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SHORTER NOTE

Walter Belyngham, Esperance Pursuivant. *Vance Mead writes:* Esperance Pursuivant served the Percy earls of Northumberland from 1438, if not earlier, to 1523. But although 'the title was in use for nearly a hundred years', and there must have been several officers who held the title, 'their names have not been found', as Godfrey and Wagner hitherto had to conclude (CA, p. 252). However, now a close inspection of the records of the Court of Common Pleas, kept in The National Archives (TNA), has allowed the identification of one of the office holders. In a case brought by Thomas Batayll, mercer of London, in Hilary term 1455, William Chestre, of Corbrige (Corbridge), Northumberland, gentleman, is summoned for a debt of £24 13s. 10d., alongside John Swynburn, of Hugh (Heugh in Stamfordham), Northumberland, gentleman, for a debt of 50 shillings. Also summoned is a certain Walter Belyngham, esquire, of Newcastle upon Tyne, who is named as Esperance Pursuivant of the Earl of Northumberland, *alias* Walter Northumberland, herald, for a debt of 103s. 4d. Since the debtors did not appear in front of the court, the sheriff is commanded to seize them to appear in Easter term (TNA CP40/776 m. 278 dorse; available online as part of the Anglo-American Legal Tradition project (AALT) under license from TNA, image d 1662 = aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT1/H6/CP40no776/bCP40no776dorses/IMG_1662.htm). Walter Belyngham (Bellingham/Bellengier/Bellinger) is in fact a well-known herald: he was appointed Ireland King of Arms in 1467 (Godfrey and Wagner, CA, pp. 269-70). According to a manuscript in the possession of the College of Arms, written by himself, he had started his career as a herald in 1422 (CA Ms L. 14, fo. 211b). Until this find there had been no supportive evidence for Walter Belyngham's earlier career.