Robert Imes

7 August 2015

Research Travel Award Report

With the support of *The* *Literary Encyclopedia*’s Research Travel Award, I conducted archival research in England from 2-30 July 2015. I worked in London at the British Library, the London Metropolitan Archives, the Royal Geographical Society, the Lambeth Palace Library, and the College of Arms, in Oxford at the Bodleian Library, and in Stafford at the Staffordshire Record Office. As per my proposal, I examined all of the chorographical manuscripts written by William Smith (1550-1618) so as to assess his work in a chapter of my doctoral dissertation. I now have a well-developed appreciation of the idiosyncrasies of Smith’s texts, such as the stylistic continuity of the chorographies that he produced while living in Germany and England, and his gradual shift away from chorographical writing and cartography towards a scholarly engagement with heraldry. As Smith’s work has not received sustained scholarly attention, I am optimistic that my research has the potential to not only enhance my chapter but to also serve as the basis for an article length study, to be completed over the course of the next year. I will most likely present my research at a conference prior to seeking publication; I am considering the 2016 meeting of either the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies or the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies.

My research in England departed from my proposal in one important respect. I was able to find the time to examine a series of manuscripts written by chorographer William Burton (1575-1645), an associate of Smith’s. In particular, I assessed the bibliographical, editorial history of manuscripts that pertain to Burton’s unfinished project to produce a second edition of his *Description of Leicester Shire* (1622). These manuscripts are scarcely known in modern scholarship, and working with them was an especially productive period of my research. My analysis of Burton’s manuscripts will constitute an important part of the same dissertation chapter in which I discuss Smith’s texts. I also plan to write a separate article length study on Burton’s preparations of a second edition. Such a study would not be possible without my research in July.

While I consider my time in England a success owing to my completion of the goals that I outlined in my proposal, I also highly value the new scholarly avenues that that research opened. I am grateful for the support of *The Literary Encyclopedia*, and I will acknowledge the Research Travel Award in my dissertation and in any publications and conference presentations that stem from my research in England.