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English 8000

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Bibliographical Detective Work: William Camden's *Remains Concerning Britain*

In the present discussion of William Camden's *Remains Concerning Britain*, heraldry has as its counterpart the study of the heredity of the English language. Both are essential to Camden's text, in content as well as in form. Prior to these discussions of priority, however, we must begin with the precursor work which the *Remains* complements, Camden's *Britannia*. Chorographical rather than historical, the *Britannia* describes Britain's geography in order to explore the country's history. In the present investigation I adopt Camden's method in reverse, beginning with the historical context of Camden's work in order to situate a discussion of the physical text of the *Remains*.

First printed in 1586, the *Britannia* appeared during what was arguably the greatest influx of foreign vocabulary into the English language since the Norman Conquest. Playwrights and poets were freely exposing audiences to Latinate words via Italian, Spanish, and, most significantly, French. Of course, the memory of French rule was hardly a distant one, and such an influx heralded a threat of influence extending beyond the merely linguistic. Thus Harold Bloom writes of "the negative aspect of poetic influence, of *influenza* in the realm of literature," while the italicization of the word mimetically reinforces its foreignness as contagion (38). Camden's sense of influence extended beyond the French to include the earlier Roman occupation of England. Thus W. H. Herendeen notes that, in the *Britannia*, "Camden's specific goal is to approach the

British (that is pre-Roman) landscape by collating the natural topography with mainly Roman literary remains" ("William Camden: Historian" 199-200). As we shall see, Camden's own strain of linguistic pluralism would often be misconstrued. Herendeen elsewhere observes that Camden's approach "allows the landscape to present its own political and cultural destiny. Description of distinguishing features on the physical landscape . . . provided a vehicle for patriotic national and regional self-definition at a time when the nation states were proclaiming their identity internationally" ("Camden" 607). The *Britannia* thereby illustrates the political implications of the literary and linguistic, Britain's remaining concern.

On 23 October 1597, Camden was installed as Clarenceux king of arms. Clarenceux is one of the highest posts in the College of Arms and presides over the province south of the River Trent ("Camden" 608). As a senior herald, Camden would therefore have made decisions regarding heredity and subsequent claims to inheritances and properties. Camden's recent promotion was perhaps the impetus for Ralph Brooke's 1599 literary attack, *Discoverie of Certaine Errours Published in Print in the Much Commended* Britannia, *1594*.[1] Brooke's accusations included plagiarism, hubris (despite Brooke's being two years Camden's junior), conspiracy to prevent his work's publication, and outright incompetence in the realm of heraldry.[2] Perhaps the one

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[1] The ensuing Brooke-Camden controversy was full of venom and, ultimately, hilarity; however, considerations of length prevent me from relating it in full.

[2] One such dispute occurred in 1602, when Camden was obliged to defend his having given arms to John Shakespeare, the playwright's father, "against charges that they too

allegation with any element of truth to it concerned Camden's use of Latin. Indeed, for all its interest in national English identity, the *Britannia* was written entirely in Latin and, through Camden's collaboration with Philemon Holland, would not be translated into English until 1610 (Herendeen, *William Camden* 7). Furthermore, as Herendeen notes, Camden's having composed a Greek grammar book in 1595 only appears to bolster Brooke's claim (*William Camden* 44). The *Remains* would both clarify and complicate Camden's position on the matter.

A decline in health in 1601 confined Camden to the home of his friend, musician William Heather, and, in 1603, to that of Robert Cotton. Therefore, whereas Camden traveled extensively in gathering material for the *Britannia*, he composed the *Remains* almost entirely from his hosts' personal library materials ("Camden" 610). Thus, the historically examined terrain is the English language itself. Following an analysis of various English forms of the Lord's Prayer since AD 700, Camden observes that "[g]reat verily was the glory of our tongue before the Norman Conquest, in this, that the old English could express most aptly, all the conceits of the mind in their own tongue without borrowing from any" (*Remains* D1^{r}).[3] Supporting this claim is Richard Carew's *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, which was first published when Camden included it as a chapter in the 1614 edition of the *Remains* (Mendyk 60). Carew's piece remained in subsequent editions and is present in the 1674 text (D8^{v}-E6^{r}).

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closely resembled Lord Mauley's, and that the grantee was not gentle" (Herendeen, *William Camden* 413-14).

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to the *Remains* are to the 1674 edition.

Although Camden celebrates the language as it existed prior to the Norman Conquest, the antiquarian's stance toward his native tongue was, as Herendeen notes, far too complex to be exclusive. Thus Herendeen states that Camden's "admiration for English, felt without compromise to his love and respect for the 'learned tongues,' has an eclectic quality reflective of the particular undogmatic, non-essentialist view of the human condition that he characteristically turns to patriotic ends . . ." (*William Camden* 41). However, this sense of the "patriotic" is broad enough to affirm the virtues of Old English without insisting upon protecting its purity from external linguistic influences. For example, even within the *Remains*, Camden frequently writes in Latin. In fact, despite his above comment regarding the Norman Conquest, he writes several pages of his discussion of arms in French ($T7^r$–$T8^r$). Furthermore, perhaps only to baffle critics such as Brooke, Camden includes the following among his "Proverbs": "Jack would be a gentleman if he could speak French" ($Cc4^v$). Thus perhaps the antiquarian was not without a sense of humor.

When Camden dedicated the first edition of the *Remains* in 1605 to his host and friend Robert Cotton, he signed the work using only the last letter from his first and last names, "M. N." ("Epistle Dedicatorie" $A4^r$). This does not necessarily indicate the author's disavowal of his second-born work, as Camden also published his 1600 Latin work, *Reges, Reginae*, anonymously. Neither should it signify that Camden viewed his *Remains* as the brief and obscure afterbirth of the more voluminous and luminous *Britannia*. Camden refers to the *Remains* in the 1605 edition as "the rude rubble and out-cast rubbish . . . of a greater and more serious worke" ("Epistle Dedicatorie" $A3^v$). Nevertheless, Herendeen observes "Camden's unmistakable affection for this dejected

material. He savours it, plays wittily with it, and safeguards it in his chapters" (*William Camden* 429). In fact, the overflow material proved more popular than the work it was to supplement, presenting "a popular spin-off from its more expensive and serious mother lode, the *Britannia*" ("Camden" 610). The seventh edition in 1674 was printed as a foolscap octavo, which, as Ronald B. McKerrow notes, was a common size "used for many 'pocket'-sized books" (164). One may infer, therefore, that this popular text was printed for everyday use and not merely to gather dust on a remote shelf. Such frequent use may account for the absence of both of the present text's boards. The spine, partially cracked, indicates that the entire book was once bound in calfskin—black, in this case—the "prime covering material" of the period (Gaskell 152).

One may base the deduction that the text is foolscap octavo on its pages' measurements, 6¾" x 4¼", or 17cm. x 11cm. (McKerrow 105). The octavo format is confirmed by the leaves' vertical chain lines (Greetham 131). The presence of horizontal wire lines also confirms that the paper was hand-made (laid) (McKerrow 104). Gaskell notes that foreign mills were responsible for nearly all white paper used by English printers until 1670, and they "continued to supply the greater part of the English market during the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth . . . chiefly from Holland, either from Dutch mills, or from French mills trading through Dutch ports" (60). The paper for the 1674 text of the *Remains* was therefore probably not produced domestically.

Given the above measurements, this foolscap octavo would have come from a sheet approximately 44cm. x 34cm. Gaskell lists Holland (43cm. x 33cm.), France (43cm. x 33.5cm.), and Italy (43cm. x 31cm.) as potential sources for foolscap paper in

1674 (74-75). Based solely on measurements, France is the likeliest candidate. The watermark partially visible in the gutter margin of $B2^r$ is an amoeba-like shape resembling the "Arms of England" (figure 35), a countermark which appeared as early as 1674. The watermark on $C4^r$ is clearer, possibly a fleur-de-lis within a shield, which resembles the alternate, more ornate version of the arms in figure 35 (Gaskell 69). The amoeba-shaped mark on $B2^r$ could as easily be part of this version of the arms. According to Gaskell's table of sources, France is the only supplier of foolscap paper in 1674 with the "England" watermark (75). The measurements of French paper, 43cm. x 33.5cm, also most closely match the inferred sheet size used to print the book, 44cm. x 34cm. As the text was stitched into 36 gatherings ($A\text{-}Nn^8$), the discrepancy is most likely due to the portion of each leaf used in the stitching—and therefore unavailable for inclusion in measurement—and to the fact that most sheet dimensions are approximate (Gaskell 67).

It is tempting to perceive an irony in using French paper with an "England" watermark to print a work which presents such a nostalgic fondness for the English language's *status ante lapsum*—in this case, France's conquest of England.[4] A text thus produced may appear as an instance of dismantling the master's house using his own tools; however, one must recall Camden's fundamentally pluralistic attitude toward languages. It is also worth noting that any irony in the production of the 1674 text would have been quite lost on Camden, as he had at that point been deceased for half a century.

A posthumous text, the 1674 *Remains* bears an introduction from Camden's colleague and protégé, John Philipot. As Somerset Herald and Rouge Dragon pursuivant

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[4] One should note, however, that any nostalgia attributed to Camden does not necessarily imply his endorsement of a *nostos*, or return, to such a prior linguistic state.

in ordinary, Philipot was himself a member of the College of Arms (Woodcock 32). In his dedication to Prince Charles Lodowick, member of the Noble Order of the Garter, Philipot claims to have made certain additions to Camden's work (Philipot A3^{v}). However, there are no indications of any such changes in the title page's description of the work (*Remains* A2^{r}).

The highest post within the College of Arms is the Garter, who also presides over heraldic matters within the Order of the Garter. Therefore, it is fitting that the text's affixed nameplate indicates that the owner was "The Most Noble Wriothesley Duke of Bedford, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, 1703" (A2^{v}). By engaging in some heraldic work of one's own, one finds that the arms on the nameplate belong to the Russell family, making the owner Wriothesley Russell, second Duke of Bedford (Jacob 232-33). The owner must be this Wriothesley and not his eponymous son, the third Duke of Bedford, because the latter was not born until 1708, five years after the date on the nameplate (Jacob 230-31). It is possible that the book was a gift to commemorate Russell's installation as a Garter member, which Jacob's *Peerage* places at Windsor, "the thirteenth of March, A. D. 1702-1703" (231).

Wriothesley Russell was named after his mother, Rachel Wriothesley, who was the daughter of the fourth Earl of Southampton, Thomas Wriothesley. Five generations before Thomas, her ancestor was John Writhe, the first Garter to preside over the College of Arms. Writhe had two sons, Thomas and William, the latter of whom was York Herald (as Ralph Brooke would later be). William's son, also named Thomas (presumably after his brother), became the first Earl of Southampton. William's brother—Writhe's other son, Thomas—had a son named Charles who would become Windsor Herald

("Wriothesley"). Charles Wriothesley was therefore the maternal fifth great uncle of Wriothesley Russell, the owner of this 1674 text. The remarkable coincidence is that Charles Wriothesley died in the home of Sampson Camden, when the latter's son William was only ten years old (*William Camden* 10).

Another coincidence concerns the Flower de Luce, one of the places where this text was printed. As Chancellor notes in his work on Fleet Street, Flower de Luce Court was also known as Fleur-de-Lis Court (88). The printing house's name was therefore an (inaccurate) Anglicization of a French symbol evident in the "England" watermark of French paper. In this respect, the text's production is mimetic of its content, enacting a precarious balance of English and French.

The book's journey from Wriothesley Russell's collection to Georgia State University's is unclear. Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue* identifies the edition as "C375" (268). Morrison's *Index* merely corroborates that it one of the seven works printed for Charles Harper in 1674 (98).[5] Unfortunately, Bishop's *Checklist*, which mentions only eleven copies of the edition in United States libraries, is only current as of 1950 (3). However, the Special Collections Department which contains the present text did not exist until 1969 ("History"). It is also plausible that the present copy arrived in the United

[5] It is worth noting, however, that Harper appears to have been rather prolific in the book trade. The advertisement in the 1674 edition's back matter indicates thirty-five titles sold by Harper at the Flower-de-Luce (here hyphenated), most of which are legal books (Nn7^{v} –Nn8^{v}). Please also note that, due to considerations of length, I have included research regarding Harper and the Flower de Luce but not regarding John Amery and the Peacock, where this text was also produced.

States since that time. Given the time, it may be fruitful to consult the archived listings of some British and American auction-houses, or to write to the current Duke of Bedford for information.

Although there is clearly more detective work to be done regarding the book's provenance, there is nevertheless a wealth of information to be gleaned from this text as an artifact. Arguably idiosyncratic, this text of the *Remains* tells a story in which coincidences, ironies, and outright contradictions abound. Some of these I have tried to account for; some I have attempted to reconcile; some I have let stand. Ultimately, one may perhaps learn as much about heraldry, history, and England's linguistic and political relationship with France from the tale attending the text's physical production as one may from the words which constitute the work itself.

Appendix A: Title-Page Transcription

[double rule frame, broken] | REMAINS | Concerning | BRITAIN: | THEIR | *Languages*, *Impresses*, | *Names*, *Apparel*, | *Surnames*, *Artillerie*, | *Alluſions*, *Wiſe Speeches*, | *Anagramms*, *Proverbs*, | *Armories*, *Poeſies*, | *Moneys*, *Epitaphs*. | [single rule] | Written by WILLIAM CAMDEN | Eſquire,Clarenceux,King of Arms, | Surnamed the Learned. | [single rule] | The Seventh Impreſſion , much amended, | with many [somewhat blurred] rare Antiquities [extra ink on final "s"] never before | Imprinted. | [single rule] | By the Induſtry and Care of *JOHN PHILIPOT* [swash *J* and *T*] | *Somerſet Herald :* and *W. D.* Gent. | [single rule] | *LONDON*, | Printed for , and sold by, *Charles Harper* at the | *Flower de Luce* over againſt St. *Dunſtan*'s Church, and | *John* [swash *J*] *Amery* at the *Peacock* over againſt *Fetter Lane*, | both in *Fleetſtreet* , I6$_{74}$.

Notes: Within the list of fourteen terms which begins "*Languages*, *Impresses*," each pair is separated by two opposing braces that span the height of the list's seven lines. Each brace is broken at its points of curvature—i.e., between the first and second line, the third and fourth, fourth and fifth, and sixth and seventh. Each line of the title page's text is centered, save the flush indentation of the aforementioned seven lines within braces and the three lines between the second and third single rules (beginning "The Seventh"). The first of these lines is flush with the inner margin, with a hanging indentation for each of the two following lines.

Appendix B

Collation: 8º: A^4 B-Nn^8 [$4 (-A1, A2, A4; Aa1 missigned A2; Cc3 missigned Cc5) signed].

Pagination: 284 leaves, pp. [*i-viii*] 1-556 [*557-61*] [misnumbering 193-208 as 191-206, 375 as 374]. In headline against outer margin of type-page.

Notes on the pagination: Neither of the two misnumberings indicated above affects the correctness of the overall pagination. In pages 193-208, the entire O gathering begins on the wrong number (191) and continues sequentially. Correct pagination resumes on P1. The four ultimate pages are unnumbered as back matter, with a table of contents on 557 ($Nn7^r$) and an advertisement for Charles Harper's Flower-de-Luce books on 558-60 ($Nn7^v$-$Nn8^v$).

Measurements: 17cm. x 11cm.

Paper: handmade (laid) French foolscap with vertical chain lines and horizontal wire lines.

Watermark: Arms of England.

Binding: black calfskin.

Spine: CAMDEN | REMAINS [gilt lettering].

Frontispiece: portrait of William Camden.

Defects of the copy: Front and back boards are missing. Calfskin binding of spine is cracked and worn throughout. Glue affixing nameplate on A2^{v} has removed a portion of A3, such that “ec,” part of the preceding “ll” and the following “t” from the word “collected” on A3^{v} now appear on A2^{v}. The lower corner of E2 is torn. The bottom of E3 has a 2cm. tear. The corners are folded at the bottom of E4, top of H7, and bottom of G1. A .3cm portion at the bottom of R8 is folded. The lower corner of Y4 is torn (missing). The top corner of Aa8 is folded. The lower outer margin of Ll3 is rotted or torn.

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