

Lady Anne Clifford 1590-1676 and her Great Books of Record

The Story of a Proud Northern Lady



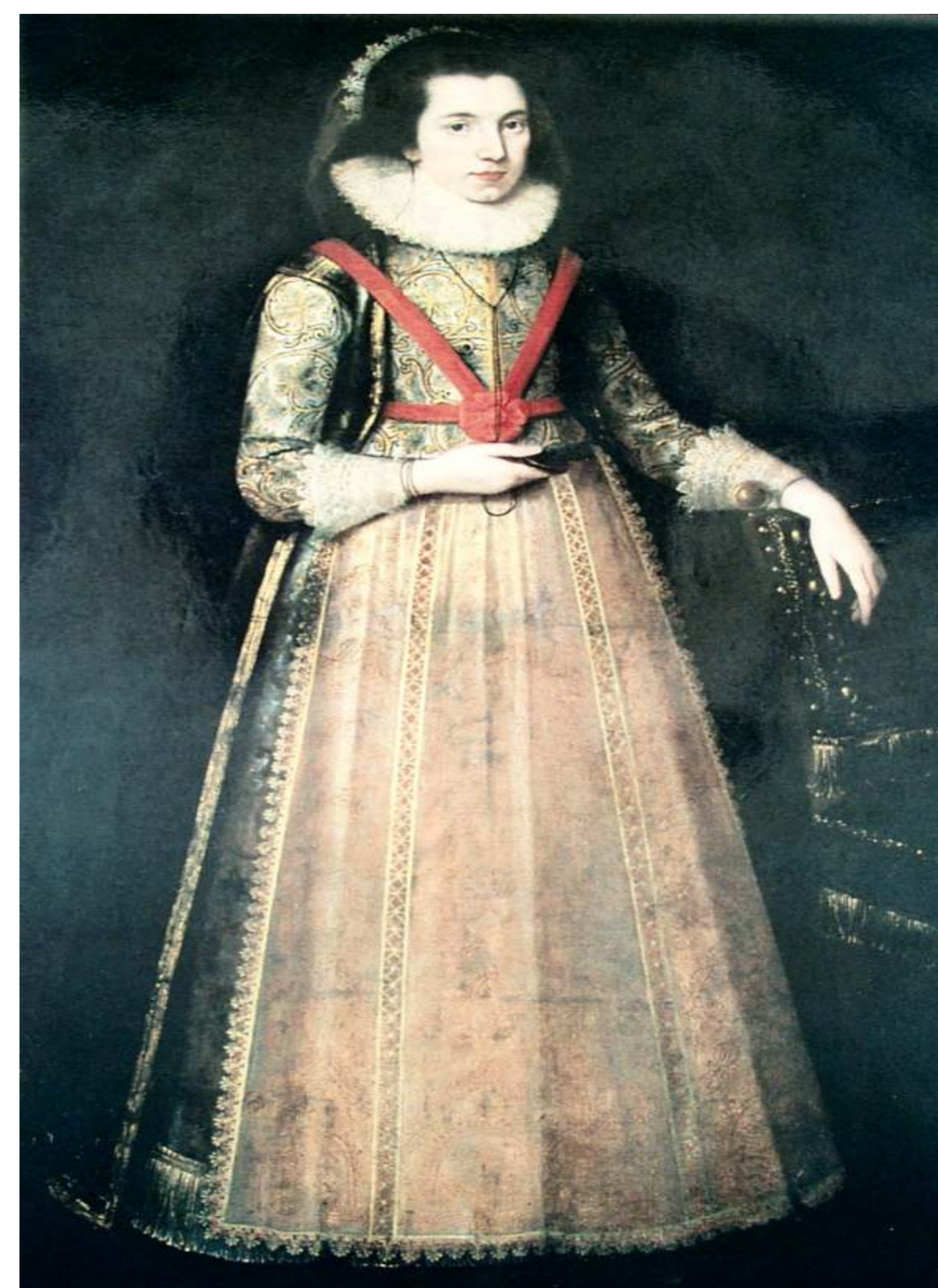
Coat of Arms of George Clifford,
3rd Earl of Cumberland



Coat of Arms of Lady Anne Clifford
and her 1st husband Richard
Sackville, Earl of Dorset

Lady Anne Clifford was a significant personality in seventeenth century Westmorland.

Her motto, “Retain your loyalty, preserve your rights”, sums up her life, in particular her lifelong dedication to her ancient lineage and the glorification of her family line, her determination to regain her rightful inheritance even in the face of royal opposition, her restoration of the Clifford castles at Brougham, Brough, Appleby and Pendragon, the rebuilding of churches, and her patronage of artists, craftsmen and writers.



Lady Anne Clifford aged 15. Taken from the Triptich of 1646

Lady Anne was born at Skipton Castle on 30th January 1590. Her parents were George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, and Margaret Russell. George was Queen Elizabeth’s Champion of the Tiltyard. He also took part in many privateering adventures and captained the *Elizabeth Bonaventure* against the Spanish Armada in 1588. However these voyages and his tastes in horse racing, tilting, shooting and the highlife meant that George Clifford incurred many debts. They also had two sons, Francis, born in 1584, and Robert, born in 1585, but both died in infancy, leaving Anne as their sole surviving child.

When George Clifford died in 1605 he left his Westmorland and Skipton estates to his brother Francis, who became 4th Earl of Cumberland. This was to have a profound effect on the rest of Anne’s life. She was to spend the next 38 years fighting for her right to inherit the estates in the face of opposition from her first husband Richard Sackville and from King James I. In the end Anne inherited the Westmorland and Skipton estates on the death of Henry Clifford, 5th Earl of Cumberland in 1643.

Lady Anne Clifford’s return to Westmorland and Skipton in 1649 ushered in a remarkable period of intense activity to restore her estates to their former glory. The Castles at Appleby, Brougham, Brough, Pendragon, Skipton and Barden Tower were rebuilt, as were the churches of St Lawrence and St Michael in Appleby, and St Mary in Mallerstang.

Lady Anne founded a hospital at Appleby comprising alms houses for a mother and twelve destitute sisters, a wash house and a chapel. The hospital continues to this day and it is in Appleby that much of Lady Anne Clifford’s legacy has endured. Lady Anne’s last memorial was to herself, her tomb in St Lawrence Church, Appleby.

Lady Anne Clifford 1590-1676 and her Great Books of Record

The Great Books of Record



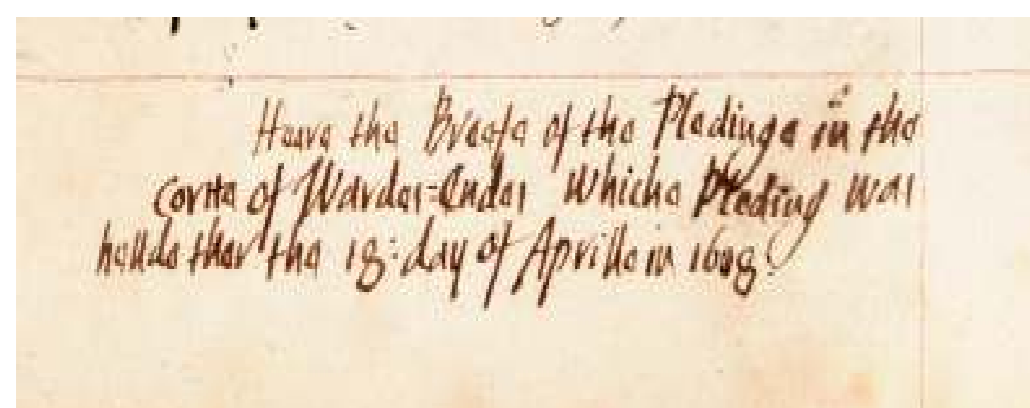
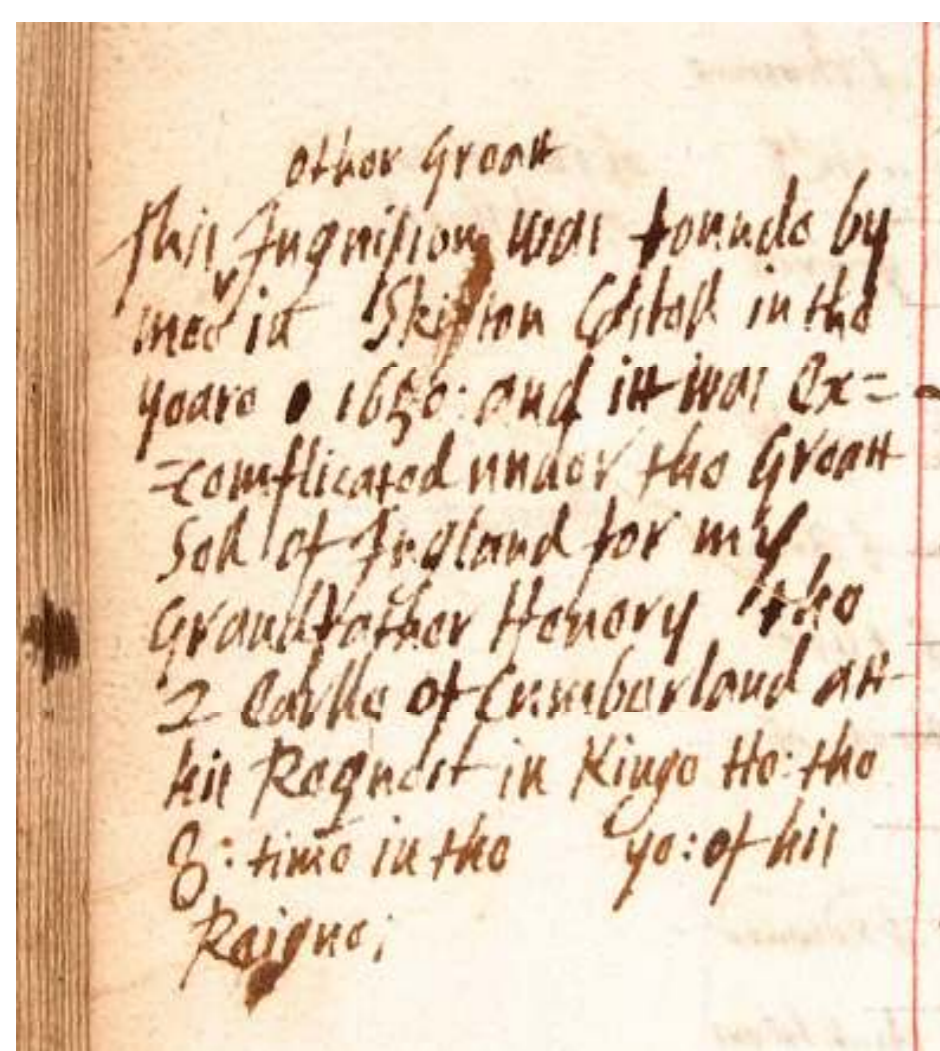
Lady Anne Clifford spent much of her life fighting for her right to inherit her estates in Westmorland and Skipton.

The result of this endeavour was the Great Books of Record, part cartulary of all the documents relating to her family and her estates, many of which no longer survive, part family pedigrees, and part autobiography.

Much of their importance lies in the fact that they are remarkable and pioneering works of scholarship in themselves, tracing the descent of one of England's great landowning families from original sources.

Since the Great Books represented a major undertaking and Lady Anne wanted frequent access to them, three sets of these great volumes were prepared, one each at Appleby and Skipton Castles, and the third for her lawyer Sir Mathew Hale of Lincolns Inn. The Appleby and Skipton sets were deposited with Cumbria Archive Service in in Kendal in the 1960s and 1980s. The third set was to remain in private hands until 2005.

At first sight the third set of volumes look very similar to the sets already held by Kendal Archive Centre . However closer inspection revealed evidence of a much greater personal involvement in the compilation of these volumes by Lady Anne Clifford than is present in either of the sets held in Kendal. There are certainly more pages where Lady Anne's unmistakable handwriting can be found. For example the third volume has about 45 such pages compared to 29 in the third Appleby volume and 25 in the third Skipton volume. The annotations were also far more substantial, with some annotations up to 50 words long.



List of ships commanded by George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, 1586 to 1595

The names of the Shippes and Pinnaces with the expresse mention of their severall Burthenes or Tonnages, and the number of men appoint to be in euey of the same vizt/

1	Imprimis the Malice scourge of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
2	The Royall Marchant of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
3	The Assention of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
4	The Sampson of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
5	The Alcodoe of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
6	The Consent of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
7	The Prosperous of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
8	The Gallion Constance of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
9	The Centurion of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
01	The Affection of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
11	The Pegasus of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
12	The Anthony of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
13	The Frigatt of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
14	The Scowt of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
15	The Guyana of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men
16	The Musketa of the Burthen of	Tonnes and men

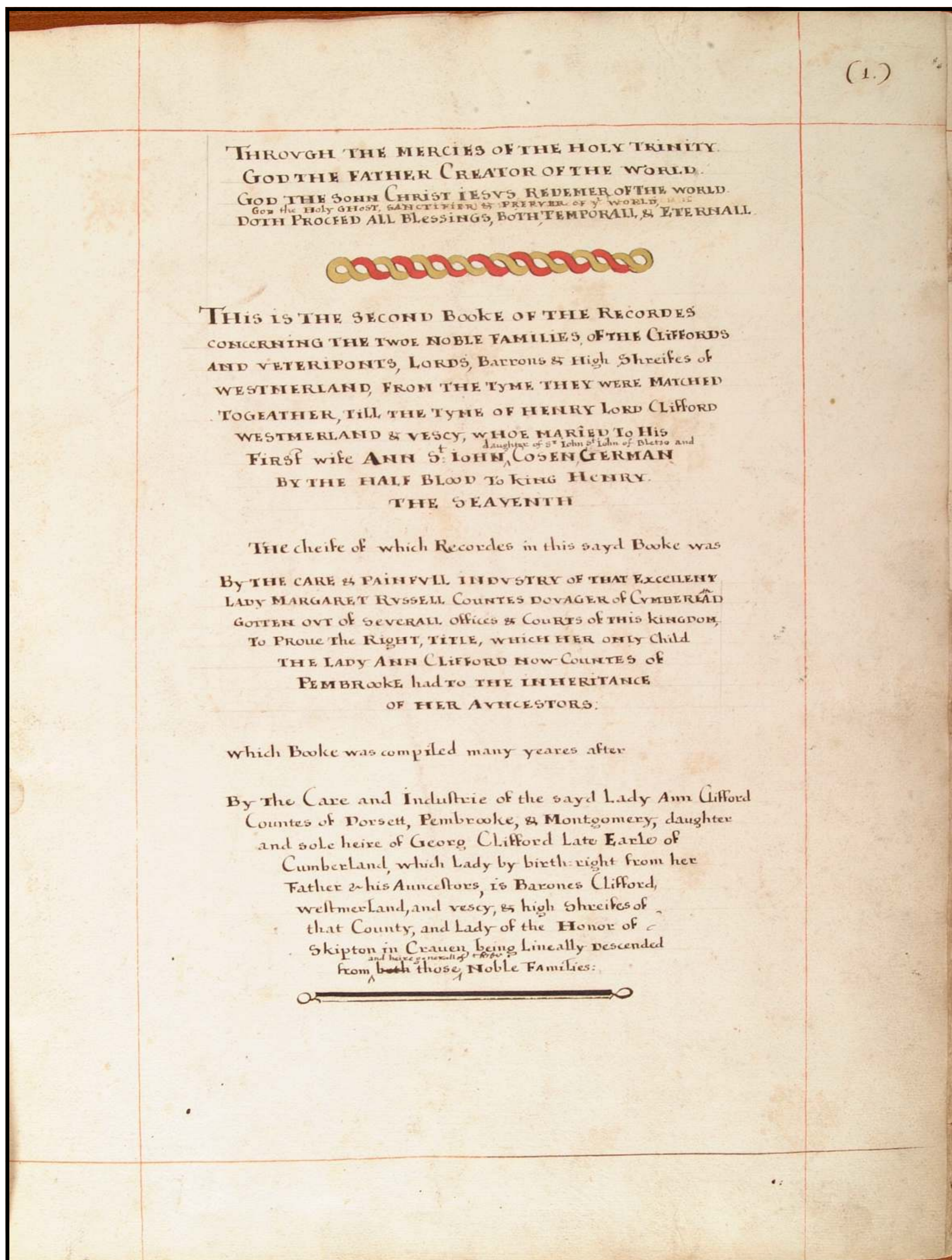
The names of the Aduentures in the victualinge and what somes of monie euey of them hath aduentured for the Purpose vizt/

Examples of Lady Anne's handwriting

Cumbria Archive Service had a once in a lifetime opportunity to purchase the third set of the Great Books of Record. Their acquisition will provide researchers with the first opportunity in over 300 years to compare all three sets and will be of much greater value to scholarship alongside the other two sets.

Lady Anne Clifford 1590-1676

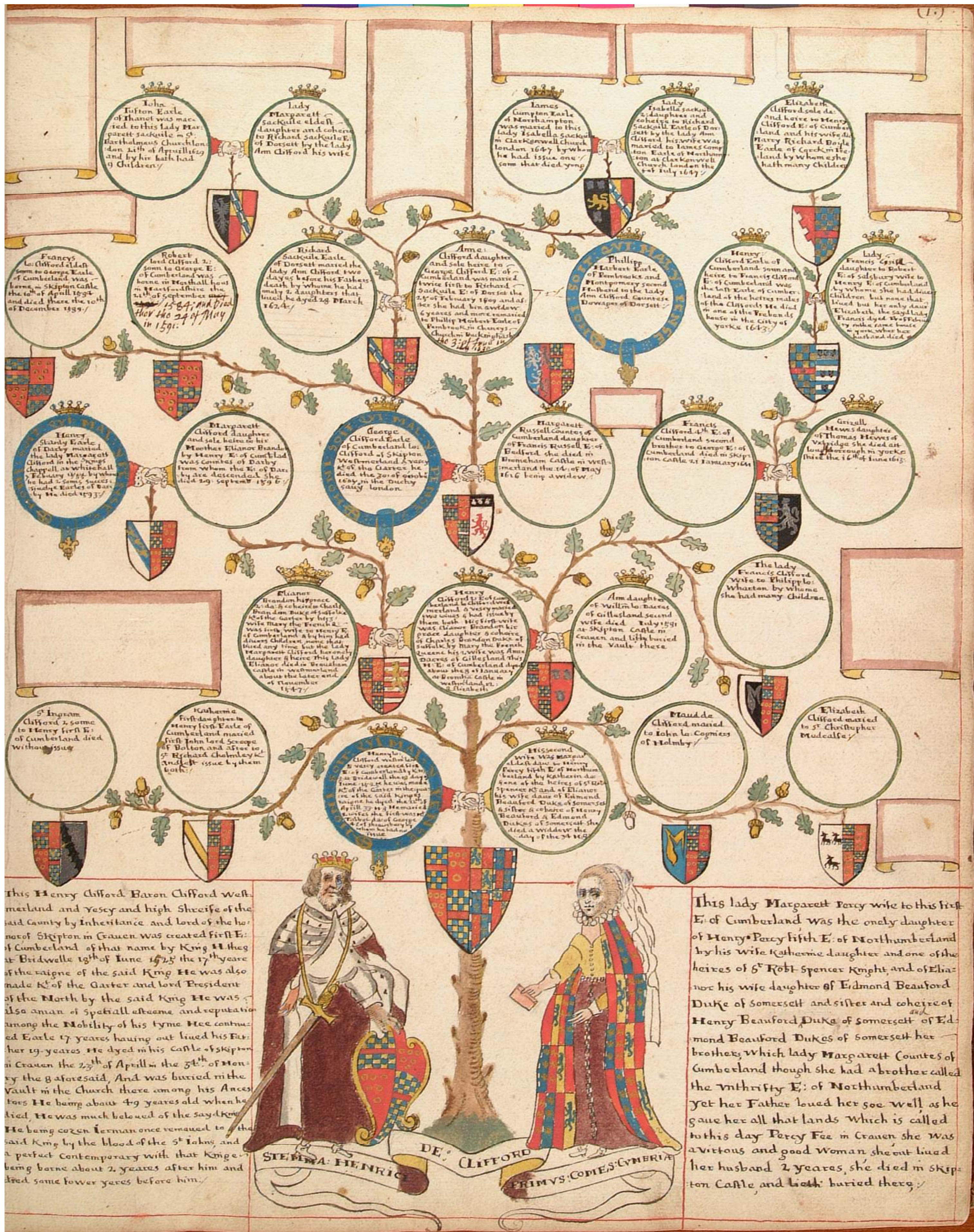
and her Great Books of Record



The frontispiece of each of the Great Books states that they are the Books of Record of the Cliffords and Veteriponts compiled “By the care and industrie” of Lady Anne Clifford, who also acknowledges her great debt to her mother, Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland.

Each book is devoted to the setting out of all the available historical documents relating to the title holders of each generation, both in the original Latin or Norman French, and in English translation. The records were “gotten out of several offices and courts in this Kingdom” and all correctly sourced in the margins of the text throughout all three volumes.

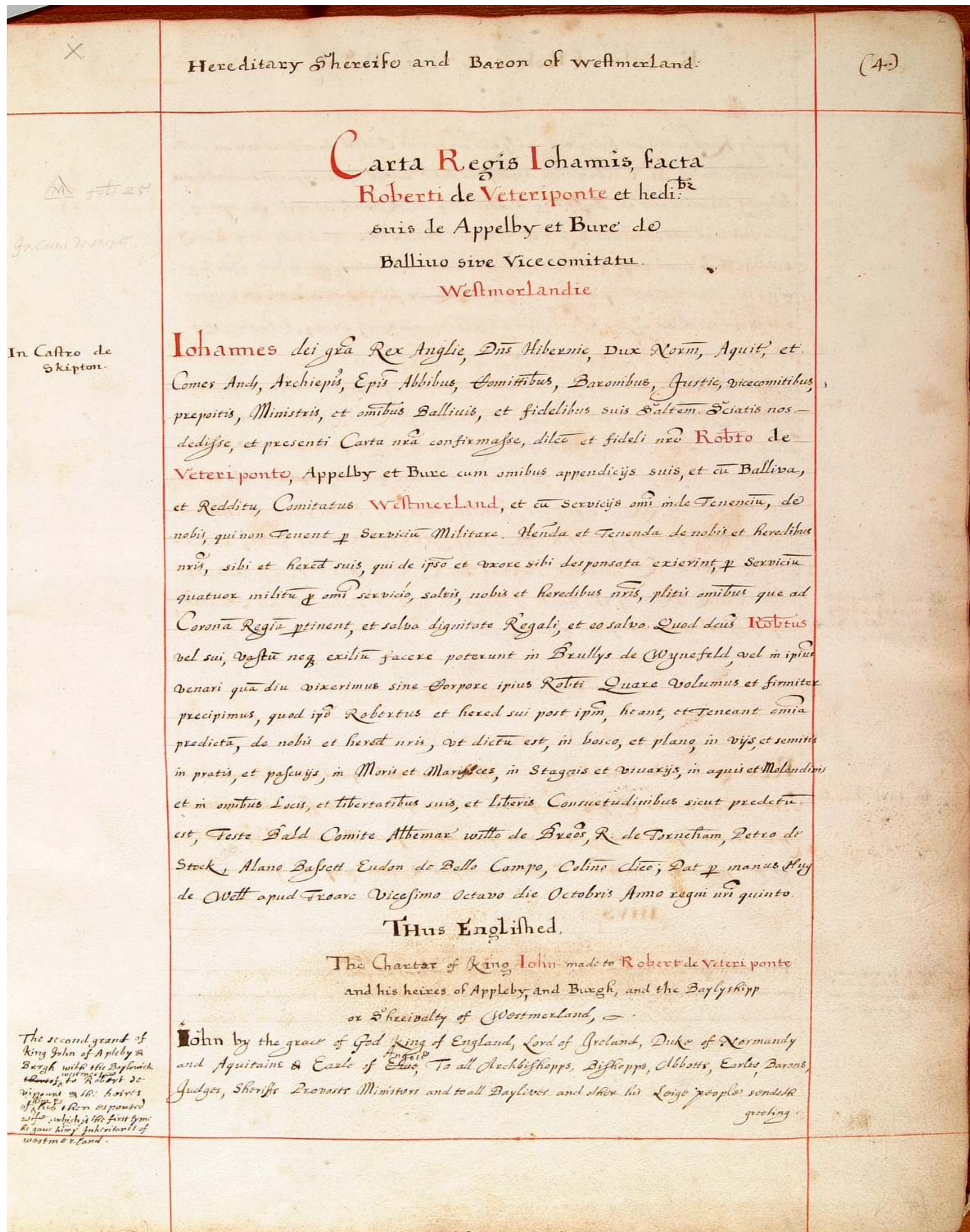
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The illuminated pedigrees are the most immediately striking aspect of the Great Books, providing splashes of colour at intervals throughout the text, and displaying the Clifford lineage at a glance.

Each book is prefaced with a full page tree tracing the generations covered by that volume. The tree displayed here, is from Book III and shows the descendents of Henry Clifford, who was created the Earl of Cumberland by Henry VIII in 1525, and his wife Lady Margaret Percy, down to Lady Anne herself and her children at the top of the page.

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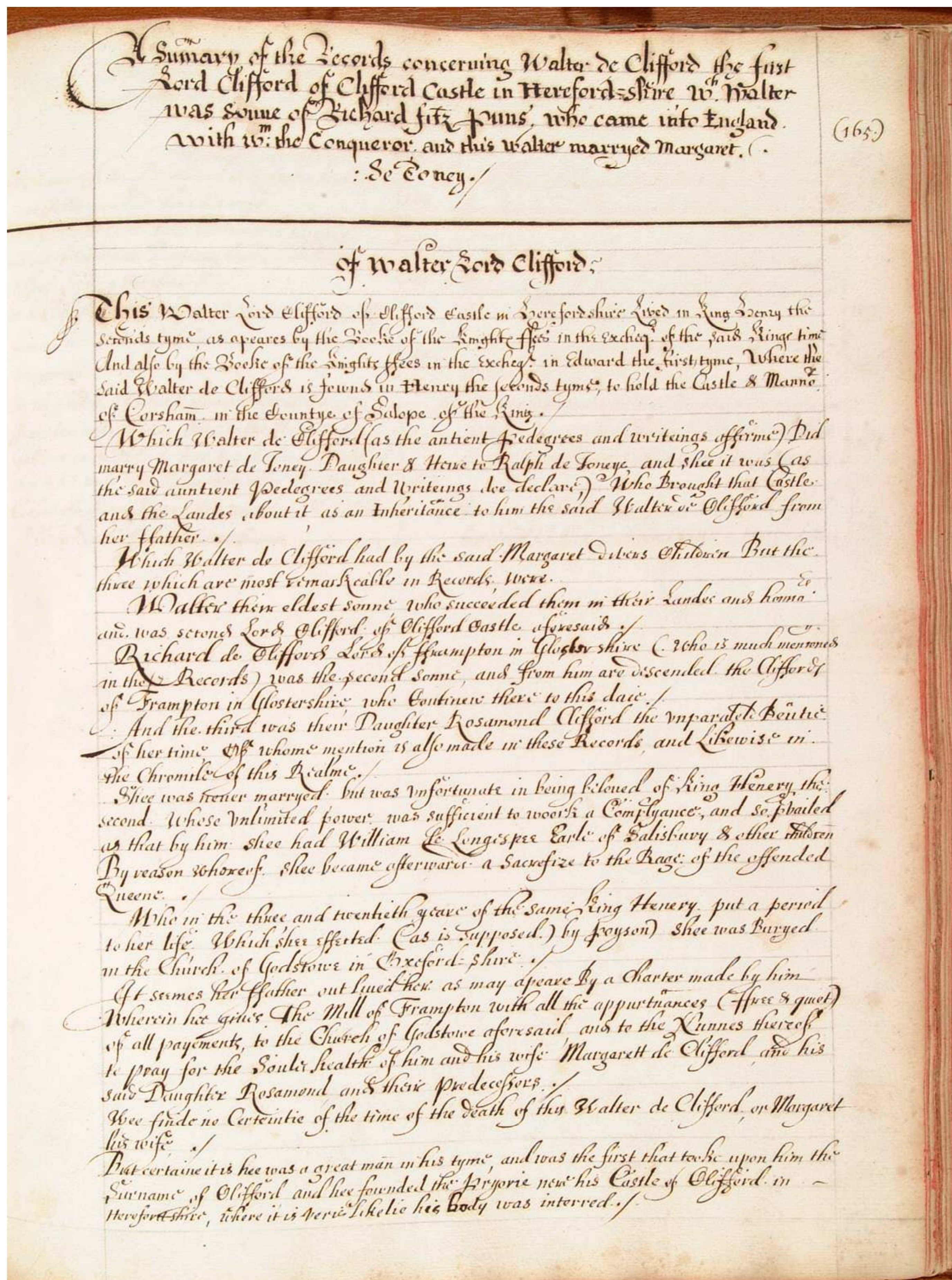


The very first document in Book I sets out the style and layout that is to be followed: a descriptive heading with the full Latin text followed immediately by an English translation (“thus Englished”). Key words are picked out in red ink. The location of the original document is given in the margin (“In Castro de Skipton”).

This charter of King John in 1203 was of fundamental importance as it granted Robert de Veteripont and his heirs the towns of Appleby and Brough and the Shrievalty of Westmorland, a right inherited by Lady Anne and her descendents until the death of the last Earl of Thanet in 1849.

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This page from Book I is a good illustration of the summary section that followed the full documentary transcriptions relating to each Veteripont and Clifford title holder.

Here the family of Walter Clifford of Clifford Castle, Herefordshire, is described. He was the first to take the surname Clifford, but it was his daughter Rosamund who achieved greater fame or notoriety as Henry II's mistress, "the unparalleled beauty of her time". The King's "unlimited power was sufficient to work a compliance and so prevailed that by him she had William de Longspee, Earl of Salisbury and other children. ... she afterwards was a sacrifice to the rage of the offended Queen". She is said to have been poisoned in 1176.

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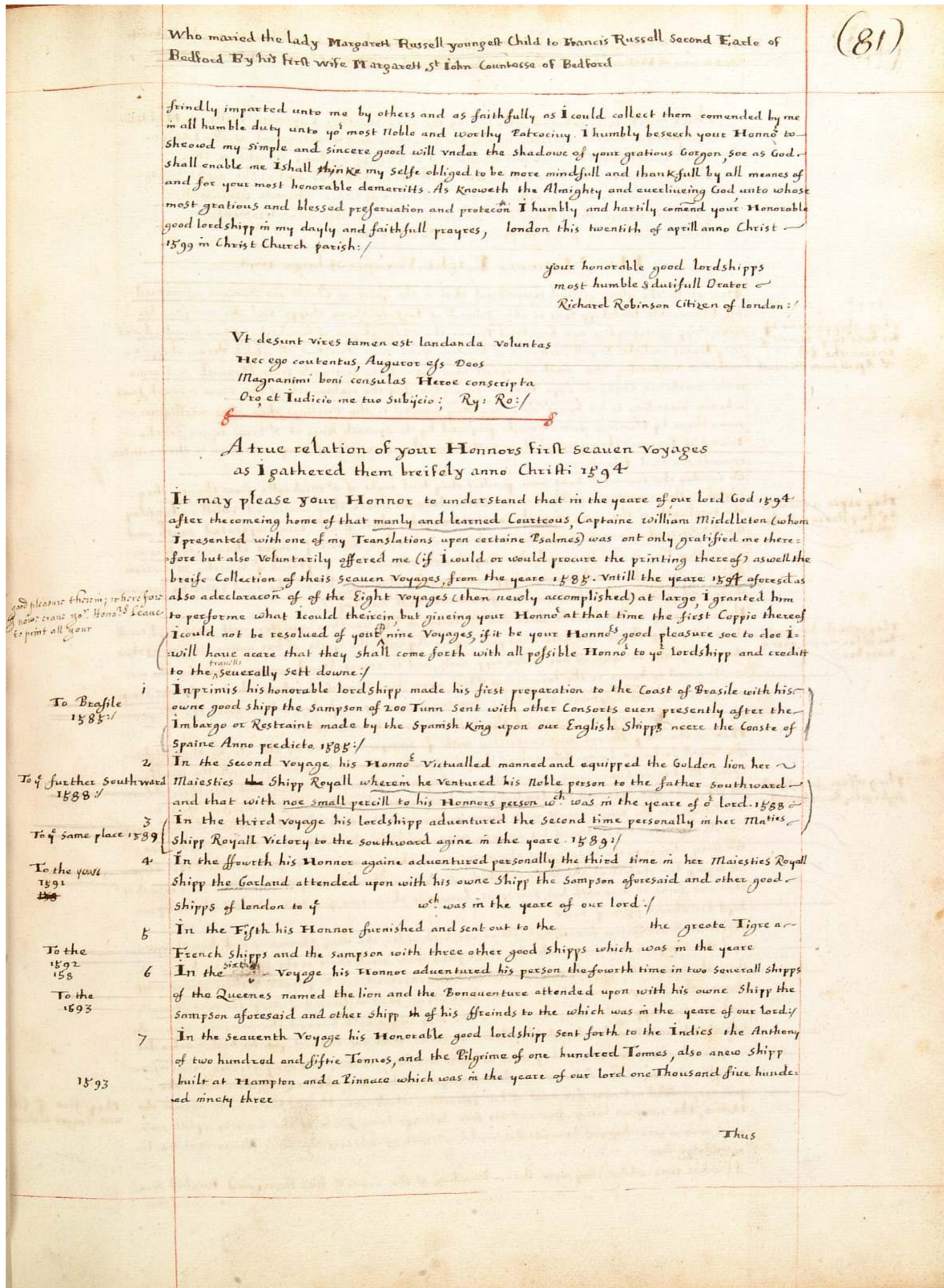


This page from Book III depicts an exceptionally fine example of the Great Seal of England from the time of Elizabeth I.

Representation of seals occur throughout the Great Books and are yet further indication of the degree of authentication which Lady Anne was prepared to invest in her project. The Great Seal was appended to royal charters and letters patent, as here with the Queen's grant to her parents for the foundation of Beamesley Hospital near Skipton in 1593. This, of course, proved the prototype for Lady Anne's own foundation of St Anne's Hospital in Appleby in 1652.

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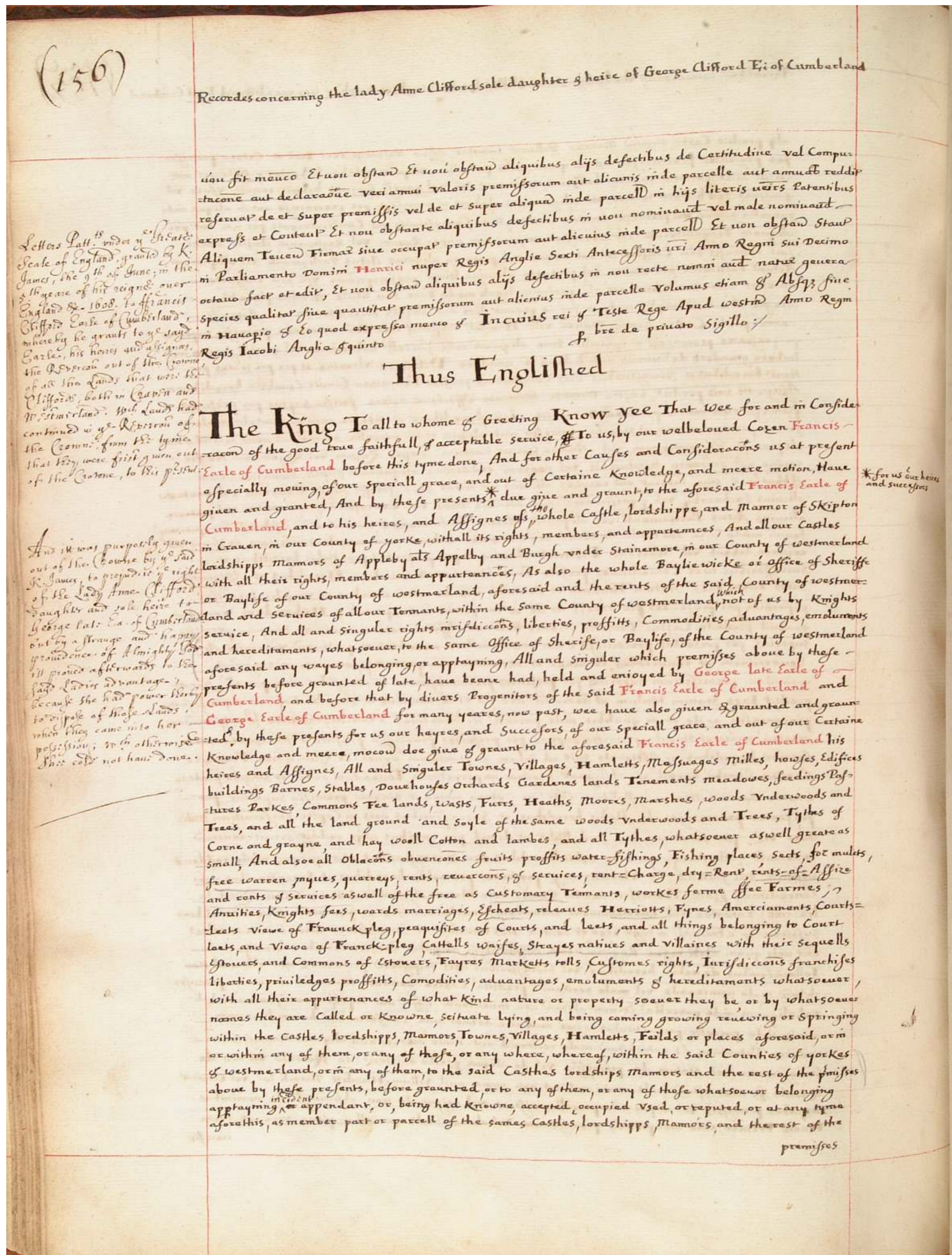
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Not all the material in the Great Books relates strictly to setting out the evidence of proving Lady Anne's right and title. Book III in particular, as it moved into the contemporary age, becomes more diffuse, though it still follows the same format as the first two.

The section on Earl George, her father, strays from the highly structured presentation by including many pages on his voyages from Richard Robinson's descriptions (which also survive in a separate volume). This filial tribute ensured that his maritime exploits were not forgotten. This page lists his first seven voyages between 1585 and 1594, the second of which involved him in the Spanish Armada of 1588.

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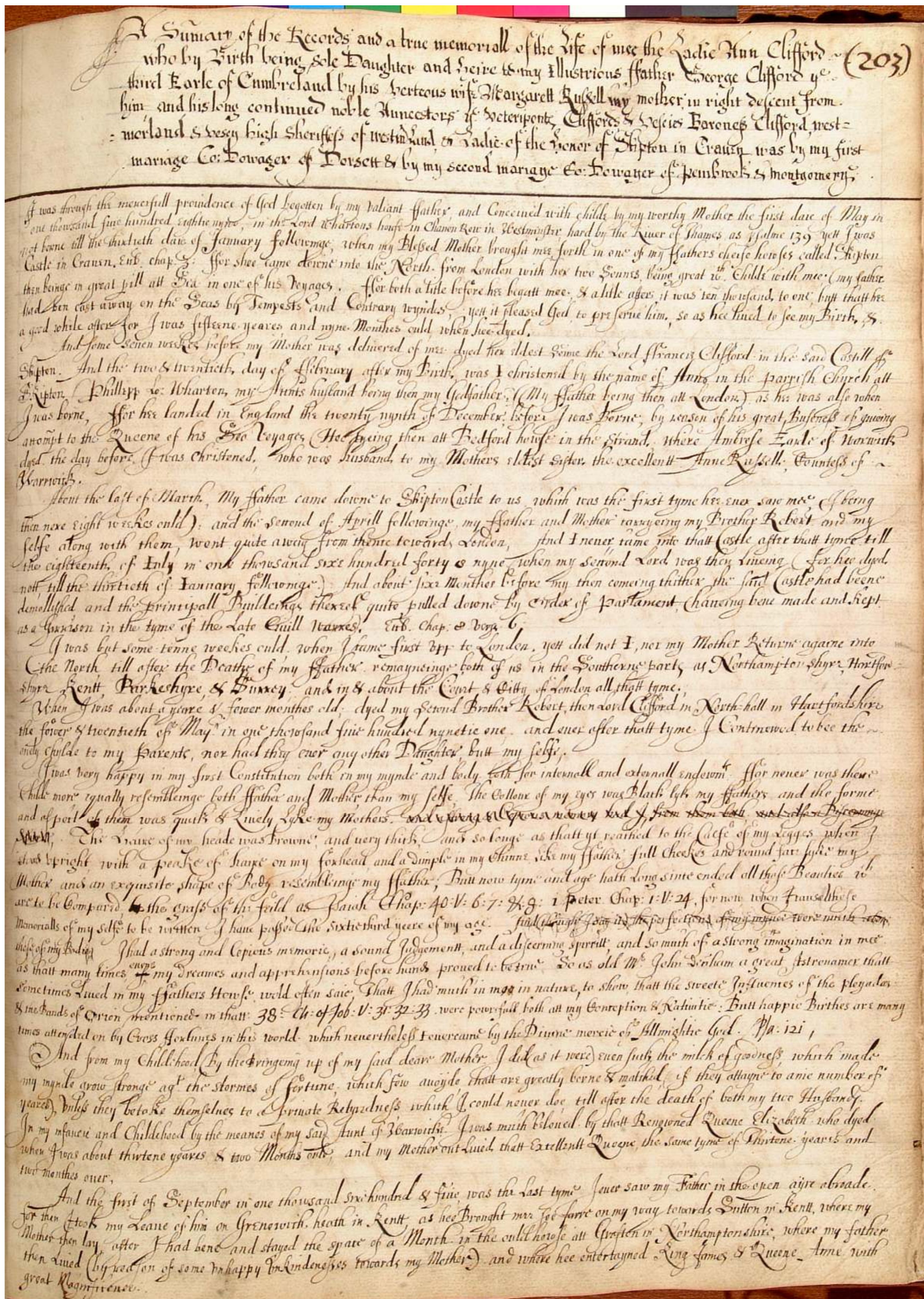


This page from Book III comes from the section dealing with Lady Anne's own records, and concerns one of the many documents involved in the inheritance dispute. The legal process is not easily summarised, but the Fine and Recovery of 1591 which enabled George to bar the entail making Anne the successor to his estates and settle them on his brother Francis, in Fee Simple, was, as he believed invalid since the reversion had never been taken out of the Crown.

James I's Letters Patent of 9th June 1608 granted Francis the reversion out of the Crown of all the Clifford Lands in Craven and Westmorland, including the Shrievalty, and so weakened Lady Anne's position. Only the failure of Francis's heirs in 1643 eventually brought the estates to Lady Anne, when this Grant worked in her favour. She now had the power to dispose of the lands, the entail of which she had argued made her the rightful heir in the first place.

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Book III concludes with “A Summary of the Records and a memorial of the life of Mee the Ladie Ann Clifford...”, in effect her autobiography. The first page deals with her early childhood up to the death of her father George Clifford in 1605 and sets the character and tone (“I had a strong and copious memorie, a sound judgement and discerning spirrit”) which is sustained throughout. The sections on her mother and other relatives continue the chronology of summaries from Books I and II up to 1650.

However the memorial to her life to 1675 was a contemporary compilation, not a diary, and was written up annually and characterised by Lady Anne’s own additions and insertions, leaving her mark in no uncertain manner. This is also one of the earliest known autobiographies by a woman.