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PLATE 3



Above (a), the arms, crest and supporters granted to the Governor and Company of Mine-Adventurers of England by Garter and Clarenceux kings of arms, 23 May 1704. CA record Ms Grants 5/135. See page 148.

Right (b), the arms and crest granted to Sir Ambrose Crowley, knight, one of the sheriffs of the City of London, by Garter and Clarenceux kings of arms, 14 June 1707. CA record Ms Grants 5/204 (pre-grant sketch as approved by Lord Bindon, Deputy EM). See page 149.

Next to the crest in the record of the grant itself (ibid. 5/205) a contemporary hand has written 'A Sun should be'; the blazon indicates a sun charged with a rose, but instead of a sun the artist has painted a sixteen-pointed star as seen on the shield.

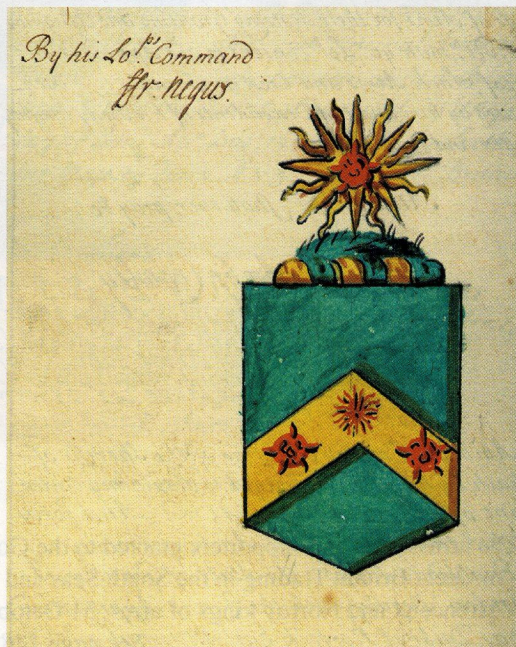


PLATE 4



The arms, crest and supporters granted to the Governor and Company of Merchants of Great Britain Trading in the South Seas and other parts of America, by Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy kings of arms, 31 October 1711. CA record Ms Grants 6/4.

See page 148.

GRANTS OF ARMS IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Peter O'Donoghue

The current series of manuscript volumes recording grants of arms made by the English kings of arms was begun in 1673 and remains in the record room of the College of Arms. The office of Earl Marshal, controlled by commissioners during much of the seventeenth century, had been taken out of commission the previous year and placed in the hands of the Duke of Norfolk; his order of May 1673 required all acts of the kings of arms such as grants, confirmations and exemplifications of arms, crests and supporters, to be officially recorded.¹ Between 1676 and 1710 the Earl Marshal required that petitioners for arms should submit references from two gentlemen in addition to their memorial or petition;² for much of the eighteenth century the grant volumes include these supplementary documents.

This article presents a statistical breakdown of the records of grants, confirmations and exemplifications of arms for the period 1700-1720³, with a similar treatment of a sample period from 1770-1772⁴ included for comparison. The statistics are analysed in the hope that they may permit us to draw some general conclusions about the recipients of grants in this period.⁵ The grant volumes, which contain office copies of letters patent issued by the kings of arms as well as of supporting documents, are relatively homogenous throughout the eighteenth century, with the formal documents being drafted and enrolled in a very consistent fashion. This renders the class a useful source for the history of the College of Arms, shedding light on the level of activity of the heralds as well as on their working practices and formal vocabulary. The records are also of great interest for the history of the gentry in the eighteenth century: the documents considered here include among other things information about rank, profession and municipal or government service. They therefore provide an opportunity to investigate the identity and nature of those seeking admittance to the formal ranks of gentility, and of those defined by the heralds as gentlemen or esquires.

Considerable caution must be exercised in the interpretation of the figures which follow, as they are based solely upon the information provided by the grant records. They may reflect therefore the assumptions and practices of the heralds of the period

¹ CA record Ms I.25/124b.

² Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England* (London 1967), pp. 294f.

³ CA record Mss Grants 5, Grants 6, and Grants 7/1-69.

⁴ CA record Ms Grants 12/1-218.

⁵ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 426, commented that during the reigns of Bigland and Heard, successive Garter Kings of Arms (1780-1784 and 1784-1822 respectively) 'many of the heralds' clients ... came from the lesser gentry and the yeoman and merchant classes', but made no specific reference to the recipients of grants of arms.

as much as they inform us about the nature of grantees themselves. The present paper should thus be taken as a preliminary study, and in many cases a more detailed study of grantees could alter or moderate our general conclusions. Nonetheless since this class of records has not previously been subjected to any analysis of this kind⁶ it is hoped that this paper will stimulate further research.

The figures derived from the grant records show considerable annual variation. For example, the numbers of grants and confirmations per year vary in the early part of the sample; thus there is no record of any official act by the kings of arms dated between December 1704 and January 1707.⁷ A number of blank pages in the volume may suggest that this is a result of incomplete record-keeping, although there is no other evidence for unrecorded grants from this period; the difficulties with the deputy Register of the College of Arms are discussed briefly in the Appendix. Analysis has been conducted on the basis of three-year periods, to even out such fluctuations, which may partly result from the time taken for the granting process to be completed, and from the varying availability of clerks to make record entries.

For the purposes of this study, rank and occupation data relating to deceased husbands have been ascribed to their widows when the petition is submitted by the latter. Information about parents and other forebears has not been included in the analysis, although it is often provided in these records.

A database has been created of all entries in the grant records for the periods 1700-1720 and 1770-1772.⁸ The description of each grantee as given in the relevant grant has been entered in the database, sorted into fields for rank, profession, office-holding, county of residence, together with the date and formal characteristics of the grant. The database thus provides a tool for statistical analysis of grantees according to each of these categories.

I

Table 1 (*right*) shows the grantees from this period according to the rank ascribed to them (or their deceased husbands) in the grant volumes. The table shows that for the period 1700-1720, just over half of the grantees were described as *gentlemen*, the lowest recognised rank in the scale of status culminating with the nobility. Only

⁶ Save that offered by Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (paperback edn., Oxford 1990), pp. 33-49 *passim*. The registers themselves have received very little attention as a source for social history. No attempt has been made that I am aware of to present an broad analysis of the entries in this series, and no statistical work has been carried out on the numbers of nature of grants over a long period, with the exception of Woodcock and Robinson, *op. cit.*, and Edward Elmhirst, 'The Fashion for Heraldry', in *The Coat of Arms* 4 (1956-58), pp. 47-50, which presents a rough assessment of the number of grants per decade based upon certain published sources, particularly the three volumes *Grantees of Arms*, ed. W. Harry Rylands (Harl. Soc. pubns. 66-8: London 1915, 1916, 1917).

⁷ As noticed by Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 318. See the Appendix for a possible explanation for this gap in entries.

⁸ I am grateful to Edward Herbert and Jack Barker for their assistance in compiling this database.

	Impersonal	Gentleman	Esquire	Knight	Baronet	Peer	Total
1700-1702		21	3	2	2	1	29
1703-1705	1	16	2	2	1	7	29
1706-1708		15	9	6	3	4	37
1709-1711	1	18	7	4		2	32
1712-1714		14	9	2		11	36
1715-1717		14	9	4	1	10	38
1718-1720		27	7	1	1	3	39
Total (%)	2 (0.1)	125 (52.1)	46 (19.2)	21 (8.8)	8 (3.3)	38 (15.8)	240 (100)
1770-1772 (%)		17 (21.5)	45 (57)	8 (10.1)	4 (5)	5 (6)	79 (100)
Total (%)	2 (0.6)	142 (44.5)	91 (28.5)	29 (9.1)	12 (3.8)	43 (13.5)	319 (100)

*Table 1: Entries in College of Arms Grants records 1700-1720 and 1770-1772.
Analysis of grantees by rank and status.*

about 19% of applicants could be described as *esquires*.⁹ Those who were granted peerages were automatically eligible for a grant of supporters, and the period 1700-1720 includes 38 grants to peers. Their presence in the table may therefore obscure the relative importance of the other categories of applicant. If peers are removed from the sample, we find that nearly 62% of grantees were gentlemen, 23% esquires, and 10% knights. The esquires, always fewer than the gentlemen in the early eighteenth century, vary as a proportion of the whole between 1700 and 1720. Two grants of arms were made in the period to corporate bodies: the Mine Adventurers of England in 1704 and the South Sea Company in 1711 (see **Plates 3a** and **4**).

During the period 1770-1772, 79 acts of the kings of arms were placed on record. This reveals the great increase in business of this kind at the College of Arms as the eighteenth century progressed.¹⁰ The relative positions of gentlemen and esquires were nearly reversed in this later sample: here those described as gentlemen make up only just over 21% of grantees, whilst esquires amount to 57%. If peers are once more removed from the totals, we find that esquires rise to 61% of the total. For this later period, moreover, Knights of the Bath feature as recipients of grants of supporters. Since this study seeks to elucidate the social and professional nature of the grantees, it may be useful to consider the figures for grantees with these knights removed. Grants of supporters account for all of those in the category of knights in the table at figure 1, and for two of the baronets; these can thus be removed from the total. This will give a revised number of grants in the period 1770-1772 of 64, rather than 79. The relative proportion of gentlemen and esquires will then change to 27% and 70% respectively.

From Table 1 we may therefore draw the following conclusions. The most striking will no doubt be the rise in the total number of grants, from 29 in the period 1700-1702, to 79 in the period 1770-1772. Although figures for the intervening decades have not yet been calculated, our comparison of the two periods studied would suggest that the average number of grants, confirmations and exemplifications by the kings of arms rose from about 9-10 per year at the beginning of the century, to about 26 per year in the 1770s. Within these totals, moreover, the first two decades of the century saw a greater proportion of such grants consisting of supporters for those elevated to the peerage: nearly 16% for 1700-1720, compared with only 6% for 1770-1772. This later figure must however be treated with caution, as peerage creations in the eighteenth century were not necessarily annual, and a great many took place at changes of government and/or of monarch. George III had acceded to the throne in 1760, and there was no general election between 1768 and 1774, although Lord North became Prime Minister in January 1770.

⁹ The use of percentages in this paper can only be to elucidate trends within the data: in most cases the data sample is too small to admit safely of much statistical analysis, and percentage figures should be approached with caution.

¹⁰ Noted by Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 406; John Charles Brooke, in a letter dated 13 April 1772, remarked that 'the business of the Office is now very great, and keeps increasing': cited in Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 408. See also the discussion in Woodcock and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GRANTS OF ARMS

The second conclusion we may draw is the changing use of the terms *gentleman* and *esquire*. For the purposes of this study it should be noted that where no rank is indicated, that of gentleman is assumed. In the early years of the century the description *esquire* would appear to have been used sparingly for those who were high sheriffs (or high sheriffs elect), aldermen or sheriffs of the City of London, holders of Crown or government appointments, judges, or at the least, commissioners of the peace. It was thus a term reserved almost exclusively in these volumes for holders of central or municipal public office. By the 1770s however the term was very nearly the default description for the recipients of grants. Table 2 will show that the increasing use of the term does not appear to have been a result of a rise in the social status of grantees.

It is worth noting that the knights in the table are of two rather different kinds. Those described as knights in the period 1700-1720 were all knights bachelor, part of that rapidly diminishing class whose status had been damaged by the Stuarts.¹¹ The eight knights of 1770-1772 were all Knight Companions of the Bath, the order which had been established in 1725.

II

Table 2 (*overleaf*) presents an analysis of the information provided by the grant records on the professions, occupations and public service careers of grantees. As throughout this study, information entered derives entirely from that included in the grant records, and there is no doubt that a more detailed study of each grantee would enable more concrete conclusions to be drawn. In the occupational information provided by the records we are subject to the desires of the grantee to present himself in a certain light. We find, for example, that the grant of arms to Sir Ambrose Crowley in 1707 (see **Plate 3b**) describes him only as sheriff of the City of London. In fact he was one of the first great industrial magnates, whose father had begun as a semi-literate nail-maker, and who in his lifetime had created an empire of iron industries.¹² The registers of arms, and indeed the pedigree that he placed on record at the same time, make no mention of his career as an industrialist. This tendency may also reflect the desire of heralds to present their clients in a certain way, and to use an acceptable or customary vocabulary, when putting forward candidates for grants.

The grantees are categorized in the database as: high sheriff, deputy lieutenant, and in the commission of lieutenancy; mayor, and alderman; justice of the peace; lawyer and judge (including certain court officials); officer in the army; officer in the navy; priest; merchant and member of livery company; holder of government, parliamentary or royal office (not including members of parliament); medical doctor. Naturally these categories are not mutually exclusive and grantees can occasionally appear in more than one category. An account of the number of entries for each period in which no occupational information is provided has also been included here, which

¹¹ John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: the peerage of eighteenth century England* (Cambridge 1987), Table 3, p. 32 and p. 54, n. 45.

¹² CA record Ms Grants 5/205; Jacob M. Price, 'Crowley, Sir Ambrose', in *Oxford DNB*.

	High Sheriff or Deputy Lieutenant	Mayor or Alder- man	Justice of the Peace	Lawyer or Judge	Army	Navy	Priest	Merchant or liveryman	Govern- ment, parli- amentary or Royal service	Medicine	<i>None stated</i>
1700-1702	3	2	1	1				6			17
1703-1705	2	1	2					5	4	1	16
1706-1708	2	2	4	8	1		1		8		15
1709-1711	3	4	2	1	2	1		3	4	1	13
1712-1714	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	5	6		15
1715-1717	4	4	5	1	3		1	5	4		14
1718-1720	1		6			1	1	5	3	2	20
Total	16	15	21	14	7	3	5	29	29	4	110
1770-1702	1	1	5	3	7	4	2	6	6		47
Total	17	16	26	17	14	7	7	35	35	4	15

EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GRANTS OF ARMS

shows that of 240 entries in the period 1700-1720, 110 or nearly 46% included no statements as to occupation or service. In 1770-1772, however, 47 out of 79 or nearly 60% of entries give no occupation or service details. This may reflect an evolution in the practices of the heralds responsible for drafting memorials and letters patent. In this context we may remark that of nineteen exemplifications of arms following the grant of a royal licence in the period 1770-1772, only two made mention of any career, public service or profession of the petitioner. The increase in the number of entries providing no such information may be explained therefore by the significant increase in the number of exemplifications following a royal licence.

We may also make some remarks upon the nature of the grantees as shown in Table 2. The first is that there are few military careers in the early decades of the eighteenth century commemorated by grants of arms, despite the constant warfare of the period. This may be contrasted with the seven army officers and four naval officers who received grants or confirmations between 1770 and 1772. The number of judges, barristers and attorneys will occasion no surprise, as the law had long provided a means of entry to the gentry. The analysis presented in Table 2 confirms the continuing presence of such men in the ranks of those seeking admittance to gentility. For the period 1700-1720, 21 grantees or nearly 9% of the total were described as being in the commission of the peace. In 1770-1772, however, only five grantees (about 6%) were described as JPs. It is unlikely that this is evidence of a significant alteration in the proportion of grantees serving on the local bench.

III

Table 3 (*overleaf*) presents a summary analysis of the information provided by Table 2, concentrating on the two themes of county or central government, and merchants or liverymen of the City of London. The figures for county or local government have been arrived at by summing those given in Table 2 for high sheriff or deputy lieutenant, mayor or alderman, and JP. These sums may then be compared with those for merchants in the same periods. The results show an intriguing decline in the proportion of grantees stated to be merchants or described as liverymen, during the course of the period studied. The century begins with some 20% of grantees being so described; by 1718-1720 this figure has declined to just under 13%, and in 1770-1772 the figure is still lower, at under 8%.

In the same period, the number of grantees described as involved in the government of the county, the town or city, fluctuates quite widely, from only 11% in 1712-1714, to as high as 34% in the following three-year period. The latter figure represents 13 grantees out of a total of 38 between 1715-1717. Further detailed biographical study of the grantees would no doubt shed light on the nature and causes of the variations in these figures: it may be conjectured that they will be shown to be related in part, at least, to the accession of George I in August 1714, and to the

Table 2 (left): Entries in College of Arms Grants records 1700-1720 and 1770-1772. Profession and local, county and central government service.

THE COAT OF ARMS

	Merchants		County/local government		Total
Three-year period	Total	% of total entries	Total	% of total entries	
1700-1702	6	20.1	6	20.1	29
1703-1705	5	17.2	5	17.2	29
1706-1708	0	0	8	21.6	37
1709-1711	3	9.4	9	28.1	32
1712-1714	5	13.9	4	11.1	36
1715-1717	5	13.2	13	34.2	38
1718-1720	5	12.8	7	17.9	39
Total	29	12.1	52	21.6	240
1770-1772	6	7.6	7	8.9	79
Total	35	11%	59	18.5%	319

*Table 3: Entries in College of Arms Grants records 1700-1720 and 1770-1772.
Merchants and those serving in local or county government.*

changes in the personnel of government at all local levels that this event brought about.

This tendency may explain in part the small number of JPs, high sheriffs, mayors and aldermen that Table 2 indicates for the period 1770-1772. Only seven out of a total of 79 grantees (just under 9%) in this later period appear in the column for any county or local government service, lower than any period in the first decades of the century. This would seem to suggest that as the use of the term *esquire* was becoming more commonplace in the petitions for arms, so the proclivity to fill local offices was declining.

IV

Table 4 (*overleaf*) analyses some of the data from the grant records in terms of the geographical information that is provided about the grantees. For the purposes of this paper the information is sorted into six categories, although in reality it is inevitably much more complex. For a number of entries, more than one place of residence is mentioned; for others, more than one individual is the recipient of a grant or is named in the letters patent. This study uses only the first named place or petitioner. Most (but not all) of the grants of supporters to peers cite no place of residence, and give only the territorial designation of the peerage title as an indication of geographical base, a rôle it fulfils extremely imperfectly; it is with full awareness of this imperfection that the territorial designation has been used in the present study, although many peers no doubt had other and perhaps more significant residences elsewhere. Many peers and gentry had residences in London or Middlesex, which may or may not have been the principal place of residence cited in the grant. The influence of the metropolis is in other respects a difficult factor to assess. In the present study grantees described as residing in Kent, Surrey and Essex, whose lives and careers may well have been principally or entirely metropolitan in focus, have not been grouped with those of London and Middlesex.

Perhaps even more than was the case with the earlier tables, therefore, the data in Table 4 should be regarded as unrefined and slightly tendentious. Nonetheless it is permissible to make some observations upon what it shows. The most important of these supports to a degree the observation by Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson that grantees of arms in the period following the collapse of the visitations in the late seventeenth century were concentrated in London and its suburbs.¹³ Indeed Table 4 suggests that the first two decades of the eighteenth century saw an increase in this tendency. In 1700-1702, seven grantees out of 29 (24%) were from London; in 1715-1717 this had risen to 42%, and in 1718-1720 the statistic is 46% or eighteen out of a total of thirty-nine grants. Contemporary with this increase was a decline in the proportion of grantees from the north of England, defined for the purposes of this study as the counties of Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland and Yorkshire. By 1718-1720, only one out of thirty-nine grantees was from the north.

In 1770-1772, the records describe 19 out of 79 grantees (24%) as being from London or Middlesex. Eleven grantees (nearly 14%) were from the north, which is a proportion similar to that achieved at the very start of the century. These figures indicate a greater degree of provincial interest in seeking a grant of arms. Thus the beginning of the eighteenth century saw a quite rapid decline in applications from the north, but if the present data are to be trusted, the trend had been reversed by the early 1770s and applications from the metropolis did not dominate the registers to the same extent.

V

The results put forward in the four tables above permit some conclusions to be drawn from the data extracted from the records of grants, confirmations and exemplifications

¹³ Woodcock and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

	London & Middlesex	Northern England	Overseas	Ireland	None stated	remainder	Total
1700-1702	7	4				18	29
1703-1705	10	2	1	1	1	14	29
1706-1708	15	3		1	1	17	37
1709-1711	15	2	1		1	13	32
1712-1714	12	3			2	19	36
1715-1717	16	1			1	20	38
1718-1720	18	1			4	16	39
Total	93	17	2	2	10	117	240
1770-1772	19	11	7		15	27	79
Total	112	28	9	2	25	144	319

*Table 4: Entries in College of Arms Grants records 1700-1720 and 1770-1772.
Analysis of grantees by residential description.*

of arms held by the College of Arms. The first is the rise in the number of entries made each year from the beginning of the sample. This confirms the impression given by earlier commentators¹⁴ that the earliest years of the century saw the College at a particularly low ebb. Some probable reasons for this have been given by Wagner: they include the end of the visitations in 1689; the cessation of the business in heraldic funerals by the late seventeenth century; the diminution in status of the Court of Chivalry; the comparatively poor quality of some appointments to the College in an age where both the Earl Marshal and his Deputy sought to exercise their powers of patronage; and the broader social trends which made social display less overt and yet saw increased assertiveness and political influence in the hands of the gentry.

Not mentioned by Wagner is the decline in central authority as exercised by other London monopoly bodies, such as the livery companies. Ronald Homer has shown that the Pewterers' Company, given the right to search throughout England and Wales for substandard wares by their royal charter of 1474, had their authority renewed and extended by legislation in 1503, 1512, 1533 and 1541. Nonetheless, Homer writes, 'by the early years of the eighteenth century the company's right to search in the provinces was being called into question', and the last full scale country search was conducted in 1702.¹⁵ John Forbes has shown that the Goldsmiths' Company, given similar nationwide powers by charter and Acts of Parliament, could no longer enforce them by the end of the seventeenth century, and abandoned all attempts at searching in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Other livery companies no doubt experienced a similar resistance to their monopoly privileges at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁶

Whatever the reasons for the comparative inactivity of the kings of arms at the beginning of the period studied, the figures presented above suggest that matters improved throughout the first decades of the century. At first this was an increase derived from London and Middlesex, with other parts of the country less well represented. A fairly steady proportion of grantees were high sheriffs of counties, had been appointed to the commission of the peace, or had been elected aldermen, sheriffs or lord mayors of London. The 1770-1772 sample shows a considerable increase in total numbers, but with proportionally fewer petitioners recorded as residing in London and Middlesex; interestingly, fewer had already served or were about to serve in any local capacity or in central government offices. At the same time, we have noted that the proportions of grantees given the designations *gentleman* and *esquire* were reversed between the earlier and later samples. This must reflect an increased tendency among the heralds and their clients to use the latter term. As the visitations became a distant memory, the heralds' rôle as arbiters of social distinction was diminished; the technical distinctions in the vocabulary of status had by the 1770s

¹⁴ Wagner, *Heralds of England* p. 318; Woodcock and Robinson, op. cit. p. 43.

¹⁵ Ronald F. Homer, 'The Pewterers' Company's country searches and the company's regulation of prices', in *Guilds Society & Economy in London 1450-1800*, edd. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London 2002), pp. 102, 105, 107.

¹⁶ John Forbes, 'Search, immigration and the Goldsmiths' Company: a study in the decline of its powers', in *Guilds Society & Economy in London*, pp. 115-26.

been seriously blurred by an inflationary trend. This trend is perhaps also reflected in the decreasing numbers of grantees described as merchants or liverymen.

Finally, the grant or confirmation of arms itself should be seen as one of a range of strategies employed by the rising or aspiring mercantile, professional or landed individual to mark their arrival in the ranks of the gentle. Local or county public service was another such strategy. The records of the College of Arms examined in this study provide useful and hitherto relatively unexamined information about social aspirations and mobility in the eighteenth century. More detailed study over a longer period would enable more definite conclusions to be drawn about why the College's business increased in the second half of the century, and about the identity, status and reasoning of petitioners for arms. With further study of this sort, the records may provide answers to questions about the aspirations and ambitions of a class that is little understood.

Appendix: a note on the Register

During the period under study in this paper the College of Arms was under the direct supervision of Deputy Earls Marshal, as the Duke of Norfolk, hereditary Earl Marshal, was incapacitated from exercising the post first by his minority and subsequently by his Catholicism. The series of records examined in this paper were, in the early eighteenth century, among the responsibilities of the Register of the College of Arms and his deputy.

In January 1695 Gregory King, Lancaster Herald, had been dismissed from his position as Register by the Earl Marshal, perhaps following some irregularities over fees, and replaced by Dr Robert Plott, newly made Mowbray Herald Extraordinary (see **Figure 1**). Plott immediately appointed Robert Dale, then Blanche Lyon Pursuivant (Suffolk Herald Extraordinary from 1707),¹⁷ as his deputy, seemingly intending him to carry out all the functions of Register, and then died in April 1696.¹⁸

Charles Mawson, Chester Herald, would seem to have been appointed Register in succession to Plott, with Dale continuing as his deputy for much of the first period of our study. In 1701 Mawson requested the permission of the Deputy Earl Marshal to appoint Laurence Crompton, York herald, as his (perhaps temporary) deputy. In his ensuing warrant, the Deputy Earl Marshal notes that 'diverse complaints have been made to me that there has been Great neglect in the Register's Office'.¹⁹

That all was not considered well with the standard of record-keeping is confirmed by an order of the Deputy Earl Marshal dated 4 July 1711, which revoked Dale's appointment as deputy Register, and ordered that 'all Orders, Warrants, Grants, Chapter Minutes etc. which from and since the year 1694 are at this time unregistered, be fully and effectively entred and completed forthwith'.²⁰

A royal warrant was issued by George I on 19 January 1714/15, revoking the appointment of Robert Dale as Suffolk Herald Extraordinary, formerly deputy Register. This states that he had 'been guilty of great neglects in his execution of that

¹⁷ Godfrey and Wagner, *CA*, p. 148.

¹⁹ *CA* record Ms I.26/152.

¹⁸ *CA* record Ms I.26/139, 141.

²⁰ *CA* record Ms I.27/30.

EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GRANTS OF ARMS

Figure 1: Robert Plott, Mowbray Herald Extraordinary and Register of the College of Arms. From T. W. King's grangerized copy of *The History of the College of Arms* by Mark Noble (1805), in the College library.



office, whereby the registries in our said College were become very deficient', so much so that at the request of the Officers the Deputy Earl Marshal had been obliged to remove him. Dale was subsequently rehabilitated in about 1720 and appointed Richmond Herald in 1721.²¹

The Deputy Earl Marshal issued a warrant²² dated 31 March 1715 which begins:

Whereas I am informed that divers warrants and approbations sign'd by me some years since for assignments and confirmations of arms have not been fully executed, so that some of them are (by the Deaths of the partys) become void and of none effect, and the others until Patents are pass'd thereupon in form, are and ought to be of no use or Benefit to the Persons who Desir'd the same...

The warrant goes on to cite eight cases (one in 1707, three in 1708 and four in 1709) in which he has issued warrants but no patent has been forthcoming from the kings of arms. Five of these warrants were issued at the solicitation of Laurence Crompton, the others by Robert Dale, both deputy Registers at one time or another.²³ The Deputy Earl Marshal ordered Mawson, Register, to receive these warrants and return them to him; he declared them to be 'void and of none effect, except such of them as Crompton

²¹ CA record Ms I.27/47; Godfrey and Wagner, *CA*, p. 148.

²² CA record Ms I.27/49.

²³ Godfrey and Wagner, *CA*, p. 188.

THE COAT OF ARMS

and Dale shall promise to pass patents thereupon in due form within two months of the date hereof". No such patents were passed and all the warrants were therefore void. It is likely that the cases had failed to come to a conclusion in part through reluctance on the part of clients to part with the official fees, and in part through a degree of disorganization in their agents' practices. The agents, in these cases at least, were those who had been entrusted with the maintenance of the records.

No entries were made in the series of records at the College of Arms known as Earl Marshal's Books between June 1703 and February 1706, which coincides quite closely with the gap in grants of Arms between December 1704 and January 1707. The cumulative effect of the entries noted here may be that the records of grants, confirmations and exemplifications of arms examined in this study suffered from the neglect or lack of resources of the officers responsible for maintaining them.