

THE COAT OF ARMS

The journal of the Heraldry Society



Fourth Series

Volume II

2019

Number 236 in the original series started in 1952

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The Society was registered in England in 1956 as registered charity no. 241456.

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Printed in Bristol by 4Word Ltd.

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ISSN 0010-003X

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BOOK REVIEWS

was popularised by early fifteenth-century French heraldic treatises. According to this narrative, maidens acted as early messengers before they were replaced by the men who became the first heralds, and their replacement is usually attributed to their vulnerability to being raped and to their frequently becoming pregnant. The text then segues into a formulaic question-and-answer session discussing the virtues and practices required of a pursuivant. Finally, the third text that Moll edits from this miscellany is a Scots treatise on gentility and arms, which he titles *The Orignall Determyning of Blasonyng of Armes* (ff. 140r-150v), after its heading, Moll points out that, while *The Persewant* was written for 'practicing heralds', this text was probably written for a 'gentle audience interested in their own gentility' (p. 161). Moll further explains that, like the *Liber Armorum*, which comprises the third section of *The Boke of Saint Albans* (1486), this heraldic treatise ascribes biblical origins to nobility and equates human virtues and hierarchies with angelic ones. Moll effectively outlines points of comparison between these two texts and posits a few of the sources they might share.

Moll's volume is a refreshing and overdue resource. Late medieval heraldic treatises have much to contribute to our knowledge of medieval chivalric literature and culture, and, by making some of these texts more readily available for the first time, Moll paves the way for deeper understanding and new perspectives. This edition is the kind of text that I was hoping to find when I first began researching late medieval heraldic treatises, but it did not yet exist. I am glad that it does now.

Sheri Chriqui

Steen Clemmensen, *The Powell Roll of Arms*. Farum, Denmark 2018. 216pp. Ebook. ISBN 978-87-970977-0-0. Free download from www.armorial.dk.

The roll itself, which is in book form, can be viewed online in its entirety on the Bodleian Library website, it being Bod MS Ashmole 804 part iv. Sir Anthony Wagner dated the roll c. 1345–51 and had very little to say about it. Denholm-Young speculated that it created for Robert Ufford, K.G. (d.1369), earl of Suffolk. On the basis that this was a roll of living knights Clemmensen has felt able to date the compilation more precisely, to 1347–8. It follows a conventional structure beginning with royals, followed by barons and then by knights, although there are more barons shown with ordinary shields in the main body of the roll than with banners at the head of the roll. The painting seems to have been done by one person, and the first 168 coats of arms are enhanced with the application of gold and silver. The legends are in diverse hands, with some being altogether absent. While Wagner calls it 'original', and Clemmensen correctly points out that it is impossible to know the date of the surviving version, in my view Ashmole 804 iv cannot be the original. Rather, it was copied at a time when many of the legends could no longer be read, and a variety of individuals (by this stage, surely heralds) then tried to fill in the blanks.

The larger part of the book comprises Clemmensen's edition of the roll, and he has assembled a lot of material which will be of use to future researchers. This work has produced a variety of interesting observations. There are around two hundred brisures here, almost a third of the total number of 672 items, but only three families have

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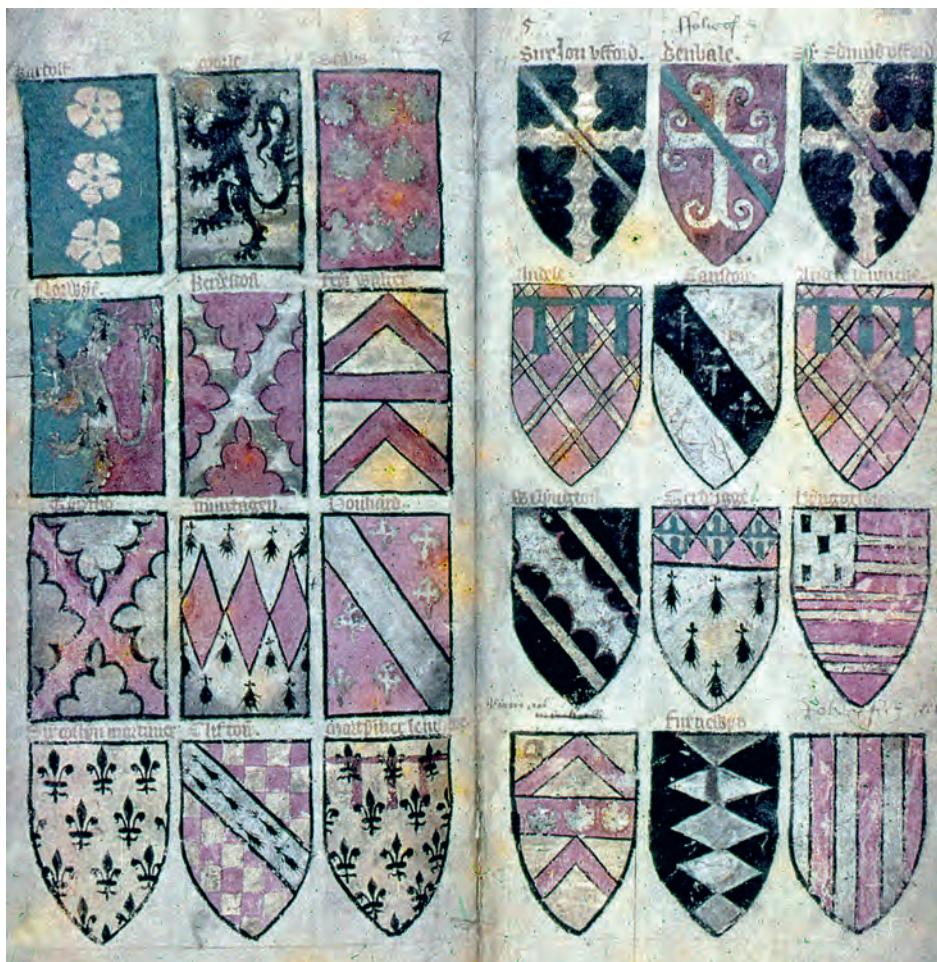


Figure 1: Powell's Roll f.2v-3r from the Heraldry Society Picture Archive, showing the end of the Barons' section with two Ufford coats at the top of the following page.

provided examples of cadency for minors, these being Ufford, Beauchamp and Neville. The heraldry of these three families is considered in some detail in the appendices. It is pointed out that the families of Beauchamp and Ufford were linked. The royal family might have provided a fourth case, the names of the second and third sons of Edward III being listed, but with their banners left blank. Perhaps the compiler was awaiting official notification of what their arms would be. The only titles in abeyance to be included are all placed together on a single page (f.25v). They might be expected to reveal something about the preoccupations of the person for whom the roll was created, and some further work is needed here, but Clemmensen has been able to link two of them to the Beauchamp earls of Warwick, and three to the house of Lancaster and its earldom of Leicester. Denholm-Young was struck by what he saw as a preponderance of knights from East Anglia, but this is not accurate. What Clemmensen found is that the East

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Anglian contingent effectively heads the list, comprising 100 out of the first 150 knights. The county of Norfolk is over represented, but the other East Anglian counties are under represented. Clemmensen is inclined to support Denholm-Young's contention that the roll was made for Robert Ufford, whose arms as a baron occur in a prominent position towards the head of the roll, with two subsidiary Ufford shields placed at the top of the first full page of knights (**Figure 1**). The barons whose arms are in closest proximity to those of the earl of Suffolk are mostly those who would have been his comrades in arms in the Crecy-Calais campaigns of 1346–7.

Clemmensen commented 'It is impractical, rather than impossible, to research and write extensive biographies on so many persons in relation to an armorial'. The difficulty is compounded by the absence of christian names for most of the knights. Yet the only possible approach to unlocking the remaining mysteries of Powell's Roll would be to know a good deal more about the ordinary knights on it, and in particular their military careers. Could it be that the roll was prepared in celebration of recent military victories? Robert Ufford was marshal of the army in this period. Such an investigation would indeed be very time consuming, but the groundwork and lower courses have now been laid.

Paul A Fox

Laura J. Whatley (ed), *A Companion to Seals in the Middle Ages* (Reading medieval sources, volume 2) Leiden and Boston: Brill 2019. ISBN 978-90-04-38064-6 (hardback) ISBN 978-04-39144-4 (e-book), both EUR 165.

The journey, to which this book is a Companion, is described as 'Seals in the Middle Ages from 500 to 1500 AD'. The chronological journey starts towards the end of the book with surveys of coins as seals in Lombard Italy (mainly on rings) and the re-use of ancient coins and gems in seals. It then moves to Byzantium where the 'Seals of the judges of the Hippodrome' and the 'Social and personal elements in Byzantine sigillography' are considered, but most insights along the journey are reserved for Europe, particularly England, and to the period between 1200 and 1500. All provide valuable information. That by Philippa Hoskin on 'Administration and identity: Episcopal seals in England from the 11th to the 13th century' is a very clear introduction to the development of episcopal seals in England, and to the role of the seal in diocesan administration. It places such seals in a far more comprehensible historical context than the survey by Sir William St. John Hope. The authors of all the articles give much information to the reader or traveller into their chosen fields, but the choice of windows or views for the traveller is dependent of the individual author's field on interest and research, and, only exceptionally, is the reader given an overview of their whole subject. To those journeying between 500 and 1500 it is not so much a Companion to the whole journey, but to a series of excursions down fascinating by ways.

There are no insights into French, Spanish, Scandinavian, Italian or German seals, except for Andreas Lehnertz's article on the seal matrices and seals of Muskinus the Jew (died 1336). Often the analysis demands previous knowledge. Many companionable facts and leadings are to be found tucked away in the depths of the articles or in the