

**LES ENLUMINURES, LTD**  
2970 North Lake Shore Drive 11B  
Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel. 1-773-929-5986  
fax. 1-773-528-3976  
chicago@lesenluminures.com

**LES ENLUMINURES**  
Le Louvre des Antiquaires  
2 place du Palais-Royal  
75001 Paris

tél : 33 1 42 60 15 58  
fax : 33 1 40 15 00 25  
info@lesenluminures.com

**ANONYMOUS, [Genealogy of the Earls of Leicester and Chester]  
In English, illuminated manuscript on paper  
[England, c. 1572-1573]**

20 leaves, complete (collation *i*<sup>4</sup> + *ii*<sup>5+4</sup> + *iii*<sup>8</sup> + *iv*<sup>4+1</sup>), on paper (165 x 215 mm), watermarks (Briquet 8077-8079, "Lettre B," Paris, 1566, Nancy 1566, Troyes, 1580), all the watermarks from the mill of Nicolas Lebé of Troyes (1550-1605), no foliation or catchwords, written in black ink in a bastard Secretary bookhand, single column, justification in single horizontal and double vertical lines in brown ink, writing space 80 x 167 mm, text ruled in plummet, 23-24 lines per page, titles for family lines in rubric on f. 2r, letters in header used to identify seven family lines (a-g) in rubric, TWO ILLUSTRATED MINIATURES OF KNIGHTS WITH COATS OF ARMS on f. 2r (135 x 55 mm), TWO LARGE GILDED COATS OF ARMS WITH CROWNS on ff. 14v and 17v (50 x 67 mm), TWENTY-FIVE SMALL GILDED COATS OF ARMS throughout manuscript, PAINTED TREE BRANCHES WITH GILDED LEAVES AND BLUE ROUNDELS in right and left margins throughout manuscript, f. 1 is a loose singleton probably formerly attached to quire 2, f. 7 attached to quire one by hinge, f. 18 affixed to f. 17 as part of quire 4, ff. 1r, 19 and 20 are blank, marginalia on f. 18r, scribal correction on f. 17r, light staining and soiling on edges of paper throughout, light chipping to fore edge on f. 1, tiny tear to fore edge on f. 4, light to medium bleeding from illumination throughout manuscript, otherwise an extremely clean copy in both text and illumination. Bound in contemporary stiff vellum binding with moderate soiling on front and rear covers, covers curling outward due to heat exposure, contemporary paper used as front and rear pastedowns, binding broken at tail of spine, five cords sewn through and visible on spine, one cord broken on tail of spine, holes for two missing ties on fore edge of front and rear binding, spine titled in very faded brown ink, front cover titled in very faded brown ink, modern pencil notation on inside front pastedown "70 Illum." Dimensions 170 x 220 mm.

An unusually rich and fully illuminated English genealogy prepared for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and consort of Queen Elizabeth I of England. The text and illumination, which consists of gilded heraldic devices entwined within a natural arbor setting, is a rare example of the Elizabethan emphasis on the documentation of noble lineages and the use of heraldry to secure the rights and privileges of the non-traditional peerage families, who competed for the patronage of the crown during the dynastic and religious conflicts in England that occurred in the sixteenth-century.

## PROVENANCE

1. Prepared for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532/1533-1588).
2. H.P. Kraus, who obtained it from an unknown London book dealer, and later consigned the book for sale to Sotheby's in 1964.
3. Madeleine Pelner Cosman (1937-1996), purchased London, Sotheby's, 1964. Cosman was a noted medievalist, medical lawyer, university instructor, manuscript and gun collector, and neo-conservative political writer, critic and commentator. She received a B.A. from Barnard College in 1959, an M.A. from Hunter College in 1960 and a Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University in 1964. She was the director and founder of the Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies at City University of New York from 1968 to 1993. Dr. Pelner Cosman taught medical law, medical business and medical history at City College of City University of New York from 1963 to 1993. In 1995, she earned a law degree from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University. Pelner Cosman wrote fifteen books, mostly on immigration and health care issues. However, her most famous book remains *Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony*, published in 1976. The book was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

## TEXT

ff. 1v-18v, [The Genologies of the Erles of Lecestre and Chester], incipit, "The Genologies of the Erles of Lecestre and Chester wherin is brifely shewed som part of their deedes and actes with the tyme of their raigns in their Erldoms..."; explicit, "Lady Temporance died at the age of one yere. Lady Katherin died at the age of vii yeres."

This manuscript was prepared for Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester. Dudley was born on 24 June 1532 or 1533 and died in 1588. He was the fifth of thirteen children of John Dudley, duke of Northumberland (1504–1553) and Jane Dudley (1508/9–1555), the daughter of Sir Edward Guildford, of Halden and Hemsted, and Kent. On June 4, 1550, he married his first wife Amy Rosbart (1532–1560), the daughter of Sir John Robsart of Syderstone, Norfolk. His second marriage in September 1578 was to Lettice Devereux, dowager countess of Essex (1540-1634) and daughter of Sir Francis Knollys (1511/12–1596). He had one son, Robert Dudley (1574-1649), with his mistress Douglas Sheffield (1542/3–1608), dowager Lady Sheffield and daughter of William Howard, baron of Effingham (c.1510–1573).

Dudley was a politician at heart. He shared the lord lieutenancy of Norfolk with his father in 1552 and was knighted first in a by-election in autumn 1551 and then in the parliament of March 1553. On 15 August 1551 he was appointed a gentleman of the privy chamber, becoming master of the buckhounds on 29 September 1552 and chief carver on 27 February 1553. On 27 December 1552, he became keeper of Somerset Place. In 1557, he became master of the ordnance and in 1558, master of the horse. Owing to Elizabeth's favor, Dudley became a member of the Privy Council in 1562. He was elected to the Order of the Garter on 24 April 1559 and was appointed lieutenant of Windsor Castle in 1562. On 9 June 1563 Elizabeth granted him the lordships of Kenilworth (Warwickshire), Denbigh, and Chirk, and he was created earl of Leicester and baron of Denbigh on 29 September 1564. Charles IX of Austria also elected him to the order of Saint Michael in 1564.

Despite not having a university degree, Dudley was elected chancellor of Oxford University on 31 December 1564 as a backer of Protestantism and the Acts of Conformity. In 1572, he became lieutenant of the Order of the Garter. During the 1570's Dudley served as the primary counselor to Elizabeth, particularly with regard to the issues of succession, religious conformity based on Protestantism, succession, and the marital alliances (including his own) with Elizabeth I. In 1584, he was named supreme military commander. His political triumph occurred in 1586, when named supreme governor of the United Provinces much to the anger of Elizabeth. In addition to this political career, Dudley was a renowned patron of the arts, having over 50 books dedicated to him, with the most famous being Edmund Spenser's *Faire Queen*.

From his childhood, Robert Dudley was attached to the royal family. Early on, he was in the household of Edward, Prince of Wales, in the early 1540s. It is here that he developed his close relationship with the future Queen Elizabeth I of England, eventually becoming the queen's consort. Ironically, the early years of Dudley's life found him in conflict with the royal crown. His family failed in the conspiracy to block the succession of Princess Mary of Guise in favor of Lady Jane Grey in 1553. In 1559, Robert Dudley's relationship with Elizabeth surfaced. Elizabeth increasingly showed an emotional dependence on Dudley and insisted on his presence at court. This relationship was early on complicated by the mysterious death of Dudley's wife, who was found with a broken neck; the situation led to the suspicion that Elizabeth was behind the murder and that Dudley was somehow involved. Amy's death freed Dudley to marry Elizabeth, but the situation at court, international alliances, and Elizabeth's own lack of interest in marriage never allowed this to happen. Elizabeth likened their relationship to that between a brother and sister. However, Dudley in fact served as a surrogate husband. After several years as consort and advisor, Dudley had an affair with Douglas Sheffield, dowager lady Sheffield (1542/3–1608) begun in either 1570 or 1571, much to the chagrin of Elizabeth. Dudley and Sheffield had a son, Robert Dudley, in 1574. The affair ended when he married Lettice Devereux, dowager countess of Essex on 21 September 1578. It was rumored that Dudley poisoned Devereux's husband to marry the countess. Despite Dudley's actions, Elizabeth's extensive generosity towards Leicester did not diminish, and she granted several lands and monopolies during the 1570s. The late 1570s and 1580s brought Leicester trouble with Elizabeth. His attempts to secure alliances with Holland and France, the discreet marriage to the countess of Essex, court intrigues against him, and his alliances with Puritans were seen by many as a threat to Elizabeth's power and their advantage. The slanderous tract *Leicester's Commonwealth* likewise damaged Leicester's reputation in Elizabeth's eyes. His later years were consumed with the wars in Holland and with Spain, and he personally led military expeditions on the continent. He died in 1588, unable to concretely secure the restoration of his family.

The history of heralds dates from the twelfth century as part of the growing importance of land and title claims and the role of chivalric codes. Heraldry confirmed the lands and titles of each lord by displaying the emblems on the shield. In 1484, Richard III created constitutionally the organization run by the heralds, also known as the College of Arms, as part of the royal court to adjudicated claims to nobility and to create new coat of arms. In the 1530s, Henry VIII reconstituted the heralds and began a comprehensive survey of titles and heraldic devices in England. Elizabeth I encouraged the creation of heraldry and noble lineages, using three kings of arms, seven heralds, and four pursuivants charged with establishing official pedigrees and asking

writers and historians to research these pedigrees. Besides granting arms, the heralds are responsible for establishing rights of arm by descent, and, in so doing, legitimizing claims to titles and lands.

Barbara McGeoch dated the present manuscript to 1572 based on Dudley's reception of the title of Lieutenant of the Order of the Garter in 1572, which was one of the three kings of arms. She argued that Dudley commissioned a herald to write his ancestry because of the appointment. There may be other rationale behind the creation of the genealogy. With the birth of his illegitimate child with his mistress Lady Sheffield, the establishment of the family line proved essential to his son's cause to the lands and estates of his father. In this, it served as a legal pedigree for his heir. The manuscript may also have been written with regard to a lawsuit started by Dudley against Lord Berkeley in 1573-1574 over the forest of Snowdown. Leicester claimed that the lands were his, despite Queen Mary I support of Berkeley's title to the lands. Dudley claimed the true rights to the lands through a dubious use of lineage, undertaking a considerable amount of historical research into his family according to Simon Adams (see below). Here the role of heraldry helps claim family relationship though the marshalling of titles represented on the shields. This information allowed Dudley to make a legal claim in addition to supporting documents showing his title to the lands.

The genealogy is generally accurate except for one major error. The work claims that Dudley was a descendent of Maude, the first daughter of Hugh Kevelock, fifth earl of Chester, sister and co-heiress of Randulf Blundeville, the sixth earl of Chester. One general weakness in the genealogy is its dependence on the maternal line, which was not as strong as the paternal line to legal claims. The problem with any of these explanations is the complete absence of Robert Dudley from the manuscript. He does not appear on f. 18rv alongside the rest of his brothers and sisters, a fact noted in the margins in a late sixteenth or early seventeenth century hand on f. 18r.

McGeoch put forward three possible authors of the manuscript. The first was Robert Cooke of Clarenceux. Cooke wrote many genealogies, including those of Warwick and Leicester when he was herald of Chester. Cooke would have had the duty of writing up the pedigree as a king of arms when Dudley became lieutenant of the Order of the Garter. Another possibility is John Cocke. He was a servant of Dudley's father. Dudley helped him to become herald of Lancaster, and he remained a close confidant of Dudley and his family throughout his life. The last possibility is Edmund Knight, who was appointed by Dudley as herald of Chester in 1574; such an appointment was a general reward for services, perhaps this genealogy.

## ILLUSTRATION

There are three types of illustration found in this manuscript. The first involves the portrait of two knights holding the lands of the earls of Leicester and Chester. The second are the series of heraldic devices of the principal members of these two families. The third are the naturalistic depiction of trees, which hold the heraldic devices and trace the families' genealogy from page to page.

## Type I

f. 2r. The illumination presents two knights reclining on two grassy knolls. Each knight is dressed in full chain mail, with the supporting shields. Gilding appears on the blades of grass, necklines, belts, wrists, and scabbards. The shields show the emblems of the earls of Leicester (on the left) and Chester (on the right). The family of Lupus, with a blue field and wolf's head, represents the Earl of Chester. The family of Beaumonde, with a red field and cinquefoil in a pewter color, represents the Earl of Leicester. The painting shows a special care for naturalism in the depiction of the knolls and even in the placing of rouge on the cheeks of the two knights.

## Type II

Heraldic shields of the descendents of the earls of Leicester and Chester as follow: f. 2v, Robert Beaumonde, second earl of Leicester; f. 3r, Hugh Lupus, first earl of Chester; f. 3v, Robert Beaumonde Boissu, third earl of Leicester; f. 4v, Richard Lupus, second earl of Chester; f. 4v, Margaret Lupus, sister Hugh Lupus and married to John Bohun; f. 5r, Robert Blanchmains, fourth earl of Leicester; f. 5v, Randolph Bohun, third earl of Chester; f. 6r, Robert Fitz Pernel, fifth early of Leicester; f. 6v, Randolph Bohn Gernons, fourth earl of Chester; f. 7r, Simon Montfort, sixth earl of Leicester; f. 8v, Hugh Bohun Kevelock, fifth earl of Chester; f. 10r, Randolph Bohun Blundeville, sixth earl of Chester; f. 11v, Roger Quincy, earl of Winchester and Ellen, daughter of Alan, earl of Galloway; f. 13r, John Scot, seventh earl of Chester; f. 14v, William, earl of Ferrers and Darby, lord of Titbery, Chartley, and Groby and Margaret, first daughter and heir of Roger Quincy, earl of Winchester and lord steward of Scotland; f. 15r, Robert, earl of Ferris and Darby; f. 15v, William, first lord Ferris of Groby; f. 15v, William II, second lord Ferris II of Groby; f. 16r, Henry, third lord Ferris of Groby; f. 16r, William III, fourth lord Ferris of Groby; f. 16r, Henry II, fifth lord Ferris of Groby; f. 16v, William IV, sixth lord Ferris of Groby; f. 16v, Henry III, seventh lord Ferris of Groby; f. 16v, Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Henry Ferrers and Edward, son of Reynold Grey; f. 17r, Sir Edward Grey, son of Edward Grey and Elizabeth, daughter of John Talbot, viscount of Lisle; f. 17r, Edmund Dudley and Elizabeth Grey, second daughter of daughter of Edward Grey, viscount of Lisle; f. 17v, John, duke of Northumberland, earl of Warwick, viscount of Lisle, and Baron of Basset and Teyes and Jane, daughter and heir of Sir Edward Guildford.

Each of the heraldic shields appears within the foliage in the right and left hand margins of the page, except for the two great shields (see below), which appear in the center of the page. The shields are the traditional gothic equilateral type. Each shield is hung by a red cord attached to one of the branches of the family tree. Each shield is gilded, except for the initial shields of the earls of Leicester and Chester. Above each shield belonging to a member of the upper peerage is placed a coronet fitting their rank, whether as earl or duke. These coronets are gilded, and mirror the coronets found in the corresponding roundels. As with custom, the marshalling of the shield has the husband's arms on the right side of the shield (left to the reader) and the wife's family arms on the left side of the shield (right to the reader). Each of these coats of arms is executed with great care and precision, reflecting many of the standard heraldic manuscripts from the period.

There are two great shields that represent the primary unions of the family trees, those of William, earl of Ferrers and Darby, lord of Titbery, Chartley, and Groby and Margaret, first daughter and heir of Roger Quincy, earl of Winchester and lord steward of Scotland (f. 14v) and John, duke of Northumberland, earl of Warwick, viscount of Lisle, and Baron of Basset and Teyes and Jane,

daughter and heir of Sir Edward Guildford (f. 17v). The marshalling of the former is quartered into twelve sections: for William of Ferrers we see the arms of Quincy, Beaumont, Grantmains, Galloway, Scott, Bohun, Lupus, and Quincy, and for Margaret we see those of Ferrers, Nottinham, Bohun, and Lupus. The latter great coat of arms is marshaled then quartered into twenty sections, with twelve from the Dudley's on the right side of the shield (Dudley, Sutton of Somery, Grey, Pembroke, Beaumont, Talbot, Arundel, Warwick, Berkeley, Lisle and De Lisle) and eight from the Guildfords on the left side of the shield (Guildford de Or, Guildford de Argent, La Ware, de la Warre, Mortimer, West, Greley, and Thorley).

### Type III

The family trees are the last type of painting within the manuscript. There are two styles of trees. The left margin seems to be an elm tree based on the shape of the leaves, while the right margin appears to be an oak. Each of the trunks and branches are highly naturalistic. The trunks begin and end at the head and foot of each page. At times they cross over and interweave with each other as families unite through marriage. When the family line ends without issue, the trunk of the tree ends. To keep clarity in the family lines, several trunks are located in one or both margins, using the guide letter rubrics at the top of the page to identify the seven major families represented by the trunks. Branches A-C represent the earls of Leicester while branches D-G represent the branches of the earls of Chester. Blue roundels periodically interrupt the trunks. Within these roundels appear the principal members of each family that help elucidate the genealogy. According to the prologue of the manuscript, the principal members that preserve the line have two leaves holding up the roundel, while the collateral children only have one leaf holding up the roundel. Those members who belong to the elite peerage appear with their coronets above their roundels just as they appear above their coats of arms. There is no significant departure from tradition in the painting of the family tree or its use of roundels and shields. However, the naturalistic sensitivity to the illuminator, particularly with regard to the foliage, provides an excellent example of the importance of nature in contemporary paintings, including the movement toward landscape art.

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#### ONLINE RESOURCES

Renaissance: the Elizabeth World

<http://elizabethan.org/>

Medieval English Genealogy

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/index.html>