

The Nobility and the Coronation of Richard III

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The preliminary questions about the presence of a large number of the nobility at Richard III's coronation have been asked by the editor herself. Would anyone miss a coronation? If you were in London for some other reason, to attend parliament for example, would you deliberately not attend? Would you not want to be seen at what was after all more a social event than a political occasion? Nonetheless, would you not also want to see who was there (and who was not) as a matter of political discretion? Was it not easier to attend than have to explain one's absence? Anne Sutton also asks: what was attendance like at other coronations? These are questions for the reader to ponder. Meanwhile, despite reservations relating to the potential fallibility of lists of attendance and to the actual frailties of the author, the following summary account is offered as an exercise in accountancy.

1. Those Not Present (minimum 22 maximum 26).

i. *Those not present because they were attainted, or in opposition, or both:* Beaumont; Clifford; Devon; Dorset; Hungerford, Edward Hastings, the son of William, Lord Hastings, summoned to parliament from 1482; Oxford; Pembroke; Richmond; Rivers, Richard Woodville, brother of Anthony, attainted 1484; Roos.

A total of ten.

ii. *Those absent because they were too young:* One needs to be tentative on that score as others who were young were present: John Stafford, Earl of Wiltshire; Henry Lovel, Lord Morley; and possibly Henry Bourghier and Richard Neville — for these two see below. Moreover, selectivity might have been operated in the case of young men: in the non-attendance of George Stanley, Lord Strange, for instance. Unless, that is, we wish to give credence to the idea of bureaucratic sloth, ignorance or indifference. Finally, Richard was fortunate where the ennobled Bourghiers were concerned: the elderly and compliant Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, being the only adult of the clan for him to deal with.

Berners, John Bourghier, aged sixteen, his grandfather had died in 1474.

Essex, Henry Bourghier, aged only eleven, grandson of Henry who died 4 April 1483, but possibly at the coronation carrying the spurs. He certainly did so at the coronation of Henry VII. He was granted livery of his lands in 1493.

Fitzwarin, John Bourghier, aged thirteen. He had livery of his lands in 1491.

Latimer, Richard Neville, aged fifteen, but he might have occupied the office of grand almoner at the coronation.

Shrewsbury, George Talbot, aged fifteen.

Strange, George Stanley, aged twenty or more.

De la Warre, Thomas West, died 1525. He was at the funeral of Edward IV and he played a role in the coronation of Henry VII. He was a soldier and might have been active elsewhere in July 1483.

A total of five or seven.

iii. *Those Absent Because They were Too Old*

Unless Dudley and Dacre were diplomatically absent, it was their age which caused their absence. They were both close to Elizabeth Woodville.

Dudley, John Sutton: he was at the funeral of Edward IV and his sons Richard and Edmund Dudley were present at the coronation. Richard Dudley died before his father and Edmund is obscure; William Dudley, Bishop of Durham, the third son was present at the coronation; he was one of the two bishops attending on the king throughout the service. John Sutton was succeeded in 1487 by his grandson, Edward, the son of Edmund.

Dacre of the South, Richard Fiennes, was chamberlain of Queen Elizabeth Woodville; he was at Edward IV's funeral; he died in November 1483.

Westmoreland, Ralph Neville, died 1484.

A total of three.

iv. *Absentee Ricardians*

Greystoke. His son Robert, who died 17 June 1483, was to have been present.

Neville, Ralph, succeeded his uncle as Earl of Westmoreland on 3 November 1484.

A total of two.

v. *Absent/Doubtful Status*

Ogle, Owen, summoned to parliament 1484 and 1485; died 1486.

Say, Richard Fiennes. Born 1471, the grandson of William Fiennes, Lord Say, who had been killed at the battle of Barnet. Richard was never summoned to parliament, although his father Henry Fiennes (also never summoned) was called Lord Say in September 1483 when Richard's wardship was granted to Sir Richard Harcourt.

A total of two.

vi. *Absent Because Elsewhere*

Dinham, John, effectively captain of Calais; he had been at Edward IV's funeral.

Mountjoy, John Blount, captain of Guisnes. His wife Lora was at the coronation. He was ill at Guisnes in 1484 and he died 12 October 1485; he had been a retainer of William, Lord Hastings.

A total of two.

2. Those Who Attended (36).

All three dukes, all nine earls, the two viscounts, and twenty-two lords.

The three dukes, Buckingham, Norfolk, and Suffolk, being well-known, require no comment. Only John Howard, Duke of Norfolk was at Edward IV's funeral, although he was not then Duke of Norfolk. More surprisingly, John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk attended Henry VII's coronation.

Of the earls, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland is also sufficiently well-known to require no comment here; the other eight do require it.

William Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, 1417-1487, is an interesting man. He married Joan, daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, sister of the Kingmaker; she died 1462 and he did not apparently remarry. He was a strenuous Edwardian 1469-71. He had been chief butler at Elizabeth Woodville's coronation in 1465, was possibly chief butler at Richard's coronation, and certainly was at that of Henry VII. Richard renewed his appointment as warden of the Cinque Ports in May 1483.

Edmund Grey, Earl of Kent, 1416-1490, was the Northampton turncoat, Lord Grey of Ruthin, who was created an earl in 1465. His creation was confirmed in 1484 and 1485. He was active at Richard's coronation. George, his second son and heir, was made a KB at the coronation; he married, probably in 1483, Anne, sister of Elizabeth Woodville and widow of Sir William Bourghier. George fought for Henry VII at the battle of Stoke in 1487.

Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, was created such on 28 June 1483, when his father was made Duke of Norfolk.

Edward Stafford, Earl of Wiltshire, was the son of John Stafford, third son of Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham. John was created an earl in January 1470; he died in 1473. Edward was born in April 1470. He was probably active at Richard's coronation, carrying the queen's crown, even though he was only thirteen. He had licence to enter his lands freely in 1484. He was at the coronation of Elizabeth of York in 1487.

William Herbert, Earl of Huntingdon was born about 1455. He was a staunch Ricardian 1469-71. He exchanged the earldom of Pembroke for that of Huntingdon in 1479, and after a first marriage to Mary, sister of Elizabeth Woodville, in 1484 he married as his second wife Katherine, illegitimate daughter of Richard III. He was at the funeral of Edward IV, played an active part at Richard's coronation, but was not apparently at Bosworth.

William Berkeley, Earl of Nottingham was born 1426. He was made a

viscount 1481, and created earl 28 June 1483. A good deal is known about him, his debts, and his Mowbray claim. He was at Edward IV's funeral, was in action at Richard's coronation, and was again at that of Henry VII. His wife, Jane Strangeways, is more interesting than her husband: she too was active at the coronation of her cousin Richard III, but died in February 1485.

Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, the son of George, Duke of Clarence, was born in 1475.

John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln was born about 1462; he was at Edward IV's funeral.

The viscounts

Edward Grey of Groby, Viscount Lisle. He had married Elizabeth Talbot and so acquired his claim to the title; made a lord in 1475, he was created viscount on 28 June 1483. He was at the funeral of Edward IV and possibly was in touch with Henry Tudor before Bosworth.

Francis, Viscount Lovel, had been a ward of Warwick the Kingmaker in the 1460s along with Richard of Gloucester. He was appointed chamberlain on 28 June 1483 in succession to William, Lord Hastings.

The Lords

Thomas, Lord Stanley, was at the funeral of Edward IV.

John Tuchet, Lord Audley 1425-1490 was at Edward IV's funeral. Treasurer from 6 December 1484 until 14 July 1486 when he was replaced by John, Lord Dinham. Missed Bosworth by being at Southampton in August 1485 to organize naval defence.

Humphrey Dacre, Lord Dacre of Gilsland (Dacre of the North). His attainder was reversed in the parliament of 1472-3 and he was given his title in 1473 at the division of lands with Richard Fiennes, Lord Dacre of the South. He was at Edward IV's funeral. He was warden of the West March 1484 and a member of Richard III's retinue. He died 30 May 1485. His son Thomas Dacre was a henchman of Richard's.

Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley was killed at Bosworth fighting for Richard III. He was one of the Yorkist Old Guard, but being a thorough-going Edwardian his participation at Bosworth is noteworthy. He was at Edward IV's funeral.

John Grey, Lord Powis was granted livery of his lands in 1481. He was in action at Richard's coronation and was militarily active during the reign. He fought for Henry VII at the battle of Stoke in 1487 and continued to be militarily active until his death in 1494: a soldier through and through.

Richard, Lord Fitzhugh was given livery of his lands in 1480. He was at the funeral of Edward IV and was a retainer of Richard of Gloucester. He remained as Steward and Constable of Richmond, Middleham, and Barnard Castle after Bosworth: the grant had been made for life. He died in 1487. His mother Alice, sister of Warwick the Kingmaker, was also at the coronation; she lived at West Tanfield, Yorkshire, and was still alive in 1503.

John Radcliff, Lord Fitzwalter, whose status as a lord is in some, but not serious, doubt until he was summoned to parliament in 1485. The son of an heroic Yorkist, he appears to have lain low in Richard's reign. Made steward of the king's household in 1485, he was attainted in 1495 and executed in 1496.

Thomas, Lord Scrope of Masham was born about 1459. He was a retainer of Richard of Gloucester and was active at the coronation.

John, Lord Scrope of Bolton was born 1437 or 1438 and was also a retainer of Richard of Gloucester, he served in the Scottish war of 1481-2.

Henry Grey, Lord Codnor was born about 1435. He had been a retainer of William, Lord Hastings.

Reginald Grey, Lord Wilton had livery of his lands in 1443. He had fought at Mortimer's Cross with Edward of York and died in 1494. His son John fought in the Scottish war of 1481-2 and was rewarded for service against rebels in 1484; he was a knight of the body and had an annuity of £40; he was possibly at Bosworth with Richard III. Reginald died in 1494.

John, Lord Stourton was born about 1454 and died 6 October 1485; was he a non-entity?

John Brooke, Lord Cobham came of age at about the time of the battle of Tewkesbury at which he fought and was knighted. He was at Edward IV's funeral. He was in action in Kent against the Buckingham rebels in October 1483, was at Elizabeth of York's coronation in 1487, and fought against the Cornish rebels in 1497. He died in 1512.

Henry Lovel, Lord Morley was aged 16-17 in 1483. He was at Edward's funeral. He was a henchman of Richard III and in the king's household in the North with the Earl of Lincoln. He had livery of his lands in 1489.

George Neville, Lord Abergavenny was knighted at the battle of Tewkesbury. He was at the funeral of Edward IV. His son and heir George was with him at the coronation. He married Margaret, daughter and heir of Sir Hugh Fenn, and died in 1492.

John, Lord Zouche was born in 1459 and had livery of his lands in 1480. His sister Margaret married William Catesby in 1471. Why was he not in the retinue of William, Lord Hastings? Either he was too young, too closely attached to Catesby, or like Francis, Lord Lovel did not want to be. Taken prisoner at Bosworth.

Richard Hastings, Lord Welles had the title in right of his wife Joan Welles and was summoned from 1482, despite Joan's death in 1475 and their having had no children: his being the brother of William, Lord Hastings is what accounts for such a rum state of affairs. He was at Edward's funeral.

Thomas, Lord Lumley had been born in 1408 and had been granted livery of his lands in 1432. He was created only in 1461, or more accurately was then restored to an attainted barony after good service to the Yorkist cause. He was a councillor of Richard of Gloucester and died 1 April 1485. He seems to have been

a soldier; if so he was an old one by 1483. His son and heir George was knighted in the Scottish war of 1481-2 and was retained by Richard of Gloucester. Was he at Bosworth? He had livery of his lands in 1486.

Thomas Fitzalan, Lord Maltravers was the son of William Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel. He was born in 1450 and married Margaret, sister of Elizabeth Woodville. He was at the funeral of Edward IV. He was granted an annuity of 300 marks in 1484. Godfather to Prince Arthur in 1486, he took part in the coronation of Elizabeth of York in 1487.

Richard Beauchamp, Lord Powick was born about 1435. He held Gloucester against Margaret of Anjou in 1471 and was knighted at Tewkesbury. He succeeded his father in 1475. He did not die until 1503.

John Bourghier, Lord Ferrers of Groby. Lord Ferrers of Groby ought to have been Thomas Grey, Marquess of Dorset, for whom see under absentees. Elizabeth Ferrers, widow of Edward Grey (who died in 1457 and through whom the title descended to Thomas Grey), only died 23 January 1483; her husband was Sir John Bourghier; he had assumed the title and was called by it both before and after 1483, although he was never summoned to parliament. He was opposed to Elizabeth Woodville over the Ferrers estates.

Walter, Lord Herbert seems the most feasible candidate for the 'Herbert' of the lists of nobles present at the coronation. He was the brother and heir of William Herbert, Earl of Huntingdon, although he did not succeed him.

3. Summary

There were sixty-two nobles in all on 6 July 1483. It seems that twenty-six of them did not attend Richard's coronation: they have been listed above.

The thirty-six who did attend I have put into the following four categories of 'State of Mind': Ricardian; Query-Ricardian; Anti-Ricardian; and Compliant.

A. *Ricardians*: Buckingham, Norfolk, Surrey, Huntingdon, Lincoln, Lovel, Audley, Dacre of Gilsland, Ferrers of Chartley, Scrope of Masham, Scrope of Bolton, Zouche.

B. *Query-Ricardians*: Arundel, Fitzhugh, Grey of Wilton, Ferrers of Groby, Welles, Lumley.

C. *Anti-Ricardians*: Northumberland — even this early?

D. *The Compliant*: Suffolk, Kent, Wiltshire, Nottingham, Warwick, Lisle, Stanley, Fitzwalter, Grey of Powis, Grey of Codnor, Stourton, Cobham, Morley, Abergavenny, Maltravers, Beauchamp of Powick, Herbert.

Such a rough and ready categorization for 6 July 1483 has produced twelve Ricardians, six Query-Ricardians, a single Anti-Ricardian (to add to the nine absentees in that category), and seventeen who were either compliant, undecided, or indifferent. If we exclude from the latter the eight-year old Warwick and the shadowy Herbert,

there are fifteen Don't Knows or Don't Cares at Richard's Coronation.

These figures are of some interest, mainly because of the sizeable number of The Compliant (or Complacent). They are the ones to watch.

Were we to attempt to categorize the twenty-six absentees along similar lines we might discover that there were five Ricardians (Greystoke, Neville, Latimer, Westmoreland, and Ogle); one Query-Ricardian (Dudley), as many as fourteen Anti-Ricardians (the ten already in opposition, and Dacre of the South, De La Warre, Dinham, and Mountjoy), and six Compliant or Too Youthful (Berners, Essex, Fitzwarin, Shrewsbury, Strange, and Say).

Of the sixty-two nobles of 6 July 1483, therefore, well over a third were Ricardian or Query-Ricardian [12+6+5+1], well under a third were Anti-Ricardian [1+13] while the remaining third were compliant [17+6]. None of which is in the least surprising.

What it to be made of this? Not a great deal probably. It is what happens between the coronation and the battle of Bosworth which strikes me as both interesting and significant. Let us take the Compliant first. Of the seventeen present at the coronation only one, and he only possibly, became a Ricardian: Thomas Fitzalan, Lord Maltravers. On the other hand, two of the Compliant, Thomas, Lord Stanley, and John Radcliff, Lord Fitzwalter become Anti-Ricardian, and another, Edward Grey, Viscount Lisle, probably did so. It goes without saying that a new king, especially a usurping one, needed to make new friends. It is a measure of Richard's failure that he did not. Moreover, when we look at what happens to the Query-Ricardians we see a similar picture. Of the six at the coronation, whereas one, John Bourghchier, Lord Ferrers of Groby, seems to have become a Ricardian, and two, Thomas, Lord Lumley, and Reginald Grey, Lord Wilton, had sons who were, Richard Hastings, Lord Welles, and Richard, Lord Fitzhugh, almost certainly were transformed into Anti-Ricardians, and William Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel might have been: decidedly not a healthy state of affairs for a usurper. Indeed, it turned out to be fatal.

NOTE

My thanks to Anne Sutton for her helpful criticism. It almost goes without saying that *The Coronation of Richard III: the Extant Documents*, ed. Anne F. Sutton and P. W. Hammond (Gloucester 1983) has been indispensable; it needs to be deployed in conjunction with the essay. The books of my friends, Rosemary Horrox, Tony Pollard, and Michael Hicks, which will be well-known to readers, have also been useful: the occasion of what amounts to my last word on the subject of Richard III, is an apt one to acknowledge the sheer pleasure, as well as the great enlightenment, their work has afforded me.