

**The Duke of Berry's Rent Roll for the Chapter of St. Julian at Brioude  
In Latin, decorated manuscript roll on parchment  
Central France, Auvergne, Nonette, dated 1398**

*Parchment scroll composed of six membranes of varying dimensions, pasted together and joined end to end, now in two pieces comprising three membranes each, complete, no ruling visible, written in dark brown ink a single cursive French documentary hand on 223 and 221 long lines, respectively, one-line paraphs in the same brown ink, six-line calligraphic initial in the same brown ink at the opening of the first membrane, four notarial signatures across the junctions of the membranes, in the left margin, and one at the bottom of the final membrane, contemporary annotations in lighter brown ink in the left margins number each lease in the document, holes punched into the junctions of the membranes in the right margin, each with a length of brown twine looped through and knotted, inscriptions on rear of membrane one, near top, and the bottom of membrane six, partially cropped, dark brown thread pulled through hole in left margin just above junction between membranes two and three and knotted, junction between membranes five and six stitched with black string in the left margin, lower edge of third membrane and upper edge of fourth membrane reinforced with strips of parchment, the latter with two holes punched in the top, some modern underlining in blue and red crayon, some small stains obscuring words, damp-staining and soiling along edges of membranes, otherwise in very good condition. Dimensions 1,641 x 629-639 mm. (length of individual membranes: 810, 743, 88 mm.) and 1,642 x 625-632 mm. (length of individual membranes: 643, 676, 323 mm.).*

The name Jean, Duc de Berry, is well-remembered today as the owner of the Très Riches Heures, one of the most famous of all medieval illuminated Books of Hours. But he was also a landowner and a businessman, as we can see in this document. More than five feet long, this roll records forty-nine leases granted by Jean to the tenants of the Canons of St. Julian in the Auvergne. Rent rolls are of interest as records of the lives of ordinary people – tradesmen, their widows, and wives – as well as for their extraordinary format. A document connected to the duke of Berry is of more than ordinary interest.

#### PROVENANCE

1. Written in 1398 in Nonette, in the department of Puy-de-Dôme, Auvergne, by Durand Aymeric, royal notary.
2. Three fifteenth- or sixteenth-century inscriptions appear at the bottom of the back of membrane six. The leftmost inscription is still mostly legible: "Reconnoissant[?] des cens et Rantes de uiz[?] A[?] messires Les / Courierz de lesglize St Iulhien de brioude A[?] St germain / [I]embront[?] Cotte[?] par / Quadragin//." The other two have faded, but further study may uncover some of their content. All appear to refer to the contents of the roll.
3. One slightly later inscription, "ter<...>r de l'ecole," appears at the back of membrane one.
4. Private Collection, United Kingdom.

#### TEXT

Text runs vertically from top to bottom:

incipit, "UNiuersis Presentes litteras Inspecturis e[t] Audituris Guillelmus de plesserio domicellus Secretarius ac Tenens Sigillum Excellentissimj principis dominj Johannis biturie et Aruernie ducis Comitisque pictauensis bolonie et aruernie in prepositura nonete in aruernia constitutum ... et de additionibus verborum que[?] se Refferunt ad precedentia prout signa Regunt. Acta fuerunt hec prout supra Annis et diebus ac testibus superius expressate. Durandi Aymerici ica[?]."

A lengthy and complete document comprising forty-nine separate leases granted in 1397 and 1398 by John (1340-1416), Duke of Berry, to tenants of properties belonging to the Chapter of St. Julian at Brioude, in the department of Haute-Loire, Auvergne. The document was written and signed by notary Durand Aymeric, notary at the court of Nonette, one of the duke's favored castles.

The third son of John II of France (1319-1364), Jean, Duke of Berry, was a powerful leader in late fourteenth-century France, as well as a renowned collector of illuminated manuscripts (most famously, the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*) and patron of the arts. His father granted him the newly raised duchies of Auvergne and Berry in 1360, and over the next fifty-six years he visited Auvergne on over thirty occasions, staying for months at a time. His visits became less frequent late in the century as he became more involved in directing France's affairs, particularly after the deaths of his two sons (in 1383 and 1397, respectively) made it clear that he could not hope to pass his lands on to any descendants. The year in which the present manuscript was completed by Durand Aymeric – acting on behalf of Guillaume de Plessis, secretary to the duke and guard of his seal – was the first year the duke had visited Auvergne since 1395.

The lands whose leases are recorded here all belonged to the Chapter of St. Julian at Brioude, a rich, powerful, and socially exclusive chapter of canons under royal protection. Founded in the ninth century as a military organization, charged with the protection of the relics of Saint Julian of Brioude and the pilgrims who sought them out, the chapter's membership gradually became more clerical in nature. By the fourteenth century, the community had grown to fifty-four canons, all of noble birth, titled as counts of Brioude, and holding a rank within the church equivalent to that of a bishop. Members of this illustrious Chapter included the future Gregory IX (*sedit* 1227-1241) and Clement IV (*sedit* 1265-1268).

The forty-nine leases recorded in this document were granted over a two-year period, from March 1397 to August 1398, to tenants identified variously as citizens, tradesmen (including mercers and a weaver), and priests, and also including wives and widows (there are at least seven women named as lessors here). The document stipulates that tenants would be granted long-term leases as long as they made an annual payment and released a census to Petrus Pawani, the priest charged with collecting tithes and rents for the Chapter (first identified as "domino petro pavvanj presbitero collectore et procuratore dicte vniuersitatis" on membrane one, line five). As noted both in leases and alongside in the left margin, these properties extended from present-day Puy-de-Dôme (notably the communes of Issoire and Saint-Germain-Lembron, quite proximate to Nonette) to present-day Haute-Loire (including the communes of Brioude, Lamothe, and Saint-Georges-d'Aurac).

Rent rolls are ripe for study not only for their contents but for their form. They are relatively rare on the market (only nine others are documented for sale in the last century in the

Schoenberg Database), and of these only two date from the fourteenth century (the majority date from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries). Carefully organized and replete with meticulously documented details of familial relationships and rental holdings, this roll is a richly informative historical source still awaiting in-depth study.

## LITERATURE

Cubizolles, Pierre. *Le diocèse du Puy-en-Velay des origines à nos jours*, Nonette, 2005.

Teyssot, Josiane. "Pouvoirs et contre-pouvoirs politiques en Auvergne durant l'apanage de Jean de Berry, 1360-1416," in *Actes des congrès de Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public*, 23<sup>e</sup> congrès, Brest, 1992, pp. 247-260.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Los Angeles, UCLA Library, MS Rouse 61 [digitization of sixteenth-century Hertfordshire rent roll]

<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz001hpcbc>

*Medieval Scrolls Digital Archive: A Comprehensive Resource for Scrolls in the Middle Ages*, Harvard University, 2017

<http://medievalscrolls.com/>

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