

# The Mysterious Affair at Crowland Abbey

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Despite its availability in the edition and translation by Nicholas Pronay and John Cox,<sup>1</sup> *The Continuations of the Crowland Chronicle* will not be the favourite reading of most members of the Richard III Society. Apart from the way in which the story of the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III keeps breaking off to give irrelevant details about interim events of concern only to the monks of Crowland Abbey, the portion that deals with Richard's reign intersperses demonstrable facts with maliciously slanted reports and what may well be items of sheer gossip, and concludes that, in common opinion, Henry Tudor arrived as 'an angel sent from heaven' to deliver God's people from the evils that had so greatly afflicted them under Richard. For over a century historians, including the present writer, have been telling the reader that the 'second continuation' had unique authority because it was the first-hand report of a highly-placed outsider. Rather than examining the basis for that belief they devoted much learned effort into trying to establish the identity of its anonymous author. The rationale, as recently expressed by Michael Hicks, was that fifteenth-century historians would then be enabled to distinguish between those parts of the 'second continuation' that bore the stamp of authority and those that depended on hearsay.<sup>2</sup> In reality, if the second continuation (henceforth 'the History') constitutes what Tony Pollard termed 'the memoirs of a Yorkist civil servant',<sup>3</sup> the reader is required to take on trust even such details as Richard's uneasy dreams before Bosworth. I propose to show that the scenarios presented in these exercises of historical detection had a strong component of fantasy, in some cases even farce, aided by mistranslations of the Latin text. With Hicks's attempted identification of the anonymous author whom he at first called 'Crowland', and whom I shall term the Historian, as Richard Langport, clerk to the council of Edward IV, I suggest that the time has finally come to look again at the earlier, straightforward, assumption that the second continuation, like the first, was put together from a variety of sources by one of the able members of Crowland's own community.

Historians may have been led to disregard that likelihood for several reasons. There was probably a lingering, and entirely misconceived, impression that the monks of Crowland led a life wholly cut off from the outside, even though a prior, whom a successor described as somewhat unworldly, had managed to compose a long history of kings and abbots from the beginning of Stephen's reign to early 1470, with the assistance of books and the records that his fellow monks had been in the habit of keeping. The patent fallacy that a writer must have been an eye-witness to the incidents that he describes also lay behind the belief that the second continuator of the Crowland chronicles, unlike the first, must have given a first-hand account of events: '[the author] says, speaking of a council meeting at which he was clearly present himself, "there were many persons present ... who very well knew the contrary";<sup>4</sup> "Our writer was certainly in London during the Bastard of Falconbridge's attack in 1471, remarking how "you might have seen the robbers hurrying away"' after the counter-attack;<sup>5</sup> "There are at least fifty-five vivid and apparently eyewitness vignettes".<sup>6</sup> The third, most compelling, reason to ascribe the History to an outsider was that one of the monks, writing in 1486, had apparently stated that he did not know the Historian's identity. This created enormous complications for those who were forced to accept that the Historian had written at least part of his account when he was at Crowland in April 1486, but had successfully kept the fact secret, in a game of cat and mouse. None of us stopped to examine what the monk might actually be implying in what, on the surface, was a strange and quite irrelevant remark, which may not even have applied to the Historian.

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<sup>1</sup> N. Pronay and J. Cox, eds, *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459-1486*, London 1986; hereafter *CC*. Unhappily the parallel texts, Latin and English, do not always agree.

<sup>2</sup> M. Hicks, 'The second anonymous continuation of the Crowland Abbey chronicle 1459-86 revisited', *English Historical Review*, vol. 122 (2007), pp. 349-70, esp. p. 370. Hereafter Hicks.

<sup>3</sup> A.J. Pollard, reviewing *CC* in *The Ricardian*, vol. 7 (1985-87), pp. 380-85.

<sup>4</sup> C. Ross, *Richard III*, London 1981, p. xlvi.

<sup>5</sup> Pronay, *CC*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>6</sup> Hicks, p. 359; listed in M. Hicks, 'Crowland's world: a Westminster view of the Yorkist age', *History*, vol. 90 (2005), pp. 172-90, Appendix, pp. 187-90. By unlucky coincidence, 'Jimmy's World' was the title of a newspaper story that won a Pulitzer prize in 1981 before being exposed as a fabrication.

To the History ending with the accession of Henry VII and the death of Abbot Fosdyke on 14 'November' (read October) 1485, three separate monks added further continuations. One of these explained that the Historian had taken his story no further because, the writer alleged, it was not customary to deal with the actions of living persons. 'It is only to record' that after his victory Henry VII was anointed and crowned on the penultimate day of the second following month,<sup>7</sup> and his anticipated marriage to Elizabeth of York took place on 18 January 1486, but an insurrection arose in the north immediately after Easter, so that *ille qui haec scripsit* ('the present writer?') added to the foregoing history a poem on mutability, with an exhortation against breaching the peace that the marriage had brought.<sup>8</sup> Another member of the community, the so-called 'third continuator', subsequently added his own concise record of further history (*hujus historiae compendium*),<sup>9</sup> disagreeing with the stated premise by saying that although the immediately preceding writer (the contributor of the preceding addendum?) had concluded his work at a point beyond which he did not wish to continue, for the reasons he had mentioned,<sup>10</sup> nevertheless he personally proposed to set a good example by updating events, to encourage later writers to record the happenings of their times 'in due place',<sup>11</sup> and 'in accordance with our usual custom' (*more nostro*). The form of his relevant sentence must be closely examined. It runs: '*Quamvis ille, quicumque sit, ... immediate superioris descriptor historiae ... finem imposuit ... ego, tamen, ...*'. In other words, 'Despite the decision of this previous author, and whatever his authority, I for my part wish to take the account further'. *Quamvis ille, quicumque sit* is part of a dismissive or 'disjunctive' clause, indicating that the writer is politely dissociating himself from the viewpoint expressed by the previous contributor, and means, not 'I do not know who he is' (where the verb would be *est*, not *sit*), but 'let him be who he may', 'no matter who he is'.<sup>12</sup> Compare in English 'Whoever is your mother to lay down the law to me?' Thus all the scholarly endeavours to fit the History to some named official depended on the over-hasty translation of two Latin words. It follows, I suggest, that the identity of 'the second continuator' was perfectly well known to his fellow monks, who had, after all, entrusted him with the task of updating their chronicles and correcting a few of the misunderstandings that had crept into the previous one.

By sheerest chance, no sooner had I read the on-line version of Hicks's unconvincing contribution to the long and futile search for an outside author than I stumbled on a fictional work entitled *The Sunken Sailor*.<sup>13</sup> This is 'a collective mystery novel' in fourteen chapters, of which the first, by Simon Brett, set the scene with a house-party at an English castle 'between the wars' and each of the following thirteen was contributed by a new writer, round-robin style. In successive chapters these freely elaborated the plot, introduced new characters (as the tale grew progressively wilder, Sherlock Holmes appeared, complete with his bees, in the role of enemy agent), produced bizarre ideas about upper-class English behaviour of the period, and variously adopted, ignored or twisted clues previously imparted. It immediately struck me that this entertaining romp had remarkable parallels with the long-running whodunit produced by those scholars who have attempted to solve the mystery of Crowland's anonymous Historian.

The case made out for one of the leading suspects, Bishop John Russell, can serve as the starting point in an examination of all the proposals put forward. If it were true in the first place that an outsider had provided the monks with their new chronicle; if it followed from this that the outsider was shown the previous chronicle and invited to correct it in one or two details, and if, thirdly, he had set about writing the result some seven or eight months after Richard's death, then Russell would fit, because he indubitably spent a month as a paying guest of the monks, starting on 14 April 1486, and was accompanied by twenty, unnamed, members of his *familia*. He presided over the formal impropriation of the church of Bringhurst from Crowland to Peterborough abbey on 24 April.<sup>14</sup> Of other imagined authors, H.A. Kelly's Archdeacon Richard Lavender had official connection with Crowland Abbey but was certainly not present at the impropriation, nor could he have stayed at Crowland for as long as a month, so that Kelly had to devise an extremely complex plot to account for how Lavender's authorship could be unknown to one of the monks. He proposed, in essence, that Lavender had insisted that his

<sup>7</sup> 30 October 1485. Historians have wrongly thought that the wording implied '29 September'.

<sup>8</sup> *CC*, pp. 188-91.

<sup>9</sup> *CC*, p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> The History itself contained no such statement.

<sup>11</sup> *Illico*: 'in place', not 'from time to time'.

<sup>12</sup> Pronay and Cox elsewhere (*CC*, p. 139) correctly translate *omne ferme patrimonium regale cuiscunque ante collatum fuisset* (subjunctive verb) as 'almost the whole of the royal patrimony, no matter to whom it had been granted'.

<sup>13</sup> E. Foxwell, ed., *The Sunken Sailor*, New York 2004.

<sup>14</sup> *CC*, pp. 199, 200-201.

identity as the Historian must be kept secret from Russell, who, as former chancellor of Richard III, would not like the hostility towards Richard and his government that the History evinces.<sup>15</sup> The proponents of, for example, Henry Sharp (Nicholas Pronay) and Richard Langport were forced, more simply, to imagine that their chosen suspect must have formed part of Russell's household staff on the occasion of the bishop's visit, but had gone unrecognised by most of his hosts: 'By 1486' Dr Sharp and Dr Russell 'must have known each other very well'. Sharp was then old and infirm and 'there is nothing inherently unlikely by [*sic*] his being a member of the private party which Russell took with him to Crowland'; 'Maybe [Langport] accompanied Russell [who] was possibly a friend as well as his line manager and colleague'.<sup>16</sup>

The only substantial piece of evidence for Russell's authorship is the statement by the unknown person who, in the course of adding index notes to the manuscript, possibly very much later, wrote the marginal '*Ille qui hanc historiam compilavit*', 'he who assembled this history', beside the Historian's description of how King Edward sent one of his councillors, a doctor of canon law, to meet Charles, Duke of Burgundy, at Abbeville in 1471. Two separate financial records, one English, one Burgundian, now make it clear that the emissary was Russell.<sup>17</sup> Almost certainly the information about his journey came from Russell himself, or from one of Russell's attendants, since the bishop would not have travelled alone. The Historian therefore describes Abbeville and its situation and says that although the emissary had to go by way of Boulogne because Calais was still in Lancastrian hands, he returned through Calais, 'at the pressing request of the [by then Yorkist] garrison'.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, it is very unlikely that the annotator was right in thinking that the Historian was here describing his own personal experience.<sup>19</sup> Nowhere else in the secular History, as distinct from the parochial portions, is any dignitary accorded his degree, and it seems to be mentioned in Russell's case as a mark of respect on the part of the Historian, rather than as any self-advertisement by Russell. The seemingly eye-witness record of the mission may have misled the annotator. One must, I now think, take it that by *historia* he meant the entire History and not, as some commentators have proposed, just this particular 'story'. Everywhere else in the Continuations the word has the broader meaning of 'history', and *compilavit*, 'assembled; put together', is the word also used of the annals previously compiled by the prior,<sup>20</sup> and would be an odd expression to apply to a single anecdote. The annotator in turn misled Charles Ross into saying flatly that the author 'claims that ... he had gone on embassy to the court of Burgundy in 1471'.<sup>21</sup>

There is no possible doubt that Russell was a member of Edward IV's council. Tentatively proposing that the emissary to Abbeville was not Russell but Henry Sharp, Pronay adduced that Sharp might have qualified as a councillor because as a papal protonotary he was sometimes invited to attend a council meeting. Hicks adopted a similar argument in favour of Richard Langport, who as clerk to the council was routinely present at meetings. Unlike Pronay, however, he did not identify his postulated Historian as the councillor who was sent to Abbeville. Instead, he said that Langport was probably not a member of that embassy.<sup>22</sup> Illogically enough, he thereby demolished his only real reason for having identified the Historian as Langport in the first place. As it was, he turned his deduction that Langport had not been part of the mission to ingenious account by saying that, in his own opinion, the mission was 'a rather trivial preliminary exchange' and not nearly so important as the Historian makes out, and consequently the Historian must have been a rather inexperienced diplomat, such as Langport.<sup>23</sup> One might ask why this Langport's other political assessments should be any more credible.

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<sup>15</sup> Kelly's case was set out in 'The last chroniclers of Croyland', *The Ricardian*, vol. 7 (1985-87), pp. 142-77 ('Kelly (1985)') and 'The Croyland chronicle tragedies', pp. 498-515 ('Kelly (1987)'), also 'Croyland observations', *The Ricardian*, vol. 8 (1988-90), pp. 334-45 ('Kelly (1990)').

<sup>16</sup> Pronay, *CC*, p. 94; Hicks, p. 369.

<sup>17</sup> Hicks, p. 358 and n. 55.

<sup>18</sup> *Multo rogatu stipendiarorum*, not (*CC*, p. 131) 'bearing an urgent request for soldiers'.

<sup>19</sup> The 'indexer' of the ms, who in one place inserted a cross-reference from the 1st continuation to the 2nd, may have been a complete outsider. Pronay suggested (*CC*, p. 44) that the work of transcribing the materials that follow the 1st continuation might not have been done in the monks' own scriptorium, but contracted out to professional scribes.

<sup>20</sup> *CC*, p. 182.

<sup>21</sup> Ross, *Richard III*, p. xliii.

<sup>22</sup> Hicks, p. 370 and Abstract.

<sup>23</sup> Hicks, pp. 358, 368; and 'The assessment is exaggerated: it was the later negotiations, which are not described, that really mattered', 'Crowland's world', p. 178.

Russell and his rival suspects, Lavender and Langport, have also been connected with an irrelevant digression by the monk who disregarded previous authority by contributing an account of further events in the early months of Henry's reign (pp. 194-98). He was greatly struck by the coincidence that Cardinal Beaufort (died 11 April 1447) and Cardinal Bourchier (died 30 March 1486) had both died shortly after Easter in years in which 1 January fell on a Sunday, and so were assigned the 'dominical letter A' in the ecclesiastical calendar. This led him to rehearse the details of Cardinal Beaufort's edifying actions on his deathbed. (It is not wholly clear whether it was the fact that Beaufort had his requiem mass sung in his presence ten days before his death<sup>24</sup> or his scrupulous attention to testamentary matters that the monk thought so admirable). Although the monk attributed his relation to no particular eye-witness, our historical detectives have done their best to show that the young Russell, Lavender and Langport could variously have been at Winchester at the time of Beaufort's death. The description of the scene must be trustworthy, the monk said, because the man who had recorded it in writing (*ille qui haec scripsit*) 'was present and saw and heard all these things' (*affuit et haec omnia vidit et audivit*), and, in the words attributed to St John the Evangelist, 'we know that his testimony is true'. Perhaps because Pronay's protonotary Henry Sharp was not in England in 1447, Pronay failed to observe that what the monk was quoting was not one man's personal recollection of events thirty-nine years earlier, but the evidence, probably of several witnesses, recorded and authenticated by a notary public at unknown date.

The give-away is precisely in those words *affuit et haec omnia vidit et audivit*: a notary's affirmation that he had personally recorded the witnesses' testimony, whether he had heard it delivered orally or inspected written evidence which was read and then sealed in his presence. He would then affix his signature and seal to his record in confirmation. So Thomas Farleton, *clericus* and notary public by apostolic authority, formally attested on 28 December 1449 that I, Thomas Farleton, 'was there in person and saw and heard it done in this way' (*personaliter interfui eaque sic fieri, vidi et audivi*) when the abbot and monks of Fountains Abbey testified about the expulsion of one of their number, and at their request had signed and sealed his record *in fidem et testimonium premisorum*, 'as accreditation and witness of the foregoing matters'.<sup>25</sup> Kelly, however, proposed that Russell was the author of the 'third continuation' and that because the words 'we know that his testimony is true' were ascribed to the evangelist in person, Russell was here applying them, with a measure of arrogance, to himself.<sup>26</sup>

Mistranslations by Pronay and Cox inspired other attempts to assign to the Historian a valedictory ode addressed to the abbot and monks of Crowland.<sup>27</sup> In the Pronay/Cox translation the opening lines of the ode appear as 'It would be sweet for a father to be a brother in a community devoid of all envy amongst brothers', so that Pronay envisaged the author as pulling rank over his hosts by presenting himself as 'father' to the community at Crowland.<sup>28</sup> Hicks similarly supposed that this 'father' was Langport,<sup>29</sup> thereby ignoring the far more accurate translation offered by Kelly.<sup>30</sup> With a slight alteration to Kelly's wording, I suggest the reading, 'How agreeable [it would be] to become a brother to the father (that is the abbot<sup>31</sup>) in a community ...'. After praising monks who do not commit the lapses of decorum in church that episcopal visitations often uncovered, so that 'virtue may increase by praises', the poet acknowledges his personal experience of the monks' generous hospitality. There may also be a reference to Crowland's neighbourly disputes, one of them just settled, if *vendicet ut proprium: discedant jugia rixae* can be translated as 'may she (Crowland) or he (the abbot) successfully protect her due rights<sup>32</sup> and may legal contentions depart'. There is also a hint that the author was writing by invitation: 'So that the sacred entreaties of a dedicated brother do not go unanswered, I now commend all mine to your prayers: may

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<sup>24</sup> On Saturday, 1 April 1447; to be repeated in the cathedral on Thursday 6 April. The dates are wrongly translated in *CC*, p. 197.

<sup>25</sup> C.H. Talbot, ed., *Letters from the English Abbots to the Chapter at Cîteaux, 1442-1521*, Camden 4th ser. vol. 4, London 1967, pp. 22-40.

<sup>26</sup> Kelly (1985), pp. 159-61.

<sup>27</sup> *CC*, p. 192. The very loose précis by H.T. Riley (1854, now available online) put the poem into the mouth of one of the monks themselves.

<sup>28</sup> 'The writer describes himself as a "father" amongst the "brothers" .... This suggests that he was a dignitary of the church, monks being required to address ordained priests and especially dignitaries ... as "*Pater*".': *CC*, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> 'That he expected monks to look up to him as a "father" indicates that [the Historian] held some kind of ecclesiastical dignity', Hicks, pp. 359-60.

<sup>30</sup> Kelly (1985), p. 159.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 'the venerable father Richard Crowland, abbot of this monastery': *CC*, p. 164.

<sup>32</sup> *Proprium* often means 'property; one's possessions'.

those fare well who wish your welfare, and may you, too, fare well in Christ!’<sup>33</sup> Here at last is one contribution to the Crowland chronicles that might very plausibly be attributed to Bishop Russell, the known guest in April-May 1486. The theme was taken from Psalm 132 in the Vulgate: ‘Behold, how good and how joyful for brothers to live as one together’. These were the words sung at vespers on a Thursday. Russell had begun his month’s stay at the abbey on 14 April. We do not know exactly when he left. Was it by any chance on Friday 12 May, the day after he had presented his farewell ode to the abbot and monks?

When the so-called ‘third continuator’ contributed an addendum to the monastic records ‘according to our custom’ he was observing traditions of the house. The prior who composed the first continuation had said specifically that much information about earlier times had been lost, except for a few notes written by some of the older (or ‘more senior?’) members of the community, not in the form of any coherent history but just as new things had arisen at intervals over the years.<sup>34</sup> Although, needless to say, our historical mystery writers ignored that clue and tried, for their own reasons, to attribute most, if not all, of the various addenda to the History proper to the Historian himself, the far simpler explanation of the confused order in which these items appeared in the original manuscript is that various monks had written of further events, not necessarily as soon as they occurred, sometimes adding that perhaps someone else would write more in a later place. Thus one of these contributors expatiated on the problems that the new abbot, Edmund Thorp, had faced at his election in November 1485, and was still dealing with.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps, he concluded, the outcome would be reported by someone else at greater length in its own place. Someone indeed started to do so in the final addition about the impropriation of Brighthurst to Peterborough.<sup>36</sup> The expectation was that when in the future someone came to compile a further chronicle, materials for it would be ready to hand. No further chronicle eventuated and what seems to have happened is that our History, together with other materials relating to 1485-6, was finally fair-copied into the manuscript that already contained the first continuation, from which the History continues in a different hand but without any break.<sup>37</sup> Someone at Crowland, it seems, searched the archives for items to be added, assembling them in the best order he could manage, since it was impossible, without thorough rewriting, to present them as a coherent history. In the process of assembly and copying some errors occurred, as when a copyist mistakenly included the direction ‘Then add below (*deinde subjunge*) the poem beginning *Dulce patri fratrem*’.<sup>38</sup> I have suggested elsewhere that three miswritten dates may possibly indicate that this process of copying took place in 1487.<sup>39</sup>

A clear example of how material was put together appears in the insertion that follows the History and the summary of its scope. The subsequent compiler found a poem that fitted here chronologically and felt obliged to give an explanatory introduction, starting awkwardly with ‘these things having been done thus, since chronicles show that no other king after Harold was killed in open battle in his own kingdom ... a certain versifier (*quidam metrista*) left these verses among written materials (*reliquit in scriptis*) about what befell the three kings after the Conquest who shared the name Richard’.<sup>40</sup> Probably because he had picked up the *Richardi* in this introduction, and the poem’s initial words, *Tres sunt Richardi*, the later annotator labelled the poem *Versus Richardi de tribus Regibus ejusdem nominis*. This wording could be interpreted either, by analogy with English word-order, as ‘The verses of Richard about the three kings of the same name’, or ‘Verses about the three kings of the same name, “Richard”.’ It was the first translation that I offered in 1975.<sup>41</sup> I did not ask how the annotator came to know the name of the poet who had left the work with the abbey, or why he should have thought it worth recording, leaving aside these aspects of the general mystery. Kelly, however, accepted my translation on reconsideration, welcoming the support that it might lend to his identification of the Historian as Richard Lavender, and went so far as to say in 1987 that the alternative translation given by Pronay and Cox ‘is so far-fetched as to be impossible’.<sup>42</sup> Like

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<sup>33</sup> *Ne sancta precamina votis Frustrantur precibus fratris, Ego nunc mea vestris Omnia commendo ....*

<sup>34</sup> W. Fulman, ed., *Rerum Anglicanarum Scriptorum Veterum*, 1, Oxford 1684, p. 545.

<sup>35</sup> *CC*, pp. 184-88.

<sup>36</sup> *CC*, p. 198.

<sup>37</sup> *CC*, Plates 2 and 4.

<sup>38</sup> Only Pronay, and then Hicks, (*CC*, p. 54; Hicks, p. 351) imagined that anyone had been thoughtless enough to claim that when Fulman edited the text in 1684 he wrote an instruction to his printer *in Latin*.

<sup>39</sup> A. Hanham, ‘Author! author! Crowland revisited’, *The Ricardian*, vol. 11 (1998), pp. 226-38, p. 235.

<sup>40</sup> *CC*, p. 184.

<sup>41</sup> A. Hanham, *Richard III and His Early Historians, 1483-1535*, Oxford 1975, p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> Kelly (1987), p. 514 n. 63.

Pronay, he attributed the poem to the Historian, who had concealed his identity by calling himself ‘a certain poet’. Hicks, here relying on Kelly, agreed that the annotator had proved conclusively that the Historian’s first name was Richard. That supposed fact, coupled with his initial belief that the Historian had been a councillor of Edward IV, led him first into searching for a known councillor named Richard, and then into settling for a Richard with official connections to the royal council. No commentator has so far observed that Crowland’s prior at the time was named Richard – Richard Cambridge. Prior Richard may in fact be our anonymous Historian, but it seems very unlikely that the annotator was referring to him, and it is still more improbable that a contemporary monk would dismiss him as ‘a certain poet’.

There is a different candidate for that designation, in the shape of the professional poet who may have been an occasional resident in the monastery in late 1485 and early 1486. The ‘King Richards’ poem concludes with one of the complex pieces of dating much favoured by writers of occasional verse: ‘In the year one thousand one hundred four and twenty times four, added five, when light came to the sixth [month, which was August by classical Roman reckoning], twice eleven, the boar’s tusks were numbed and the red rose, avenger of the white, shines out in general acclaim’.<sup>43</sup> A corrody<sup>44</sup> at Crowland Abbey was in the king’s gift, and on 4 December 1485 Henry VII conferred it, pending some more substantial appointment, on a certain ‘B. Andrew’.<sup>45</sup> Can this have been Henry’s eulogist, the French-born Augustinian friar Bernard André or Andrew, and was he the *quidam metrista* who left this poem with the monks after one of his visits?

In 1913 C.L. Kingsford<sup>46</sup> did much to promulgate the notion that the second continuation of the Crowland chronicles had been composed by an outsider who was close to the royal court. Mistakenly, he also supposed that, along with various supplementary additions, it had been written at Crowland in the ten days ending on 30 April 1486. For subsequent mystery writers it was especially enticing to attribute the work to Bishop Russell. The hard fact, too often forgotten, is that personages like Edward IV, Elizabeth Woodville, Margaret of Anjou, Richard of York or Warwick – even Richard III himself – are faceless people, insofar as they left few or no direct personal records of their private thoughts and intentions, so that biographers must deduce personality and character from what evidence they can assemble. If Russell, Richard’s former lord chancellor, had penned Crowland’s chronicle, historians were being offered a unique document which threw great light on Russell himself, as well as presenting an intimate picture of people and events. Although those who adopted a similar ‘whodunit’ approach in favour of some other official did their best to build up personal portraits of their chosen candidates from unpromising material, this served only to diminish, rather than enhance, the chronicle’s apparent importance.

It takes on quite different significance when it is seen, as it was in the survey of Crowland’s history and muniments in the relevant volume of the Victoria County History of 1906,<sup>47</sup> as an ‘in-house’ production of the monastery itself, which drew, like any other anonymous chronicle, on the various sources that a compiler had available.<sup>48</sup> That Crowland’s Historian was no diocesan official turned chronicler, nor elderly civil servant recording his political reminiscences, but a senior monk fulfilling his obligation to continue the annals of a predecessor along established lines at once disposes of some of the seeming difficulties that the ‘second continuation’ presents. It explains the puzzling way in which the text carries straight on from the previous chronicle with ‘after the death of the aforesaid Abbot John in 1470 a continuation follows of the events that befell in England, and especially those concerning the said monastery of Crowland. Yet before starting to describe what happened after that year it is fitting to add some things which were overlooked by the said chronicler’.<sup>49</sup> It explains what Hicks thought was the chronicler’s ‘surely remarkable’ ability ‘to remember all his changes of mind in 1475 and 1483, and to rationalize them into a more logical sequence’.<sup>50</sup> It explains, of course, why the Historian so carefully

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<sup>43</sup> Linguistic note: *in ore [omnium]*, ‘in everyone’s mouth’.

<sup>44</sup> A corrody supplied the nominee of a patron with board and lodging at a monastery’s expense.

<sup>45</sup> W. Campbell, ed., *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, 2 vols., London 1873-1877, vol. 1, p. 203. In Latin verses delivered at Henry’s entry into London on 3 Sept. 1485 André said that no-one, after the turbulence [of previous years] need go in fear of the crown now worn by the king: J. Gairdner, ed., *Memorials of Henry VII*, London 1858, pp. 35-36.

<sup>46</sup> C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1913.

<sup>47</sup> *The Victoria County History of the County of Lincoln*, 2 vols., London 1906, vol. 2, pp. 105-18.

<sup>48</sup> Who wrote the well-informed Latin chronicle for the years from 1400 to 1462 which the clergyman John Benet copied into his commonplace book?

<sup>49</sup> *CC*, p. 108.

<sup>50</sup> Hicks, ‘Crowland’s world’, p. 187.

wove into his ‘secular history’ the ‘obituary’ notices of succeeding abbots, in what Pronay dismissed, with singular incongruity, as ‘a lengthy and unconvincing imitation of “monk-speak”, intoning a dateless tale of child-like monks guided by holy-simple abbots’, and ‘tedious parodies of a monastic chronicler’.<sup>51</sup> Working, in all probability, from the records made at the relevant times, the Historian followed his predecessor’s example by producing a coherent narrative, while creating a *concordancia* – harmonious conflation – of the doings of kings and abbots, as the first continuator put it.<sup>52</sup> It was for the instruction of novices that he introduced a digression which succinctly explains the difference between the English dating of the year of grace, which began on 25 March, and the method of the Roman curia, by which a new year started on the preceding 1 January.<sup>53</sup> It is a very unusual feature of his chronicle that it is often careful to offer both kinds of year-date, as well, sometimes, as the regnal year, which was far more generally employed but could lead to mistakes, as it did here. Perhaps the use of Roman dating was another old custom of the monastery; perhaps the Historian had some special interest in the matter.<sup>54</sup>

By tradition the Historian wrote anonymously, but in personal terms, often marked by his use of the first person singular or plural: ‘I think this is a truer reason for the quarrel between [Edward IV and Warwick] than the one rehearsed above’ (p. 114); ‘Let us leave at present this good father and his actions, which we shall recite when we reach [the year of his death], and return to the aforesaid secular history of the realm’ (p. 120); ‘although, in my opinion’, King Edward privately repented (p. 146); ‘I pass over the Christmas festivities’ (p. 168); ‘I do not know’ who formulated the oath of loyalty to Richard’s son (p. 170). That his information came from many sources explains why chronology is occasionally confused and, for example, how the compiler came to call Bishop Fox John instead of Richard (p. 180). It explains especially why he was careful to attribute many of his stories to ‘report’ or ‘rumour’: ‘many thought’ (p. 142); ‘it was strongly doubted by many’ (p. 144); ‘those who were there at the time of Edward’s death testify’ (p. 150); ‘it was put about that’ (p. 160); ‘there was a rumour’ (p. 162); ‘it was said by many’ (p. 174), and, most notoriously, ‘as it is being asserted (*ut asseritur*)’, Richard was assailed by a terrifying dream on the eve of Bosworth (p. 180: not, as translated, ‘as it was reported’).

Any idea that a large monastic community, however geographically remote, led a life cut off from the world is quite unrealistic. And the various supplementary records copied into Crowland’s volume show how the monks routinely supplied notes of occurrences both within and outside the abbey. Like everyone in an age when ‘the news’ passed from mouth to mouth, the monks must have listened eagerly to the latest tidings brought by visitors or gleaned in casual conversation with neighbouring families, tenants or workmen. Bishop Russell and his twenty companions, who no doubt included people like his personal physician and secretary,<sup>55</sup> cannot have been the abbey’s only talkative guests, lay or clerical, in the sixteen years after January 1470. And who, for instance, held the corrody in the king’s gift before it was conferred on ‘B. Andrewe’? What other pensioners was Crowland housing, such as the later prior of their college for students in Cambridge who would retire to the abbey after 1516 on account of his infirmity and long service?<sup>56</sup> Crowland’s monks studying at Cambridge are a further likely source of information on current events.

The abbot, in particular, was one of the lords spiritual who attended that hotbed of gossip, a session of parliament. Possibly it was Abbot John Wisbech who noted with such indignation that in the parliament of 1472-1475 the bishops had granted King Edward, out of hand, a clerical tenth, as though when the clergy at large met to approve it they would simply do as the king wished:<sup>57</sup> ‘O pernicious enslavement of the church!’ commented the chronicler, in Ciceronian outrage; ‘God avert the minds of all future kings from following a deed of this kind, lest the same ills, or worse, if worse are imaginable, befall them as soon befell this king and his noble offspring!’<sup>58</sup> Abbot Richard Crowland may have reported from

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<sup>51</sup> Pronay, *CC*, pp. 74, 100.

<sup>52</sup> Ed. Fulman, p. 545.

<sup>53</sup> *CC*, p. 118.

<sup>54</sup> Even the English Cistercian abbots, writing to the mother house at Cîteaux, did not bother to convert Anglican dates into the Roman equivalent, e.g. *Cistercian Letters*, no. 9, from the abbot of Byland, dated ‘Feb. vicesima prima 1479’ (by English reckoning, that is).

<sup>55</sup> What position in ‘my master’ Russell’s household was held by Simon Stallworth, who sent Sir William Stonor news in June 1483?

<sup>56</sup> A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500*, Cambridge 1963, sub Overton, Anthony.

<sup>57</sup> *CC*, p. 150.

<sup>58</sup> In ascribing the History to a senior cleric in royal service, Hicks (p. 360) had to say that in his official capacity ‘he frequently acquiesced in decisions that he did not personally approve’.

the next parliament how Clarence was first attainted and then secretly executed, together with an account of the duke's earlier actions, and the executions of Stacy and Burdet.<sup>59</sup> Abbot Edmund Thorp, or one of his companions, since he would not have travelled to Westminster unaccompanied, may have written critically of the proceedings at Henry VII's first parliament, adding 'but of these matters perhaps more below'.<sup>60</sup>

Some of the information that the eventual compiler included in his History may well have been sheer gossip. Who reported the stories that Richard had given identical garments to his wife and his niece at Christmas 1484, and that 'it was considered' (*censebatur*) that Anne's illness was exacerbated because Richard avoided her bed, saying that he did so on medical advice (p. 174)? Did Ratcliffe and Catesby really recruit 'more than a dozen doctors of theology' to persuade Richard that the pope could not grant a dispensation for a marriage between uncle and niece?<sup>61</sup> The pleasing anecdote that Richard discovered Anne Neville disguised as a kitchen-maid in London (p. 132) closely resembles a folk-tale. The 'rumour' that there was a plot to rescue Edward's daughters from sanctuary (p. 162) may or may not have been true, although some sort of 'criminal activity' certainly appears to have been foiled in July 1483.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, there is a ring of credibility about some details of the oath of loyalty reportedly taken to Richard's son, 'in case anything happened to his father', 'one afternoon in February, in a lower chamber next the passage leading to the queen's apartments', reinforced by the fact that the Historian could not commit himself to the exact date, or name the person who formulated it (p. 170). Nor did he give the date 'shortly after Easter' 1485 (in fact 30 March) on which King Richard appeared in 'the great hall of St John's before the mayor and citizens of London' to deny that he meant to marry his niece (p. 176). The meeting, with the same specific detail of 'the great hall' (of the Hospitallers at Clerkenwell), along with the king's further denial that he had poisoned his wife, is reported as taking place 'yesterday' in the *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company*,<sup>63</sup> and obviously derives from the first-hand account of somebody who was present. In that connection, it is interesting that the Historian's incidental remark (p. 138) that Edward IV's customs officers or 'searchers' – 'most exquisite men', that is 'most searching', or 'subtle; devious', men – were commonly said to be too hard on the merchants reflects the ongoing complaints recorded in the acts of the mercers of London. In July 1479 they registered their concern over 'the straitness of the customers' who were breaking open packages of goods to inspect the contents – on the king's orders, the controller of customs declared.<sup>64</sup> It had been proposed in July and October 1475 that duty should be calculated only 'by the piece without any sight'.<sup>65</sup> It seems evident that at least one of Crowland's informants was not the civil servant whose mental world Hicks sought to uncover in 'Crowland's World', but someone closely associated with the merchant community.

When it comes to narrating events after the death of Edward IV the Historian, unlike Thomas More, who stresses his subject's villainy from the outset, unfolds the story of the usurpation gradually, with only occasional hints of slight foreboding until the arrests at the Tower on 13 June and the execution of Hastings, when 'the three strongest supports of the new king were removed without justice or judgment' (p. 158), and then, following the surrender of the king's brother from sanctuary, Gloucester and Buckingham displayed their intentions openly. There is little invective against Richard, except that he is contrasted with 'the most glorious' King Edward (p. 160) and described as a man of elevated (that is, 'exalted; arrogant') mind, who intrudes himself onto the throne on a pretext that was never properly examined, so that after his coronation *homo iste*, 'this fellow', was called King Richard the third after the conquest (p. 160). So little is known about Richard's government that one must regret the Historian's refusal to give any details when he bursts out, 'O God, why linger to add to the recital of unsuitable matters? There were so many that they can scarcely be counted, and they should not be mentioned because they would set pernicious precedents if they came to the attention of scoundrels. There are also

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<sup>59</sup> *CC*, pp. 142, 144-46.

<sup>60</sup> *CC*, p. 194.

<sup>61</sup> *CC*, pp. 174-76. Discussion of contemporary canon law on the subject, while interesting in itself, is irrelevant if these doctors existed only in popular imagination. Similarly, the Historian made the point (pp. 168-70) that in 1484 parliament accepted the proposition that Edward's marriage was invalid without the question being examined by the competent ecclesiastical authorities, 'since it was a question of matrimonial legalities': the translation offered perverts the sense with 'there was a dispute concerning the validity of a marriage'. Investigation now comes over five centuries too late!

<sup>62</sup> Hanham, *Richard III*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>63</sup> L. Lyell and F. D. Watney, eds., *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company, 1453-1527*, Cambridge 1936, pp. 173-74.

<sup>64</sup> *ACM*, p. 117.

<sup>65</sup> *ACM*, pp. 86, 92.

many things unwritten in this book because it is shameful to speak of them' (p. 174). The target is partly at least those who gathered forced loans, 'by threats and prayers, by fair means and foul', 'scraping up information from the records'. One such official was probably Catesby, who was, says the Historian with biting irony, beheaded after Bosworth 'in final payment for his outstanding services' to the dead king. The only praise given to Richard is the acknowledgment (p. 182) that he fell on the field of battle, fighting 'like a courageous and intrepid prince'.

But in shaping his account of Richard's reign, the Historian had a particular agenda of his own. To his mind Richard had not only disrupted the succession to the crown but had imperilled the soul of Edward IV by seizing the wealth that Edward had charged his executors to dispense for his benefit after death. Worldly as he was, with his pious testamentary dispositions Edward had made the best imaginable end (p. 150). The Historian expatiates on the matter at length, emphasising its importance with, unusually for him, a whole cluster of preacher-like quotations. Just like Zacchaeus in Luke, chapter nineteen, Edward bequeathed nearly half of his goods to the poor and ordered that if he had defrauded anyone they should be repaid four-fold. 'By this, hope was given to all his loyal subjects that he would not be cheated of his eternal reward'. To that end, 'he was quickly carried off', says the chronicler, quoting *Sapientia* (Wisdom) 4: 11, 'lest supervening *malicia* (ill-will) should change his mind' – 'or guile deceive his soul', adds the text. Failing to recognise the source in Luke 19: 9, Pronay and Cox strangely mistranslated the key sentence (p. 152) in which the chronicler reproduces Christ's words about Zacchaeus, with the explanatory addition of *animae suae*, 'of his soul' to *huic domui* 'this dwelling-place', with reference to the promise of bodily resurrection: 'Undoubtedly by this firm intention salvation was brought to his soul's habitation, in such a way that he too would be a son of Abraham, destined for the light that God formerly promised to Abraham and his seed'.<sup>66</sup> But for the Historian, and anyone else at that time, all that assurance would be vain if Edward's careful provisions for his soul were not carried out. 'Faith without works is dead. Was not Abraham our father justified by works?'; 'The body without the spirit is dead. So too is faith dead without works', said the Apostle James, in words destined to be much bandied about between Catholics and protestant reformers.<sup>67</sup> The outcome was therefore, as the further tragic story would relate, especially 'piteous and unhappy', and the author repeatedly indicates that by frustrating Edward's declared intentions Richard had defrauded him of his eternal reward: 'there was no lack of treasure because he had immediately seized all the wealth accumulated by Edward, which Edward had entrusted to his executors' (pp. 160-62); after the expensive campaign against the rebels of 1483, 'so began the rapid consumption of all those rich possessions which King Edward thought he had left behind him for far different purposes' (p. 168); Richard was well-placed to resist Henry's first threatened invasion because he still had in his hands the remnants of Edward's treasure (p. 170); but later he was already starting to lack money for defence and resorted to obtaining voluntary contributions from almost everyone of means (pp. 172-74).

Where an unidentifiable author is concerned, the style must furnish a major clue to his background and beliefs. It is unfortunate that Pronay, when intent on disproving Russell's authorship of the History (p. 82), said that its writer does not 'appear to have an interest in learning. He only refers twice to something he had read, once to the chronicles [a mistranslation of *viso quod per chronicas*, 'since, according to chronicles ...' in one of the addenda, p. 184] and once to Roman (political) history'; 'He does not give the impression' of being a 'pious, learned ecclesiastic'.<sup>68</sup> Pronay was perhaps misled by the fact that the Historian eschewed the heavy ornateness of his predecessor in favour of a more modern and straightforward style. Elsewhere (p. 88) he remarked approvingly that 'there is not one dragged-in quotation even from the Bible'. Certainly the Historian does not show off his biblical knowledge in the way that some of the Cistercian abbots did, tirelessly and to tiresome effect. References came naturally to him, however, and he employed them aptly when occasion arose. Burdet, therefore (p. 144), could have declared his innocence by saying, with Susannah in the book of Daniel, 'Behold, I die, although I did none of these things'. 'The three-fold cord which is difficult to break' (p. 132) comes from Ecclesiasticus 4:12. For Hastings, 'grief took the place of this joy' (p. 158), which probably echoes the adjuration to sinners in James 4: 9, 'let your laughter turn to mourning and your joy to grief'. There is a small clerical joke when Edward's chosen collectors of the 'benevolence' are described as 'sons of this world, more

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<sup>66</sup> Luke: 19:9 'Today salvation has come to this house (Vulgate, *quia hodie salus domui huic facta est*) for he also is a son of Abraham'. The *CC* says nothing whatever about any purpose 'with regard to this monastery', as translated (p. 153).

<sup>67</sup> The Epistle of James, 3: 20-21, 26.

<sup>68</sup> Hicks ('Crowland's world', p. 176) cites no evidence for his statements that the Historian 'not infrequently [leaves] his meaning unclear. His imperfect grammar and jargon do not help'.

prudent in their generation than the sons of light' (p. 172; Luke 16: 8; but also Luke 7: 35, 'Wisdom is justified by all her sons'). The metaphor of the officials from Deeping 'setting their sickles to other men's crops' (p. 166) reflects the 'reaps where he did not sow' in the several versions of the same parable of the unjust steward.

At the very least, our author had also received a good grounding in the standard classical Roman authors, and historians like Tacitus, Livy and Sallust may have provided him with models. 'Not war but the appearance of war' (p. 108) has been traced to Sallust, and Caesar's 'venit ... vidit ... vicit' was something of a commonplace.<sup>69</sup> That 'money is the sinews of war' was said by Cicero (*5th Philippic*, chapter 5). The Historian had certainly read Terence's play *Phormio*, so that the aphorism 'there is nothing so sacred or proper that it cannot be denigrated by ill-speaking' came to mind when he mentioned criticisms of Edward's peace-treaty with Louis XI (p. 132). And *rea mens sibi conscia facti* 'a mind made conscious of a guilty action' (p. 116) looks like an ironic reversal of Virgil's *mens sibi conscia recti*, 'a mind conscious of righteousness' in *Aeneid*, Bk 1, 1: 604. More generally, the Latin idiom *sine cura* 'without troubling' provided him with a pun on 'incurable' (p. 132), and linguistic word-play produced '*dimittens homines voluntarios voluntat?*'; 'leaving strong-willed men to their own will'.

There is no doubt that the Crowland Historian was a writer of remarkable quality, who put together the mass of detailed information that members of his community obtained and produced a highly personalised, smooth-flowing narrative, along the best lines of the classic Roman historians, but without the invented orations with which many writers liked to adorn their work. When he quotes, for instance, the high-flown titles by which Charles the Bold addressed Edward,<sup>70</sup> there is good evidence that his report was truthful, and Charles's public statement that with Edward's army he could go a-conquering up to the gates of Rome itself (p. 134) also has the appearance of originating from someone who heard him, however embellished it may have become in later retelling. As a story-teller the Historian enlivened his account with dramatic touches and brought in the reader with the rhetorical 'You might then have seen ...'. As a monk, he wrote of the doings of great persons with a wry detachment, except when his religious sensitivities were offended. I have suggested that part of the animus that he displays towards Richard arose for such reasons. But whether he deliberately selected reports and items of hearsay that were hostile to the king, or whether they genuinely reflected widespread disquiet, readers must decide.

As a historian, the author's two viewpoints – that of the devout monk, 'a son of light', and that of the experienced man of affairs, 'wise in his generation' – are balanced in his description of the problems that Crowland had faced under the abbacy of Richard Crowland (pp. 164-68). The pious abbot was inclined by his nature towards study and the writing of books; pursuits eminently proper to a cloistered monk but not conducive to the vigorous leadership that the community required. The results, by the monks' own account, were disastrous for Crowland when the depredations of its neighbours and tenants had to be checked. Instead these took advantage of what they perceived as the abbot's 'simple innocence and innocent simplicity'. And when it came to combating rival claims by Peterborough Abbey, 'you might there see the lamb at law with the wolf, the mouse with the mouser'. So it was Peterborough's interests that Archbishop Rotherham's award of 1 May 1481 promoted.<sup>71</sup> The monks' volume concluded with the record of how Bringhurst was formally conceded to Peterborough, entirely at Crowland's expense, in April 1486.

Crowland's Latin chronicles were a cooperative effort, produced in-house for the benefit of an educated elite within the community itself. No records survive for Buckingham College at Cambridge, established for Benedictine monks under the auspices of Crowland Abbey in 1428 and enlarged by Abbot Wisbech in the 1470s. But between 1476 and 1485 Crowland's successive abbots from Richard Crowland to Edmund Thorp were graduates of Cambridge University. Thorp was prior of the abbey when he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Theology in 1484-5.<sup>72</sup> He was evidently succeeded as prior in November 1485 by Richard Cambridge. The sparse and scanty university records show that in 1486-7

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<sup>69</sup> These and other instances were elicited by L. Visser-Fuchs, 'A commentary on the continuations', *The Ricardian*, vol. 7 (1985-87), pp. 520-22.

<sup>70</sup> *CC*, p. 130. Such flattery became popular in England all the same: e.g. the abbot of Fountains referred to Richard as 'Celestial Royalty': *Cistercian Letters*, no. 36, p. 91.

<sup>71</sup> The wolf and the mouse-hunting cat obviously refer to 'our all-too-near neighbour', the abbot of Peterborough, and the whole tone makes Kelly's interpretation that the compromise favoured Crowland impossible to support: 'the controversy with Peterborough was settled in Crowland's favour': Kelly (1987), p. 501; 'I think that [the author] views Crowland as the winner': Kelly (1990), p. 335.

<sup>72</sup> Emden, *Biog. Reg. Cambridge*, sub Thorpe, Edmund.

Richard was granted the 'grace' that study for three years in Canon Law and Arts sufficed for him to enter onto the degree of BCnL, which he obtained in 1491-2, when he was excused from lecturing, on the grounds that he was occupied as prior of Crowland.<sup>73</sup>

Tradition dictated that Crowland's chroniclers wrote anonymously, using, for instance, the impersonal *ille qui haec scripsit*. It is not impossible that it was Edmund Thorp who both compiled and narrated 'the second continuation', in which the latest event mentioned was the sudden death from the sweating sickness of Abbot Fosdyke in October 1485 (p. 168). Despite that, the section dealing with Crowland's neighbourly disputes ended effectively in November 1483 with the death of Abbot Richard Crowland. The major calamity of his unfortunate rule was the unjust decision by Archbishop Rotherham in March 1481 that Crowland must compensate Peterborough for the rights Peterborough claimed over the marsh of Alderland: 'we have therefore decided to bring an end to this tragedy with the end and death of the said father, Richard Crowland'.

A case, however, can be made for arguing that it was not Edmund Thorp but Richard Cambridge who eventually put together the History presented in the 'second continuation'. Its text ends with Henry's accession and demonstration of clemency. A summary of its scope follows (pp. 182-84): 'And thus ends the History which we promised to set out, up to the death of the said King Richard .... We began, summarily, by supplementing the account compiled by the previous prior, from the battle feared to occur at Ludlow between Henry VI and the duke of York in 1459 and came to this battle at Merevale on 22 August 1485, twenty-six years later'. If we ignore the interpolated 'Three Kings Richard' verse and its introduction, the text runs straight on from that, with the same authorial plural: 'In these first days of the new king's reign the sweat, on which we touched before, was rampant, from which the aforesaid Abbot Lambert died on 14 [October], as has been said, to whom succeeded as abbot Edmund Thorp, B.Th., formerly prior, [on 9 November 1485]. ... At the start of his tenure he was acutely mindful of the troubles suffered by his predecessors from their ungrateful, arrogant and almost unrestrainable near neighbours, and spared no effort to bring peace on every side' (p. 184). In particular, the author now explains the terms of Rotherham's award, which had previously appeared to settle the dispute with Peterborough in a very costly but inconclusive fashion. As the lesser of two evils, Crowland now decided to accept the suggested transfer of Bringhurst to Peterborough and Thorp succeeded in obtaining the necessary royal licence (in March 1486). 'Perhaps someone will record the ensuing process in a later place' (pp. 184-88).

It cannot have been Abbot Thorp himself who wrote this laudatory account of the abbot whose successes were such as to suggest that 'no-one before him had been found worthy of achieving all this'. I am strongly inclined, therefore, to attribute to the gifted Richard Cambridge both the eventual writing up of the 'second continuation' and this adjunct. With Hicks,<sup>74</sup> I would guess that it was Abbot Thorp who contributed 'the third continuation', disagreeing with the view that a historian should not write of living people and, inter alia, criticising the proceedings at Henry's first parliament and noting the visit of Bishop Russell in April. But Crowland's emphasis on anonymity means that some mysteries about authorship must remain. What can be stated decisively is that historians have been sadly misled in attributing the 'second continuation' to some hypothetical person outside the community, and there is rich irony in Pronay's ringing declaration that it was thanks to the outsider who 'fortuitously' composed a chronicle for them that it 'succeeded where the monks had failed: it brought Crowland the lasting fame they so thirsted after'.<sup>75</sup> By way of footnote, it might be added that an almost-concurrent re-reading of 'the second continuation' and the various versions, Latin and English, of More's *Richard III* has also strengthened my earlier impression that the Crowland author's account of Richard's reign must have been known to More. According to Pronay, the monastery had lost possession of the volume by 1506.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, sub Cambridge (Cambrygge), Richard. Thorp's successor as abbot in 1497, Philip Everard, is probably the 'Evered' who became BCnL. in 1498. Furthermore, a certain John Crowland was described as 'monk. OSB, Crowland Abbey, Lincs.', when he incepted in Theology at Cambridge in 1498-9, 12 years after graduating BTh at Oxford.

<sup>74</sup> Hicks, pp. 357, 370.

<sup>75</sup> *CC*, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *CC*, Addendum, p. 102.