

Armorial (Roll of Arms) of Cheshire
In English, illuminated manuscript on paper
England, c. 1580-1620

i (backed with marbled paper on the recto) + *vi* (eighteenth-century paper with a Maid of Dort "Pro patria" watermark with a countermark of 'GR' and a small crown) + 83 (42 folios interleaved with blanks) + *vi* (paper) + *i* (backed with marbled paper on the verso) on heavier paper, used for text and illumination, with unidentified watermarks including two initials, 'E' or 'L', and possibly 'R' (?) separated by a quatrefoil which continues to a bunch of grapes(?), interleaving paper is much thinner with a unidentified watermark of three circles inscribed with various motifs, not in Piccard (see Royal Orbs) or in Briquet, some general similarity with [Briquet 3247](#), [Genoa 1548](#); see also [Briquet 3245-3246](#), [Brussels, 1552 and 1598](#), and with [Gravell Watermark Archive](#), [Sphere 181.1](#), [France 1627](#), [Sphere 204.1](#), [Switzerland 1623](#), [Sphere 196.1](#), [Perpignan 1539](#), foliated in ink top outer corner recto including blank leaves, 1-83 [cited], complete, blank leaf f. 6 is a replacement, collation impracticable, no signatures, some folios ruled in ink with the top and bottom horizontal rules full across, single full length vertical bounding lines, prickings outer margin ff. 32-43 including the blank leaves (justification 248-235 x 195-166 mm.), written in a formal (legal or engrossing) secretary script with elaborate majuscules, including four very intricate cadel initials, ff. 3, 9 (with a small face), 13 (with two small faces), and 17 (with a large bust of a man), 132 ILLUMINATED COATS OF ARMS in vibrant colors (eight full page, eight half page, the remainder four per page), and one blank shield, full page, first and last folios darkened, some stains, thumbing, and occasional slight pigment bleed-through to the verso, but overall in excellent condition. Bound in 18th-century diced calf with a narrow gold file border, marbled pastedowns and endpapers, corners repaired, re-backed, two spine labels lettered in gilt: "Heraldic MS." and "England XVI Century," some wear to edges but in very good condition. Dimensions 267 x 208 mm.

This captivating heraldic manuscript dates to the reign of Queen Elizabeth or her successor, King James I. Its skillfully painted coats of arms are labeled with family names; some include short historical captions. Sometimes such rolls of arms were the product of a formal visit ("visitation") conducted by heralds on behalf of the crown to record the genealogies of noble families, to confirm and grant arms, and to resolve uncertainties over arms. While the precise origin of the present armorial remains unknown, its quality suggests it was made by a professional scribe and herald for a wealthy individual in Cheshire.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in England in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, c. 1580-1620, as indicated by evidence of the script (cf. for example, Preston and Yeandle, no. 29, dated 1621, and Walters Art Museum and Library, MS W847, dated 1598, Online Resources).

The interleaving with blank pages appears to be original since on ff. 32-43 both the content pages and the blank leaves between them include prickings in the outer margins; the entire volume is foliated in ink, top outer corner, and the foliation includes the blank leaves.

2. Signature of C. Tarleton dated September 5, 1783, front flyleaf, f. i verso.

3. Unidentified modern (nineteenth century?) heraldic armorial bookplate with two feathers and a lion's head above a turret.
4. Belonged to the noted private collector, Brian Douglas Stilwell, his book plate, inside front cover.
5. Booksellers's and owners's annotations, front flyleaf, f. i verso (in pencil), "28/164"; front flyleaf, f. ii (in pencil), "jsx/83," "1300-".
6. Sold by William H. Allen, Philadelphia, 1983 (English language description, inside front cover, no. 41) to Dr. W. G. Scholz, Mystic, Connecticut.

TEXT

ff. 1-83, Leaves with illuminated coats of arms, some with captions, all blank on verso, interleaved with blank paper leaves on thinner paper:

ff. 1-17, Eight full page coats of arms, plus one with text but a blank shield:

f. 1, [blank shield], incipit, "Edole or Edolph Earle of Chester. Lyved in the Raigne of Vortiger kynge of the Brittons and ..."; [f. 1v, f. 2rv, blank];

f. 3, [coat of arms of a gold two-headed eagle on black], incipit, "Leofricke Earle of Chester before the Conquest. He lyved in the reigne of Kinge Edward the Confessor"; [=Leofric, Earl of Mercia, d. 1057]; [blank on the verso; f. 4rv, blank];

f. 5, [coat of arms of a wolf on blue]; incipit, "Hugh Lou or Lupe Earle of Chester. Lyved in the Raigne of William the Conqueroure ..."; [blank on the verso; f. 5rv, blank];

Hugh d'Avranches (c. 1047-1101), also known as Hugh the Fat or Hugh the Wolf (in Latin, *Hugo Lupus*), was the second Norman Earl of Chester (1st of the 2nd creation) and one of the great magnates of early Norman England.

ff. 7-17, [coat of arms of a wolf on red with gold crosses], incipit, "Richard Lupe Eldest sonne to hughe Lupe and seconde Earle of Chester married Maud the doughter of Stephen Earle of Bloys ...; Jhon Scott. The sonne of ... was in the right of hys mother the Seventhe Earle of Chester ..." [John of Scotland, seventh Earl of Chester (c. 1207-1237); all blank on verso, and interleaved with blanks];

ff. 19-25, Eight coats of arms with short captions, two per page, incipit, [coat of arms, azure, lion rampant argent], "Eustace Baron of Mountalto Lord of Hawardey And Stuard to the Earle of Chester ... [coat of arms, blue shield with gold crosses and three gold diamonds] Robert Stokport, Barone of Stockeporte" [Robert de Stokeport, c. 1160, of Stockport, Cheshire; all blank on verso, and interleaved with blanks];

ff. 27-83, 116 coats of arms, four per page, incipit, [coat of arms, red lattice work], "Sir William Trussell [possibly Sir William Trussel, Justice of Chester, b. 1261 or c. 1285]; ...; [f. 47], [coat of arms, red shield with three groups of three trout], Sir William de Troutbecke [(d. 1459), of

Dunham, Cheshire], ... [continuing with coats of arms identified by family name] ..., Wagstaffe"; [all blank on verso and interleaved with blanks].

An extensive collection of coats of arms, 132 in total (plus one with text only and a blank shield). It begins with the earls of Chester, each on a separate page with a large coat of arms in full color and several lines of identifying text, copied in a beautiful, professional script with elaborate capitals. This section concludes with John of Scotland (d. 1237), the seventh—and the last independent—earl of this powerful earldom. The barons of Chester are depicted two per page in the next group. The last, and largest, group, are presented four per page. Given the strong connections with Cheshire in the opening pages, it seems almost certain that these remaining coats of arms depict the gentle families of the county. The early coats of arms in this section include names, which may be chronological; the remaining include only the family name.

This is a formal manuscript in terms of script and the level of execution of the coats of arms. For example the heraldic compilation now Glasgow University Library, MS Sp Coll Hepburn q23, probably English, c. 1625, is much more informal in its execution (Online Resources), as are surviving working manuscripts prepared by heralds for their own use. Everything about it suggests it was made by a professional scribe and an artist specializing in heraldry for a wealthy individual, presumably someone with family ties to the Cheshire and/or an antiquarian interested in the history of the county.

In terms of content, this belongs to the general category known as rolls of arms, which were sometimes, but not always, copied in actual roll format. Some recorded the coats of arms of participants in a tournament or battle, others were related to a particular family; our roll of arms, or armorial, records the coats of arms related to one region, the very important county of Cheshire, a county palatine that had considerable autonomy from the English crown from the time of its creation after the Norman Conquest until the sixteenth century. After the death of John of Scotland, seventh Earl of Chester (c. 1207-1237), the earldom of Chester passed to the crown by escheat (that is, due to the lack of an heir), and since 1301 the title has been granted to the heir to the English crown. (Today Charles, prince of Wales, is also the Earl of Chester.) In England, heraldic visitations were formal visits conducted by heralds on behalf of the crown to record the genealogies of noble families, to confirm and grant arms, and to resolve uncertainties over arms. There were heraldic visitations of Cheshire in 1580 (by William Flower or Robert Glover) and in 1614 (by Sir Richard St George, accompanied by Henry St George, Bluemantle Pursuivant, his son). Either could have been occasions that prompted or facilitated the production of our volume.

People adopted personal or corporate emblems long before the Middle Ages, but the systematic use of colored devices on shields to identify knights grew out of the need to make them recognizable in battles and tournaments, where their armor rendered them virtually anonymous otherwise. As codified in the late Middle Ages, heraldry was restricted to those who had earned the right to bear arms. It was also hereditary: once a man had a coat of arms, he could pass it on in some form to his children, and it also carried legal weight. In 1484, Richard III created the organization run by the heralds, also known as the College of Arms, as part of the royal court to adjudicate claims to nobility and to create new coat of arms. In the 1530s, Henry VIII reconstituted the heralds and began a comprehensive survey of titles and heraldic

devices in England, pursuits that continued vigorously during the reigns of Elizabeth I (reigned 1558-1603) and James I (reigned 1603-1625).

LITERATURE

Armytage, Sir George J., Rylands, J. P., eds. Pedigrees made at the Visitation of Cheshire, 1613, taken by Richard St George, esq., Norroy King of Arms, and Henry St George, gent., Bluemantle Pursuivant of Arms, and some other contemporary pedigrees, Harleian Society, 1st ser. 59, London, 1909.

Preston, Jean F. and Laetitia Yeandle. *English Handwriting, 1400-1650*, Binghamton, 1992.

Rylands, J. P., ed. The Visitation of Cheshire in the year 1580, made by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, for William Flower, Norroy King of Arms, with numerous additions and continuations, including those from the visitation of Cheshire made in the year 1566, by the same herald; with an appendix, containing the visitation of a part of Cheshire in the 1533, made by William Fellows, Lancaster Herald, for Thomas Benolte, Clarenceux King of Arms, and a fragment of the visitation of the City of Chester in the year 1591, made by Thomas Chalenor, deputy to the Office of Arms, Harleian Society, 1st ser. 18, London, 1882.

Tomlinson, H Ellis. *The Heraldry of Cheshire*. Manchester, 1956.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Maid of Dort "Pro patria" watermark

<https://nga.gov.au/whistler/details/patria2.cfm>

Daniel W. Mosser and Ernest W. Sullivan II, with Len Hatfield and David H. Radcliffe, "The Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive"

<https://www.gravell.org/index.php>

Walters Ms. W.847, Book of English heraldry, 1598

<http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/html/W847/description.html>

Manuscript of the Month, University of Glasgow, Special Collections, Heraldic manuscript, c. 1625, MS Sp Coll Hepburn q23

<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/feb2008.html>

The Victoria County History of Cheshire

<https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/cheshire>

BHO: British History Online, Cheshire

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/ches/vol5/pt1>

Visitation of Chesire, 1580

<https://archive.org/details/visitationofches00glov/page/2>

"Symbols of Honor: Heraldry and Family History in Shakespeare's England," Folger Library Exhibition by Nigel Ramsay and Heather Wolfe, 2014

https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Symbols_of_Honor:_Heraldry_and_Family_History_in_Shakespeare%27s_England

Nigel Llewellyn, "The manuscript remains of the Randle Holmes, herald antiquaries of the 17th century," British Library, Picturing Places

<https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/the-manuscript-remains-of-the-randle-holmes-herald-antiquaries-of-the-17th-century>

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