

‘The Lorde Barons Slaine at Barnet Field’

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The London antiquarian, John Stow (1525-1605), recorded a curious memorial in his great *Survey of London* (1603) which commemorated a casualty from the battle of Barnet. The entry is vague and simply says ‘the Lorde Barons slaine at Barnet Field’ in a list of monuments for the dead noted from the former church of the Austin Friars just off Broad Street in the north of the city.¹ This is intriguing, for no aristocrat in fifteenth century England was known as ‘Lord Barons’ and neither of the two barons who fell at Barnet, Humphrey Bourchier, Lord Cromwell, and William Fiennes, Lord Say and Sele, can be identified as this fallen nobleman. The implication is that this memorial may have been an early form of cenotaph for the fallen recorded under a generalised heading of ‘baron’ meaning ‘noble’.² This essay will reconsider this argument and suggest a possible identity for the mysterious ‘Lorde Barons’ and reveal new light on a noble casualty from Barnet who was swiftly exhumed and buried elsewhere.

On a foggy Easter Sunday in 1471 the armies of Lancaster and York met at Barnet. Here they played out the latest move in a bloody conflict: Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, with his brother John Neville, Marquess Montague and the Lancastrian generals Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, and John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, engaged their forces against the newly returned Edward IV and his supporters. It was a confused and uncertain battle but after five hours or so the Yorkists emerged victorious, Warwick and Montague were dead and Oxford and Exeter had fled. Edward IV returned to London before readying his forces for their march west to engage with the army of Queen Margaret and her teenage son Edward of Lancaster. The bodies of Warwick, and his brother Montague, were displayed in St Paul’s Cathedral before they were taken to Bisham Abbey, Berkshire, for burial alongside the remains of their father Richard, Earl of Salisbury, and their younger brother Sir Thomas killed eleven years earlier at Wakefield.³ Warwick’s funerary monument – if he had one – was

I am grateful to Nick Holder for drawing my attention to the entry in *The Great Chronicle of London* which recorded the burial of ‘Lord Barnes’ in the Austin Friars, and for his engaging discussion on this nobleman’s identity. I likewise thank Caroline M. Barron and Linda Clark for reading a draft of this article, and for their helpful suggestions, and to Stephen Freeth, to whom I am particularly indebted for his transcription and translation of the Bourchier epitaph in Westminster Abbey, and to him and to David Moncur for their discussion and interpretation of this text.

¹ John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed C.L. Kingsford, 2 vols, Oxford 1908, vol. 1, p. 178.

² I suggest this in my essay, ‘Royal and noble commemoration in the mendicant houses of London, c. 1240-1540’ in C.M. Barron and C. Burgess, eds, *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England*, Donington 2010, pp. 114-42, at p. 136.

³ *Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV in England and the Final Recouerye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI A.D. M.CCCC.LXXI*, ed. John Bruce, reproduced in *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV*, Gloucester 1988, pp. 131-93, at pp. 164-67. The location of the battlefield has most recently been

not recorded but in 1521 Montague's daughter Elizabeth, Lady Scrope of Masham, left £20 in her will to commission a tomb for her parents.⁴ She did not specify the exact design but this bequest was enough to pay for a modest sized memorial, either a tomb chest or a canopied altar tomb, and probably with brass figures commemorating John Neville and his wife Isabel, who had died in 1476. Other casualties from Barnet included Sir Henry Stafford, the Yorkist husband of Margaret Beaufort, who was mortally wounded and died of his injuries the following October. He was buried in the Stafford mausoleum in their collegiate church at Pleshy, Essex.⁵ From the Grey Friars register of burials in their London house, we learn of at least three other notable casualties; Sir William Blount, son and heir of the former Lord Treasurer Walter, Lord Mountjoy, who was buried in their Apostles Chapel,⁶ and John Milewater and Thomas Parr, the household squires of Richard of Gloucester, who were buried in the chapel of St Francis.⁷



Fig. 1: The church of the Austin Friars (top, centre), in Sir Howard Colvin and Susan Foister (eds), *The Panorama of London, circa 1544*, by Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, London 1996.

discussed by Bruce Watson, 'Barnet: the ongoing archaeological search for Greater London's only medieval battlefield', *London Archaeologist*, vol. 14 (2015), pp. 231-38. See also P.W. Hammond, *The Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury*, Gloucester 1990, pp. 66-80.

⁴ Lady Scrope's will, TNA, PROB 11/ 20, ff. 145v-147.

⁵ M.K. Jones and M. Underwood, *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort Countess of Richmond and Derby*, Cambridge 1992, p. 58.

⁶ C.L. Kingsford, *The Grey Friars of London*, Aberdeen 1915, p. 89.

⁷ Kingsford, *The Grey Friars of London*, p. 94. Both squires were remembered by Richard of Gloucester who included prayers for their souls in his 1477 endowment at Queens' College, Cambridge, A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, "'As dear to him as the Trojans were to Hector': Richard III and the University of Cambridge", in *Richard III and East Anglia: Magnates, Guilds and Learned Men*, ed L. Visser-Fuchs, Richard III Society 2010, pp. 105-42, at p. 121.

The London Austin Friars

The Austin Friars arrived in London during the 1260s and settled in Broad Street, **figure 1**.⁸ They soon came to the attention of Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex (d. 1275), their founder, whose descendant and namesake, another Humphrey, paid for the rebuilding of the church where he was buried in the middle of their choir in 1361.⁹ This particular mendicant house became popular with the medieval aristocracy whose burials and tombs were recorded c. 1500-05 by Thomas Benolt, then Windsor Herald.¹⁰ The noble burials included Richard II's half-brother, Edmund Holland (d. 1355?), and the young king's tutor, Guy d'Angle, Earl of Huntingdon (d. 1380). Although Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel (ex. 1397), had requested burial behind the high altar in Lewes Priory, in fact this executed aristocrat was buried in the choir of the Austin Friars.¹¹ Their church was later to become a burial vault for casualties of the Wars of the Roses and contained the remains of John de Vere, twelfth Earl of Oxford, his son and heir Aubrey, and Sir Thomas Tuddenham all of whom were executed in February 1462 for their part in a plot to kill Edward IV. In 1464, John de Vere, the new Earl of Oxford, secured his inheritance and arranged for the reburial of his father in the choir of the Austin Friars, **figure 2**.¹² It was here where the heralds' manuscript recorded the de Vere graves, the choir being the domain of the prestigious dead.¹³ But shortly before 1492, the remains of the executed earl, together with the bones of his widowed countess, Elizabeth (d. 1472), buried near to him in Austin Friars, were once again exhumed and transplanted to the de Vere mausoleum at Colne Priory in Earls Colne, Essex. In his will made on 5 July 1492 the de Vere servant, James Arblaster, requested burial at the foot of the tomb of the parents of his then master, the thirteenth earl.¹⁴ Benolt recorded the de Vere monuments (probably floor brasses) from empty graves. Other notable burials at Austin Friars were recorded in the 'body of the church' (the nave) such as the remains of the unlucky Tyrell family, Sir William (ex. 1462) and his brother, also Sir William (died at Barnet 1471), and the former's son Sir James, the alleged murderer of the Yorkist princes, who was executed with Sir John Wyndham in 1502 for their support of Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. It

⁸ For a succinct introduction to this church see C.M. Barron and M. Davies, eds, *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex*, London 2007, pp. 133-36. The archaeological and documentary history of the church has been ably summarised in N. Holder, M. Samuels and I. Betts, 'The Church and Cloisters of Austin Friars', *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, vol. 64 (2013), pp. 143-62.

⁹ Benolt's MS, College of Arms, London, MS CGY 647, f. 15v.

¹⁰ College of Arms, London, MS CGY 647, f. 15v.

¹¹ N.H. Nicolas, ed., *Testamenta Vetusta*, 2 vols, London 1836, vol. 1, pp. 129-34.

¹² J. Ross, *John de Vere: Thirteenth Earl of Oxford 1442 – 1513 'The Foremost Man of the Kingdom'*, Woodbridge 2011, p. 52.

¹³ College of Arms, London, MS CGY 647, f. 15v.

¹⁴ TNA, PROB 11/9, f. 124; Ross, *John de Vere*, p. 206.

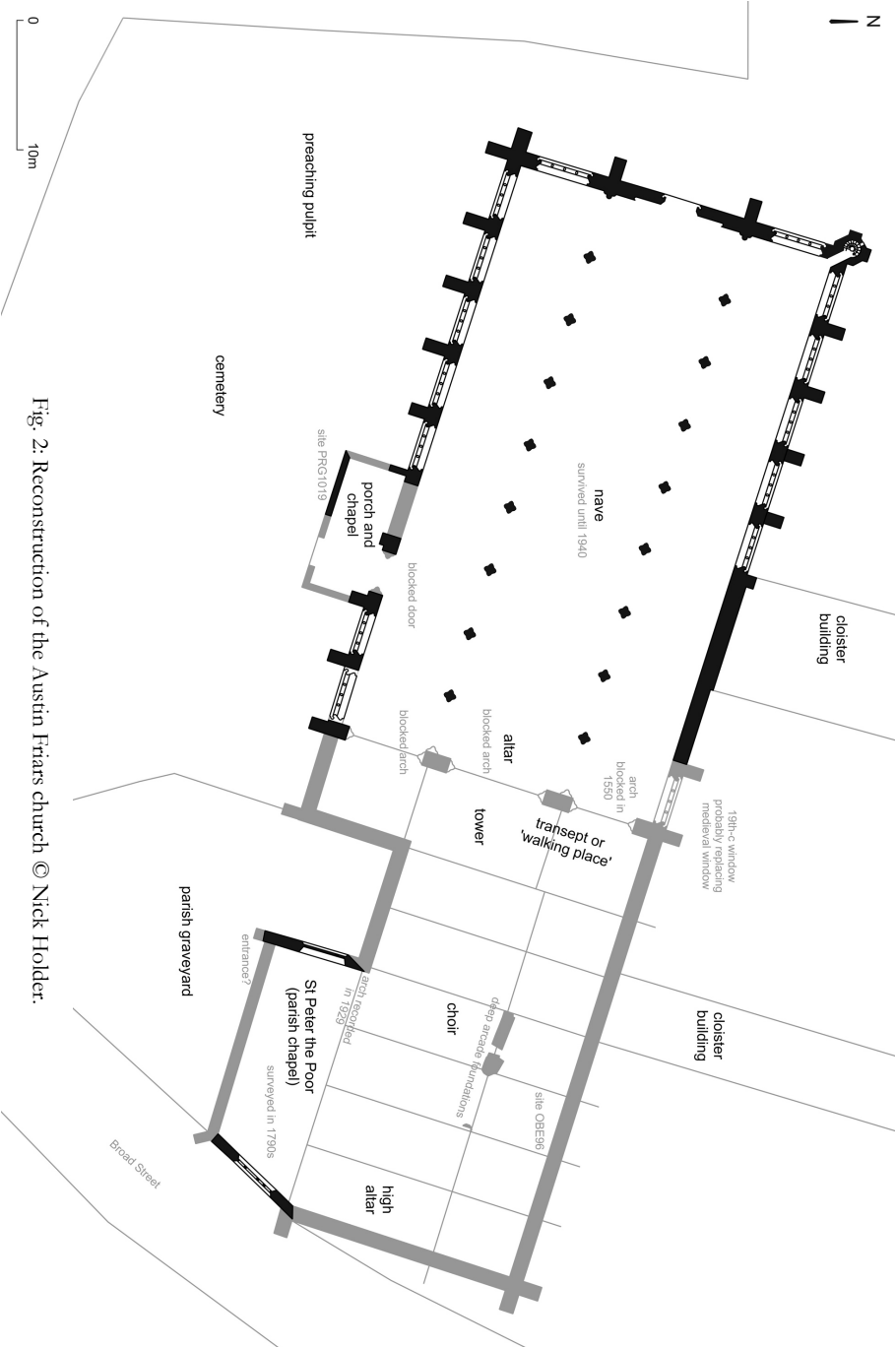


Fig. 2: Reconstruction of the Austin Friars church © Nick Holder.

was also at the Austin Friars that the remains of Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham (ex. 1521), were interred: his now lost monument was noted by Stow.¹⁵ The Yorkist imposter, Perkin Warbeck, was also allegedly buried in this Augustinian house but neither Benolt nor Stow recorded any monument for Perkin.¹⁶ The popularity of the Austin Friars as a mausoleum for the aristocracy more generally, probably explains why the remains of noble and knightly traitors and those who fell in battle were buried in their church. The friars' political neutrality and their commitment to pastoral care may also explain why the mendicant friars, as the poor men of God, took in the remains of the fallen: nowhere is this better demonstrated than the original grave of Richard III at the Leicester Grey Friars.

In spite of this record of important burials the surrender of the order in November 1538 soon led to loss and the eastern end, tower, side aisles, and choir were quickly sold to William Paulet, later Marquess of Winchester, who:

Sold the Monuments of noble men there buried in great number, the pauing stone, and whatsoever (which cost many thousands) for one hundred pounds, and in place made fayre stabling for horses. He caused the Leade to be taken from the roofes, and laid tile in place, which exchange prooued not so profitable as he looked for, but rather to his disadvantage.¹⁷

Stow's caustic commentary is eloquent in his disapproval of the former church now being used for stabling, and he is evidently satisfied that Paulet's efforts to capitalise on the sale of the lead had failed. In 1550 the western part of the church was granted to the Dutch community to serve the growing number of Protestant migrants arriving from the Low Countries and this preserved something of the fabric of this Austin house. It was not until the Blitz on 10 October 1940 that the medieval church was finally destroyed. Almost twenty years earlier, in the early summer of 1923, Frank Greenhill had visited the Dutch church and recorded the indents of forty now-lost monumental brasses: this record is an invaluable window into a lost commemorative landscape.¹⁸ It is to be remembered that the western end of the Dutch church was the former nave of the Austin Friars where moderately well off city merchants, shire knights, and migrants from overseas were buried. The shadows of these lost brasses compare in size and design to many extant examples of figure brasses from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century and were almost certainly products of the industrious London workshops. It is difficult to attempt any

¹⁵ Stow, *Survey of London*, vol. 1, p. 179.

¹⁶ On the burials of traitors and conspirators in the London Austin Friars, see W.E. Hampton, 'Sir James Tyrell: with some notes on the Austin Friars and those buried there', in James Petre, ed., *Richard III: Crown and People*, Gloucester 1985, pp. 203-17.

¹⁷ Stow, *Survey of London*, vol. 1, p. 177.

¹⁸ F.A. Greenhill, 'Austin Friars, London', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, vol. 8 (1949), pp. 330-41.

reliable connection of such indents with known burials in any church but these shadowy remains nonetheless reveals a popularity of brass figures and inscriptions, exhorting prayers for the dead, as conduits between the living and the dead. And nowhere was this needed more than for those who had fallen in battle or who had been executed for being on the losing side in civil war.

The record made by Thomas Benolt in his inspection of c. 1500-05 identified ninety monuments of the dead in the London church of the Austin Friars. But he did not record the memorial for 'the Lorde Barons'. A comparison with the account made by John Stow about 100 years later reveals that Stow copied Benolt's earlier list almost word for word but with this new entry inserted mid-way in his copy of the herald's account. 'The Lorde Barons slaine at Barnet field, buried there [the Austin Friars], 1471' is included after Stow recorded a tomb for the siblings Philip and Isabell, children of Hugh Despenser (who seem to have died young in the early 1300s), and before the entry recording the memorial for Julian, wife of Sir Richard Lacy (whose date of death is unknown).¹⁹ This is curious. We know that the heralds were selective in their accounts: the 120 funerary monuments recorded by Benolt in the London Grey Friars was in fact one-fifth of the total number (682). What was of particular interest to the heralds were those tombs which contained armorials and it was details about these that they copied down into their own accounts. It seems unlikely that Benolt would have excluded the arms of a peer buried at Austin Friars. The suggestion I offered in 2010 is one possible interpretation namely that Stow had in fact seen a text recording the fallen from Barnet which was not a specific memorial to a named nobleman, hence the exclusion from Benolt's account.²⁰ In a letter written three days after Barnet to the city authorities in Cologne, the Hanseatic merchant Gerhard von Wesel gave an account of the battle and the casualties on both sides: nowhere amongst them was a 'lorde barons'.²¹ Another letter, written on 4 May 1471 by Jean de Molesmes, secretary to Charles the Bold, to the mayor and aldermen of Dijon referred to the recent battle at Barnet and set down the names of notable casualties from Barnet including Sir William Tyrell the younger who was buried in Austin Friars. The lords slain at Barnet were Humphrey Bourchier, Lord Cromwell, his cousin and namesake Sir Humphrey, William Fiennes, Lord Say and Sele, and Bernard de la Forssa, a Gascon nobleman.²² None were recorded in Benolt's burial list and nor did they hold the title 'Lord Barons'. The memorial chapel of St Blaise ²³ built on the site of the battlefield

¹⁹ Stow, *Survey of London*, vol. 1, p. 178.

²⁰ Medieval war memorials were not uncommon, see P. Morgan, 'The medieval battlefield war memorial' in F. Andrews, ed., *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages*, Donington 2011, pp. 282-97.

²¹ H. Kleineke, 'Gerhard von Wesel's newsletter from England, 17 April 1471', *The Ricardian*, vol. 16 (2006), pp. 66-83.

²² L. Visser-Fuchs, 'A Ricardian riddle: the casualty list of the battle of Barnet', *The Ricardian*, vol. 8 (1988-90), pp. 9-12.

²³ Watson, 'Barnet', p. 232.

commemorating the fallen suggests that a cenotaph in the city of London would not be surprising, and that this was to serve as another record of the war dead.

A Royal Kinsman

A clue to the possible identity of this burial is found in *The Great Chronicle*, a history of London begun in the early fifteenth century, and maintained by Robert Fabyan during the 1490s who continued to update the *Chronicle* until his death in 1513. It is Fabyan's entry on the aftermath of Barnet which suggests the answer to this puzzle for on Easter Monday 1471 he recorded, 'And upon the Same Moneday was the Corps of the lord Barnes Reverently browgth unto the Frere Augustynys & there buried in the Quere upon the Sowthe syde of theyr ffounder'.²⁴ But as we have seen there was no peer called 'Lord Barnes' killed at Barnet. The member of the English peerage to hold a title closest to this was a kinsman of King Edward, Sir John Bouchier created Lord Berners in 1455, a younger son of William Bouchier, Count of Eu and Anne Plantagenet (the daughter and heiress of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester). Sir John was the brother of Henry Bouchier, Earl of Essex²⁵ (uncle to the king through marriage to Isabel Plantagenet) and of Thomas Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury. Berners died in May 1474 and was buried in Chertsey Abbey.²⁶ Fabyan also recorded the death of 'the lord Barnes' at Barnet and later clarified that this fallen peer was in fact 'Sir Humphrey Bouchier'.²⁷ So it was not Lord Berners himself who was killed at Barnet but his son and heir, Sir Humphrey, and it seems that it was in fact this younger Bouchier whose burial Fabyan recorded in the choir of the Austin Friars.²⁸ Stow's notebook, now in the British Library, is also revealing for in his original list of tombs from the Austin Friars, Stow omitted the reference to the memorial for 'the lorde Barons': this was a later addition to the final text of the *Survey of London* probably based on Fabyan's earlier account which Stow copied.²⁹

²⁴ *The Great Chronicle of London*, eds, A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, London 1938, p. 217.

²⁵ The earl's son was Humphrey Bouchier, Lord Cromwell, who is often confused with his namesake and first cousin, the son of Lord Berners.

²⁶ *CP*, vol. 2, p. 153. For his will, TNA PROB 11/6, ff. 112v-113.

²⁷ *The Great Chronicle*, p. 217. For a discussion of the annotations see pp. xxi-xxiv. I thank Julia Boffey for her comments on the handwriting of the annotation in the Great Chronicle.

²⁸ I am grateful to Linda Clark for kindly providing me with information on Sir Humphrey from her 1974 doctoral thesis on the Bouchier family.

²⁹ BL, Harley MS 538, f. 62

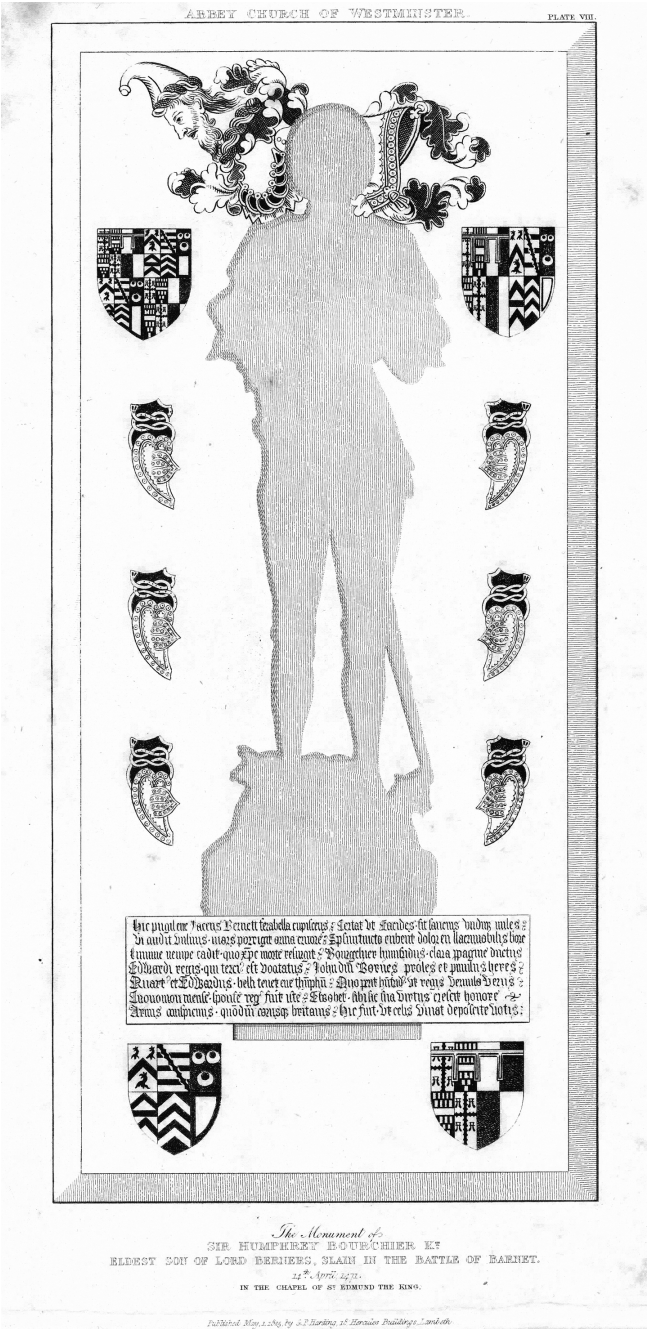


Fig. 3: Engraving of the indent for the lost brass of Sir Humphrey Bourchier (d. 1471) and his epitaph, from G.P. Harding *Antiquities in Westminster Abbey*, London 1825 © of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

The indent for the armoured effigy of Sir Humphrey, set within a Purbeck marble altar tomb, survives however in the chapel of SS Edmund and Thomas the Martyr in Westminster Abbey, **figure 3**.³⁰ The monument contains four surviving coats of arms recording the families of Bouchier, Louvain, Berners, Tilney and Thorpe, with a Saracen's head serving as a cushion upon which Sir Humphrey rests his head. Six elbow-cops with Bouchier knots are displayed either side of the figure characteristic of other monuments for this noble family. In St Mary's church, Little Easton, Essex, for example, is the canopied tomb for Humphrey's uncle and aunt, the earl and countess of Essex, and on their tomb chest are indents in the shape of Bouchier knots flanking their enamelled brass figures. An early eighteenth century description of Sir Humphrey's brass in Westminster Abbey, written in 1711,³¹ described the now lost figures of a leopard and an eagle at the base of the effigy. Beneath this there survives an elegant epitaph written in iambic hexameters, which recorded the fallen knight.

The asterisk mark in the transcription which follows indicates a square dot in the text with the forward slash indicating the line end:³²

Hic pugil ecce Jacens* Bernett fera bella cupiscens/
Certat ut Eacides.* fit saucius undiq(ue) miles./
Vi cecidit.* Vulnus. *mars porrigit. Arma cruore/
Sp(ar)sim tincta rubent,* dolor en llacrimabilis hore.
Lumine nempe cadit, *quo xp's [Christus] morte resurgit/.
Bourgchier humfridus, *clara p(ro)pagine ductus
Edwardi regis,* qui terci(us) est vocitatus,/
Joh(an)n(is) d(omi)ni Barnes *proles et p(ri)mulus heres./
Quart(us) et Edwardus *belli tenet ecce th(ri)u(m)phu(m),/
Quo perit hu(m)frid(us)* ut regis vernula verus/.
Cironomon mense *sponse reg(is) fuit iste/
Elizabet;* sibi sic sua virtus crescit honore./
Armis conspicuus *quo(n)d(a)m carusq(ue) brita(n) nis/
Hic fuit.* Ut celis vivat deposcite votis.

(Behold this champion lying here who, eager for the fierce fighting at Barnet, fights like Achilles. The soldier receives wounds from all directions. He [Bouchier] fell by force. Mars offers the wound. His armour spattered by blood glows red in colour. Lo, the grief of the tearful hour. And indeed he falls on the day on which Christ rose from Death [Easter Sunday]; Humphrey Bourgchier, sprung from the glorious line of King Edward, called the Third, the

³⁰ J.S.N. Wright, *The Brasses of Westminster Abbey*, London 1969, pp. 25-26. I thank Matthew Payne, Keeper of Muniments at Westminster Abbey, for his on the spot assistance with this monument and for his generous help with my many enquiries.

³¹ J. Crull. *The Antiquities of St Peters or the Abbey Church of Westminster*, 2 vols, 4th edition, London 1741, vol. 1, pp. 48-49.

³² I am indebted to David Moncur for his help on the metrical features of this text and for his expert advice on the scansion markers applied.

son and first heir of John, Lord Barnes [Berners]. And behold, Edward the Fourth holds the triumph in the battle, in which Humphrey dies as a true, faithful servant of the King. He was Chief Carver of the King's wife Elizabeth; thus is his virtue increased by the honour He was formerly distinguished in arms and dear to Britons; ask in your prayers that he may live in Heaven).

This rather elegant composition compares the dead Humphrey to the mythical Greek warrior, Achilles ('Eacides') and records the war-hero's bravery in the thick of fighting and on the battlefield. And that in spite of being assailed on all sides it was the god of war, Mars himself, who landed the fatal blow. This is followed by his royal lineage and service to his Yorkist kin and with an almost throwaway remark concerning intercessory prayer. There are some structural features to this epitaph which reveal the care taken in its composition and the engraver's inexperience with the metrical features of the text and who evidently misjudged the length of lines two and three of the brass. The author of the Bouchier epitaph has used two devices to divide the text, a curlicue marking the verse end (except at the end of verses 4 and 6 at lines two and three on the brass where he seems to have run out of space) and a square dot. The latter was perhaps meant to function as a scansion marker indicating the position of the caesura (or pause) in each hexameter. This epitaph to a fallen knight of Barnet was not only concerned with his death, bravery, and royal lineage but was composed as a piece of courtly literature placing Sir Humphrey amongst the heroes of chivalric romance. It was perhaps meant to be read aloud. It is uncertain who commissioned the funerary monument and its splendid epitaph for this fallen knight. His widow Elizabeth was the principal executor of his will which is undated and was evidently written in a hurry, either before setting out to Barnet or on the field of battle. It is unwitnessed.³³ The will is short and expressed the testator's particular concern for the settlement of his debts the remainder of his estate was to provide for his wife and children:

It is my will that my wif pay my dette[s] And if she so doo then she to have such goode[s] as I have to hir use and to my children And if she do nott than my stuff to be sold to the valewe of my dette[s] and my dette[s] to be paide therw[i]t[h] and my wif and my children to have the surepluse And p[er]formyng herof I will that thies p[er]sones undrewriten have full power to see it doone my lord my fadir my lady my modir my wif S[i]r John Say maist[er] Thomas Rous S[i]r Robert Scayman and John Weston.

Sir Humphrey gave no instructions on his place of burial and nor did he leave any direction on his commemorations: whatever was to be carried out was either based on verbal instructions or left in the hands of his widow, Dame Elizabeth. Probate of the will was granted to Elizabeth on 18 June 1471. She later re-married Thomas Howard (created Earl of Surrey), and died in 1497.

³³ TNA, PROB 11/6, f. 33.

The style and composition of Sir Humphrey's monument is remarkably similar to the monumental brass commissioned for another of his executors, Sir John Say (d. 1478), in St Augustine's church, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. Say was the step-father of Humphrey's wife, Elizabeth, and an associate and former colleague of Bouchier's uncle, the earl of Essex.³⁴ The elbow piece on Sir John's brass, the coulter, is particularly striking and is clearly seen on the indent for Sir Humphrey. They are shown scallop shaped. Other elements reveal slight variations, for example the pauldrons (at the shoulder) on the Bouchier indent, suggests his were shown not as part of a tabard, as on the Say brass, but as plated armour. The Say brass also contains features comparable to that of Sir Humphrey's uncle, the earl of Essex, now at Little Easton church. One example is the similarity of the pommels of their swords, the posture of their mittened hands, and the design of the plated armour of their brass effigies. This has identified these three memorial brasses as products of the London D workshop made in the mid-1470s during the stewardship of master James Reames.³⁵ The author of the epitaph remains anonymous although Master Thomas Rous, evidently a university educated man, is a likely contender.³⁶

Given the political uncertainty in the immediate aftermath of Barnet, it is not surprising that Bouchier was at first buried in one of the mendicant houses of London and particularly in a church where other casualties were likewise buried. Benolt's list of burials of c. 1500-05 also recorded seventy-eight monuments in Westminster Abbey and it is from this account that we learn that the bones of Sir Humphrey were exhumed from Austin Friars and reburied in this most prestigious royal burial vault. It is likely this took place soon after the Yorkists had secured the throne in 1471. Benolt too recorded Sir Humphrey's tomb in Westminster Abbey as for 'the lord barnes' which suggests that the Berners heir was known by his father's title during their lifetimes.³⁷ Sir Humphrey was reburied in the south chapel (now the chapel of SS Edmund and Thomas the Martyr) near to the remains of his namesake and cousin, Humphrey, Lord Cromwell, also killed at Barnet, and another worthy knight, Sir Bernard Brocas (d. 1395).³⁸ Obsequies for the Bouchier cousins were celebrated in the abbey

³⁴ History of Parliament Trust, London, unpublished article on Sir John Say for *The Commons, 1422-61*, by Charles Moreton. I am grateful to the History of Parliament Trust for allowing me to see this article in draft.

³⁵ S. Badham, 'Patterns of patronage: brasses to the Cromwell-Bouchier kinship group', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, vol. 17 (2007), pp. 423-52, at p. 432, and J.P.C. Kent, 'Monumental brasses – a new classification of military effigies, c. 1360 – c. 1485', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. 11 (1948), pp. 70-97, at pp. 86-87; N. Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation*, Oxford 2009, p. 80.

³⁶ There is no record of Thomas Rous (or variants) in the lists of graduates from Oxford or Cambridge although this does not preclude his education in either town or overseas.

³⁷ College of Arms, MS CGY 647, f. 2v.

³⁸ For Lord Cromwell's inscription (written in English) which recorded his royal kinship, see John Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments*, London 1631, p. 482.

for which the sacrist was to receive £6.³⁹ Close to these knightly tombs were the remains of nine infant princes and princess, the children of Henry III and Edward I, who had died young.⁴⁰ And in the same chapel was buried Eleanor de Bohun, Duchess of Gloucester (d. 1399), the great grandmother to Sir Humphrey and Lord Cromwell. So these fallen knights from Barnet were accorded burial near their royal kin in the Abbey.

Yet the epitaph for Sir Humphrey Bourchier is unique and there are no other known epitaphs which compare the deceased to the Greek war-hero, Achilles.⁴¹ But given Humphrey's place at the Yorkist court, with his role as Queen Elizabeth's chief carver proudly recorded on his funerary inscription, and his kinship to the royal family, it is perhaps not surprising that his epitaph should be influenced by the chivalric literature of the age, read by the court, with a focus on the brave and their lineage. The legends of Troy were one of the best known and inspiring collections of stories in the fifteenth century with at least three versions circulating in English. It is telling that the first book printed by William Caxton in English was *Recuyell of the Hystories of Troye* published with the encouragement of Margaret of York in 1473/74.⁴² The attention given by the earl of Essex and Sir John Say on their own monuments in the mid-1470s, suggests that they took the opportunity to organise, or help Elizabeth to organise, the exhumation and reburial of her war-hero husband in the royal necropolis at Westminster Abbey, and for a newly commissioned funerary monument appropriately to commemorate Sir Humphrey. Their choice of epitaph comparing the fallen kinsman to the mythical Achilles demonstrates how court culture could influence the texts of funerary monuments and that such pre-Reformation funerary inscriptions were not exclusively concerned with intercession. The focus of this particular epitaph was on heroism and loyalty to the Crown, and about royal lineage and status. Sir Humphrey was to be remembered first and foremost as a hero of Barnet.

³⁹ B. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 2nd edition 2002, p. 382, nn. 10 and 11.

⁴⁰ London College of Arms, MS CGY 647, f. 2v.

⁴¹ I thank Jerome Bertram for his discussion on this.

⁴² A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'Richard III's Books: VII. Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*', *The Ricardian*, vol. 8 (1988-90), pp. 190-96, and A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince*, Stroud 1997, p. 159 n.19. I thank both authors for their discussion of fifteenth century literature and also David Harry for his comments on 'the Indian summer of chivalry'.