THE MAIRE OF BRISTOWE IS KALENDAR

EDITED

BY

PETER FLEMING

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I have been using *The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar* as a source for my own research for many years, and in that time I have wished that all of the illustrations might be published in one place, so it has been a great pleasure finally to be able to bring this about. However, this edition would never have seen the light of day were it not for the encouragement of the Bristol Record Society, and in particular Jonathan Barry, Madge Dresser, Evan Jones, Jonathan Harlow, Roger Leech and Kathleen Thompson, and so I wish to express my wholehearted gratitude to them. In addition, I very much want to acknowledge the support of Joe Bettey, who very kindly read an early draft of the text, and from whose comments I have benefited enormously. Needless to say, any errors or dubious statements are entirely my own! Julian Warren and the staff of the Bristol Record Office have been unfailingly generous in answering queries and, most importantly, in allowing the BRS to publish this edition of one of the greatest treasures in their magnificent collection. Also, John Roost and Steve Drew at 4word Ltd have, once again, been models of patience and efficiency in overseeing the production of this volume.

Finally, I must thank my wife, Ann Rippin, for putting up with not seeing me for what must have seemed like days on end while I produced this volume.
THE MAIRE OF BRISTOWE IS KALENDAR

*The Maire of Bristowe Is Kalendar*, begun by the town clerk, Robert Ricart, in the winter of 1478/9, combines an exceedingly rare provincial town chronicle with collections of legal precedents, civic oaths and other related material which, with its lavish illustrations, make it unparalleled among the products of later medieval English urban culture.1 While none of the individual elements within the *Kalendar* were unprecedented as products of English provincial civic culture in the fifteenth century (for example, customals, precedent books, and even town chronicles were produced by Coventry and Colchester), what is unique about the *Kalendar* is the fact that it assembled all of these various types of document in one volume, and that they were accompanied by an extensive – and expensive – scheme of illustrations.2 No other fifteenth-century English town or city, not even London, had thought it necessary to produce such an exquisite book or, if they had, all trace of such a book has since been lost.

In his prologue Ricart describes the intended structure of the *Kalendar*. The book is to be divided into six parts. The first three constitute a chronicle, telling, or so it was initially hoped, the history of Bristol from its foundations to the writer’s own day. The fourth part was intended to clarify how civic officers were chosen, and how they fulfilled their offices, with particular emphasis on the mayoralty. The fifth would constitute a finding aid, showing where the written evidence for the town’s franchises, liberties and customs could be found. The sixth and final section would contain the text of a book of precedents for London, since Bristol’s civic structures and practices followed closely those of the capital. This was the plan, but as we shall see it was not adhered to.

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1 Bristol Record Office [henceforth, BRO] CC/2/7. The volume is discussed by Peter Fleming, ‘Making history: culture, politics and *The Maire of Bristowe Is Kalendar*’, in Douglas L. Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove, and A. Compton Reeves (eds.), *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth-Century Europe* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 289–316. This is the only substantial study of the volume, and has informed the present edition throughout.


The editor would like to express his gratitude to Julian Warren and the staff of the Bristol Record Office for their help and advice, to Dr J. H. Bettey for kindly agreeing to read an early draft, and to Dr Madge Dresser. Without their generous assistance this volume would have been impossible. Needless to say, mistakes and dubious interpretations are entirely my own.
Lucy Toulmin Smith edited the *Kalendar* for the Camden Society in 1872. She was a very considerable scholar, of Anglo-American parentage, who lived much of her adult life in Oxford. She died in 1911. Her edition is accurate, but she only saw fit to publish part of the whole volume. She omitted all of the non-Bristolian chronicle material and the eighteenth and nineteenth-century extensions of the chronicle. In particular, most of the illustrations were omitted. Only the ‘mayor-making’ scene was reproduced, and this was not done in colour. Modern printing techniques now make possible the faithful colour reproduction of these images. Hence, the present volume consists of a selection of the later chronicle material and facsimiles of the pages of the *Kalendar* that carry illustrations, together with this introduction, in which some of the problems presented by this unique volume will be explored.

**The Author and Commissioner: Robert Ricart and William Spenser**

In her introduction, Toulmin Smith assembles what was known about Robert Ricart at the time she wrote. This was very little, and nearly all of it was misleading. Now it is possible to add a little to this picture, but he remains a fairly mysterious figure.

Ricart was Bristol town clerk from Michaelmas 1478 until he was replaced by Thomas Harding in October 1489, his death probably coming at around that time. Few other definite facts about him are known. While Toulmin Smith believed that Ricart himself wrote the early parts of the *Kalendar*, comparison of the handwriting in the original with Ricart’s signed contributions to *The Great Red Book* do not bear this out, so, while he appears to have compiled – and probably translated, where necessary – the volume that bears his name up until 1489, it was actually written by others.

Attempts to identify Ricart are complicated by the existence of at least two men called Robert Ricart – or Ricard – in fifteenth-century Bristol. The will is extant of a Robert Ricard, whitetawyer (worker in white leather), of Lewins Mead, who died in 1503/4, leaving a widow, Joan, who then married one of her husband’s former associates, John Bailey, before herself dying by 1514. However, this Ricard does not appear to have been associated with Bristol’s governing elite, and his will suggests a man of only modest wealth. Also, if this man was the town clerk there is no indication of why he would have given up the role in 1489, over fourteen years before his death.

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5. The National Archives, Kew, Public Record Office [henceforth cited as TNA] PROB 11/14/55; BRO 26166/63, a–b; 26166/305.
Another Robert Ricart is more promising as a candidate to be the town clerk. In the 1450s a Robert Ricart was active as a Bristol merchant, associated with, among others, Philip Mede, three times mayor of Bristol, who died in 1475.\(^8\) If we assume that this Ricart was at least in his early twenties by the middle of the 1450s, then he would have been in his fifties as town clerk, dying perhaps in his early sixties. This is quite possible. He was probably identical with the Robert Ricart who acted as an attorney to deliver seisin of the goods of the recently deceased William Canynges in 1482: Canynges was the London-based son of William Canynges senior, Bristol’s wealthiest man at his death in 1474; Ricart’s fellow attorney was the Thomas Harding who would be town clerk in 1489, and the recipients of Canynges’s goods were Robert Strange, mayor, John Twynyho, Recorder, and William Spenser (the mayor who commissioned the *Kalendar*), and William Byrde, an alderman. Thus, this Robert Ricart was moving in august company. He was almost certainly the same man as the town clerk. So, Ricart the town clerk, and author of some of the *Kalendar*, had probably been active as a Bristol merchant since the 1450s, and died in or soon after 1489. He was on good terms with members of the governing elite, but aside from town clerk he held no civic office, and so he cannot be said to have been part of this inner elite of men who served as aldermen, sheriffs and mayors.

The *Kalendar* was commissioned by the mayor, William Spenser, in the Winter of 1478/9. Ricart tells us that the *Kalendar* was begun in the mayoralty of William Spenser, and in the eighteenth year of King Edward IV. Since Edward began his reign on 4 March 1461, his eighteenth regnal year occurred between 4 March 1478 and 3 March 1479. Spenser’s period of office began, like all medieval Bristol mayoralities, at Michaelmas, and thus he became mayor on the same day that Ricart was appointed town clerk, 29 September 1478. Ricart must therefore have begun work on the *Kalendar* between the end of September 1478 and the beginning of March 1479.\(^9\) Spenser has much greater presence in the records than Ricart. He was a prominent merchant, a member of the common council (the governing body, below the mayor) from at least 1450, sheriff in 1461/2, mayor three times (in 1465/6, 1473/4 and 1478/9) and MP in 1467/8. He died in 1494.\(^10\)

**Why was the Kalendar Commissioned?**

One reason for incorporating a town chronicle into the *Kalendar* may have been that Mayor Spenser had compelling personal reasons to attempt to ensure that it was only his version of Bristol’s history that survived. While the dominant faction within Bristol’s elite had been conspicuous Yorkist supporters in 1460, and immediately

\(^8\) E.W. W. Veale (ed), *The Great Red Book of Bristol*, Parts 2–4 (Bristol Record Society [henceforth cited as BRS], 4, 8, 16, 18, 1931–53) [henceforth cited as GRBB], *Part II*, pp. 23, 130–2; BRO AC/D15/18, 20; Philip Mede’s will is summarised in T. P. Wadley (ed.), *Notes or Abstracts of the Wills Contained in the Volume Entitled the Great Orphan Book and Book of Wills, in the Council House at Bristol (1381–1605)*, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (Bristol, 1886) [henceforth cited as Wadley, *Wills*], p. 157.


after his accession in 1461 Edward IV had confirmed and extended Bristol’s liberties, relations between the town and the king had soured by 1470. In that year Edward IV was forced into exile by his erstwhile supporter, Richard Neville, earl of Warwick (the ‘Kingmaker’), and by his own brother, George, duke of Clarence, who replaced him with the Lancastrian King Henry VI. Bristol’s governing elite was heavily influenced by Warwick, and during this period of restored Lancastrian rule, known as the ‘Reademption’, the town’s controlling faction sided with Edward’s enemies. Edward returned in the spring of 1471. A Bristol contingent fought for the Lancastrian Queen Margaret at the battle of Tewkesbury on 4 May, which was a Yorkist victory that paved the way for Edward IV’s restoration to the English throne. This left Bristol in a very vulnerable position, and it was probably only through the ministrations of the duke of Clarence (whose defection to Edward had made possible the Yorkist victory), that members of the town’s governing elite paid for their mistake only through their purses, and not with their lives. Among those implicated in Bristol’s support for Warwick and the Lancastrians was none other than William Spenser. He was among those named and fined by Edward immediately after his victory at Tewkesbury.

Spenser had a rude reminder of his previous disloyalty in March 1479. While Spenser was presiding over the mayor’s court in ‘the Counter’, on Corn Street, a Bristol gentleman, Thomas Norton, strode in and threw down a gauntlet before him, publicly accusing him of treason. The exact grounds of Norton’s accusation are not clear, but almost certainly they related to Spenser’s behaviour in 1470/1. Spenser voluntarily delivered himself up to the town gaoler while the matter was heard by the king himself. While Spenser was fully exonerated, and Norton became a wanted man, this episode probably showed that the mayor could not entirely shake off his dubious past. In the chronicle section of the Kalendar, Bristol’s role in the Reademption, and Spenser’s part in that less than glorious chapter, is downplayed to the point of mis-representation. For 1470 we are told only that Clarence and Warwick and their forces, came into England, ‘... reryng al the West contray, ... ’, while in 1471 Queen Margaret, ‘... gedering grete people came to Bristowe, and met with Kyng Edward at Teuxbury, where the Kyng had the fielde’. Perhaps it was after clearing himself of the Norton accusation that Spenser thought it a good idea to commission the chronicle part of the Kalendar, so that those instances of disloyalty, including his own recent role, could be expunged from the record of Bristol’s past.

This was not the only reason for the Kalendar’s production, however. In the prologue Ricart writes that,

this noble and worshipfull Toune off Bristowe is ... founded and grounded upon fraunchises, libertees, and free auncient customes, and not vpon comen lawe, as it is affermed and ratiefied bi oure olde chartres, in as free and semblable wise as is the Citee of London ... as tyme oute of mynde it hath be graunted bi the noble progenitours of oure moost dradde souveraigne lorde the kinge, and by his good grace conferred vnthe saide worshipfull Toune in so large wise, that for to shewe or express it in certeyn it passith mannes mynde to remember it

11 This episode is dealt with at greater length in Fleming, ‘Making history’, pp. 312–16 and in Peter Fleming, Bristol and the Wars of the Roses, 1451–1471 (Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 2005), pp. 15–26. What follows is a brief summary.

12 GRBB, Part IV, pp. 57–93.

13 Ricart, Kalendar, pp. 44–5.
Consequently, Mayor William Spenser and the common council had commissioned the work, ‘in maynteyneng of the said fraunchises herafter more duely and freely to be executed and excercised, and the perfaitter had in remembraunce’.14 Bristol’s liberties and special constitutional position depended on a series of charters, some granted from ‘tyme oute of mynde’, that is, beyond the limit of legal memory, taken as Richard I’s coronation in 1189.15 The Kalendar’s prologue reflects the intentions behind commissioning the volume, rather than what Ricart actually achieved.

By the 1470s the civic archive had become voluminous and unwieldy. During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries a series of local initiatives had greatly increased the scope of the civic bureaucracy, and, with it, inevitably, the amount of documentation it generated. The earliest Bristol custumal of which there is evidence, the Constituciones Ville Bristolle, was probably produced in the early thirteenth century, but it is extant as an early fourteenth-century copy.16 However, the real acceleration in the accumulation of civic documents appears to have begun in 1344. In that year Bristol’s government was reformed, it was proclaimed that copies of all wills of burgesses in which lands, tenements or rents were bequeathed were to be kept in the civic treasury, and the Recorder, William de Colford, ordered the production of what is now known as the Little Red Book (so-called from the colour of its leather binding), to record the town’s ordinances, customs and liberties. This volume also became the repository of a miscellaneous collection of copies of other, unrelated, documents.17 The Little Red Book’s companion volume, the Great Red Book, probably came into being between 1373 and 1376, as a repository for deeds relating to Bristol property, with the stated aim that such collections should form a secure, definitive and accessible record. However, like the Little Red Book, around the middle of the fifteenth century it too came to take on the character of a general miscellany, receiving an increasing number of ordinances and other civic documents, probably as a result of the Little Red Book running out of space.18 In addition, the later fourteenth century saw the appearance of the Great Orphan Book and Book of Wills, containing copies of the wills of Bristol burgesses who died leaving an underage heir and of the indentures concerning arrangements for the wardship of their children’s inheritances.19 In 1381 it was resolved to provide a secure place, under lock and key, for the preservation of the civic archive, and until the early sixteenth century this was supplied by a wooden chest in the Guildhall.20 The increase in the

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14 Ricart, Kalendar, pp. 2–3.
15 M. T. Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, (2nd edn., Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) [henceforth cited as Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record], pp. 42, 152.
18 Cronne, Bristol Charters, p. 12; GRBB, Part. I, pp. 1–3. The coincidence of dates in 1344 and 1373 between bureaucratic re-organisation and innovations in record-keeping was probably not accidental: see Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, pp. 62–8 for the relationship between record-keeping and bureaucracy.
19 Wadley, Wills, pp. 1–4.
number of extant documents after 1381 is testimony to both the effectiveness of the provision of a chest in which to preserve them, and to its necessity. By the middle of the fifteenth century, then, the two Red Books were in simultaneous use, and their functional distinctiveness had been lost, while a large number of legal records and charters were loose and uncollected within the Guildhall chest.

So, between 1344 and 1478 Bristol had developed a bureaucratic culture based on written records. Nationally, manuscripts had comprehensively replaced memory as the primary means of preserving evidence of title, privilege and liberty: by the fifteenth century proving such claims was usually all but impossible in the absence of written records.\textsuperscript{21} The growth in civic record-keeping had evidently outpaced the Bristol bureaucrats’ ability to navigate efficiently within the archive: to find something they had either to leaf through the substantial Red Books, wherein material appeared according to no very obvious organisational scheme, or rummage through the ever-growing collections of bundles and loose documents in the chest in the Guildhall.

The stated aim of the Kalendar was that it would provide a means whereby the liberties granted by the town’s charters could more readily be identified in time of need.\textsuperscript{22} The three sections that followed the chronicle were intended to assemble in one place the evidence of the town’s various liberties. This aim was not fulfilled. The first of these sections was supposed to rehearse, ‘the laudable custumes of this worshipfull Towne, and … the eleccion, charge, rule, and demenyng of honourable Maire, Shiref, Baillifs, and othir officers of the same Towne in theexecuting and guidyng of theire said offices during theire yeres’; however, while this section gives both a detailed account of the procedures for the appointment of civic officers, and a summary of the civic ceremonial calendar, it does not contain Bristol’s ‘laudable custumes’.\textsuperscript{23} The prologue promises that the next section will be a calendar of the town’s charters, liberties and customs, ‘And in whate places, bokes, and levis the premises and euery of them may be founde with a wete fynger’, but this is not what was actually produced.\textsuperscript{24} Instead, we are presented with the inspeximus of the 1373 charters that created the Town and County of Bristol, and a table of clauses from Prince John’s charter of 1189, which was regarded – incorrectly – as Bristol’s first charter of liberties. The final section opens with the statement that since, ‘this worshipfull Toune of Bristowe hath alweis vsed comenly to execute his fraunchisez and libertees according in semblable wise as the noble Citee of London hath vsed, and a grete parte hath take his president of the said Citee in exerciseng the same’, it was fitting to include a transcript of a London custumal. This promise was fulfilled. The assertion is that this text is based on one that had belonged to Henry Darcy, described as Recorder of London under Edward III; in fact, Darcy was mayor, holding office in 1338/9. The text in this section is very similar to, but not identical with, London’s Liber Albus, written in 1419 by John Carpenter, the city’s common clerk.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{21} Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, pp. 162–72.

\textsuperscript{22} For chronicles supplying the place of imperfect memory, see Chris Given-Wilson, Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), pp. 57–64.

\textsuperscript{23} Ricart, Kalendar, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{24} Ricart, Kalendar, p. 5.

Together these three sections provide a great deal of valuable material, but they do not provide a comprehensive finding aid to the civic archive. Mayor Spenser seems to have grasped that an archive’s power to act as a defence in the present by giving access to the past could only be realised if it were accessible. He wanted the Kalendar to act as a finding aid to the chaotically-arranged heap of material found in the Guildhall, but that ambition would be thwarted.

Possible Irish Inspiration?

Some inspiration for the compilation of the Kalendar may have been derived from an illustrated document created over a hundred years earlier, in Ireland. Waterford’s Great Charter Roll was compiled around 1373, and consists of fifteen original charters and seventeen illustrations sewn together to form a four metre-long roll. This was done in order to assemble evidence for presentation to the Chancery in Westminster as part of the dispute between Waterford and New Ross that began in 1215 and did not end until 1518. The roll contains documents that span the whole period of the dispute from its beginnings until 1372. The illustrations depict five English kings from Henry II to Edward III, who is shown twice (Richard I and Edward II are missing), together with seven justiciars of Ireland, a judge, and William of Windsor, Lord Lieutenant, Governor and Keeper of Ireland at the time of the roll’s production; in addition, there is one panel depicting the mayors of Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. Finally, at the top of the roll is a portrayal of Waterford itself. The whole ensemble was clearly designed to impress, and to carry subtle messages about the loyalty and strategic importance of Waterford that went beyond the straightforward legal points made by the individual charters.

While the Waterford Roll was designed as a weapon in one particular dispute, unlike the Kalendar, it is still a collection of historic documents combined with illustrations of kings and officials intended to help defend civic privileges; as such, its composition and intended function were very similar to the Kalendar’s, and both include views of their respective towns. Given Bristol’s close links with Waterford, it is quite possible that the roll came to mind when consideration was being given to the best format to adopt for what became the Kalendar.
The Chronicle

The chronicle in Ricart’s *Kalendar* was not unique as a fifteenth-century attempt to set down in writing the history of Bristol, and nor was it unprecedented for a provincial town to produce a chronicle. In fact, the chronicle may not even have been based on the best manuscript chronicles that were circulating among Bristol’s burgess elite. However, it is the only one to have survived in its original form. The Bristol tradition of chronicle-writing doubtless followed that of London, but other provincial urban chronicles survive for a small number of towns, such as Colchester and Coventry. Bristol was unique, however, in the strength of its tradition of manuscript chronicle, or annal, writing, which lasted far into the eighteenth century. The chronicle occupies the first three sections of the *Kalendar*, and it too may have been seen as part of the effort to defend Bristol’s civic liberties. The *Kalendar*’s prologue offers two statements relating to this possibility. First, it declares that the chronicle is supposed to show how:

…this worshipfull Toune hath be enlarged, fraunchised, and corporated, by whate kinges daies, and by whoos sute and coste. The laboure, peyne, and travaille of the saide sewtours Almighty God rewarde them in hevyn, for al we ar bounde to pray for the same.

Thus, the chronicle was expected to act like a bede-roll, so that those who read the work would be reminded to pray for past champions of the town’s liberties. This in turn would encourage those readers in their efforts, since their sacrifices would be remembered by subsequent generations in the same way, and so ease their souls’ paths through Purgatory. Next, the prologue asserts that the chronicle’s inclusion is justified:

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28 The topic of Bristol’s other later medieval chronicles is to be discussed more fully in Peter Fleming, *Time, Space and Power in Fifteenth-Century Bristol* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming) [henceforth cited as Fleming, *Time, Space and Power*].


31 Ricart, *Kalendar*, p. 4.
For asmoche as it is righte convenient and according to every Bourgeois of the Towne of Bristowe, in especiall thoo that been men of worship, for to knowe and ynderstande the begynnyng and first foundacion of the saide worshipfull Toune.32

There seems to be a sense here that a proper awareness of Bristol’s ancient and glorious origins would naturally encourage the burgesses to defend their town’s liberties. Thus, the study of History is most certainly not an idle entertainment, and in this, the Kalendar was very much in line with later-medieval justifications for chronicle-writing.33

However, just as with the stated ambition that the final sections of the Kalendar would provide a finding aid to the civic archive, the chronicle as produced falls far short of the ambitions announced in the prologue. Apart from a short section at the beginning on the origins of Bristol, and another on the digging of the new channel for the Frome and associated works in the 1240s, Bristol itself does not figure until the chronicle reaches the 1440s. To answer the question of why the chronicle did not amount to a bede-roll of civic benefactors necessitates a review of the sources used by Ricart.

Ricart tells us that the pre-Conquest section was drawn from a Brut – that is, from a chronicle of England that begins with Britain’s foundation by the Trojan Brutus.34 Fourteenth-century English and Anglo-Norman Bruts, following Geoffrey of Monmouth’s twelfth-century Historia regum Brittaniae, tell how two of Brutus’s descendents, the brothers Belinus and Brennius, divided up Britain between them: the elder, Belinus, got the lion’s share, while Brennius had to settle for Scotland and the North of England.35 Brennius grew jealous of his brother and civil war ensued. Their mother eventually reconciled them by appearing between their two armies as they prepared for battle, bearing her bosom, and imploring Brennius: ‘Do not forget, my son, do not forget these breasts which gave you suck…’. Suitably admonished, the brothers settled their differences and went off to conquer Rome. At this point the fourteenth-century Bruts diverge from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s version, and have Brennius, who Geoffrey says stayed in Italy, return to Britain and then found Bristol.36 Geoffrey of Monmouth makes no mention of Bristol; coming from South-East Wales, just across the Severn from Bristol, he would probably have recorded the story of the town’s foundation by Brennius had it been current in his time.

This fanciful story became part of Bristol’s official history, thanks to Robert Ricart.37 The chronicle begins with a shortened Brutus story before giving a detailed account of Brennius’s foundation of Bristol. Brennius, we are told, ‘first founded and billed this worshipful Towne of Bristut that nowe is Bristowe’. This broadly

32 Ricart, Kalendar, p. 8.
33 Given-Wilson, Chronicles, pp. 57, 65–81.
34 For more detailed discussion of the sources, see Fleming, ‘Making history’, pp. 291–303.
36 Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain, pp. 54–9.
37 The story was not only believed in Bristol. In the 1430s the chronicler John Whethamstede dismissed the Brutus legend but accepted the reality of Brennius and Belinus, and the supposed arms of Belinus were quartered in the heraldry of Henry VII and Elizabeth: T. D. Kendrick, British Antiquity (London: Methuen, 1950), pp. 34–6. Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Brennius was widely identified with Brennus the Gaul who Roman sources say captured Rome in 390 B.C.E.: ibid., pp. 92–3.
follows the fourteenth-century *Bruts*, but then Ricart adds, apparently from his own imagining, or following a local, otherwise unrecorded, tradition, ‘and set it upon a litell hill, that is to say, bitwene Seint Nicholas yate, Seint Johnes yate, Seint Leonardes yate, and Newe yate’. 

Brennius was to have a long association with the town. When Henry VII paid his first visit to Bristol in 1486 he encountered a representation of Brennius, who greeted Henry as his ‘most dear cousin’, continuing,

> I am right glad, ye be welcome to this land,  
> Namely to this town, which I Brennius king,  
> Once builded with her walls old,  
> And called it Bristow in the beginning

... before complaining that when he founded Bristol it had been prosperous, but had lately suffered a decline in its trade and was consequently impoverished, and would remain so unless Henry came to its aid. Ricart was still town clerk at this time, and so would have had a major part in staging the festivities for Henry’s entry: the reception by Brennius may have been his idea. Brennius thus stands as the guarantor of Bristol’s liberties.

The chronicle also contains an account of Joseph of Arimathea, which seems to have derived from a text displayed at Glastonbury Abbey for the instruction of Latinate pilgrims. Glastonbury is about 25 miles south of Bristol, and it is in the diocese of Bath and Wells, which also included Bristol’s southern suburbs of Redcliffe and Temple. This was probably thought to be sufficient justification for the inclusion of the story in Ricart’s civic chronicle, but the tale was also politically significant in the fifteenth century, and this may also help to explain why it was included.

Joseph’s supposed role as the founder of British Christianity, of the island’s first Christian church at Glastonbury, and as custodian of the Holy Grail, was already well-established by Ricart’s time. John of Glastonbury’s *Cronica*, written around 1400 at the behest of John Chinnock, abbot of Glastonbury, contained the definitive account, and this appears to have influenced the Kalendar’s version. For Chinnock the legend supported his claim to primacy among English abbots, but it also allowed the English to claim primacy among Catholic Christians. English delegates to the great church councils in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries used the story to press their claims for primacy over the French. Christianity in England had been founded by a contemporary of Christ; it only came later to France. The importance of the diocese of Bath and Wells as both Christianity’s point of entry to Britain, and as a direct, personal connection to Christ, is conveyed in a speech made...
in 1417 by a member of the English delegation to the Council of Constance, Thomas Polton, at that time dean of York. After describing Joseph’s arrival in South-West Britain with his twelve companions and subsequent conversion of the locals, he relates how the British king:

…bestowed twelve hides of land and the diocese of Bath upon them for their support. They are now, it is written, buried in the monastery of Glastonbury, in the diocese of Bath, and the same monastery has from of old possessed the endowment of the said twelve hides.

From textual evidence it would appear that the rest of the medieval part of the Kalendar’s chronicle was drawn from a number of different sources. Among these was a brief account of English kings in Latin couplets; a set of Notabilia diversa, also in Latin and mainly referring to events in ecclesiastical history, probably also derived from Glastonbury Abbey; the thirteenth-century Flores historiarum of Matthew Paris; the Chronica de fundatoribus et de fundatione Ecclesie Theokusburi, written in Tewkesbury Abbey between 1450 and 1476; and, probably, a Latin chronicle of the Lords Berkeley and of their foundation of St Augustine’s Abbey, in which place it was probably written, and was possibly related to a Latin original from which the English-language Abbot Newland’s Roll was produced in 1490/1. For the section from 1216 Ricart turned to at least one of the London Chronicles as his main source. The marginal comments made in that section of Ricart’s chronicle drawn from the Flores historiarum are very moralistic, and suggest that they were made – probably in Latin before being translated into English for the Kalendar – by a cleric. A marginal note for the year 1216, which notes this as the year in which the Dominican Order was confirmed, suggests that the copy of the Flores historiarum used by Ricart may have been produced in a Dominican scriptorium or owned by a Dominican friary: possibly this may have belonged to the Friary in the Bristol suburb of Broadmead. Alternatively, there is an extant copy of the Flores historiarum which was once owned by the monks of nearby Tintern Abbey, although these were Cistercian rather than Dominican. What is striking is how little these various sources have to say about Bristol. The Brut, Flores, and the London Chronicle are concerned with the history of England as a whole, often as seen through metropolitan eyes. The Notabilia and the Tewkesbury Chronicle are largely concerned with ecclesiastical matters, although Ricart mainly uses the latter for an account of the earls of Gloucester, and their foundation of not only Tewkesbury Abbey but also of Bristol Castle, Bristol’s St James’s Priory and Keynsham Abbey. Even the Berkeley/St Augustine’s chronicle has little to say about Bristol, being largely a history of the Berkeley family and their religious bequests. Between the account of the foundation of Bristol and the year 1216 there is virtually no reference to the town.

The format of the chronicle changes considerably after the entry for the year 1216. Until this year, following the Flores historiarum, the entries are divided by the year of grace; afterwards, following the practice of the London chronicles, they appear under mayoral years. London first acquired a mayor in 1189, and so it is

42 For this paragraph see Fleming, ‘Making history’, pp. 297–301.
43 H. R. Luard (ed.), Flores historiarum, 3 vols. (Rolls Series, London, 1890), vol I, preface, pp. xxii–iv, discusses British Library Royal MS 14-e.16, the text of a Flores begun in St Benet Holme, Norfolk in 1304 and finished at Tintern Abbey between 1304 and at some point soon after 1324.
44 For this paragraph see Fleming, ‘Making history’, pp. 301–2.
from this year that the city’s chronicles begin their mayoral lists. From 1216/7 Ricart’s chronicle follows this practice, beginning with what its author took to be Bristol’s first mayor, Adam le Page. In this year we are told of Henry III’s coronation at Gloucester and how ‘he came to Bristowe and hilde there his grete Counseile in maner of a Parlement’. However, over a period of more than two centuries after 1217 local references continue to be scant. In 1232/3 the death of the abbot of Keynsham is noted, but with the exception of the civil engineering works of the 1240s there is nothing else of local interest for the next two centuries. Not even the granting of the charters of 1373 that elevated Bristol to county status is mentioned, although the text of the confirmation of the charters itself is reproduced later in the Kalendar. The exception comes under the year 1239/40, when there is a relatively fulsome description of the building of the new deep-water channel for the Frome, which mentions the pressure exerted by Henry III on the men of Redcliffe to co-operate with their neighbours across the Avon, as well as the grant of land by St Augustine’s Abbey through which the channel would be cut, ‘As appereth by olde writynge therof made bitwene the forseid Maire and Cominaltee and the seid Abbot and Covent’.

Once a steady rhythm of local events develops after 1440 we find recorded royal entries into Bristol, as well as local instances of bad weather, and their consequences, high grain prices and the loss of shipping. Civic improvements, such as the paving of roads and redecoration of the High Cross, also merit mention. These are interspersed with national events, gleaned from one or more London chronicles. Clearly, in the Chronicle as in its later sections, the Kalendar fails to do what was required of it by the mayor and common council.

From the perspective of a modern historian, it might at first seem inconceivable that Ricart, the town clerk, with ready access to the civic archive, should have made so little use of this to provide him with his primary sources for the construction of a history of Bristol, but of course, Ricart was a man of the fifteenth, not the twenty-first, century. He lived centuries before the dominance of archivally-based historical writing. While it is possible that Mayor Spenser grasped that history could be produced by archival research, it might be thought anachronistic and unreasonable to expect a provincial town clerk to anticipate modern historiography in this way. The typical medieval chronicler used previous chronicles to provide the bulk of his work, with only the final sections comprising new material. That new material usually covered the period within the memory of the chronicler and of his informants, and was provided by eye-witness testimony or reportage. Original documents might be used, but usually as verbatim transcripts, inserted into the text, rather than as the raw materials from which a narrative could be constructed. Ricart was no exception, and his chronicle’s access to the past of his town seems to have been limited largely to a forty-year period, that is, probably to within his own memory. However, it would be rash to assume from this that Ricart constructed his chronicle simply from

46 Ricart, Kalendar, p. 28.
48 But, having said this, in the 15th century the Coventry Leet Book appears to have been reorganised by a scribe with some notion of ‘archival research’: Mary Dormer Harris (ed.), The Coventry Leet Book, or Mayor’s Register, Containing the Records of the City Court Leet or View of Frankpledge, A.D. 1420–1555 (Early English Text Society, 146, 1913), pp. xv–xvi, Appendix A, pp. 845–6.
49 Given-Wilson, Chronicles, pp. 1–20.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar

historical sources just listed combined with his own memory. Almost certainly, the most recent forty years of his chronicle was based on one or more Bristol chronicles that have not survived.

Ricart’s is the earliest extant manuscript of a Bristol chronicle before Adams’s chronicles of 1623 and 1625, but Ricart was not a lone pioneer of Bristol historiography, producing the chronicle that, added to by those who came after him, would serve as the only town chronicle that ever existed before Adams. There are two extant scraps that demonstrate that there were other medieval chronicles of Bristol. In the early sixteenth century the antiquary John Leland copied extracts from what he described as ‘a little Boke of the Antiquities of the Howse of Calendaries in Brightstow’. The second scrap is found on the reverse of the paper copy of Abbot Newland’s Roll, produced after 1515, which contains a list of Bristol mayors and civic officers from 1373 to 1524, with some sparse annotations of national and local events. Both of these, and one of the sources used by Adams, were closely related to Ricart’s chronicle, but were not identical with it; therefore their sources cannot simply be later redactions of Ricart, but must depend to some degree on another chronicle. They may not be our only witnesses to that lost chronicle or chronicles.

As Rosemary Sweet has observed, between Adams, writing in the first half of the seventeenth century, and Samuel Seyer, working from the end of the eighteenth century, Bristol had the most vibrant tradition of urban chronicle writing of any English city. There are around twenty Bristol chronicle manuscripts extant from this period. They tend to begin in 1216, with Adam le Page as Bristol’s first mayor, and to continue into the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. They are all written in English. Seyer gathered together what he believed to be the best of these later annals, and this collection survives, in two volumes.

By comparing their accounts of events in medieval Bristol with accounts found in what sources would have been available to a seventeenth or eighteenth-century annalist, it seems that some of them had access to other sources based, ultimately, on a lost medieval chronicle or chronicles. This judgement is based on a number of cases where these annals recount a local incident that is not recorded in Ricart’s Kalendar and has not been found in published sources that would have been available at the time of the annal’s likely composition. This is not the place in which to go into detail about these episodes, but they range from Bristol’s dealings with Edward I in the thirteenth century, through a visit made to Bristol by Richard II in the 1390s, to two fifteenth-century events, namely a visit to Bristol by Queen Margaret of Anjou and the incarceration of the earl of Oxford in the town’s Newgate prison.

Ricart doubtless drew upon at least one local chronicle, and, to judge by the omissions of these episodes from his effort, he may not have had access to the

50 For the 1623 chronicle see Adams’s Chronicle of Bristol ed. Francis F. Fox & E. Salisbury (Bristol, 1910); the 1625 chronicle is unpublished, and is BRO 13748/4. The anonymous review of the 1910 edition of Adams’s Chronicle, TBGAS, 33 (1910), pp. 140–2, is a valuable discussion of his sources.
52 The Itinerary of John Leland in or About the Years 1535–1543, ed. L. T. Smith (London, G. Bell & sons, 1910), Part X, p. 91.
53 Sweet, Writing of Urban Histories, pp. 76–8.
54 Two others, in addition to Adams’, have been edited in A. E. Hudd, ‘Two Bristol calendars’, TBGAS, 19 (1894–5), pp. 105–41.
55 BRO 44954/1/4–5.
56 These are discussed at greater length in Fleming, Time, Space and Power, Chapter Two.
fullest account of Bristol’s history. Until 1478 Bristol’s manuscript chronicles would have been in the hands of private individuals, such as members of the civic elite, burgesses, aldermen and lawyers. This was the case with London, and Bristol probably followed a similar pattern. Before the mayoralty of William Spenser there was no official civic chronicle. He sought to remedy this omission by commissioning the newly-appointed town clerk to produce one. Spenser’s intention was to produce a continuous narrative of Bristol’s history from its origins to his own time, but this could not have been done. Even if Ricart had been able to gain access to all of the privately-owned town chronicles in circulation, which evidently he did not, there is no indication that they provided such a continuous history. The result was a chronicle that had little to say about Bristol before the 1440s. Even this section, however, may have been merely a copy of one of the existing chronicles, rather than Ricart’s original composition.

Ricart was no longer town clerk after 1489, but the chronicle was maintained long afterwards. While for long stretches it records nothing more than the names of mayors and sheriffs, it was kept going until 1899, when Bristol acquired a Lord Mayor and with it a new volume for its mayoral calendar, this one in use until 1938.57 Toulmin Smith has edited much of the Bristol material found in the post-Ricart chronicle up to 1698.58 Those few local notices from before 1698 that she did not published are to be found here. For the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the entries tend to settle into a dull round of royal visits and mayors dying in office. It has not been thought worthwhile including these here in extenso, but a selection, comprising what are judged to be the more interesting notices, are given below.

With increasing frequency the coats of arms of the mayors were placed next to their names. The first of these dates to Walter Frampton’s mayoralty in 1358, but for these early mayors the shields appear to have been added later; indeed, some later mayors have their shields pasted in on pieces of paper, at times actually obscuring the wording beneath.59 There are also occasional pencil notes indicating that a shield is misplaced.60 So, the appearance of a coat of arms next to a mayor’s name is no guarantee that those arms were actually carried by the man in question. Between 1783 and 1857 eleven men chosen as mayor refused to take office, and so were replaced. No action against them is recorded in the Kalendar, until the final instance, when, we are told that the reluctant mayor, ‘having refused to serve the Office law proceedings were taken against him’.61

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57 BRO CC/2/8. In the original MS (BRO CC/2/7), mayors’ lists occupy ff. 60r to 151v (1216–1570), ff. 166r–195v (1571–1657), ff. 198r–209v (1658–1696), and ff. 227r – 278r (1697–1898). Evidently, sufficient leaves were left blank by Ricart to take the chronicle up to 1570, before he resumed with ff. 152r (the illustration of the mayor making), and 153r – 165v (his Quartum Principale). The section that interrupts the mayors’ list from 1657 to 1658 (ff 195v–197v) comprises more oaths of office, in a 17th-century hand, while coming between the lists ending in 1696 and beginning in 1697 are copies of Henry VIII’s letters patent of 1542 that created Bristol as a city, and the inspeximus that contains Edward III’s 1373 charter that granted Bristol county status, together with some blank folios (ff. 210r–226r).

58 Ricart, Kalendar, pp. 27 – 68.

59 BRO CC/2/7 f 96r (Frampton); f 149v (the mayoralty of John Pykes, in 1562, has a shield and crest added on a separate slip of paper pasted onto the page).

60 For example, BRO CC/2/7 f 199r (The mayoralty of Sir John Knight, in 1663, has a modern pencil note saying that the arms shown are incorrect for him, and really belong either to John Knight, mayor 1670, or Sir John Knight, mayor in 1690).

61 Below, pp. 18–20.
Other Material in the Kalendar

In addition to the six parts of the Kalendar described above, there is some ancillary material. Some of this was added much later, and was included at the end of the volume. Most notably, this includes documents relating to the annexation and final demolition of Bristol Castle in the 1650s. There is also a basic index to the volume, evidently added by Robert Saxcy, mayor in 1556/7. In addition, there are included at the beginning of the volume twentieth-century lists of recorders, town clerks, lord high stewards and treasurers, and a 1621 list of civic books in the keeping of the town clerk. At some point the volume was bound with end papers composed of extracts from court rolls of the manor of Walwyn Castle, in Pembrokeshire, made during the reign of Henry VI (1422–1461, 1470–1). Binding volumes with old parchment or paper that was no longer required was a very common practice, and there is no indication of when this was done. However, the use of fragments from the proceedings of a Pembrokeshire manorial court may reflect later medieval Bristol’s close relations with South Wales.

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62 Ricart, Kalendar, pp. ix, xxii, 113–8; Fleming, ‘Making history’, pp. 310–11; Peter Fleming, Bristol Castle: A Political History (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 110, 2004) [henceforth cited as Fleming, Bristol Castle], pp. 20–29. This material appears in ff. iv–iir, vr, 322v – 324v, 328r (BRO CC/2/7).

1586 Mayor Richard Cole
This yeere died John Carre of the Cittie of Bristowe m[er]chant the moneth of June, and gave the Mannor of Congresbury and his landes in Bristoll to be employed upon an hospitall w[i]thin the Cittie for the bringinge up of poore fatherlesse children accordinke to the order of the hospitall of Christchurch in St Bartholomewes in London, after his debts and legacies paiied and appoynted devisees for the Same landes Thomas Aldworth, alderman, Rob[er]t Dory of London m[er]chant, Thomas Ashe and John Bythesea of Axbridge, and made Thomas Aldworth alderman and John Bythesea of Axbridge his executors of his last will and testam[en]t.

f. 170r

1598 Mayor John Webbe
This yeare there was bistowed (at the request of the Cittie) in perchasinge and buildinge the new markett in Broad Street 400 £ & bycoares out of the rents whereof there is 20 £ yearly given for the placeinge of poore boyes appr[en]tices.

f. 173r

1602 Mayor William Vawer
This yeare M[ro] J[ohn]n Whitson purchased of M[ro] Edward Butlor of London m[er]chant to the use of the maior & com[on]altie of this Cittie divers lands & tenem[en]ts lyinge & beinge at Winterborne in the Coun[ty] of Glouc[ester] of the yearely value in possession of one hundred pounds & upwards, for w[i]ch he paid one thousand & fower hundred pounds whereof the Lady Rawsey of London widdow deceaste gave freely one thousand pounds, & M[r]ss Ann Coulstone the wife of M[r] Tho[mas] Colstone gave two hundred pounds, & the residue was was paid by the Maior & Com[on]altie.

f. 177r

1605 Mayor Thomas James
This yeare one basen & Ewer of silver & guilt, w[hi]ch cost xxxij £ goeth from Maior to Maior yearely. W[hi]ch was given by the exec[utors] of M[r] Robert Kitchin Alderman.

f. 178v
1606  Mayor John Barker
Also this yeere there were very Faire and convenient Seates built in the Cathedrall Church of this Cittie for the Maior Aldermen & common Counsell to sitt on to heare Sermons w[hi]ch was donne by a lycence under the Seale of the deane and Chapiter; w[hi]ch Seale cost the Maior Aldermen and common Counsell one hundred and fifteene poundes.
f. 178v

1660  Mayor Henry Creswick
This yeare the new Key from the lower slip of the key towards Aldworths Dock in the marsh was begunne to be made as alsoe the way to bee made passable by Rownam to the Westwell.

1661  Mayor Nathaniel Cale
This yeare a new Barge was built to passe upp & downe the River; to bee used by the Maior & Ald[er]m[en] or Councell.
f. 198v

1690  Mayor Sir John Knight
This year was the Goal of this City new built ... Edw[ar]d Colston Esq founded the Hospital on St Michael Hill, & Endowed the same for 12 men & 12 women.
f. 208r

1697  Mayor John Bubb
This year the High Cross of this City was repaired and new painted & Guilded.
f. 227r

1699  Mayor John Bacheler
This Year Queen Square began to be built
f. 227v

1701  Mayor John Hawkins
This Year the Merchants Hall in King Street was new Built.

1702  Mayor William Lewis

1703  Mayor Peter Saunders
The Councell House was finished this year.
This Year a violent Hurricane raised the Water to such a degree, that great Damage was done For all the Low Parts of the City. Several Ships drove on Shore and great damage was done to several Tower’s & other Buildings.
f. 228v

1707  Mayor William Whitehead
In this Mayoralty the head of the Key was greatly enlarged at the charge of the City

1708  Mayor James Hollidge
This Year, the Bank called the Greete Bank, in the River Frome, above the Great
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar

Tower, was taken In, & the Key thereby greatly Enlarged Two third at the Charge of the City and the other third at the Charge of the Society of the Merchants.

f. 229v

1709 Mayor Robert Bound
This year Mr Colstons Almshouse on St Augustines Back, was Rebuilt & by him afterwards Endowed for one hundred boy’s.

f. 230r

1756 Mayor Giles Bayly
The full length Portrait of The Mayor & also that of his Wife was presented to the Corporation & is hung up in one of the Cimmittee Rooms of the Council House.

f. 242r

1783 Mayor Isaac Elton
Mr Elton on the 29 Sep. 1783 appeared and refused to take the oaths and on the 2 Oct following John Anderson Esq was chosen Mayor.

10th December 1783 Richard Burke Esq Brother of the Rt Hon[ourab]le Edmund Burke was elected Recorder of this City.

f. 248v

1789 Mayor James Hill
Jeremy Baker was chosen Mayor on the 15 Sep 1789 and declined serving. On the 5 October following James Hill Esqr was Elected & sworn Mayor.

f. 250r

1791 Mayor John Noble
Matthew Brickdale Esqr was elected Mayor on 15 Sep 1791 he refused serving, and on the 3 October 1791 John Noble Esqr was Elected & sworn Mayor.

f. 250v

1794 Mayor Joseph Smith
John Fisher Weare Esqr was chosen Mayor on the 15 Sep[tember] 1794, he declined serving on the 2 Oct[ober] following Joseph Harford Esqr was chosen who likewise declined, and on the 20th October Joseph Smith Esqr was chosen and immediately sworn Mayor.

1795 Mayor James Harvey
William Weare Esqr was chosen Mayor the 15 Sep[tember] 1795 which he declined accepting and on the 3 October following James Harvey Esqr was elected and sworn Mayor.

f. 251v

1805 Mayor Daniel Wait
John Toy Edgar Esqr was chosen Mayor on the 15 Sep[tember] 1805 he declined serving, and on the 2 Oct[ober] 1805 The Corporation elected Daniel Wait Esqr.

f. 254r
1806 Mayor Richard Vaughan
W[illia]m Fripp Esqr was chosen Mayor on the 15 Sep[tember] 1806, and declined serving, on the 2 Oct[ober] 1806 Richard Vaughan Jun[io]r was elected.  

1810 Mayor Philip Protheroe
Sir Henry Protheroe was chosen Mayor on the 15 Sep[tember] 1810 when he declined serving and the Corporation elected Philip Protheroe Esq.

1811 Mayor John Hilhouse Wilcox
Levi Ames Jun[io]r Esq. was elected Mayor on the 15 Sep[tember] 1811 he declined serving and on the 24 Oct[ober] 1811 John Hilhouse Wilcox Esq was chosen.

1831 Mayor Charles Pinney
In the month of October 1831 the Great Riots took place in this City the Mob burnt down the Mansion House occupied by the Mayor & situate in Queen Square together also with about 30 other Houses also the Gaol Bridewell & the Bishops Palace.

1834 Mayor Charles Payne
An Act of Parliament was passed on the 9 September 1835 to provide for the Regulation of Municipal Corporations in England Wales in consequence thereof Mr Payne continued in Office up to the 1 January 1836 when the said Act as affecting the Offices of Mayor & Sheriff came into operation.

1836 Mayor William Fripp

1837 Mayor John Kerle Haberfield
1 November 1838 The Mayor laid the Foundation Stone of the Victoria Rooms, Clifton.

1841 Mayor George Woodroffe Franklyn
St Philips Bridge opened in State by the Mayor.

1843 Mayor William Lewton Clark
The Mayor attended the opening of the Bristol and Exeter Railway.
1849  Mayor John Kerle Haberfield
8 August 1850 The Mayor laid the Foundation Stone of the High Cross College
Green.
f. 266\textit{v}

1857  Mayor Allan Cooke
Mr So --- [rest of name obscured by super-imposed shield] having refused to serve
the Office law proceedings were taken against him see proceedings of Town Council
– Mr Edwards the sheriff of 1856 did the Dates.

1860  Mayor Odiarne Coates Lane
In this Year the Purchase of Durdham Down was made by the Corporation at a cost
of £15000 which was paid by the Treasurer this day (Novem[ber] 8th 1861).
f. 268\textit{v}

1864  Mayor William Naish

1864  Decem[ber] 8th The Mayor went in state at the head of the Procession on
opening the Clifton Suspension Bridge this day.

1865  April. This year was Granted a Commission for holding a Criminal Assize in
this City and the two Judges attended one of whom tried Prisoners and the other
Civil Cases.
f. 269\textit{v}

1866  Mayor Elisha Smith Robinson
1 November 1867 On & from this day the various Tolls of Turnpikes connected with
the Borough of Bristol abolished.

1867  Mayor Francis Adams
17 April 1868 The corner Stone of the new Nave of the Cathedral in this City was
laid by The R[igh]t Hon[ourable] the Earl of Limerick Provincial Grand Master of
Freemasons for Bristol, The Mayor, Corporation & Officers attended in their Robes.

20 August 1868 Perry Road Parish of St Michael opened by the Mayor and
Corporation the first street made by the Local Board of Health under the Local
f. 270\textit{r}

1871  Mayor William Proctor Baker
[In margin] 9th May 1872 Spire of the Church of St Mary Redcliff [main text]
The Mayor (accompanied with the Mayoress, the Vicar of the Parish & the Church
Wardens & others) laid the Cap Stone of the new Spire of St Mary Redcliff Church.
f. 271\textit{r}

1872  Mayor William Hathway
The new Race Course near the City was opened 19 Mar 1873.
1 May 1873 – Baths & Wash Houses Mayors Paddock opened.

1873  Mayor Thomas Barnes
City Boundaries Perambulation 19th & 20 May 1874 ... City Boundaries to the Holms 1 July 1874 ... City Boundaries to Hanham 21. August 1874.

1874  Mayor Christopher James Thomas
The road which skirts the western acclivity of the Downs towards the Sea Wall, and was afterward continued to the Westbury Road was made during this Mayoralty, its cost being defrayed by a subscription set on foot by the Mayor. Such a road had a few years previously been projected by Alderman Thomas Proctor.

1875 August 24th This day the Mayor, Mayoress & Family took up their residence at the Mansion House given to the Corporation 29 June 1874 by Thomas Proctor one of the Aldermen of this City.

1876  Mayor George W[illiam]m Edwards
24 February 1877 The Channel Dock at Avonmouth was opened this day by The Mayor accompanied by many Members of the Corporation the Sheriff & Directors & Officials connected with the Channel Dock Company.

1881  Mayor Joseph Dodge Weston
1882 July 3. Sir Greville Smyth, Bart. presented Land at Bedminster for a People’s Park ... July 25 New Police Station at Bedminster opened.

1887  Mayor Charles Wathen
25th July 1888 H.R.H. Prince Albert Victor, eldest son of H.R.H The Prince of Wales visited the City accompanied by His Grace, The Duke of Beaufort, & his Equerry Major Miles; His Royal Highness was presented with a loyal address, & the Freedom of the City, in the Council Chamber, & he then proceeded to College Green where he unveiled a marble statue of H.M. Queen Victoria subscribed for by the Citizens, as a memorial of Her Majesty’s 50 years reign, after which he was entertained by the Mayor at a Banquet at the Mansion House.

1888  Mayor Charles Wathen
29th Sept. 1889 The Mayor’s Chapel re-opened for public worship, after its restoration.
1894  Mayor Robert Henry Symes

6 May 1895 Restored Chancel of Cathedral re-opened by The Archbishop of Canterbury.

f. 277r

1896  Mayor Robert Henry Symes

24 June 1897. The Most Honourable The Marquess of Dufferine and Ava, laid the foundation stone of the Cabot Memorial Tower on Brandon Hill ... 28 October 28 [sic]. Dr George Forrest Browne, the newly appointed Bishop to the restored See, was enthroned at the Cathedral.

1 November. Bristol Corporation Act 1897 came into force, and the new Wards added to the City from this day.

f. 277v

1898  Mayor Herbert Ashman

July 10 – 1899 Opening of the new Council Chamber by the Lord Mayor ... July 12 – 1899

The first complete isolation Hospital provided by the City, opened at Ham Green by the Lord Mayor.

f. 278r
There are eighteen fifteenth-century illustrations, a seventeenth-century illustration of James I of England, the illuminated border to Edward III’s inspeximus charter of 1373 as well as numerous mayoral coats of arms put on shields next to the mayor’s name. Of the eighteen fifteenth-century illustrations, thirteen depict medieval kings, mostly shown in half-page, and each ushering in the account of that king’s reign or, from 1216, accompanying the first mayoral year of the reign. The remaining four illustrations are of Bristol’s first sheriff, appointed following the 1373 creation of the county of Bristol, a three-quarter elevation, or birds-eye, view of Bristol, a full-page depiction of the mayor-making ceremony, and a portrayal of the Annunciation and Adoration of the Holy Infant.

The fifteenth-century illustrations are not the work of the same artist. Most of the artists were evidently professionals, producing work of relatively high quality. As such, this programme of illustrations must have cost a great deal of money. The Bristol civic elite appear to have been unusually keen to pay for high-quality illustrations for crucial documents: the 1373 charters are a prime example, but the 1499 charter is also adorned with an illuminated capital letter, the royal arms, and a depiction of Henry VII enthroned with a smaller figure at his feet. None of these documents, neither the charters nor the Kalendar, were intended for public display, but would only be seen by mayors and common counsellors. So, the considerable expenditure on illustration was not undertaken in order to persuade or influence the mass of the townspeople.

The purpose of the depictions of kings in the Kalendar may have been to remind readers of where to find particular episodes in Bristol’s history. Each king is depicted

64 The medieval illustrations are discussed in K. L. Scott, Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490, vol. 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), pp. 348–50, and the following discussion is indebted to her work, including her suggested attributions of artists to illustrations.

65 The portrayal of the Annunciation and Adoration of the Holy Infant appears immediately above, and so appears to support, the invocation to God the Father, Christ and the Virgin that opens the Kalendar. The purpose of this invocation may have been similar to that of the invocation in Wells’s “Constitutional Statement” of 1437; according to David Gary Shaw, Creation of a Community: The City of Wells in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 179, ‘in a sense, these supreme powers were being called to witness, guarantee, and oversee the burgesses’ sincerity and the aptness of their regime’.

66 For the 1373 charters see Christian Liddy, War, Politics and Finance in Late Medieval English Towns: Bristol, York and the Crown, 1350–1400 (Woodbridge: Boydell/Royal Historical Society, 2005), pp. 55–7; for the 1499 charter see Cronne, Bristol Charters, p. 168.
differently, and their intended function as a visual mnemonic may have been thought important as a support to the initial conception of the chronicle as a means by which the important stages in Bristol’s constitutional development could be identified. The depictions of the birds’-eye view of Bristol, the first sheriff, and the intended illustration for the 1373 Inspeiximus may have had a similar purpose. The mayor-making scene, on the other hand, may have functioned to inform members of the civic elite of the nature of their polity. The use of illustrations in manuscripts as aide memoire was well established; they served to remind the reader of important points in the text, and the more memorable the image the better the chances of their being effective. That, as eventually executed, the chronicle was unable to fulfil its intended function need not detract from the possibility that this is why the original set of illustrations was commissioned.

Only two depictions of kings take up an entire page. No reason is given for the inclusion of these full-page illustrations. One of these shows William the Conqueror, and the other shows Henry III’s coronation. An answer to the question of why these particular two kings were given such prominence may help us to understand how the Kalendar was produced.

Ricart naturally had a keen appreciation of William’s part in national history, and used his reign as the point of division between two sections in the Kalendar (between pre- and post-Conquest kings: the illustration marks this division) but his special treatment probably relates to his earlier role as Bristol’s patron. In Part Two there are four sections not drawn from the Flores historiarum. Of these three are concerned with men who might fairly have been considered as having had a crucial part in Bristol’s rise to prominence. These are: the earls of Gloucester, builders of Bristol Castle and of St James’s Priory; Robert fitz Harding, founder of St Augustine’s, and the house of Berkeley; and King John, who through his charter to the town as count of Mortain was, ‘one that moost freest and moost largest enfraunchised this worshipfull Toune’. The fourth is William the Conqueror, whose ancestry is explained in a short section. While William is of course of immense importance in English history, his inclusion amid three men with particular Bristol associations suggests that he too was thought to be of particular local significance. Hence, his full-page depiction may have been commissioned with this supposed connection in mind.

That William was thought of as Bristol’s special patron is suggested by the use of his image at the start of Edward IV’s first royal visit to Bristol in September 1461. The king was met at Temple Gate by William the Conqueror, with these words:

Welcome Edward, our son of high degree, many years hast thou been out of this land, I am your forefather, William of Normandy. to see thy welfare here through God’s hand.

Thus, on this occasion William seems to have been regarded as Bristol’s historical protector. Could he have been supplanted in this role by Brennius? If so, then perhaps whatever links between William and Bristol there were thought to be were suppressed in the Kalendar in favour of Brennius, although not without leaving textual and pictorial traces. Brennius would have been preferred over William because he could

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67 Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, pp. 172–7, 283–93.
69 REED Bristol, pp. 7–8.
be more exclusively associated with Bristol, and he linked the town with an antiquity that was far greater than that provided by the Norman dynasty, even if traced back to their Scandinavian forbears, and far more prestigious.

The prominence given to Henry III might be explained by the great council that was held in his name at Bristol shortly after his coronation at Gloucester, as referred to in the chronicle. However, this alone seems of insufficient importance to justify his special treatment, and so it may be that this image was commissioned in the erroneous belief that the coronation took place in Bristol, and that by the time the error was spotted it was too late. This would be in accord with the general relationship between illustrations and text in the Kalendar.

Ricart himself is unlikely to have been entrusted with commissioning the artwork for the Kalendar: such a decision, carrying significant financial implications, would almost certainly have been in the hands of the mayor and common council. Quite possibly, the illustration scheme was decided upon and commissioned before Ricart produced his text, and therefore without the benefit of his researches. Ricart’s work, while unable to deliver what Mayor Spenser and the common council wanted, did, perhaps, correct their mistaken belief that Henry III had been crowned in Bristol, and provided Brennius as a more suitable local hero than William. However, these revelations were only made after the commissioning of the images had been made. There are thus two disjunctions in the Kalendar: one between the declared intentions for the work and what Ricart actually produced, the other between text and illustration scheme.

Half-page spaces have been left blank at the beginning of the reigns of Edward III, Henry IV, Henry V, Edward IV and Henry VII, suggesting that illustrations were intended, but never executed. No space is left for a portrait of Richard III, and the heading for his reign is cramped, as though it had been added as an afterthought. The entry in the main text for Richard III notes his coronation at Westminster, the great flood that occurred in Bristol, and the execution of the duke of Buckingham in 1483, but in a marginal note, added later but still – to judge by the hand – in the fifteenth century, we are told that Edward IV’s two sons were ‘were put to scylence in the towre of London’. The entry for Richard III was crammed into a restricted space at the bottom of the page between Edward IV and Henry VII, strongly suggesting that it was added after Richard’s death: the marginal note almost certainly was.

However, the lack of images for the other five kings demands another explanation. Evidently, Ricart continued to oversee the writing of the chronicle until he was replaced as town clerk in 1489, four years into the reign of Henry VII. With the accession of Henry VIII in 1509 a change of policy is evident: no spaces are left for the depictions of kings. Apart from Richard III, of whom there is no evidence that an illustration was planned, there had at some stage been the expectation that the five kings would be so commemorated, thereby completing the scheme whereby all English kings from the Conquest would be depicted. This plan was evidently abandoned after the text was written, since spaces were left for illustrations, and it is possible that all of the other fifteenth-century images were inserted into the completed volume after this point. The illustration of Henry VI is cruder than the others, and is not the work of any of the other artists used in the Kalendar. So, it

70 Kate Norgate, The Minority of Henry the Third (London: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 9–10. The council is noted in Leland’s transcript of the annals he found in the house of the Kalends: The Itinerary of John Leland, ed. Toulmin-Smith, Part X, p. 92.
71 ff. 129r–129v.
appears that the commission to produce images of kings was abandoned after the production of those from William I to Richard II (with the omission of Edward III), and that by this time the chronicle text, completed up until at least the opening of the reign of Henry VII, had been sent to the artists’ workshops, where the images of the kings up to Richard II were added. The image of Henry VI was added later, by another artist, as something of an afterthought. Perhaps the mayor and common council had run out of money, or considered that this was no longer a worthwhile item of expenditure. The latter possibility may, in turn, have been prompted by the realisation that the mnemonic function of these illustrations was not working, since Ricart had been unable to supply a text that told the history of Bristol. Without that function, the expense of providing the missing royal depictions was thought to be unjustifiable, and hence the commission was abandoned.

That a space was left for an image of Henry VII strongly suggests that this decision was made after his accession in 1485, and that the images were inserted into the text at around that time. If the supposition that Brennius replaced William as Bristol’s special protector is correct, then the date of the addition of the full-page image of the Conqueror probably predates Henry VII’s visit of September 1486, when he was met by a presentation of Brennius. However, if the bird’s-eye view of Bristol was intended to depict the town that Brennius founded, then this must have been commissioned and executed after the putative adoption of the Trojan foundation myth, and so, probably, after the commissioning and production of the image of William. This opens up the possibility that the text was sent to the various artists’ workshops on different occasions, which is not improbable. The likelihood is that while the Kalendar was commissioned in 1478/9, the chronicle text, with its illustrations, was not completed for at least another seven years. Given Ricart’s other duties, and the fact that the chronicle up to 1485 occupies only three of the six sections of the Kalendar, it is quite possible that the book’s production would take this long.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
Annunciation and Adoration of Christ
(f. 1v)

This view is unusual in that it shows both Mary reading (representing Christ as the *Logos*, or Word (John 1:14–15)) as she conceives Christ from the Holy Spirit, shown as the rays emanating from God the Father (and hence, not, strictly speaking, the Annunciation itself), and the Adoration of the infant Christ, depicted as the infant being censed by an angel. The figure on the floor in front of Mary, preparing some kind of food on a fire, perhaps represents St Anne, Mary’s mother. The portrayal of the Annunciation and Adoration of the Holy Infant appears immediately above, and so appears to support, the invocation to God the Father, Christ and the Virgin that opens the *Kalendar* (f. 1v–1r). On stylistic grounds, the artist of this illustration appears also to have produced the depictions of William the Conqueror and Henry III.
Bird’s Eye View of Bristol
(f. 5v)

In this view, the four gates of the first town wall stand at each of the four corners of the picture. At the centre, and dominating the image, is an oversize depiction of the High Cross, erected, supposedly, to commemorate the granting of the charters in 1373 that created the Town and County of Bristol. The whole image might be seen as an attempt to portray, in a single bird’s-eye-view, the town as it would have appeared to an observer standing beneath the High Cross, at the central carfax, and turning to look down each of the four streets. As such, it portrays an image that could never have been seen from the ground, and which is quite clearly a stylised representation. The image shows only the very centre of town, omitting those areas outside the original circuit of walls that comprised most of Bristol’s built-up area in the fifteenth century. This tight focus may have been the result of purely aesthetic considerations, producing a simple image that works well within a rectangular frame. On the other hand, it was also intended to convey a strong symbolic charge. The image is designed around two crosses, portrayed in vertical and horizontal planes, which connect at the centre of the picture, which is also the centre of town. The first is the High Cross, the second the simplified street system, where Broad Street, Corn Street, High Street and Wind Street form a saltire. This was probably intended to be read as an expression of the Christian nature of the place: Bristol was a holy city.

There are correspondences between this image of Bristol, portrayed graphically, and a textual description of Chester, found in the *De laude Cestrie*, a twelfth-century encomium to the city by the monk Lucian. In his representation, Lucian draws a similar parallel between a cruciform street system and the Christian cross:

Chester also has two perfectly straight streets intersecting like the blessed cross, which form four roads, culminating at the four gates, mysteriously revealing that the grace of the Great King dwells in the very city…

While the artist responsible for the Bristol image is highly unlikely to have known Lucian’s text, the conceptual similarities suggest that a correspondence between the stylised street plan and the Christian cross was deliberate, and would have been recognised as such by contemporaries for whom such associations would have been readily made.

The image was added immediately below the description of Bristol’s foundation by Brennius, who ‘set it vpon a litell hill, that is to say, bitwene Seint Nicholas yate, Seint Johnes yate, Seint Leonarides yate, and Newe yate’. In this line, Ricart may only have been intending to locate the ancient core of the town within familiar

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72 Although, on architectural grounds, the earliest part of the High Cross has been tentatively dated to the early 15th century. The cross can now be seen at Stourhead, Wiltshire: Michael J. H. Liversidge, *The Bristol High Cross* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association Pamphlet, 42, 1978), passim, and pp. 10–11.


The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar

landmarks, and the artist may not have intended his image to be read as depicting the town at an early stage in its history. However, Ricart’s choice of words, and the close juxtaposition of words and image does suggest that a relationship between the two was intended, and that what was being depicted was in some way the atemporal essence of the place, that since its foundation the town walls had bounded a sacred community. ⁷⁵

The tight focus on the town as contained within its first circuit of walls may also have carried a political message. Excluded are areas which had represented challenges to the authority of the mayor and common council. South of the Avon, in Redcliffe and Temple, were lands and lordship held, respectively, by the Lords Berkeley and the Knights of St John; on the northern bank of the Frome lay the extensive properties of the Priory of St James, the Franciscan and Carmelite friaries, and the Abbey of St Augustine. At various points in the later middle ages, Bristol’s mayor and common council had violent clashes with the Berkeleys, the Knights of St John, and the abbot and canons of St Augustine’s. In addition, Bristol Castle, which would have dominated the town, is shown, if at all, as a relatively insignificant structure. Given that this was a royal castle, and that before 1373 new mayors had to present themselves before the castle constable, as the king’s representative, for confirmation in office (the 1373 charter released mayors from this obligation), then this too might have been viewed as a seat of authority that was independent of, and, perhaps at times antagonistic towards, that held by the mayor. ⁷⁶

The image bears some similarities with the depiction of towns on the mural paintings made for the tomb of Bishop John Carpenter of Worcester (d. 1476) in Westbury-on-Trym church, just to the north of Bristol. The crypt tomb recess once contained paintings depicting Carpenter’s funeral procession from Worcester to Westbury. The originals have vanished, but copies of them were made in 1852, and the stylistic resemblance to the view of Bristol in Ricart’s Kalendar does suggest that the same artist may have been responsible for both. ⁷⁷ If so, then he may have been local. This artist may also have been responsible for the depictions of Henry I, Stephen, Henry II, Richard I and John.

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⁷⁵ For the idea of urban walls as defining a sacred and sovereign space see Wendy Brown, Walled States, Waning Sovereignty (New York: Zone Books, 2010), pp. 43–7.

⁷⁶ These ideas are explored further in Peter Fleming, ‘Processing power’, pp. 153–5, 160–2.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Orme and Jon Cannon, Westbury-on-Trym: Monastery, Minster and College (BRS, 62, 2010), pp. 162–4, plate x.
William the Conqueror (f. 21r)

King William I (r. 1066–1087) is shown here on horseback, with an infantry army behind him. He is shown wearing a fifteenth-century plate harness, while the footmen carry bills, poll-axes and longbows, and are thus shown as a contemporary military force. The shield William carries is the one element in the picture that is in any way not thoroughly modern, since by the later fifteenth century the plate harness of the best-protected man-at-arms had become so complete that shields were rendered obsolete on the battle field. Here, William’s shield carries the three lions of England (Gules, three lions passant guardant or). Possibly with a nod to some sort of historical verisimilitude, these arms are not shown quartered with the fleur-de-lys of France (as they had been since 1340). However, the three lions were not carried by English kings before Richard I, and so this too is anachronistic.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
William II (Rufus)
(f 29r)

William II (r. 1087–1100), was the third son of William the Conqueror. He was killed by an arrow while hunting in the New Forest, and ever since there has been speculation that this was not an accident, but an assassination.78 He is shown here carrying the arrow that killed him, rather in the manner of a saint depicted with the instrument of his/her martyrdom, even though William would certainly not have been regarded as a saintly martyr. The artist for this image does not seem to have been used again in the Kalendar.

The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
Henry I (f. 32v)

Henry I (r. 1100–1135), was the fourth son of William I. On the basis of stylistic evidence, it is possible to conclude that the artist of this image was also responsible for those of the next four kings.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar

This same yeare Stéphane de l'Aube seing his kingly sette saft, ad verticis leu, sauf, et se mis the first thiat ollere fiolle te Minde. Hone nauy wonduir, yet he lees his eie. And took the spurrie upon him. Wolde Archibishop of Ulm, whos he made the king oble to the sainde. Touched the Duke Stéphan, at beond the loop. Day after the Deere of the burne, he engene: And the papa Archibishop (1209) not a pese Ix, and Spier to eyes.
Stephen  
(f. 37v)

King Stephen (r. 1135–1154), was one of William I’s grandsons, and a nephew of Henry I. In 1135 he usurped the throne from Matilda, daughter of Henry I, and so began a period of civil war known as the Anarchy. The artist appears to have had difficulty depicting the king’s eyes, evidently changing his mind about their placement.
This same year the vii day of December, having the son of Richard Plantagenet, the Prince of Wales, called Henry the Second, came into England. Nevertheless, second of all people. And in the thirty day of January, he was crowned king by Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury.

This year was having the son of King Henry the Second.
King Henry II (r. 1154–1189) was the son of Matilda, and became king after Stephen’s death, inaugurating the line of Angevin kings, named from Anjou, of which Henry was count from 1151. His marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152 gave him the Duchy of Aquitaine, which included the vineyards of Gascony: hence, his accession as king brought this territory under the English crown, with very positive implications for Bristol’s trade. As a youth, in the 1140s, Henry had spent time in Bristol.79

The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
Richard the Lion-Heart (Cœur de Lion) (f. 47r)

King Richard I (r. 1189–1199) was the third son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. He is shown here with a lion, in obvious reference to his nickname, given in recognition of his martial qualities. While this illustration is clearly by a different artist from that of William Rufus, one wonders if the one artist saw the other’s depiction of a lion and copied the idea. Richard spent little time in England as king, but instead was a prominent leader of the Third Crusade, before being captured and held for ransom by the duke of Austria.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
John (f. 50r)

King John (r. 1199–1216) was the youngest of Henry II’s five sons, and inherited the throne on the death of his elder brother Richard. In 1189 John was made count of Mortain and, through his marriage to Isabel, heiress of the duke of Gloucester, lord of Bristol, and it is probably to this year that Bristol’s first extant charter dates, granted by him to the men of Bristol. He is not given privileged pictorial treatment, despite the special place he occupies in Ricart’s text as the supposed grantor of Bristol’s first charter.

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The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
The Coronation of Henry III
(f. 59v)

King Henry III (r. 1216–1272) was the son of King John by his second wife, Isabella of Angoulême. He was crowned at Gloucester on 28 October by Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, the papal legate, and within days held his first council meeting at Bristol. His coronation is depicted here. However, at the time he was only a child of nine, not the adult shown in the illustration, and real power lay in the hands of the veteran William Marshal, earl of Pembroke.
Edward I 
(f. 74r)

King Edward I (r. 1272–1307) was the son of Henry III. The artist of this monochrome depiction of the king is of superior competence to the one who executed the previous illustrations, and this led Scott to suggest that he may have been based in London.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar

This year King Richard went into armes. He did the last time in England the 25 day of January in a town named of Rochester. And the 35 day of February he was found in York. And this same year within the space of his stay he made many other towns to submit and he made them the lordship of Warlingham and the deacon of strondvale. He also promised protection to the children of Thirlsmon.
Edward II
(f. 83r)

King Edward II (r. 1307–1327) was the son of Edward I. He was deposed and – probably – murdered in Berkeley Castle in 1327. The artist of this depiction is, on stylistic grounds, believed to be the same as the one responsible for the illustration of Richard II, and his superior competence led Scott to suggest that, like the artist of the Edward I image, he was based in London.
Bristol’s First Sheriff  
(f 100r)

There is no depiction of Edward III (r. 1327–1377). This image comes at the point (1373) when Bristol received a charter that recorded that the town had become a county in its own right (the first English provincial town or city to be awarded this honour). Among the benefits of this new status was the right to have a sheriff. The sheriff is shown here flanked by two civic serjeants, the one carrying a mace (as a serjeant-at-mace, a common sight in fifteenth-century Bristol), while the other carries an axe. This latter detail seems to be a reference to the fact that the charter gave both sheriff and mayor the powers of keepers of the peace to investigate, indict and imprison suspected felons. However, they could not condemn and execute felons, but had to await the prisoner’s delivery from gaol by a central court justice, with whom the mayor sat at sessions of gaol delivery, before sentence of death could be passed. So, having the sheriff accompanied by a serjeant carrying a headsman’s axe would seem to be over dramatising his role. On the grounds of greater competence, Scott suggested that the artist of this depiction was based in London. He appears to have been different from the one who produced the images of Edward II and Richard II.

Richard II
(f. 101v)

King Richard II (r. 1377–1399) was the grandson of Edward III. He was deposed by Henry Bolingbroke, who became King Henry IV (1399–1413), and who ordered Richard’s murder in 1400. The artist of this depiction was, according to Scott, probably based in London, and also executed the image of Edward II.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
Henry VI
(f 113v)

King Henry VI (r. 1422–1461, 1470–71) was the son of Henry V (r. 1413–1422) and grandson of Henry IV, neither of whom were depicted in the Kalendar. This illustration was made by a different artist from the ones who produced the other royal depictions, and he was evidently less skilled. This may be an attempt at an individual likeness of the king. His depiction with a down-turned sword may be significant. Henry VI was the last of the Lancastrian kings. After being removed by the Yorkist Edward IV in 1461, he was restored to the throne in 1470, before being finally deposed by Edward, and murdered on his orders, in 1471. If, as suggested above, the first iteration of text and illustrations was only completed after Henry VII’s accession, then this image would not have been intended as a hostile comment on the king, since it was as a Lancastrian that Henry Tudor presented himself and it was upon the Lancastrian claim to legitimacy that he based his own to the English throne in 1485. So, the down-turned sword may refer to Henry’s deposition and murder, although he was not unique in this among English medieval kings: both Edward II and Richard II shared his fate, but neither are depicted in the Kalendar in a way that sets them apart as murder victims.
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
The Mayor-Making Ceremony
(f 152r)

The mayor stood at the pinnacle of Bristol’s civic government. The new mayor was elected in the Guildhall on 15 September. After this, with two weeks to prepare, the hand-over of power from old to new mayor – the mayor-making – took place on Michaelmas – the 29 September – in the Guildhall on Broad Street, and this was the central event in Bristol’s civic calendar. The event is depicted over a whole page of the Kalendar. This depiction proceeds along two axes: reading from top to bottom reveals a descending hierarchy of political power; reading from left to right we see the passage of time, as office is transferred from the old to the new mayor. There is a careful spatial arrangement of the elements within the image.

The page is divided into four horizontal bands. At the top is a panel containing three armorial shields. One bears a red cross on a white background, the second the royal arms, and the third the arms of Bristol. Below this the second band has as its focus the image of the previous mayor handing power to the new mayor, the pair flanked by five other figures, all wearing fur-trimmed scarlet cloaks. Below and in front of them is a table around which stand civic officers, identified by their party-coloured robes, including serjeants-at-mace, the sword-bearer and the town clerk holding a book. To our right is a group of nine men also wearing scarlet gowns. The figures in this band are portrayed as smaller than the mayors and their companions, and this gradation in size operates between, on the one hand, the civic officers standing behind the table (the sword-bearer, a serjeant-at-mace standing immediately behind him and the town clerk), all three of whom impinge somewhat into the space occupied by the mayors’ party, and on the other those standing in front of and below the table, who are depicted as smaller. The group of nine scarlet-clad figures to our right descend in size from top to bottom to broadly the same degree, so that the uppermost figures are of approximately the same size as the sword-bearer, serjeant-at-mace and town clerk, and the lowermost match the dimensions of the figures below the table. Beneath the line of civic officers, and in front of the table, is a barrier, delineating the fourth and final space, which is occupied by a group of men wearing civilian costume. According to standard medieval practice, there is a relationship between size and significance: the most important figures, those of the two mayors and their immediate companions, are the largest; those at the bottom of the picture are the smallest and least significant. However, the mayors do not stand in the uppermost band, and hence we are to assume that in the hierarchical scheme they come below the authority symbolised there.

The central shield, carrying the royal arms, tells us that the power exercised by the civic elite comes from the Crown alone. The Bristol arms might be read as suggesting that the town, as a corporate entity, is greater than any individual, even a mayor, and essentially immortal. The red cross is the cross of St George, patron saint of England and, evidently, of Bristol. Certainly, the saint had special significance for the civic elite, to judge by the chapel of St George that adjoined the Guildhall, home to the merchants’ fraternity of the same name, and functioning as a civic chapel for the use of the mayor and common councillors, and by the mayor and common council’s involvement in a St George’s day procession. In addition, in 1461 on his
first royal visit to Bristol Edward IV was entertained by a tableau of St George slaying the dragon.82

The armorial invocation of St George also provides the only indication of divine legitimation in this scene, apart from the fact that the new mayor is presumably swearing on a Bible. However, even the specifically sacred aspect of St George’s identity was so closely associated with the English monarchy that his special place in Bristol’s elite civic culture might have been at least as much about underlining the town’s loyalty to the king as it was an indication of particular piety. While there was no clear distinction between secular and sacred in medieval culture, the absence from the mayor-making scene of any other indication of religious legitimation is still noteworthy. Indeed, Bristol’s coat of arms is also entirely secular: the castle represents the town’s military and administrative importance, and the ship its commercial economy, but the Church, the saints and God are nowhere to be seen. This is in contrast to many other towns and cities in later medieval England.83 The local individual representative of royal authority, the castle constable, had enjoyed no part in the mayor-making since 1373, and nor had either of the bishops of Worcester or Bath and Wells ever done so. The message is not that the elite were impious, but that they were autonomous under the king.84

Immediately below the top panel stand the two mayors and their five colleagues, all dressed in fur-trimmed scarlet cloaks over scarlet gowns. The appearance of the five matches Ricart’s description of past and present mayors, for whom the scarlet cloaks were a jealously-guarded symbol of office. Their number matches that of the five wards of Bristol, suggesting that they may be meant to represent the five ward aldermen, all of whom, apparently, would have been former mayors.85 Whether representing aldermen and former mayors, or simply past mayors, the figures still act as a reminder of the transience of office. This impression of transience is reinforced by the grey hair of the old mayor, in contrast to the brown hair of the new mayor. This detail is probably intended to stress the wisdom of the old mayor, but also to remind us that while individual office-holders grow old, frail, and then eventually die, the office itself carries on in perpetuity. For one year the man chosen to be mayor is the most powerful person in Bristol, but at the year’s end he must relinquish that power. The process being portrayed, the transfer of authority from one individual to another.

82 Ricart, Kalendar, p. 81; LRBB, vol. I, pp. 10–11 (record of 2 torches provided to each of the mayor and the sheriff on St George’s Day, and of an 8 mark p.a. pension to the chaplain of St George), vol. II, p. 235 (inventory of the goods of St George’s chapel, 1466); REED, Bristol, pp. 7–8. For the popularity of St George in later medieval England see Jonathan Good, The Cult of St George in Medieval England (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), passim, and pp. 86–8, 111.


84 The overwhelmingly secular character to Bristol’s political life in the early-Tudor period has been noted by Robert Titter, ‘… the sense of civic wholeness which in most towns still depended on the Church had in Bristol already begun to depend upon the civic magistracy. To the common run of fifteenth-century towns, Bristol represented the wave of the future’: The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c.1540–1640 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 32–3.

85 A scarlet fur-trimmed cloak was an article of clothing worn only by mayors. Ricart, Kalendar, pp. 70–1, prescribes that a new mayor in his second or subsequent term of office was to wear his scarlet fur-trimmed cloak during the procession to the Guildhall; while those councillors who had been mayor previously were to have their cloaks carried behind them by servants. Councillors who had never been mayors simply wore their scarlet gowns. For the importance of the fur-lined cloak as a mark of mayoral office, see Lee, ‘Political communication’, pp. 234, 257–60. For the five ward aldermen’s previous incarnations as mayors, see ibid., pp. 215–6, 244–6.
the next, embodies a duality between the perpetual authority of the mayoralty and the transient exercise of that authority by a succession of individual mayors. 86

Standing in front of the two mayors are the three civic officials: the sword-bearer, town clerk and a serjeant-at-mace. While depicted as smaller than the mayors, these figures are slightly larger than the common councillors standing to one side on our right. Probably this reflects the significance of their function within this particular ceremony. The book held by the town clerk – Ricart himself, we can assume – evidently contains the text of the mayor’s oath, which Ricart described as being read aloud by the town clerk as the new mayor rests his right hand on the Bible. The mayor’s oath is contained within the Kalender, and almost certainly it is this very book that is represented. 87 If this is the case, then we must imagine that the Kalender depicted here contains the very same mayor-making illustration, which scene would in turn contain its own representation of the same book, with the same illustration to be imagined within it, and so on, ad infinitum. This process of infinite regression is another evocation of the continuance of civic authority: both the ceremony and its depiction are perpetually repeated. The unbroken succession of mayors given in the chronicle section of the Kalender reinforces the contrast between the transitory nature of individual human lives and the never-ending (it was hoped) office of the mayoralty.

The sword and grey fur hat, or cap of maintenance, had both been granted by the king as a sign of Bristol’s special status: the sword would be carried before the mayor, along with the cap. 88 Both are depicted in the image, and are held by the sword-bearer. The illustration shows a number of objects on the table: a parchment roll, a pen case and ink-well, a bag tied at the top with a red cord, and a rectangular object with a grid design and a strap. Conceivably the last could represent the casket described by Ricart as containing various official seals, while the bag could contain the seals normally kept inside. Conversely, given the rectangular object’s grid pattern, it might be a folded chequer cloth, used for casting accounts, of the sort that gave the Exchequer its name.

Five of the civic officers standing in front of the table carry maces, and they and another three mace-bearers depicted elsewhere in the illustration are presumably serjeants-at-mace, whose job was to carry out the commands of the mayor, sheriff and common council and to keep order. The barrier between them and the civilians at the bottom of the image may represent the outer wall of the Guildhall, cut away so we can see inside, so that the structural feature surmounted by an arch to our left would be the doorway into the hall, guarded by a serjeant-at-mace. Thus, the mayor-making took place in private, behind the closed doors of the Guildhall, and would have been witnessed only by the civic officials and councillors. Those not within this charmed circle had to stand outside and await the new mayor’s appearance in Broad Street. This interpretation of the mayor-making as being essentially private and exclusive accords with the overall tone of Bristol’s civic oaths and elite culture:

86 This concept might be described as the ‘mayor’s two bodies’, to adapt Kantorowicz’s famous formulation: the one is the embodiment of the office of mayor, and is perpetual, while the other, that of the mere mortal executing the office, is all too transitory: Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology (1st edn. 1957, 1997 edn., Princeton: Princeton University Press).
87 Ricart states that the oaths of lesser civic officers are contained in the Red Book, as indeed they are, but this is not the case with the mayor’s oath: Kalender, p. 72; James Lee, ‘“Ye shall disturbe noe mans right”: oath-taking and oath-breaking in late medieval and early modern Bristol’, Urban History, 34:1 (2007), pp. 27–38, at 29, and passim.
88 Ricart, Kalender, p. 74.
members of Bristol’s civic and guild governing bodies pledged their primary loyalty, after the king, to the elite community of which they were part rather than to the wider urban community, and in many cases an aspect of that loyalty was a commitment to maintain the confidentiality of their proceedings.\(^{89}\) Government was an arcane art whose secrets were not to be shared with the governed.

The artist of this image appears not to have been used for any other image in the *Kalendar*. This scene has strong similarities with the illustrations of the four central courts of law (King’s Bench, Common Pleas, Chancery and Exchequer) now in the Inner Temple Library, but in Scott’s opinion the same artist was not responsible for these and the *Kalendar*’s mayor-making scene.\(^ {90}\) Stylistically they show clear differences to the Bristol image. The courts of law depictions were probably made around 1460, and are hence somewhat earlier than this one. However, it is quite possible that the artist responsible for the *Kalendar* image had seen these, and may even have produced this depiction in the same London workshop.

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\(^{89}\) Lee, ‘‘Ye shall disturbe noe mans right’’, pp. 30–2.

\(^{90}\) The images of the courts of law can be seen on the Inner Temple Library website, [http://www.innertemplelibrary.org.uk/collections/manuscript-collection/manuscript-collection-four-illuminated-manuscripts.htm](http://www.innertemplelibrary.org.uk/collections/manuscript-collection/manuscript-collection-four-illuminated-manuscripts.htm) [accessed 27 July 2015].
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar
The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar

James I
(f. 177v)

James VI of Scotland became James I of England on the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, and reigned until his death in 1625. This full-page picture shows the influence of Renaissance notions of realism on English art between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Illuminated Border of 1373 Inspeximus Text (f. 211r)

This is the text of the charter granted by Edward III on 20 December inspecting (hence, *inspeximus* – ‘we have inspected’) and confirming the charters of 8 August and 30 October 1373 which recorded Bristol’s creation as a county and the perambulation of the county boundaries. In addition to the floral border and illuminated initial letter ‘E’, this image is notable for showing a space left for an illustration that was never inserted, as in the folios marking the beginnings of the reigns of Henry IV, Henry V, Edward IV and Henry VIII.

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91 The full text of the *Inspeximus* is given in Harding, *Bristol Charters*, pp. 170–3. See also the comments of Toulmin Smith, Ricart’s *Kalender*, pp. 90–91.
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