



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: PROVENANCE, THE CASE OF THE YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND COLLECTION

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In cleaning up the last bits of retrospective conversion, catalogers often have the opportunity to correct past omissions and errors. I was asked to recatalog an item referred to as the Yorkshire Scrapbook. The old card simply gave that name and little other information. The collection had been disassembled—items removed from their pages, put into folders bearing the page numbers, and boxed—and was to be moved from the classed collection to the graphic arts collection. I asked the curator if anything was known about the collection, particularly its provenance. For many collections, provenance is of crucial importance. There was no further information, so I was on my own.

With the first folder, containing the remarkable four-sheet “A plan of ye south prospect of ye ancient borrough of Richmond . . .” by Robert Harmon and engraved by Benjamin Cole (1724), I knew we had something interesting. The collection was chiefly graphic, with a few original drawings, some printed and manuscript textual leaves, and eight maps, about 300 items in all. The prints were generally cut out of books, some of them annotated in manuscript with the volume and page numbers. Because of this and because of the dates on some of the manuscript material, I was able to date the collection as covering roughly the 1620s to the 1780s. A typed “index” to the collection, consisting chiefly of locations (and a few genres and subjects) represented on those pages, was present, along with a shorter index (on University of Delaware watermarked paper) to the “Tombs & monuments.” No finding aid for the collection was available.

Many of the graphics cut out of books were of seats and buildings of the eighteenth century. Because they frequently had the engravers’ and artists’ names,

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they were tentatively identifiable as being from Colin Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* and James Paine's *Plans, Elevations, and Sections of Noblemen and Gentlemen's Houses*. I confirmed this with a comparison of the prints to a reprint of the first and a copy of the 1783 edition of the second. Also represented were text and illustrations from *Gentleman's Magazine* and from books, journals, and/or newspapers, which were not firmly identifiable using our collection.

Some of the graphics and maps appeared to be stand-alone publications, and were so spectacular that I noted them for subunit records. These included the plan of Richmond; an advertisement for the Sheffield Tontine Inn in two states



Figure 1

(one with text, one without; figure 1); articles of agreement between Edward Ackroyd and Maximillian Colt for the building of the tomb of Lady Elizabeth Savile (Colt's sketch of which was later found and was also given a subunit record); a map of "some stupendous remains of Roman antiquity on the Wolds in Yorkshire" present in two copies, one hand-colored, one not; and a 1697 map of York.

All of the material was carefully scrutinized for any clues as to who put the scrapbook together and for what purpose. Many times I wished for the original pages of the scrapbook, for any notes that the compiler might have made besides these items, and for the compiler's original page arrangement. One name, though, seemed to recur fairly frequently, particularly on manuscript material: I. C. Brooke or J. Brooke. Of particular interest was an original drawing of two tomb figures, with an extensive explanatory caption. The handwriting matched many of the other holograph captions, and it was signed J. C. Brooke, 1776 (figure 2). But it was not until I reached nearly the last folder that I found the final clue: a letter from Mr. [Marmaduke] Tunstall to Mr. Brooke, which read:

Mr. Tunstall's best compts. wait on Mr. Brooke, has taken the liberty of sending a little view of his house & description lately published in a series of seats; the dimensions of the rooms so he sent, but the fine flummery at the end, he can assure him was out of the editors own brain.
Wycliffe May 1st—87.

hope you will receive safe
the pedigrees so by the same
conveyance with this.—

Accompanying it in its folder is an illustration of Wycliffe Hall, Yorkshire, seat of Marmaduke Tunstall, and its printed description.¹ I now felt tentatively able to attribute the compilation to this Mr. Brooke.

Then came the big shock: there was provenance information, after all. In the last folder were the boards from the original scrapbook. One bore the bookplate of the College of Arms, London, with its release stamp.²

I was able to identify Mr. Brooke as John Charles Brooke, 1748–1794. His entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (vol. 2, pp. 1338–39) reveals that he was the Somerset herald, a member of the Society of Antiquaries, that he “had made voluminous manuscript collections, chiefly relating to Yorkshire,” and that he had planned to write a history of the county. The entry added that “He bequeathed his manuscripts to the College of Arms.” My suspicions were confirmed, and I was confident enough to give Brooke a tracing, and to see the collection in a new light: not as a hobby that a gentleman might have assembled, but as a serious, scholarly file, one of several, compiled as a file in the days before photoreproduction and digital scanning. It may even have been preliminary material for a book he was planning to publish.

There are manuscript annotations on many of the items, some of them clearly captions and explanatory text, others more cryptic. A numbering system (N7695, N7705, etc.) with apparently unique identifiers for each item is also present. One wonders if there is a master index referring to these numbers, or if this was another way Brooke used to sort and re-sort his collection of visual information.

This was an interesting time in historiography, when history, archeology, and antiquarianism were not the fully differentiated disciplines they became in the nineteenth century.³ Antiquarians were interested in those things thought unworthy of historians, of the daily life of people, of their homes, manners, trade, and art. Historical writing was to instruct political society.⁴ This collection



Two figures in marble on an altar tomb within
an arch in the south chancel of Strensall Church in
the North-Riding of Yorkshire, which originally belongs
to the family of Doncaster of East-Doncaster, 1200-1750
by marriage to that of Doncaster of the place.
1750 & 1751 when last supposed to have been Robert
2d son of East-Doncaster, Esq., and Jane his wife 2d
of 1750 daughter of Doncaster, Esq. 1750-1751.

Figure 2

reveals an effort to collect graphic evidence and sort it in ways different from those the original publishers chose, in order to illuminate theories known only to Brooke himself, preparatory to his writing a history of Yorkshire.

Any effort to try to ascertain Brooke's intentions would require the inspection of all of the collections he compiled, for he died⁵ before writing it. The arrangement of the materials on each page of the original scrapbook could have provided clues as to how Brooke saw the evidence he had collected. For this collection, that has been lost. One hopes that the other scrapbooks have not been disassembled; or if they have been, that the original pages have been photocopied or photographed. Then a full intellectual understanding of the collection and of the compiler might be possible.

(Quotations and illustrations from the Yorkshire, England Collection are courtesy of the University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.)

Notes

1. Yorkshire, England Collection, 1628-1787, box 3, p. 88. Because the format of the collection had been irretrievably altered from its scrapbook form, the title was changed. The old title was given an added title entry.

2. A remarkable stamp on the boards said, "Duplicate sold by order of the Chapter of the College of Arms." On the pastedown is also the penciled notation "\$300—" and the bookplate of The Esther Schwartz Decorative Arts Collection, University of Delaware Memorial Library.

3. See Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1836-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 35-36.

4. See Philip Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 33.

5. "... he was crushed to death on 3 Feb. 1794, in attempting to get into the pit of the Haymarket Theatre," *DNB*, vol. 2, p. 1339. For a full account, see Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England* (London: H.M.S.O., 1967), pp. 415-17.