

HPHI 7016: Past Peoples, Present Societies

Fall 2021

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Assessment 5: Transcription Exercise

Document: Entries from *Armorial Bearings Of The Kings And Noble Families Of Great Britain From The Reign Of William The Conqueror To That Of James I*

Introduction

Armorial Bearings is a record of the individuals granted titles by each monarch from William I to James I and was created in 1572.¹ The manuscript is organized by monarch and includes a color illustration of the coat of arms for each entry. Some entries are brief and only include the title that was granted, while others give more detail on the individual and their family. The folios are made of paper, and some colors have bled through the paper or transferred to the opposite page, sometimes obscuring notes in the margins.

Robert Cooke is given as the author and he would have compiled it during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, who was succeeded upon her death by James I in 1603.² Cooke was Clarenceux of Arms, a senior position responsible for the management of heraldry and arms, which lends credibility to the accuracy of the work. Cooke died in 1593, meaning entries at the end of Elizabeth's reign would have been completed by someone else (not recorded).³ There is a horizontal line on folio 83v with the notation "huc vsque R. Cooke" to signify the end of Cooke's work and there is some difference in handwriting style in the final entries.⁴ There are no entries listed under James I, despite there being several blank folios available. It is unclear why documentation ends here, though James I was the first

¹ Chicago, Newberry Library, MS F0745.1915 (Cooke, Robert, *Armorial Bearings Of The Kings And Noble Families Of Great Britain From The Reign Of William The Conqueror To That Of James I*, 1572)

² *Handbook of British Chronology* 3rd ed., ed. by E.B. Fryde, et al (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1986), pp. 43-44.

³ W.H. Godfrey and A. Wagner, 'Clarenceux King of Arms', *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/bk16/pp74-101> [accessed 29 December 2021].

⁴ "huc usque" translates as "up to here" per the Latin-English dictionary translation website <https://en.opentran.net/latin-english/usque+huc.html> [accessed 31 December 2021].

monarch who began selling titles, so perhaps a new style of documentation was preferred with this change in peerage allocation.⁵

The manuscript is currently held by the Newberry Library in Chicago. There is no information on how the Newberry came to have the book, but former owners listed inside give some provenance. The name Philip Ayers and the year 1672 appears on folio 4r, and there is also a bookplate for Otto Orren Fisher on the inside cover. Fisher was an avid collector of rare books, amassing more than 80,000 by the time of his death in 1961.⁶ As Fisher often sold or donated his collection to academic institutions, it is likely this is how the Newberry came to have it in their collection.

Excerpts for transcription were selected for their length as well as general interest. The second excerpt caught my eye as it was the only coat of arms that was a different shape. It was also the only entry in the entire manuscript for a woman in her own right. The diamond shape of this coat of arms is known in heraldry as a lozenge and was used by unmarried women since a shield is associated with war and was not believed to be appropriate for a woman at the time.⁷

Transcription Techniques

I believe the script is secretary hand, which was the predominant style used in Elizabethan Britain, especially for official and government documents.⁸ To transcribe, I started by numbering each line and listing the words I could make out on my own. Context and repetitive use throughout the manuscript helped and I also created a handwriting alphabet and frequently used phrase key to assist

⁵ Charles R. Mayes, "The Sale of Peerages in Early Stuart England." *The Journal of Modern History*, 29(1) (1957), p. 21.

⁶ "Holabird to Offer First Folio Fragment at October 29 Auction", *Fine Books Magazine*, (October 22, 2021) <https://www.finebooksmagazine.com/news/holabird-offer-first-folio-fragment-october-29-auction> [accessed 1 January 2022].

⁷ "The Law of Arms" from the College of Arms website, <https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/the-law-of-arms> [accessed 30 December 2021].

⁸ H. Jenkinson, "Elizabethan Handwritings" *The Library Journal*, Fourth Series 3(1)(1922), p. 5.

with the transcription (see Appendix). I researched names and titles to confirm that my transcription was correct. I found Document 3 of the National Archives website helpful as it was written in the same period in secretary hand, so it acted as a nice cross-reference to my key.⁹ To identify and understand words that are no longer used today, I found the website Shakespeare's Words to be helpful.¹⁰

Images of the manuscript are not available online, so I took my own photographs of the pages to work from, which turned out to be more helpful than just trying to transcribe it directly from the manuscript. Often it would help to zoom in on the photograph to better make out the pen strokes and distinguish letters.

Historical Context of the Document

Though the manuscript records nobility from the Norman Conquest in 1066 through to what would have been present day at the time it was written, the concept of peerage did not originate with King William I. Anglo-Saxon Kings had "earls", possibly from the Norse word "jarl" as a holdover from when the Danes ruled England.¹¹ Few records survive from the Anglo-Saxon period, and titles were not originally hereditary, so it can be difficult to track early peerage. Further complicating matters was that, following the Conquest, lands and titles were often re-distributed to those loyal to the new King.¹² The armorial manuscript does capture some of this transfer, as peers created under William the Conqueror include several individuals listed as "a Saxon" or "a Britayn"; some of whom are recorded as fleeing to

⁹ "Document 3: Examination of James Machary, 29 December 1588" from the Palaeography section of the National Archives website <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/doc3/default.htm> [accessed 18 December 2021].

¹⁰ Glossary section of Shakespeare's Words website <https://www.shakespeareswords.com/public/Glossary.aspx> [accessed 28 December 2012].

¹¹ L.G. Pine, *The Story Of The Peerage* (Edinburgh & London: Wm Blackwood & Sons Ltd, 1956), p 9.

¹² Pine, *The Story Of The Peerage*, pp 22-23.

Denmark, Scotland or Wales and some who “did homage to the Conqueror for his E[a]rldom” and were re-granted their lands and titles.¹³

The first entry transcribed is for Hugh Bigod and reflects one such occurrence. In many sources, Bigod is noted as the “first” earl of Norfolk, but the *Directory of British Peerages* includes an earlier entry for the earl of Norfolk under the surname “Wayher” as having held the title prior to 1066 but is noted as having “forfeited” it.¹⁴ Ralph Guader (also known as Ralph Waders or de Wather), whom I believe is referenced in the Bigod entry, was involved in a rebellion against William I, which would explain why he was forced to renounce his title.¹⁵

The re-allocation of land and titles would have been important to keep track of to determine who was indebted to the Crown, hence the usefulness of a manuscript like this one. In addition, peerages also present a monarch with the perfect “carrot and stick” approach to ruling where they can either bestow or seize a title and the associated land, which was the main source of wealth in the middle ages.¹⁶ As the practice of inheriting titles became more commonplace, it would also have been important to keep track of heirs to settle any disputes and clarify ownership.

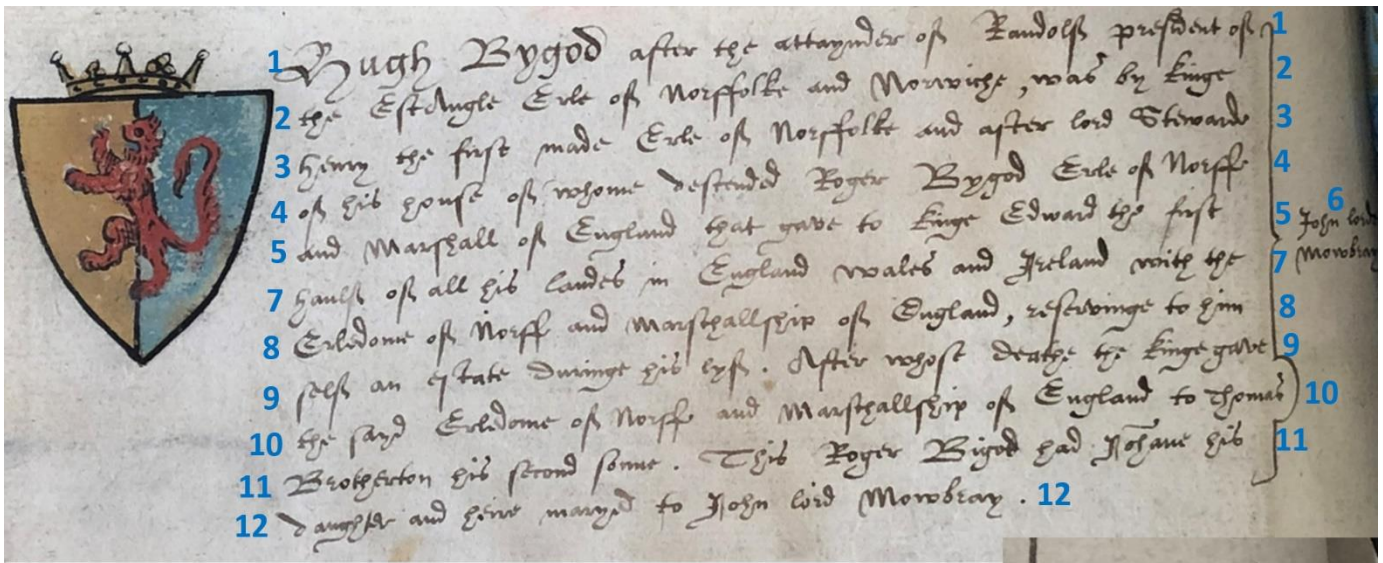
¹³ *Armorial Bearings* Manuscript, MS F0745.1915, folios 7-11.

¹⁴ Francis L. Leeson, ed, *A Directory of British Peerages* (Baltimore: Society of Genealogists, 1985), pp. vi, 117.

¹⁵ A. Williams, “Ralph [called de Gael, Ralph Guader], earl” from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography website (2004) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11707> [accessed 29 December 2021].

¹⁶ L.G. Pine, *Peerage*, p. 26.

Excerpt #1: Entry for Hugh Bygod; fol. 20v (photo: author)



1. Hugh Bygod after the attayndor of Randolf presedent of
2. the E[a]stAngle E[a]rle of Norffolk and Norwiche, was by kinge
3. henry the first made E[a]rle of Norffolk and after lord Stewarde
4. of his house of whom descended Roger Bygod E[a]rle of Norff[olk]
5. and Marshall of England that gave to kinge Edward the first
6. John lorde Mowbray
7. hault of all his landes in England Wales and Ireland with the
8. E[a]rldom of Norff[olk] and Marshallship of England, reservinge to him
9. self an estate duringe his lyfe. After whose deathe the kinge gave
10. the sayd E[a]rldome of Norff[olk] and Marshallship of England to Thomas
11. Brotherton his second sonne. This Roger Bigod had Johan[na] his
12. daughter and heire maryed to John lord Mowbray.

Transcription Notes/Contextual Confirmation:

- Hugh Bigod (alternate spelling) was Steward of the Household for Henry I from 1115 and first earl of Norfolk from 1141¹⁷
- Line 1: I believe word #5 is “attayndor”, meaning “denunciation” which would fit the context of Hugh becoming Earl following the dismissal of the “presedent”, or previous holder of the office.¹⁸
- Lines 4-9: Roger Bigod (5th earl of Norfolk) did relinquish his lands to King Edward I, who in turn regranted them to Roger for life.¹⁹
- Lines 10-11: Thomas Brotherton was a son of King Edward I but was the fifth son, not the second.²⁰ I feel my transcription is correct, so I’m not sure if Robert Cooke was mistaken in his writing or if there is some other way Thomas would have been regarded as the “second” son.
- Lines 11-12: I am not sure of the woman’s name listed at the end of Line 11 as it appears to be an abbreviation if the mark above the word is so intended. The DNB article states that the 5th earl did not have any heirs, so perhaps the Roger Bigod referred to in this passage was the second or fourth earl of Norfolk, who were also named Roger.²¹ I can not find a reference to any daughters that would match for any of these men, however.

¹⁷ *HBC*, pp. 74, 473.

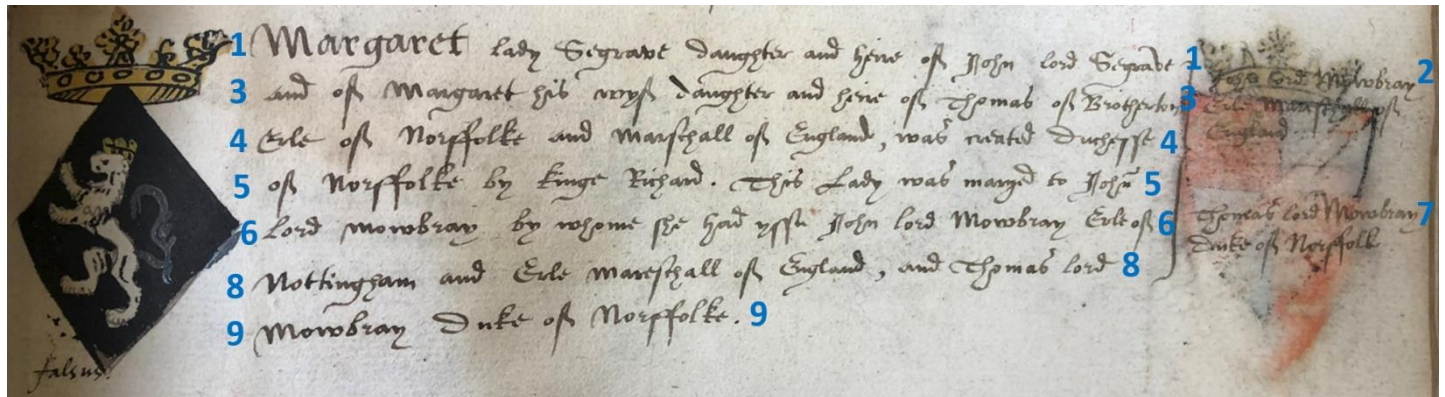
¹⁸ Glossary from the “Shakespeare’s Words” website
<https://www.shakespeareswords.com/Public/Glossary.aspx?id=249> [accessed 29 December 2021].

¹⁹ M. Prestwich, “Bigod, Roger, fifth earl of Norfolk” from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography website (2004) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2381> [accessed 29 December 2021].

²⁰ S. Waugh, “Thomas [Thomas of Brotherton], first earl of Norfolk” from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography website (2004) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27196> [accessed 29 December 2021].

²¹ *HBC*, p. 473.

Excerpt #2: Entry for Margaret, Lady Segrave, folio 53r (photo: author)



1. Margaret lady Segrave daughter and heire of John lord Segrave
2. John lord Mowbray E[ar]l Marshall of England
3. and of Margaret his wife daughter and heire of Thomas of Brotherton
4. E[ar]le of Norffolk and Marshall of England, was created duchesse
5. of Norffolk by kinge Richard. This Lady was maryed to John
6. Lord Mowbray by whome she had yssu[e] John lord Mowbray E[ar]le of
7. Thomas lord Mowbray Duke of Norffolk
8. Nottingham and E[ar]le Marshall of England, and Thomas lord
9. Mowbray Duke of Norffolk.

Transcription Notes:

- Margaret Brotherton was made duchess in 1397 during King Richard II's reign.²² She was also the granddaughter and sole heir of Thomas Brotherton, who made an appearance in the other excerpt I selected!²³ There are several Margaret, John and Thomas Mowbrays listed in the

²² HBC, pp. 40, 473.

²³ R. Archer, "Brotherton [Marshal], Margaret, *suo jure* duchess of Norfolk" from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography website (2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/53070> [accessed 29 December 2021].

family, so more work would be needed to work out the lineage, but I feel confident I have transcribed these lines correctly.²⁴

- Lines 7 & 9: Thomas Mowbray was created duke of Norfolk in 1397.²⁵

Conclusion

The transcription process became easier the more I deciphered words and built the alphabet key. The antiquated words and spelling were challenging, as it was sometimes difficult to work them out from context. Researching the individuals was helpful for knowing what words to expect to see (“duke;”, “Norwich”, etc) and to confirm the details as I had transcribed them. The most difficult letters for me were “h”, the three different forms of “s” (depending on if it was used within a word or the first/last letter), “e” (which looks like it took 2 pen strokes to create), and “w” because they were the most different to my eye from modern handwriting. Cooke was a fairly consistent scribe, thankfully, so once I realized what mark represented these letters it became much easier to pick out the letter everywhere. I definitely had more than one “lightbulb” moment when I finally figured out words like “his”, “with”, and “was” that were used frequently but just did not come to me clearly given the unfamiliar style. At times, I would have to put down the transcription and take a break for a day or two as it felt like I would hit a wall with some sections! In the end, there are a couple of words I’m uncertain about but overall I am confident in the transcription.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

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²⁴ R. Archer, “Mowbray, John, fourth Lord Mowbray” from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography website (2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19452> [accessed 29 December 2021].

²⁵ *HBC*, p. 473.

Secondary Sources

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Appendix

A		I		Q		Y	
B		J		R		Z	
C		K		S		Willm [William]	
D		L		T		the	
E		M		U		with	was
F		N		V		who made him	
G		O		W		second sonne [son]	
H		P		X		had no yssue	

Alphabet and Phrase Key for Transcription
Source: Author's own work & photographs