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Edited by Ian W. Archer

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**RELIGIOUS CEREMONIAL AT
THE TUDOR COURT: EXTRACTS
FROM ROYAL HOUSEHOLD
REGULATIONS**

Edited by Fiona Kisby

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I wish to thank Andrea Clarke, John Guy, David Loades, Charles Littleton, Shelagh Mitchell, Glenn Richardson, David Starkey, and Richard Yorke for their expert advice during preparation of this edition. I am grateful to Andrew Wathey for originally drawing my attention to British Library, Additional MS 71009. Extracts from the manuscript are reproduced by kind permission of the British Library.

I would like to dedicate this piece to the memory of Michael Taylor, an inspiration.

EDITORIAL PRACTICE

The following extracts have been edited according to the guidelines suggested in R.F. Hunnisett, *Editing Records for Publication*, British Records Association, 4 (London, 1977). Punctuation and capitals have been modernized; abbreviations have been silently expanded, and otiose abbreviations have not been shown. The thorn has been rendered as 'th' or 'i'. For the sake of consistency, the ampersand, used only by the scribe of item (iii), has been spelt out. The modernization of spelling has been limited to the correction of scribal inconsistencies in the use of 'i' and 'j', 'u' and 'v', 'c' and 't'.

INTRODUCTION

Physical characteristics of the manuscript

British Library, Additional MS 71009 is a paper manuscript consisting of 114 leaves (300 × 210 mm) of which thirteen are completely blank. On the very first leaf, a list of contents occurs, together with other information on the probable authorship of the MS. This is probably in the hand of John Anstis (1669–1744), bibliophile and Garter King of Arms (1719). On the inside of the vellum cover is written ‘Ex libris John Anstis’ and no other marks of ownership are apparent.¹ From henceforward this source will be referred to as the Anstis MS.

The text in the Anstis MS consists of twenty-nine items appearing in three sections separated by blank leaves (Appendix). Sections 1 and 2 contain twenty-eight items, some of which are undated and concern ceremonial, both sacred and secular, at the court of unidentified kings (probably, on the basis of internal evidence, Henry VII and his son); dated items, relating to the reigns of Edward IV, Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary, are also present. Section 3 contains item (xxix), a mid-sixteenth-century copy of accounts of the Royal Collectors in Norfolk, 1346. Sections 1 and 2 are written on paper incorporating a pot with flower watermark, in use c. 1545. Section 3 begins on a new quire (from which the first two leaves have been torn) compiled from paper with a later pot with flower watermark, dated c. 1553–1554. The entire MS has been foliated in a modern hand; section 1 has no older foliation and sections 2 and 3 each bear separate contemporary foliations. Watermark evidence and textual analysis (discussed below) suggests that sections 1 and 2 are closely related, but section 3 appears to be unconnected. As the entire source is contained within a seventeenth-century binding, it is possible that the third section was, perhaps for reasons of preservation, bound in with the other two when they were acquired by Anstis during the earlier part of his lifetime.² Doubtless he was interested in the first two sections because they contained material on the Order of the Garter, the English order of knighthood of which he was an early historian.³

¹ L. Campbell, *A Catalogue of MSS in the College of Arms Collections* (London, 1988), p. 468. For Anstis's hand see *College of Arms, MS Officers of Arms*. For a similar list of contents in a MS formerly owned by Anstis see BL, Additional MS 71001, fos iv–v.

² As no marks of previous ownership are apparent, it is unlikely that Anstis acquired the MS ready-bound.

³ D'A. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325–1520* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 96–166, 101; J. Anstis, *The Register of the*

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Four anonymous mid-sixteenth-century secretary hands are present in sections 1 and 2 of the MS (Appendix). All hands are neat and errors in the text are minimal.⁴ Scribe A consistently prefers 'gentleman ussher'; the descender of the 'es' abbreviation in 'kynges' always points to the left; the base of the 't' in 'the', 'that' etc. is distinct and curved. Also apparent is a preference for the use of marks of abbreviation in positions where they are either unnecessary or ambiguous (e.g. the horizontal stroke over 'on' and '-men'; the extension of the last stroke of every final 'n' with an ascending or descending left-pointing flourish). Scribe B uses virtually no otiose signs of abbreviation and prefers 'Gentilman ussher' with a distinctive initial reminiscent of a modern upper-case 'G' crowned with a curved 'c'-shaped flourish. The descender of the abbreviated form of 'kynges' invariably points to the right and the initial 't' of 'the', 'that' etc. has no base curve and the stem of the letter is usually formed with a long leftwards stroke beginning halfway along the length of the word. A distinctive approach stroke is used to form the bow of the first letter of 'and', and long descenders are often attached to the letters 's' and 'f'. Scribe C uses a hand distinguished by the use of a thickened, straight ascender of the letter 'd' which is slanted to the left at an angle of almost 45 degrees from the base line. Scribe D uses a small, compact hand; usually the looped ascender of the final 'd' of 'and' has a pronounced slant to the left towards the base line, often touching the head of the adjacent 'n'. In the formation of the looped ascender of the final letter of 'and', the scribe's quill invariably leaves the paper at approximately the height of the head of the 'n', and rarely touches the base line. This contrasts with the 'and' of scribe A, which invariably contains an upright 'd' with a looped ascender that terminates at the base of the writing line.

Contents, provenance, and dating

A catalogue entry for this source made when it was acquired by the British Library in 1992 suggested that it is a 'book of ceremonies at the court of Henry VIII etc. by John Norris, Gentleman Usher; mid-sixteenth century, 1554'.⁵ No signatures appear in the MS, and this description almost certainly derives from one appearing in the 1939 Catalogue of Bernard Quaritch Ltd, a typed extract of which has been

Most Noble Order of the Garter [...], 2 vols (London, 1724). The MS contains a passage written by the Black Rod, one of the officers of the Order (fos 6v-7, see below), and a description of ceremonies on the feast of St George, the patron saint of the Order (fo. 26).

⁴ Occasional interlinear insertions, deletions, or dittographical mistakes occur.

⁵ British Library, MSS Students' Room, *Catalogue of Recent Additions, 1992-.*

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inserted inside the manuscript's vellum cover on two loose leaves. The Quaritch cataloguer probably made the ascription on the basis of information given by Anstis, who prefaced his aforementioned table of contents: 'This noble Book of Ceremony was wrote by the Usher of the Order of the Garter, that is the Black Rod as appears in the first leafe, and as I take it from p. 22 [fo. 31] by John Norris who had that office given him 1 May Pat 1 Mar p. 4 m. 27'.⁶ Thus, three pieces of information are given about this source: (a) that the MS contains ceremonials 'at the time of Henry VIII etc.'; (b) that it was 'wrote by' a gentleman usher at court who also held the office of Usher of the Order of the Garter or Black Rod; (c) that, according to evidence on fo. 31, the particular officer in question was an individual named John Norris. Analysis of the contents of the Anstis MS verifies that Norris was indeed almost certainly the one most closely associated with this source. He probably originally brought all the items of sections 1 and 2 together and may even have composed some of them; and this may have been done soon after the death of Mary Tudor in 1558.

Assuming that the third section of the MS is unrelated, then the 'book of ceremony' referred to consists of only the items appearing in sections 1 and 2. The text on fo. 31 cited by Anstis as proof that Norris composed this book is not, by itself, convincing evidence, for it merely describes, in the third person, the role of an individual of that name in the preparations for the marriage of Philip and Mary in 1554.⁷ However, other evidence from elsewhere in the source can be adduced in support of the Norris identification. The very first item, (i), is a passage in the first person in which the author describes himself as a gentleman usher daily waiter, who served a king as a member of the Outer Chamber, and who also became usher of the Order of the Garter.⁸ The Usher of the Garter, otherwise known as Black Rod, was one of the five offices of the Order and had the privilege of keeping all the doors where any council, including Parliament, was held. During Tudor times the office was usually awarded to one who held a prominent position at court, and the succession in the first half of the sixteenth century was William Compton (1513–), Henry Norris (1526–), Anthony Knyvet (1536–), Philip Hoby (1543–) and John Norris (1554–).⁹ Compton and Henry Norris served as Henry VIII's groom of the stool, the principal royal body

⁶ Fo. 1; see *CPR [...] Philip and Mary*, 4 vols (London, 1937–1939), I, p. 112.

⁷ '[...] there was prepared by John Norres gent ussher (who had all the doinges for that marriage [...]) in the cathedral church [...]'].

⁸ BL, Additional MS 71009, fo. 6v.

⁹ A. Wagner, *The Heralds of England* (London, 1967), p. 150; M. Bond and D. Beamish, *The Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod* (London, 1981); *LP*, I.i, p. 1662 (10); *LP*, IV.ii, p. 2599 (23); *LP*, XI, p. 943 (2); *LP*, XVIII.ii, p. 449 (12); *CPR [...] Philip and Mary*, I, p. 112.

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servant, and chief officer of the Privy Chamber.¹⁰ Owing largely to the labours of David Starkey, the development of this sub-department of the royal household under the early Tudors and its relationship to the other departments of Hall and Outer Chamber is well known.¹¹ Knyvet and Hoby were also associated with the Privy Chamber, and served there as gentleman ushers in the 1520s–1540s.¹² Only John Norris (c. 1502–1577) was associated with the Outer Chamber of a king for a significant part of his royal career. A member of a family who had served at court since the reign of Henry VI, he was the brother of the aforementioned Henry.¹³ He served as gentleman usher daily waiter of the Outer Chamber of Henry VIII from around 1536, and continued in that office until he was appointed gentleman usher of Mary's Privy Chamber by 1554.¹⁴ He remained in royal service until his death in 1577.

Thus, John Norris's close association with the Anstis MS and his role as author of item (i) is confirmed, for he is the only Tudor courtier whose biographical profile fits the first-person description. If this is the case, then what survives as the 'noble book of ceremony' is not, however, holograph, because comparison of the hand and orthography of this item (and indeed all others in the MS) with Norris's own reveals no similarities.¹⁵ As a gentleman usher of the Outer Chamber under

¹⁰ PRO, LC9/50, fo. 206; *LP*, I.i, pp. 94 (27), 640, 1015; *ibid.*, II.i, p. 2735; *ibid.*, III.i, p. 51; *ibid.*, p. 80; *ibid.*, pp. 316, 610, 1035, 2074 (14); *ibid.*, IV.i, p. 297; *ibid.*, V, p. 1065; *EC*, pp. 78, 94; *HO*, p. 156.

¹¹ D. Starkey, 'Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485–1547', in *EC*, pp. 71–119; see also D. Loades, *The Tudor Court* (London, 1987), pp. 46–52; *HO*, pp. 165–166.

¹² *LP*, II.i, p. 875; *ibid.*, II.ii, p. 1507; *ibid.*, III.ii, p. 1536; *ibid.*, III.i, p. 999; *ibid.*, III.ii, p. 1556; *HC*, pp. 631, 689; *HO*, pp. 154–155; *LP*, IV.ii, p. 2673 (20); *ibid.*, IV, p. 5243 (27); *ibid.*, V, p. 119 (43); *ibid.*, II.i, p. 2735; *ibid.*, XIV.i, p. 3 (2); A.G.W. Murray and E.F. Bosanquet, 'Excerpts from the ms of William Dunche', *The Genealogist*, new series, 30 (1914), pp. 18–28, 19; *LP*, XIV.i, p. 3 (2); *ibid.*, pp. 16, 220 (25).

¹³ *DNB*, XIV, pp. 566–567; W. Dugdale, *The Baramage of England*, 2 vols (London, 1675), II, pp. 403–404; *CPR [...] Henry VI*, 6 vols (London, 1909), II, p. 37; III, pp. 92, 568.

¹⁴ Before he received his formal court appointment, Norris was an unsalaried member (as groom of the Outer Chamber) of the King's wider affinity in the counties, c. 1520–1525; PRO, E36/130, fo. 231v; J. Guy, 'Wolsey and the Tudor polity', in S. Gunn and P.J. Lindley (eds), *Cardinal Wolsey* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 54–75, 67. For his service at court see: BL, Royal MS 7 F. XIV, fo. 100 (1536, not 1516 as given in *LP*, II.i, p. 2735); *LP*, X, p. 392 (11); *ibid.*, XIV.i, p. 607; Murray and Bosanquet, 'Excerpts from the ms of William Dunche', p. 20; *LP*, XVII, p. 580; PRO, LC2/2, fo. 37; BL, Stowe MS 571, fo. 30; *CPR [...] Philip and Mary*, i. 200; PRO, LC2/3 prt 1, 86; PRO, LC2/4/1, fo. 18; PRO, E101/427/5, fo. 14v; PRO, LC9/50, fo. 206 (1509); PRO, LC2/2, fo. 37 (1547); *HoP*, 1509–1558, III, p. 19 incorrectly describes him as a member of the Privy (rather than the Outer) Chamber from 1536.

¹⁵ M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters*, 6 vols (London, 1981), I, pp. 118, 122; VI, pp. 2, 7–10, 18–19, 293.

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Henry VIII and Edward VI and member of the *domus magnificencie* – the ‘above-stairs’ department of the royal household under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain whose servants were concerned with the public, formal aspects of kingship and royal body service – Norris would have performed a leading role in the organization of the ceremonial life of the court.¹⁶ As a full-time ‘daily waiter’, he would have acted as the Lord Chamberlain’s assistant and organized other servants on duty in the public rooms of the Outer Chamber – the great or guard chamber and the presence chamber. In this capacity he would have had little formal contact with the other sub-section of the chamberlain’s department, the Privy Chamber. Neither would he have dealt in a formal capacity with the below-stairs household or *domus providencie* under the jurisdiction of the Lord Steward.¹⁷ An earlier household ordinance of Edward IV, of c. 1471–1472, stipulated that an officer in Norris’s position was ‘to be cunyng, curteys and glad to receue [...] and direct every man in serues [...], and to know all the custumes and cerimoniez used aboute the king and other astates’, because ‘he assigneth the yomen of crown and chambre, gromez and pagez, to [...] busynes inwarde and outwarde for the king’.¹⁸ Court ordinances issued under both Henry VIII and his father also stated that gentlemen ushers ought to be familiar with the duties of those working under them or else they risked ‘the kinges displeasure’.¹⁹

In item (i) Norris states that he had ‘set forth’ regulations concerning ceremonial at royal banquets, coronations, christenings, burials, marriages, the Order of the Garter, the receiving of ambassadors, and visits of the Emperor and the French and Spanish kings.²⁰ This he did because he considered it ‘mette for a gentilman ussher to know all estates, bothe lordes and ladies’ in order to ‘place them in suche order as their estates requirethe’. He also stressed that, even though men in his office dealt primarily with the ceremonial life of the *domus magnificencie*, some familiarity with the duties of those working in the *domus providencie* was necessary because ‘it appertayneth to a gentleman ussher to know the estate and order of the hole howse as the halle and all other officis [...]’.²¹ The items that follow in the MS contain just such material as Norris claimed he had assembled – a fact which further strengthens the argument that sections 1 and 2 are closely related. As what survives

¹⁶ D.A.L. Morgan, ‘The house of policy: the political role of the late Plantagenet household, 1422–1485’, in *EC*, p. 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁸ A.R. Myers (ed.), *The Household of Edward IV: the Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (Manchester, 1959), pp. 114–115.

¹⁹ *AR*, II, p. 192.

²⁰ BL, Additional MS 71009, fo. 6v.

²¹ *Ibid.*

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occurs in four anonymous hands, it must be a copy of such a compilation. The discussion below shows that Norris could have composed some of the texts himself from personal experience; some other passages were probably the work of older individuals as they are retrospective and refer to the late fifteenth-century court.

Taken together, the texts of items (i) to (xxviii) survey almost the entire court and preserve material on the principal occasions of estate and other significant events which occurred under the early Tudor monarchs before Elizabeth. After the aforementioned introductory passage, item (i) goes on to outline the organization of the officers below stairs including those of the cellar, the kitchen, bakehouse etc. The first half of the remaining texts are formal regulations explaining household organization and, in particular, guiding a gentleman usher through his duties (Appendix). Item (ii) describes the order of the King's Hall, where many of the officers of the *domus providencie* worked. Item (iii) moves into the realms of the *domus magnificencie*, and deals with the order and ceremonial of the Outer Chamber. It advises the gentleman usher on the organization of the whole chamber staff, and describes how he was to receive visitors, manage access to the King, and deal with other formal aspects of domestic ceremonial. Information on the usher's role as the King's chief attendant during his visits to the household chapel on special 'holy days' forms a large part of this section. The holy days are not listed but, using evidence from elsewhere, it is possible to deduce that they included Sundays, Christmas Day, Easter Day, Whitsunday, and forty-four other feasts in the calendar of the Sarum Use (the rite used in the English Chapel Royal).²² Throughout this item, ceremonial norms were set as if a king, prince, and cardinal were present.²³ As it was only under Henry VII that three such individuals were simultaneously alive, this passage probably refers to practice under the first Tudor king.²⁴

Item (iv) deals with the Recording of the Chamber, a prime responsibility of the gentleman usher; and item (v) outlines his role during the royal removings, a regular aspect of court life.²⁵ Items (vii) and (viii) deal with preparations to be made by an usher for court banquets, and item (viii) draws attention to his duties during the opening ceremonies

²² They are identified in KGP. A brief reference to the chapel also occurs in item (ii), because its members were entitled to eat their 'bouche of court', along with other courtiers, in the hall.

²³ BL, Additional MS 71009, fos 12, 13, 14, 14v, 15, 17, 17v.

²⁴ Cardinal John Morton (1493–1500); Princes Arthur (1486–1502) and Henry (1491–1547). Under Henry VIII, Wolsey became Cardinal in 1515 and died in 1529, eight years before Edward VI was born.

²⁵ F. Kisby, 'Kingship and the royal itinerary: a study of the peripatetic household of the early Tudor kings, 1485–1547', *The Court Historian*, 4 (1999), pp. 29–39.

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of Parliament.²⁶ Item (ix) provides additional information on the usher's responsibilities as royal attendant when the King participated in the liturgical ceremonial occurring on sixteen of the highest-ranking chapel holy days. The five days when the monarch took communion in the chapel are also listed. Only four of the five days specified match those documented in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber for Henry VIII; neither do they correspond to what little is known of the communion times of earlier English kings.²⁷ However, given that communion was rarely taken five times a year in pre-Reformation times, and as the realities of household life rarely matched idealized situations prescribed by court ordinances, this mismatch may be unimportant and this passage may reflect ideal practice under Henry VIII. Finally, items (x) to (xii) describe the usher's role in the ceremonies at the royal baptisms, the status of a king's deputy in his dominions, and the order of the two main rooms of the Outer Chamber in which the gentleman ushers worked – the great chamber and chamber of presence.

This material is followed by items (xiii)–(xxii) which, in contrast to the preceding texts, are narrative accounts, written in the third person. They describe, with varying detail, the receiving of Anne of Cleves, the marriage of Mary and Philip, the coronations of Edward VI and Anne Boleyn, the burials of Henry VIII and Queen Jane and the performance of a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's cathedral by Cardinal Wolsey in 1527. Meetings occurring between Henry VIII and Francis I (1520 and 1532) and the Emperor Charles V (1520) are also mentioned. Some of these passages were probably written by an individual closely associated with the Outer Chamber, for the role of a gentleman usher is often highlighted and details of precedence are provided that would interest one who held that post.²⁸ In this respect John Norris is certainly a likely candidate, especially for the narratives concerning events in the last two decades of Henry VIII's reign.²⁹ At the end of section 2 of the source, like an appendix, appear miscellaneous items, including an oath of allegiance sworn by members of the chamber of Edward IV, table plans at banquets during the time of Henry VIII, a diagram of the stage in Winchester Cathedral where Mary and Philip married, and

²⁶ Item (vi) is an anomaly in this context because it is not a formal regulation but a narrative account. In item (vii), reference is made to members of the chapel who sang a 'wassail song' on Twelfth Night, a court tradition since at least the reign of Edward IV; F. Kisby, 'The royal household chapel in Early Tudor London, 1485–1547' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1996), pp. 218–221.

²⁷ See edition note 47.

²⁸ e.g. in item (xvii).

²⁹ Given Norris's leading role in the preparation of lodgings in Calais used by Anne of Cleves before she came to England to marry Henry VIII, his authorship of item (xv) is likely; *Lisle Letters*, VI, pp. 2 7–10; BL, Arundel MS 97, fo. 112; BL, Additional MS 71009, fo. 34.

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an order outlining the organization of Mary's Privy Chamber. Given the responsibilities bestowed on Norris by the Privy Council for organizing the stage at Winchester for Mary's marriage, he may well have drawn the stage diagram.³⁰ The Privy Chamber order is written in the first person and was intended to provide 'abreffe what order was used in this tyme'.³¹ Norris's membership, as a 'cheffe ussher', of Mary's Privy Chamber by 1554 also points to his authorship of this item.³²

If the Anstis MS is a copy, in a number of hands, of material 'set forth' by John Norris from his own and other people's knowledge, the question arises as to what prompted the assembly of the original materials and when this was done. An important clue to its dating is contained in the passage describing Mary's Privy Chamber. As its author speaks of 'the quene that dede is', 1558, not 1554 as suggested in the British Library catalogue, must be a *terminus post quem* for the MS.³³ In fact, there was a reason for John Norris to have made such a compilation in that very year. Listed as a 'gentleman usher quarter waiter' at the coronation of Elizabeth, he was soon promoted to gentleman usher of the Privy Chamber.³⁴ On 20 November 1558, three days after Elizabeth's accession, Norris was summoned to court.³⁵ The purpose of his visit is not stated, but it has been suggested that he was asked to give advice on the organization of the new royal household.³⁶ Any documentation produced on that occasion may have formed the exemplar, now lost, from which sections 1 and 2 were copied. If this was the case, it was not, as will be shown below, the first time that an usher of the English court had been commissioned to produce ordinances on ceremonial for guidance at the beginning of a new regime.

In the light of this, the items copied into the Anstis MS form a handlist which reflects information passed down to John Norris from the courts of both Edward IV and Henry VII, the experience he obtained under Henry VIII and Edward VI, and the issues he dealt with in Mary's reign. The MS contains highly topical items and can be seen as a precedent book providing guidance for those matters concerning royal ceremonial and household organization which pre-occupied the new Queen as an unmarried female monarch (only the

³⁰ *CQJ*, p. 134.

³¹ BL, Additional MS 71009, fo. 60v.

³² *CQJ*, pp. 128–129.

³³ BL, Additional 71009, fo. 60v. This dating explains why, in item (i), Norris spoke of meeting the French King, Spanish King, and Emperor as if they were three different individuals, for it was only after 1556 that this was true: Francis I of France, Emperor Charles V (1516–1556) and I of Spain (1519–1556), and Philip, husband of Mary and King of Spain (1556–1598).

³⁴ PRO, LC2/4/3, 105; *EC*, p. 157; PRO, E351/1795, fos 12, 32, 36.

³⁵ *APC*, VII, p. 4.

³⁶ *HoP*, 1509–1558, III, p. 20.