

KIDDERMINSTER, WORCESTERSHIRE  
Maud Harcourt and two husbands M.S. I  
London: "B" series<sup>1</sup>

St. Mary and All Saints  
NN kid 1415

Effigies of Maud [Harcourt], in mantle, and her two husbands, Walter Cookeley, Esquire, [1407], and Sir John Phelip, 1415, both in armor, all with SS collars. Mutilated triple canopy; mutilated inscription in eight Latin verses. Five shields (another lost). On the floor of the chancel.

On this very large worn brass, the three figures of Sir John Phelip, Walter Cookeley, Esquire, and Maud Harcourt stand under a section of the mutilated triple canopy that once surrounded them. To the viewer's left is Sir John Phelip, identified by his bawdric or belt inscribed with his initials. In full plate armor, he has a slightly pointed bascinet, a metal beaver around the neck, a breastplate, jointed spaudlers over the shoulders, rerebraces on the upper arm, flanged couters at the elbow, vambraces on the forearms, and fingered gauntlets on the hands and over the wrists. Rectangular besagews protect the vulnerable armpits. The fauld or skirt of lames is being worn over a mail hauberk, the bottom of which is just visible below the fauld. The leg armor—cuisses over the upper part of the legs, poleyns on the knees, and greaves around the lower legs—is all typical, as are the pointed, articulated sollerets with their rowel spurs attached at the instep. The knight's feet rest on a couchant lion, his head facing the viewer. Attached on the knight's left side to the bawdric with its distinctive hanging tassels is the long sword encased in a scabbard decorated with quatrefoils.

To the far right, the effigy of Walter Cookeley, Esquire, is also depicted in plate armor, almost identical to that of Sir John Phelip, except that the besagews at the armpits are round as are the flanges on the couters. His sword belt is plain, and from it hangs a now mutilated sword. Finally, a profile lion is at his feet.

Between the two knights is Maud Harcourt, the wife of each of these men. She wears the crespine headdress in which the hair is caught in square cauls at the side of the head with the veil of the headdress on the top of the head. Her dress seems to be of a piece with a full skirt, a wide, turned-down collar, and a tremendous pair of sleeves that seem to reach to the floor. At her feet is a small lapdog that sits gazing up at her.

There are several special details worth noting—the lions' heads at the meeting of the canopies, for example, and the SS collars worn by all three figures, suggesting a connection with the Lancastrian regime, since this was taken as part of that family's livery as early as 1383 by John of Gaunt.

At the top of this huge brass were once six shields, five of which now remain. The first to the left, now missing, probably bore the arms of Phelip. The second bears the arms of Phelip impaled with Harcourt; the third, Harcourt alone; the fourth, Phelip impaling Harcourt; the fifth, Cookeley; and, the sixth, Cookeley impaling Harcourt.<sup>2</sup> The blazons for these are as follows: Phelip: Quarterly, Gules and Argent, in the first quarter

<sup>1</sup>Norris, I, 75; Kent, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Barnard and Parker, p. 143.

an eagle displayed Or, on the breast an annulet Sable;<sup>3</sup> Harcourt: Or two bars Gules; and, Cookesey: Argent, on a bend Azure three cinquefoils Or.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately below the effigies is a four-line inscription of eight Latin verses in black letter as follows:

Miles honorificus Johannes Phelip subiacet intus:  
Henricus quintus dilexerat hunc ut amicus //  
Consepelitur ei; sua sponsa Matildis amata:  
Waltero Cookesey prius armigero sociata //  
Audax et fortis apud Harffleu John bene gessit  
Et Baro vim mortis patiens migrare recessit //  
M.C. quater xv. Octobris luce secunda:  
Sit suus alme Jesu tibi spiritus hostia munda.<sup>5</sup>

These verses praise Sir John Phelip for his bold and valiant action in the French wars and tell us he was esteemed by Henry V. He fought, it says, bravely and boldly at Harffleur, and though he did not die in the battle, he did die some ten days after the siege of that French port. The lines also tell us that Walter Cookesey, Esquire, was Maud's first husband and, finally, that Sir John died on 2 October 1415. From other sources we know that Cookesey had died in 1407.<sup>6</sup>

The effigy of Sir John Phelip is 56 1/4" (142.9cm) high, that of Maud, 53 1/2" (135.9cm), and that of Walter Cookesey, 55 1/4" (140.3cm). Each shield measures 4 1/2" x 5 1/2" (11.4cm x 14cm), the inscription 46" x 6" (116.8cm x 15.2cm), and the extant canopy 45 1/2" x 30 1/4" (115.6cm x 76.8cm).

<sup>3</sup>Barnard and Parker, p. 143. The shield is divided quarterly with red and silver fields alternating, with a gold eagle, wings outspread, in the first quarter, on its breast a black ring, perhaps a mark of cadency indicating descent from a fifth son.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* On a silver field is a blue band with three gold cinquefoils.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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