

The Canterbury Roll Digitisation Project: Fostering Historical Engagement in Aotearoa

Date: Thursday 18 May 2017

Time: 1.00pm – 2.00pm

Location: Room 208, Te Ao Marama Building

Presenter: Zhivannah Cole

Abstract:

The Canterbury Roll highlights the function of history in substantiating and fostering cultural identity. This fifteenth-century English manuscript was originally constructed as a political tool through which to strengthen claims of royal authority and power; the underlying cultural history is essentially the foundation on which British cultural identity is built. In other words, the manuscript combines the familiar threads of origin myths, environmental connectivity and whakapapa, displaying the integral links between a people, their ancestors, and the land from which they came. Through highlighting the continuities between Māori experience of history and construction of cultural identity and that of medieval Britain, the broader aim of my research is to break down polarising ideological barriers. It is important that Māori scholars do not endorse exclusive tendencies, such as those that characterised settler society in colonial New Zealand, but instead foster an open engagement with historical sources both here in Aotearoa and within the wider international scholarly community. Introducing the Canterbury Roll and the benefits of digital approaches to history will shed light on the ways in which she hopes foster the positive experience of - and engagement with – history here in Aotearoa.

Biography:

Zhivannah Cole (Kāi Tahu) is in her fourth year of study at the University of Canterbury. She is completing the History Honours programme, where she specialises in medieval European history. For the last eight months, she has worked on a collaborative project with UC Digital Humanities, which involves aiding in the production of a digital facsimile, edition and translation of a rare but neglected fifteenth-century English manuscript held at the University of Canterbury. Through gaining transferable digital skills, she hopes to lay the foundations for a career that will unearth undervalued heritage within both New Zealand's institutional collections and those in the guardianship of her iwi, hapū and whānau, making that inheritance more accessible to both Māori and pākehā alike.