

The Companion Roll of William of Worcester

An Addendum to a Critique and Comparison of 'Companion Rolls of the Conquest'



This paper is an addendum to 'A Critique and Comparison of *'Companion Rolls of the Conquest, some known as 'Battle Abbey Rolls'*' which is paper R4.2a in our online paper collection 'Collectanea', with which this should be read in conjunction.

Here is discussed another roll, which post-dates the derived roll from Wace (about 1170) and the Auchinleck Roll of 1330 but predates the Le Talleur (1487), Leland (1533/6) and Holinshed's (1577) rolls. This is in the *'Annales Rerum Anglicarum (Chronicles of English Events) of William of Worcester'*, within the contained *'Liber Niger Sacattarii (Black Book of the Exchequer) Vol. 2'* printed by Thomas Hearne in 1774, and is a list said to have been copied from a roll at Battle Abbey, with the copy probably initially dated 1419, and later given to Worcester annotated *'to my most welebeloved and trusty friend'*, and was re-transcribed by him. Unfortunately, we do not know the name of this friend, nor when the gift was made. Hearne accepted that it had been copied from *'some remarkable register of Battle Abbey, as described by Worcester's friend'*, but carefully adds, *'you will be the judge however'*.

William Worcester or Botoner (1415–about 1482), a lay chronicler and traveller, was son of William de Worcester, a burgess of Bristol. He went to Oxford in 1431, and became a scholar of Great Hart Hall, then attached to Balliol. He worked for Sir John Fastolf (the prototype for Shakespeare's Falstaff) for many years acting as his secretary until Fastolf's death. We are told that Fastolf was a *'close-fisted and irritable old knight'* who would not assign him any fixed position or salary. Having made Worcester one of his executors, he left him nothing in his will.

The *'Annales Rerum Anglicarum'* (1324–1468, 1491), were written by, or have been ascribed to Worcester, the only manuscript of which is the author's hand-written manuscript in the Arundel Manuscripts collection MS. 48 at the Library of the College of Arms in London. There its description is as follows: *'Botoner's Annals: Historical Tracts and Collectanea of William Botoner (alias Wyrcestre) with Sir John Fastolf's original State Papers. Including: various lists of the Kings of Britain, Popes, and Emperors; genealogies of kings, including of the British Kings from Kamber to Rees ap Meredith; excerpts from chronicles; Botoner's Annals; rhyming Latin poem on the Lamentation of King Edward of Caernarvon; supplication of King John of France to King Edward III for release from confinement; peace treaties between England and France; and History of Henry V's Wars in France.'* The roll was first printed by Thomas Hearne in *Liber Niger Scaccarii Vol2*, (this is the one transcribed here) and again in 1864 by Rev. Joseph Stevenson.

The Duchess of Cleveland says of this list that the names *'are so mangled and distorted by their strange orthography as to be mostly unrecognizable.'* She gave the following examples: Seintbrewel : Wadel : Spigurnel : Tupz : Butet : Punchet : Pachet : Parli : Cunli : Cicerli : Wilbi : Spinevile ; Ferebrace : Feteplace : Gunter : Carli : Brok : Kusas ; Escot : Figarvi : Kosni. At this point she basically gave up and (perhaps wisely) did not consider this list further.

The Worcester roll appears to have first been transcribed as a tetrastich (a series of four-line stanzas) in 1419 and copied to Worcester sometime later in the 15th century, before his death in about 1482, possibly in the period of ten or twelve years from 1458 when Worcester resided in London.

Here this 'Worcester' list is copied both as printed by Hearne in 1728 and re-sorted. The printed list is somewhat curiously grouped, presumably to fit with the stanzas, not alphabetically but in groups of names which have the same endings. The first group ends ...'ard', second ...'el', third ...'et', fourth ...'i', fifth ...'vile', sixth ...'er', plus some others, seventh ...'ot' and 'val' plus others, and the eighth is a mix. For ease of use it has been transcribed and ordered alphabetically at the end of this paper.

It has 318 names, but 137 of these (43%) do not match at all to any other entry in the large spreadsheet which is paper R4.2b in Collectanea, so the total number of unmatched names in the collated lists considered in total in BDHS' Collectanea goes up from 722 to 859.

As we are now considering a total number of names of 1544, (and there certainly will not have been anything like that many men of note who were true companions of William in 1066 – the total army has been assessed to be of 7,000 - 10,000 men, most of lowly rank!) the percentage overall of unmatched names rises from 51% to nearly 56% after the addition of the Worcester list. Clearly many of these were probably later vanity entries and not true companions of William, but a very significant number, as can be seen from the lists, must be just unrecognisable and unmatchable, their spellings having been truly scrambled over the years.

Of names where there is a match or a probable match to another list only nine match to a single name in one other roll. The other 172 have multiple matches, which clearly shows some commonality of source.

Of the single name matches they are truly scattered between the other rolls – one to the list derived from the *Roman de Rou* (abt. 1170), two to Auchinleck (1330), one to the small Leland II list of the de Moion entourage (1533/6), three to Holinshed (1577) and, perhaps most remarkably of all, two to the Dives (1862) list – this last being a very large time jump indeed.

Looking solely at matches between Worcester and the earlier 'Rou' and Auchinleck lists there are only 24 matches between Rou and Worcester, about 25% of the total 'Rou' names, and 105 between Auchinleck and Worcester, only 19% of the Auchinleck names. In only 18 cases are all three concordant.

It has been suggested that Holinshed had sight of the Worcester list, so a comparison has been made. 133 of the Worcester 318 names appear in Holinshed (42%) and there are 32 names in Worcester, which match to other Rolls (10%) but not to Holinshed. Some of the last may not be insignificant, and include names such as Courcy, Gaunt, Grenville, Percy and Tirel, which are definitely represented in other rolls. So if Holinshed did have access why are these not included in his list?

The Worcester list includes about 50% of the very small true known Companions list.

Given the paucity of matches and the scrambled names the conclusions of BDHS Collectanea paper R4.2a are little changed, but we are left wondering about the provenance of Worcester's data. If it actually came as a copy from Battle Abbey via Worcester's 'friend' rather than an unknown third party, it comes from a period when the abbey remained in abbatial hands under either Abbot William Mersshe or Abbot Thomas de Ludlowe. This was well before the turmoil of the dissolution, but may have been distorted by its double transcription, by the unknown hand, then Worcester's, and then a third time when printed by Hearn.

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Battle, March 2021

[http://www.bdhsarchives.com/Archives/Collectanea/R4.2c The Companion Roll of William of Worcester v2 .pdf](http://www.bdhsarchives.com/Archives/Collectanea/R4.2c%20The%20Companion%20Roll%20of%20William%20of%20Worcester%20v2.pdf)

Appendixes at

[http://www.bdhsarchives.com/Archives/Collectanea/R4.2d Appendixes for Paper R4.2c.xlsx](http://www.bdhsarchives.com/Archives/Collectanea/R4.2d%20Appendixes%20for%20Paper%20R4.2c.xlsx)

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http://www.bdhsarchives.com/Archives/Collectanea/R4.2b_v3_Appendixes_for_Paper_R4.2a.xlsx

Foord, K The worksheets for this study http://www.bdhsarchives.com/Archives/Collectanea/R4.2d_Appendixes_for_Paper_R4.2c.xlsx

Hearne's *Liber niger scaccarii* Vol2, p522-4 Reference: Great Britain. Exchequer. (1774). *Liber niger scaccarii, nec non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales rurum anglicarum*. Editio altero. Londini: B. White. can be viewed but not copied from

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x001179402&view=2up&seq=135>. It is also available as a free e-book via https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&id=cdBIAAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y

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Liber niger scaccarii Vol2, p522-4

The relevant three pages from 'Hearne' as thumbnails

Alpha sorted name list from Worcester

Abbeville	Brachet	Darci	Greinvile
Achard	Braci	Delamare	Greis
Akeni	Bran	Despenser	Grenvile
Albemarle	Bret	Dival	Grounvile
Amundevile	Brevile	Doreward	Gunter
Andevile	Briton	Drumassal	Gurnai
Annei	Brok	Duket	Hai
Archer	Budler	Dunstervile	Haket
Arci	Buffei	Duredent	Hanet
Arvile	Buket	Escot	Hansard
Asprevile	Burdet	Eurons	Hantevile
Aubrei	Burle	Fassard	Hanvile
Audeni	Burnel	Fenis	Hard
Aukeni	Bursel	Ferebrace	Hasard
Avenel	Butet	Feriters	Hatchet
Ayelard	Butevile	Ferrer	Heris
Bagot	Butevilein	Feskampe	Hersi
Baignard	Butler	Feteplace	Hubert
Bardulf	Cabot	Figarvi	Hunfrevile
Baren	Camage	Fisgefrai	Husser
Barl	Cantlou	Fitzsimunds	Keines
Barri	Canvile	Fizbrian	Kirketot
Bars	Cardevile	Fizherberd	Kosni
Barvile	Carevile	Fizhu	Kufas
Baskervile	Carli	Fizpers	Laci
Basset	Chainel	Fizurs	Lambert
Bastard	Chambelein	Fizwater	Ledet
Beauchampe	Charnel	Foliambre	Leini
Beaumeis	Chastelein	Folmile	Lescei
Beler	Chaucer	Fornivale	Leverer
Belet	Chawis	Fregnes	Limeci
Berard	Cheine	Fresel	Lincot
Bernevile	Cicerli	Fressevile	Livet
Berri	Clare	Frison	Lovel
Bigood	Clarel	Frivile	Lovetot
Biset	Colevile	Gangi	Luci
Bleis	Condrel	Garmmemil	Lungchampe
Bluet	Corateis	Gaunt	Lungevile
Blundel	Corbet	Gauter	Maignard
Boignard	Corti	Gerard	Malett
Boitevile	Coubrei	Giffard	Maleverer
Boner	Courteneis	Gorger	Malmani
Bonett	Courthose	Gorger	Mareis
Botener	Cresci	Gower	Mareschal
Boughchier	Cunli	Gras	Martelle
Bozmr	Curcei	Grauntson	Martimas

Masci	Pinel	Spineville
Maudeville	Pipard	Stunteville
Maunsel	Pleisi	Surdeival
Mautervers	Poer	Swiward
Mawreward	Prers	Tailpais
Meigne	Puliein	Tainet
Meisi	Punchet	Talbot
Miler	Punegsyce	Tibotot
Monfrei	Purcel	Tiptot
Morelle	Putrel	Tirel
Morins	Quatermars	Tonni
Morlei	Quinsi	Torchapelle
Mornele	Renger	Torel
Mortein	Rennes	Toreville
Mortemer	Richemont	Tortet
Mounbrai	Ridel	Touchet
Mounfichet	Rochele	Traci
Mounford	Roos	Trainel
Moungomeri	Roter	Travers
Mountagu	Russelle	Trivet
Muelent	Saccheville	Trussbert
Mulet	Sai	Trussel
Muntchansi	Sancei	Tupz
Munteni	Sanderville	Turbeville
Murdas	Santmareis	Valens
Musard	Sanzaver	Veili
Neimarche	Saucer	Ver
Nevile	Savage	Vesei
Nizunt	Seignes	Viel
Nuncchampe	Seintbrewel	Vilers
Orival	Seler	Wadel
Os/feville	Seneville	Waldebef
Pachet	Sentcler	Ward
Painelle	Simeli	Wasteneis
Palet	Sintchiz	Wichard
Pantulf	Sintgeorge	Wideville
Parli	Sintjohn	Wilbi
Passeauaunt	Sintjour	Wivile
Passemer	Sintleger	Yvoire
Paveli	Sintmoriz	Zetche
Perci	Soilard	
Perpunt	Soleni	
Peverel	Someri	
Pichard	Somerville	
Piket	Sourel	
Pikot	Sourville	
Pilet	Spigurnel	