

SUMMARY: *Anagrammata in Nomina Illustrissimorum Heroum* is a broadside published in 1603 containing Latin epigrams on the names and titles of nine lords and four knights. The lords are Thomas Egerton, Charles Howard, Thomas Sackville, Charles Blount, John Fortescue, Gilbert Talbot, Henry Percy, Edward de Vere and Henry Wriothesley. The knights are John Stanhope, Julius Caesar, George Carew and John Swinnerton.

Anagrammata is attributed to Francis Davison, a son of Queen Elizabeth's disgraced former secretary, William Davison (1541?-1608). The latter was of Scottish descent, and may have hoped for a renewal of his political fortunes with the arrival in England of King James after Queen Elizabeth's death on 24 March 1603. If so, *Anagrammata* has political overtones, and the personages named in it may represent a political faction of sorts, if only in Francis Davison's view. The absence of Sir Robert Cecil, Lord Henry Howard, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Cobham and others from the list of 'heroes' is very noticeable. If the group of individuals named in *Anagrammata* does represent Francis Davison's view of a group which might wield political influence, the precise date of publication may be significant as well, since matters were in a considerable state of flux in May and June 1603, and it was not really known which of those vying for power with King James at the time would emerge victorious.

As mentioned earlier, *Anagrammata* was published in 1603. Can the date be more precisely narrowed? Does *Anagrammata* perhaps date from the months of May and June 1603 when political jockeying was at its fiercest?

The most significant facts in the dating of *Anagrammata* are that Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, is referred to in it as the King's lieutenant in Ireland, an appointment made by King James on 21 April 1603, and that he was created Earl of Devonshire on 21 July 1603. The conclusion therefore seems inescapable that the *terminus ad quem* for the publication of *Anagrammata* is 21 July 1603. It is inconceivable that *Anagrammata* could have been published after Mountjoy's elevation to an earldom and not have referred to him as Earl of Devonshire.

Another key fact is that Sir Julius Caesar is referred to in *Anagrammata* as a knight. Caesar was knighted by King James on 20 May 1603, and that date thus provides a *terminus a quo* for the publication of *Anagrammata* since the broadside could not have been published before Caesar was knighted. This conclusion is supported by the fact that Sir John Fortescue is referred to in *Anagrammata* as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster but not as Chancellor of the Exchequer, although he held both positions under Queen Elizabeth. The latter office was taken away from Fortescue by King James. However King James confirmed Fortescue's position as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 20 May 1603.

Additional support for a *terminus a quo* of 20 May 1603 is that in May 1603 both Mountjoy and Sir George Carew returned from Ireland. Carew had been appointed President of Munster on 27 January 1600, a position Queen Elizabeth would not allow

him to give up. However King James permitted Carew to retire as President of Munster in May 1603 and to return to England. Mountjoy was also summoned to England on 20 May 1603, and never returned to Ireland although he continued to advise on Irish affairs and retained his title of Lord Lieutenant for a time. Once Carew returned to England, he was given a position in the household of King James' wife, Queen Anne. In *Anagrammata*, this position is referred to as *domus reginae praefecti*. There seems to be no English equivalent for the title, but the Talbot papers provide evidence that by October 1603 Sir George Carew held two positions in Queen Anne's household, vice-chamberlain and receiver. It thus seems likely that almost as soon as he returned from Ireland in May 1603, Sir George Carew was appointed to some office in Queen Anne's household which corresponded to the Latin *praefectus*, and that by October he had been promoted to be both her vice-chamberlain of the household, and her receiver.

The convergence of all these details so far suggests that *Anagrammata* was published between late May 1603 and 21 July 1603.

The only anomaly involves Sir John Swinnerton, who is referred to in *Anagrammata* as both a knight and one of the sheriffs of London. According to the *Remembrancia*, Swinnerton was elected sheriff on 24 June 1602. The usual term of office for the sheriffs of London was only one year, so Swinnerton's term would normally have ended, and likely did end, on 24 June 1603. Since Swinnerton is referred to as one of the sheriffs of London in *Anagrammata*, the *terminus ad quem* is narrowed still further to 24 June 1603. However a difficulty arises from the fact that, according to the *Remembrancia*, Swinnerton was not knighted until 26 July 1603 at Whitehall. This late date for Swinnerton's knighthood is inconsistent with the fact, mentioned earlier, that Mountjoy was created Earl of Devonshire on 21 July 1603, and that it is inconceivable that he would not have been referred to as Earl of Devonshire in *Anagrammata* had it been published after 21 July 1603. The crux can perhaps be resolved by considering the distinct possibility there was an earlier date at which Swinnerton could have been knighted by King James. The entry in Camden's *Diary* for 7 May 1603 reads:

May 7 Setting forth from Theobalds, the king was first received by Sheriff Swinnerton, whose orator rather severely criticized the administration of the realm under Elizabeth for His Majesty's benefit. Afterwards he was received by the Lord Mayor and the citizenry, and led off to the Carthusian hall, where he created eighty knights in a bunch.

Was Swinnerton among the 'eighty knights in a bunch' created on 7 May 1603? If so, the titles and offices given to all the personages named in *Anagrammata* would be consistent with a date of publication between late May 1603 and 24 June 1603.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the fact that Henry Wriothesley is referred to in *Anagrammata* as Earl of Southampton does not present a problem in terms of dating its publication. Although Southampton's title was not formally restored until 21 July 1603, he was granted a pardon on 16 May 1603, and according to Akrigg, could legitimately be referred to as Earl of Southampton after the issuance of the royal pardon.

The Latin epigram on Oxford from *Anagrammata* is reprinted below from the transcript and translation by Dr. Dana Sutton at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/anagrams/>.

9. EDOUARUS VEIERUS per anagramma *AURE SURDUS VIDEO*

Auribus hisce licet studio, Fortuna, susurros
Perfidiae et technas efficis esse procul,
Attamen accipio (quae mens horrescit et auris)
Rebus facta malis corpora surda tenus.
Imo etiam cerno Catilinae fraude propinquos
Funere solventes fata aliena suo.

9. EDWARD VERE by an anagram *AURE SURDUS VIDEO* (“DEAF IN MY EAR, I SEE”)

Though by your zeal, Fortune, you keep perfidy’s murmurs and schemings at a distance, nonetheless I learn (at which my mind and ear quake) that our bodies have been deafened with respect to evil affairs. Indeed, I perceive men who come close to Catiline in deception, freeing other men’s fates by their death.