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A GIFT FROM ROBERT GLOVER

BL Ms Egerton 3789, fos. 25r-32r

Douglas Arden

When Robert Glover died on 10 April 1588 he was just forty-four years old, but he left a formidable legacy in the shape of dozens of folio notebooks, now priceless sources for texts which have been lost, destroyed, or rendered illegible during the intervening 400 years. Mined eagerly by lesser men, much of his work is lost, and the rest is scattered, largely unpublished, while some lies unrecognised in public and private collections in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.¹

The great library of Baroness Lucas of Crudwell, heir to the de Grey family of Wrest Park, Bedfordshire, was dispersed last century. In 1974, a British Library acquisitions officer recognised Glover's hand in Ms 15 from that source, and the volume was acquired for the nation. Now catalogued as Egerton 3789, it rests safely in the Manuscripts Department, with some twenty-seven other Glover items.²

The large folio volume on paper contains groups of extracts from monastic and ducal cartularies and registers, together with family archives, chronicles, and biographies. Glover examined and made extracts from the muniments of the lords Lancaster and Segrave, and the families of Lascelles, Clifford of Frampton, Montagu, Annesley, Chaworth, and others. He recorded materials collected by the early antiquaries Sampson Erdeswick and Arthur Gregory, and because monastic sources available to him are now lost, his extracts from the registers of Godstowe, Newhouse, and Tutesbury are of unique value.

The 1619 Visitation of Warwickshire was compiled by the pursuivants Lennard and Vincent, and included a pedigree of the Ardens of Parkhall which replaced the unsubstantiated narratives of the past with a text which included notes and references clearly extracted from ancient charters.³ In preparing manorial histories for the *Victoria County History* series, John Simmons observed that for the Arden estates the heralds had not worked from the original deeds, but instead had used Glover's collection of extracts, which suggests that Egerton 3789 was at the College of Arms in 1619.⁴ Its subsequent history is obscure, until in 1874 the Historical Manuscripts Commissioners recorded it at Wrest Park, and when Simmons studied it there in 1947 he was the first historian to recognize its value and apply it in his research.⁵

¹ See now Nigel Ramsay's expanded entry on Robert Glover in *Oxford DNB*.

² The Ms appears to retain the undisturbed original binding.

³ *The Visitation of the County of Warwick in the year 1619*, ed. J. Fetherston (Harl. Soc. vol. 12: London 1877), pp. 176-82.

⁴ It is possible that this Ms contains Glover's original notes, and that a counterpart may be preserved in the College archives.

⁵ *VCH Warwicks* vol. 4, p. 62, n. 20. The Parkhall survey is undated, and Simmons assumed it was made in 1577, but the groups entered before and after were collected in 1578 and 1579 respectively.

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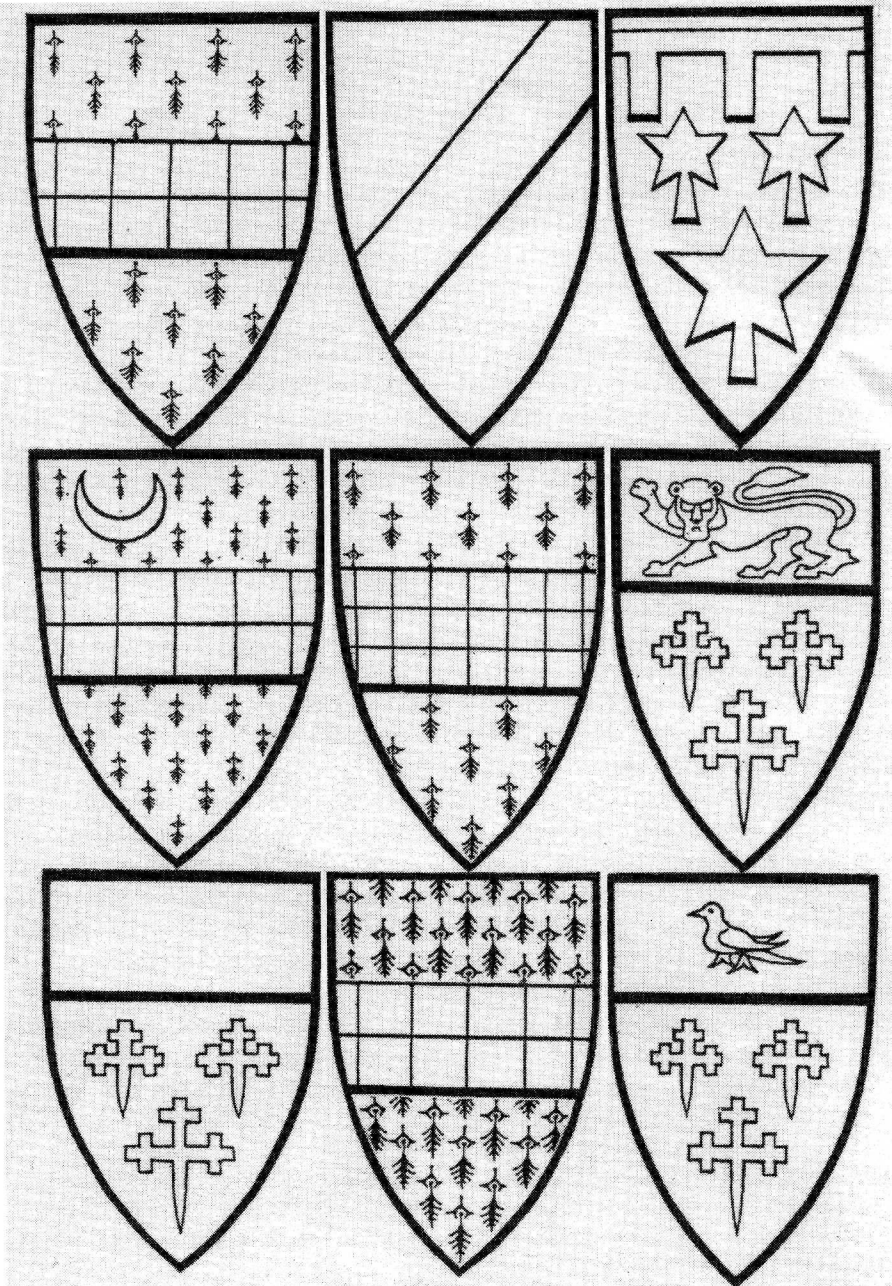


Figure 1: Arms of (a) Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell, 1279; (b) Ralph I, 1294; (c) Ralph II, 1347; (d) Henry, prior to 1366; (e) Sir Ralph III, 1406; (f) Nicholas, 1366; (g) Simon Arden, 1569; (h) Simon Arden, 1583; (i) Mary Arden, mother of Shakespeare, 1599.

A GIFT FROM GLOVER

It is hoped that this article will demonstrate the impact of Egerton 3789 on the modern study of just one of the families whose deeds Glover recorded. The Arden documents occupy only seven of some 130 folios, but these are thickly sown with heraldry in the shape of his sketches of dozens of armorial seals, providing a remarkable account of the development of this family's arms.

Glover was tireless in the pursuit and transcription of ancient records, but his purpose in surveying the Parkhall deeds in 1578 is uncertain. As Somerset Herald he had his own practice and compiled pedigrees for numerous private clients.⁶ He may have been engaged by the Ardens, as at the end of his survey of their muniments he entered a tabular sketch of their early descent, from the Conquest to about 1230.⁷ However, the most recent deed among those extracted is dated 1449, and if Glover was assembling a pedigree for a client living in 1578, his materials stopped well short of completion.

It is also possible that he visited Parkhall to augment his professional reference materials. His interest is evident throughout, as the last deed in these notes, from about 1195, is not a summary but a full transcription to the unusual extent of naming all twenty-three witnesses.⁸ Glover was engaged on the Visitation of Durham in 1575, but he may have been among the heralds in attendance on the Queen in July of that year during her progress through Warwickshire, where among the local officials obliged to participate in her ceremonial reception was the high sheriff, Edward Arden. It would be no surprise if Glover, as a member of the royal retinue, made Arden's acquaintance, or at least heard of his well-stocked muniment chest.

Glover's notes amount to something like an Arden cartulary, although their landed possessions would have been of no interest to him. He worked with practised speed, but he faced a mass of ancient documents which had been accumulating untouched for some 400 years. The results he achieved must have occupied him for several days, and meanwhile the owner and his family would have been very glad to entertain Somerset Herald as a guest while he investigated their records. Parkhall was a moated sandstone house near Curdworth, on a hill above the river Tame, the Warwickshire home of the Ardens for centuries, and now commemorated by Park Hall School.⁹ In 1578, Glover's hosts were Edward Arden and his wife Mary Throckmorton, devout and stubborn Catholics. Adding to that heavy disadvantage, Arden had offended Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, openly calling him an upstart and adulterer, and by a public act of disrespect in the royal presence.

Among his elaborate arrangements for the Queen's formal visit to Kenilworth in 1575, the earl requested that local notables wear his badge, the bear and ragged staff.

⁶ In the years 1577 to 1581, Glover compiled pedigrees of the families of Wyatt and Glover of Kent; Poley; Deane of Billington; and Cliff, or Clive, of Huxley: BL Department of Manuscripts, MSS Index at 13/09/2003.

⁷ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fos. 30v, 31.

⁹ The house was known both as Parkhall and *le Logge iuxta Bromwich*. Park Hall School is in Water Orton Road, Castle Bromwich, and the arms of the Parkhall Ardens form the school badge. The moat of the mediaeval house is visible on the current Ordnance Survey, partly overbuilt by a modern structure. The Ardens never occupied an 18th-century farmhouse known as Park Hall, now demolished, which stood downhill from the ancient site.

Edward Arden alone among them refused, a highly visible insult as he was for that term the incumbent high sheriff. Dudley's predictable resentment simmered until 1583, when Arden's unstable son-in-law John Somerville was arrested on his way to London, allegedly boasting that he planned to shoot the Queen, and hoped '...to se her head to be set uppon a pole, for that she was a serpent and a viper...'.¹⁰ On the rack, he implicated Arden, and the powerful Dudley is said to have taken the opportunity to ensure a vigorous prosecution and a fatal outcome. Although he was probably guilty only of a bad choice of enemies,

Arden was attainted of high treason, and on Friday 20 December 1583, he suffered the appalling penalty prescribed for the offence by the Tudor authorities.¹¹

Folio 25r of Egerton 3789 is headed *Ex cartis et evidencijs Edwardi Arderne de Com' Warr' de Parkhall*, and begins with a deed sealed about 1170 by Henry de Arden, holder in 1166 of five knights' fees.¹² Directed to all his men, French and English, the document bore a large, non-armorial seal, displaying a lively staghound, described by Glover in a caption as 'An ancient seale of white wax wth the ymage of a greate hound regardant of this greatnes and forme' (**Figure 2**).¹³

Henry's seal was still intact in 1637 when it caught Dugdale's eye, although his drawing presents a grotesque creature with a lion's tail and a bird's feet.¹⁴ Glover's image is more convincing, but in fairness to Dugdale the wax was probably much worn after 400 years. No modern inspection will be possible, as a third facsimile of the deed made in 1641 indicates that the seal was already gone, leaving only its tag.¹⁵

Other twelfth-century Ardens, like Hugo and Osbert de Arden (**Figure 3**), used seals of the equestrian type, as did Henry's sons William and Thomas.¹⁶ All show long convex shields with rays, stars or spikes, but without any discernible heraldic devices. The earliest armorial seal so far located for this family is the signet engraved +SIGILLUM. SECRETI. affixed to his deed about 1279 by Sir Thomas de Arderne of

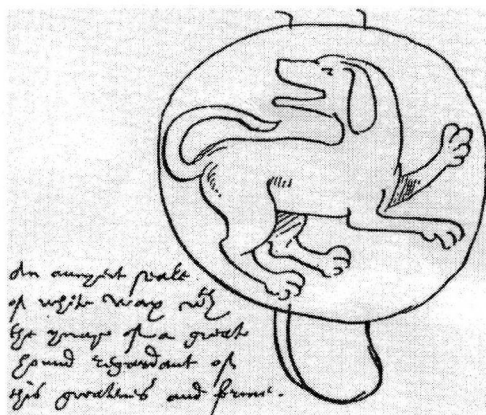


Figure 2: Seal of Henry de Arden, ca. 1170.
Drawn by Robert Glover, 1578. BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 25. By courtesy of the British Library.

¹⁰ NA (PRO) SP 12/163/23.

¹¹ Ibid. SP 12/164/47.

¹² *Red Book of the Exchequer* (HMSO 1896), p. 325.

¹³ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 25.

¹⁴ Bod Ms Dugdale 17, fo. 15.

¹⁵ L. C. Loyd and D. M. Stenton (edd.), *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals* (Oxford 1950), p. 33, no. 48, copied November 1641 from among the deeds of Robert Arden of Parkhall.

¹⁶ Hugo, c. 1170: BL Harl Ch 45 C.47. Osbert, c. 1135: BL Cotton Ch xxii 2; Bod. Ms Dugdale 17, fo. 13. William, c. 1198: BL Cott. Ch. xxii 4. Thomas, c. 1190: *Hatton's Book*, pp. 115-6, no. 159.



Figure 3: Seal of Osbert de Arden, ca. 1135.
Drawn by Sir William Dugdale. Bod Ms
Dugdale 17, fo. 13. By courtesy of the
Bodleian Library.

Hanwell (ca. 1225-1297) with a shield
Ermine a fess counter-compony
(Figure 1a).¹⁷

Glover's sketches of their seals demonstrate that those successors of Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell who adopted his arms displayed their fesses as counter-compony until 1406, when his descendant Sir Ralph de Arderne III used a seal with a chequy fess.¹⁸ This is the present-day practice, but the earlier form appears again in several significant sixteenth-century examples. To distinguish a counter-compony fess from one which is chequy may appear trivial, but the difference is visually striking, as demonstrated by Cecil Humphery-Smith.¹⁹ Glover evidently thought it was important, and although many of his sketches of the Arden seals were

cursory, he took care to show that the fesses were chequy in five cases, while six others were counter-compony.

Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell had died by 1297, leaving four sons named Thomas, Ralph, Robert and Bartholemew. The eldest was Sir Thomas II, who inherited the arms of his father, confirmed by his shield which is 236th in the Lord Marshal's Roll of 1310, tricked *Ermine a fess counter-compony or and azure*.²⁰ His son and grandson bore his name, and the fourth and last Sir Thomas was in the retinue of the Black Prince in Gascony in 1367, but never returned and his male line was extinguished.²¹ This was the senior descent of the family, settled at Spratton in Northamptonshire, but it was forgotten or ignored by surviving branches, and might have vanished without trace had it not been for the litigious inclinations of Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John de Swinford and his wife Joan, only child of Sir Thomas de Arderne IV.²²

¹⁷ BL Cott. Ch. xxii 5, and *Calendar of Ancient Deeds* vol. 4, p. 121. At *BM Seals* 6902 Birch names the grantor as Thomas de Arderne of Newton, but that manor was merely the subject of the grant.

¹⁸ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 25v.

¹⁹ C. R. Humphery-Smith, *Anglo-Norman Armory Two: An Ordinary of Thirteenth-Century Armorial* (Canterbury 1984), p. 370.

²⁰ This Thomas de Arderne was in the gang of thirteen men pardoned for the killing of Piers Gaveston in 1312. They were led by Guy, second Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, who was mesne lord to Thomas and others: *CPR 1313-7*, pp. 21f. ²¹ *CCIR 1367-70*, p. 374.

²² The effigy of Sir John de Swinford in Spratton church wears the earliest example of a collar of SS; see C. E. J. Smith, 'The Livery Collar', *CoA* n.s. 8 (1989-90), no. 151, pp. 238-53, and *VCH Northants*, vol. 4, p. 105.

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In 1366 Elizabeth de Swinford sued her cousin Sir Giles de Arderne, claiming the manor of Drayton, Northamptonshire, in reliance on a pedigree deriving her mother Joan from Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell, by way of three further generations of knightly Thomas de Ardernes at Spratton.²³ The seal of the fourth and last Sir Thomas is recorded in Glover's sketch of his deed dated 15th July 1361, displaying the shield *Ermine a fess counter compony* adopted by his great-grandfather, borne by his grandfather, and evidently by his father.²⁴

Given this sequence of four generations of the same name and arms, it seems likely that a single seal matrix served them all. Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell used his signet in 1279 to seal the deed mentioned above, but he would certainly have owned a larger matrix as well, probably the one employed by his great-grandson Thomas IV in 1361, which was inscribed + SIGILL. THOME. DE. ARDERNE. Transmission by descent of this seal, and with it the arms, would require no action by anybody in the succession, and may well be an instance of the process so convincingly postulated by Mackay, whereby simple inertia would reinforce the tendency for arms to become hereditary.²⁵

Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell's eldest son Thomas had assumed his father's arms and presumably inherited his seal, so that Ralph I the second son evidently felt no obligation to follow the heraldic examples set by his father and elder brother. Both Glover and Dugdale found his deed at Parkhall, dated 7 March 1294, which recorded the sale of three '*nativos meos*', his bondmen, and its seal bore a shield with the remarkable charge of a bend sinister (**Figure 1b**).²⁶ Opinions differ as to whether this necessarily imputed bastardy, but it is most unlikely in the case of Ralph de Arderne I, as his mother was the formidable Roese de Vernon, who brought on her marriage to Thomas de Arderne some of her family's Oxfordshire lands, and his toponymic suffix 'of Hanwell'. Glover found two deeds of hers at Parkhall, executed in her widowhood about 1297, whereby she settled on her second son Ralph I most of the family's Warwickshire holdings, improbable if he had been her late husband's progeny by another woman.²⁷

Ralph de Arderne's shield with its bend sinister is startling, and unrelated to the coat *Ermine a fess counter-compony* adopted by his father. His son Ralph II followed his father's heraldic example by assuming arms of his own invention, known only from two seal impressions Glover found at Parkhall, attached to two deeds dated 1347 (**Figure 1c**).²⁸ There are three charges, which could be mullets, but if indeed they are spur rowels they have kept their shanks, an odd feature apparently unique in English heraldry. They might also represent five-lobed leaves 'slipped', retaining their stems.

²³ NA (PRO): CP 40/429 m. 396.

²⁴ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 29.

²⁵ A. Ian Mackay, 'Whence Armory?' *CoA* 12 (1971), no. 87, pp. 107-14.

²⁶ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 26v; Bod. Ms Dugdale 17, fo. 15.

²⁷ The letter 'S' on Ralph I's seal inscription was reversed, and it may be that the bend sinister was, after all, no more than a similar error by a careless craftsman.

²⁸ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fos. 29, 30.

Although never knighted, Ralph II was one of the retinue of Earl Thomas de Beauchamp at the siege of Calais, and an active soldier all his life, which raises a third possibility, that these objects are stylised mace heads.²⁹ The shield bears a label of three points, suggesting that Ralph II assumed it during the lifetime of his father Ralph I, who died in 1316, but whether as the eldest son he was obliged to observe this rule of cadency where his coat differed so markedly from that of his father, with its bend sinister, is a nice question which Ralph II evidently answered in the affirmative.

Ralph II's elder sons John and Henry were both knights, and served in the French wars with their father, but chose not to assume his arms.³⁰ Glover recorded their seals at Parkhall, each bearing the shield first adopted by their great-grandfather Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell, *Ermine a fess counter-compony*.³¹

A boar statant on a chapeau has been this family's crest for centuries, but evidently had not yet been adopted in 1355, when Ralph II's eldest son Sir John Arderne used a seal displaying his achievement. Glover recorded it among the Parkhall deeds with a ducal coronet supporting the crest, which although much worn was patently not a boar.³² He found a more legible example of John's arms in another source, and was able to blazon the crest '...in a Coronet or, a pyramid of leaves vert.'³³ The earliest appearance of the Arden boar on its chapeau is Glover's sketch of the seal of Robert Arden discussed below.³⁴

Although Sir Henry de Arderne was Sir John's younger brother, Glover found that in 1365 his seal bore the shield *Ermine a fess counter-compony* without a difference.³⁵ However, he lived until 1382 and it seems that in his early years he observed cadency by one or more crescents, probably during the life of Sir John, who had died by 1366 (**Figure 1d**).³⁶

Ralph de Arderne II had a third son, Nicholas, and although Glover did not find his seal at Parkhall, he recorded *Nichol fitz Rauf de Arderne* among the witnesses to his father's deed, which confirms his place in the family.³⁷ His seal is preserved in the British Library, misappropriated by a clerk named William *Darderne*, presumably a

²⁹ Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (2nd edn., London 1730), p. 928, places Ralph II's grandson Ralph III at the siege of Calais (1345-7) but he was born about 1360 and does not appear in the record until 1399.

³⁰ Sir John de Arderne's shield is 157th in the Styward E copy of the Calais or Styward Roll, BL Ms Harl 1068. His brother Sir Henry was in the retinue of Sir Walter de Mauny, and was reimbursed for a horse lost in the Breton campaign 1342-3; A. Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy under Edward III* (Woodbridge 1994), pp. 233-40.

³¹ Glover noted their seals in BL Ms Egerton 3789; Sir John's at fo. 30, Sir Henry's at fo. 27.

³² BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 30. Glover wrote beside his sketch: *quaere qualis sit crista nam non poss' bene discerni*.

³³ J. Edmondson, *A Complete Body of Heraldry* (2 vols., London 1780), vol. 1 p. 84, 'Glover's Ordinary of Arms; Augmented and Improved'.

³⁴ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 30v.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, fo. 27.

³⁶ *Visitation of Warwicks 1619* (n. 3 above), p. 180; Dugdale, *Warwickshire*, p. 791.

³⁷ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 29v.

relative, and attached to his own deed dated 1366. The shield displayed is unrelated to those borne by Nicholas's father and brothers, being charged with *Three cross crosslets fitchy on a chief a lion passant* (**Figure 1f**).³⁸ It seems likely that Nicholas added the lion to honour his mother, the daughter of Anselm de Bromwich, whose arms were *Or a lion rampant sable gutty or*.

Without the lion in chief, the cross crosslets shield borne by Nicholas seems to have been a 'secondary' coat, borne by several younger sons in this family, and also by collaterals (**Figure 1j**).³⁹ Tricked as *Gules three cross crosslets fitchy and a chief or*, with a martlet in the chief, the heralds assigned it to Mary Arden in 1599 for an impalement with the arms of her husband, John Shakespeare.⁴⁰ Simon Arden, a second son of the Parkhall family, ancestor of most surviving Arden lines, had borne the cross crosslets coat without the martlet in 1569 as high sheriff of Warwickshire (**Figure 1g**).⁴¹ By 1583 he had moved to Yoxall in Staffordshire, and Glover records in his Visitation of that year that Simon had assumed the senior arms of his family in the ancient form *Ermine a fess counter-compony or and azure* (**Figure 1h**).⁴²

The third son of Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell was Robert, whose blazon appears in the Parliamentary Roll of 1310-12 as 'Sire Rob't de Arderne' with arms 'de ermyne a une fess chekere de or e de azsure'.⁴³ No example of Robert's seal has been found, but Glover recorded those of his widow Nicholaa, and son Sir Giles, both with shields *Ermine a fess counter-compony*, good evidence that Robert's fess was of that form, and not checky as suggested by the blazon in the roll.⁴⁴ There has been confusion as to Sir Robert's parentage, but Glover's record of his mother's settlements mentioned above, and the seals of his widow and son, identify him as a younger son of Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell.⁴⁵ A soldier in his youth, and later a royal official, ambassador, and justice in eyre, Robert died in 1331.⁴⁶ His male line was extinguished on the death in 1377 of his son Sir Giles, whose own son Giles had predeceased him.⁴⁷

³⁸ BL Add Ch 21492; *BM Seals* 6892.

³⁹ Baron Arden of Albanley bore this shield, with a crescent in chief.

⁴⁰ Drafts of the Shakespeare grants of 1596 and 1599 are preserved in the College of Arms. Stephen Tucker, Somerset Herald, published facsimiles in *Misc Her & Gen* 2nd ser., 2 (1886), p. 109.

⁴¹ In 1569 as high sheriff, Simon bore *Gules three cross crosslets fitchy a chief or*: T. Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* ([1662] ed. P. A. Nuttall, 3 vols., London 1840), vol. 3, p. 294.

⁴² In Glover's notes for his Staffordshire visitation of 1583, he assigned to 'Simon Arden, gentleman, of Yoxall' a coat he tricked as *Erm. a fess counter-compony or and az.*; Queen's College Oxford Ms 106, fo. 129v.

⁴³ Sir Francis Palgrave (ed.), *Parliamentary Writs* (London 1827), vol. 1, p. 418.

⁴⁴ Sketches of Nicholaa's triple seal are in BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 25v, and in Bod. Ms Dugdale 17, fo. 15, while Sir Giles's seal is in BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 29.

⁴⁵ Robert's mother calls him 'my younger son': BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 28.

⁴⁶ Among other offices, he was a castellan, an ambassador to France, and a chief justice in eyre. According to T. C. Banks, *Peerage* (3 vols., London 1807-9), he was created Baron Arden in 1327, but no more is heard of this.

⁴⁷ *CFR* vol. 4, p. 274; *CClR* 1330-33, p. 541.

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The Parkhall Ardens continued through Ralph II, grandson of Sir Thomas de Arderne of Hanwell. As discussed above, his arms bearing indeterminate charges which may be spurs, leaves or mace-heads, were not adopted by his sons John, Henry or Nicholas. In 1406, Henry's son Sir Ralph de Arderne III was the first of his family to display arms properly blazoned *Ermine a fess chequy* (**Figure 1e**).⁴⁸ Glover recorded five sealed charters of his at Parkhall, three dated September 1406, the others from 1412 and 1414. They all bear impressions of the same seal with a chequy fess, and one deed bears a second, smaller seal, engraved only with a capital 'S' which is that of his wife and co-grantor Sibilla.⁴⁹ Dugdale transcribed only one deed of Ralph's, but typically his drawing of the seal is more detailed than Glover's sketch, showing it to have been large and decorative.⁵⁰

The latest Arden deed in Glover's inventory is dated 8 September 1449, and its seal is of particular interest (**Figure 4a**).⁵¹ Robert Arden (1412-52) executed this grant at Castle Bromwich, three years before he was captured by Lancastrians in Shropshire, raising troops for the Yorkist army. Open hostilities and the first battles of the dynastic wars lay several years in the future, but together with his sergeant-at-arms John Mattys and others, Robert was arraigned before three local judges and attainted of treason. Possibly as an example to others of their party, the condemned men were escorted in fetters from shire to shire, first from Ludlow to Kenilworth castle, then to Hereford, where they were held for three days and then beheaded on Saturday, the 12th of August 1452.⁵²

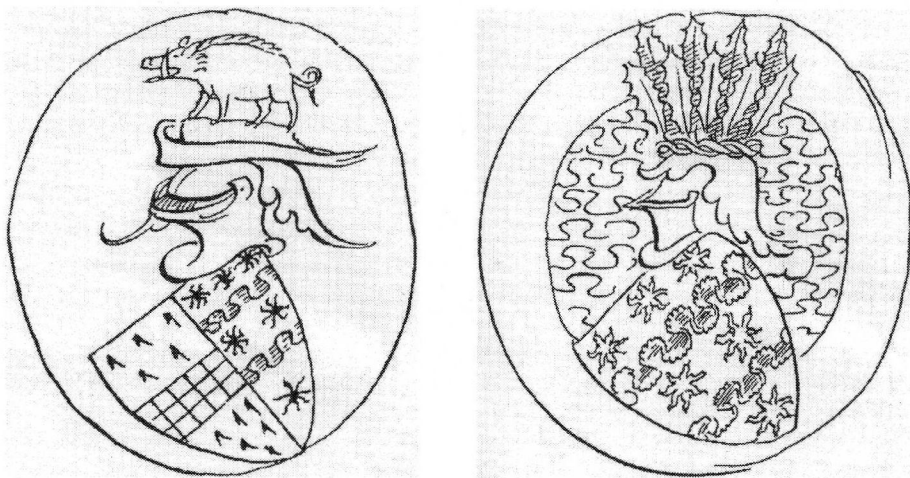


Figure 4: (a) Seal of Robert Arden, 1449; (b) Seal of Richard Clodeshale, 1423. Drawn by Robert Glover, 1578. BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 30v. By courtesy of the British Library.

⁴⁸ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fos. 25v, 26 and 30.

⁴⁹ Ibid., fo. 26. ⁵⁰ Bod. Ms Dugdale 17, fo. 30v.

⁵¹ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 30v.

⁵² Dugdale, op.cit. p. 928; *Extracts from the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer Hen. III-VI* (Pell Records 1837), p. 475; *CFR* vol. 19, p. 70.

The seal shows Robert's achievement, with his boar crest prominent upon the distinctive frog-mouth helm of the period. The shield hangs aslant or couchy, bearing the Arden coat *Ermine a fess chequy*, impaling that of Robert's wife Elizabeth Clodeshale, *Two bars nebuly between six estoiles*.⁵³

The boar in Glover's drawing is a cheerful creature, making his first definite appearance as the Arden crest, statant on a chapeau, an unusual element in the arms of a commoner, borne by his present-day descendants. Robert's grandson John Arden (1457-1526) was one of the esquires of the body to Henry VII, and it seems the king stayed at Parkhall during a progress through the region.⁵⁴ Around these facts grew a tradition that the chapeau was a mark of favour given John Arden for his service as a courtier, but it turns out that this was just a good story, dignified by repetition.⁵⁵ Glover's drawing establishes that by 1449 the chapeau was already part of the Arden crest, some 36 years before Henry Tudor ascended the throne. In 1355 Robert's great-uncle Sir John de Arderne had awarded himself the honour of setting his leafy crest on a coronet, and Sir Henry his younger brother, Robert's grandfather, may have been first to assume the chapeau, upon similar authority.

Perhaps the most striking of the seals in Glover's manuscript was not cut for the Ardens, though an impression was preserved in their muniment chest at Parkhall, attached to a charter dated at Edgbaston on the 3rd of September 1423. The matrix belonged to *Ricardus Clodeshale, armiger*, last male of his Worcestershire family, and father-in-law of the unfortunate Robert Arden.⁵⁶

Richard's achievement stands against a nebuly field, commonly employed in mediaeval art to represent both the element air, and a cloudy sky. The big tilting helm bears a crest of nine holly leaves set on an orle of five twists, while the shield hangs aslant, with two bars nebuly between six estoiles three, two and one. A later source makes the Clodeshale charges gold on a red field, and while it is unnecessary to doubt those tinctures, that source also tricks and blazons the bars as *wavy gemelles*, in effect two pairs of undulating barrulets.⁵⁷ Glover's sketch (**Figure 4b**) shows the Clodeshale charges distinctly, not as two pairs but two single bars nebuly, more complex than the simple meander suggested by that term. These elements on Richard Clodeshale's seal, and the impalement for his daughter as the wife of Robert Arden, are the stylised form of clouds much used in graphic art of the late middle ages.

Cloudy bars are an obvious canting reference to the name Clodeshale, which was also spelled *Cloudshall* and *Clodishalle*.⁵⁸ No great leap of the imagination is

⁵³ Dugdale, op.cit. p. 884; *CCLR 1447-54*, pp. 459-60; *1468-70*, p. 243.

⁵⁴ Dugdale op.cit. p. 928. In his will, dated 4 June 1526, John bequeathed to his eldest son Thomas 'the bedde in the kings chambr wt. all tht belongith of the best' (PCC Porch 8). Frequently referred to as *Sir John Arden*, he did not himself claim knighthood, either in his will or other surviving documents.

⁵⁵ The tradition was noted as in 'an Arden MS' by the careful Shakespearean scholar Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *Shakespeare's Family* (London 1901), p. 231.

⁵⁶ BL Ms Egerton 3789, fo. 30v.

⁵⁷ *Visitation of Warwicks 1619*, pp. 72, 74.

⁵⁸ First noted by Sir William Dugdale, op.cit. p. 885.

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necessary to recognise estoiles among clouds as a vivid heraldic image of a starry night sky, intensified by the seal's nebuly ground. The analogy is a pleasant remembrance of a lost mediaeval family, absent when wavy bars are substituted, and misinterpretation of these charges probably arose from a worn impression of the seal. A similar link might be proposed between the '-halle' element of one version of the name, and the vivid stand of holly leaves forming the crest, phonetic canting rendered more plausible when the syllable is given its old midlands sound of 'horle-y'.

Egerton 3789 contains further new material relating to the Ardens, but those folios are only a fraction of an extensive document which is likely to provide information of interest to historians of other families, and to heraldic scholars who may not yet have seen it. The present writer would be grateful for observations on any aspect of these matters, especially identification of the anomalous charges on the seal of Ralph de Arderne II in 1347.