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Roll or Codex for 'A tous nobles'?

The Physical Expressions of a French Genealogical Chronicle

Cy fine des Bretons [...] jusque a la nativité Jesu Crist et trouverés le demourant en l'aultre roulle [...] ("Here finish the Britons until the birth of Christ; you will find the rest in the other roll").¹ This statement is situated half-way down a lengthy roll, seventeen metres long, which contains a universal chronicle that starts at the Creation and ends in the fifteenth century. Two other similar statements mentioning 'the other roll' are located in parallel columns of text nearby. After a brief gap in the writing across all four columns, the text starts again in the middle of the same membrane, picking up the thread of the historical tale at the beginning of the Christian era.

Apart from the gap that breaks up the text mid-membrane, there is no other physical hint of the change of roll mentioned in the statement, not even the start of a new membrane (which could have suggested that two original rolls had been stuck together). The reader is faced with a direct contradiction between the practical guidance found in the text—to find the next episode of the story in another, separate roll—and the material reality of the text's support, i. e. a single manuscript containing both the pre-Christian and the Christian histories in one roll.

This anomaly is not limited to that specific manuscript: all twenty-seven rolls containing this particular universal chronicle include the same statements. Indeed, most of them do not even have the convenient gap in the text block enabling the reader to find the place where the Christian era begins. Instead, the text concerning this new era follows immediately after the stories of the Old Testament period, located at different heights in the separate columns, leading to a staggered effect (fig. 1).² Thus the reader is not only puzzled by statements that do not correspond to the physical reality, but also loses the awareness of a new beginning in the history of mankind with the arrival of Christ that the author of the original statements had wanted to convey.³

¹ This example is in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 176, half way down the roll, before the white space starting with 'Explicit'. For a full colour reproduction of one of these universal chronicle rolls, which I call 'version H' and which Lisa Fagin Davis has named *La Chronique Anonyme Universelle*, see the online copy of Cambridge, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ. 41, https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:3828490\$1i (last accessed: 6.3.18). Davis has illustrations of a representative selection of rolls and a CD with images of an entire roll, see *La Chronique Anonyme Universelle*, ed. Davis.

² In the Harvard roll cited in note 1, the change to the Christian era is on seq. 9, and is particularly difficult to spot, as not only is the text staggered between the columns, but in this roll, there are no illustrated medallions at this stage to mark the change visually.

³ In this 'version H', a paragraph about the Sixth Age of Man and the Final Judgement is inserted at the beginning of the third column that subsequently has the narrative of the kings of France.



Fig. 1: Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. fr. 1493, fol. 14, version H. By permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. — Change from Old Testament period to Christian era. Col. 1: life of Christ followed by popes headed by St Peter. Col. 2: Julius Caesar (being murdered in the medallion) and Roman emperors. Col. 3: the Sicambrians sail down the Rhine and occupy Gaul, renaming it France (standard medallion with men in ship); beginning of the resumed *A tous nobles* text (*Vous devés savoir*); the Franks defeat the Romans (standard medallion with battle scene). Col. 4: last pagan kings of Britain, mythical "Lucie" first Christian king of England (standard medallion with king in majesty). Note the staggered effect of the text and medallions marking the change of period in the different columns.

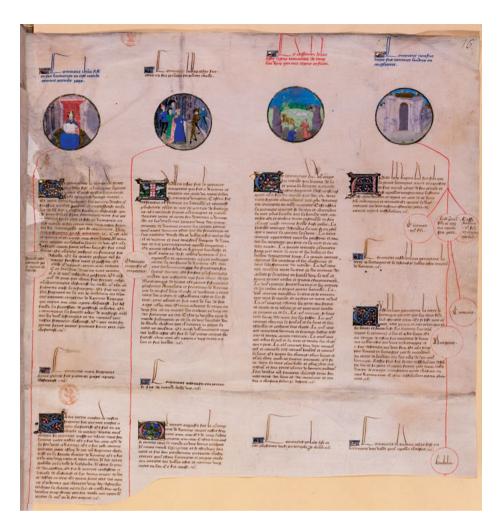


Fig. 2: Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. fr. 1494, fol. 16, version H. By permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. - Change from Old Testament period to Christian era made clear in the layout. Medallions: St Peter as first pope, the murder of Julius Caesar, the Nativity (as the A tous nobles section is preceded by a long paragraph on the arrival of the Sixth Age of the world), the foundation of London by King Lud.

The few manuscripts where the physical layout shows a break between the Old Testament period and the Christian era demonstrate the value of such a visual device in strengthening the message in the text (fig. 2).4

⁴ See Davis 2014, 19, for a list of the manuscripts that do or that do not show the break between the eras in their layout. Out of 22 fully preserved rolls, only three mark this division across the entire width of the manuscript.

The fact that the scribes of most of the manuscripts chose to ignore this evocative layout reinforces the sense that a basic disconnection took place at some stage between the materiality of the initial version and the later copies: two rolls became one, and in most instances no effort was made to distinguish between the two historical eras in any other material way. It raises questions about how this universal chronicle was originally designed and subsequently altered, how the rolls were used, and for whom they were made. The chronicle also brings up another, more basic issue: why was it copied in the roll form in the first place, rather than in the codex form?

This article considers these questions through the prism of more than seventy manuscripts containing a fifteenth-century genealogical chronicle of the kings of France named A tous nobles after its most common incipit. 5 This work is either embedded within universal chronicles, including the one introduced above, or stands alone as a separate entity. It is found in at least twenty-six textual versions, and all but five of these versions are accompanied by a genealogical diagram, usually formed of circles and lines. The diagrams also exist in separate versions, linked to the textual ones. The divergences between the versions range from minor textual variants (e.g. using synonymous words or phrases) to the insertion or omission of significant factual content. The survival of so many copies and versions suggests that A tous nobles was a popular work in its time. Many of its readers or copyists were sufficiently interested in its contents to take the trouble to amend the text and accompanying diagram to create new versions.7

Not only does A tous nobles display numerous textual variations, it also survives in a large variety of manuscript forms, formats and layouts. These include codices and rolls, large and small, with or without genealogical diagrams near or within the text, drawn vertically or horizontally, written in single or multiple columns. Regarding their materiality, there are great differences: many manuscripts are made of fine parchment, decorated in coloured inks and gold, some of them with various iconographic elements; others are plain paper books, devoid of any decorative features.8

The surviving copies of *A tous nobles* provide fertile ground for examining the different ways in which the same basic text could be materially presented and used. To do this, it is worth exploring the various manuscripts in some depth from a codicological perspective in order to gather the data for a praxeology of this versatile genea-

⁵ For a very short introduction to A tous nobles, see Norbye 2010a, vol. 1, 1. More information in Norbye 2007a, which should now be complemented by the updated list of manuscripts here in the Appendix.

⁶ Note on terminology: the diagrams will also be referred to as 'trees' throughout this article, except in the case of version 3 where there are no lines linking the circles; in that specific case, only the term 'diagram' will be used.

⁷ For detailed discussions on the geographic origins and the owners of *A tous nobles* manuscripts, see Norbye 2007b, and for deliberations on those writers (remanieurs) who remodelled the text and tree, Norbye 2008a.

⁸ See my survey of the decorative aspects of *A tous nobles* manuscripts in Norbye (forthcoming).

logical chronicle. The codicological analysis will serve the reader as a *Quellenkunde* of *A tous nobles* genealogies. After this detailed survey of the manuscripts in both form and content, I will propose some tentative conclusions, in particular about the use of the roll form and how the makers of codices coped with the challenges of laying out the same work in a different book form.

Identifying manuscripts of A tous nobles: textual contents and sources

The first challenge is to identify manuscripts containing *A tous nobles* among the numerous anonymous abridged chronicles of the kings of France produced in the late Middle Ages. 10 The work *A tous nobles* derives its name from its prologue's incipit: A tous nobles qui aiment beaux faits et bonnes histoires [...] (spelling varies). It is usually but not always preceded by a heading or rubric using variants of: Cy s'ensuivent les lignees des roys de France, et comment les generations sont descendues l'une de l'autre [...]. The first paragraph of the chronicle itself starts with the Creation (Vous devez savoir que Dieu forma Adam et Eve [...]), and swiftly moves on to the destruction of Troy and the mythical Trojan origins of the Franks via the Trojan prince Francio, who was believed to be an ancestor of the Merovingian kings. The core text finishes with King Charles V of France who died in 1380, although many versions provide continuations that take the story to his son Charles VI (d. 1422), and some to Charles VII (d. 1461) or even later.11

The text of *A tous nobles* exists in at least twenty-six versions with significant variations between them, but all have a substantial body of text in common, and most contain the prologue (with its characteristic incipit), although with minor variants. All but five versions are accompanied by corresponding variations of some form of genealogical diagram: all these are characterised by the same factual error relating to the two kings preceding King Philip IV (Philippe le Bel, d. 1314)—an error that is often reflected in the accompanying text—which thus serves as a supplementary marker to aid the identification of the work.12

⁹ The term 'praxeology' denotes an analysis of how, where, when and in which context an artefact was used, with particular focus on the reciprocal relationship between user and artefact, see for example Dickmann/Elias/Focken 2015.

¹⁰ See the Appendix of this article for an updated table of manuscripts, indicating the version of their contents and their physical form. Sanford Zale identified the first seven versions, see Zale 1994, 76–78 (v 1), 78–83 (v 2), 98–107 (v 3 and 4), 107–108 (copy of v 5 with tree), 122–124 (v 6) and 134–136 (v 7) respectively.

¹¹ On the dating of A tous nobles, see Norbye 2007a, 299-300. I reckon the earliest versions could date from 1409–1415, judging by information in the tree, and the latest are from the early sixteenth century. 12 See Norbye 2007a, 313, for details about the error.

A tous nobles is disseminated either as an independent, stand-alone chronicle (easily identifiable thanks to the prologue's incipit) or incorporated into a universal chronicle. The stand-alone A tous nobles may exist on its own within a manuscript, or occur with other texts, some on closely related topics.¹³

The most common occurrence of *A tous nobles* is in the large rolls mentioned in the introduction (my version H). 14 These contain the most popular version of a long universal chronicle that starts at the Creation; there are two other versions of this long chronicle in which A tous nobles is also found. 15 The chronicle's narrative covers the Old Testament in parallel with ancient history concerning dynasties with biblical connections such as those of Persia, Ptolemaic Egypt and Rome, as well as mythical events such as the adventures after the fall of Troy of certain Trojan heroes seen as the ancestors of the Romans, the Britons and the Franks. In the Christian era, the text is divided into four columns, covering respectively sequences of popes, of Roman and medieval emperors, of the kings of France (versions of *A tous nobles*, but usually omitting the prologue), and of the kings of England. ¹⁶ Version H is always found in roll form, with one known exception, whereas the other two versions are in codex form.

In the vast majority of the universal chronicles in roll form I have examined, the section on the kings of France contains the text of A tous nobles.¹⁷ However, in the most common version of the long universal chronicle, as well as in one other version of this chronicle (version U), it loses its prologue (A tous nobles qui aiment [...]). 18 One therefore has to search for *A tous nobles* both in the Old Testament portion—where

¹³ Version 4 is significantly different from the others: it is much longer and without any diagrams, but usually found in manuscripts together with the shorter version 3 which does have diagrams. I have not studied it in detail.

¹⁴ This version was initially the subject of study by an art historian, Nathalie Hurel, hence my naming it 'version H', see Hurel 1992 and Hurel 1994. I thank Mme Hurel for sending me her articles in the early days of my research. More recently, it has been comprehensively analysed, edited and translated by Lisa Fagin Davis under the name La Chronique Anonyme Universelle. For a brief introduction, see Davis 2010.

¹⁵ Versions F and U.

¹⁶ The column for the kings of England in version H digresses at one stage into a genealogy of the Latin kings of Jerusalem.

¹⁷ I have not examined all the universal chronicles produced in France at that time, but those listed in Fossier 1980–1981, 173–174, which he treats as a fairly homogeneous group. Virtually all these are in roll form. To complement this, I investigated those codices described as 'croniques universelles' in the Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (henceforth: BnF) catalogue index: out of 47 copies, two contain a version of A tous nobles, and another has small sections of A tous nobles within it, as discussed below. There are no doubt further copies in other libraries.

¹⁸ However, version U starts its A tous nobles section with: Or vous dirons une partie de ceulz qui partirent de Troye la deserte (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, LJS 266, fol. 16^v), introductory words that are more or less the same as in one of the short universal chronicles, version L (see below). That leaves version H, where the incipit of the relevant section is: Comment Priamus le jeune fonda la cité de Sincambre sicomme dient les histoires. Priamus le jeune dessus nommé se partit de Troye [...] (Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. fr. 1495, fol. 6).

several paragraphs talk of the Trojans who founded Sicambria and eventually moved westwards to Gaul, where they called themselves Franks, founded Lutetia (Paris) and became Roman subjects—and in the Christian period, when the story of the Franks under the rule of the Roman emperor Valentinian I (d. 375) is resumed.

Whereas the long universal chronicles begin with the Creation, there are five shorter versions that start after the birth of Christ. 19 In those shorter universal chronicles, identification of *A tous nobles* is usually straightforward: the main *A tous nobles* text follows immediately after the standard heading (Cy s'ensuivent les lignees des roys de France [...]) and is always situated in the third column. In all but one version (L), it starts with its characteristic prologue.²⁰

My list remains provisional, as further manuscripts may yet be revealed.²¹ Nor do occurrences of the text of A tous nobles stop there: Sanford Zale has identified another unofficial French history of the fifteenth century which had entire sections of A tous nobles embedded within it in combination with at least one other text.²² He also referred me to a universal chronicle with elements in common with A tous nobles, including the error concerning the predecessors of Philip IV.²³ There is also an incunable, a very early printed edition of a 'Chronique universelle abrégée', where the wording relating to some of the mythical events of French history is identical to that in A tous nobles, and some other sections contain the reporting of identical events in slightly reworded text.²⁴ This incunable has a very similar counterpart in manuscript form.²⁵ A high degree of borrowing is noticeable between one of the universal

¹⁹ Versions 2, C, Y, G and L. Although in all versions the columns related to the popes and emperors begin at the deaths of Christ and Julius Caesar, in version 2 the column concerning the kings of England starts at a later period (at the adventus Saxonum, illustrated with a diagram of the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy). The third column, covering the genealogy of the kings of France, always opens with the mythical Trojan origins of the Franks.

²⁰ The version L prologue starts: Or dirons d'une partie de cheulx qui partirent de Troye la grant (London, British Library, Harley Roll O.1). This is more or less the wording also used to introduce the A tous nobles section in the version U long universal chronicle (see above).

²¹ In the past decade since I last wrote on A tous nobles I owe my discovery of the manuscripts of the 'new' versions D, E and G to Karen Fresco, E. A. R. ("Peggy") Brown and Jaclyn Rajsic, plus news of various copies or fragments of versions H and U from Lisa Fagin Davis. Gillette Labory pointed me to the important prototype manuscript of version H now in Saint Petersburg, and a conversation with Natalia Elaguina at the library in Saint Petersburg led to the discovery of the version L codex there. Maree Shirota alerted me to the existence of the Caen copy of version T. My grateful thanks to them all.

²² Paris, BnF, MS fr. 24976, in Zale 1994, 120-122.

²³ Paris, BnF, MS fr. 9688, highlighted in a personal letter of 16 June 2003; see also Zale 1994, 90–94.

²⁴ Paris, Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, MS Œ XV 760, described in the Gesamtkatalog 1934, col. 486, no. 6680, as possibly printed in Paris by Denis Meslier, circa 1490. The Gesamtkatalog lists seven other similar "Chroniques abrégées des rois de France" published by other printers: cols. 485–488, nos. 6678-6679 and 6681-6685.

²⁵ Paris BnF, MS fr. 5704, a luxury manuscript with a full-page painting of the arms of the dauphin Charles (who had just become King Charles VIII, according to the narrative of the text) inserted at the beginning.

chronicles containing A tous nobles (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 23017, version U), the universal chronicle reported by S. Zale (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 9688) and the 'counterpart' of the incunable (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 5704), from the prologue onwards.²⁶ However, after common beginnings for the coverage of the mythical Trojan ancestors, the text in the latter two manuscripts becomes much expanded for the historical kings of France, losing all direct links with the much shorter text that makes up the common core of the versions of A tous nobles.²⁷ They all appear to have been part of a complex textual tradition of abridged chronicles characterised by a large degree of borrowings between texts, whose influence extended to other works containing historical information.²⁸

This raises the question of the sources for the text of *A tous nobles*. Its prologue claims that the chronicle is based on the histories by Orosius and Martin of Troppau, and on the Grandes Chroniques de France, considered among the main authoritative historical texts of the time. Much of its material appears to derive from the *Grandes* Chroniques. However, one particular example of a story not found in the Grandes Chroniques indicates that the original author must have had access to at least one further source: probably a version of the *Chronique Abrégée* by Guillaume de Nangis (one of the authors of the Grandes Chroniques), which was written as a "guidebook for visitors to the royal tombs at Saint-Denis", or the second redaction of the same author's universal chronicle, the Chronicon, which existed in "relatively numerous copies".29

Lisa Fagin Davis, in her comprehensive study of La Chronique Anonyme Universelle (the universal chronicle with version H of A tous nobles), identified the various sources making up the work, which include Orosius and Martin of Troppau (for the

²⁶ The first two of these manuscripts are available in the BnF Gallica online collection of digitised documents. Search for 'français' followed by the call number, directly or via the BnF online catalogue of manuscripts. Note that most of the Gallica reproductions are currently digitised versions of black and white microfilms.

²⁷ It could also be interesting to compare the text of version 4 (a much longer textual version, without a diagram) with that of these various universal chronicles; even a cursory glance reveals that they have numerous elements in common. See Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4990 (available on Gallica).

²⁸ Kathleen Daly has alerted me to some resemblances between the genealogy of the kings of England alongside A tous nobles and the treatise Pour vraye congnoissance avoir (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 15490; available on Gallica). Many more such parallels can probably be found.

²⁹ Spiegel 1978, 103 and 107. The story itself concerns the revenge that Louis IV took on Herbert II de Vermandois who had imprisoned his father. According to Lauer 1900, 295–299, this was an apocryphal story, which eventually appeared in the Chronicon of Guillaume de Nangis (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 4918, fol. 307; available on Gallica). Guillaume's source was likely to have been the Anonymous chronicler of Laon; see Lauer 1910, 86–90. Sanford Zale, with whom I discussed this observation, followed up this lead and examined the first and second versions of Guillaume's Chronique abrégée, and found the story in the second version (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 10134, fol. 22^v-23^v; available on Gallica). I thank him for sharing this discovery with me. However, the actual text of A tous nobles is not directly derived from that of Guillaume's chronicle.

biblical and ancient world and for the popes and emperors respectively).30 We both conclude that the Grandes Chroniques de France and Guillaume de Nangis are the most likely sources for A tous nobles. However, no Urtext from which all versions of A tous nobles derive has been identified. Nor can one be sure which came first, A tous nobles or the universal chronicle, although Lisa Fagin Davis states that "the possibility remains that ATN [... was] extracted from [its] French sources by the compiler of" the prototype manuscript of version H (Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MSS Fr. F.v.I.9 & Fr. F.v.IV.14), as opposed to being borrowed by him as a fully formed existing work. Davis further posits that La Chronique Anonyme Universelle might have been compiled at the library of the dukes of Bourbon "under the auspices of Duke Jean I and Duchess Marie" around 1410 "by a courtly scholar".31

When considering the origins of *A tous nobles* and *La Chronique Anonyme Univer*selle, one needs to consider not only the textual sources, but also the stimulus for the creation of the accompanying genealogical diagrams and for the use of the roll form. The most likely inspiration is the Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi by Peter of Poitiers, written about 1200: a summary of Peter Comestor's Historia scholastica in diagrammatic form, using mainly simple circles and lines. It was created to help students memorise the genealogy of Christ and other elements of biblical and ancient history thanks to visual aids (as explained in the prologue).³² Some of the early copies of the Compendium were in roll form, although there is no evidence as to the form of Peter's original exemplar.³³ His work became popular beyond France and was soon expanded, with interpolations inserted and continuations added to include Roman and medieval emperors, as well as popes, and in some cases the kings of England and France, thus turning the revised *Compendium* into a universal history.³⁴

Meanwhile in England, the last quarter of the thirteenth century saw the emergence of rolls with genealogical diagrams of the kings of England, accompanied by a brief narrative text. Olivier de Laborderie emits the plausible hypothesis that the chronicler Matthew Paris may have been involved in their creation in the 1250s, with a roll of the Compendium or a Compendium-based universal chronicle possibly inspiring the choice of form and layout.35

³⁰ Davis 2014, 25–46, with summary table on 42.

³¹ Davis 2014, 43 and 94–95. The Bourbon library inventory of 1524 "includes numerous texts that can be potentially identified with the source material of the Chronique", and Duchess Marie, daughter of the bibliophile Jean de Berry, "is the likeliest intended audience". She was "part of an elite group of literate, learned royal women" who could have commissioned this work with its "utilitarian" manuscript as an "educational text".

³² On Peter of Poitiers, see Klapisch-Zuber 2000, 121–132; Norbye 2010b; Worm 2010, 2013.

³³ Panayotova 2001, 332, comments that numerous surviving codices had been copied from rolls; one can tell this from the way names or roundels were split from one page to the other, or from the methods used to help the reader track the various lines from one page to the next.

³⁴ See Monroe 1990, vol. 1, 23–24 and Panayotova 2001.

³⁵ See de Laborderie 2008, 51; 2010; and 2013, 131 and 142–143.

In France, apart from rough sketches in the margins of one manuscript of Guillaume de Nangis' Latin version of his Chronique abrégée des rois de France, there was no attempt to combine a genealogical diagram with a short chronicle of the kings of France until the early fourteenth century when Bernard Gui, down in the south, wrote his *Arbor genealogie* in codex form, with one tree per page. 36 No writer used the roll form for such a purpose until around 1410 when La Chronique Anonyme Universelle and early versions of *A tous nobles* emerged. What prompted this development? In the absence of any conclusive evidence, one can posit that the compiler of the *Urtext* and the *Urbaum* of *A tous nobles* or of the *Chronique* may have been inspired by a roll containing the Compendium or a genealogy of the kings of England.

Constituent elements of *A tous nobles* manuscripts

The contents of the A tous nobles manuscripts, in terms of both text and graphical elements (genealogical diagrams, other figures), are made up of various constituent elements whose combination can vary from version to version, or even between manuscripts of the same version, and which could repay further study beyond that of A tous nobles itself.

Every manuscript contains at the very least the abridged chronicle of the kings of France which I call the 'text' of *A tous nobles*. Most versions are accompanied by a genealogical figure of the kings of France and their close relatives, to which I usually refer as the 'tree' or the 'diagram'. The diagram may contain other information, of a non-genealogical nature: the most common category concerns various religious establishments, churches or abbeys, whose foundation is attributed to a king or queen. Usually this is represented by an archetypal church, accompanied by its name and that of its founder. Under this category one also finds the foundation of various eleventh- and twelfth-century religious orders. Most diagrams contain this information. Another element is only found in some diagrams: episodes relating to the very early days of the church, mainly to do with fourth- and fifth-century saints but with the occasional non-religious events such as the death of Seneca, usually put into small roundels in the margins or alongside the diagram. A small number have roundels with supplementary information, mostly dates or activities concerning the early popes (similar to the entries on popes found in the universal chronicles), but again with some authors from Antiquity included, such as Ovid, Lucan or Origen (fig. 3).

A further element of interest, in particular for art historians, is the series of miniatures, some of them illuminated, found in medallions within the diagram of the main

³⁶ Guillaume de Nangis: Paris, BnF, MS lat. 6184, fol. 1–15^v (available on Gallica). See Klapisch-Zuber 2000, 168–171, illustration plate 23. Bernard Gui: for example, Paris, BnF, MS lat. 5929, fol. 1^v–15 (available on Gallica). See Klapisch-Zuber 2000, 174-176, illustration plate 25.

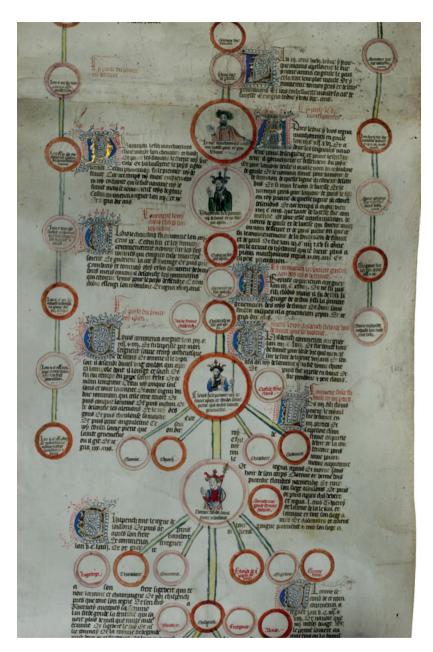


Fig. 3: Princeton, University Library, Princeton MS 56, near the very top of the roll, version P. Courtesy of Princeton University Library. - The only manuscript with portrait busts of kings in the roundels. Top medallion: Marcomir, mythical "duke" of the Franks (not wearing a crown). Second medallion: Pharamond, mythical first king of the Franks. Third medallion: Clovis I, first Christian king. The narrative alternates from left to right by paragraph. The small roundels in the left and right top margins contain brief captions about the acts of the early popes as well as the names of some ancient authors, here Origen (last roundel to the right).

universal chronicle (version H).³⁷ They consist mainly of representations of towns (their foundation or destruction) and rulers in majesty, but also little scenes illustrating events in the text, such as battles or migrating peoples sailing in ships (fig. 1). Some of the short universal chronicles (versions C and Y), in the column relating to Britain, have diagrams representing the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy, or the dioceses of Brittany. One manuscript is particularly important for the history of cartography: Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991 (version 5) contains detailed representations of cities, as well as a map of France and one of southern England.³⁸

It should not be forgotten that in two-thirds of the copies, *A tous nobles* exists as one work embedded within the universal chronicle, and that the remainder of the contents—the pre-Christian history and the parallel successions of popes, emperors and kings of England—are also worth further investigation.³⁹ Stand-alone genealogies of the kings of England also exist within the same manuscript as A tous nobles for some versions; they are similar to those found in the universal chronicles and also come in different versions. 40 The other texts found in some codices with *A tous nobles* can provide clues about the audience of these books, and the intellectual and literary context of A tous nobles.41

³⁷ The iconography of these chronicles was the subject of art historian Nathalie Hurel's thesis. See Hurel 1994, 303 first note. Raynaud 1992 gives a useful overview of a typical example of the universal chronicle and the issues it evokes, and she provides an interesting interpretation of its imagery. However, neither of them were aware of the full extent of the corpus of version H manuscripts, which affected some of their views (see Davis 2014, 81 note 6). Davis 2014, 68–93, has made a systematic study of the illustrative cycle of version H manuscripts.

³⁸ See Serchuk 2006. The entire manuscript is available on Gallica in colour.

³⁹ See the critical edition by Davis: La Chronique Anonyme Universelle, ed. Davis. Pickering 1998, has studied the section on the kings of Jerusalem found within the genealogy of the kings of England. I thank him for giving me a copy of his article.

⁴⁰ Jaclyn Rajsic is currently working on these parallel chronicles of the kings of Britain and England, which she calls Les Chroniques d'Engleterre Abrégiées (LCEA): the main source material is the Prose Brut, but this chronicle is a distinct work in the same way as A tous nobles is, and it too has different versions parallel to those of A tous nobles (communication at the London Medieval Manuscripts seminar on 24.11.2015). See also Rajsic 2016.

⁴¹ For the version 3 codices, see Norbye 2007b.

Typology of manuscripts: form and textual content

The typology of the manuscripts is best summed up in the table below, with details in the Appendix.42

To date, 26 different versions of A tous nobles, which differ in text and in corresponding diagram, have been identified. 43 The sigla for the versions can be in the form of a number (1–7, corresponding to the seven versions identified by Sanford Zale) or a letter. Some can be grouped together into 'families' that share numerous common traits. Rather than creating a second set of sigla for the families, I named them by combining the sigla of their constituent versions, e. g. family '23RE' consists of versions 2, 3. R and E.44

Tab. 1: Manuscripts of A tous nobles: summary of relationship between textual versions and manuscript types ('v' = 'version')

Form	A tous nobles only	Short univ. chronicle	Long universal chronicle
Codex	v 1 and 7: single copies, text alone in MS v 5: 2 copies, 1 text alone in MS, 1 with other texts v 3 and/or v 4: 7 copies, with other texts v 6: 2 copies, probably with other texts v B: 1 copy, with other texts v E: 1 copy, with one other text v D: 1 copy, with one other text	v 2: 1 copy v L: 1 copy	v F: 3 copies v H: 1 copy v U: 6 copies, of which one with other texts
Roll	v P: 1 copy, text alone in MS v A and V: single copies, text alone in MS v T and R: 2 copies, text alone in MS v O: 1 copy, with kings of England v W: 1 copy, with rulers of Hainault/Flanders	v L: 2 copies v C: 1 copy v Y: 2 copies v G: 1 copy v F: 1 copy	v H: 28 copies v H-type1: 1 copy v H-type2: 1 copy
Total 74 MSS	25 ATN-only: 16 codices + 9 rolls	9 short UC: 2 cod. + 7 rolls	40 long UC: 10 cod. + 30 rolls

26 versions: 11 codex only, 12 roll only, 3 both; Form: 28 codices, 45 rolls, 1 accordion book (v W)

⁴² To avoid overburdening readers with endless detailed references to individual manuscripts in this codicological survey, I refer them to the list of manuscripts in the Appendix (tab. 2), and I will only cite specific manuscript shelf marks when not doing so might cause confusion.

⁴³ For my initial lists of manuscripts, see Norbye 2007a and 2008a, lists now superseded by the Appendix to this article. I now count the two version H manuscripts on my list (Paris, Archives Nationales, MS AE II 419 and Paris, Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, MS 523) as being two versions separate from H, one contemporary with the prototype copy of version H, and the other a late and expanded version from the sixteenth century. See Davis 2014, 15 note 1, 39-41.

⁴⁴ See the families in the Appendix.

Of the 74 known manuscripts, 49 contain the universal chronicle (long or short), and 25 have *A tous nobles* on its own or with one other genealogical chronicle. 45 Thus in about two thirds of cases, A tous nobles is incorporated into a universal chronicle. In material terms, 28 manuscripts are in codex form, written on parchment or paper. Most copies of *A tous nobles* are written on parchment rolls: the current tally is 45 rolls (plus one accordion book made up of a roll folded to resemble a codex) representing just over 60 % of the corpus.46

These rolls between them contain fifteen versions of A tous nobles. Most of these versions only exist in one or two copies. The major exception is the version H long universal chronicle with its 28 rolls (plus two more manuscripts with closely related version H) which ensures the dominance of the roll form in the corpus of *A tous nobles* manuscripts. The remaining 28 copies of *A tous nobles* are in codex form. Codices hold nine stand-alone versions (several surviving in only one or two manuscripts), as well as two codex-only versions of universal chronicles and three versions found in both forms.

Most codices contain stand-alone versions of A tous nobles. Two copies, where A tous nobles is the only text, consist of unique versions, 1 and 7, each of which only exists in one manuscript.⁴⁷ The copy of version B includes several other texts: the abridged Chronique de Baudouin d'Avesnes, continued by the abridged Chronique Normande, and, following A tous nobles, a genealogy of the kings of England until Henry IV (1399-1413) similar to that found in the universal chronicles, and a list of religious events usually found incorporated in the margins of some versions of *A tous* nobles. A more luxurious manuscript has used version E of A tous nobles as a preliminary text to the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. 48 Both these codices belonged to the libraries of high-ranking aristocrats: the dukes of Burgundy and the duke of Nemours, Jacques d'Armagnac. The text of version D, a close sibling to version 6, follows one other work, Christine de Pizan's Faits d'armes et de chevalerie. 49 Two codices contain version 5: in the first, A tous nobles is the only text (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991); in the

⁴⁵ I have counted as one manuscript the three fragments that make up the copy of version H that Lisa Fagin Davis lists as MS X, and have done the same for the three fragments of her MS Y: these therefore make up six separate items on my list in the Appendix, but they are counted as two copies of A tous nobles which is what they would have been originally. See Davis 2014, 3. Where a copy of version H is physically made up of two separate parts, I have counted this as one roll in the statistics.

⁴⁶ New manuscripts keep cropping up, so the numbers will vary, but the general proportions have remained more or less the same so far.

⁴⁷ Both are available on Gallica.

⁴⁸ See Hindman/Bergeron-Foote 2014, 120-131 for the provenance of the manuscript (now in a private collection). As the cataloguer did not seem aware of the numerous other copies of *A tous nobles*, some statements about the origins of A tous nobles should be treated with caution, but the juxtaposition with the Grandes Chroniques is indeed of interest. This catalogue with three photos of the manuscript is available online.

⁴⁹ See Fresco 2016, who concludes that it is impossible to tell whether the two texts were bound together initially or at a later stage. I thank her for this article and for sending me the photographs that enabled me to identify this version.

second, it is located between two other genealogical chronicles, one of the Dreux and Coucy families (starting with the conquest of Jerusalem by Godfrey of Bouillon), the second of the house of Burgundy.⁵⁰ Version 6 exists in two copies.⁵¹ The first is a twoquire pamphlet containing A tous nobles plus a list of French kings, subsequently bound with other unrelated texts (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 5734). The second contains an acephalous text of A tous nobles, an incomplete extract from Sir John Mandeville's 'Travels' and a later eighteenth-century text; many leaves of this codex have obviously been lost.52

Six codices include version 3 (stand-alone), of which three also contain version 4 (the atypical, longest version of *A tous nobles*). A seventh copy contains version 4 without version 3.53 They are combined with various permutations of texts.54 Among these texts are the so-called *Débats et appointements* (a polemical piece of the early fifteenth century against the pretensions of the king of England), the genealogical chronicle of the kings of England and short historical documents relating to France, Normandy and Brittany.55

The final nine codices contain the universal chronicle. Paris, BnF, MS fr. 23019 begins with some diagrams of virtues and vices, before displaying a genealogical tree from the Creation to Christ, illustrated by various medallion miniatures, of the type found in the universal chronicles, but omitting the accompanying text.⁵⁶ It then includes a short universal chronicle, covering the Christian era only, with version 2 of the text of *A tous nobles* in the third column. Version F of the long universal chronicle exists in three codices.⁵⁷ The most common version of the universal chronicle (version H) is only found in rolls, except for one codex, Arras, Bibl. Mun., MS 146.

⁵⁰ Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991, available on Gallica.

⁵¹ Both are available on Gallica.

⁵² It is rare among copies of *A tous nobles* in having some marginal annotations by an early sixteenth-century reader, drawing attention to certain events. The other copy to have some marginal notes is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. Rolls 2, although they are fewer in number, concerning mainly battles and changes of French dynasties.

⁵³ See a detailed list of these manuscripts with their contents in Norbye 2007b, 126. Paris, BnF, MSS fr. 5059, 10139, 19561 and 4990 (available on Gallica).

⁵⁴ The variety of combinations of the contents of these seven manuscripts is the subject of an article by Lewis 1995. It should be noted however that he does not distinguish between version 3 and other 'short' versions of A tous nobles.

⁵⁵ The Débats et appointements are published in L'honneur de la couronne de France, ed. Pons, 45-79. This text is also discussed in Pons 1982. My special thanks go to Nicole Pons who generously gave me her notes on the manuscripts.

⁵⁶ Panayotova 2001, 329, points out that trees of virtues and vices were often found in manuscripts with Peter of Poitiers' Compendium. The version 2 manuscript (Paris, BnF, fr. 23019) is available on Gallica, and a few colour images in the BnF Banque d'images.

⁵⁷ There is also a roll of a short universal chronicle, Montpellier, Bibl. Universitaire, MS 586, whose text is basically that of version F, but whose corresponding tree diverges from that version. Paris, BnF, MS fr. 61 is available on Gallica as a colour reproduction of the original manuscript.

The third version of the long universal chronicle (version U) is only found in codex form.⁵⁸ It has a layout different to that of all the other universal chronicles with *A tous* nobles, irrespective of their length or form. Instead of several columns of text with parallel narratives, it has only one column, with sections of text setting out the various stories consecutively, sometimes interrupting one strand to pick up another, and returning to the first one later. In twin copies (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 23017 and Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, LJS 266) the chronicle, after a section on emperors, finishes at the end of the narrative about the French kings, and does not keep the promise made in the prologue to narrate the history of the popes and of the kings of England (elements which are found in all the other universal chronicles). This chronicle and its accompanying tree occupy the entire codex. The same applies to three other copies (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl., Cod. Gall. 13, and Paris, BnF, MSS fr. 694 and 695). However, these three have a couple of significant textual differences from the previous two manuscripts: the prologue does not mention the popes, and the chronicle has an extra continuation containing the life of Charles VI which is identical to the text for this king in the second recension (using the Davis typology) of version H.⁵⁹ Like the first two manuscripts, these copies do not have the kings of England, nor the popes. In the final copy of version U (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 1370), the section on the popes is included as the final part of the universal chronicle, but again the kings of England are missing. This manuscript has no diagrams, no decoration, and is written in cursive script. The rest of this codex (60 % of its length) contains an assortment of religious and moral texts, ranging from a Life of Pilate to short prayers in French.

Finally, version L, a short universal chronicle, exists in both forms: two rolls and one codex.60 The latter has two columns of parallel texts instead of the usual four, starting with the genealogies of the kings of France and England, and then moving to the narratives of the popes and the emperors in the second half of the book.

⁵⁸ Paris, BnF, MSS fr. 694, 695, 1370 and 23017 (available on Gallica). Search online for "UPenn LJS 266" for a full colour reproduction. There are some images of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Gall. 13 in Melville 1987a, 143-145.

⁵⁹ Transcription of this prologue in Melville 1987a, 153.

⁶⁰ See Figure 6 for the roll London, British Library, Harley Rolls O.1. Digital Scriptorium has a full colour reproduction of the other roll, New York, Columbia University Plimpton, MS 286.

Typology of manuscripts: genealogical diagrams and layout

It was not just the text of *A tous nobles* which was subject to numerous revisions; the accompanying genealogical diagrams were equally likely to be remodelled, not just in contents, but in appearance. ⁶¹ The trees are thus interesting in two ways. Firstly, they are as important as the text, and their contents too reflect the historical and political choices of the authors.⁶² Secondly, as a graphical device, they have a major impact on the layout and visual aspects of the manuscript. The degree of lavishness of a diagram's decoration is reflected in the rest of the physical makeup of the manuscript; indeed, it is inseparable from it in most cases. Just as for the textual variations, one is struck by the variety of visual forms encountered, which again reveals the involvement and inventiveness of the makers of the manuscripts.⁶³

All manuscripts of *A tous nobles*—apart from versions B, 4, 6, D and 7, and one copy each of versions 5 and U, which only contain the text of the chronicle-include diagrams of some sort. Most common is a circle and line diagram producing a 'tree', formed by a thick central vertical trunk or stem representing the main line of succession, usually to the eldest son, with younger offspring on side-branches. Graphically, the tree is articulated around roundels containing the names of the kings or their family members, and lines joining the generations, usually emanating from the father. The children are placed on the next horizontal axis; generally the lines from the children's roundels converge onto the father's central roundel, creating a radiating effect. In some more complex diagrams, several generations descending from cadet lines may be shown. The designer of this tree mastered the technique of depicting intricate genealogies via this structure; the mistakes that occur probably originate from inaccurate information rather than from design faults.⁶⁴

The basic structure described above depicts the relatively simple genealogies of the French kings, but similar diagrams were used for the biblical genealogies of the Old Testament and for other historical or mythical dynasties mentioned in the univer-

⁶¹ Two seminal studies on the use of graphical devices for genealogies are Melville 1987a (supplemented by Melville 1987b for some of the ideological underpinnings) and Klapisch-Zuber 2000. For a useful summary and bibliography, see Worm 2010.

⁶² I have discussed the contents of the trees and their accompanying text in several articles. Three focus on *A tous nobles*: Norbye 2007a, on the trees in particular see 305–306, 309–311, 313–317; 2007b, 127-128, 133, 138; 2008a, 180, 183, 185. In the context of the political messages found in French genealogical diagrams: 2008b, 87-89, 92-93, 96, 97, 99.

⁶³ For a study of the resemblances of the diagrams with real vegetal trees, see Norbye 2014, 78, 82–86. 64 For the genesis and use of this type of genealogical tree, see Klapisch-Zuber 2000, in particular on the graphical choices of Peter of Poitiers (127-132), and the subsequent chapters on universal chronicles (139-157), royal chronicles and genealogies (159-185), and genealogies of nations and families (187-206).

sal chronicles. The stand-alone A tous nobles text was written in two columns, with the tree placed in the central margin, but the universal chronicles were divided into four columns (sometimes three or five during the Old Testament period), with several parallel trees drawn in the outer margins and between the columns of text, leading at times to some very intricate designs.

There are several ways of depicting this basic underlying structure. By far the most common, found in all the universal chronicles irrespective of form, in all the rolls of the stand-alone A tous nobles and in one codex (Enluminures, catalogue 18, 120), is a tree formed of smallish roundels (typically 20–30 mm in diameter), usually outlined in black or red ink and linked by thin red lines. A series of larger roundels (henceforward referred to as 'medallions') of about 45–85 mm in diameter are often placed either on the central vertical axis (for certain important kings) or in parallel with the main tree, free-standing in the margins or embedded in the accompanying text. These medallions might, like the roundels, merely contain a caption with the king's name and other data, but more often, they are filled with the drawing of a building (usually religious) whose foundation is attributed to a ruler or his wife, or with a stylised representation of the monarch. Princeton, University Library, Princeton MS 56 is exceptional in that the medallions contain half-length portraits of rulers and no buildings (fig. 3).⁶⁵ The more lavish manuscripts have medallions representing scenes from the Bible or historical events, such as the destruction or foundation of cities, armies or people on the move, or important battles (figs. 1 and 2).

Two rolls of the stand-alone *A tous nobles* (version R) convey a slightly different visual impression, as instead of lines radiating from a king's roundel to his offspring, they have horizontal or vertical lines going at right angles to each other, much in the way of modern printed genealogical tables (fig. 4). Moreover, they have an elaborate system of colour coding to distinguish between descendants of different cadet branches. The central trunk and its large medallions are drawn in alternating bands of three colours. However, the basic structure remains the same.

The layout described vividly represents to the reader the continuity of the lineage and is most appropriately conveyed on a roll that was read from top to bottom, with the circle-and-line diagram following a vertical axis. 66 However, if such a layout was copied into a codex, as it was in Paris, BnF; MS fr. 23019 (version 2, part of a short universal chronicle), the sense of continuity was lost. ⁶⁷ Here the four columns of standard

⁶⁵ Images of the entire manuscript in ArtStor and in the Index of Medieval Art (formerly Index of Christian Art).

⁶⁶ On the appropriateness of the roll form for genealogical trees, see Melville 1987a, 104, 106-107 and Klapisch-Zuber 2000, 132–134. In his magisterial study of the genealogical rolls of English kings, Olivier de Laborderie 2013, 59–75, evokes several possible reasons for the adoption of the roll form for these genealogies, without being fully convinced by any of them. I thank him for very generously sharing his work in progress with me when we were both doing our doctoral research.

⁶⁷ Scrolling through the manuscript images on Gallica gives some idea of this loss.

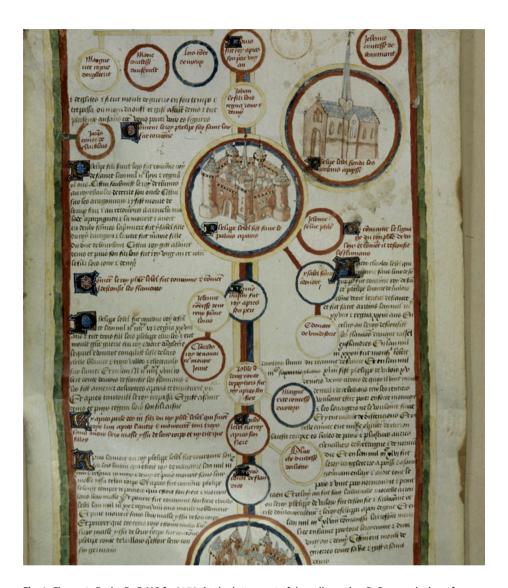


Fig. 4: Figure 4: Paris, BnF, MS fr. 6470, in the latter part of the roll, version R. By permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. – In the central axis, two roundels with the common A tous nobles error: "Louis" and "Jean" inserted as kings before Philip IV (the actual son and successor of Philip III). Medallions with pen and colour wash drawings of buildings founded by Philip IV: the Palace in Paris, and the church of the Jacobins in Poissy. Three roundels in the kings' central axis correctly show the three sons of Philip, successive kings who died without male heirs; incorrectly, a fourth roundel is placed there for their cousin Louis of Flanders. The top of the medallion for their cousin Philip VI of Valois is just visible. The blue roundel to the right below that of Philip IV is for Isabella his daughter, followed by the roundel of her son Edward III of Windsor, claimant to the throne against Philip of Valois.

circle-and-line diagrams were copied across the opening of the book, with two on the left hand page, and two on the right, to be read in parallel, but the eye follows the tree vertically down the page, and has to jump upwards again when turning the leaf. The same arrangement is found in the only copy in codex form of the most popular universal chronicle (version H), Arras, Bibl. Mun., MS 146.

Another universal chronicle (version U) was produced in codex form, but with its narrative material arranged consecutively rather than in parallel columns. In the five copies with a genealogical diagram, the tree was placed in the margins of the page, with some encroachment into the text area, using the usual circle-and-line structure. Continuity was provided by drawing a line to the bottom edge of the page, with the caption "this branch goes to [name of the first person on the next page]", and another line from the top of the next page, with the caption "this branch comes from [name of the last person on the previous page]". Changes of narrative sections (e.g. interrupting the story of the Romans to pick it up in a later section) also used this graphical device.⁶⁸ This avoided misunderstandings, but as in the previous manuscripts, the sense of a linear connection was lost.

The visual problem of a continuous genealogical diagram in a codex was solved to an extent by the designer of Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991 (version 5, a stand-alone A tous nobles). The basic structure of the diagram is preserved, but the axis is horizontal rather than vertical. The main line is about one third of the way down the page, and as one turns the page, the eye travels to the same level on the next page, maintaining a greater sense of linear continuity. Secondary branches are drawn as parallel lines, at the top or bottom of the page. The text, divided into two columns, is distributed above and below the horizontal line. The tree is depicted as a rose bush: the lines of transmission are painted as thick green boughs, with the new shoots of the next generation entwined around this main branch and then flowering into a rose with a bust of each king (and occasional queen). Like the more traditional diagrams, thin lines link kings to their younger offspring, who are represented in small roundels captioned with their names and titles. The cities, religious foundations and historical scenes, normally circumscribed within medallions, invade the page as illustrations. The visual effect is very different to that of the other trees, but the basic structure follows the same principles.

A horizontal axis was also used by the designer of the accordion book (version W) which is in the physical form of a roll, i.e. membranes stuck together to form a long strip, but folded in pleats to be read as a codex, turning the folded 'pages' in the normal way.⁶⁹ As in Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991, there are small blocks of text above and below a horizontal genealogical circle-and-line diagram. There are often several narratives

⁶⁸ Melville 1987a, 101-104, describes this in more depth. Illustrations 143-145 of the Munich manu-

⁶⁹ Digital Scriptorium has colour images of the entire manuscript.

at once (e.g. A tous nobles and genealogies of the counts of Hainault), leading to at least two parallel horizontal diagrams leading the reader onwards down the generations.

Another solution was adopted by the designer of the model for Paris, BnF, MS fr. 61 and Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, MS 520, the two codices containing version F of the universal chronicle, as well as by the writer of the only codex copy of version L (Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v.IV.11).⁷⁰ They had turned the leaves of each quire around by 90 degrees before writing the text and the diagram in parallel vertical columns in the usual way. Thus, when one opens the book, in order to read the text one has to rotate the book so that the central gutter is horizontal rather than vertical, laying the codex flat. The advantage is that the tree can thus extend down across both the pages of any given opening, and as one flips the leaves over, the line continues over the edge of the page.

Another, less common, type of genealogical diagram consists of free-standing roundels placed singly or in clusters in the margin or between paragraphs. This is only found in the six codices of version 3 (fig. 5).⁷¹ Near the text entry for each king is a roundel for him and for his queen(s) when known. Younger offspring are shown, starting from the early Capetian Philip I (d. 1108). For the Valois kings, roundels go down several generations in some cadet lines. The roundels of descendants are clustered around a given king, in vertical or horizontal groupings. Most roundels of kings and queens, especially from the Capetians onwards, are distinguished from those of their offspring with a stylised crown. The absence of lines between roundels makes a clear genealogical reading difficult, particularly of some of the later clusters, where several generations of cadet branches are grouped together.

The final type of diagram is found in one manuscript codex only, Paris, BnF, MS fr. 5697 (version 1).⁷² The genealogical figures are based on a central stylised tree trunk, representing the line of royal succession, containing one or more roundels of kings and occasionally of some queens. Usually these are surrounded by other roundels or captions of queens and/or offspring. Royal religious foundations are depicted in additional roundels capped by a special triangular shape. They appear either above or below the main tree trunk, or on their own on a given page, individually or in clusters (vertical or horizontal). The tree trunk, although crudely drawn to look like a real tree, is not shown as continuous: a sawn-off trunk appears for each king or group of kings depicted on any given page. There are lines between some of the roundels, but they do not follow any logic: they are found linking spouses as well as parents and offspring, and sometimes join up persons who are not related. The designer of this particular manuscript has not fully exploited the potential of the 'tree' image, nor

⁷⁰ A reminder that there are colour images of Paris, BnF, MS fr. 61 (available on Gallica).

⁷¹ My grateful thanks go to my friend and colleague Camille Serchuk for photographing this for me.

⁷² Available on Gallica, with some colour images in the BnF Banque d'images.

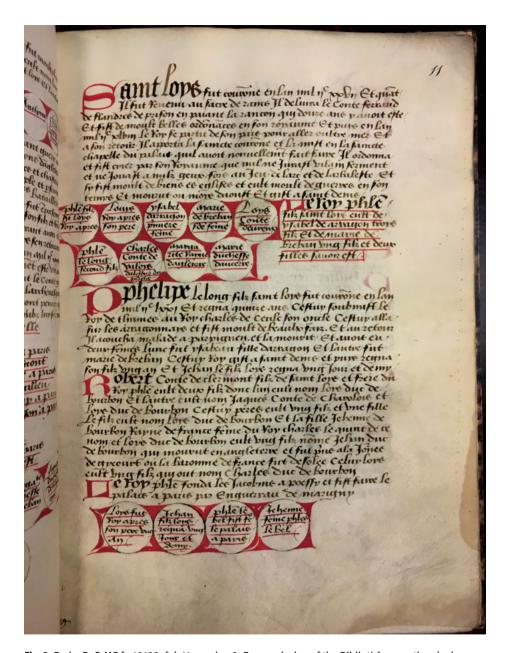


Fig. 5: Paris, BnF, MS fr. 10139, fol. 11, version 3. By permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. – One of the more polished copies, with the clusters of roundels framed in a red background. In the bottom cluster, the A tous nobles error, with Louis and Jean placed before Philip IV. Standard paragraphs on Louis IX and Philip III are followed by an extra paragraph typical of this version, giving a genealogy of a cadet line down several generations, in this case that of Robert of Clermont, a younger son of Louis IX, who was the ancestor of the Bourbon branch of the Capetians.

understood the purpose and the practicalities of a genealogical diagram in showing the relationships between members of the same family. It may not be a coincidence that this copy seems to be one of the earliest extant versions of A tous nobles. The visual and graphic elements are not worked out in the sophisticated manner found in the 'standard' diagram typical of most manuscripts.

One kind of variation found in many of the genealogical diagrams is that they contain extra roundels, especially in the early sections, with captions relating to various Christian martyrs and saints, and other events of note. These roundels are usually tucked in the outer margins, or they might be clustered around some of the central medallions, sometimes prefaced by a rubric. They tend to peter out around the time of the later Merovingians. For later periods, such roundels might reappear to indicate the foundation of the main religious orders; in the more decorated manuscripts, medallions depicting religious buildings illustrate such foundations. In most cases, these non-genealogical events are clearly differentiated visually from the main genealogical figure; the main exception is the less sophisticated Paris, BnF, MS fr. 5697 (version 1), where the two sets of information might appear in the same cluster of roundels.⁷³

Typology of manuscripts: other material aspects

Another aspect that illustrates the sheer variety of manuscripts of *A tous nobles* is their format (defined as the various properties of the form). The most obvious is size, which is often linked to layout. A universal chronicle with parallel narratives in four columns will require a larger width than a stand-alone version of A tous nobles written in one or two columns. Dimensions vary enormously. By far the largest manuscript is an early sixteenth-century roll (version H-type 2), Paris, Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, MS 523, whose narrative ends in 1520. It is 650 mm wide, which is consistent with many version H rolls, but is an extraordinary 32.7 metres long. The standard version H rolls range in length from about 11 metres to about 18 metres, with the Rouen roll being the longest at 21.88 metres and c. 30 membranes. Their width ranges from 500 to 680 mm which easily accommodates the four columns of text and tree. Their length makes them awkward to handle. The most practical way is to unroll just a section at a time on a flat surface, and to keep rolling and unrolling bit by bit, limiting the amount visible at any one time. Just to reach the other extremity of the roll is time-consuming: it takes eight minutes to get as fast as possible from the end all the way back to the beginning of the 17.7-metre long Paris, BnF, MS fr. 15373, for example. Most users do not have access to a space or table measuring ten metres or more in length to unroll the manuscript in full, and even if they did, reading over such a long distance would entail constantly moving along the roll. The sheer volume of parchment means that the manuscript is

⁷³ Paris, BnF, MS fr. 5697, fol. 6^v and 26^v show this clearly.

heavy to carry, too bulky to be grasped by one hand, and impossible for one person to open up and consult without some form of physical support for the roll.

As mentioned in the introduction, the text in version H suggests that it originally existed in two rolls. This was indeed the case: the prototype of version H still exists (now in Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MSS Fr. F.v.I.9 & Fr. F.v.IV.14), in two rolls that contain the text and tree of version H, in a more manageable format: each roll measures under 2.5 metres and is only 280 mm wide. The text blocks are denser and the trees more compact, as there are no large medallions with miniatures in this prototype. It has small roundels (14 to 26 mm in diameter) and medallions ranging from 30 to 36 mm, a far cry from the miniatures of 65 to 85 mm in the fully developed version H. As Lisa Fagin Davis points out, the prototype rolls were "easily portable" and probably "intended for [...] educational purposes". 74 Their relatively short length makes it reasonably straightforward to search for information within them, which is not the case for the standard version H rolls. The plainer, smaller prototype rolls were made for consultation, whereas it is likely that the large later rolls were made partly for ostentatious display, with less concern for ease of handling. 75 Whoever decided to convert the modest exemplar (the Saint-Petersburg rolls or a now-lost similar copy) into one huge roll with large legible writing, illuminated initials and decoration, and a tree studded with big illustrated medallions, had created a winning formula: nearly thirty of these large rolls are known to survive, with others possibly still awaiting discovery. 76

The other rolls with a universal chronicle contain the short history, starting at the Christian era (versions C, F, L and Y). The briefer narrative is reflected in the length of the rolls, which are usually about 5 metres long. 77 As the text is still in four columns, their width (510 or 560 mm) is commensurate with that of the version H rolls. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. Rolls 2 (version O) contains *A tous nobles* and the genealogy of the kings of England in two parallel columns of text and tree. Its length is similar to that of the short universal chronicles (5.3 metres) and it has generous space for each column with its total width of 540 mm, similar to the rolls with four columns. The remaining rolls contain just A tous nobles (versions P, A, T and R in order of size) and are written in two columns with the tree in the central margin. They range from 3.9 to 8.25 metres long and 300 to 390 mm wide. The longest are the two copies of version R which have a fuller genealogical tree with numerous cadet branches going down several generations in the later sections.

⁷⁴ Davis 2014, 141.

⁷⁵ We do not know the owners of most of the rolls, but Brussels, Bibl. Royale, MS IV 1003 belonged to Arthur de Montauban, nobleman and later archbishop of Bordeaux, and Cambridge, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ. 41 has the arms of the aristocratic Flemish family of Liederkerke (see online copy cited in note 1, final image). It is likely that many of these rolls went to similar owners.

⁷⁶ In terms of timing, the prototype dates from 1409-1415 (same as several other early versions of A tous nobles), whereas the developed version H appeared during the reign of Charles VII (1422–1461), with most copies datable to after his death.

⁷⁷ London, British Library, Harley Rolls O.1 is slightly longer at 6.7 metres.

The final 'roll' is the accordion book (New York, Columbia University, Smith Western MS 06; version W) which is read horizontally, not vertically like the other rolls, with a horizontal axis for its genealogical diagrams. Its length is similar to that of other rolls (5.7 metres), and it has a width (or, in this case, height) of 370 mm.

The codices are fairly homogeneous in size and fall into two main groups. Firstly, there are the two codices of version F (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 61 and Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, MS 520), a universal chronicle in four columns that was rotated 90 degrees.⁷⁸ The books are therefore quite tall before rotation, as their height corresponds to the width required to accommodate the four columns (450 and 400 mm). Their width when closed is 300 mm. When the book is open and rotated, this gives a double page opening with a vertical length of 600 mm equivalent to a manageable-sized section of an open roll. The other codex that gets rotated, St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v.IV.11 (version L), has unusual proportions when closed: it is wider (310 mm) than it is tall (250 mm). When open and rotated, the 250 mm side is wide enough to contain two columns of text plus trees, and the double page opening (620 mm vertically) is again similar to that of a manageable segment of a roll.

All the other codices are of fairly standard octavo sizes and proportions, ranging in length from 350 to 185 mm and in width from 210 to 125 mm, with most clustering around 280 mm long and 200 mm wide. The smallest manuscript of A tous nobles discovered so far is Paris, BnF, MS fr. 5734 (185 mm × 125 mm; version 6) which is also the most modest in every other material way: no diagrams, undecorated, written in the most cursive script, and made of paper.

The great majority of copies are made of parchment, with only seven codices being made of paper (version B, the four copies with version 4, and the two copies of version 6). It is probably no coincidence that these paper copies are collections of texts, probably used for more practical purposes (e.g. to consult their historical, polemical or devotional contents) than many of the other manuscripts of *A tous nobles*.

There is often a correlation between the script and the degree of quality of the manuscript. Thus, the luxury rolls of version H were copied mainly in a large neat French *bâtarde* hand. Some manuscripts are written in Gothic textura, but many are in *bâtarde*, or in some form of semi-cursive *bâtarde* or secretary hand. Brussels, Bibl. Royale, MS 10233-36 (version B), despite being made of paper, was carefully presented and rubricated, as befitted a book in the library of the dukes of Burgundy, and was written in *bâtarde*, whereas the paper copies of versions 3, 4 and 6 were copied in more informal cursives.

Finally, the decoration ranges from the painted miniatures of the medallions of the version H rolls (of variable degrees of artistic merit and execution), numerous pen and ink drawings with colour washes of ecclesiastical buildings, representations of

⁷⁸ There are fragments of a third codex Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. fr. 5386 which I only saw on microfilm.

kings, some illuminated initials and decorated borders, multicoloured genealogical trees, lavish use of red ink for the diagrams and rubrication, to no decoration or coloured ink whatsoever.79

The choice between roll and codex: who made the decisions for A tous nobles?

As seen from the codicological survey above, A tous nobles was presented in a large variety of ways, whether in its textual context (i. e. alone or with other texts), in its layout together with its genealogical tree, or in its form (roll, codex and even accordion). For every version of *A tous nobles*, and sometimes for individual manuscripts containing that version, someone was making decisions, not only about the contents of the text and the tree, but also about the form, format and layout of the artefact. I have discussed elsewhere the question of the remanieurs, those who not only remodelled the intellectual content but also its physical presentation. 80 To sum up my arguments, for each version, someone took the initiative to amend the text and tree, whether significantly (e.g. by adding or omitting chunks of text, even altering the bias of the chronicle) or very slightly (minor changes of words, paraphrases, and other such changes that did not alter the basic tenor of the text).

The versions with minor textual variants tend to fall into groups or 'families'. The interesting point is that within the same family, there can be huge variations in the physical characteristics of the manuscripts of the 'sibling' versions, in terms of form, format and make-up of the book. Compare for example the luxury rolls of H, the rotated codices of F, and the elegantly produced codices of U with their consecutive narrative blocks. Contrast them with the sixth copy of U and the copies of versions 6, 7 and D, plain codices devoid of decoration, written in a cursive hand, often on paper, and lacking any genealogical trees. The same can sometimes apply to the manuscripts of the same version, for example the two codices of version 5. One is idiosyncratically filled with a horizontal tree in the form of a rose bush. The other, without a tree, presents a standard late medieval appearance: *bâtarde* script with headings in textura, with alternating red and blue initials of decreasing sizes. This evidence suggests two types of remanieurs: those who made the significant changes of content that are common to all versions of the same family, and those who made the minor

⁷⁹ Readers wanting to explore images online can refer not only to the BnF Gallica site, but to the French website Enluminures that links to the IRHT database Initiale (also accessible directly), with pictures from French municipal libraries for the Caen, Orléans, Rouen, Tours and Verdun manuscripts. Decorated Sainte-Geneviève manuscripts ought to be available through Liber Floridus, the database of images from French university libraries.

⁸⁰ Norbye 2008a.

content changes that distinguish the text and tree of sibling versions but who used their creativity to produce physically distinct and sometimes unique manuscripts, in roll or codex form.81

Who was responsible for these changes? In each case, someone had taken an existing copy of A tous nobles and deliberately amended its contents, or produced a different physical object from the exemplar, or done both. For the contents, I have argued that *A tous nobles* may have been the product of intellectual circles where people were interested in history and its impact on contemporary politics. 82 The remanieurs may have been members of government circles or of the nobility. Some of them might have been clerics associated with a secular patron. The *remanieurs* of the contents were not necessarily scholars. There are some historical errors in the text and tree which remain unchallenged in all the versions.⁸³ Whoever the *remanieurs* were, they used their initiative to change the contents of the exemplar (or exemplars, judging from the amount of cross-fertilisation between versions and between families) at their disposal.

Questions on the practical aspects of the process come to mind, most of them unanswerable due to lack of evidence. In the case of some of the more modest, cursively written copies, it is possible that the remanieur and the scribe were the same person, the 'writer' in both senses of the word. In the case of the more professionally written copies, who decided on the changes? Particularly for the material changes in presentation, whether it be the form of the manuscript, the use or not of diagrams, the page layout etc., was it the patron or the scribe who made the choices? Was there a collaborative effort between the person who emended the text and the scribe who wrote out the manuscript? In this context, another question arises: who was the end user? Was it the person who commissioned the manuscript, the *remanieur* who revised the contents, or the scribe who physically produced the copy? In the case of some of the changes to the physicality of the manuscript, one can posit that the end user was involved in the production process, helping to create a book in the form and format that he found the most convenient or best suited to his purposes.

In all these questions above, I am focussing on the creation of the first (and often only) copy of a version or of an individual manuscript variant within a version, i. e. the copy where something new and different was produced, intellectually or physically. One should not forget that A tous nobles was also a work that in some versions and physical manifestations was manufactured in very similar multiple copies.

⁸¹ A reminder that versions L, F and H, exist in both forms, and that all three main families use both

⁸² Norbye 2008a, 185–189. In the context of the Hundred Years War and its focus on competing claims to the throne via the bloodline, this seems likely.

⁸³ However, Davis 2014, 65, notes that some mistakes were corrected in her subgroup R2a of the version H universal chronicle.

A clear example is version H and its twenty-seven known large rolls. There are plenty of subtle differences in content and in appearance, as masterfully analysed by Lisa Fagin Davis, but they all follow a certain pattern, and on stylistic grounds, it is safe to say that some groups of rolls must have been written or decorated in the same workshop or based on a common model.84 Two copies of version U (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 23017 and Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, LJS 266) are quasi twins. All five copies with genealogical diagrams of that version have such similar layouts that the same information is found on the same page for each one, with at most only a few lines of text being out of sync with the other manuscripts. In the case of both these versions, the manuscripts were of high quality, decorated with miniatures or illuminated initials and borders, suggesting that professional scribes and illuminators were carefully reproducing whichever exemplar they were using. At the other end of the scale, the scribes of version 3, where some of the six codices are copied in a cursive and untidy way which suggests that writers made copies for their own personal use as part of a compilation of useful historical and polemical texts, nevertheless all respected the same basic structure and layout, as well as the common text and tree.

These examples show that it was possible to produce homogeneous groups of copies of A tous nobles. Yet nearly half of the known manuscripts do not belong to these three groups. Most of them are unique in appearance or content, or only have one or two close sibling manuscripts. Presumably, these artefacts fulfilled a need on the part of their producers or users to create a manuscript which bore their personal imprint, and which was best suited to the uses to which they wished to put it.

Consequences of the choices: challenges posed to the users

We may speculate about the identity and motivations of those who made the choices that affected the materiality of the manuscripts of A tous nobles, without reaching any definite answers due to lack of evidence. However, we are on firmer ground when it comes to gauging the user's relationship with the manuscripts themselves, simply because we ourselves are users of the same manuscripts. We handle the same artefact and encounter similar difficulties as medieval users, even if we nowadays might react to them differently. In what follows, I reflect on some of the challenges posed by the copies of *A tous nobles*, such as I encountered them, or such as they might have been to medieval users, as evidenced by traces (often errors) left by the scribes. In other words, how user-friendly are they?

At the most basic level, is the choice of the roll form for genealogical diagrams necessarily the best one? As mentioned earlier, there is no incontrovertible evidence

⁸⁴ See Davis 2014, 78-80, for her conclusions on the iconography of the copies of version H.

that Peter of Poitiers' original Compendium was in roll form. All we know is that about one third of the surviving manuscripts are on rolls.⁸⁵ The roll form appears to be the optimal way of visually conveying the continuity of a line over time, be it a series of office holders such as Old Testament judges or popes, or rulers keen to stress their legitimacy through bloodline.86 However, as Olivier de Laborderie points out, the concept of dynastic bloodline was stronger in France than in England, yet it was in England that genealogical chronicles on rolls had flourished since the mid-thirteenth century.⁸⁷ Rolls of *A tous nobles* and the version H universal chronicle only emerged in France in the early fifteenth century. Before then, no one seems to have felt the need to imitate the English in depicting royal genealogies on rolls.88 The advantages were perhaps not as obvious as they may seem to us.

On the other hand, two designers of codices (versions F and L) chose to rotate their books by 90 degrees to create a more roll-like effect, suggesting that some users at least wanted the sense of continuity created by a roll. The creator of the copy of version 5 (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991) with its horizontal 'rose bush' tree also seems to have wanted to avoid the disadvantages of using vertical columns in a codex. Readers of all these volumes get more of a sense of genealogical continuity, although rotating the book is initially an awkward gesture which makes one more aware of the physicality of the book.

The other codices with genealogical circle and line diagrams show that for this type of figure, the roll has a clear advantage. Apart from the visual discontinuity of page breaks in the vertical axis, there is the challenge of ensuring that the line is carried over to the next page in the right place, and that there is no confusion caused by several parallel lines. In the case of version 2 of *A tous nobles*, towards the end in particular, where the French and English trees occupy the entire double page opening, with several cadet lines as well as the main royal line (fol. 33^v-34), it is quite demanding to remember what the origin of each line was.89

Codex version U avoided the problem of parallel lines by using single blocks of narrative where sections were interrupted at suitable points and picked up again several pages later. This created its own challenge of suspending the circle and line diagram and resuming it in a way that enabled the reader to take up the thread again. The solution was ingenious and effective: to put little labels on each broken end of the line announcing the interruption and then the resumption of the tale. However, the narrative is disjointed, and the reader has to find the correct continuation of particular

⁸⁵ Laborderie 2013, 68, using the data in Monroe 1990.

⁸⁶ See Melville 2015 and Norbye 2015, about genealogical trees as legitimising devices for rulers.

⁸⁷ Laborderie 2013, 72.

⁸⁸ The earliest rolls of *A tous nobles* are the three sister versions A, C and Y (Yale copy), and the Saint Petersburg prototype of version H.

⁸⁹ Panayotova 2001, 332, points out how this problem occurred in codices of Peter of Poitiers' Compendium.

storylines. Moreover, the scribe of the first exemplar of this version may have got himself confused, as he never put in the final two sections of the chronicle that had been announced in the prologue: the popes and the kings of England. 90

Most universal chronicles, however, kept the original concept of parallel histories physically positioned alongside each other that Peter of Poitiers had adopted in his Compendium. This posed other challenge, irrespective of the form of the manuscript: how to present the parallel narratives in an intelligible way for the user. Peter of Poitiers had set a fine example with a coherent set of diagrams, but as more and more interpolations were introduced, and his Compendium was integrated into a wider universal history, keeping track of the various strands of narrative became more difficult.

Overall, in La Chronique Anonyme Universelle (version H), the designer has managed this quite well, keeping a specific lineage or succession within the same line in the genealogical diagram. The text also tends to be arranged so that one narrative usually remains in the same column throughout, but there are instances where the reader has to hunt for the next part of a specific narrative in a neighbouring column. The tree is usually easier to follow, as it shows a succession of rulers along the same vertical line, even in cases where the text concerning these rulers jumps from one column to the next (as it does, for example, for the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt). For the user, navigating around the chronicle is feasible but not easy, even with the unbroken continuity of the roll.

Another difficulty is the lack of chronological concurrence between the events in the different columns. There is no horizontal alignment between the narratives or the trees. 91 The designer of the genealogy did not try to create a grid defined by set chronological boundaries. However, there were attempts in two versions of the short universal chronicle to match up the rulers in the Christian era for whom accurate dates were available from the beginning, namely the popes and the emperors. In versions L (roll) and 2 (codex), the trees have lines linking the roundels of the popes and of the emperors who were their contemporaries, with more than one line emanating from a roundel if any given emperor ruled at the same time as several popes, or vice versa (fig. 6). In some versions such as H, a line was sketched between the roundel of Charlemagne (d. 814) as king of France in column 3 and that of Charlemagne as emperor in column 2, often quite a distance apart given the lack of chronological alignment (fig. 6).92

⁹⁰ Either that, or he was prevented from finishing his task, and another scribe used his copy as an exemplar for the manuscripts that have come to us. It is interesting to note that the five sister codices all have this omission, whereas the scribe of Paris, BnF, MS fr. 1370, a less elegant collection of texts in a cursive hand, included the section on the popes: did he copy the book for his own use, using his initiative more than the other scribes?

⁹¹ Morrison/Hedeman, 2010, 245 also note this phenomenon.

⁹² One can note in passing how Charlemagne illustrates the dual nature of the lines, which may show succession by blood lineage (e.g. royal dynasties) or by office (e.g. popes). In the French line, he is part of a blood line from his father Pippin (first Carolingian king, on the main trunk of the tree), then up a side branch to his great grandfather Pippin of Herstal, Mayor of the Palace. Pippin of Herstal

Links between columns could have greater significance than just matching up contemporary rulers. I have discussed elsewhere in detail the attitudes within A tous nobles towards the thorny issue of female succession, in a period when the Hundred Years War was raging or had just finished, with the main bone of contention being Edward III of England's claim to the throne of France through his mother Isabella, daughter of Philip IV.93 In the main, most versions ignored Edward III's claim in both text and tree. The only exceptions are versions 3 and O. How did the universal chronicles, with their parallel columns of kings of France and England, represent visually the relationship between Philip IV, Isabella, her husband Edward II, and Edward III? Did they show any link between them that might help the reader see the connections?

The answer depends in good part on a couple of material considerations: the degree of chronological disparity between the columns with kings of France and England, leading to a longer or shorter distance between the position of Isabella in the French column and that of her husband, and whether the manuscript is a codex or a roll. In a codex, if the distance between husband and wife is too great, the scribe does not attempt to draw a line between them. This is the case in both version 2 (fol. 32 and 33) and version F (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 61, fol. 29^v and 30^v), where a page turn would disrupt any attempted link. In the version F codex, the designer partly overcame the problem of distance between Isabella and Edward II by not placing her among her father's children, but in a roundel with her husband, captioned as the daughter of Philip IV. Such captions are also the only link in the roll of version C: Isabella and Edward II, in their respective columns, are each accompanied by a roundel or a caption identifying their spouse. This is reinforced by the roundel for Edward III that describes him as son of the daughter of Philip IV. In both cases, it is the captions that inform the reader, not the lines of the tree.

The lack of synchronicity between columns can lead to a discrepancy between manuscripts of the same version. In the rolls of version Y, only one of them shows a line drawn between Isabella and Edward II in columns 3 and 4.94 In this roll, there is a long gap between the two, but it is not insuperable. However, the second version Y roll has no line: the distance is too great, as the tree for England is long over by the time the tree in column 3 reaches Isabella. 95 In the rolls of version L, Edward II appears opposite French persons two generations above Isabella. To resolve this, her roundel is placed above that of her father, enabling a line to be drawn between Philip IV and

however is shown as the successor to a line of Mayors, the men who held the real power in parallel with the Merovingian kings (whose blood line is shown in the central trunk). In the imperial line, Charlemagne is shown as the successor to a Byzantine emperor, i. e. he has taken over the office, not inherited by blood right. The reader of the genealogy can tell lines of succession from the diagram but cannot always be sure whether there is also a blood link or not.

⁹³ Norbye 2007a, 311-316, discussion on the question of female succession to the throne of France.

⁹⁴ Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Fr. 54.

⁹⁵ New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library, MS Marston 180.

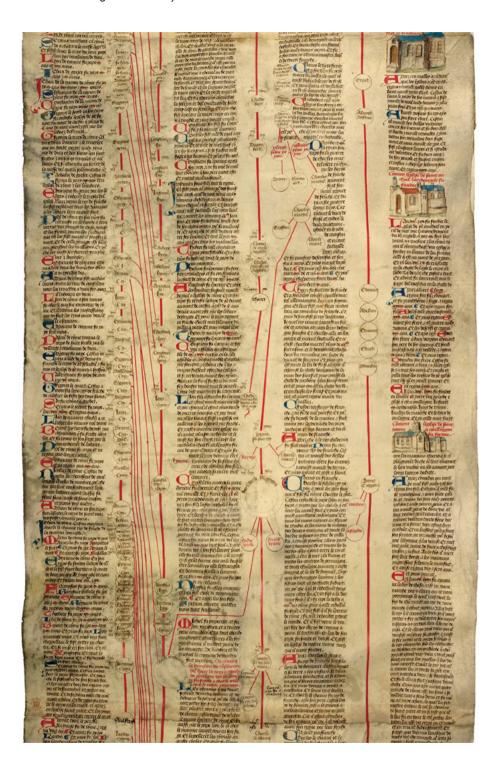


Fig. 6 (opposite page): London, British Library, Harley Roll 0.1. By permission of the British Library Board. – Short universal chronicle in four columns. Note the lines between columns 1 and 2 linking each pope to the emperor(s) contemporary with his term of office. In the central tree, the line of the Merovingian kings of France is terminated; Pippin I, from a line going up to his grandfather Pippin of Herstal and beyond him to a succession of early Mayors of the Palace, takes place in the centre as the first Carolingian monarch, followed by his son Charlemagne in the large medallion. From there, one line goes to the line of emperors in column 2, where Charlemagne appears a second time in a medium-sized medallion following from the Byzantine Roman emperors. Column 4 contains the kings of England, but the illustrations do not relate to English churches but to French or imperial buildings.

Edward II through her. In this case, the roll form is more advantageous compared to a codex, making it easier to draw lines over long distances. In the version H rolls, a line is drawn between Isabella in her position as daughter of Philip IV and her son Edward III. Her husband also has a roundel with her name beside his. The link is clearly made, at about the same level. This connection also appears in one of the stand-alone versions of *A tous nobles*: in the manuscript of version 5 with the horizontal tree, there is a parallel line of kings of England added from the marriage between Edward I and Margaret, daughter of Philip III (d. 1285). ⁹⁶ A line connects together Isabella and her husband, and a caption for Edward III states that he wished to be king of France. Finally, the version which shows the link most clearly in text and tree is version O, a roll with parallel genealogies of France and England. Its remanieur was pro-English. Therefore, not only is Isabella shown linked to her father and her husband, but her son appears both in the English tree and in a large medallion in the French tree, together with his wife, with a caption stating clearly his claim to the throne. 97 The designer of this version was making quite sure that the reader would get his message.

The visual presentation of the link between Isabella and her son, a link that had important implications for the political narrative of the chronicle, shows how different the impression would have been on the user depending on which manuscript he was viewing. In both codex and roll, there were structural constraints, such as the relative positioning of the generations of French and English kings, that affected the way the links could be shown, above and beyond any deliberate choices made by the designer of the tree as to whether to highlight or not the relationship between the two royal houses. Modern readers should beware of overinterpreting the significance of certain elements in the trees: they may simply be due to physical considerations, as in the two differing copies of version Y.98

⁹⁶ Paris, BnF, MS fr. 4991, fol. 16–17°.

⁹⁷ See more details in Norbye 2007a, 316, and Norbye 2018, 188–190.

⁹⁸ This example shows how our interpretations can be affected by the randomness of survival (or discovery) of manuscripts: if only one of these rolls had survived, one could have read into the presence (or absence) of a line, a deliberate intent on the part of the version Y remanieur.

Reading parallel histories might be confusing for the user (who could be the scribe copying the next generation manuscript as well as any reader), but even stand-alone texts of *A tous nobles* could lead to misunderstandings. In the rolls of *A tous nobles* on its own, the text is placed in two columns, one on either side of the genealogical tree that occupies the centre. Each king's reign is written in a separate paragraph (except for some short-lived Merovingians who are grouped together), and the normal pattern is to have king number 1 in the left-hand column, then king number 2 in the right-hand one, king number 3 on the left under number 1, and so on. This layout of the narrative of A tous nobles on a roll was probably the cause of a mistake made by the scribe of the exemplar of version F, a universal chronicle where the A tous nobles text about the kings of France only occupies a single column. In this column, for a long stretch one king (or paragraph) out of two is missing, from the early Merovingians (Chilperic I, d. 584) to the Capetian Louis VIII (d. 1226), via the Carolingians (even Charlemagne himself is missing). The most logical explanation is that the scribe was only copying the text on one side of the tree of a roll containing a now lost stand-alone copy of A tous nobles, thus omitting all the kings from the other column. There is a similar set of omissions in version D.

Misunderstandings linked to layout also occur at the end of rolls, particularly for universal chronicles where the narratives of the popes and the emperors tend to finish first. They are followed by the kings of England, leaving space for the history of France to spill out of the confines of its third column and enter the empty adjacent columns. This may happen in an orderly fashion, as it often does in version H rolls. For example, in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 176, as soon as the kings of England narrative stops in the fourth column, the text for France spreads across to occupy the third and fourth columns, thus doubling the length of each line of writing, whilst the final part of the French tree extends its branches into the space vacated in columns 1 and 2 after the end of the papal and imperial histories. Once the tree is complete, the text for France moves across the entire width of the roll, occupying what used to be all four columns. In this instance, navigation is straightforward, although the user finds the text much more uncomfortable to read, as the reader's eyes are obliged to travel across lines of writing about half a metre long.99

In other cases, rather than gradually widening the text once the other narratives came to an end, scribes chose to use the space left in the other columns, by inserting blocks of the text of *A tous nobles* into these columns, paragraph by paragraph. This could lead to some confusing situations where the inexperienced reader might not

⁹⁹ The Harvard roll available online (see note 1), Cambridge, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ. 41, shows a less extreme example of this: at the end, when the text for the emperors is complete in column 2, the text for the kings of France spreads across columns 2 and 3, ignoring the red line of the French tree that separates the columns, so that many individual words straddle the line.

know in which order to read the text blocks. It is made all the more challenging because at the end of many versions, the entries for the later kings are much longer and tend to occupy more than one paragraph, so the reader cannot use the first sentence with the name of the new king as a guide. Undoubtedly, scribes unfamiliar with the text were also confused, and perpetuated or worsened any muddled situation they encountered in their exemplars. In the roll of version G, London, College of Arms, MS 9/48, the scribe has put the text relating to the final king, Charles V, on both sides of the tree. On the right, he has put the lengthy paragraph relating to Charles as regent for his father, which wraps around the tree and finishes across the entire right-hand half of the roll at the very bottom, giving the impression that it is the final text. However, it is not: some way above, on the left-hand side of the tree, there is the final paragraph with the story of Charles' reign as king. Something similar happens in the roll of version C, London, British Library, Cotton Roll XIII.33. The latter part of the story of Charles' regency, which ought to be the penultimate paragraph, is written across the bottom of the roll below the tree, whereas the paragraph relating to his reign is placed above it on the right, opposite the paragraph containing the first part of the regency. A reader unfamiliar with the text would read the story of the king's reign and then be taken back to his regency. A modern cataloguer would indicate an explicit for the manuscript which is not the appropriate explicit for the text. The risk of such confusions occurring is probably magnified by the roll form, where the text can be taken down and across in an undisciplined fashion, without the constraint of the page. Thus, the material characteristics of the medium and the process of copying between different forms and layouts can explain some of the mistakes and inconsistencies.

Finally, another challenge for the user of the genealogical diagrams can be the way the text wraps around the lines of the genealogical trees. Most diagrams were probably sketched out before the copying of the text began, since in most manuscripts, the text carefully avoids the branches. In narrow columns, when some branches intrude too much into the text block area, this leads to text being broken up into very small units, sometimes even just a few letters, filling every bit of space around the tree. This makes for laborious reading for the user who does not see complete words and whose eye is distracted by the circles and diagonal lines of the diagram.

Conclusion

A tous nobles, thanks to its relatively high number of copies presented in such a variety of forms, formats and layouts, provides an important case study of how a reader can engage with different types of manuscript all containing the same base text. The fact that about half of the manuscripts are rolls makes the user all the more aware of the impact that the materiality of the book can have.

Some advantages and disadvantages of the roll form become clear. For a global view of a dynastic or national narrative, an understanding of the ramifications of a family tree, or the presentation of parallel narratives, a roll provides a powerful tool where visual impressions can reinforce and promote intellectual understanding, so long as the designer or the scribe produce a clear layout and avoid confusions and errors. The rewards are higher, but so are the risks. However, when it comes to a working instrument for readers wanting easy reference to specific information, the codex often has the advantage over the roll, especially once the roll gets past a certain size. The user of a codex can flick through its pages rapidly, note down the page or folio number, or put in a bookmark. 100 Once consulted, a codex can be closed immediately, whereas it can take several minutes to roll up a roll.

Physically, it is usually easier to consult a codex than a roll, unless the latter is small, in which case the roll presents the advantage of being scanned through at a glance. We cannot be sure how medieval readers used their rolls. Theories that grand rolls such as La Chronique Anonyme Universelle or the English genealogies of the kings of England might have hung on walls of tall rooms have been discredited. From a practical point of view, it makes no sense, since the rolls would have been impossible to read.¹⁰¹ It is more likely that they were laid flat on a table, or possibly draped on a gabled lectern or writing desk, such as the one depicted in a portrait of the author and scribe Jean Miélot widely disseminated nowadays. 102 One of the large rolls of version H has a wrought iron rod at the end with a crank handle, which suggests that at some stage, this handle was used to turn the roll. 103 Perhaps the roll was hooked by its rod onto some sort of vertical frame; currently the only way to use the handle is to lay the roll right at the edge of a table, so that the handle can be turned in the empty space beyond the table edge. The big version H rolls are so unwieldy that they are unlikely to have been used for study or consultation, unlike their smaller prototype. 104 From their size and their decoration, they were more likely to be used as display objects, although that would not preclude a reader from being edified by its contents.

One other disadvantage of a roll is that one cannot easily add texts to it. It can be lengthened with additional membranes at the end-this can be handy for prolonging genealogical trees—but it is not very practical otherwise: one cannot easily insert extra elements in the middle of a roll, nor form a collection of related texts bound together. It is no coincidence that the diffusion of Peter of Poitiers' Compendium was

¹⁰⁰ Medieval readers probably could find a way of affixing some sort of bookmark to their roll, an option that is not open to modern scholars.

¹⁰¹ Laborderie 2013, 67-68.

¹⁰² Paris, BnF, MS fr. 9198, fol. 19, miniature by Jean Le Tavernier. Available on Gallica and numerous websites.

¹⁰³ Paris, BnF, MS fr. 15373.

¹⁰⁴ Some have even been cut up in modern times: Paris, BnF, MSS nouv. acq. fr. 1493, 1494 and 1495 are now bound as large folio volumes.

increased by it being joined with the text that it was summarising, Peter Comestor's Historia scholastica, in a codex form, or with the Bible itself, also in codex form. 105 A nous nobles is often combined with other non-genealogical texts, but always in a codex, never in a roll. For both these works, the codex form enabled users to refer to the genealogical information whilst also consulting the other works in the manuscript, which would not be easy to do with a roll.

Despite these drawbacks, rolls are the most rewarding medium with which to view genealogical diagrams, and the physical act of scrolling through them does give a tangible sense of history unrolling before one's eyes. As for the mistakes and inconsistencies found within them, they are a touching reminder of the humanity and foibles of the scribes who wrote them. They even provide an insight into how unquestioning people can be: did none of the copyists of those twenty-seven large rolls of version H ever stop to ask themselves why they were reproducing a statement about l'aultre roulle as they copied their way down their single roll? We will never know what was going through their minds, but we can still appreciate the result of their hard labours and engage in our turn with these remarkable artefacts. 106

¹⁰⁵ Panayotova 2001, 327.

¹⁰⁶ A description of several projects where scholars are currently closely engaging with rolls can be found on https://digitalrollsandfragments.com/ (last accessed: 18.9.18). See also the Medieval Scrolls Digital Archive on http://medievalscrolls.com/about (last accessed 1.6.2019)

Appendix

Tab. 2: Manuscripts with A tous nobles (updated August 2018). Organised by versions or groups of related versions.

Legend: UC: universal chronicle, containing A tous nobles within it. Short UC: universal chronicle starting with Christ and Julius Caesar, rather than at Creation. ATN: A tous nobles as stand-alone chronicle. BnF: Bibliothèque nationale de France. All manuscripts have genealogical diagrams unless specified otherwise: circle-and-line type unless indicated. Former shelf marks (in brackets) or provenance are indicated when these can identify the manuscripts mentioned in older secondary literature.

Shelfmark	Version	Form	Comments
Text common with other versions, few	unique feature	es	-
London, British Library, Harley Roll 0.1	L (short UC)	roll	4 columns with parallel diagrams.
New York, Columbia University Library, Plimpton 286	L (short UC)	roll	4 columns with parallel diagrams.
St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v.IV.11	L (short UC)	codex	Rotate book 90 degrees; 2 parallel columns: kings of France and England. Popes and emperors in the second half of the book.
Paris, BnF, MS français 5697	1 (ATN)	codex	Segments of diagram on each page.
Close siblings: B and P (related to 1)			
Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 10233–36, fol. 281–289	B (ATN)	codex	No diagram. Followed by genealogical chronicle of the kings of England. Other historical texts before.
Princeton, University Library, Princeton MS 56	P (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin. Bust portraits of kings in diagram.
Family 23RE (+ long version 4)			
Paris, BnF, MS français 23019, fol. 13–34 ^v	2 (short UC)	codex	In 4 parallel columns, 2 per page.
Paris, BnF, MS français 5059, fol. 2–24 ^v	3 (ATN)	codex	All version 3 MSS: diagram consisting of circles only, no lines linking them.
Paris, BnF, MS français 10139, fol. 2–14°	3 (ATN)	codex	All version 3 MSS: co-located with other contemporary texts including a genealogy of the kings of England.
Paris, BnF, MS français 19561, fol. 2–21	3 (ATN)	codex	

Tab. 2 (continued)

Shelfmark	Version	Form	Comments
Family 23RE (+ long version 4) (contin	ued)		
Paris, BnF, MS français 4990, fol. 1–39°, 42–54	3 & 4 (ATN)	codex	Version 4: no diagram.
Paris, BnF, MS nouvelle acquisition française 7519, fol. 15–85°, 94–115	3 & 4 (ATN)	codex	
Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 1994, fol. 1–62, 70–77°	3 & 4 (ATN)	codex	Several texts incomplete, including both versions of ATN.
Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 1993, fol. 5–67°	4 (ATN)	codex	Co-located with other texts. Several incomplete, including ATN.
Paris, BnF, MS français 6470	R (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin.
Chicago, Newberry Library, 132	R (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin.
Privately owned (Enluminures catalogue 18 (2014), 120)	E (ATN)	codex	ATN precedes the <i>Grandes</i> Chroniques de France. 2 columns, diagram in central margin.
Family YCATWG			
New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library, Marston 180	Y (short UC)	roll	4 columns with parallel diagrams.
Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Fr. 54	Y (short UC)	roll	4 columns with parallel diagrams.
London, British Library, Cotton Roll XIII.33	C (short UC)	roll	4 columns with parallel diagrams.
London, British Library, Additional MS 26769	A (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin.
Caen Bibliothèque Municipale MS 0345 (514 in-fol. 155)	T (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin.
Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1039	T (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin.
New York, Columbia University, Smith Western 06	W (ATN)	roll- type	Accordion book, to be read like a codex. Horizontal diagrams, parallel lines of France, Hainault, Flanders.
London, College of Arms, 9/48	G (short UC)	roll	4 columns with parallel diagrams.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Shelfmark	Version	Form	Comments
Related: 5 and V			
Paris, BnF, MS français 4991	5 (ATN)	codex	Horizontal diagram.
Paris, BnF, MS Picardie 6, fol. 40–58	5 (ATN)	codex	No diagram. With lineage of Dreux & Coucy families, genealogy of the house of Burgundy, and misc. info.
Verdun, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 31	V (ATN)	roll	2 columns, diagram in central margin.
Family HFU67D			
Paris, Archives Nationales, AE II 419	H-type 1 (UC)	roll	Early variant of version H.
St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v.I.9 & Fr. F.v.IV.14	H (UC)	roll	Prototype, 2 rolls. All version H MSS have 2 columns later splitting into 4.
Paris, BnF, MS français 15373	H (UC)	roll	
Paris, BnF, MS français 15374	H (UC)	roll	
Paris, BnF, MS nouvelle acquisition française 1493	H (UC)	roll	Now cut into sections and bound.
Paris, BnF, MS nouvelle acquisition française 1494	H (UC)	roll	Now cut into sections and bound. Incomplete: ends at Louis IX.
Paris, BnF, MS nouvelle acquisition française 1495	H (UC)	roll	Now cut into sections and bound.
Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 522	H (UC)	roll	
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78 F 2	H (UC)	roll	Incomplete: ends at Charlemagne.
Boston, Public Library, Pb. Med. 32	H (UC)	roll	Provenance: formerly at Ashburnham Place.
Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS IV 1003	H (UC)	roll	Incomplete: ends at Philippe VI. Now cut into two equal-length rolls.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 176	H (UC)	roll	
Cambridge, Harvard College Houghton Library, Typ. 41	H (UC)	roll	
Cambridge, Harvard College Houghton Library, Fr. 495	H (UC)	roll	Fragment 2 of Fagin Davis MS Y. Acquired from Quaritch in 2008.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Shelfmark	Version	Form	Comments
Family HFU67D (continued)			
Columbia, University of South Carolina Libraries, Irvin Dept of Rare Books & Special Coll., Early MS 148	H (UC)	roll	Fragment 1 of Fagin Davis MS Y. Acquired from Sotheby's 23/5/2017.
Croydon, Archive Services, 'Chronique du monde'	H (UC)	roll	
Hanover, Dartmouth College Rauner Library, MS 461940	H (UC)	roll	Fragment 1 of Fagin Davis MS X. Acquired in 2009.
Krakow, Czartoryski Library, 2851	H (UC)	roll	Incomplete: ends at Philippe VI.
Leeds, University Library, Brotherton Collection 100	H (UC)	roll	Provenance: Rosenheim collection until 1923.
London, British Library, Additional MS 27539	H (UC)	roll	
Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Fr. 99	H (UC)	roll	Text edited and translated by Lisa Fagin Davis.
New York, J. Pierpont Morgan Library, M.1157	H (UC)	roll	Sold at Christies 26/11/1997. Given to Morgan Library in 2006.
New York, Public Library, MA 124	H (UC)	roll	
Orléans, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 470	H (UC)	roll	
Orléans, Centre Jeanne d'Arc, 35	H (UC)	roll	Fragment 2 of Fagin Davis MS X.
Princeton, University Art Museum, y1932–32 (MS 5)	H (UC)	roll	Incomplete: starts with Clovis II.
Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1137 (U.018 ^{bis})	H (UC)	roll	
Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 975	H (UC)	roll	
Privately owned (Jay Walker collection, Connecticut, USA)	H (UC)	roll	Hauck Scroll until 2006. Fully reproduced by Lisa Fagin Davis.
Privately owned (Enluminures catalogue 18 (2014), 133)	H (UC)	roll	Fragment 3 of Fagin Davis MS X. Sold in 2014.
Privately owned (Mark Mersiowsky collection Fragment ms 318, Tübingen)	H (UC)	roll	Fragment 3 of Fagin Davis MS Y. Bought in 2011.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Shelfmark	Version	Form	Comments
Family HFU67D (continued)			
Privately owned	H (UC)	roll	Last sold by Semenzato in Venice, May 2003, lot 148.
Privately owned	H (UC)	roll	Fragment. Sold by Reiss & Sohn in 2012, lot 1477.
Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 146	H (UC)	codex	Vertical diagram, 2 columns per page.
Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS 523	H – type 2 (UC)	roll	Late variant, 32.7 metres long.
Paris, BnF, MS français 61	F (UC)	codex	Rotate book 90 degrees; four parallel columns.
Paris, BnF, MS nouvelle acquisition française, 5386, fol. 16–21°	F (UC)	codex	Rotate book 90 degrees; four parallel columns. Fragments only, in a modern collection of misc. fragments.
Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Gene- viève, MS 520	F (UC)	codex	Rotate book 90 degrees; four parallel columns.
Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire, MS 586	F (short UC)	roll	Tree differs from other version F trees. First 2 membranes missing.
Munich, Bayerische Staats- bibliothek, Cod. Gall. 13	U (UC)	codex	Diagram mainly in margins. Single column with consecutive narrative sections, lacks final sections on popes and on kings of England.
Paris, BnF, MS français 694	U (UC)	codex	Diagram mainly in margins. Single column with consecutive narrative sections, lacks final sections on popes and on kings of England.
Paris, BnF, MS français 695	U (UC)	codex	Diagram mainly in margins. Single column with consecutive narrative sections, lacks final sections on popes and on kings of England.
Paris, BnF, MS français 1370, fol. 1–51°	U (UC)	codex	No diagram. Lacks final section on kings of England. First text in a collection of misc. texts, mostly religious.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Shelfmark	Version	Form	Comments
Family HFU67D (continued)			
Paris, BnF, MS français 23017	U (UC)	codex	Diagram mainly in margins. Single column with consecutive narrative sections, lacks final sections on popes and on kings of England.
Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, JS 266	U (UC)	codex	Diagram mainly in margins. Single column with consecutive narrative sections, lacks final sections on popes and on kings of England.
Paris, BnF, MS français 5734, fol. 93–111 ^v	6 (ATN)	codex	No diagram. Part of a modern collection of misc. MSS.
Paris, BnF, MS français 20145, fol. 2–13°	6 (ATN)	codex	No diagram. Part of a modern collection of misc. MSS.
Paris, BnF, MS français 5696	7 (ATN)	codex	No diagram.
Bordeaux, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 815, fol. 157–173°	D (ATN)	codex	No diagram. Follows the <i>Le livre des</i> faits d'armes by Christine de Pizan.
Amended by pro-English author		-	
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. Rolls 2	O (ATN)	roll	In two columns, with parallel genealogy of the kings of England.

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