

Shedding the Earthly Crown Imperial for a Heavenly Crown: Henry VII, Dead and Buried

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Introduction

Graves are amongst the earliest sources of our understanding of human culture.¹ They are the product of rites of passage; the rituals through which humans mark the critical events of their lives. Such rites changed with changes of culture. Since Arnold van Gennep first made them a subject for academic study these shifts in traditions have been intensively studied especially in recent decades as drama, literature,² spectacle, and religion.³ It was not simply the personal aspect of what was called ‘the art of dying well’ that was important in burial rituals.⁴ Funerals also had a public function. They were drama, a drama that embodied the whole social structure. The funeral procession had to include relatives and friends, servants and the ubiquitous poor so that all could acknowledge the place of

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¹ See the immense detail in Liv Nilsson Stutz and Sarah Tarlow (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For the ordinary rituals, see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

² Peter C. Herman, *Royal Poetrie: Monarchic Verse and the Political Imaginary of Early Modern England* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 15.

³ Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in the Renaissance 1570 - 1625* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997).

⁴ The literature on the *ars moriendi* was considerable. However, this article is not concerned with the problems of approaching death properly, but with the funeral. For the *ars moriendi* see Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1981) and Philippe Aries, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia Ranum (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Press, 1974); Clare Gittins, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); and Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, ‘The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1989), pp. 259-275.

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

the dead and the living in the community. It identified and reinforced that community. This was a critical part of the social and religious bonds that tied the world together. Grand funerals for prominent people were considered a necessary part of the symbolism that maintained the due hierarchy of the kingdom. Nobles were obliged to provide a spectacle for the people suitable to their rank and status. Monarchs routinely overruled those who for piety or poverty would have preferred a modest burial. The heralds ensured that all due propriety was observed.

The importance of such rites is clear from the multitude of different sources in which accounts can be found and the prominence given to them in those accounts.⁵ This was true of magnates who had to have appropriate funerals although these too might be shaped to fit the political needs of family and fortune.⁶ A royal funeral, necessarily, had to overshadow that of any magnate, however magnificent. It also had to emulate or exceed the practices in neighbouring kingdoms. The claims made in a regal funeral established the status of the kingdom itself.⁷

The King Is Dead, Long Live the King

What was important in any funeral was on a different plane in the interment of a monarch. So important were royal funerals that fellow monarchs, to signify their respect, held special services in their own countries for the deceased. The symbolic relationship of a ruler and kingdom meant that the society as a whole was involved in the re-establishment of the state that the monarch had embodied. The monarch was wedded to the kingdom; the two made one. The funeral should lead seamlessly to the inauguration of a successor. This was a problem when a different line was taking the throne, especially by force. It was still more difficult when no funeral service could be held. James IV of Scotland died excommunicate and Henry VIII brought what was thought to be his body to England, where it remained unburied for more than half a century.

⁵ This is a theme in Nicola McDonald and W. M. Ormrod (eds), *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004).

⁶ See Gerald Broce and Richard Wunderli, 'The Funeral Of Henry Percy, Sixth Earl Of Northumberland', *Albion*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1990), pp. 199-215.

⁷ See Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1960).

While there was a need for the funeral ceremonies to appear immutable as the ceremonial aspects carried such a wealth of political and social symbolism, in fact they had to be altered to meet the specific needs of particular moments. How do you conduct a funeral rite for a deposed king? Edward II's funeral included an effigy of the dead king, a practice followed on and off for over two hundred years.⁸ When his son Edward III died there were further alterations to the protocol.⁹ The ritual in the fifteenth century was significantly different from the thirteenth.¹⁰ The death and quick interment of Henry VI at Chertsey could not in any case observe the full protocol. A royal funeral was spectacle and drama, a critical event.

Henry VII's Early Funeral Preparations

It is not, therefore surprising that Henry VII, and his closest courtiers,¹¹ gave much thought to his funeral long before his death. It would either confirm or destabilise the new dynasty. It needed to impress on the world the authority of the new dynasty and its continuity with the past. Earlier Tudor funerals had helped establish the necessary rituals. Arthur's death had created a delicate problem of balance for Henry VII but, as the herald John Writhe describes, Henry provided suitably for a procession in London followed by a funeral and interment at Worcester Cathedral that required the political elite to participate in a display of political allegiance.¹² The

⁸ See Joel Burden, 'Re-writing a Rite of Passage: The Peculiar Funeral of Edward II', in McDonald and Ormrod (eds), *Rites of Passage*, pp. 24-26. However, Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*, pp. 84-85 says there was no effigy at Richard II's funeral or Henry IV's.

⁹ Chris Given-Wilson, 'The Exequies of Edward III and the Royal Funeral Ceremony in Late Medieval England', *English Historical Review*, vol. 124, no. 507 (2009), pp. 257-282.

¹⁰ For some discussion on the thirteenth century, see D. A. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (London: Hambledon, 1996), p. 417.

¹¹ There is no place here for a discussion of Henry VII's court and courtiers. In any case, S. J. Gunn's new book on them, *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England* is expected in 2016. For work already in print, see his 'Conseils et conseillers en Angleterre sous les premiers Tudors (1485-1558)', in *Conseils et conseillers dans l'Europe de la Renaissance v.1450-v.1550*, ed. Cédric Michon (Rennes: Rennes University Press, 2012), pp. 21-46, and 'The Court of Henry VII', in *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, eds Steven Gunn and Antheun Janse (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 132-134.

¹² See Ralph Houlbrooke, 'Prince Arthur's Funeral', in *Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales: Life, Death and Commemoration*, eds Steven Gunn and Linda Monckton (Woodbridge: Boydell

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

death of the Queen, Elizabeth of York, in February 1503 was followed by an even more splendid funeral managed by the under treasurer and master of the great wardrobe, Sir Robert Litton, the total cost of which came to £2,832-7-3.¹³ Both had elaborate processions and appropriate heraldic paintings and carvings around their hearse, produced by the leading artists of the day.¹⁴

These were mere preludes to his own funeral and the success this achieved has resulted in numerous contemporary and subsequent historical relations of the presentation, the most recent that of Sam Wood.¹⁵

The Location

Amongst the most important aspects of an impressive rite was provision of a tomb and preparation for an appropriate funeral. There was also the question of where that tomb should be. The Yorkists had avoided burial at Westminster, and were buried at Windsor, where Richard III had reinterred Henry VI in 1484.¹⁶ The symbolism of Westminster tradition was a powerful image for the Tudors. Although he could still contemplate a second marriage, Henry was by 1503 preparing for his own death, and making decisions about his last resting place. Henry, in contemplation of his end, had determined to leave an imperishable monument behind him and after first intending a chapel at Windsor, which would have laid him to rest beside his father-in-law Edward IV, he was by 1503 spending lavishly

and Brewer, 2009), pp. 64-76. Also, the main financial record is National Archives, Kew [hereafter NA], Lord Chamberlain's Office [hereafter LC] 2/1, f. 34.

¹³ NA, LC 2/1, f. 55: "whereof he received according to the account £433-6-8 from Sir John Heron treasurer of the Chamber." See also British Library Manuscripts [hereafter BL] Add. MS. 59,899, Chamber and Memoranda Book 1502-1505 kept by John Heron, f. 24. £2399-0-7 is entered in allowances, although elsewhere in this account £2399-19-7 is entered.

¹⁴ Erna Auerbach, *Tudor Artists: A Study of Painters in the Royal Service and of Portraiture on Illuminated Documents from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth I* (London: Athlone Press, 1954), pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ Sam Wood, 'The Funeral of Henry VII and the drama of Death', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, eds Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 372-380.

¹⁶ Ralph A. Griffiths, 'The Burials of King Henry VI at Chertsey and Windsor', in *St George's Chapel, Windsor: History and Heritage*, eds N. Saul and T. Tatton-Brown (Wimborne, UK: Dovecote Press, 2010), pp.100-107, 239-241. See also A. F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs with R. A. Griffiths, *The Royal Funerals of the House of York at Windsor* (London: Richard III Society, 2005).

upon a new chapel at Westminster. He obtained bulls from Alexander VI and Julius II for indulgences for the new chapel, identical to those issued for the prominent titular basilican church of Ara Coeli in Rome.¹⁷

The old chapel was demolished and the new one begun. The date when the foundation stone was laid is generally given as 24 January 1503, based on Holinshed, but the date must be queried. On 18 December 1503, Heron, by the King's command had delivered and paid no less than £30,000 for purchasing of land for the King's chapel at Westminster.¹⁸ On 20 January 1504¹⁹ John Heron records in his accounts a payment of £10 to master Estfield "for conveyance of the King's tomb from Windsor to Westminster."²⁰ Possibly 1503 is Old Style so we would translate it as 1504.²¹ The first stone was laid February 11 1503/4. Thereafter, under the supervision of the Abbot of Westminster, a building was rising which was costing several thousand pounds a year; a significant percentage of Henry's income. The abbot's reckonings for "the Kings werks there" were made with the King alone. When finished it was to have glazed windows with images, badges and cognisances, and the walls, doors, windows, arches and vaults within and without were to be "painted and garnished and adorned with our arms badges and cognisance and other convenient painting... as to a King well appertaineth."²²

In addition, the King was establishing almshouses at Westminster, so that he could be assured of prayers for his soul. The chapel, as he reiterated in his will, was to be lavishly adorned as already discussed with the prior of St Bartholomew, the architect and Master of the Works of the chapel. A full size statue of Henry was also commanded "of timber covered and wrought accordingly with plate of fine gold, in manner of an armed

¹⁷ Wilhelm Busch, *England Under the Tudors: Henry VII 1485-1509*, trans. Alice Todd (London: A. D. Innes, 1895) pp. 311-312. For a recent exhaustive review of the chapel see the entries in W. T. Tatton-Brown and Richard Mortimer (eds), *Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel of Henry VII* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).

¹⁸ BL Add. MS. 59,899 f. 4d.

¹⁹ BL Add. MS. 59,899 f. 9d.

²⁰ BL Add. MS. 59,899 f. 11.

²¹ Helen Marshall Pratt, *Westminster Abbey: Its Architecture, History and Monuments*, vol. 1 (Alcester, UK: Read Books, 2007), p. 411 gives 24 January 1503, based on Holinshed.

²² The lengthy document was printed lavishly in the eighteenth century. *The Will of Henry VII* was printed for the editor Thomas Astle and sold by Thomas Payne at Mews Gate and B White at Horan's Head Fleet Street, in 1775. See Pratt, *Westminster Abbey*, p. iv.

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

man and upon the same armour a coat... of our arms of England and of France enamelled... kneeling... holding... the crown which it pleased God to give us with the victory of our enemy at our first field.” The tomb he later described was for him and for Elizabeth, whose remains were to be moved to it. Made of stone “called Touche,” it was to have an image of them both in copper and gilt.²³ Various designs for the tomb were produced and rejected. Strangely, although everyone agrees that the tomb was the work of Pietro Torrigiano his name does not appear in the funeral accounts, perhaps because the tomb was only finally commissioned after his death.²⁴

Producing the figures Henry required was a long business and an expensive one. Laurence Ymbar, the carver who tendered for the patterns from which the statues would be cast, said that it would take eighteen months. The two large figures lying in the tomb and the King’s image kneeling would cost £8 each, and four lords kneeling £4 each, and twelve small images £2.²⁵ The metal founder, Humphrey Waker, needed six thousand four hundred weight of fine yellow metal, and for casting and preparing them ready to gild would cost £604. The painters John Sell and John Maynard would cost only £40, but it would take four men nine months. The master masons, Robert Vertue, Robert Jenyns and John Labens, said that working black touchstone and white marble to the pattern made by Master Paguy would cost £80 and take a year, and the merchants providing 100 foot of black touchstone at 2-0 per foot and stuff for legs and back and 80 foot of white marble for the sides and ends required £23-6-8, a total of £1,257-6-8.²⁶

²³ The funeral accounts are to be found in two contemporary volumes, one is in the Lord Chamberlain’s records, LC 2 f. 81ff in the National Archives and the other in the United States, Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745. The Huntington library manuscript is that rare survival of a preliminary version that was amended before the audited accounts were finalised. The Lord Chamberlain’s copy has certain entries such as the “boke of painters,” which shows the making of coats of arms by the college of arms and painters, which is lacking in the Huntington version.

²⁴ For the tomb see David Howarth, *Images of Rule, Art and Politics in the English Renaissance 1485-1649* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 159-161.

²⁵ The sheriff of York, however, was prepared to argue that this was unnecessarily expensive and that the whole could be done in twelve weeks for a total of £36. See Howarth, *Images of Rule, Art and Politics in the English Renaissance 1485-1649*, p.153.

²⁶ NA State Papers [hereafter SP] 1/1 f. 94. Again it was argued that Lord Derby had an image in copper 5 ½ feet long and 500 weight made and gilded for £130, so that the cost here for three large figures, four medium and twelve small, was excessive.

His Last Will and Testament

By March 1509 Henry was finalizing his Testament. It had undoubtedly been long in the making and carefully worded by his clerks.²⁷ He expressed his complete submission to Christ in wholly orthodox words, asking only for mercy: “*Domine Jesu Christe, qui me ex nichilo creasti, fecisti, redemisti et predestinasti ad hoc quod sum, Tu scis quid de me facere vis, fac de me secundum voluntatem Tuam cum misericordia.*” His worldly religious focus was on six of the seven works of charity, which he named as principally visiting the sick, ministering meat, drink and clothing to the needy, lodging of the miserable poor, and burying the dead. He also sought to improve highways and bridges, particularly the road from Southwark to Greenwich and then on to Canterbury, which he wanted to have substantially ditched on both sides, well and surely graveled and raised, and wide enough for two carts to pass “the one by the other or both together.” To more spiritual ends, he had already established almshouses for thirteen poor men and three women at Westminster, was to pay the wages and charges of three monks’ scholarships to Oxford, established the hospital of the Savoy, and envisaged one at York and one at Coventry. He was also providing for masses to be sung in perpetuity, and for every church in the realm that lacked a pyx to be provided with one, costing £4. The remembrance of his death at his anniversary was to comprise the ringing of bells, and tapers and torches, with rewards to the participants.

To provide for all this, he assumed that the money, plate, jewels and goods in his personal coffers were his to dispose of, as any ordinary man might do with his goods and chattels, as also were the contents of the great wardrobe. Further arrangements were not so simple for a King, whose kingdom passed immediately to his successor. Only possessions that did not belong to a monarch as king could be used for his personal purposes. Such was the Duchy of Lancaster, but even here the prudent monarch took precautionary steps. As long ago as 1492 Henry had had an Act of Parliament passed whereby the Duchy of Lancaster and the county Palatine of Lancaster were vested in feoffees for the fulfillment of the provisions of

²⁷ His bequest to his elder daughter, Margaret, comprised jewels. Mary, if the marriage to Charles of Spain fell through, was to receive a dowry of £50,000. The will has recently been re-examined and edited by Margaret Condon who comments on the errors and omissions that still survive, in Tatton-Brown and Mortimer (eds), *Westminster Abbey*, pp. 99-140.

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

his Testament including “the payment of our debts, the advancement of our children not preferred, deeds of charity” and more. Since most of those named in that Act predeceased him, he had another Act passed in 1504 nominating another set of feoffees. In doing this he was following the precedents set by Henry V who had similarly left the duchy to trustees, who had issued a certificate for its revenues.²⁸ Henry VI had intended the same use of duchy lands and so had Edward IV.²⁹ Henry VII had already conveyed £2,250 to the abbot, prior and convent of Westminster, by an Indenture³⁰ and had paid money to Mr Hatton, Provost of Kings Cambridge, for the chapel there.³¹

The will was finally dated at Canterbury 10 April. The executors named were his mother, Margaret, the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of Winchester, London, Salisbury, Lincoln and Rochester, the Earls of Arundel and Surrey, Sir Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert, Sir John Fynieux Chief Justice of Kings Bench, Sir Robert Rede Chief Justice of Common Pleas, Mr John Yonge Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas Lovell, Treasurer of the Household, Master Thomas Rowthall Secretary, Sir Richard Empson, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Sir John Cuttes, Under Treasurer General, and Edmund Dudley esquire; with the Archbishop of Canterbury as supervisor. Henry envisaged the completion of his instructions as taking some time (at least three years), since he arranged for them to meet every year, at least once a term, and to be paid munificently at £6-13-4 a day, and for those who attended, fifty marks each half year, until each had received £100.

²⁸ See R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster* (London: National Archives, 1953), pp. 53-54; and Helen Castor, *The King, the Crown, and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power 1399-1461* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁹ See William Hardy (ed.), *Charters of the Duchy of Lancaster* (London: printed by order of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy, 1845), pp. 209-11.

³⁰ The original survives. The payment is recorded in Heron's book of payments. See NA Exchequer [hereafter E] 36/215 p. 344.

³¹ NA E36/214 pp. 302, 344.

The Death and Funeral

Biographies of Henry VII usually give long literary accounts of the death based on Hall or the diary of the herald, Roger Machado.³² Thomas Penn's recent narrative describes the funeral as part of the process of securing Henry VIII's accession.³³ Perhaps significantly, the date of his death has always been slightly uncertain.³⁴ One chronicler has it as 21 April 1509, the Saturday before St George's Day, while the Greyfriars chronicle has it on 22 April, the day from which Henry VIII's reign is usually begun.³⁵ It is frequently accepted, based on interpretation of fragmentary evidence, that his death was concealed for three days while the dominant faction arranged that the succession would follow without a hitch.³⁶

What really ensued remains somewhat unclear. Perhaps significantly, Henry VIII's letters of pardon and other matters relating to his father's reign, tend to grant the retrospective forgiveness for all matters prior to 23 April.³⁷ The detailed accounts of the rites, moreover, confuse this further.³⁸ 23 April was the feast of St George, with major festivities which were a normal part of the cycle of court life, and which all leaders at court and in the country would be expected to attend, convenient for marshalling the necessary processions, less so for those who fear conspiracies against the succession. The accounts, however, simply note, "no offering." Henry VIII's 'book of payments' starts 1 May 1509, leaving payments in the first week or so of the reign unaccounted for.³⁹ It does show the messengers paid at the Tower for riding out on an undisclosed date to sheriffs and justices, peers and officials, presumably to announce "the King is dead, long live the King," but the regular payments in this

³² Herald's College, Arundel MS. 51.

³³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: Henry VII and the Dawn of Tudor England* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2011).

³⁴ For a thorough examination of the position see S. J. Gunn, 'The Accession of Henry VIII', *Historical Research*, vol. 64, no. 155 (1991), pp. 278-288.

³⁵ A. J. Pollard, *Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1913), p.330.

³⁶ For references, consult Mark Horowitz (ed.), *Who Was Henry VII?: The 500th Anniversary of the Death of the First Tudor King (1509-2009)* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

³⁷ NA E King's Remembrancers Rolls 159/288, 289, 290 *passim*.

³⁸ The heading of the document simply says that the accounts relate to Henry's death, which occurred 21 April 24 Henry VII and he was buried at Westminster 11 May next following.

³⁹ NA E 101/416/12, an account book of Heron's from the first year of Henry VIII's reign.

book only start 24 May and it is not clear what the date of the dispatch of messengers was.⁴⁰ It is at the end of Henry VII's last book of payments that the entry of the costs for his funeral is recorded. The warrants for payments were issued not by Henry VIII but by the executors of Henry VII's will.⁴¹

The first Tudor monarch breathed his last at Richmond. In his sermon at the funeral, Fisher presented his death as a perfect example of the *ars moriendi*, with the king weeping and sobbing, bowing to the body of Christ beating his breast and embracing the crucifix.⁴² The published version shows the king lying in state before the preacher and the people.⁴³ Before this moment, however, there was much to do.

Organising the Funeral: The Role of the Executors

Whether political negotiations over the execution of the Testament and the non-continuance of certain of the executors in office delayed the public announcement of his death cannot be certainly established. Since a King's Will and Testament was not proved like those of ordinary mortals, the supervision of the Archbishop of Canterbury apparently sufficing the Church, various queries about the exactitude with which it was observed remain. Volume 1 of the *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII*, perhaps because of the editor's determination to adhere to chronological order, interspersing foreign papers, gives a misleading impression of the events which are more easily followed from the arrangements of the State Papers themselves. The detailed tidy accounts of the funeral expenses are amongst the wardrobe records,⁴⁴ and a rough draft of part of these is now in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

⁴⁰ NA E 36/215. J. S. Brewer (ed.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1862), p. 963, has confused this by arbitrarily transferring the payments from one book to the other.

⁴¹ NA E 36/214. The commissioners, it is noted, paid and delivered to certain persons upon divers and sundry warrants "to me John Heron directed and signed by the executors of our forsaied late King Henry" £8,474-4-6 and also to John Sharp £100 and William Tyler £100 by a warrant in the Kings will and to the Friars Observant by warrant £333-6-8.

⁴² John Fisher, 'Funeral Sermon for Henry VII', in J. E. B. Mayor (ed.), *English Works of John Fisher* (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1876), p. 271ff.

⁴³ Cecilia Hatt, '“The Tree and the Weed”: Bishop John Fisher's Sermons at Paul's Cross', in W. J. T. Kirby and P. G. Stanwood (eds), *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion in England, 1520-1640* (Leiden: Brill 2014), pp. 95-106.

⁴⁴ NA LC 2/1 f. 81ff.

The draft is illuminating because it shows alterations such as the crossing out of various names from the lists of mourners who are to receive cloth.⁴⁵

From the start, it is clear that those acting as executors are differ somewhat from those in the formal will, reflecting the disgrace of Empson and Dudley, who were made political scapegoats for some of Henry's actions. The rough book of accounts lists as executors the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishop of Winchester, and my lord treasurer (Surrey), my lord chamberlain (Somerset), Mr Secretary (Rowthall) Sir Thomas Lovell the treasurer of the Kings house, the under treasurer (Cuttes) and the master of the rolls (Yong) as well as the duke of Buckingham, who was not appointed and does not seem to act. Perhaps, his naming when he was one of the possible opponents of Henry VIII's succession is part of the politics surrounding his position. As funeral protocol required the absence of the immediate family from the obsequies, it was Buckingham who had, if possible, to be the royal representative.

As executors, they are to have more servants as a 'super' over and above those allowed on the general warrants.⁴⁶ These are the executors who act. The others named executors were inactive – the bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln the two justices Sir John Fynieux chief justice of Kings bench, Sir Robert Rede chief justice of common pleas, Sir Richard Empson, still chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster until after the funeral, and Edmund Dudley – do not act. Although Fynieux and Rede, who were reappointed to their positions, were amongst the mourners, the other laymen were not. The first orders from the active executors of Henry's will are dated 24 April and are signed by Margaret, and then by the Archbishop of York, Richard Fox, the Bishop of Winchester, John bishop of Rochester, Charles Somerset, and John Cuttes.⁴⁷ Winchester, Surrey, Somerset, Lovell and Cuttes sign on 25 April.⁴⁸ On 26 April Margaret, Surrey, Winchester, Somerset and Rochester sign,⁴⁹ on 28 April Margaret, York, Winchester and Somerset,⁵⁰ on 9 May Surrey, Winchester, Arundel, Somerset, Lovell and Cuttes.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745.

⁴⁶ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745.

⁴⁷ NA SP 1/1 f. 10.

⁴⁸ NA SP 1/1 f. 18.

⁴⁹ NA SP 1/1 f. 11.

⁵⁰ NA SP 1/1 f. 12.

⁵¹ NA SP 1/1 f. 13.

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

After the funeral, the position alters. Although on 26 May Surrey, Winchester, Somerset, Rochester, Lovell, Rowthall, Yong and Cuttes sign, by 20 May Cuttes in acknowledging the receipt of 1,000 marks from Heron had entered ‘by virtue of a warrant to the said John Heron from the King’s Council in that behalf’⁵² and by 6 June the order to Heron for the payments under Henry VII’s will comes with Henry’s own signature at the head at the request of the executors.⁵³ There is nothing further to show whether the executors continued to meet separately, as Henry had laid down, to fulfill his bequests. The executors seem to have become in fact, only an aspect of Henry VIII’s Council. The immediate removal of Empson from his position as Chancellor of the Duchy, which could be regarded as in contravention of the Act of Parliament, was swept under the carpet.

Did the trustees ever receive the revenues of the Duchy for the purpose Henry required? The Act left the administration in the King’s hands so it is difficult to prove; the receiver general’s accounts merely shows payments to the cofferer of the household by assignment made at the Receipt of the Exchequer and four bills amongst the records of the Duchy and £5,161-19-10 1/2 are marked “paid to the chamber to John Heron by a warrant of the King which ordered the auditors under the seal of the Duchy of Lancaster 28 June 2 Henry VIII,” to acquit the receiver-general for this amount.⁵⁴ Although it is difficult to prove a negative, none of the leases appear to be made, as was instructed in the names of the feoffees.⁵⁵ Did Mary ever get the money left for her? What explains the discrepancies in the dates? Margaret, in Scotland, complained that she never received the jewels to which she was entitled. Henry VIII certainly accepted his father’s Testament so far as the masses and alms accompanying the funeral and the tomb was concerned.

⁵² NA SP 1/1 f. 17.

⁵³ NA SP 1/1 f. 30.

⁵⁴ NA Duchy of Lancaster [hereafter DL] 28/6/8, Thomas Bonham’s account as receiver general of the Duchy from Michaelmas 24 Henry VII to Michaelmas 1 Henry VIII.

⁵⁵ NA DL 41, DL 42/28, a book of leases all apparently in Henry VIII’s name.

Providing for the Funeral

Henry VII himself had modestly left to his executors and supervisor the arrangements for his funeral ceremonies. They were to “have a special respect and consideracion to the laude and praising of God, the welth of our soule and somewhat to our dignitie Roial, eviting alwaies dampnable pompe and oteragious superfluities.” Whether what was provided met these criteria or the need for as much ostentation as could be introduced cannot be decided. As the funeral needed to be a massive pageant that expressed the idea of Kingship and the relationship between King and people presenting the state to the world about it seems unlikely. The executors took the opportunity to have as lavish a ceremonial as possible, to display the Tudors standing and emphasise the grandeur and dignity of Henry VII’s line.

There are difficulties in fitting together the accounts of the pre-funeral events. They vary slightly, as might be expected in minor details, such as how many horses drew the chariot, but they pose greater problems. Henry VII died on either the Saturday or the Sunday according to contemporary accounts. Now, allegedly soon after Henry’s death: while his body rested in the Great Chamber, there were three days of solemn masses and dirges; then the corpse was removed into the Hall where there were three further days of masses; and then to the Chapter House where there were yet three more days; and on the Wednesday, 9 May, the body was placed in the ‘chare’ to take it to London. The account of the watching over the body, however, has it starting on a Thursday evening, with a rotation of mourners, starting with Essex, Derby, Lord Fitzwater, Willoughby, Fiennes, Grey of Dorset and others, an honour that acknowledged their positions. On the Friday the Dean of the Chapel, the Abbot of Winchcombe and the Bishop of Rochester sang three masses. The next group of mourners included the Earl of Kent and Sir Davy Owen (*causa sanguinis*, as bastard son of Owen Tudor, he was Henry VII’s uncle), and on Saturday three masses were sung by the Kings Almoner, the Abbot of Tower Hill and the Bishops of Llandaff, and so it went on.⁵⁶ The following timetable shows the problems:

⁵⁶ BL Arundel MS. 26 f. 28.

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

Saturday 21 April Possibly Henry VII's death. This is the date usually given and given in some of Henry's formal letters of notification.

Sunday 22 April This is given in some other letters and is the date usually given.

Monday 23 April This is the date on the Pardons. And in the accounts shows the start of 15 days work by the wax chandlers (which assumes this ends by the morning of 8 May or no work on Sundays end evening 9 May).

Tuesday 24 April First order from Margaret Beaufort as one of the executors of the will. Alternative possible start of 15 days work by the wax chandlers at Westminster (which assumes it is completed by the morning of 9 May, and that they worked on Sundays). NB: The maximum days the wax chandlers servants were paid at St Paul's was fourteen in the tidy account, so this would be the first day of fourteen days.

Wednesday 25 April Orders from a long list of executors.

Thursday 26 April Further orders from Executors. The first watchers over night by King's body (named).

Friday 27 April Three masses sung.

Saturday 28 April Three masses sung; alms to poor at the Clink, St Paul's.

Sunday 29 April Three masses sung; alms to poor at the Clink, St Paul's.

Monday 30 April The first of three days in which the body lay in the Chamber.

Tuesday 1 May The second of three days in Chamber; formal start of Henry VIII's book of payments.

Wednesday 2 May The third of three days in Chamber.

Thursday 3 May The first of three days in which the body lay in the Hall.

Friday 4 May The second of three days in Hall.

Saturday 5 May The third of three days in Hall.

Sunday 6 May The first of three days in which the body lay in the Chapter.

Monday 7 May The second of three days in Chapter.

Tuesday 8 May The third of three days in Chapter.

Wednesday 9 May The body taken to London via St Georges Field Southwark; alms to poor at the Clink, St Paul's.

Thursday 10 May The body lies in state at St Paul's; alms to poor at the Clink, St Paul's.

Friday 11 May The King buried at Westminster; alms to poor at the Clink, St Paul's.

Various questions arise. Why was the watching delayed? Certainly, the King's corpse had to be properly prepared and his death mask taken.⁵⁷ £14 was spent on sealing of the corpse using forty ells of linen and two hundred weight of wax and spices and myrrh. Then another £6-13-4 went on

⁵⁷ See A. Harvey and R. Mortimer (eds), *The Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).

“leading” it,⁵⁸ and a suitable coffin had to be prepared and the plumber, John Buswell had to make the “molds of scripture” about the corpse. There was also the King’s picture to be set up; but does this explain the four or five days before the first mourners’ watch? The cortege started out on May 9 and the final interment took place on May 11. For a royal funeral it was eventually a comparatively short space of time. Perhaps Henry VIII and his advisers felt some need for haste.

To get the proceedings ready in such a short time, these were days of frenzied activity behind the scenes, which can be traced in the detailed accounts⁵⁹ Men rushed up and down the Thames from Richmond to London, from London to Greenwich, and back to Westminster. They went in boats, drove carts and moved mountains. Women washed and baked and sewed, as all the paraphernalia, all the people, clad in the appropriate robes, were assembled in the right places and at the right time for the ritual interment of a great King. Everyone was pressed into service.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ NA LC 2/1 f. 103; Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745, p. 23.

⁵⁹ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745.

⁶⁰ Huntington Library HM 745 f.107. Officials mentioned in Henry VII’s funeral accounts make an interesting list for administrative historians, as it sometimes indicates an importance not evident from the formal role. Note especially the Hatcliffes (or Atcliffes) - George Atcliffe is servant to the “princess of Walys,” Edward Hatclyffe is the clerk comptroller of the rolls. William Hatcliffe in the counting house. My lord Treasurer (Surrey), my lord Chamberlain (de Vere), Mr Secretary, (Rowthall) Sir Thomas Lovell (treasurer of King’s household and chancellor of the Exchequer), Sir John Cuttess the undertreasurer, the master of the Rolls (Sir John Yonge) Henry Worth master of Kings jewels, my lord wardrobe [crossed out] clerk of the council William Bellouse, the judges John Fyneux CJ Robert Rede CJ common Pleas, William Hody chief baron; John Erneley King’s attorney William Portear clerk of the crown, Walter Foster clerk of the works, councillors include Mr Chancellor, Mr Chamberlain, Mr Steward, Mr Morgan, Mr Christopher Urswick. Mr Simon Salworth Mr Nicholas West. Henry VII’s household at his death included My Lord Steward, Mr Treasurer and Mr controller. The counting house was headed by Mr cofferer, Mr William Hatcliff, Mr John Buntayn, Mr John Myklow with lesser clerks John Robyns, William Saxilby, William Blacknall Thomas Darell, Henry Hawker and Thomas Haimes; they controlled the bakehouse, the pantry, the cellar, the buttery the pitcher house the spicery the confectionay the waffery, the Chanfry, theurry, the laundry, the kitchen the larder the boiling house, the accatry, the poultry, the scaldinghouse, the sculley and the sal fry.

Representing the Kingdom in Mourning

News of the king's death was carried through the realm and symbolically the king's people had to participate in the mourning procedures even if all they could do was offer a mass. In London arrangements were made for residents and others to line the route along which the body would pass. Ritually the people who represented the kingdom were to go to London and Westminster to participate in the rites of transition. Surprisingly few – and they were overwhelmingly those needed to hold the borders – did not appear. To provide part of the requirements for the funeral made a particular relationship with that Kingdom evident. For some it was more than appearance. The rules required nobles to offer palls. It was laid down that a duke (Buckingham, the only duke at that moment) offered five palls, a marquis four, an earl three, a viscount two, and a baron one. A prince, if there were one, should offer seven and a King nine; which invites some consideration of the supposed status of the monarch whose interment was in question.

To wear mourning made from material provided by the monarch was an outward sign that you belonged to the visible Kingdom that the King had ruled, and that you were committed to all that made that Kingdom legitimate. It is interesting therefore that the Scottish earl of Arran was given robes and also Lyon King of Arms for Scotland, who had presumably come with his King's commiseration for the death of his father-in-law. It is significant to observe who has been struck from the lists. Participation in the funeral and membership of the state ran together, and it is worth observing who were omitted. The executors provided set lengths of cloth of a rigidly hierarchical quantity and quality for the entire court and a set number of their servants, again varying with the individual's rank. Knights received twelve yards, squires for the body nine yards, with nine yards of lesser stuff for three servants, gentleman ushers four yards, with six yards for two servants and so on down to the minimum four yards. It may well be that these lists provide a better measure of who could be considered part of the Court, part of the Royal Household and part of the official structure of the Household (which is listed separately), than any other single source, and any omissions from them not otherwise explicable by absence on

royal business may be regarded as significant. It certainly provides a list of the King's Council at the time of his death.⁶¹

The lists begin with Henry VII's mother, the princes of England, the princess of Castile, and the late queen's sisters, and works down through marquises and countesses, viscountesses and baronesses, to knights' wives and gentlewomen. The men, listed separately, start with Archbishops and Dukes, Earls and Bishops, Barons and the head officers of the Household and so on down to yeomen, grooms and pages, minstrels, trumpeters, the children of the chapel and the King's players. The number of extra servants to be provided for each of the dignitaries is an indication of status. The duke of Buckingham, archbishops of Canterbury and York, the lord chamberlain, Mr Secretary and Sir Thomas Lovell were allowed four, the bishop of Winchester, my Lord Treasurer three, the treasurer of the King house, the under-treasurer and the master of the Rolls two, and the other executors of Henry's will two; all these were extra servants "over and besides the general warrants."

The lists of livery given, however, are not in perfect hierarchical order and may give an indication of who was present at Court when Henry died and who arrived later, as the full court assembled for the ceremony. There is also an internal shift as the first list or two are confined to the senior courtiers who are to receive better quality cloth while in later lists pages, minstrels, grooms, messengers, the keeper of the greyhounds and workers in the bake-house and such like receive their allowance. The whole list, in order of receipt, is broken into sections according to role. It starts with the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishops of Winchester and London, the lord treasurer and the earls of Essex, Kent and Derby, and a list of barons; Henry Stafford, various Greys, Delaware, Willoughby, both lords Dacre, Lord Ferris the Lord Chamberlain and Sir John Huse, Controller and a list of thirteen knights and four gentleman ushers. Then the lists start again with more bishops (Chichester, Chester and Rochester), more lords (Howard, Fitzwater and Clynton), the secretary, eight more knights, twenty-one

⁶¹ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745. This volume has been put together from a number of different records and p. 63 marks a new gathering and a different source.

squires for the body, twelve gentleman ushers, sewerers of the chamber, sergeants of arms, officers at arms, grooms of the chamber, and pages. Then we return to the top of the hierarchy. The King's grandmother, a list of ladies, gentlemen, and chamberers. Finally we have Councillors (Mr Chancellor, Mr Chamberlain, Mr Steward and Mr Morgan) and chaplains. The lists eventually reach the Kings Guard and lesser mortals. The whole suggests that the distribution took several days.

Additionally cloth had to be provided to Dr Ednam for the 330 gowns and hoods for the torchbearers and the beadsmen of Westminster⁶² and a further thirty for gowns for the thirty staff torchbearers who were "lacking of the household."⁶³ John Dauncey seems to have been acting as Heron's agent throughout the funeral. Clothing, dress lengths and mantles for the ladies, was only one of his problems. The Court had to be suitably mounted, and in the case of the Princess of Wales and the Princess of Castile, the new King and others, that meant new saddles and harness.

Preparing for the Ceremonies

From the viewpoint of the harassed officials, men drawn from various offices, amongst others the works, the spicery, and even the poultry, the more pressing question was logistical: finding the thousands of yards of expensive materials and arranging its distribution so that the numerous tailors and seamstresses could make the garments in time for the ceremonies; getting together all the other items needed; and keeping a record of all they did so that a reckoning could be made, for which they purchased paper, parchment and ink. Andrew Windsor, the Keeper of the Great Wardrobe was principally in charge and the first £1,000 authorised by the executors, from John Heron, the Treasurer of the Chamber, was in prest (money to be accounted for later) for Windsor for black cloth for hangings. A later prest to Windsor was for £2,895-11-2 broken down into £1,13-19-9 for the wardrobe, £150-6-8 for the stable, £270-8-6 for the painters, £795-3-4 for the chandlery (candles), £205-6-8 for the household, and money for rewards to religious orders and

⁶² NA LC 2/1 f. 133d.

⁶³ NA LC 2/1 f. 136; NA SP 1/1 f. 24.

churches – £100 for the abbot of Westminster, £33-6-8 for rewards to the Kings chapel, £50 for the four orders of friars, £130 to 130 parish churches, and £25 to each of five houses of nuns.⁶⁴ Windsor was not sole paymaster, however. Apart from smaller sums to Henry Wyatt, master of the Jewel House, and others, Sir John Cuttes received £666-13-4 for the necessary ‘composition’ with St Pauls and Westminster – even a King had to pay for the privilege of holding the services there – and for the four orders of friars and others. Cuttes also received the money for the escutcheons, the banners and bawdekins, coats of arms and such like garments and for the torches.⁶⁵

The King’s bedchamber, his chapel and various other galleries and chambers had to be suitably hung and the wardrobe supplied 559 yards of black cloth conveyed to Richmond for this purpose; which in turn required freighting a “great boat.” Another 418 1/2 yards were needed to hang in the choir at St Paul’s and 690 yards more for Westminster Hall.⁶⁶ The Cloth of Estate for the altars at Richmond and Greenwich also had to be prepared. The painters had to produce escutcheons and banners in their hundreds, the King’s arms sole, the King’s and Queen’s impaled with the garter about the arms and some with “eight powderings, two roses, two portails two fleur de lys and two stounes;” as well as embroidered coats of arms and helms and shields and the Swords of State.⁶⁷

Elsewhere, the venue for the obsequies had also to be prepared. At St Paul’s the work of the wax chandlers and their labourers took fifteen days. Cooks and other ancillary staff had to be employed to see to their physical needs during the time and beds hired. Ironworkers and joiners were required to make the hearse and the stands around it. The lists give endless details, including braces of iron, and hoops for the “principals” of the hearse, four ears for the chest, 124 small pins of iron, 4 square hapses, staples for the hearse, 23 dressed pins, 6 great sayboards, a pair of cross garnets, and two pairs of side garnets. After the hearse was made, it had then to be provided with the painted and

⁶⁴ NA SP 1/1 ff. 10, 16.

⁶⁵ NA SP 1/1 ff. 13, 14, 15.

⁶⁶ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745, p. 121-122.

⁶⁷ NA LC 2/1 f. 100d.

gilded imagery of Scriptures, which were put on the pillars, and candlesticks had to be hired to stand about it for fourteen days. Wire was needed in quantity, packthread, banners, and banneroles. The hearse and all the rails and fitting were stained black and the Chancel where the tomb was to stand adorned with the effigies of seventy-two Kings – Henry’s mythical ancestors – each in their own “house” and with 347 cloud angels and seventy archangels. All this required an endless supply of red and green wax, and the equipment for melting and modeling it. The hearse had a great angels standing on each corner.⁶⁸

At Westminster the preparations were different, but possibly even more elaborate. Thirty great cloud angels were surrounded by nearly seven hundred smaller angels, and the 320 ‘other’ angels. The tableau included two great images of John and two great Kings, and numerous roses and *fleurs de lys*.

Spiritual Preparations and Alms

Meanwhile, alms were distributed in accordance with Henry’s instructions. Henry had asked for 10,000 masses within one month in honour of various entities – 1,500 in honour of the Trinity, 2,500 in honour of the Five Wounds, 2,500 for the Five Joys of Our Lady, 450 for the Nine Orders of Angels, 150 for Patriarchs 600 for the 12 Apostles and 2300 for All Saints - for each of which 6d was to be paid the priest. £2,000 was to be paid in alms £1,200 among the poor “as may travail to ask elemose” who were to get 4d each (which suggests at 60 to the pound an incredible 72,000 beggars), and £500 to the lame, blind, bedridden and needy. £300 was to go to prisoners in gaol for debts of under £4. In response to this, the King’s Almoner, Dr Edman, who was attendant on the corpse, and Dr Beckingsale, Dr Rawlins and Dr Honeywood who were in London, and Doctor Lupton who was in Westminster, distributed over £1,500, and in order to ensure that all knew of this benefaction a crier was employed for twelve shillings to go about the city. The poor in prisons such as the Clink were substantially provided for several days running. In addition food and drink were

⁶⁸ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745, p27.

provided at Westminster on 9 and 10 May.⁶⁹ For all this the money was needed in very small coins, and there is a frenzied letter from Henry Wyatt to his “brother Heron” asking that it be delivered in groats.⁷⁰

The Cortege

The common people were to be participants in the cortege. Every ward of London was provided with four hundred torches some long torches and others staff torches to be carried by those escorting the King to his final rest. The cortege started from Richmond. Thirty-seven horses were waiting. The traps, saddles, and horse harness for them had been taken laboriously up the Thames; two days to Mortlake, and another six to Richmond. Henry’s body was apparelled in his parliament robes with a Crown on his head, and the Orb and Sceptre in his hands. The corpse was surrounded with banners displaying his arms, dominions, titles and genealogies. It was placed on the chare, with its wheels and spokes and ‘navers’ blackened, drawn by six horses, gentlemen ushers kneeling on a black cushion at its end. The chare was followed by twenty-two great coursers covered with black accoutrements, with even their bits blackened, and by the Master of the Horse leading on a long rein the King’s own charger. This cortege made the long journey from Richmond to London protected by fifty trusty servants bearing staves and thirty bearing staff torches together with 330 other torchbearers who were paid 4-0 each in alms.

When the cortege arrived at St Georges Field, Southwark it was joined by the full procession for the journey to St Paul’s. Henry VIII, as was the custom, did not attend but there were others of the bereaved family and the Court, most on foot, although the Princess of Castile and other ladies rode on side-saddles. All of London turned out. The procession included religious orders of all sorts in or about the city, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Councillors in black, and representatives of all the wards. It moved through the city to St Paul’s,

⁶⁹ Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745, pp. 49-52.

⁷⁰ NA SP1/1 f. 24.

singing.⁷¹ At St Paul's, the body was transferred to the hearse in the chancel, the choir sang and a solemn mass was presided over by the Bishop of London, the Abbot of St Albans, and the Abbot of Reading. The next day, the 10 May, there were more religious ceremonies and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, delivered the memorial sermon. It was not a eulogy, but a lesson for the kingdom. Kings, he reminded his audience, too, were judged by God. The sinner "must undermine the stronge walls of sinne by true humblynge and lwoying of himselfe and make hymselfe lyttel to to entent he may crepe out at the narrow hole from the daunger of synne and soo come unto the lyberte of grace." Penitent at his death, he had not avoided avarice and corruption in his life.⁷²

Then the chare was once more loaded and the procession re-organised.⁷³ First came six sword bearers and the Vice Chamberlain of London with two of the masters of the Bridge house "to set the crafts in array." Then the King's Messengers, two by two, with their boxes at their breasts, and trumpets. They were followed by Florentines and other strangers, gentlemen ushers, aldermen and sheriffs, two heralds in coat armour, and finally Sir Davy Owen carrying a steel helmet with gold ears and Sir Edward Howard on a courser trapped with the defunct arms, bearing the King's banner and with the King's battle axe, head downwards resting on his foot. The papal Caps of Estate, which had been refurbished with ermine, were carried with the other insignia behind the hearse.⁷⁴

The procession, singing, proceeded via St Georges Bar to Charing Cross, where it was formally met by the Abbot and Convent of Westminster. The corpse was incensed by the Abbots of St Albans, Reading and Winchcombe and taken on to the Abbey, where the coffin

⁷¹ For music at the court and elsewhere, see Theodor Dumitresc, *The Early Tudor Court and International Musical Relations* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), especially p. 104.

⁷² For recent work on John Fisher and his writing, see Brendan Bradshaw and Eamon Duffy (eds), *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁷³ BL Harleian 6-79 f. 31.

⁷⁴ BL Harleian 3504 f. 264b.

was once again set upon the prepared hearse, this one described as “a most curious hearse full of lights, the representation lying upon the coffin on a pall of gold,” and a further service was performed with choral music, the choir beginning *placebo* and ending *dirige*. At the first rail of the mourners were the close relatives and aristocrats, at the second, knights bannerets within, and officers of arms. Garter King of Arms cried aloud “for the soul of the noble prince, Henry VII, King of this realm.” On 11 May there were three further solemn masses sung by the bishops and banner and coat of arms, sword, tassel and helmet were offered, and the nobility offered their palls. Then, at last, as the choir sang *libera me* the King’s body was lowered, by the four pieces of girth-web provided for the purpose, into his tomb and the Great Officers of England ceremoniously broke their white staves and cast them into the grave, symbolising the end of his rule. Garter cried out, “Vive le Roy Henry le Huitesm Roy d’Angleterre et de France, Sire d’Ireland.” The new reign might date from the late King’s death, but the King’s full authority was only now acknowledged. The sumptuous entertainment to which the mourners and household then repaired partook of the character of a celebration as well as a wake.

The Aftermath

Henry’s Council, or perhaps just the part of it that was supervising the royal revenues, for a time seems dominated by the surviving members of Henry VII’s executors. For example, the cancelling of a recognisance in an order to John Yong, is signed by the King, but countersigned by Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, Richard, Bishop of London, the earl of Surrey, John, Bishop of Rochester, John Fyneux, Thomas Lovell, Yong himself, and John Cuttes, “in the presence of Henry Marney, now Chancellor of the Duchy, Thomas Englefield and John Heron.”⁷⁵ This is strengthened by the fact that when it was decided that John, Abbot of Reading, had been “unjustly bound” (one of Henry VII’s notorious bonds), it was specifically done by examination “before certain of

⁷⁵ See J. S. Brewer (ed.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 1 [hereafter *LP*] (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1920), no. 749 (3), and also 749 (16, 24, 26), 804 (49), 833 (13).

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

Henry VII's executors in the presence of others of our Council” and those countersigning are Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, Richard Bishop of London, Thomas, Bishop of Durham, John, Bishop of Rochester, Thomas, earl of Surrey, John Fineux, Richard Rede and John Cuttes, in the presence of George earl of Shrewsbury, Henry Marney, Thomas Englefield and John Heron.⁷⁶

More problematic is the question of whether Henry's surviving executors met as he willed. The bills for the funeral were paid by Heron, and in the first book for Henry's reign, we find Heron delivering upon a warrant to Thomas earl of Surrey, Richard Bishop of Winchester, Sir Thomas Lovell and Sir John Cuttes, executors to Henry “in part of payment and contentation of his will £20,000.”⁷⁷ On the other hand a bill for the funeral mourning at Calais in the churches of St Mary and St Nicholas, which provided 36 black robes for poor men and torches, although agreed by the consent of the whole Council of Calais, was disallowed in the Calais accounts.⁷⁸ What is the significance of the fact that in 1512 (3 Henry VIII) the Duchy was one of the accounts that had not been rendered to the crown for 2 years.⁷⁹ Were the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster handed over to the crown rather than kept for the purposes of Henry VII's Testament?

The last act of the interment seems to have been the raising of John Skelton's epitaph on the eve of St Andrew the Apostle 1512, on the order of John Islip, Abbot of Westminster.⁸⁰

The Symbol of State

But what then had been in Henry VII's eyes his rank, which meant that even kings should contribute palls to his obsequies? The eight-sided imperial crown that dated back to 962 AD, and which had been the prerogative of the Holy Roman Emperor when the kings of France or England were only entitled to wear simple round crowns, had for the

⁷⁶ *LP* no. 1123 (45).

⁷⁷ BL Add. MS. 21,481 f. 18.

⁷⁸ *LP* no. 893.

⁷⁹ NA E 101/517/26.

⁸⁰ See A. J. Pollard, *Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1913), no. 218.

past hundred years or more been imitated by ambitious monarchs in other European states.⁸¹ Henry VII and his executors had no doubts on this score. At both St Paul's and Westminster, a painted and gilded Crown Imperial dominated the hearse.⁸² The closed imperial crown rather than the open royal crown had first been formally permitted to Edward IV by the pope and flaunted by Richard III. It was a potent symbol of the claims to independence under God. Henry VII was already emphasising England's independence of any earthly domination and her parity with France. England was an Empire.

This was to have multiple significances later. Henry VIII used the symbol of the Crown Imperial on every possible occasion. Early in his reign in lists of materials for the jousts and revels there are bardes covered with cloth of silk and russet, embroidered with the Lyon of England, powdered with "crowns imperiall and clowdes and sunes."⁸³ When Cromwell used the idea of the crown's imperial powers in the Statutes that introduced Henry's secession from Rome it was, therefore, hardly an unfamiliar, revolutionary new departure as Geoffrey Elton suggested, since it is doubtful that it referred to England alone and not to Wales, Ireland and the remnants of English holdings on the continent, even if it was used in ways not previously envisaged.⁸⁴ Henry VIII had

⁸¹ Stephen Brockmann, *Nuremberg: The Imaginary Capital* (New York: Camden House, 2006), p. 14.

⁸² Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 745, p.27. Twelve yards of sarcenet for the lining and thirteen yards of black cloth of gold, sixteen yards of black fringe, and four tassels, were purchased for the pall of Estate Imperial.

⁸³ NA E 36/228. For recent discussion of this see Alice Hunt, *The Drama of Coronation: Medieval Ceremony in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 69-71. For some earlier thoughts, see Dale Hoak, 'The Iconography of the Crown Imperial', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 54-103.

⁸⁴ See Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 181; Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *England Under the Tudors* (London: Methuen, 1955), pp. 88, 133, 161; Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 340-344. Also see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 60-61, 86-89, for a brief consideration of the European background of the idea that *rex est imperator in regnum suum* (the king is emperor in his kingdom), and Henry's use of this during the Hunne affair in 1515.

Henry VII, Dead and Buried

always believed that “this realm of England is an empire”, an empire he had inherited from his father in due and legitimate succession.