

Convocations Called by Edward IV and Richard of Gloucester in 1483: Did They Ever Take Place?

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IN 1483, THE YEAR OF THREE KINGS, a series of dramatic regime changes led to unforeseen disruptions in the normal machinery of English government. It was a year of many plans unfulfilled, beginning with those of Edward IV who was still concerned over unfinished hostilities with James III of Scotland, and had also made clear his intention to wreak revenge on the treacherous Louis XI of France. All this came to naught when Edward's life ended suddenly and unexpectedly on 9 April. His twelve-year-old son, Edward V, was scheduled to be crowned as his successor, with Edward IV's last living brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, appointed as lord protector. But within two months Richard had become king in his place, with young Edward deposed on the grounds that his father's marriage to Queen Elizabeth Woodville was both bigamous and secret, thus rendering their children illegitimate.

Since this article will be looking closely at the events of this brief period, perhaps it will be useful to start with a very simplified chronology of early 1483. The questions addressed concern two convocations, called by royal mandate in February and May respectively, about which some erroneous assumptions will be revealed.¹

January/February	Edward IV's parliament.
3 February	A convocation of the southern clergy is called by writ of Edward IV.
9 April	Edward IV dies.
17–19 April	Edward's funeral takes place, attended by leading clergy.
30 April	Richard of Gloucester seizes control of Edward V en route to London.
10 May	Gloucester is confirmed as lord protector.
13 May	A parliament is called in Edward V's name for 25 June.
16 May	A convocation of the southern clergy is called by writ of the protector in Edward V's name.
22–25 June	Public recognition that Edward IV's heirs are illegitimate.
26 June	Gloucester accepts petition to ascend the throne as Richard III.

¹ Calendar years are deemed to commence on 1 January. The writer would like to acknowledge kind assistance with research and especially with Latin transcriptions and translations by Dr Lesley Boatwright, also assistance by archivists at Lincolnshire Archives, Lambeth Palace Library and Worcestershire Record Office.

About Convocations

Expressed in simple terms, the significance for the king in calling a convocation resided principally in his need for money so as to carry out his responsibilities to his subjects. Parliament determined the level of taxation he might seek from the laity, and convocation determined the contribution of the clergy. Although the English bishops had gathered together in synods ever since the seventh century, synods had ceased to meet in this connection by the fourteenth century owing to the parallel development of the two ecclesiastical convocations of Canterbury and York. Convocations were (and are) ecclesiastical assemblies of clergy. The English church in the fifteenth century consisted of two church provinces: York with three dioceses, and Canterbury the more important with nineteen (to be precise, four Welsh dioceses were encompassed in addition to fifteen English ones). The overall membership of convocation consisted of the archbishop and bishops, the abbots and priors, the deans and provosts of cathedrals and collegiate churches, the archdeacons, two proctors for the clergy of each diocese, and one for the chapter of each collegiate church. To a certain extent they mirrored the composition of the secular parliament, the clergy forming the lower house of each convocation, and the bishops the upper house.

As early as the thirteenth century, the clergy of England had offered to supply the crown independently of parliament. 'This liberty was occasionally challenged, as in 1295 when Edward I, in his fiscal dispute with Archbishop Winchelsey, sought to incorporate the clergy into parliamentary grants by requiring them to send proctors to Parliament, but all such attempts to end separate clerical taxation were successfully thwarted'.²

Having secured the right of meeting separately in convocation as the clerical equivalent of parliament, the clergy successfully maintained the right of the church to tax its property independently, as also the right of petitioning and to some extent of legislating for itself in terms of ecclesiastical laws (canons) which bound both clergy and laity. In short, convocations transacted church business and voted clerical tax grants to the crown, analogous to secular taxes, for the benefit of the royal exchequer. Acts of parliament required the monarch's approval to become legally valid, but those of convocations did not: they came into force when approved by both houses of the relevant convocation and promulgated by the archbishop of the respective province. The mandate for a convocation would be issued by the archbishop to his bishops, pursuant to a writ received from the sovereign. Convocation itself was opened with divine service and a sermon, which was followed by an address from its president, the archbishop, to all its members.

² P. Carter, 'Parliament, convocation and the granting of clerical supply in early modern England', *Parliamentary History*, vo. 19 (2000), pp. 14–26; quotation, p. 14–15.

Convocations in the 1480s

By writ of Edward IV, convocations of Canterbury and York had taken place in 1481 when they voted the king a clerical tenth to help finance his proposed invasion of Scotland. In the event, the York convocation of 1481 proved to be the last held by the northern province for another six years. Convocations of the southern province continued. But the Canterbury convocation of 1481 happens to be the last mentioned in the records of Thomas Bourghier, who presided as primate of Canterbury for the thirty-two years 1454 to 1486, embracing the entire reigns of Edward IV and Richard III.

Evidence of convocations during his primacy, such as mandates and minutes of business, would normally appear in the archbishop's register. Nevertheless, they are absent after 1481. The register of Thomas Bourghier is to be found in the library at Lambeth Palace, and its quires are bound up in a volume of 161 folios. The section relating to convocations ends suddenly at the end of a gathering at folio 30v. After this, the following sections move on to recording certain *Acta* (of 1455), commissions relating to wills (1454–77), institutions and exchanges (1454–83), and ordination lists (1454–86). So the first question to be answered is what became of the archbishop's records relating to all convocations after 1481. Not only those two called in 1483 which will be examined below, but others as well, for example two that were called during Richard III's reign, which are recorded as taking place in February 1484 and February-March 1485.

'The register is obviously imperfect. ... Were the missing parts of the present register at some stage lost, or were they never written up at all? Both solutions are possible. ... Furthermore, the way in which the quires became scattered and displaced before being bound suggests the possibility that some were lost altogether'.³ It may be concluded that the lack of any records at all relating to convocations after 1481 may simply reflect the incomplete nature of the register as a whole. It seems unlikely, however, that records of such important events – the church's own equivalent of parliament – were simply never kept by the archbishop's clerks. More probably, material after folio 30v has been removed, misplaced, lost or destroyed. It can only be hoped that it may one day come to light, since its absence has led to some confusion.

For the years that Bourghier was archbishop, the introduction to the modern edition of the archbishop's register lists thirteen occasions, which have until now been generally accepted, on which the clergy of the southern province met in convocation. The opening dates are given as follows: 6 May 1460; 21 July 1462; 6 July 1463; 12 May 1468; 27 July 1470; 23 January 1472; 3 February 1473; 9 February 1475; 10 April 1478; 21 March 1481; 18 April 1483; 3 February 1484; 10 February 1485.⁴

With two separate writs issued in the names of different kings in 1483, what is

³ F.R.H. Du Boulay, ed., *Registrum Thome Bourghier, Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi A.D. 1454–1486*, Canterbury and York Society, vol. 54, Oxford 1957, pp. xxiii, xxv.

⁴ Du Boulay, *Registrum Bourghier*, p. xxix.

of interest is whether either of these convocations actually met. They will now be examined individually: the first issued by Edward IV, the second by Richard of Gloucester as lord protector in the name of Edward V.

Edward IV's Writ

The writ of Edward IV dated 3 February 1483 was issued during his parliament of 20 January–18 February. In this parliament rewards were granted to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who had led Edward's campaign against James III of Scotland in which the English had emerged with the upper hand. The wording of these grants indicated that more action and more gains were anticipated. The king also spoke of exacting revenge on Louis XI of France, who had recently reneged on his long-standing treaty with England. Parliament duly granted the taxes known as a tenth and a fifteenth 'for the speedy and necessary defence of this your realm and of us your true and humble subjects'. The author of the *Crowland Chronicle*, while reporting the king's intention to take vengeance on France, opined that Edward did not dare seek the full cost from parliament (he had suffered criticism in the past for wasteful campaigns against the French). 'But he did not hide his needs from the prelates', the chronicler continued indignantly, 'blandly demanding from them, in advance, the tenths which were shortly to be granted as if, once prelates and clergy had assembled in their convocation, they were obliged to do whatever the king asked. O what a servile and pernicious ruin for the Church!'.⁵

The precise nature of Edward's revenge on France, in pursuit of which the chronicler asserted that 'the bold king was determined to give anything', never came to be specified owing to the king's sudden death. Nevertheless, his need for finance was clearly so pressing as to warrant the unholy presumption of demanding taxes from the church before convocation even had a chance to meet.

What, then, is known of this convocation called by Edward IV? The date generally assumed, that is 18 April 1483, should immediately ring warning bells. It was a date on which most of the senior prelates of the realm would have been occupied with another pressing engagement – that of attending Edward IV's own funeral. The late king's solemn rites commenced on 17 April with a service in Westminster Abbey, followed by a procession to Windsor attended by Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York and Chancellor of England, together with the bishops of Bath and Wells, Chester, Chichester, Durham, Ely, Lincoln, London, Norwich and Rochester. They were joined for the entombment on 19 April in St George's Chapel, Windsor, by Thomas Bourghier, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Waynfleet, Bishop of Winchester.⁶

⁵ C. Given-Wilson, ed., *Parliament Rolls of Mediaeval England*, CD-ROM Scholarly Digital Editions, Leicester 2005, vol. 6, item 13; N. Pronay and J. Cox, eds., *Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459–1486*, London 1986, pp. 148–51.

⁶ J. Gairdner, ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII*, London 1861, vol 1, pp. 3–10, citing College of Arms MS I, 7, f. 7.

Nevertheless, the southern clergy might have chosen to convene on a different date. To check this possibility one must look in the various extant episcopal registers which contain records of convocations over which Bourghier presided. Most contain nothing to aid this quest. However, Wilkins's eighteenth-century record of British and Irish ecclesiastical councils does contain a note of an April 1483 convocation, citing the registers of Lincoln and Worcester as sources.⁷ These provide more fertile ground. In addition, a more modern authority fills an important gap with a transcription of Archbishop Bourghier's mandate to his province, in Latin, dated 10 February 1483, for the convocation to take place as required by Edward IV. This source is also content to record that it was held, as a result, on 18 April.⁸

The original of this mandate in Latin is found in its entirety in the otherwise unpublished episcopal register of John Russell of Lincoln, folios 93v-94r. The bishop of Lincoln received the announcement of the king's writ via a letter from Thomas Kempe, Bishop of London. The procedure, apparently, was that Bourghier conveyed the contents of the king's writ to Kempe in London, adding his own mandate to convene at St Paul's Cathedral on 18 April, which Kempe then relayed in similar terms to Lincoln and other dioceses of the southern province.⁹ An identical letter from Kempe is found in the unpublished register of John Alcock, Bishop of Worcester: Bourghier's mandate is embedded within it, and Edward IV's writ is embedded within the mandate. The king's writ is transcribed and translated here (see Appendix).

Alcock's register goes a stage further by recording a copy of his reply to the archbishop, dated 12 April, listing those persons certified to attend from his diocese. Since Alcock is clearly still expecting it to proceed, his letter is helpful in ruling out the idea that the convocation was brought forward, or at least not to any date prior to Edward IV's last illness. On 12 April he might not have been aware that the king had died three days earlier, but he is likely to have known of Edward's sudden collapse and serious illness around Easter-time (the end of March). Indeed, knowledge of this may possibly account for Alcock's tardiness in providing Bourghier with his required list of delegates, which ought to have been in the archbishop's hands by 6 April. (The list is firmly attached to previous correspondence about the convocation, so it is not a stray list relating to some other occasion which somehow found its way into this place in the register.) This may tie in with the matter of the false alarm of Edward IV's death which reached York on 6 April and was probably prompted by a crisis in the king's health around 1 April. It is not impossible that if for some reason this news reached Alcock's ears, it might have stayed his hand until he heard more. That he sent a response on 12 April suggests an assumption that Bourghier would inevitably be calling a convocation anyway,

⁷ D. Wilkins, ed., *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae ab anno MCCCL ad annum MDXLV*, London 1737, vol 3, p. 614.

⁸ G. Bray, ed., *Records of Convocations: Canterbury 1313-1509*, Woodbridge 2006, p. 283.

⁹ Lincolnshire Archives, Bishop's Register 22 (MF 6/19), ff. 93v-95v.

whether on behalf of a recovered Edward IV or, failing his recovery, by writ of his successor.

All this is mere speculation. Alcock's delay may have been due to much simpler reasons: sickness or absence or other indisposition, or perhaps waiting to know of his delegates' availability. His list of delegates is sound enough evidence that by 12 April he still believed the convocation had yet to take place. Another reason for concluding that the date was not brought forward is a document containing an address which was composed for its opening on a date proposed as 18 April but cancelled. This is preserved in a British Library manuscript, of which the full Latin text is found in a German publication of 1904.¹⁰

The heading of the address reads as follows: '1483, the Friday after the Sunday on which is sung "the mercy of the Lord" [April 18], a little speech appointed to be spoken in the convocation, but it was not spoken at this time' (1483, *feria 6. post dominicam, qua cantatur misericordia domini* [April 18], *oratiuncula ordinata, ut diceretur in convocatione, nec tamen est dicta hoc tempore*). The author of the address is unknown; but the heading clearly confirms that, although prepared for a convocation of the clergy on 18 April, it was not delivered on that date. It rules out an earlier date, else the heading would not read as it does. This conclusion is reinforced by a passage nearly half-way through the address, which is a bidding prayer that mentions the new king:

... the new prince of excellent character and sweetest hope, our dread king Edward V, lady Elizabeth the queen mother, all the royal progeny, the princes of the kingdom, the nobles and the people, and, among the deceased faithful of Christ, the soul of that renowned and ever to be remembered and late most powerful king over us, Edward IV, from whose recent and by many recently mourned death this day is the tenth ...

... *optimae etiam indolis et dulcissimae spei novum principem regem nostrum metuendissimum Edwardum quintum, dominam Elizabeth, reginam maternam, totamque regiam subolem, principes regni, procures atque plebem, et inter Christifideles defunctos animam illius celebris atque in aeternum recolendae memoriae potentissimi dudum regis nostri Edwardi quarti, cujus recentis atque a multis diu recenter lamentandi obitus is dies decimus est*

It will be remembered that the Roman manner of counting includes the day you start from, thus by this means of calculation 18 April is the tenth day from 9 April.

Nevertheless, even though the writer knew there had been a king's death, a funeral, and a cancellation of the convocation scheduled for 18 April, he evidently deemed it desirable to record and retain this latest version of his speech. An obvious conclusion seems to be that he was looking ahead to the normal practice upon coronation of a new sovereign, when a convocation as well as a parliament

¹⁰ E. Fueter, *Religion und Kirche in England im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, Tübingen n. Leipzig 1904, pp. 66–78, appendix taken from British Library Cotton MS Cleopatra E III. Grateful thanks to Marie Barnfield for locating this.

would be expected to follow. In such case this speech might still be useful as a template for the new opening address.

Should we consider the remote possibility that Edward IV's convocation was held after all, on a date which would have been *after* the clergy had returned from his funeral, it must be questioned why they would wish such a thing to happen. Edward IV's intention had been to gain endorsement for the sizeable taxes he had decided to levy in order to finance his military ventures, so the underlying political imperatives had now fallen away. For the clergy to seek an early opportunity to endorse these payments would surely be perverse. Equally foolhardy would be to alienate their new king by holding a convocation that resisted his father's royal demands; far better to wait for Edward V to call his own new convocation, when he might prove desirous of pursuing a less warlike and financially damaging policy.

Fortunately there exists further evidence, in writs issued the following year by Richard III (see below), which confirms conclusively that no such convocation took place.

Edward V's Writ

The new reign of the twelve-year-old Edward V ushered in a regime in which Richard of Gloucester was appointed as lord protector. On 13 May summonses were issued for a parliament to take place on 25 June after Edward's planned coronation. Issued by Gloucester at the same time, on or about 16 May, was a writ in the new king's name calling for a convocation of the southern province. For evidence relating to Edward V's convocation the search is beset by even worse problems than before: not only is there no sign of it in Archbishop Bourghier's register, but no mention has been found in any other register or record. Indeed, the only indication that exists is a copy of the royal writ in the collection of documents in Harleian MS 433, the record of items that passed under Richard's personal signet.¹¹

A certain amount of speculation has surrounded this writ, its tone and purpose. It first attracted comment in notes for the catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery's Richard III Exhibition, citing an English translation of the Latin text which contains phrases referring to 'difficult and urgent matters intimately concerning us and the state of our realm', etc., apparently hitherto overlooked by historians, which 'can only represent the wish of the Protector. The summoning of a Parliament might be regarded as a matter of form at the beginning of a new reign, but this document must surely be interpreted as it reads, an indication of crisis, and the attempt to find a responsible solution'.¹² The imperative tone of the phraseology does indeed suggest that it referred to critical matters which the protector wished urgently to be discussed by the clergy. This, if true, might indicate an intention to consult senior prelates on a weighty dilemma which had come to

¹¹ R. Horrox and P.W. Hammond, eds., *British Library Manuscript 433*, 4 vols, Upminster and London 1979-83, vol 1, p. 16 (f8 dated *xvj Maij*).

¹² P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, Catalogue of National Portrait Gallery Exhibition, London, 1973, p. 52.

light upon Gloucester's assuming the protectorship, and which presented a number of problems under canon law. This dilemma concerned the revelation that the late king had entered into an early secret marriage some years prior to his subsequent secret marriage with Queen Elizabeth Woodville. In canon law the inference was that this combination of events would render Edward IV's Woodville marriage bigamous and its offspring illegitimate, a situation that threatened to deprive Edward V of the throne.¹³ It was a legal problem of great complexity as well as huge importance for the realm, and it is not difficult to imagine that Gloucester, ever preoccupied with the workings of the law, might wish to place it before a number of leading experts in canon law called together in one place. The proposition is a persuasive one, but must be ruled out.¹⁴

As regards the urgent wording of the summons, comparison with other royal writs for convocation issued before and after that of Gloucester now shows clearly that a standard format was used in May 1483 which differed only slightly from that of other such writs.¹⁵ In general, each begins with a greeting followed by a command to assemble the clergy in convocation for a variety of reasons, usually strikingly described as urgent and pressing. In Gloucester's writ the words do indeed sound extremely compelling: 'certain difficult and urgent matters closely concerning us and the state of our realm of England and the honour and benefit of the English Church' (*quibusdam arduis et urgentibus negocijs nos ad statum Regni nostri Anglie ac honorem et utilitatem ecclesie Anglicane intime concernentibus*).¹⁶ Nevertheless, Edward IV's writ only three months earlier sounds a very similar note: 'certain difficult and urgent matters concerning us, the security and defence of the English Church and the peace, tranquillity, public good and defence of our kingdom and of our subjects' (*quibusdam arduis et urgen[tibus] negocijs nos securitatem et defensionem Ecclesie Anglicane ac pacem tranquillitatem bonum publicum et defensionem Regni nostri et subditorum nostrorum eiusdem*).¹⁷ Similar words may be found in other convocation writs: 'important and urgent business concerning the estate, defence and utility of the church and realm of England', and 'the peace, tranquillity, public good and defence of our realm and subjects'.¹⁸

Allowing for certain changes in detail and emphasis, it therefore seems that the royal writs for convocation habitually employed a repertoire of phrases that

¹³ R.H. Helmholz, 'The sons of Edward IV: a canonical assessment of the claim that they were illegitimate', in *Richard III: Loyalty, Lordship and Law*, ed. P.W. Hammond, London 1986, pp. 91–103.

¹⁴ It was adopted by this writer in early editions of *Richard III: The Maligned King*. Its premise, however, could not be verified until research was undertaken into original sources, only recently possible and reflected in this article. This does not preclude the protector's search for a responsible solution; it merely excludes a convocation as the means. A. Carson, *Richard III: The Maligned King*, Stroud 2008, 2009, amended in editions of 2010, 2011, p. 76.

¹⁵ Bray, *Records of Convocations*, pp. 280–87.

¹⁶ See note II.

¹⁷ Worcestershire Record Office, Bishop's Register b716.093 – BA2648/7(i), pp. 131–32, transcribed/translated by Dr Lesley Boatwright, see Appendix.

¹⁸ B. Thompson, 'Prelates and politics', in Linda Clark and Christine Carpenter, eds., *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, Woodbridge 2004, p. 76, citing *Reg. Chichele*, vol. 3, 344 (1481).

referred to difficult, important and urgent matters relating to the state, the church and the defence of the realm. They seem to reflect a formula similar to that used when parliament was called, cf. the parliamentary summons of 13 May 1483 which refers to 'certain arduous and urgent business, concerning the state and defence of this kingdom of England and the English Church'.¹⁹

As to whether Edward V's convocation ever took place, the absence of any documents referring to it must in all likelihood point to its abandonment owing to the exigencies of the times. When the allegation of Edward IV's prior marriage came to the notice of the king's council, probably in late May/early June 1483, the reaction to its implications for Edward V led to the postponement of his coronation. A date only recently fixed for 22 June was switched to 9 November, affording a relatively leisurely timetable during which authorities might be consulted and the legal position considered.²⁰ However, any such hope was swiftly overtaken by the onrush of events during June, when resentment led to arrests and the powerful magnate Lord Hastings was executed: delay was no longer feasible, and an expeditious decision by the lords and commons led to the deposition of Edward V in favour of Richard III. Richard's accession on 26 June was quickly followed by his coronation on 6 July and a lengthy royal progress that lasted until October, when it was cut short by the need to quell an uprising. There was no opportunity even to hold a parliament until after Christmas, so it may be concluded that the planned convocation was also held over. In due course a writ in the name of Richard III was issued on 20 December and convocation met on 3 February 1484 when a grant of tax was made.

Thus, despite the urgent need for funds given the parlous state of royal finances after Edward IV's death, there was no convocation to vote clerical taxes before this date. Evidently loans were made to the crown in the interim, since 'the government had raised some £1,680 from the bishops in anticipation of a grant'.²¹

Lastly, by way of conclusive confirmation that neither Edward IV's nor Edward V's convocation took place, an item of convincing evidence emerges from another part of the episcopal register of John Russell, Bishop of Lincoln, in a writ of Richard III dated 5 March 1484. The king's writ was issued in relation to the clerical tax of a whole tenth 'for the protection and defence of the English church and the realm of England' (*ad tuitionem et defensionem Ecclesie Anglicane et huius regni nostri Anglie*), which had been approved by the recent convocation of 3 to 24 February. Several exemptions to the tax had been granted and were listed in the writ; among those exempted were two categories of ecclesiastics who had endured

¹⁹ Du Boulay, *Registrum Bourgchier*, pp. 53–54.

²⁰ For the revised date see A.F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond, eds., *The Coronation of Richard III: The Extant Documents*, Gloucester and New York, 1983, p.22 footnote 80 citing Corporation of London Record Office Journal 9: f. 25b. Appreciation to Lynda Pidgeon for this reference.

²¹ R. Horrox, *Richard III: A Study of Service*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 109; A.K. McHardy, 'Clerical taxation in fifteenth-century England: the clergy as agents of the crown' in R.B. Dobson, ed., *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, Gloucester 1984, chapter 8, pp. 168–92, see pp. 181 and 188.

travails at the hands of the law at certain times, those times being identified by reference to the last day of 'the last convocation' which was 16 April 1481 (paragraph 4: *post et citra ultimum diem ultime convocationis qui erat decimus sextus dies mensis Aprilis anno domini millesimo CCCCLxxxj^o* and paragraph 7: *citra sextumdecimum diem mensis Aprilis anno domini millesimo CCCCLxxxj^o qui erat ultimus dies ultime convocationis*).²²

Both these references – probably embedding actual phraseology used during the recent proceedings – make it clear that 'the last convocation' (before the present one) had been held three years previously. Hence this document, a mundane administrative writ providing for the collection of the clerical tax of a tenth, fortuitously provides evidence issued by Richard III himself that no convocations of the clergy took place in 1483.²³

Appendix: Text of Edward IV's Writ to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 3 February 1483. Register of John Alcock, Bishop of Worcester²⁴

Transcription and translation by Dr Lesley Boatwright
(punctuation added; capitals as in the original manuscript).

Edward, by the grace of God King of England and of France and Lord of Ireland, to the venerable father in Christ Thomas, by the same grace Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, our most dear kinsman [gives] greeting. With certain hard and urgent matters concerning us, the security and defence of the English church and the peace, tranquillity, public good and defence of our Kingdom and of our subjects of the same [pressing], we ask and command you in the loyalty and love by which you are bound to us that, the foregoing having been studied and weighed with due consideration, you cause to be summoned each and every one of the bishops of your province and the deans and priors of the cathedral churches, the abbots and priors and others [holding] elective [office], and the archdeacons, chapters, convents and colleges, and all the clergy of each diocese of the same province to appear before you in the church of St Paul, London, or elsewhere as you shall think most expedient, with all fitting speed in the accustomed manner, to treat and agree and reach a conclusion concerning the foregoing and other matters which will be set before them more clearly then and there on our part, and that you will by no means omit [to do] this as you love us and our state and the honour of our kingdom and what is useful for the

²² Lincolnshire Archives, Bishop's Register (see note 9), ff. 94v–95v, transcribed/translated by Dr Lesley Boatwright.

²³ The writ, ordering collection of the grant in two instalments, on 24 June and 11 November 1484, is calendared in *Calendar of the Fine Rolls, 1471–1485*, London 1961, pp. 278–81.

²⁴ By kind permission of Worcestershire Record Office; Bishop's Register b716.093 – BA2648/7(i), pp. 131–2.

said church. Witnessed by me at Westminster on the third day of the month of February in the 22nd year of our reign [3 February 1483].

Edwardus dei gracia Rex Anglie et Francie et Dominus Hibernie venerabili in Christo patri Thome eadem gracia Cardinali et Archiepiscopo Cant' tocius Anglie primati consanguineo nostro carissimo Salutem. Quibusdam arduis et urgen[tibus] negociis nos securitatem et defensionem Ecclesie Anglicane ac pacem tranquillitatem bonum publicum et defensionem Regni nostri et Subditorum nostrorum eiusdem concern[entibus] vobis in fide et dilectione quibus nobis tenemini rogando mandamus quatinus premissis debit[o] intuitu attentis et ponderatis universos et singulos Episcopos vestre provincie ac Decanos et Priores Ecclesiarum cath[edralium] Abbates et priores ac alios electivos exemptos et non exemptos necnon Arch[idiacon]os capitula Conventus et collegia totumque clerum cuiuslibet dioc[ese] eiusdem provincie ad comparend[um] coram Vobis in Ecclesia Sancti Pauli London' vel alibi prout melius expedir[e] videritis cum omni celeritate accommoda more debit[o] convocari faciatis ad tractand[um] consensciend[um] et concludend[um] super premissis et aliis que sibi clarius exponentur tunc ibidem ex parte nostra et hoc sicut nos et statum nostrum et Regni nostri ac honorem et utilitatem ecclesie predict' diligitis nullatenus omittatis. Teste me ipso apud Westm' tercio die mensis Februarij Anno Regni nostri xxii^{do} [3 February 22 Edward IV].

of the manor from the Hilton line. Feet of Fines had long been a major source for antiquarians to trace the descent of estates, and amongst the Yorkshire Fines in 1473 was the information we sought. A final concord was made in the court of Common Pleas at Westminster in the third and Michaelmas terms of that year by which Richard, Duke of Gloucester, acquired from John Burne, Margery his wife (formerly the wife of Godfrey Hilton, d. 1472) and Godfrey Hilton, her son (d. 1476) the manor of Hooton Pagnell (Hooton Pagnell) and 100 acres of land, eighty acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, twenty acres of wood and 16 of rent in Hooton Pagnell, for which, according to the fine, the duke gave them 100 marks.

The fine was not what actually changed hands, yet as C.A.B. Morkings has shown these considerations represented twenty times the sworn annual value of the property, and were a guide to a purchase price on the open market.⁴ Godfrey Hilton's inquisition post mortem of 1472 assessed the manor at £20 per annum, which would make the purchase price of the manor at twenty times the annual

⁴ J. Hilton, *Saint Neot's: The History and Topography of the Diocese of Exeter*, 3 vols, London 1894, vol. 3, pp. 141–42.

⁵ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Philip Morley, and others in his work as early as 1768 *History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 2 vols, London 1768.

⁶ The National Archives, Public Record Office (hereafter TNA), CP 150/134/10, number 23, accessed at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/online-image/CP_150_134_10.pdf. This excellent site contains numerous other useful resources, the first instance of the page in the published form of Fines for the late medieval period.

⁷ *Administrative Survey: Feet of Fines*, <http://www.britain.gov.uk/uk/land/eng/feetofines/>, accessed 14 Dec 2006.