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PLATE 1



Sketch by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms, of the tomb of Robert, Duke of Normandy, in Gloucester Cathedral. Done by Cooke on his Visitation of Gloucestershire, 1569. CA Ms ICB 70 fo. 49. See page 72.

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PLATE 2



Funeral certificate of Sir John Spencer (d. 1600), by Robert Scarlett, herald painter.
CA record Ms I.16, p. 82. See page 78.

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ARTISTS AND ARTWORK OF THE HERALDIC VISITATIONS 1530-1687

Adrian Ailes

The heralds' visitations, undertaken throughout England and Wales between 1530 and 1687, resulted not only in many thousands of neatly produced family pedigrees accompanied by finely executed tricks of arms, but also in hundreds of drawings of church monuments, seals and other evidences taken at the time as proof of right to those same arms and gentle status. Though much has been written on the heraldic and genealogical value of visitations, their artwork and the artists that produced it have been little studied.

Heralds as artists

The first known royal commission for a provincial king of arms to visit was issued in 1530. It is from this date that the first true visitation journeys and their subsequent records and artwork begin, though earlier, semi-official, proto-visitations had taken place since the 1480s.¹ Between 1530 and 1533 Thomas Benolt, Clarenceux King of Arms, went on visitation in Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, Surrey, and the Isle of Wight. He took with him sheets of paper each headed with three blank shields, doubtless drawn from templates. These were to receive the arms of the head of the family alone and also combined with those of his wife or wives. This use of blank shields either pre-drawn or stamped-in made good practical sense and was used throughout the visitation period by the officers of arms and their accompanying artists on their journeys. Final versions, from the rough sketches taken on visitation, were then entered into fair 'office' copies to be kept as the official record.² It is quite possible that Benolt drew or painted these 'office' copies himself. To save time and space he or his artist used pre-prepared pages in his fair copies this time using the outlines of two shields along with their helm, wreath and mantling; see **Figure 1** (over) for examples from visitations made by Benolt.

No king of arms, including Benolt, could have visited the whole of his province by himself – the task was simply too great. He, therefore, appointed other heralds to go in his stead. One such deputy was William Fellow, Lancaster Herald. He was

¹ See A. Ailes, 'The development of the Heralds' Visitations in England and Wales, 1450-1600', *CoA* 3rd ser. 5 (2009), pp. 7-23 at 7-11.

² A. R. Wagner, *Heralds of England: a history of the Office and College of Arms* (London 1967), p. 167.

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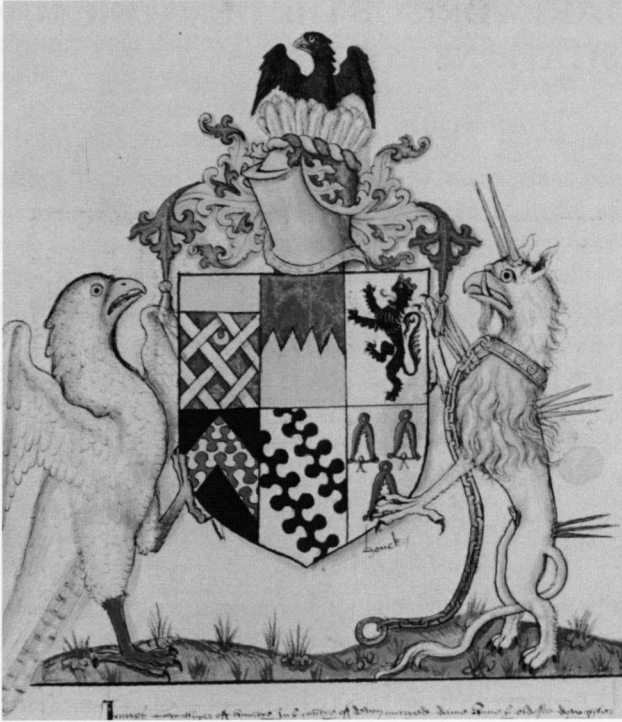
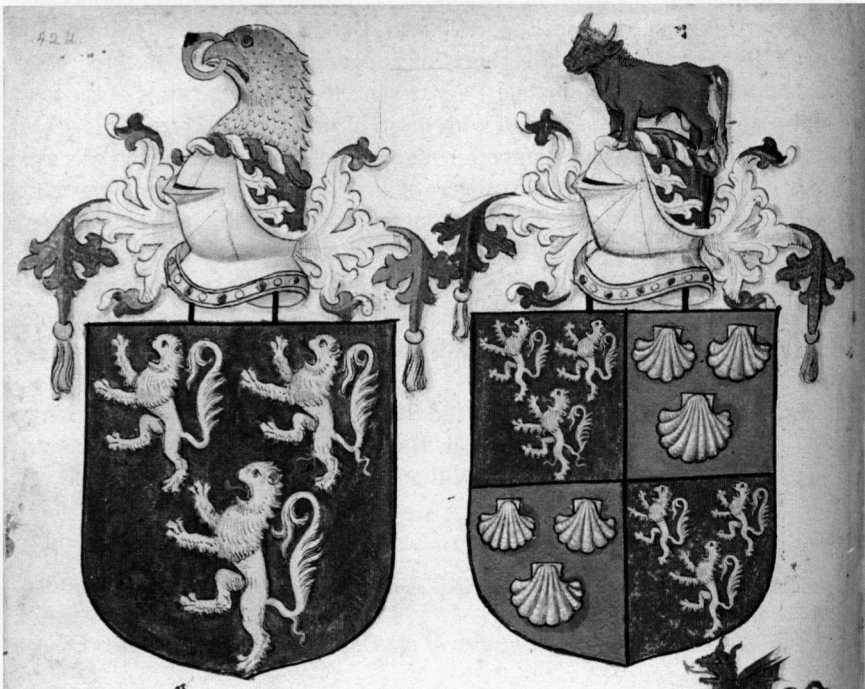


Figure 1: entries in Visitations by Thomas Benolt, Clarenceux King of Arms, 1531. Left (a), arms, crest and supporters of St Leger as recorded in the Visitation of Devon and Cornwall: CA record Ms G2 fo. 24v. Below (b), the arms of Fiennes and Fiennes quartering Dacre as recorded in the Visitation of Sussex: CA record Ms D13, fo. 42v.

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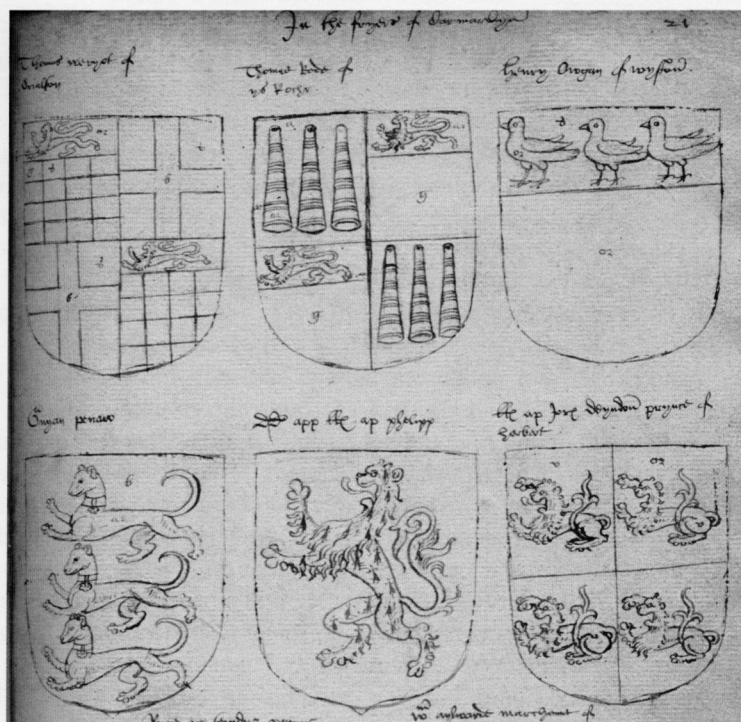


Figure 2: six shields recorded in the Friary of Carmarthen by William Fellow, Lancaster Herald, on Visitation in Wales, 1531. CA record Ms H8, fo 21.

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sent on several visitations including south Wales and Herefordshire in 1531, tricking the arms of the local gentry as he went. But he also drew many coats of arms taken from windows and monuments in religious houses such as St David's cathedral and the friars' houses at Cardiff, Carmarthen, and Brecon. These were amongst the first so-called 'church notes' taken by heralds on visitation. Judging from his drafts of the arms in the Friary of Carmarthen (see **Figure 2**) and the College of Abergwili, he was a skilled artist and draughtsman; the shields are clear and neat with well ordered and lively charges.³

³ CA record Ms H 8 fos. 21-2. For other reproductions see Siddons, *DWH* 1, fig. 100, and T. Woodcock and J. M. Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford 1988), p. 149. For drawings of badges Fellow made at Abbey Dore, Herefordshire on visitation see M. P. Siddons, *Heraldic Badges in England and Wales* (4 vols., London 2009), vol. 1 pl. 23. For Fellow himself see Siddons, *DWH* 1, p. 309; 2, p. xliii, and id. (ed.), *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales* (Harl. Soc. pubns. n.s. 14: London 1996), pp. 23-4. For church notes in general see Wagner, *The Records and Collections of the College of Arms* (London 1952), pp. 61-2; Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 226; and Ailes, 'Development of the Heralds' Visitations', p. 20.

Another early herald who was a competent (though rather pedestrian) artist and who went on visitation was Robert Glover, Somerset Herald. An outstanding scholar he copied no fewer than thirty medieval rolls of arms.⁴ Between 1570 and 1585 he visited several northern counties as deputy to his father-in-law, William Flower, Norroy King of Arms. He replaced the curvilinear family tree (looking rather like a tree root) with the now familiar rectilinear pedigree. Moreover, in his last three visitations he included transcripts of old charters often accompanied with drawings of their seals recorded as evidence to prove family descent or a right to arms; see **Figure 3** for an example.⁵ Sir Thomas Wriothesley, Garter King of Arms in 1530, had used pictorial evidences to back up his own pedigree but Glover was the first to do so on visitations.⁶ Indeed, after Glover visitations never looked the same again.

Fellow and Glover were not the only heralds skilled in drawing. Before his death in 1534 Garter Wriothesley and his studio produced an enormous amount of high-quality artwork, but as Garter he could not go on visitation – that was the prerogative of the provincial kings of arms, Clarenceux (south of the River Trent) and Norroy (north of the Trent). Some of those heralds that did visit actually began life as herald painters or were themselves accomplished artists. Robert Cooke, either as deputy to William Hervey, Clarenceux King of Arms, or, after 1567 in his own right as Clarenceux, personally visited nineteen counties. He was an accomplished draughtsman and may have also painted portraits. An example of Cooke's draughtsmanship can be seen in **Plate 1**.⁷ Hugh Cotgrave, Rouge Croix Pursuivant, was probably an arms painter and accompanied Clarenceux Hervey on his visitation of Suffolk in 1561. He is said to have visited Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire as Hervey's deputy in 1564.⁸ That notorious firebrand, Ralph Brooke, York Herald, practised as a herald painter before he was made an officer of arms in 1580. He had been a freeman of the Painter-Stainers Company since 1576 and went on visitation to Somerset in 1591.⁹ In 1581 Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, wrote to the earl marshal recommending a Humphrey Hales for the post of Bluemantle Pursuivant, since, *inter alia*, 'He doth draw and paint excellently well.'¹⁰ William Camden, Clarenceux, whom Brooke vilified and who was responsible for twenty visitations though he never went on one

⁴ CEMRA, p. xx and pl. III (b).

⁵ Wagner, *Records and Collections*, pp. 16, 58.

⁶ Ann Payne, 'Sir Thomas Wriothesley and his heraldic artists' in M. P. Brown and S. McKendrick (edd.), *Illuminating the Book: makers and interpreters* (London 1998), pp. 143-61.

⁷ Godfrey and Wagner, CA p. 84. For Cooke's sketch of the tomb of Robert, Duke of Normandy, in Gloucester cathedral taken on his visitation of Gloucestershire c. 1569 in CA Ms ICB 70 fo. 49 see T. D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London, 1949), p. 156, pl. X; and Woodcock and Robinson, *Oxford Guide*, pp. 173, 174).

⁸ Godfrey and Wagner, CA p. 145; P. Cotgrave, 'A note on Hugh Cotgrave, Richmond Herald (d. 1584)', *CoA* n.s. 12 (1998), pp. 298-9; J. Corder (ed.), *The Visitation of Suffolk 1561 made by William Hervey* (Harl. Soc. pubns. n.s. 2: London 1981), pt 1, p. vii.

⁹ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 211; Godfrey and Wagner, CA p. 187.

¹⁰ CA Ms Talbot Papers G fo. 231; quoted in A. R. Wagner, *English Genealogy* (2nd edn., Oxford 1972), p. 362.

¶ Inmunda ex. Edmundus de Lasey Constabularius Cestrie Salu. Nostis missos esse
me continasse Deo et ecclesie sue officiali de Nothle et Canonici Regularibus eiusdem
loci diuini concilium tenere in qua sita est ecclesia eorundem Canonice super iuratu
refo. Et liberam suam electionem ad Patres suos eligendos sicut tunc temporis refo
confessi à Symone Secano et inter Regem de Lasey quendam bene memoriam adum
mum et Canonici sui officiali de Nothle. ac. Tunc Bno Hugone Dissolubere
Bno Gilberto Hamulard, Bno Rob Folist, Bno Ada de Nino Merck, Bno Johi
de Bel, Bno Radu de Horbury, Bno Johanne de Hothel, Bno Gualtero de Button et alijs



Sigillum Edmundi de
Lasey Constabularij Cestrie.

Qua sequuntur ex chartis Johannis Daunay militis collecta sunt. 1584.

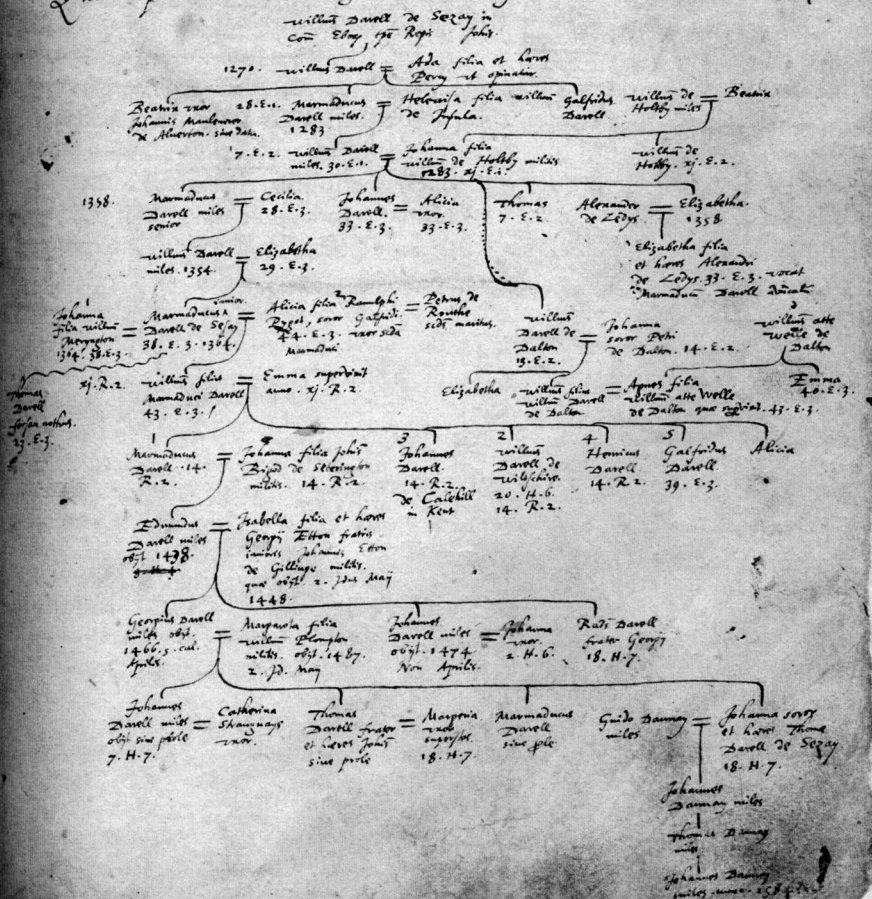


Figure 3: draft pedigree of Darell of Sessay, by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald. From Glover's working notebook for the Visitation of Yorkshire 1584-5. CA record Ms 2.D5 fo. 58.

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personally, was the son of a Lichfield painter-stainer. His father, Sampson Camden, was employed by Garter Wriothesley to help produce artwork for heraldic funerals. William Camden later became master of the Painter-Stainers and in 1623 left money for plate to the company.¹¹ Another officer of arms who presented a cup to the company was Henry Lilly, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant. He was originally apprenticed as a painter-stainer in 1605, and in 1633 was imprisoned for meddling in an heraldic funeral without Norroy King of Arms' permission. However, the next year he was appointed a pursuivant and deputed to go on visitation. He was a skilful limner and illuminator.¹²

Two seventeenth-century heralds were particularly fine draughtsmen: Francis Sandford, created Lancaster Herald in 1679, and his successor, Gregory King. Both went on visitation. As a teenager King accompanied William Dugdale, Norroy King of Arms, as his clerk on various northern visitations between 1663 and 1666. He also doubled up as Dugdale's artist compiling numerous church notes and drawings of antiquarian interest. For one so young his artwork is impressive as can be seen in his drawing of the castle and chapel of Bishop Auckland, taken on Dugdale's visitation of Durham produced in 1666 when he was only seventeen (see **Figure 4**).¹³

Some of Francis Sandford's sketches dating back to 1653 (such as his drawing of Sir Thomas Stanley's monument erected sometime after 1603) are bound in Dugdale's office copy of the 1663-64 visitation of Shropshire.¹⁴ Sandford was a surveyor and actively engaged as architect and supervisor in the rebuilding of the College of Arms after its destruction in the Great Fire of London in 1666.¹⁵ All the visiting heralds like Dugdale had to be at least proficient in tricking if nothing else and many made commendable attempts at church notes. Nicholas Charles, Lancaster Herald, who deputed for Camden in Huntingdonshire in 1613, produced some elegant drawings of seals and numerous church notes including detailed sketches of the Spencer family tombs in Great Brington, Northamptonshire.¹⁶

¹¹ BL Ms Add 45131 fo. 169v; Payne, 'Wriothesley and his heraldic artists', p. 158; W. H. Herendeen, *William Camden: a life in context* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 10; Godfrey and Wagner, *CA* p. 85; W. A. D. Englefield, *The History of the Painter-Stainers Company of London* (repr., London 1996), p. 14 and fig. opposite p. 93.

¹² Godfrey and Wagner, *CA* p. 222; Englefield, *History of the Painter-Stainers*, pp. 15, 92, 93.

¹³ Wagner, *Records and Collections*, pp. 62, 83; work illustrated in Woodcock and Robinson, *Oxford Guide*, pp. 146-47. In a letter dated 29 March 1666 Dugdale wrote that Gregory had taken two prospects of York at the fairest views: one upon Hull Road, the other on Tadcaster Road (Bod. Ms Yorks C36 fo. 13).

¹⁴ *CA* record Ms C35 pt 2 p. 20 and see pp. 34, 35, 39; *Heralds' Commemorative Exhibition 1484-1934*, p. 39; illustrated in K. A. Esdaile, *English Church Monuments 1510-1840* (London 1946), fig. 55. See also Wagner, *Records and Collections*, pp. 61, 62, 83.

¹⁵ Godfrey and Wagner, *CA* p. 138.

¹⁶ BL Ms Lansdowne 874 fos. 70v and 71, illustrated in R. Marks and A. Payne, *British Heraldry from its Origins to c. 1800* (London 1978), p. 50. See also John Philipot, Somerset Herald, who went on several visitations, in BL Ms Harl 3917 fos. 34v-35, illustrated in C. R. Cuncer, 'Heraldic notices of the church of St Martin, Herne', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 53 (1940), pp. 81-100 (opposite p. 81).

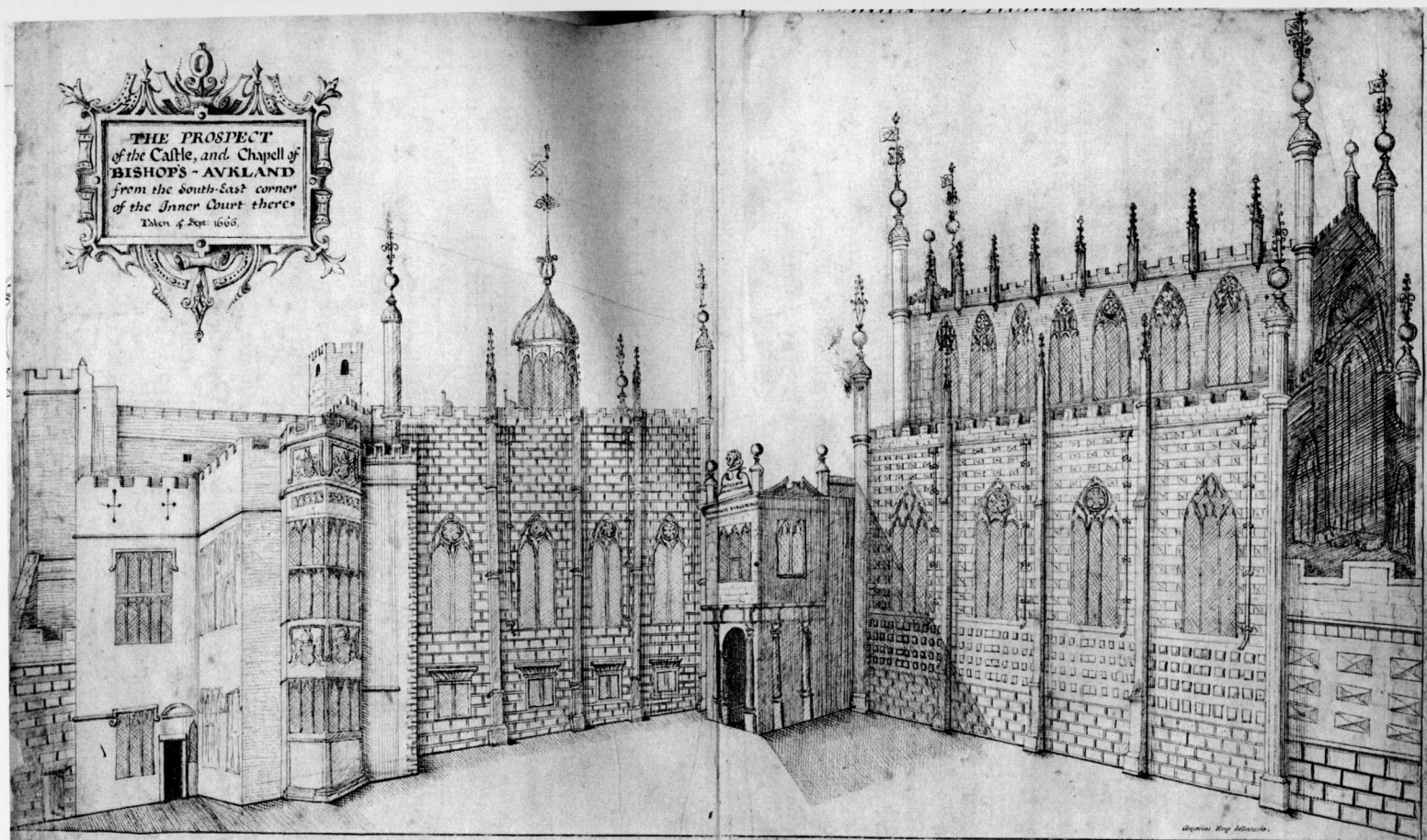


Figure 4: 'The prospect of the Castle, and Chapell of Bishop's-Aukland'. Drawn by Gregory King (later Rouge Dragon Pursuivant and Lancaster Herald), on Dugdale's Visitation of Durham, 4 September 1666. CA record Ms C31 pt 2 fo 10c.

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Professional artists

Sadly not all the visiting officers of arms were as skilled as Sandford or King or Charles. Some appear to have had little artistic talent. One such it seems was Richard Lee, Portcullis Pursuivant. Even allowing for the fact they are working drawings, his sketches of shields in Merton College, taken on his visitation of Oxfordshire in 1574, are crudely executed.¹⁷ As the visitations increased in number and sophistication and with more gentryfolk wishing to record their descent and arms for posterity so it became imperative for officers of arms such as Lee to take competent artists with them into the counties.

The role of the early heraldic artist has barely been studied. Apart from the sovereign's official painter, we do not even know their names.¹⁸ For sure, in the sixteenth century heralds farmed out occasional work to independent painters, and this may well later have included producing fair copies of their visitations based on the heralds' working papers.¹⁹ Some heralds, as we have seen, were competent artists in their own right, but they had many duties to perform, including acting overseas, and from the middle of the sixteenth century the role of the heraldic artist, particularly with regard to funereal heraldry and pedigree production, was coming into its own. This in itself was not initially a problem for the heralds. A growing awareness of the potential for heraldic display, even if rather ostentatious, was good for business and some of the officers of arms exploited this new fashion mercilessly. What concerned the heralds was that valuable heraldic work was being siphoned off to these professional artists and, moreover, the heraldic work they were producing was not being monitored or recorded. Indeed, if it was being written down it was in the private notebooks of these men.

From this point on a kind of love hate relationship between the two professions – herald and arms painter – existed. Both were aiming at the same market – the nobility and the gentry, especially the *nouveaux riches* who were keen to legitimise their new-found status and demonstrate their conspicuous consumption through pompous pedigrees and ostentatious heraldic display. At the same time both were (at least initially) dependent on one another. In many ways the visitations, by taking the heralds into the provinces, brought this conflict to a head nationwide. It is not surprising, therefore, that the new royal commission for visitations in 1552 instructed visiting heralds to ensure that no engraver, glazier, goldsmith, or painter-stainer produced heraldic artwork without the authority of the relevant provincial king of arms.²⁰

One way out was for the heralds to work with the arms painters. From the early seventeenth century onwards several agreements of varying success were made between the College of Arms and the Painter-Stainers Company.²¹ From as early as

¹⁷ Bod Ms Wood D14 fos. 70-3, illustrated in Alan Bott, *The Heraldry in Merton College* (Oxford 2001), pp. 21-2.

¹⁸ See Payne, 'Wriothesley and his heraldic artists', pp. 147-61, for John Browne, King's Painter to Henry VIII.

¹⁹ Payne, 'Wriothesley and his heraldic artists', p. 146.

²⁰ Ailes, 'Development of the heralds' visitations', p. 14.

²¹ See Englefield, *History of the Painter-Stainers*, and Wagner, *Heralds of England*, *passim*.

1564 the heralds appointed deputies (rather than using junior officers of arms) and some of these were professional arms painters.²² Initially they were local agents appointed *ad hoc* to help out with funerals and the functions of visitations by constructing pedigrees and chasing up those who did not obey the visitation summons. Peter Proby, for example, an arms painter of Chester, was appointed Norroy's deputy for Cheshire in 1578. He was required to use his art for funeral arms, banners, standards, and helms.²³ Another was Thomas Chaloner, also an arms painter of Chester. In 1591 he made a visitation of the city on behalf of the heralds, and in the following year was appointed Garter's deputy for Chester, Lancaster and North Wales.²⁴

From 1585 full-blown deputy heralds appear. These were officially appointed by letters patent signed and sealed by the provincial kings. From at least 1600 they exercised the policing functions of a visiting herald. For the arms painters amongst them this was truly a case of 'poacher turned gamekeeper' since it was now their job as agents of the heralds to control the heraldic work of their fellow artisans. Randle Holme I of Chester was an arms painter who married Thomas Chaloner's widow. In 1606 he was appointed deputy herald for Cheshire, Lancashire and North Wales. He was the first of four generations of his family to be so appointed.²⁵ Little wonder that William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant between 1597 and 1618, complained that every painter's shop had become an office of arms.²⁶

If some professional artists were to become deputy heralds, and a few even heralds, and ride on visitation then there were some who accompanied visiting officers of arms as no more than artists and scribes of pedigrees. One of the first, if not the first of such men (that is, purely artists) to go on visitation was Richard Scarlett of St

²² See especially A. R. Wagner and G. D. Squibb, 'Deputy heralds', in F. Emmison and R. Stephens, *Tribute to an Antiquary: essays presented to Marc Fitch by some of his friends* (London 1976), pp. 229-64 at 232-3, 242-3; and Siddons, *DWH* 1, p. 314.

²³ Wagner and Squibb, 'Deputy heralds', pp. 233-5.

²⁴ Siddons, *DWH* 1, pp. 315-16. For Chaloner see Wagner and Squibb, 'Deputy heralds', pp. 233, 253-4; Siddons, *DWH* 1, p. 309; and HMC, *Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians* (Guide to Sources for British Historians 12: London 2003), p. 37. Chaloner may have produced early 'target pedigrees' – circular pedigrees with the subject in the middle surrounded by ancestors in successive generations arranged in concentric circles around him and accompanied by their arms (Siddons, *DWH* 1, p. 51). In the following century Benedict Horsley, a painter-stainer of York, was appointed deputy herald for Northumberland and co. Durham in preparation for William Dugdale's visit before the end of June 1666 (Wagner and Squibb, 'Deputy heralds', p. 259).

²⁵ Letters patent of appointment: CA muniment room Box XXV, no. 27; transcribed in G.D. Squibb (ed.), *Munimenta Heraldica 1484-1984* (Harl. Soc. pubns. n.s. 4: London 1985), pp. 144-5, illustrated in Wagner and Squibb, 'Deputy heralds', pl. 1. For Holme and his family see Wagner and Squibb, op. cit. pp. 234, 237, 257-8; *Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians*, p. 101; A. K. Fursey [J. Campbell-Kease], 'A note on deputy heralds, the Holme family, and *The Academie of Armory* 1688', in J. Campbell-Kease (ed.), *Tribute to an Armorer: essays for John Brooke-Little* (London 2000), pp. 131-7.

²⁶ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 238.

Botolph-without-Aldgate, London.²⁷ As a warden of the Painter-Stainers Company he was a signatory of a petition directed *against* the heralds in 1578. However, in 1592 he rode *with* Richard Lee, now Richmond Herald, on visitation to Lincolnshire; Lee, as already noted not a particularly able artist, would have valued Scarlett's help. Throughout his career Scarlett collected a number of important genealogical and heraldic manuscripts, including some belonging to Glover. He produced numerous pedigrees and was very probably responsible for much funereal heraldry: see **Plate 2** for his funeral certificate for Sir John Spencer (d. 1600). Scarlett copied at least eight medieval rolls of arms and four visitations; he also owned Glover's copy of the 1566 visitation of Buckinghamshire. His manuscript collection was acquired by the Augustine Vincent, Windsor Herald, who between 1618 and 1623 went on to visit six counties himself.²⁸

At the very end of the sixteenth century the College of Arms went into something of a melt down as internal strife tore the office apart. Heralds bemoaned the fact that arms painters, masons, and plasterers were taking advantage of these divisions and were taking over their business.²⁹ Not surprisingly regular visitations ceased and only picked up again in 1611 when more able men such as Nicholas Charles and Augustus Vincent were sent into the provinces to visit. They were now regularly accompanied on these journeys by professional herald painters. These artists took with them loose quires of paper either already stamped with rows of blank shields for tricking the arms of those registering, or for making church notes. They also carried vellum and parchment often pre-printed with blank shields for painting certificates of arms to be signed by the visiting herald.³⁰ In 1591 Robert Cooke, Clarenceux, sent his deputy, Ralph Brooke, Rouge Croix Pursuivant, who was then visiting Somerset for him, five blank but signed letters patent so that he or his artist could draw up new grants of arms whilst on visitation.³¹

Because the artist may have tricked all the arms brought to them at the visitation for registration, their records, however preliminary, provide a unique record of

²⁷ For Scarlett see L. Campbell and F. Steer, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the College of Arms Collections*, vol. 1 (London, 1988), pp. 245-6, 492-3; *Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians*, p. 181; and *CEMRA* p. 151.

²⁸ Humphrey Wanley et al., *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 4 vols (London 1802-12) [hereafter *Harl. Cat.*], no. 1550 (3). Accounts for painters' materials used at heraldic funerals and written in Scarlett's hand include those for Lee's funeral in 1597 (Campbell and Steer, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the College of Arms*, p. 307). The fact that the then Garter King of Arms, William Dethick, could not tolerate Lee might help explain why he attacked Scarlett, Lee's painter, in the streets (Wagner, *Heralds of England*, pp. 209-10; Bodleian Ms Ashmole 840 pp. 22-3).

²⁹ BL Ms Cotton Faustina E1 fos. 262v, 265v.

³⁰ For printed escutcheons very probably used on visitation see *Harl. Cat.* nos. 1531, 1534, 1538, 1543, 1545, 1548, 1551, 1554. Dugdale's artist, Gregory King, carried blank escutcheons on vellum (Bod Ms Rawlinson C514 fo. 14; Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 269; id., *Records and Collections of the College of Arms*, p. 61 note 3).

³¹ A. W. Vivian-Neal, 'The Visitations of Somerset, 1573, 1591: notes on Ralph Brooke's manuscript', *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* 84.2 (1938), pp. 59-99 at 68.

the arms used by the gentry of a particular locality whether or not such arms were later allowed by the visiting herald. In that respect their manuscripts are often more informative than the office copies of the visitations which only contain those arms permitted to pass into the official record.³² After the visitation the artist drew up the fair copy. This would include tricking or painting neat and precise versions of the arms that either they or their herald master had drawn in rough during the visitation itself. It also included collating together the original pedigrees signed by those who had registered their descents and copying these into the fair copy.

The artist's knowledge of the visitation was thus very much first hand. When a dispute arose regarding the accuracy of a certain coat in the 1634 visitation of Sussex the herald artist who rode on that occasion, John Withie, was called to give evidence.³³ When the Oxford antiquary Anthony Wood complained that his pedigree in the 1669 Oxford visitation did not include his arms, he blamed the artist and not the presiding herald for leaving them out.³⁴ Indeed, a mistake by the artist could result in a permanent change to the arms. Painters accompanying heralds on visitation were sometimes even regarded by the local gentry as officials of the College of Arms.³⁵ In 1665 Garter complained that Clarenceux's clerk and painter on the recent London visitation were sitting as judges of men's arms and families and entering descents in his absence. They were also deliberately frightening those summoned by reference to the royal commission granted not to them but to the visiting herald for the visitation.³⁶

Apart from the Holme family, three arms painters, Richard Mundy, John Withie, and John Saunders, dominate the artwork of the visitation world of the seventeenth century. All three rode on visitation as herald painters.³⁷ They, along with several other notable arms painters, built up impressive private manuscript collections consisting of pedigrees, armorials, ordinaries, grants of arms, and examples of the procedural documents used by the heralds on visitation, such as the printed tickets used to summon individuals. These private collections also included numerous visitations many of which they had copied themselves. Saunders had copied the 1619 visitation of Kent which he began at 9pm on 1 October 1645 and finished on Saturday 31 January 1646.³⁸

³² See below for the work books of the visiting arms painter, John Saunders.

³³ BL Ms Add 22883 fos. 116-118v; Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 260.

³⁴ A. Clark (ed.), *Life and Times of Anthony Wood* (Oxford Historical Society pubns. 21: Oxford 1892) 2, p. 476.

³⁵ W. H. Rylands (ed.), *The Visitation of the County of Buckingham, 1634* (Harl. Soc. pubns. 58: London 1909), p. 60.

³⁶ Bod Ms Ashmole 840 p. 800.

³⁷ For Mundy (fl. 1620-39), Withie (1593-c.1678), and Saunders (d. c.1687) see G. D. Squibb, *Visitation Pedigrees and the Genealogist* (Canterbury 1964), pp. 8-9; *Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians*, pp. 141, 181, 225; and Englefield, *History of the Painter-Stainers*, passim. For Saunders' role in the 1665-66 visitation of Berkshire see A. Ailes, 'Elias Ashmole's "Heraldicall Visitation" of Berkshire 1665-66' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University 2008), pp. 127-30. They were not the only artists. For example, John Gough rode on the 1623 visitation of Somerset.

³⁸ *Harl. Cat.* no. 1432 (11).

Sometimes the so-called 'visitations' of these artists consisted of little more than the original draft pedigrees signed at the visitation and used to draw up the fair copies. Once the information had been transferred into the College copy they were considered of little use by the visiting herald. The accompanying artist often had them bound together to form their own record of the visitation and as a valuable aid for future work. Arms painters bought these 'visitations' and other collections of books and records from each other³⁹ and occasionally from the heralds.⁴⁰ It is little wonder that from the middle of the seventeenth century the College of Arms demanded that all such working papers and drafts from a visitation be handed in at the end.⁴¹ This not only allowed future heralds to check the original signed pedigrees but also stopped rough copies of visitations being circulated as tools of the trade amongst their rivals – the arms painters.

Many of these herald painters updated and added new information to their visitation copies and those of their fellow artists,⁴² conflating several visitations of one county into a single work and then adding to these details from other often unspecified sources. Because of this their works (many of which are in the Harleian collection of the British Library and have been published by the Harleian Society) have come down to us more as composite collections of the pedigrees of local gentry families stretching over several decades than as the record of a county visitation taken at a single point in history.⁴³ Dugdale recognised the problem as early as 1639, warning a friend to whom he had sent a copy of the visitation of Warwickshire that it was 'but taken from a false cotype much maymed by often transcribinge as is most of that stuffe which the Paynters have got together, wherewith they please many [clients] better than descents laboured out of authentick Records'.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, at the time, these copies, however hybrid in nature, were valued as working tools and on several occasions were loaned by their artist owners to visiting heralds as the most up-to-date records available.⁴⁵

Like the young Gregory King on Dugdale's earlier visitations, Saunders appears to have acted as both herald painter and clerk on Ashmole's Berkshire visitation. He tricked the fair office copy of the visitation as well as Ashmole's personal copy. But he was not happy with his remuneration. On 10 October 1668 he wrote angrily that he had received just £19 for his pains in producing this work of 193 pedigrees.⁴⁶ His own private draft copy of the visitation, which he may have produced as the journey proceeded, still exists. It is compiled in roughly the same date order as the visitation but is flawed and contains no original signatures of those registering their descents.⁴⁷

³⁹ *Harl. Cat.* no. 1464.

⁴⁰ *Harl. Cat.* no. 1386.

⁴¹ BL Mss Add 38140 fo. 106v and 22883 fo. 23.

⁴² *Harl. Cat.* nos. 1081, 1532, 1535, 1538, 1550.

⁴³ See especially Squibb, *Visitation Pedigrees and the Genealogist*, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁴ William Hamper (ed.), *The Life, Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale* (London 1827), p. 191.

⁴⁵ *Harl. Cat.* nos. 1531 (6), 1533 (3), 1543 (3).

⁴⁶ BL Ms Harl 1483 fo. 61v. On 28 September he received £10 from Henry Dethick for the 1663 visitation of Middlesex (BL Ms Harl 1468, f.143).

⁴⁷ BL Ms Harl 1483.

This work, and another four pages of tricked shields he produced in a separate manuscript,⁴⁸ do, however, include many arms that do not feature in the final version. Presumably they were brought forward at the visitation by their hopeful owners, recorded by Saunders, but later dismissed by Ashmole either for non-payment of the registration fee or because of insufficient proof to entitlement.⁴⁹ In some cases he later updated the pedigrees beyond 1666, the formal end date of the visitation.⁵⁰

Ashmole took copious church notes as background evidence for the arms and pedigrees he eventually entered into his visitation of Berkshire.⁵¹ The art work of the final versions of these (which like the visitation itself was produced in two copies) is very probably that of Saunders, though it is just possible it is in the hand of Ashmole who was a fine draughtsman. Ashmole probably noted the heraldry and made rough sketches for his own heraldic interest whilst Saunders presumably made more detailed drawings to be executed in the fair copy at a later date. This would explain the very high quality of the finished product.⁵² Since Ashmole visited the Berkshire churches over a period of eighteen months after his initial visit we must assume that Saunders joined him for some if not all of these later journeys.

Conclusion

In August 1669, almost two years after Ashmole had handed in his finished visitation of Berkshire, Sir Edward Bysshe, Clarenceux, began his visitation of the neighbouring county of Oxfordshire. Anthony Wood, noted that on this occasion Bysshe brought with him 'old ... Wither', a herald painter from London, and a clerk, 'Gregorie', who wrote down the visitation.⁵³ What Wood was witnessing here, though he did not realise it, was not only the passing of one generation of artist to the next, but also, in terms of the art and artists of the heralds' visitations, the end of one era and the beginning of a new one, albeit short-lived. 'Old ... Wither', as Wood described him, was the ageing artist, John Withie, and 'Gregorie' was the nineteen-year old multi-skilled Gregory King, boy-artist and future visiting herald noted earlier. With the decline of men such as Mundy, Withie and Saunders who had worked so closely with the College, and their replacement on visitation by those from *within* the College acting as artist and clerk and sometimes visiting officer of arms (men such as Sandford and King) the need for professional arms painters on visitation declined. Moreover, the

⁴⁸ BL Ms Harl B 1457 fos. 300v-305v.

⁴⁹ For example, the Hoper tree in W. H. Rylands, *The Four Visitations of Berkshire, 1532, 1566, 1623, 1665-66* (Harl. Soc. pubns. 56 and 57: London 1907-8) 2, p. 154. Some may have been respited for further proof which never appeared so that the arms were never entered into the official copy.

⁵⁰ BL Harleian MS 1483, ff. 66v, 110v, 126.

⁵¹ CA record Ms C12 pt 2; Bod Ms Ashmole 850. He continued to make these church notes well after the spring of 1665 (Ailes, 'Elias Ashmole's 'Heraldicall Visitacion' of Berkshire 1665-66', pp. 155, 159). Ashmole's church notes were poorly edited in *The Antiquities of Berkshire by Elias Ashmole Esq*, 3 vols (London 1719).

⁵² See the drawing of Garter banners and crests in St George's Chapel, Windsor (CA record Ms C12 pt 2 fo. 329), reproduced in Woodcock and Robinson, *Oxford Guide*, p. 148.

⁵³ Clark (ed.), *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ii, p. 152; Wagner, *Heralds of England*, p. 273.

insistence that all rough books and notes should be recalled at the end of the visitation meant that artists could no longer hold on to their personal visitational records.

In short, professional independent arms painters appear to have ceased accompanying the heralds on visitation. But in some ways this was hardly to matter, for the visitations themselves ended in 1689 when the new king, William III, chose not to grant any new commissions for the heralds to continue their visits; at least none were issued after this date. Deputy heralds in the provinces continued and so did arms painters, but increasingly the latter used their detailed knowledge of heraldry and comprehensive collections of heraldic records (so often gathered from visitations) to supply paid artwork for funerals. As far as this money spinner was concerned the heralds had now been truly overtaken by a new breed of professionals – the undertakers who managed to produce their own heraldry for these sombre occasions.

Today much of the artwork of the visitations between 1530 and 1687 still survives. As already stated it consists of much more than the standard tricked shields and crests of individual gentryfolk. Civic heraldry and regalia, town seals, copies of charters, tombs, armorial glass, even panoramic views of whole towns are included, much of it in very fine detail.⁵⁴ Sometimes this artwork exists in rough working draft, sometimes in highly finished, fair copy, sometimes in both. It is strictly contemporary, often datable to a year, and can on occasions be attributed to an individual hand. It deserves greater attention.

In addition there are the artists who produced this countrywide kaleidoscope of early modern armory. Initially, in the sixteenth century, they were the visiting heralds themselves, but for the first three-quarters of the next century professional arms painters took over. All too often they were, and still are, the unnamed, unsung heroes of the visitations. Poorly paid and occasionally having to double up as clerks and money takers, at the end of the day they appear to have been easily forgotten and their artwork neglected. In many ways their records, so often working compilations of several visitations lumped together as one, have confused the unwary scholar and proved more of a hindrance than a help. Because the vast majority of the arms in pedigrees are tricked in black and white they are rarely reproduced in books unless they contain an extra-ordinary charge or to prove a particularly obscure heraldic point. But for a century these men may well have had the upper hand on their herald masters since they all too often held the records of previous visitations not currently available in the College. The history of heraldry has been written by heralds and heraldists – one written by artists or art historians might well reveal some new truths and open our eyes onto an heraldic past that looks substantially different to the one we presently profess to know.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See the examples illustrated in Woodcock and Robinson, *Oxford Guide*, pp. 146-9; G. D. Squibb (ed.), *The Visitation of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight 1686* (Harl. Soc. pubns. n.s. 10: London 1981), pp. 39, 49, 67, 92, 107, 122-23, 142, 151; Siddons (ed.), *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales*, pp. 136-44, 167; id. (ed.), *The Visitation of Herefordshire 1634* (Harl. Soc. pubns. 15: London 2002), pp. 1, 4, 6, 19, 20, 84-90.

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Patric Dickinson, Clarenceux King of Arms, for reading a draft of this paper and making useful suggestions.