

The Tomb of Richard III

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After the battle of Bosworth the body of Richard was borne away on horseback by one of his heralds – the pursuivant whom he himself had appointed and named Blanc Sanglier.¹ It was brought to the hospital and college of St Mary of the Annunciation of the Newark in Leicester, where it was exposed to public view for two days – leaving no room for doubt as to Richard's death. It was then transferred to the Franciscan friary, presumably because Henry VII recognised that it was highly inappropriate for the body to remain in a college that was celebrated as a Lancastrian foundation.² A friary was a decently private place for it to lie, even if not as firmly closed off as a monastic house. And, as was observed by the scholar-priest John Rous (d. 1492), Richard was buried in the choir of the church – always a place of honour.³

The early Stuart historian Sir George Buck (d. 1622) wrote in his *History of King Richard the Third* (1619) that 'after all the malicious eyes were satiated in beholding those barbarous cruelties done unto the body of this dead prince, they gave his royal corpse a bed of earth, which was done by commandment and order of King Henry VII, and honourably in the chief church in Leicester, called St Mary's, belonging to the order and society of the Greyfriars. And the king also, soon after, caused a fair tomb of mingled colour, marble adorned with his image, to be erected upon the monument'.⁴ Buck was an admirer of Richard (and his own great-grandfather, John Buck, had fought for Richard at Bosworth and had subsequently been executed and attainted⁵) and so it might be thought that he would not have exaggerated the respect that Henry VII had accorded to his foe. However, the *Newe Cronycles* of Robert Fabyan (first printed in 1516) make clear that the truth was much less attractive. Describing the aftermath of Bosworth, Fabyan wrote: 'Thanne was the corps of Richarde, late kynge, spoyled, and, naked, as he was borne, cast behynde a man, and so caryed unreuercntly overthwarte the horse backe vnto the fryers at Leyceter; where

¹ W.H. Godfrey, A.R. Wagner and H.S. London, *The College of Arms*, London Survey Committee, 1963, p. 238.

² See A. Hamilton Thompson, *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St Mary in the Newarke, Leicester*, Leicester, 1937; D. Baldwin, 'King Richard's Grave in Leicester', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, vol. 60 (1986), pp. 21-24. Henry maintained close links with the college and granted it 100 marks yearly: Thompson, pp. 213, 230.

³ John Rous, *Historia Regum Angliae*, ed T. Hearne, 2nd edn, Oxford 1745, p. 218.

⁴ Sir George Buck, *The History of King Richard the Third* (1619), ed. A.N. Kincaid, reprinted with corrections, Gloucester 1982, p. 217; this passage is found in British Library, MS Egerton 2216, f. 308.

⁵ See A.N. Kincaid, 'Buck [Buc], Sir George, Master of the Revels and Historian', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 8, pp. 498-500.

after a season that he had lyen, that all men myght beholde hym, he was there with lytel reuerence buried'.⁶

Richard himself in August 1484 had shown how a king should act, by his removal of Henry VI's body from Chertsey abbey to a more fitting place of burial, in St George's Chapel, Windsor.⁷ Henry VII must have come to see that it was incumbent upon him to see that Richard was accorded a more decent commemoration than had happened in the immediate aftermath of Bosworth. Henry's eulogist, Bernard André (d. 1522), in his *Vita Henrici Septimi* of c. 1500-2, wrote of his ordering Richard to be buried with all reverence.⁸ It was then only a matter of time before some writers began to credit Henry with having treated his opponent's corpse with respect from the very time of Bosworth. The ultimate distortion of the facts is to be seen in Bacon's *Life of Henry VII* (written in c. 1621), where it is asserted that 'the King of his nobleness gave charge unto the friars of Leicester to see an honourable interment to be given to it, yet the religious people themselves, being not free from the humours of the vulgar, neglected it'.⁹

It is curious that Buck refers to Richard as being placed on a bed of earth, for that is precisely what did happen, against all known convention and precedent for a medieval monarch. How could Buck have known that Richard was buried in this way? The conventional means of burial of any member of the royal family would have been for the corpse to be enveloped in a shroud cloth and then placed within a lead casing.¹⁰ However, the body that was found on 5 September 2012 and almost immediately identified as that of Richard – an identification that was soon afterwards confirmed by DNA analysis¹¹ – had been placed in a relatively shallow grave, with neither shroud nor lead casing nor stone coffin.¹² At least, it had been placed in the choir of the church,

⁶ Robert Fabyan, *New Chronicles of England and France*, ed H. Ellis, London 1811, p. 673. Similar words were used in the Great Chronicle, including the remark that once Richard had been brought to Leicester, he was 'there lastly Inreverently buried': *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, London 1938, p. 238.

⁷ B.P. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, revised edn, New Haven and London 2001, p. 352.

⁸ *Historia Regis Henrici Septimi a Bernardo Andrea Tholosate Conscripta*, ed J. Gairdner, Rolls Series, vol. 10 (1858), p. 34: 'Moereor tamen tot fortiorum virorum stragem conspiciens, quos tamen honorifice mandare sepulchrae velim. Imprimis ipsius Richardi Regis in [gap in MS] cum omnimoda reverentia sepelendum sentio'.

⁹ Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII*, ed J. Rawson Lumby, Cambridge and London 1885, p. 5.

¹⁰ See e.g. B. Watson and W. White, 'Anne Mowbray, Duchess of York: a 15th-century child burial from the Abbey of St Clare, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets', *Trans. London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, vol. 67 (2016), pp. 227-60, at 236, 240-41, 248, 250.

¹¹ See Turi E. King and others, 'Identification of the remains of King Richard III', *Nature Communications*, vol. 5: article no. 5631 (2014).

¹² Michael Pitts, *Digging for Richard III: How Archaeology Found the King*, revised edn London 2015, p. 164: 'Skeleton I [i.e., Richard III] had been laid on its back with its legs straight out, feet reaching east towards the altar in the conventional Christian way. Unusually, however, the left

towards its west end and rather towards the south-west corner: this was close to, while not actually being, a place of particular honour.¹³

The Lawsuit: Petition of Ralph Hill against Walter Hilton about Richard III's Funerary Monument

The document which is printed below is a petition to the Lord Chancellor from Ralph Hill of Nottingham, grocer, against Walter Hilton, also of Nottingham, alabasterman. That Hill is described as 'grocer' is likely to mean only that he was a member of the local company of grocers or had been admitted to the freedom of Nottingham as a grocer. There was never a separate company for the handful of local traders and craftsmen who were known as alabastermen. Hill sets out in his petition that about twelve months previously he had made a contract with Sir Reynold Bray and Sir Thomas Lovell to make a tomb in Leicester where the bones of Richard III remain. For this work Hilton was to receive a sum of money, which was originally written in the petition as £50 but was then altered to £20; and he himself had received £20 'in hand' from Lovell and was to receive the rest – perhaps meaning £30 – when the tomb was actually set up and completed. The contract was made in the form of a pair of indentures, and Hilton entered into an obligation in the sum of £100 for the performance of the contract; that is to say, he stood to be liable for £100 if he failed to complete the work. Hill then claims that unknown to him Hilton had inserted his name and had caused a third party ('a straunger') to seal both the indentures and the obligation, and Bray and Lovell had then sued on the obligation, causing Hill to have to 'take a wey' with them – presumably meaning that he had had to settle with them to avoid the full £100 liability. The petition invokes the Chancellor's intervention, on the basis that Hill was without remedy at the common law (since the sealed documents would have appeared to be valid and binding instruments); and he asks the Chancellor to summon Hilton to be brought before him by writ of *sub pena*. The document concludes

arm, instead of matching the right which hung down the side, was bent and crossed the torso so that the two hands were together over the right hip, right hand apparently over left. No organic remains survived to confirm the hypothesis, but it seems reasonable ... to imagine that the wrists had been tied, which would explain why the right hand had not fallen off the hip. Otherwise the body appears to have been handled casually. There was no coffin. Neither was there a shroud: though fabric almost never survives, Leicester's archaeologists have come to recognise shrouded burials by the way skeletons lie in a compact, tight tube, with arms tight and legs close together.

This is not to say that the body had been singled out for punitive treatment. There is a rare but consistent practice, found around the world and in many different eras, of burying certain people – hated, feared, marked in some way as deeply abnormal – face down, or prone. Skeleton I had apparently been buried with haste and disinterest [*lege* uninterest], but not dramatized disrespect'. See R. Buckley *et al.*, 'The king in the car park: new light on the death and burial of Richard III in the Grey Friars Church, Leicester, in 1485', *Antiquity*, vol. 87 (2013), pp. 519-38.

¹³ The location is clearly shown in a plan, based on the archaeological excavations of 2013, reproduced by Deirdre O'Sullivan, *In the Company of the Preachers: The Archaeology of Medieval Friaries in England and Wales*, Leicester Archaeology Monographs, no 23, Leicester 2013, p. 200.

with Hill's own pledges for his prosecution of the case. An endorsement of the petition indicates that the petition had some effect: on 1 July in the eleventh year of Henry VII, that is 1496, a writ of *dedimus potestatem* had gone out for the receipt of Hilton's response. This endorsement enables the making of the contract to be dated to about July 1495 (twelve months earlier).

It is not clear exactly what was to be paid to whom, but my reading is that Hilton was to be paid £20 and Hill a total of £50, of which he received £20 in advance. The fact that the obligation was in a far larger sum, £100, does not mean that this was the same as the total value of the contract; £100 would have been an enormous sum to spend on an alabaster tomb at this date, and even £50 was a much greater sum than was normally allowed for such works. Hill and Hilton were sharing in the undertaking: neither was subcontracting to the other. The contract will presumably have set out precisely what each man's role was to be.

Both Hill and Hilton are reasonably well documented in the published archives of the corporation of Nottingham. Hilton's name has been familiar to those interested in medieval English alabaster sculpture ever since W.H. St John Hope drew attention to certain of these archival mentions of him, in articles on alabaster carvings published in *Archaeologia* in 1890 and in the *Archaeological Journal* in 1904.¹⁴ Assuming that there was only one man of this name, sometimes termed alabasterman, he had a long and, at least in political terms, successful life. He was sheriff of Nottingham in 1463-64, alderman and justice of the peace of Nottingham by December 1495, and mayor of Nottingham in both 1489-90 and 1496-97.¹⁵ In 1468 he had rights in three properties in the town's *womanmerket* released to him, although he must already have been a freeholder when he served as sheriff; in July 1480 the town agreed to lease him another piece of land.¹⁶ In January 1473 he was assessed to pay the very middling sum of 2s 8½d for the subsidy: he does not appear to have been a rich man.¹⁷ He had died by 12 October 1503, when his widow, Joan, surrendered the remainder of the lease of what were now described as three cottages in the 'Woman Merket'.¹⁸ She herself was dead before the close of the following year.¹⁹

Hilton is documented in two or three ways in connection with sculptural and architectural activities. In 1478-79 he was one of those appointed by the town

¹⁴ W.H. St John Hope, 'On the sculptured alabaster tablets called Saint John's Heads', *Archaeologia*, vol. 52 (1890), pt. 2, pp. 669-708, and 'On the early working of alabaster in England', *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 61 (1904), pp. 221-40.

¹⁵ *Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, vol. 2, ed W.H. Stevenson, London and Nottingham 1883, pp. 377, 415, 430 (sheriff); *ibid.*, vol. 3, ed W.H. Stevenson, London and Nottingham 1885, pp. 401 (alderman and JP), 459, 460 (mayor).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 419-20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 292.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 434.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 94.

to supervise the building work of the New Hall (the town's guildhall).²⁰ In the town's July 1480 agreement he is described as imagemaker, and this broader description of his skills accords with what we can deduce from a lawsuit that he brought in February 1483 against Emma Sherwood for 8s 8d which in January of the previous year she had agreed that she would pay him for gilding and painting a *tabernaculum* (tabernacle or retable) of St Philip in the church of St Peter, Nottingham.²¹ Intriguingly, he is also seen to have had other dealings with both Ralph Hill and other members of what seems to have been a Hill family of imagers or sculptors. Ralph Hill sued him in July 1496 – at almost the very date of the Chancery petition – for 15s 2d for various loads of hay.²² In 1470-71 Nicholas Hill was paid 13s 4d as Walter Hilton's servant, as a reward for going on the town's business at various occasions.²³

It is sometimes assumed that the designation 'alabasterman' was used exclusively of those who were engaged in carving the alabaster reliefs and statues that were so widely sold for devotional use, from the later fourteenth century onwards. Certainly, many and perhaps even most alabastermen did specialise as sculptors of such imagery. Thus, for instance, we find Nicholas Hill, alabasterman of Nottingham, suing William Bot, his salesman, for payment for fifty-eight carvings of the head of St John the Baptist, in 1491, while another Nottingham record refers to Nicholas Hill's payment for the carriage of heads of St John the Baptist to London.²⁴ Similarly, in 1512 we find the churchwardens of Ashton-under-Lyne (Lancs.) in litigation with Edward Hilton, alabasterman of Nottingham, and Robert Melleurs, bellfounder (*campanarius*) of Nottingham, about a contract for £40.²⁵ But alabastermen were also sometimes responsible for the making of tombs.

There were two forms that an alabaster tomb might take. The more costly option comprised a rectangular chest surmounted by a three-dimensional alabaster effigy and commonly also had alabaster side-panels showing weepers, figures of saints or at least coats of arms. Less expensive – but probably much less common – was a flat slab of alabaster with an incised figure representing the deceased. In Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, first published in 1577, Richard's tomb is described as incorporating 'a picture of alabaster representing his person'²⁶: that could be taken to suggest a mere incised slab. The cost of such a slab is not known, but a marble slab set with a figure-brass would only

²⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 298.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 332.

²² *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 296.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 420.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 18, 28.

²⁵ N.L. Ramsay, 'Alabaster', in *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*, ed. J. Blair and N.L. Ramsay, London and Rio Grande, Ohio, 1991, pp. 29-40, at 37.

²⁶ *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, vol. 3, London 1808, p. 447.

have cost something in the region of £1 to £2 13s 4d.²⁷ Clearly, then, the payment by Bray and Lovell must have been for a sculpture that was carved in the round and thus will have been placed on the top of a table tomb. This is also confirmed by the comment in William Burton's *Description of Leicestershire* that Henry VII 'erected for him a faire Alablaster Monument, with his picture cut out, and made thereon'.²⁸ This, too, is suggestive of a three-dimensional effigy, of the classic alabaster type that was so widespread in the second half of the fifteenth century.²⁹ The documented costs of alabaster tombs also bear out this view. A contract made in 1419 by two Derbyshire 'kervers' for two alabaster effigies (to go on a tomb chest that was the subject of a separate contract with another carver, of London) specified 43 marks as the cost of the effigies, the total for the monument being around £60.³⁰ Comparably, the alabaster tomb with effigies of Ralph and Katharine Green at Lowick (Northants.), also contracted for in 1419, was to cost £40.³¹

There is nothing exceptional in the fact that Sir Thomas Lovell and Sir Reynold Bray were involved in the commissioning of the monument. Lovell was Henry VII's chief financial adviser (as he had been for Richard III), acting as head of the Chamber from 1485 until 1492 as well as being Treasurer of the Household from August 1492 until April 1522 and (less significantly) Chancellor of the Exchequer from October 1485 until May 1516.³² Bray was equally closely involved in running Henry's finances. He had made his way up in life as a financial manager. Quite early on in his career, he was receiver-general for Margaret, countess of Richmond, and trustee for her dower, and then after Bosworth he entered Henry VII's service and was given charge of 'the entire revenue machinery of the kingdom'.³³ Bray was also recognised as someone who took a particular interest in building projects: this is seen in his correspondence with Oliver King, Bishop of Bath and Wells.³⁴ Quite early in his career, in 1473-74, in a striking parallel to his dealings with James Keyley which are discussed below, he is recorded as having paid 60s to 'Raff Tykhull in

²⁷ See the range of sums quoted by R.H. D'Elboux, 'Testamentary brasses', *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 29 (1949), pp. 183-91, at 188-90; and see F.A. Greenhill, *The Incised Slabs of Leicestershire and Rutland*, Leicester 1958, p. 17.

²⁸ W. Burton, *The Description of Leicester Shire* (London, 1622), p. 163.

²⁹ Some 339 alabaster effigies in England dating from before c. 1500 are listed by Sally Badham, 'The rise to popularity of alabaster for memorialisation in England', *Church Monuments*, vol. 31 (2016), pp. 11-67.

³⁰ J. Bayliss, 'An indenture for two alabaster effigies', *Church Monuments*, vol. 16 (2001), pp. 22-29.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² W.C. Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration, 1485-1547*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1952, pp. 484, 485.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 451-58. M. Condon, 'From caitiff and villain to *pater patriae*: Reynold Bray and the profits of office', *Profit and Piety and the Professions*, ed M. Hicks, Gloucester 1990, pp. 137-68.

³⁴ See C. Wilson, 'The designer of Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster Abbey', in *The Reign of Henry VII: Proceedings of the 1993 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed B. Thompson, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 5, Stamford 1995, pp. 133-56, at 140-41.

party of payment of the making of my lord 'Tombe'.³⁵ Tykhull is not documented as a sculptor or mason and was perhaps a figure akin to Keyley: an enabler of some sort. The monument must have been to Margaret's first husband, Edmund Tudor (d. 1456), Earl of Richmond (and father of the future Henry VII), and it was for erection in the Greyfriars' church at Carmarthen; unlike Richard III's, it was saved at the dissolution, being moved in 1536 to St David's cathedral. Browne Willis in the early eighteenth century described it as a table tomb, still extant with a flat stone on top: 'It had once a Brass Image near the full length, and four Escocheons at the four Corners, all of Brass, with a Brass Plate round the Rim or Verge'.³⁶ Willis thought it very like Prince Arthur's tomb in Worcester cathedral.

Thanks to the accounts of such men as Sir George Buck and William Burton, we can be confident that an alabaster monument was indeed erected to mark Richard's burial in the Franciscan church, whether or not it was at all close to where his body had been interred. Buck's reference to its being of marble can safely be discounted as significant: marble is a word that was often applied to alabaster, then as now. It will doubtless have remained in place until the friary was dissolved, on 10 November 1538; it will then have shared the fate of almost every tomb that had been set up in the church of a religious house: immediate destruction, along with the church itself.

Epitaph

Associated with the monument was a Latin epitaph, in sixteen lines of elegiac couplets, of which more than one transcript is extant. Buck in his *History of King Richard the Third* describes the epitaph as having been seen by him in a book chained to a table in a chamber in the Guildhall (did he or his source perhaps mean the Guildhall Chamber, a room that was accessible to the public?).³⁷ Oddly, he describes it as the work of 'some grateful pen', but it is clearly the very opposite of that, being instead a justification of Henry VII's rightfulness as ruler and a tribute to his generosity towards a king who betrayed his own nephew.

It survives in more than one version, none of which seems to be wholly reliable, and it is not possible in this present discussion to assess their merits and reliability.³⁸ Two date from the early sixteenth century: British Library, MS Add. 45131, f. 10^v, and College of Arms, MS I. 3, f. 4.³⁹ The former is from the

³⁵ Westminster Abbey Muniments, 32407, f. 11^v.

³⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Willis 108, p. 10 (printed), dated 1719. The tomb was 8 ft long and 4 ft high.

³⁷ *History of King Richard the Third*, ed Kincaid (cited in n. 4), p. 217.

³⁸ The most satisfactory discussion to date seems to be that of Philip Schwyzer, *Shakespeare and the Remains of Richard III*, Oxford 2013, pp. 25-28.

³⁹ The former is illustrated by Ashdown-Hill, *The Ricardian*, vol. 18, p. 44, fig. 2; it is printed, unsatisfactorily, in *Finding Richard III*, p. 66 (full refs n. 41). As a text it is unreadable.

circle if not the hand of Thomas Wriothesley (d. 1534), Garter King of Arms, while the latter is by the hand of Thomas Hawley (d. 1557), Lancaster Herald.

It has been printed several times – first by Buck and then by the herald Francis Sandford (d. 1694),⁴⁰ and then in modern times. Several modern writers have examined it closely.⁴¹ The late John Ashdown-Hill was surely right to draw attention to parallels with the epitaph of Queen Katharine, the widow of Henry V, which was written in Henry VII's reign: both are in narrative form, praise Henry VII, refer to the kingdom as 'Britanna' and address directly either the queen's father (in Katharine's case) or Henry himself (in Richard's). That Richard is described as king is no cause to doubt its general authenticity. It was perhaps set out on a board of some sort, placed near, rather than on the side of, the tomb; if Richard's monument is correctly interpreted as a three-dimensional effigy surmounting a rectangular table-tomb, there would not have been a suitable space on the side panels for such a long inscription. It was a political statement rather than an inscription: for parallels we must look to the historical *tabulae* (or tables) that were set up on the walls of cathedrals and other great churches in England in the later Middle Ages, usually to inform visitors about either the general history of the church or about a particular person who was buried there. Such *tabulae* had inscriptions that were painted on wooden panels, either directly or on sheets of parchment that were pasted onto the panels; many survived into the seventeenth century, and a few are still extant today.⁴²

The epitaph is given here from Buck's version, from an unknown source and with his emendations of its 'faults and corruptions'.

Epitaphum Regis Richardi Tertii, sepulti ad Leicestriam, jussu et sumptibus Sti Regis Henrici Septimi.⁴³

⁴⁰ Buck, *History of King Richard*, ed Kincaid, p. 217; Francis Sandford, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England and Monarchs of Great Britain ... from the Conquest, Anno 1066 to the Year, 1677*, London 1677, p. 410; 2nd edn, ed S. Stebbing, London 1707, p. 435. Reprinted from Buck by J. Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, vol. 1, London, 1795-1815, pt. 2, p. 298.

⁴¹ J. Ashdown-Hill, 'The epitaph of Richard III', *The Ricardian*, vol. 18 (2008), pp. 31-45; idem, in his *The Last Days of Richard III and the Fate of his DNA*, 2nd edn, Stroud 2013, pp. 31-45; Emily Kearns, 'Richard III's epitaph revisited', *The Ricardian*, vol. 24 (2014), pp. 75-86; [J. Ashdown-Hill and E. Kearns, in] *Finding Richard III: The Official Account of Research by the Retrieval and Reburial Project*, ed A.J. Carson *et al.*, Horstead, Norf., 2014, pp. 65-67, Appx. 2; and A. Kincaid, 'Researching Richard III's epitaph', *The Ricardian*, vol. 27 (2017), pp. 117-29.

⁴² Useful introductions are by M. Van Dussen, 'Tourists and *tabulae* in late-medieval England', in *Truth and Tales: Cultural Mobility and Medieval Media*, ed Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, Columbus, Ohio, 2015, pp. 238-54, and Sonsoles García González, 'The *tabulae*: ephemeral epigraphy in the surroundings of medieval tombs', *Church Monuments*, vol. 31 (2016), pp. 68-84; note also the discussion of satirical epitaphs on Richard Neville (d. 1471), Earl of Warwick, by C.T.L. Visser-Fuchs, 'Warwick and Wavrin: two case studies on the literary background and propaganda of Anglo-Burgundian relations in the Yorkist period', PhD dissertation, University College London, 2002, pp. 114-24.

⁴³ This title or heading is not present in College of Arms MS I.3, which is simply headed Epitaphe. It seems first to have been given by Buck: see his *History of King Richard the Third*, ed Kincaid, p. 217. 'Sti' (for Sancti) is presumably an error for Sacri, just as Epitaphum is an error for Epitaphium.

Hic ego,⁴⁴ quem vario tellus sub marmore claudit,
Tertius a justa⁴⁵ voce Ricardus eram.
Tutor eram patriae,⁴⁶ patrius pro jure nepotis;
Dirupta, tenui regna Britanna, fide.
Sexaginta dies binis dumtaxat adeptis
Aestatesque tuli tunc⁴⁷ mea sceptras duas.
Fortiter in bello certans⁴⁸ desertus ab Anglis,
Rex Henrice, tibi, septime, succubui.
At sumptu, pius ipse, tuo, sic ossa dicoras,⁴⁹
Regem olimque facis regis honore coli.
Quatuor exceptis jam tantum, quinque bis annis,
Acta trecenta quidem, lustra salutis erant.
Antequam⁵⁰ Septembris undena luce kalendas,
Reddideram rubrae jura petita⁵¹ Rosae.
At⁵² mea, quisquis eris, propter commissas precare,
Sit minor ut precibus poena levat⁵³ tuis.

Bishop White Kennett in *The Complete History of England* (1706) provided his readers with a versified English translation, and a partly modernised version of that is given below:⁵⁴

I who am laid beneath this marble stone,
Richard the Third, as rightly called,
My country's guardian in my nephew's name,
By trust betrayed I to the kingdom came.
Two years and sixty days save two I reigned
And bravely strove in battle; but, abandoned by the English,

⁴⁴ I.3: equo [absurdly].

⁴⁵ I.3: multa

⁴⁶ I.3: Nam patriae tutor

⁴⁷ I.3: non

⁴⁸ I.3: merito

⁴⁹ I.3: decoras

⁵⁰ I.3: antequam

⁵¹ I.3: debita jura

⁵² I.3 begins: Sed at

⁵³ I.3: pena fienda

⁵⁴ *A Complete History of England: With the Lives of All the Kings and Queens Thereof*, [ed White Kennett], 3 vols, London 1706, vol. 1, p. 577; 2nd edn, 3 vols, London 1719, vol. 1, p. 577; reprinted by e.g. John Hackett, *Select and Remarkable Epitaphs ...*, 2 vols, London 1757, vol. 2, p. 92; William Hutton, *The Battle of Bosworth Field*, ed J. Nichols, London 1813, pp. 221-22; Caroline A. Halsted, *Richard III as Duke of Gloucester and King of England*, 2 vols, London 1844; reprinted in facsimile with new index, Dursley 1977, vol. 2, p. 476). A more literal translation is given by J. Ashdown-Hill, *The Last Days of Richard III*, Stroud 2010, p. 102; another version is given by Schwyzler, *Shakespeare and the Remains of Richard III* (cited in n. 38), p. 26.

To you, King Henry, the Seventh, I yielded.
At your cost these bones shall say:
You have done for a king what kingly honour requires.
In [the year 1484]
And on the eleventh of the Kalends of September [22 August]
I restored its rights to the red rose.
I beg you, whoever you are, to pray, so that the burden of my crimes
May be lightened by your prayers.

Second Contemporary Mention of the Making of a Monument in Leicester to Richard

Puzzlingly, Henry VII's chamber accounts show a preliminary payment being made in the year 1495 to an entirely different individual, James Keyley, for a tomb for Richard. The original chamber account for the relevant part of this year is lost (although, tantalisingly, it survives from just over a fortnight later, onwards, being extant from 1 October 1495 until 21 August 1496), but two sets of excerpts made by or for Craven Ord (1755-1832) when the account existed in full are extant in Additional MS 7099 in the British Library.⁵⁵ The record of payment to Keyley has been quoted from the second of these sets by various writers; it is at folio 129, and is part of a very short series of excerpts, beginning at folio 126, which were perhaps written by Craven Ord himself. The first set of excerpts is much fuller but has not been cited before, and yet it has the advantage that it enables the payment to be seen more clearly in context and to be dated with certainty to the year 1495. The wording of the excerpt about the tomb is identical in each case, except that the first (at f. 30) gives the place where the King was on that day as 'Rekyng' which can be identified as

⁵⁵ There are extensive excerpts at ff. 2-96, while a second, much smaller, selection is at ff. 126-135. Selected entries from the first set were published by Samuel Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, London 1831, pp. 87-113, the payment to Keyley being at p. 105. It may be Ord himself who wrote at the start of the second set: 'Articles of the Expences of Hen.7, extracted from [*two or three words deleted and then a whole line deleted*] the Originals now in the Exchequer, every Leaf signed by the King'. This is entirely plausible, even though Ord is not a man in whose word one can have much confidence. In the case of three other account books from the King's Remembrancer's Office that are now in the British Library (MSS Add. 21480 and 21481 and Egerton 3025), Ord sought to cover his thieving tracks by pasting in the signatures of collectors of an earlier date. That the original chamber account book for this date is lost is stated by W.C. Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration, 1485-1547*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1952, p. 463. The reliability of the excerpts is attested by the fact that from just a few weeks after the Keyley payment their source is extant among the Exchequer Accounts Various in the National Archives: E 101/414/6. Bentley stated in an addendum to his *Excerpta Antiqua* (p. 427), that the original manuscript of the accounts [i.e., for 1495-6 as well as all the other years covered by the excerpts, presumably] 'is now in the possession of Sir Thomas Phillipps'. No pages are missing from the beginning of E 101/414/6, and so it is evident that Bentley's source was an account book that began a few weeks earlier but otherwise duplicated it.

Rockingham. In full, it reads 'Sept 11th. At Rekyng. Item to James Keyley for King Richard Tombe [L]10 0[s] 12[d]'.⁵⁶

There is absolutely no reason to doubt that the payment was in connection with the making of a tomb for Richard III and that it must have been in Leicester: Henry would not have wished to exhume Richard's body and transport it anywhere else, lest that encourage any latent sympathy for him. Besides, as Colvin remarked in his discussion of the matter in *The King's Works*, this payment came immediately after Henry himself had been in Leicester.⁵⁷

But who was James Keyley, and what is the connexion between this payment and the contract with Walter Hilton and Ralph Hill? Keyley is thinly but fairly securely documented. He was not a sculptor, apparently (although the late John Harvey included him, albeit with a question-mark, in his dictionary of English medieval sculptors and architects⁵⁸). Given the rarity of his name, he is likely to be the James Keyley, 'gentleman', to whom the Crown granted some lands at Yoxhall (Staffs.) for fifteen years in 1498.⁵⁹ The parish of Yoxhall is adjacent to that of Tutbury, and is thus on the edge of the area where alabaster was 'dug' or quarried in the later Middle Ages.⁶⁰ A scatter of other references enable elements of Keyley's life to be reconstructed. For instance, he is very plausibly also identifiable with the James Kayley to whom Henry VII on 24 September 1485 had made a grant, during the minority of Edward, Earl of Warwick, of the office of porter of Warwick castle and certain related offices, 'in consideracioun of the good and true service which oure trusty servaunt hath doon unto us in our last victorious journey'.⁶¹ That is to say, he was a supporter of Henry VII, even before he gained the throne. The records of his activities all point to his life being spent in north Warwickshire and Staffordshire. He received land at Shenstone (Staffs.) in 1473, and that village is surely where he lived: after his death, his executor established a chantry for his soul in a purpose-built chapel adjoining Shenstone church, for a priest who was also to teach grammar to the

⁵⁶ TNA: E 101/414/6, ff. 1-49 (corresponding to Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 105-10). Henry's chamber accounts are also extant for the two following years, 22 August 1496 to 21 August 1497 and 1 Oct. 1497 to 30 Sept. 1498 (TNA: E 101/414/6, ff. 49v-91, and E 101/414/16, respectively; the latter corresponds to Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 114 ff.); neither of these accounts appears to include any mention of James Keyley or of further expenditure on the tomb.

⁵⁷ *The King's Works: The Middle Ages*, ed H.M. Colvin, 2 vols, London 1963, vol. 1, p. 490 n. 5.

⁵⁸ J.H. Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects*, 2nd edn Stroud 1984, p. 168: 'carver?'

⁵⁹ *CPR 1494-1509*, p. 140.

⁶⁰ Various references to the extraction of alabaster from in and around Tutbury are given by N.J. Tringham, 'Industries: gypsum', in VCH, *Staffordshire*, vol. 10 *Tutbury and Needwood Forest*, London 2007, pp. 92-94, and see *ibid.*, pp. 22, 82 and 132.

⁶¹ *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, ed W. Campbell, 2 vols, Rolls Series, 60 (1873-77), vol. 1, p. 55.

young children of the parish.⁶² Keyley is just the sort of entrepreneur who might have owned an alabaster pit or quarry. As Jon Bayliss has suggested, it is also possible that he was the third party who sealed the indentures and obligation. He is known to have been involved in at least one other transaction with Lovell.⁶³

Second Monument in Leicester to Richard

Once Richard's alabaster monument had been erected, his supposed burial place will have remained well known even after the Grey Friars' convent had been demolished. The friars' church was part of the property which came into the ownership of the Herrick family of Leicester. It is stated of Christopher Wren (1589-1658), the future dean of Windsor and father of Sir Christopher Wren, in the Wren family history written by his great-nephew Christopher, *Parentalia* (1750), that in 1612 he was shown by Mr Robert Herrick, some time mayor of Leicester and the then owner of the site, the garden which covered Richard's presumed burial place. There, Robert Herrick had set up 'a handsome stone pillar, three feet high, with the inscription: "Here lies the body of Richard III. Some time king of England"'.⁶⁴ No trace of this monument has subsequently been recorded.

Supposed Stone Coffin of Richard in Leicester

The fact that Richard was buried in Leicester was sufficiently well known that tradition came to supply what in reality had never existed. From the early seventeenth century onwards, visitors to the town were sometimes shown the remains of what was said to be the stone coffin or sarcophagus in which Richard's body had been placed. The first such visitor who has left us a record of what he saw is John Evelyn: his diary recounts how in August 1654 'I went ... to the old and raged City of Licester ... famous for the Tombe of the tyrant Rich: the Third, which is now converted to a Cistern at which (I think) catell drink: also here in one of the Churches lies buried the magnificent Cardinal Wolsey ...'.⁶⁵ Over the next century and more, other visitors saw what was possibly the same stone coffin, which was moved and became broken as time went by; with irresistible piquant irony, it was said to have become a watering trough at the White Horse Inn. For instance, the antiquary William Hutton wrote that 'I took a journey to Leicester, in 1758, to see a trough which

⁶² I owe this and other references to an informative article by Jon Bayliss, 'Who Was James Keyley?', *Church Monuments Society Newsletter*, 28, no. 2 (Spring 2013), pp. 21-2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ C. Wren, *Parentalia, or, Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens* (London, 1750), p. 114.

⁶⁵ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer, 5 vols (Oxford, 1955), III, p. 122. An earlier mention of the stone coffin serving as a horses' drinking trough is in John Speed, *The Historie of Great Britaine* (London, 1611), p. 725 col. b.

had been the repository of one of the most singular bodies that ever existed, but found it had not withstood the ravages of time. The best intelligence I could obtain, was that it was destroyed about the latter end of the reign of George the First, and some of the pieces placed in steps in a cellar, at the same inn where it had served as a trough'.⁶⁶

Ralph Hill's Petition: The Document

It is endorsed with two memoranda, the first of which states that on July 1st, in the eleventh year of Henry VII (that is, 1496), a writ of *dedimus potestatem* was sent to Robert Pole, clerk, in effect for him to receive the response of Walter Hilton by the next quindene of Michaelmas. The first endorsement is crucial for the document's dating, since otherwise our dating of it could be no more than the timespan when the Chancellor, John Morton, was both a cardinal and archbishop of Canterbury – that is to say, between about the end of September 1493 and his death on 15 Sept. 1500. It has not previously been printed, although it has featured more than once in the relevant modern literature: the fullest discussions are those of Rhoda Edwards, 'King Richard's tomb at Leicester', in *The Ricardian* in 1975,⁶⁷ and the late John Ashdown-Hill, "King Richard's Tombe", in his book on *The Last Days of Richard III*.⁶⁸

As a legal document, the petition is of a standard form, and in no way remarkable. The two pledges for the prosecution were doubtless each men who specialised in fulfilling such functions; the first, indeed, appears as a pledge in an adjacent petition, C 1/206/71.

Note on Editorial practice: Contractions have been expanded, and square brackets have been used for conjectural readings and other editorial interventions. Uncertain readings are followed by a question mark within round brackets. Proper names have had their first letter capitalised, and some punctuation has been added in line with modern practice. Since the document is rather the worse for wear – particularly as a result of having had some form of reagent such as oak gall applied to a large area of it (necessitating the use of an ultraviolet-ray light) – it is presented here on a line-by-line basis.

National Archives of England and Wales, Early Chancery Proceedings, C 1/206/69.

To the moste Reuerent father in god my lord Cardynall the Archebisshop of Caunterbury and Chaun[ce]ll[or] of Englund

⁶⁶ W. Hutton, *The Battle of Bosworth Field*, (cited in n. 54), p. 143.

⁶⁷ *The Ricardian*, vol. 3, no 50 (Sept. 1975), pp. 8-9; reprinted in *Richard III: Crown and People*, ed. James Petre (London: Richard III Society, 1985), pp. 29-30, and again in *The Ricardian Bulletin* (Magazine of the Richard III Society), Sept. 2014, pp. 37-38.

⁶⁸ Ashdown-Hill, *The Last Days of Richard III* (cited in n. 54), pp. 97-104, 162-3.

1. Sheweth and compleyneth vnto your goode and gracious lordship your daily Oratour and bedman [Ra]uff Hill of the Towne of Notyngnam Grocer howe that one [*two words illegible; must have been* Walter Hylton] of the same aliblasterman
2. aboute this tyme xij moneth couenaunted and bargeyned with the right honorabill(?) Sir Reynold [Bray] and Sir Thomas Louell knyghtes to make and cause to be m[ade] a Toumbe within the Church of
3. [Newark ⁶⁹ *deleted*] \of Frers *inserted above the line*/ in the Towne of Leycestr where the bonys of kyng Richard the iij^{de} resten, for the which Toumbe the seid Walter shuld haue [1 li. *deleted*] \xx li. *inserted above line*/and therof [he rece]yued of the seid Sir Thomas xx li. in han[d]
4. and the remenaunt shuld receyue at such tyme as the forseid Toumbe wer(?) [set] up and fynys[s]h[ed] in the Church aforseid, as it apperith by a peyer of Indentures of coue[nant] therof betwene the
5. seid Sir Reynold and Sir Thomas of the one partie and the seid [Walter] therof made. In wh[ich] In[dent]uris and also in an obligacion of C li. made for the performaunce of the [*one word illegible*] seid Walter,
6. of an vntrue and subtile mynde, unknowyng(?) to your seid Oratour put in the name of your seid Oratour and caused a straunger afor the seid Sir Reynold and Sir Thomas to seele aswell
7. the seid Indentures as oblig[acion(?)] and [so it] is gracious lord that nowe for non performaunce of the seid bargeyn the seid Sir Reynold and Sir Thomas sued the obligacion iointly ayenst the other(?)
8. Walter and your seid Oratour, till your seid Oratour was fayne to take a wey with the seid Sir Reynold and the seid Sir Thomas to his grete coste and vtter vndoing. In which case your(?)
9. seid Oratour is without remedye at the comyn lawe or otherwise, vnlesse your gracious lordship to hym be shewed in that behalf, wherefore in tender consideracion of the premisses d[*one or two words illegible*]
10. your seid Oratour neuer knewe nor was preuy to any of the premisses. It may pleas the same your gracious lordship to be lym[itied] th[*a few letters illegible*] to graunt a writte sub pena to be direct to the seid Walter
11. commaundyng hym by the same to appere be fore the kyng in his Chauncerie at a certeyn day and payne by your lordship' to be lym[itied] ther to answer to the premisses and [*three words almost wholly illegible*]
12. to doo and receyue in that behalf, as by your goode lordship' shalbe thought resonabill accordyng to right and conscience. And this at the reuer[*rest of word illegible*] of [*two words illegible*] the wey(?) of [*word illegible*]

⁶⁹ 'Newark' indicates the college of St Mary of the Annunciation of the Newark, where Richard's body had been displayed for two days, back in August 1485.

13. and your seid poore Oratour shall daily pray for the preseruacion of your goode lordship long to endure.

Pleg' de pros Willelmus Budde de London mercer(?)

Thomas Albon de eadem yoman(?)

Endorsed: Memorandum quod primo die Iulij anno regni regis h[enrici] vij vndecimo et termino sancte Trinitatis emanauit breu[is] dedimus potestatem direct' Roberto Pole cleric' ad recipiend' res[pons]' infrascripti (?) Walteri Hylton retornabil' xv^a [*i.e.*, quindena] Michaelis tunc proxima futura. Coram domino Rege in Cancellaria sua in xv [*i.e.*, quindena] [sancti(?)] Iohannis Baptiste proxima futura.

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