

Coats of Arms of some Ricardian Contemporaries

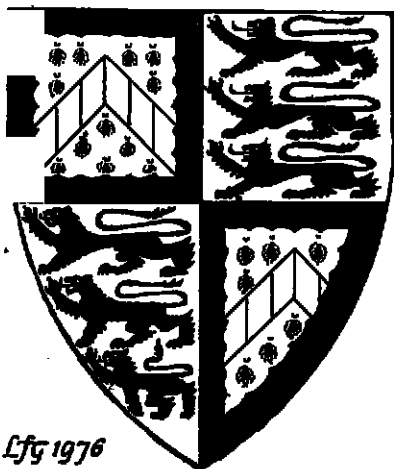
LAWRENCE T. GREENSMITH

TWO SIR THOMASES

OUR TWO Sir Thomases were not at all contemporary (Malory died seven years before More was born): Richard's life merely overlapped theirs. The two men shared nothing but their immeasurable influence on the English language.

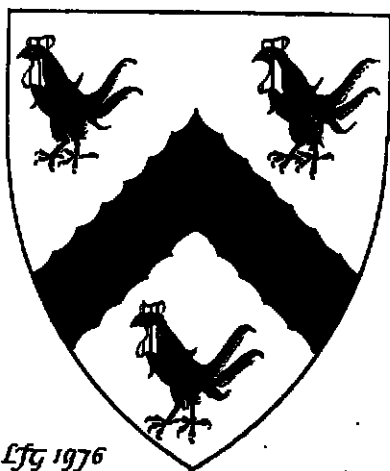
Sir Thomas Malory (c. 1410-1471)

Kendall¹ refers to Malory as 'an obscure knight', but he was not so obscure as all that, although there is some controversy over his identity. Certainly Sir Anthony Wagner² is satisfied that he was the Sir Thomas, descended from a John Malory of Winwick, Northamptonshire, who married a Revel coheiress *temp.* Edward III, although his immediate parentage seems uncertain. The arms of Revel and Malory were quartered with Revel in the first quarter. A Sir John Revel had arms c. 1350 and a Perus Maulorie as far back as c. 1295, both as in the illustration. Estates in Warwickshire were inherited by Sir



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MALORY



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MORE

Thomas. The handsome arms are: Quarterly 1 and 4 Revel: Ermine, a red chevron with a black engrailed border; 2 and 3 Malory: Gold with three black lions passant. There is uncertainty about the dates of birth and death—the DNB gives only *fl.* 1470—but Wagner gives the dates above.

Most of us think of Malory's name to couple it with only *Le Morte Arthur*, and some of us rightly think of Caxton also. The book was translated 'from the Frensshe'. The DNB quotes 'a most pleasant jumble and summary of the legends about Arthur'.⁹ It was finished (whenever and wherever it was begun) in 1470 and Caxton published it fifteen years later.

Other references have little else to say, except Sir Paul Harvey.⁴ His book ventures a good deal although it gives no clue to his sources. Malory succeeded to his estates around 1434. In 1450 he was charged with no less than attempted murder, one infers that he was acquitted. For all that, he suffered imprisonments for various major (but unspecified) crimes, and it is to these that we have to be grateful for his opportunities of writing his 'immortal English prose'.⁵

In 1456 he sat for his shire in Parliament, and like the Earl of Warwick began as a Yorkist but (probably along with him) ended as a Lancastrian.

Sir Thomas More (1478–1535)

Kendall⁶ (again, but more helpfully) points out that Sir Thomas More, Copernicus, Erasmus, Machiavelli, Michelangelo and Wolsey were born between 1465 and 1478. By 1485, King Richard was dead. In both time and place, nothing better establishes all of them; yet how many readers are old enough to recall that the 'Sainted More'⁷ was canonized only forty years ago?

One could, but need not, write much about More. His father was Judge of the King's Bench who, says Wagner again, probably received the grant of arms inherited by his more famous son: Silver, a chevron engrailed between three moorcocks all black, the cocks being crested red. And the difference between the moorcock and that of the farmyard? Julian Franklyn⁸ is amusing on the moorcock: 'makes himself conspicuous by having two different types of tail, both of which are correct, and neither of which is ever specified in the blazon. One is a broad, flat "dovetail" shaped tail: the other, two feathers only, one on each side of the body, from which they jut out jauntily'.

For us, More's chief interest is his hand in the 'Ricardian myth': apart from Shakespeare, it is More's *History* which has done perhaps more than anything to perpetuate it. Kendall,⁹ as always, deals with the whole matter thoroughly and dispassionately but fragmentarily. V. B. Lamb¹⁰ is clearer in that she has a chapter entitled simply 'Sir Thomas More'; but she is less dispassionate. Dr Hanham¹¹ complicates the matter by discussing the theory that the *History* was a satire on other Renaissance historians.

Not much more than forty years after Richard, More also became a tenant of Crosby Place; there seems no evidence that he actually lived there, but his Roper son-in-law did.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. P. M. Kendall, *Richard the Third*, 1955, p.339.
2. A. R. Wagner, *Historic Heraldry*, 1972, p.63.

3. *Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, 1939, p.832.
4. P. Harvey, *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 1953, p.489.
5. G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, 1944, p.58.
6. Kendall, pp.246-7.
7. Josephine Tey, *Daughter of Time*, 1954, pp.96, 97.
8. Julian Franklyn, *Shield and Crest*, 1960, p.113.
9. Kendall, pp.421-3.
10. V. B. Lamb, *The Betrayal of Richard III*, 1968, pp.82-92.
11. Alison Hanham, *Richard III and his Early Historians 1483-1535*, 1975, pp.152-190.

Research Notes and Queries

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OPPOSITION TO HENRY TUDOR AFTER BOSWORTH

The following note has been received from W. E. Hampton:

Although several historians maintain that England quickly accepted the verdict of Bosworth as that of trial by battle, there is in fact much evidence of unrest immediately after Bosworth, and continuing until, and after, Stoke Field. Let us briefly examine some of this evidence.

In September 1485 Robert Throckmorton was appointed Sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire (Richard's Sheriff, Richard Boughton, having been killed on his way to Bosworth—either in resisting Henry's forward troops or, perhaps through treachery—an incident strangely ignored) and was replaced in November. He petitioned for a pardon of fines and arrears touching his office, 'which sheriffwik your said liege occupied but by space of one month or full little more, and in which time of occupation was within this your realme such rebelloun and trouble, and your lawes not stablysshed' that he could not execute his office to the King's profit (William Campbell, *Materials for a History of Henry VII*, Vol. 1, 1873, pp. 282-3).

We have Henry's own testimony. On 17th October, 1485, he wrote to Henry Vernon of Haddon (one of Richard's esquires of the body) telling of his 'knowledge that certeyne our rebelles and traitours being of litell honour or substance confedered with our auncient ennemyes the Scottes (against their allegiance, etc.) . . . made insurreccion and assemblies in the north portions of our realme, taking Robin of Riddesdale, Jack St Thomalyn at Lath, and Maister Mendall for their capteyns, entending if they be of power the fynall and abversion . . . of our realme'. Vernon is urged to come with his attendance and assistance in all haste, the letter being under the King's sign-manual (Henry Kirke, *Sir Henry Vernon of Haddon*, Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Vol. 41, 1919, pp. 11-12). Such pseudonyms as 'Maister Mendall' and 'Robin of Redesdale' must have seemed to Henry ominously reminiscent of the forces