

# GOUCHER

—college—

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

### John Mitchell Kemble Collection

#### An Inventory

- Creators:** Bright, James Wilson, 1852-1926  
Kemble, John Mitchell, 1807-1857
- Title:** John Mitchell Kemble Collection
- Dates:** 1827-1840
- Abstract:** Bound manuscripts containing notes, charts, and drawings document the research of John Mitchell Kemble, notable Anglo-Saxon scholar.
- Extent:** 3 containers, 4.5 linear feet
- Languages:** English, Latin and Anglo-Saxon
- Repository:** Goucher College Library
- Call #:** MS 0010

### Biographical Sketch

John Mitchell Kemble, born 2 April 1807, studied at Clapham, where it is supposed he found his love for philology and during a trip to Germany, he began to study Teutonic philology. Kemble established his reputation as an Anglo-Saxon scholar through the publication of an edition of *Beowulf* in 1833. His work with Anglo-Saxon charters showed his knowledge of the language to be more comprehensive than any scholar before his time. His work laid the groundwork for the present knowledge of institutions and customs of the English before the Norman Conquest. Kemble published numerous articles and over a dozen books on Anglo-Saxon customs, philology, history and tradition.

James Wilson Bright bought these notebooks during a trip to England. As a philology professor at Johns Hopkins University, Bright used these materials to aid his teaching. Similar to Kemble, Bright published many articles and books on Anglo-Saxon language and tradition.

Source:

“Kemble, John Mitchell.” Dictionary of National Biography. 1973.

## **Scope and Contents**

The John Mitchell Kemble Collection consists of six manuscript notebooks detailing Kemble’s work with the Anglo-Saxon language, customs and traditions. Two of the largest manuscripts are attempts to build an Anglo-Saxon glossary, drawing from a wide variety of texts including Beowulf, early Anglo-Saxon charters, and parish records.

One larger notebook and three smaller notebooks deal with Kemble’s research on British Antiquities. The smaller notebooks consist of drawings and watercolors of British Antiquities, Anglo-Saxon phonology, notes on various historical subjects, and another with notes on phonology and grammar. Kemble wrote in the smaller notebooks without regard to page order or orientation, making his handwriting suddenly appear upside down when turning through the notebook.

## **Restrictions**

Open for research

## **Index Terms**

### **People**

Bright, James Wilson, 1852-1926 (lcnaf)  
Kemble, John Mitchell, 1807-1857 (lcnaf)

### **Subjects**

Poets, English--Old English, ca. 450-1100 (lcsh)  
English Philology--Old English, ca. 450-1100 (lcsh)  
Weapons, Anglo-Saxon (lcsh)

### **Document Types**

Drawings (aat)  
Notebooks (aat)  
Sketches (aat)

## **Related Material**

James Wilson Bright Collection, Goucher College Library.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Acquisition**

Purchased as part of the James Wilson Bright Collection, acc. 1925.001

### **Processors**

Gabrielle Glass, 2007

Cassie Brand, 2009

### **Preferred Citation**

John Mitchell Kemble Collection, 1827-1840. James Wilson Bright Collection.  
Goucher College Library.

## **Container List**

### **Container 1**

**Folder 1:** Blotting paper removed from *Glossæ* of John Mitchell Kemble.

**Folder 2:** *Glossæ*. Manuscript is bound in white pigskin vellum with a red leather spine label. The paper is cut to form tabs labeled in alternating black and red ink to divide sections alphabetically.

### **Container 2**

**Folder 3:** Kemble, John Mitchell. *The Runes of the Anglo-Saxons*. London: J.B. Nicholas and Son, 1840.

**Folder 4:** Three Notebooks on British Antiquities. Notebook 1 contains notes in brown ink. Notebook 2 contains drawings in pencil and watercolor. Notebook 3 contains notes, charts and a sketch in brown ink.

**Folder 5:** Notebook on British Antiquities. Bound in half goat with marbled boards, contains Kemble's notes in brown ink.

### **Container 3**

**Folder 6:** Notebook on Anglo Saxon Phonology. Bound in brown leather with blind tooling and a red leather spine label that reads “MSS. A c.1.” in gold. Evidence of tabs remain, dividing the notebook alphabetically.