

Did the Sons of Edward IV Outlive Henry VII: A postscript

MUCH INTEREST has been raised by the article by Mr Leslau in the September *Ricardian*. Some comments have been received, of which the most interesting are given in this postscript.

Part of the comment has been centred on the question of who painted the picture discussed. As Mrs Helen Maurer remarks, if it cannot be shown that Holbein painted it, 'then Leslau's contention that Holbein's portraits conceal within them hidden messages cannot be used to lend credence to the presumed existence of a message concealed in this particular painting'. It is a fact that Lord St. Oswald's painting bears the date 1530 or 1532, and the name Rowlandus Locky. The date is impossible for Locky (fl. 1590), and the painting is generally believed to have been painted about 1593, and to be an exact or modified copy of a Holbein original, now lost or destroyed.¹ Mr Leslau of course believes that the painting is in fact by Holbein, and in support of his belief makes the following comments:

'The painting was described by both the Reverend John Lewis² and George Vertue (died 1756).³ Neither Lewis nor Vertue report the inscription "Rowlandus Locky" upon the portrait, and both, with little hesitation, attribute the portrait to Holbein. Lewis, in 1717, makes a detailed description of the entire portrait, including specific details within three inches of the area where today can just be seen the inscription 'Rowlandus Locky'. I conjecture that the inscription was not on the portrait when Lewis and Vertue examined it.

An infrared photograph of the inscription on the Group Portrait at Nostell, taken at the National Gallery, London, in 1951, reveals an hidden and partially disfigured date, possibly '1752', which has been inexplicably overlooked in the past. A preliminary and inconclusive microscopical examination of the portrait in January 1978 by Robert Bruce-Gardner, Acting Director of the Technology Department, The Courtauld Institute, revealed (in part) three separate applications of paint and the relevant missing outline of the date (identified by me) which I deduce was probably due to the interference reported in writing by the National Gallery in 1951. The recommendation was made that the date (and inscription) should be examined further, the possibility of my date-identification not being excluded; and though Bruce-Gardner was willing to do this the portrait was too large to permit entry to the workrooms at the Courtauld Institute. I still await some response from a competent source that will undertake a complete scientific examination of the portrait for which the National Trust, I am informed, will be asked to pay, and which, I believe, must be done at some stage.

May I explain further that in 1752, the first (believed) distemper on cloth

Holbein Group portrait (the Nostell portrait is probably oil on canvas) is reported to have been destroyed by fire at Kremsier in Germany. I conjecture that the report of the destruction of the portrait reached England as 'the destruction of the original Group Portrait by Holbein' (or similar), and that the then perplexed owner, Sir Rowland Winn (probably influenced by a picture restorer, initials 'S.D'(?), also revealed by the infrared photograph) permitted the inscription 'Rowlandas Locky' '1752' to be written on the Nostell portrait in the mistaken belief that he possessed a copy by an artist of the late sixteenth century. Sir Rowland Winn was a newcomer to the family, having married the last Henshaw heiress in 1729, and was therefore less influenced by the family tradition that the portrait was painted for William and Margaret Roper, that Holbein was 'a great acquaintance' of the Ropers (from document, reported by Lewis), and that the portrait had never been out of the ownership of the Roper family (which from my research I believe to be true).

Since the mid-eighteenth century, the confusion by writers on the Well Hall/Nostell portrait has been compounded, I suggest, by the report of William Burton in the late sixteenth century that Rowland Locky had painted a modified copy of the group portrait of the family of Sir Thomas More, which is now identified with the portrait in the National Gallery, London, commissioned for the descendants of John and Anne More (née Cresacre), another branch of the family. I believe the evidence shows that the National Gallery portrait was painted fifty-three years after the painting of the Well Hall/Nostell portrait, which is secretly dated (in rebus form) '1540' (a rearrangement of the 10.54 on the clock—all other possible combinations being non-relevant chronologically)—which again supports the theory upon the identity of the artist who died in 1543. Comparative studies of the extant Locky copies and the Well Hall/Nostell portrait, never before undertaken, might give some indications in support or rejection of this theory.

Mrs Alwyn Allen takes up another matter, this time the question of John Clements: 'May I put forward a suggestion, which, despite his painstaking research into the life of the man known as Dr John Clements, Mr Leslau has not apparently considered. After reading the article, it appears possible that there were two doctors of the same name, father and son. The father who may, or may not, have been Richard Duke of York, was a member of a coterie of humanists, while the son was a doctor of medicine. Assuming a birth date of 1473 and the date of 1572, a single individual would, by this time, have reached the age of 99. This is not all that common in our own time and, I submit, would have been highly improbable in the late sixteenth century. Sir Thomas More is, of course, the 'link' in all Mr Leslau's observations. I am assuming that the literary circle consisted of Thomas Linacre, John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, Dr John Clements the elder and possibly later, Dr John Clements the younger. Sir Thomas studied under Linacre at Oxford and also knew Colet there. Erasmus began to visit England in 1499 where he met Linacre, More and Colet and from Mr Leslau's note No. 12, it would appear he also met Dr John Clements the elder. His note No. 13 indicates Dr Clements the younger. All these men were Greek and Latin scholars, and all, with the exception of Erasmus, had been at Oxford. I suggest that the career of the father, John Clements the humanist, could have been as follows: born in 1473, possibly sent to Burgundy sometime between 1483 and 1485; if he was Richard Duke of York, certainly before the Battle of Bosworth.

He entered the University of Louvain on 13th February, 1489, to study Greek and Latin and, as it was part of the tripos, Hebrew. He returned to England and studied at Oxford, where he came to know Sir Thomas More and the others. He was Reader in Greek at Corpus Christi in 1519, aged 46 years. By the time Holbein's More family portrait came to be painted, at any rate by 1527, he was probably dead. The son would then have been Dr John Clements the physician, who was born in 1500 when his father was 27 years old. He attended St Pauls School and studied there under its re-founder, John Colet, friend of his father and Sir Thomas More, went to Bruges in 1515 with More, and his career then followed the course described by Mr Leslau.'

The remaining two comments are concerned with Sir Edward Guildford, Mr Leslau's 'Edward V'. Dr Robert Hetherington points out that Sir Thomas More undoubtedly had a Secretary (or servant) named Harris, as stated in the inscription above his head '*Johannes Heresius Thomae Mori famul(us)*'. It is difficult to see why this should be done if it was in fact a portrait of John Clements, More's son-in-law. How would More explain this? Dr Hetherington goes on to say that the opening in the lira da braccio (the 'lute') is not at all unusual, as Mr Leslau says, but can be matched perfectly by the similar instrument in Holbein's portrait of Federigo da Montefeltre.⁴ Finally he says that the wife of Sir Edward Guildford is well known to be Eleanor West, daughter of Lord de la Warr, and that for their daughter Jane, Duchess of Northumberland to be described on her tomb as Princess was common form for a Duchess. Her husband the Duke of Northumberland is described on his grandson's tomb as Prince. The Duchess' tomb shows her ancestry from her quarterings.

Further information on this matter comes from Professor Richard Griffith of C.W. Post College. He states Sir Edward Guildford's mother is usually said to be Joan, daughter of Sir William Vaux, second wife of Sir Richard Guildford, and that there are certainly earlier references to him than the 1509 date cited by Mr Leslau. There is an entry in the Patent Rolls for 1494 for example, giving him the reversion of his father's position of Master of the King's Armour, and one in the Close Rolls for 1506, where he owes £300 to a Joan Huddilston.⁵

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See for example Stanley Morison, *The Likeness of Thomas More*, London (1963), p.22.
2. J. Lewis (editor), *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, London (1729), pp.168-71. For a full description see the document written and signed by Lewis at Well Hall, Eltham, dated March 1716/17, now in the Muniment Room at Nostell.
3. Vertue's *Manuscripts of The Celebrated Painter Hans Holbein*, Notebooks, Vol. 4, Oxford, (1936), pp.1 lff. Notes from this volume are in the Holbein folder at Nostell.
4. E. Wintermütz, *Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art*, London (1968), plate 52.
5. *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1485-1494*, HMSO (1914), p.467; *Calendar of Close Rolls 1500-1509*, HMSO (1963), p.235.