

One article published in *Le Monde Berrubey*, vol. 26 no 3 (summer 2014) is inspired by traces the Berubys left in the judicial domain.

Some bad guys among the Berubys from the Middle Age?

There is more than one way to imagine how our surname has been transplanted into France, certainly during the Hundred Years War. I'll try to describe one that would come to my mind if I was feeling the need to write an historical novel, like Isabelle Berrubey did with *Les seigneurs de Mornepierre*, published in 2010 or *Les maîtres de la pierre* in 2012.

I would build my story around Hugh Beruby, once accused of stealing a horse, an amazing individual to my eyes. He was accused of this theft at Armeston, Bernewell, certainly Barnwell nowadays (in Northamptonshire), around 1399. He was found guilty and described as a highwayman by the judge condemning him. What is the most astonishing about him is that he benefitted after of a pardon, which only the king, then Richard II, had the power to grant. This king is himself a Shakespearian character approaching the end of his reign. He is deposed in this same year 1399 before dying in captivity at Bordeaux, probably killed by order of his successor, Henry IV. This puts an end for a while to the Plantagenet's dynasty who had ruled since Henry II, after succeeding the Norman dynasty that had begun with William the Conqueror, in 1066.

The first question that comes to my mind is about understanding how a common swindler, if it's really his social status, could benefit of a royal pardon at that period, while stealing a horse, then considered a serious crime. There is necessarily one influent person who intervened to favor him. I see one possibility in this case, an intervention from the baron of Haringworth, close to the King. This typical English name hides in reality a francophone lineage from Brittany by the name of Zouche, de Zouche, Le Zouche or La Zouche (originally Ceoh in Brittany, a surname that evolved to De Rohan on the French side). The elder becomes the baron of Haringworth, a title which was transmitted from father to son over many generations. For one of these barons, there was nevertheless a younger brother who bore the name William; he became archbishop of York and passed away in 1352. These Zouches were owners of many domains including one named Haringworth and another, the «*Manor of Beruby*», which I mentioned in preceding articles.

The Beruby family from this region seems to have had close ties with the Zouches. When William II, lord of Haringworth, who was baron, deceased on Friday, March 14, 1381, his testament appointed *John Berwby* as one of the beneficiaries. He received 40 sols or *solidis*, an ancient currency in surplus to what he held already: «*John Berwby xls, plus quam habet*». A few years later, just before the theft we are here writing about, it was Richard La Zouche turn to decease, in 1397, at the age of 67. His testament was made earlier at Norwich the same year. This Lord Le Zouche, who is also a son of Eudo La Zouche, was a younger brother to the baron who had passed away in 1381. He had fought at Cressy and participated when young to the siege of Calais. His testamentary executor's

name is **John Berowby**, which lead us to believe that he is probably the same John who had previously been at the service of Baron William.

William the third, successor as baron, was Lieutenant at Calais in 1413, just before the resumption of hostilities that would lead to the besiegement by Henry V of Harfleur, the entry door of Normandy, before going back to Calais and facing on his way a strong army of French Knights against whom an important but miraculous victory was won on October 1415, at Agincourt: *“His son and heir William la Zouche took part in the French wars, and in 1413 was Lieutenant of Calais. He was followed at his death in 1415 by his son, grandson and great-grandson in succession, all of whom bore the name William”*.

Coming back to Hugh, there is one way to imagine how he obtained his royal pardon. He was probably related in some way to John Berowby, himself close to the Zouches. At the same period, another document tells us of a Hugh **Berewby**, accused of stealing a horse, a Heyford, a theft committed in Northamptonshire, with his brother Robert, both sons of Barthelemy Berewby. If there is a family link here, Hugh and Robert could be nephews or grandsons of John Berowby, possibly cousins or second cousins.

It doesn't take a lot of imagination moreover to put oneself in Hugh's boots, after Richard II was deposed, from whom he necessarily obtained his pardon. As well as his protectors, he certainly feared a nullification of his pardon, if he was not already submitted to banishment. In one case or the other, Hugh could have left England then to find a refuge in a place like Harfleur, at the mouth of the Seine River, in Normandy, or even at Rouen. Furthermore, since there is no mention of Robert at the judicial hearings, it may be that he was already gone to France in 1399.

When King Henry V took over the City of Harfleur, in 1415, he drove out its inhabitants to bring in English burgesses and craftsmen. Those who were chased out were mostly Frenchmen, but there were already some Englishmen who lived there. Why not someone like Robert, a first name we meet a lot among our Berrubey ancestors? If he took refuge in a near city, Montivilliers, he could have asked for help. There was in this place a dependence or, in other words, an affiliated house to the Priory *de la Madeleine* from Rouen, whose role was to help the poor and particularly immigrants in need of help. At the time of Damien, the French Berrubes were still showing a particular attachment to this priory, something we have never been able to explain.

The Deschamps lords also owned a few fiefs around Montivilliers. Considering that people identified themselves to their masters in those times, even more than to their nations, it is possible that the Beruby's destiny, having been separated from the Zouches, started slowly to fall under the Deschamps' protection; this could have been the starting point of an adventure that later led us to Rouen, then to Rocquefort and after to Riviere-Ouelle and a bit everywhere over North America.

Those are, to sum up, the ingredients with which we could write the story of our arrival in France, inspiring ourselves from different events of that period. There are also other possibilities that we have referred to in the past, like the coming in France of one of the

many craftsmen (mainly weavers and masons) who were brought to Rouen during the English occupation, running from 1420 to 1450. Hugh and Robert are nevertheless offering us something more novelistic...

This being said, their case is not the only one we can find in the judicial archives of the time. An older document dated April 10, 1340, speaks of the arrest of many persons accused for crimes of all sorts. There is the mention in it of William, son of William de Beruby, who was jailed in York, in the North of England. And a writ of seizure was delivered on February 4, 1341, against a William de Berughby, son of William, probably the same individual who was living in Barrowby, Yorkshire, for a debt amounting to 12 £ that he had contracted in November 1336. The sheriff of York concluded that William the son had no possessions at all, no livestock or land (a document preserved at the *UK National Archives*).

Much sooner, a Walter Beruby had also experienced life in jail at Lincoln, in 1285, as reported in a document where we read: *Appointment of Robert de Somercotes, Robert de Swaddeworth, Robert de Horbling and William de Colevy II to deliver Lincoln gaol of **Walter son of Nicholas de Beruby and Robert Amon**, who were put in exigent after the last eyre in the county of Lincoln, and have since surrendered.* A Beruby/Berubé and an Amon/Émond arrested in England 730 years ago, at the request of a regional tribunal (« eyre »), this is amazing while appearing very Norman, even a bit French Canadian!

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