil Ker enumerates six manuscripts that are attributable to it, and Julian Marcus Luxford has added a seventh to this list.⁴⁰ Notwithstanding the paucity of the extant records it is obvious that the library must have been rich in its holdings, and might have held a ‘geographical’ text copied into the *Chronica Minor* and independently into the Canterbury Roll. It may also be recalled that on the first page of the introduction to his edition of the text Arnold Wall admitted that the Roll could be of monastic origin.⁴¹ Still, the prehistory of the sections based on Geoffrey’s *Historia* copied between 1429 and 1433 into the Canterbury Roll and also by William Worcestre in 1479 from Brewster’s book are difficult to trace: *librum Magistri Brewster* remains enigmatic and its sources as well as relation to St. Benet’s is mysterious. What remains certain is that the particular concise version of the mythological story of Armorica’s conquest preserved in these three known documents was identical, and the text of it may be restored even from just the two surviving manuscripts.

It should also be borne in mind that the exact origins of the corresponding passages in the Canterbury Roll have not yet been identified. As Arnold Wall stated in the introduction to his edition of the text a century ago, ‘[n]o attempt has here been made to identify all the sources from which the Marginal History has been drawn’.⁴² The scholar noted that ‘[t]he compiler has used Geoffrey of Monmouth’s “Historia Britonum” for the story of Brutus and the legendary Kings who follow, especially King Arthur. He has used Higden’s “Polychronicon” and acknowledges this by direct reference.’ He enumerates major chronicles used as sources to the text, and this list, apart from the two historians already mentioned, refers to Gildas, Nennius, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Giraldus Cambrensis, William of Newburgh and Roger of Hoveden. The list has since been revised, and as Jayson Boon observes,

³⁷Boon, *An Exercise in the Obscure*, 89 and with the analysis on 97–101.

³⁸John of Oxnead, *Chronica Johannis de Oxnedes*, ed. Sir Henry Ellis (London, 1859), 412.

³⁹Boon, *An Exercise in the Obscure*, 99

⁴⁰Neil Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books* (London, 1964), 102 and Julian Marcus Luxford, ‘A forgotten medieval Benedictine manuscript: the annals in British Library Cotton MS Vitellius D.IX.’, *Scriptorium* 55 (2001), 298–306. See also the chapter ‘The Cronica Buriensis and the Abbey of St Benet of Hulme’ in Gransden’s *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England*, 239–44 et passim.

⁴¹Wall, *Handbook to the Maude Roll*, no pagination; cf. Robert Allen Rouse, ‘Inscribing lineage: writing and rewriting the Maude Roll’, in Stephanie Hollis and Alexandra Barratt (eds), *Migrations, Medieval Manuscripts in New Zealand* (Newcastle, 2007), 108–22, at 109. Wall tentatively names one of the monasteries of Chester as a candidate for the Roll’s provenance.

⁴²Wall, *Handbook to the Maude Roll*, no pagination.

‘the Roll-maker had access to a more varied and obscure corpus of primary sources than has been assumed since Wall published his first edition of the Roll in 1919’,⁴³ while Maree Shirota admitted that for many passages it ‘is very difficult to trace the immediate sources used by the roll’s compiler’.⁴⁴ Although this paper by no means aims at establishing the exact source of the story preserved independently in two records (the research on the prehistory of the Canterbury Roll is still in progress), some preliminary considerations may tentatively be offered here.

It is obviously important in this respect that both the Canterbury Roll and the ‘Feudal manual IV’ referred to above on a number of occasions are pedigree rolls, a type of genealogical writing particularly popular in the fifteenth century.⁴⁵ Moreover, they belong to the same group of historical documents of this type, the so-called ‘Noah’ version of the fifteenth-century English pedigree rolls. Extremely widespread at the time, they remain very much under-studied, but due to the academic research of Dr Ben Guy we have now at our disposal a concise and helpful survey of these texts.⁴⁶ Quite a few manuscripts fall into this category (e.g., Oxford, Bodley Rolls 10, Oxford, Bodley Marshall 135 and London, BL Add. 18002), and it is apparent that any research into the sources of the Canterbury roll should take into account the identical (or very close) data preserved in the other pedigree rolls belonging to the same ‘Noah’ group and the closely related ‘Roger of St Albans’ genealogies. It is known that in general these documents incorporated data from Geoffrey’s *HRB*,⁴⁷ and it is significant that many of the fifteenth-century pedigree rolls tend to copy exemplars faithfully even while laying out their diagrams and text in varying ways. The same passage relating to the legendary history of Britain is found in the three Noah pedigree rolls referred to above.

With this in mind, one should pay attention to the sole major discrepancy found in the narratives that is truly significant, and this is the sequence preserved in the Canterbury Roll as *regnum eo nato nepoti Octavii Regis*. Arnold Wall

⁴³Boon, *An Exercise in the Obscure*, 85. Boon also (*ibid.*, 22) aptly notes: ‘Despite the scores of medieval English chronicles which have survived to today, there is an innumerable amount which have been lost.’

⁴⁴Shirota, *Unrolling History*, 88.

⁴⁵On it see Olivier de Laborderie, ‘A new pattern for English history: the first genealogical rolls of the kings of England’, in R. L. Radulescu and E. D. Kennedy (eds), *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Medieval Britain and France* (Turnhout, 2008), 45–61, and more recently various contributions to Stefan G. Holz, Jörg Peltzer and Maree Shirota (eds), *The Roll in England and France in the Late Middle Ages* (Berlin and Boston, 2019).

⁴⁶See Ben Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction and Textual Study* (Woodbridge, 2020), 253–6; on the Canterbury roll in this context see 253 n. 118. The pioneering work on the subject was that by Alison Allan, ‘Yorkist propaganda: pedigree, prophecy and the “British History” in the reign of Edward IV’, in C. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), 171–92, at 172–3 and 189. Cf. also M. P. Siddons, *Welsh Pedigree Rolls* (Aberystwyth, 1996).

⁴⁷Cf. e.g. Alison Allan, ‘Yorkist propaganda’, 175–9 et passim or Olivier de Laborderie, ‘L’incorporation de l’Histoire des rois de Bretagne de Geoffroy de Monmouth dans les généalogies en rouleau des rois d’Angleterre (xiii^e–xiv^e siècles)’, in Hélène Tétrel and G  raldine Veyss  yre (eds), *L’Historia regum Britannie et les ‘Bruts’ en Europe*, vol. II (Paris, 2018), 255–80 for the thirteenth/fourteenth-century rolls.

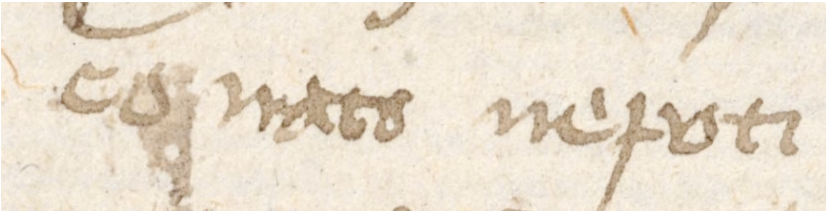


Fig. 2

reconstructed *eo nato* here as *Dianotus* (sic!) in view of Geoffrey's *Dionotus*, and explained this mistake as a misunderstanding by the scribe of the text as it was being dictated.⁴⁸ Certainly, as Jayson Boon reminds us, 'the Roll-maker added his own alterations where he saw fit',⁴⁹ but this is not the case here. Moreover, the reading *eo nato* looks like a feature of the 'Noah' group of pedigree rolls in general, and Dr Ben Guy kindly draws my attention (personal communication) to the same *eo nato* in the corresponding sections of Oxford, Bodley Rolls 10 as well as London, BL Add. 18002. The name corresponds to *Cornato* of Worcestre's text as edited by J. H. Harvey, and it is exceedingly remarkable that a reading of the form as *Conato* was printed by J. Nasmith in his edition, that is, *Conatus*.⁵⁰ It looks likely that Nasmith was correct, as the <rn> sequence in the name as *per* Harvey is very similar to the manuscript reading of the initial <n> of the next word, *nepoti*, see **fig. 2**. In the original, Geoffrey of Monmouth refers to *Conanus* (*Meriadocus*), and this passage is presented as direct speech of Maximian to Conan.⁵¹ Importantly, *Conatus* instead of *Conanus* is found in a number of paraphrases of *HRB* in medieval chronicles, as, for example, in Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*.⁵² Therefore, there is no need to see in this fragment copied by Worcestre a break with the previous tradition – it still speaks of *Conanus* in its later guise *Conatus*, and, incidentally, it is obvious that Worcestre could not have copied it from the Canterbury Roll, or a similar document of the group. Moreover, the manuscript reading of the name in the *Itineraries* itself explains the difficult *eo nato* found in the Rolls. In the copy made by Worcestre the first two letters of the name are isolated from the rest of it by a gap, *regnum eo nato nepoti* (**fig. 2**). A similar reading, as Dr Ben Guy advises me, probably is found in the corresponding fragment in Oxford, Bodley Marshall 135. The initial <c> – apparently in the exemplar – was read as <e> by the scribe of the Canterbury Roll as well as some other manuscripts of the group, who like Worcester left the gap after the first two letters, but took

⁴⁸ On Dionotus duke of Cornwall see Padel, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Cornwall', 7–8.

⁴⁹ Boon, *An Exercise in the Obscure*, 40.

⁵⁰ Nasmith, *Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre*, 338.

⁵¹ 'Promouebo etenim te in regem regni huius, et erit haec altera Britannia, et eam ex genere nostro expulsis indigenis repleamus': 'I shall make you the ruler of this kingdom; we shall drive out its inhabitants, and it will be another Britain, occupied by our people'; *GM* 106–7. On Conan (W. Cynan) see Jankulak, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 63–5 and Guy, 'Constantine, Helena, Maximus', 395–7.

⁵² Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis; together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an unknown writer of the fifteenth century*, ed. by Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, vol. 5 (London, 1874), 202.

the name as two separate words. Therefore, it is most likely that Worcestre and the scribes of the rolls copied a document in which the name of the nephew of Octavius *Conatus* (< *Conanus*) was written with a gap after the first letters, perhaps thus separated due to standing at the end of a line in the manuscript, and in which the initial <c> resembled <e>. This common source also may explain the styling of Maximianus as *Rex Britonum* in the text preserved in the *Itineraries*, but as *Romanus* in the Canterbury Roll and elsewhere. The character ‘was of royal blood on both sides’ (*HRB* V.ix), that is, British on his father’s side and Roman on his mother’s, and both descriptions could have been in the underlying exemplar, from which our texts selected one each.

All that certainly poses the question of the nature of the book of Master Brewster, fragments of which were copied by William Worcestre. Although the antiquary used the word *cronice* to denote these historic narratives, it should be remembered that ‘the term “chronicle” has been used so loosely in medieval and modern times that it has lost any precise meaning’.⁵³ Some passages of the book, as Worcestre’s *Itineraries* testify, perfectly fitted the genre of pedigree rolls, such as stories derived from Geoffrey’s *HRB*, or accounts of the revolts in Wales of Madog ap Llywelyn and Owain Glyndŵr. The book, apparently, also contained fragments that may be reconcilable with this genre. Apart from the quoted passages, Worcestre also copied from the same source a number of miscellaneous notes on Henry V’s campaigns in France (*IWW* 214–19), importantly, ‘with particular references to his [i.e. Brewster’s – A. F.] employer, Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick’,⁵⁴ and it is noteworthy that this passage has been described as an echo of ‘Rous’s panegyric on Earl Richard’.⁵⁵ This is not inconsistent with an origin in a pedigree roll, as a certain focus on particular lords is known in this type of document just as in the slightly later Rous’s rolls; it has been noted that ‘fifteenth-century rolls and genealogical chronicles were produced not only as royal propaganda, [...], but also as objects of pride for their owner’.⁵⁶ Various stray notes on war activities in which the earl participated are followed by passages that list a number of castles and manors that ‘the most noble Richard Beauchamp earl of Warwick’ built or restored according to the account of Brewster (*secundum relacionum Brewster*, *IWW* 218–19). These entries are different from the previous set in that they do not provide dates and they definitely do not fit the genre of the roll. Nevertheless, it is important that the collection looks to be centred on the earl and the notes have a profound personal flavour. Indeed, Brewster’s patron is mentioned there by name on several occasions, some of the jousts he participated in are listed and even the name of his secretary is provided. Yet, this highly heterogeneous selection of

⁵³A. Gransden, ‘The chronicles of medieval England and Scotland: Part I’, *Journal of Medieval History* 16 (1990), 129–50, at 129.

⁵⁴Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II*, 340.

⁵⁵Emma Mason, ‘Legends of the Beauchamps’ ancestors: the use of baronial propaganda in medieval England’, *Journal of Medieval History* 10 (1984), 25–40, at 38. For the latter text see Charles Ross, *The Rous Roll: With an Historical Introduction on John Rous and the Warwick Roll* (Gloucester, 1980).

⁵⁶Raluca Radulescu, ‘Yorkist Propaganda and “The Chronicle from Rollo to Edward IV”’, *Studies in Philology* 100 (2003), 401–424 (p. 408). Cf. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 256–8.

various notes also contains the complete text of ‘Vale et gaude glorioso ...’, addressed by the Emperor Sigismund to the King (*IIW* 214) and known from other fifteenth-century written texts.⁵⁷ That may point to varied sources used by the compiler, and it looks very likely, therefore, that *liber Magistri Brewster* was a miscellaneous collection of excerpts of various genres. Most probably it also contained extracts from a pedigree roll, and it is known that ‘[s]uch genealogies were usually written on pedigree rolls, though they sometimes appear in codices too’.⁵⁸

The legendary history of *Britannia mynor* copied from Brewster by William Worcestre in 1479, although indeed based on the corresponding passages of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *HRB*, does not go back directly to this medieval best-seller. A precise parallel for the narrative should rather be sought in the pedigree rolls current in the fifteenth century (particularly the ‘Noah’ rolls and related ‘Roger of St Albans’ genealogies), such as the so-called Canterbury Roll. The *liber Magistri Brewster* is likely to have contained, perhaps, fragments of such a pedigree, which were copied faithfully by the antiquarian. With this new data at our disposal it becomes evident now that Worcester’s version of the British conquest of Armorica is not a sudden disruption of the Galfridian tradition. Indeed, his copy of *Britannia mynor* testifies to the fact that this distinctive description of the legendary events had some circulation in the fifteenth century. It is also evident that the list of direct sources used by William Worcestre should be emended: his *Britannia mynor* does not go back to Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *HRB* directly.

ALEXANDER FALILEYEV

University of Salamanca

⁵⁷For it, see David Fallows, *Henry V and the Earliest English Carols 1413–1440* (Abingdon, Oxon. and New York, 2018), 183–4, with references to the texts in which it occurs.

⁵⁸Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 253; for some examples see Raluca Rădulescu, ‘The political mentality of the English gentry at the end of the fifteenth century’, *New Europe College Yearbook* 8 (2000–1), 355–89, at 369–72.