



HENRY HALLAM

ADM IT 1802; CALL 1802;
BENCHER 1841; READER 1853

HISTORIAN



INNER TEMPLE
LIBRARY

MEMBERS PROFILES

PROFILE

Henry Hallam was born in Windsor on 9 July 1777, the only son of John Hallam, Canon of Windsor and later Dean of Bristol. He developed an interest in literature and writing poetry at an early age, and was known for his studious demeanour during his time at Eton College. He studied at Christ Church, Oxford, matriculating in 1795 and graduating BA in 1799. He initially decided to pursue a career in law, and was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1798, but moved to the Inner Temple in May 1802; he was called to the Bar in July 1802, and practised on the Oxford circuit. However, he did not continue in this field for long. In 1806 he accepted a commissionership of stamps, a position which he reached partly with the patronage of the leading Whig politicians with whom he was associated. Around this time he also began to contribute to the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, writing nine articles between 1805 and 1809 on literary and political topics. By 1809, he was devoting large amounts of time to his historical research. When Hallam's father died in 1812, and Hallam inherited his property in Lincolnshire, he made the decision to focus on his studies from that point on.

Hallam's first major work, *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, was published in 1812. This was followed by *The Constitutional History of England* in 1827 (of which the Library holds the first, ninth and eleventh editions). Both books are noted as being works of serious scholarship which can also be read for their contribution to the ideological debates of the 1810s and 1820s; Hallam endorsed a moderate Whiggish view, rejecting the Tory defence of the Stuarts seen in the period's standard authority, Hume's *History of England*. Hallam's books went on to become standard authorities, and remained so for much of the nineteenth century. In the 1830s Hallam published his four-volume *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, which was one of the most extensive works of literary history to appear in the early Victorian period. In 1848 he published an updating set of *Supplemental Notes* to his first book, bringing it up to date with contemporary scholarship.

Hallam graduated MA from Oxford in 1832, and was created DCL by the university in 1848. He also received an LLD from Harvard. In 1841 he became a bencher of the Inner Temple. He was a member of various learned societies beyond his immediate interests of

history and the law: he became a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1801 (holding the office of vice-president from 1824 to 1851) and of the Royal Society in 1821. He helped to found the University of London, sitting on its council from 1828 to 1831; he was also a founding member of the Statistical Society and its treasurer from 1834 to 1840. In 1837 he was elected a trustee of the British Museum, and he was an honorary member of the Royal Academy, a vice-president of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, president from 1845 to 1849 of the Royal Society of Literature, and a member of the Royal Geological Society.

Hallam married Julia Maria Elton in 1807; they had eleven children, but only four reached adulthood and only one outlived their father. His eldest son, Arthur Henry, died suddenly in 1833 at the age of 22; the poem *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, by his close friend Tennyson, was written as a memorial to him. Hallam himself died on 21 January 1859, survived only by his daughter Julia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Calendar of the Inner Temple Records

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