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# DEATH, COMMEMORATION AND THE HERALDIC FUNERAL IN TUDOR AND STUART CHESHIRE AND LANCASHIRE: Part II

Wendy Walters-DiTraglia

## 2. The Heraldic Funerals of Edward Stanley, third Earl of Derby, Sir John Savage of Rock Savage and Sir Peter Legh of Lyme

‘In solemn show attend this funeral’  
(Shakespeare, *Ant. & Cleo.* V. ii. 238)

On Thursday, the fourth of December 1572, Edward Stanley, third Earl of Derby, made his last journey from the family home in Lathom Hall, Lancashire, to his parish church in Ormskirk. The chariot that carried the earl to his final resting place was draped in sumptuous black velvet, ‘garnished with escocheons’ and ‘drawne by foure horses trapt with black’, bearing both ‘schoceons and a shaffron’ of the earl’s arms. Fifty esquires and knights processed two by two, with eighty of ‘the defuncts gentlemen mounted on comely geldings in their gownes and hoodes’.<sup>1</sup> Alongside the body rode four esquires in mourning gowns and hoods, flanked on either side by six other esquires. Behind the chariot rode the chief mourner, Henry, now fourth Earl of Derby, eldest son and heir of the deceased in his mourning robes, accompanied by two gentlemen ushers. The eight other mourners, as allowed by heraldic prescription for the funeral of an earl or viscount,<sup>2</sup> followed closely behind.

This grand procession was led by two yeoman conductors followed by one hundred poor men in gowns, two abreast. There were no doleful sounds of the trumpet, as called for in Randle Holme’s directive for the ‘Funeral of a Lo: or Earle’,<sup>3</sup> but rather a choir of forty men in their surplices singing. The preparations for Edward’s heraldic funeral necessitated a delay of nearly six weeks from the time of his death on 24 October.<sup>4</sup> During this time the earl’s body was ‘wrapt in lead and chested’ and lay in state at Lathom Hall, the house being draped with black cloth ‘garnished’ with ‘Schochions of his Armes’.<sup>5</sup> In his will the earl had requested ‘the

<sup>1</sup> The heralds’ account of the funeral is given in CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 350-361; quotations in text from p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> Randle Holme, ‘The number of murners at funerals according to the degree & estate of the defunct’, in *Cheshire and Lancashire Funeral Certificates AD 1600-1678*, ed. John Paul Rylands (Record Society 1882), p. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> BL Ms Harl 2129 fo. 54a.

<sup>4</sup> A delay from the time of death to burial was not unusual. Litten notes several factors were contributory: the preparations, availability of College of Arms representatives and official mourners and travel time of kings of arms from London. See J. Litten, *The English Way of Death: the common funeral since 1450* (London 1991; repr. 2002), p. 174; also C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London 1984), p. 166.

<sup>5</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 p. 350.

burial of my corpe according to my honoure and vocaton',<sup>6</sup> but the display appears to have surpassed even that which was prescribed to his degree. Three kings of arms who travelled 308 miles for the earl's obsequies – for which the Stanley family paid £138 10s 4d<sup>7</sup> – rode behind the Lancaster herald: Norroy bearing the shield of arms of the earl in 'his coate of armes richelie imbrodered with the Armes of England', Clarenceux bearing his sword 'with the pomell upward the hilt and chape gilt with a scabberd of velvuet', and Garter 'bearinge another of the defunctes coates of Armes'.<sup>8</sup> The ten esquires that attended the body exhibited six bannerols representative of 'the alliances of the ancestors of the deceased', not merely the '4 banner rolle 2 of each side' called for by heraldic prescription.<sup>9</sup> Whilst the size of the cortège in no way rivalled a royal funeral, where participants could number 9,000,<sup>10</sup> at least 830 persons in mourning cloaks were involved in the Derby funeral procession.<sup>11</sup> This venerable observance would have likely pleased the earl, a man who, like the Queen he served, 'laid stress on formal manners and dignified ceremonial'.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst the funeral appears to have been a solemn tribute to Derby himself, additional bannerols that contributed to the spectacular heraldic display suggest the day's honours bestowed on the earl were to be shared with his family, both living and deceased. The deceased earl's father and grandfather (first and second Earls of Derby) and the rest of the Stanley line were vibrantly personified in the large, colourful banners that co-mingled each defunct's arms with the impalements of his wife's bearings.<sup>13</sup> William Stanley, the deceased earl's grandson and son to Henry, rode on horseback carrying the third bannerol of his great-grandfather the second earl.<sup>14</sup> Familial solidarity and attachment were palpably expressed in the position these arms assumed in the procession: flanking the chariot that carried the earl's body and before the chief mourner, Henry, the new earl.<sup>15</sup> This ancestral connectedness continued after the earl's death, with his interment in the chapel he had requested to be built in his will (**Figures 1 and 2**).<sup>16</sup> Within the chapel, inside a family funeral vault decorated with now faded heraldic emblems (**Plate 1a**), Edward's effigy rests on the tomb opposite that of his great-grandfather, which the earl had asked to be moved from Burscough Priory (**Plate 1b**).<sup>17</sup>

The kinship and extension of the Stanley line through the earl's three important marriages were also celebrated in the procession, by the display of the arms of the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, the first Earl of Huntington, and Thomas Duke of Norfolk.<sup>18</sup> Curiously, in the funeral account there is no mention of the attendance of representatives from the Stafford, Dudley or Morley families, despite the marriages

<sup>6</sup> PCC: PROB 11/54.

<sup>7</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 p. 307.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

<sup>9</sup> BL Ms Harl. 2129 fo. 54a.

<sup>10</sup> Chamberlain recorded 9,000 in attendance for James I's funeral: Gittings, op. cit. p. 227.

<sup>11</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 353-358. The number of gentlemen servants is not mentioned in the account and not included in this figure.

<sup>12</sup> J. J. Bagley, *The Earls of Derby 1485-1985* (London 1985), p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151, pp. 356f.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 355f.

<sup>16</sup> PCC: PROB 11/54.

<sup>17</sup> *Ormskirk Parish Church: a guide and short history* ([Ormskirk] 2000), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 354-6.

*Figure 1 (right):* the exterior of the Derby Chapel, at the north-west corner of Ormskirk parish church, Lancashire.



*Figure 2 (below):* Derby Chapel, Ormskirk parish church: altar with the tomb of Edward, third Earl (d. 1572) and his countess.



of Edward's three other daughters by Dorothy Howard to sons of these families, who were all minor peers and religious conservatives like Edward himself.<sup>19</sup>

Edward Haigh, Francis Holt, George Middleton, Edward Torbock and Charles West, esquires, 'sons of prominent gentry families' were entrusted with 'bearing a bannerol not onely of the defuncts armes but also of the armes of such noble houses whereof he was descended'.<sup>20</sup> Holt and Torbuck were from families that were part of the earl's retinue – the group of advisors and assistants who accompanied him – and had contributed men to his army in 1536.<sup>21</sup> Their place in the obsequies, as well as that of Derby's household servants and men from other leading Cheshire and Lancashire gentry families with long-term connections to the earl (the Asshetons, Bartons, Butlers, Bradshaws, Daltons, Haighs, Holts, Middletons, Orrells, Prestons, Torbocks, Scarisbricks and Wests)<sup>22</sup> is significant. It supports Mervyn James's suggestion that a 'lineage culture' existed in the north-west,<sup>23</sup> and, specifically, that it flourished in Cheshire and Lancashire.

The Earl of Derby's connection with his servants, tenants and followers epitomised this way of life, which James explains as a relationship between a lord with ancestral blood ties to the area and household retainers and dependant gentry followers where 'common allegiance', 'fidelity and obedience' were the reward for 'good lordship'.<sup>24</sup> The deference and loyalty of the Stanley dependants is perhaps explicable given the nature of the people of the north-west, characterised in 1585 in King's *Vale-Royal* as 'always true, faithful, and obedient to their superiors; insomuch that it cannot be said, that they at any time stirred one spark of rebellion, either against the king's majesty, or against their own peculiar lord or governor'.<sup>25</sup>

David Kertzer suggests civic involvement in funerary rituals is therapeutic, but also demonstrates 'the powerful dependence people feel toward their society'.<sup>26</sup> And the participation of the earl's household officers and servants, five hundred of his tenant yeomen and gentry followers in his funeral embraces this idea. It may be viewed as a public demonstration of the dependence, loyalty and respect that bound the 'lineage culture'; for, as Coward notes, 'the duty of client gentry to their lords was more often expressed in ceremonial form'.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Louis A. Knafla, 'Edward Stanley, third Earl of Derby', in *Oxford DNB*; CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 353-61.

<sup>20</sup> Barry Coward, *The Stanleys Lords Stanley and Earls of Derby 1385-1672: the origins, wealth and power of a landowning family* (Chetham Society pubns. 3rd ser. vol. 30: Manchester 1983), p. 120; CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 354-6.

<sup>21</sup> The army totalled 7,811 and had been assembled to suppress the Pilgrimage of Grace; Coward, pp. 97f.

<sup>22</sup> Their attendance is indicated by CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 353-8; for their status and ties to the earl, see Coward, pp. 112, 120.

<sup>23</sup> 'The concept of order and the Northern Rising, 1569', in *Society, Politics and Culture*, ed. M. James (Cambridge 1986), pp. 270-307, at 274. <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 271-5.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel King, *The History of Cheshire: containing King's Vale Royal entire* (2 vols., Chester 1778) vol. 2, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven and London 1988), p. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Coward, *The Stanleys* p. 119.

In addition, Alison Wall relates that the ‘palatinate structures’ of counties like Cheshire, Lancashire and Durham ‘gave exceptional patronage to influential magnates’ which fostered obedience.<sup>28</sup> To be sure, the third earl was a powerful magnate and peer. Whilst for several generations the Stanley family had been considered ‘pre-eminent in Lancashire’, they also commanded authority in Cheshire where they ‘held large estates and major offices’.<sup>29</sup> The third earl was royal visitor for the northern province and served as an ecclesiastical commissioner for the diocese of Chester and chamberlain of the county palatine of Chester.<sup>30</sup> A religious conservative, he spent a good portion of his career balancing the interests of his constituents’ competing religious ideologies – both Protestant and Catholic – and perhaps his own. The earl’s political prowess was as well honed as his ancestors’, who were known for their resolve ‘to keep on the winning side whichever that might prove to be’.<sup>31</sup> This contributed to what Alison Wall notes was ‘peaceful and successful rule’ even in ‘religiously divided’ Lancashire.<sup>32</sup> According to her, the Stanleys as a group ‘excited loyalty and dependence rather than opposition’; the third earl so much so, that he drew ‘convinced catholic as well as protestant followers’.<sup>33</sup>

Derby’s ability to engender loyalty and support across both counties and amongst Protestant and Catholic sympathisers alike manifested itself at his funeral. Riding on horseback after the two chaplains and preacher was Richard Shireburn, one of the earl’s household officers, in hooded mourning coat and bearing his white staff of office.<sup>34</sup> Shireburn was a suspected Catholic sympathiser and recusant, once reported to the Privy Council; yet he maintained a rather lucrative position in the earl’s favour as his household treasurer.<sup>35</sup> Included in the list of additional mourners are: Sir Piers Legh of Lyme, knight and high sheriff of Lancashire, whose house was ‘consecrated for Protestant worship’ in 1558, but was suspected of being a Catholic recusant in 1580;<sup>36</sup> Thomas Butler, esquire, M.P. for Lancashire 1553 (March) and 1571, a known Protestant deemed by Sir Edward Fitton in 1567 ‘the only non-papist among the Lancashire gentry from Warrington all along the coast’, who served with Derby on the ecclesiastical commission investigating Catholic recusants;<sup>37</sup> John Ratcliffe, esquire, of Ordsall, M.P. for Wigan in 1563 and Lancashire 1571, 1572, one of Derby’s followers and his Parliamentary patron in 1563;<sup>38</sup> and William Massey,

<sup>28</sup> ‘Patterns of Politics in England, 1558-1625’, *Historical Journal* 31 (1988), pp. 947-63, at 957.

<sup>29</sup> C. B. Phillips and J. H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540* (London 1994), pp. 12f.

<sup>30</sup> Knafla, in *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>31</sup> Coward, *The Stanleys* p. 13, quoting S. B. Chrimes.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 957; For the religious divide in Lancashire see also Coward, p. 163.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 956f.

<sup>34</sup> CAMs Vincent 151 pp. 353f.

<sup>35</sup> Coward, pp. 89f., 121.

<sup>36</sup> Lady Newton, *The House of Lyme: from its foundations to the end of the eighteenth century* (New York 1917), p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> The Bishop of Chester also declared Butler ‘a sound protestant’: *Hist. Parl.: the Commons 1558-1603* vol. 1, pp. 520f.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 3, pp. 278f.



esquire, of Puddington, M.P. for Cheshire in 1563, a steward of Derby's manors who 'favoured Catholicism'.<sup>39</sup>

The participation of men from these prominent gentry families – and others constituting Derby's affinity<sup>40</sup> – is a further demonstration of the reciprocal relationship inherent in the 'lineage culture' where, as James notes, both conscience and interest bind lord with his servants, tenants and followers.<sup>41</sup> According to Simon Adams, a lord's retainership or affinity was considered 'the main stabilising force in local politics because it provided a means for the mediation and peaceful resolution of disputes'.<sup>42</sup> And whilst Adams notes that these bonds were not always based on financial reward and were 'to some extent natural, held together by local social connections',<sup>43</sup> there is no doubt that some of those attending Derby's funeral benefited financially from being retained by the earl. William Stopforth and Marmaduke Newton, Edward's steward and gentleman usher, received leases of lands for their service.<sup>44</sup> Alexander Rigby, another retainer and household servant from a modest family, served as one of the additional mourners at the earl's funeral.<sup>45</sup> As Coward notes, Rigby owed his 'later prominence in Lancashire society almost entirely to his master's generosity'.<sup>46</sup>

Given the potential rewards of loyalty and service to the Stanleys, it is not surprising that, after the earl's death, mourner Sir Piers Legh looked to continue his relationship with the heir. During the third earl's tenure, Legh had become High Sheriff of Lancashire, and under the fourth earl, he became Provost Marshal for Cheshire, Lancashire and Chester.<sup>47</sup> In his will he made a bequest of his best silver bowl to the fourth earl: 'in token of my verie faithfull goodwill towards him and his house which I have ever loved and honored'.<sup>48</sup> Sir Piers died in 1590, with the hope that his house 'might ever contynewe and remayne to the house of my Lord [Derby] and his posteritie for ever'.<sup>49</sup> And continue it did, with Sir Peter Legh, the ninth Peter of the line (twenty-seven years old at the time of his grandfather Piers' death) maintaining the Legh-Stanley connection as Captain of the Isle of Man in 1593, the office his grandfather requested that the earl 'bestowe' on Peter in his will.<sup>50</sup>

Integral to the 'lineage culture' was the responsibility of good lordship.<sup>51</sup> That Derby achieved the same is reflected in the account of his funeral, which states that five hundred of his yeomen were in attendance. The earl demonstrated the 'paternal

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. vol. 3, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> 'Affinity' is defined as 'a close relationship based on a common origin or structure' whereas a 'retainer' is one kept 'engaged' in another's 'service' (*OED*). Simon Adams employs the term 'affinity' for 'retainer', noting 'retaining disappeared into the less formal but more complex affinity'; S. Adams, 'Baronial contexts? Continuity and change in the noble affinity, 1400-1600', in *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics*, ed. S. Adams (Manchester and New York 2002), pp. 374-410, at 376.

<sup>41</sup> James, 'The Concept of Order', pp. 288, 292.

<sup>42</sup> 'Baronial contexts?', p. 377.

<sup>44</sup> Coward, p. 88; CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 356f.

<sup>46</sup> Coward, p. 91.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>49</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>51</sup> James, 'The Concept of Order', pp. 271-5.

<sup>43</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>45</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 p. 357.

<sup>47</sup> Lady Newton, *The House of Lyme* p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> Loc. cit.

concern' that Coward notes the Stanleys showed as stewards, offering his tenants protection from harassment in two well-documented instances.<sup>52</sup> The chronicler John Stow relates Stanley's 'godly disposition to his tenants', writing that the earl was known for 'never forcing anie service at their handes, but due payment of their rent', adding, 'there was never gentleman or other that wayted in his service, but had allowance from him to have as well wages as otherwise for horse and man'.<sup>53</sup>

The extensive public presence at the funeral and response to the earl's death was surely bound up with his character and reputation. The link between a deceased's personal attributes and public sympathy over the death affecting the scope of obsequies has been advanced by J. F. R. Day in his analysis of the funeral of Sir Philip Sidney. Day contends that although he was 'technically a commoner', Sidney's heraldic funeral was 'grander than that of many peers'.<sup>54</sup>

And whilst Derby was no commoner, as John Stowe declares, he was 'deserving' of 'commendation'.<sup>55</sup> The earl was regarded for his generosity to the poor, hospitality to his friends and neighbours, as well as his treatment of his tenants. Stowe contends that as well as feeding 'especially aged persons, twice a day 60 and beside all comers, thrice a weeke', he also supplied 'another 2700 with meate, drink money and money worth' on Good Friday for thirty-five years.<sup>56</sup> Further, the earl's 1572 will provides bequests for the poor and a year's wages to his servants. His renowned munificence and the notion of dependence upon his good lordship is reflected in the 'Epitaphe Upon The Deathe Of The Right Honorable Edward Stanley, Earle Of Derby':<sup>57</sup>

How manye did hee dailie feede  
Whom neede had prickt before  
How many have yo<sup>w</sup> now alive  
So carefull for the poore?  
How liberall was hee unto his men  
How carefull for his frend  
How good unto his tenants still  
Even to his latter ende

Even though the earl was resolute that deference according to rank be observed, the last gesture that Stowe reports he made with death approaching perhaps stands as a final testament to his successful, good lordship: 'his joyful parting this world, his taking leave of his servants, by shaking of hands, and his remembrance to the last day'.<sup>58</sup> The earl's reputation for fairness and generosity may further help to explain

<sup>52</sup> Coward, p. 95.

<sup>53</sup> John Stow, *The Annales or Generall Chronicle of England* (London 1615), p. 673 lines 58v-59v; 3r-6r.

<sup>54</sup> J. F. R. Day, 'Death Be Very Proud: Sidney, subversion, and Elizabethan heraldic funerals', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge 1995; repr. 2002), pp. 179-203, at 182.

<sup>55</sup> Stow, p. 673 line 49v.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. lines 63v-65v; 1r-3r. King suggests it was actually on Christmas, as Good Friday was a day of fasting; *Lancs Funeral Certificates*, pp. 11f.

<sup>57</sup> Repr. from BL Ms Harl. 2129 fo. 52r in *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Bagley, *Earls of Derby* p. 50; Stow, p. 673, lines 13-17r

the size and tenor of his funeral, as well as the outpouring of emotion as he was laid to rest. Here, his yeomen, gentlemen ushers and comptroller, Henry Stanley of Cross Hall, treasurer, Sir Richard Shireburn, and steward, William Massey, were 'kneeling on their knees' and 'with weeping hearts brake their white staves and roddees ouer their heades and threw the slivers of the same into the grave'.<sup>59</sup>

The surrender of the staves of office by household officers was also a part of the heraldic funeral of Sir John Savage of Rock Savage, Cheshire, which took place at Macclesfield on 24 January 1597/8. Savage was the mayor of Chester at several points from 1569 to the time of his death, and was many times sheriff of Cheshire between 1560 and 1591.<sup>60</sup> Although only a knight, he wielded more influence than many barons elsewhere and like the third Earl of Derby was entrusted with an office that oversaw the punishment of Catholic recusants. At his funeral, Savage's household officers kissed their staves before delivering them,<sup>61</sup> in a sign of respect similar to the raising of staves and kneeling of Stanley's officers at his funeral. Like the visually symbolic 'break with the past' that took place at Stanley's graveside, William Aldersey, alderman of Chester, dressed in gown and hood, also broke 'a playne white staff' and threw it into the grave in recognition of Savage's dying in his mayoralty.<sup>62</sup> Another white staff 'tipped with Gould in regard he was Leiftenant & sheriff of shier' was also broken and 'thrown into the vault'.<sup>63</sup> Whilst these scenes may engender an impression that heraldic obsequies emphasised finality, one of the most essential parts of this funerary ritual, as seen in both Savage and Stanley's obsequies, involved the public 'offeringe' of the deceased's 'honorable' attachments – crest, helm, mantle, sword and target – to the heir.<sup>64</sup> This formal ceremony, symbolic of the passing of responsibility for the family, name and reputation – which was bound up with public service – fostered a sense of continuity rather than termination.<sup>65</sup> Adding to this feeling was the heir's bestowing new staves of office on the men who would remain in the family's service.

As Mervyn James has noted, this public, emblematic transfer of responsibility to the heir was chivalric, and in keeping with the secular tone of heraldic obsequies.<sup>66</sup> To be sure, there were clergymen in the funeral procession, biblical references in the funeral sermon, and the service did take place in the deceased's parish church; but the prominence of heraldry, the attestations to the deceased's military and public service, the aforementioned offering in the church, as well as the funeral monuments, were all decidedly secular in emphasis.

<sup>59</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 pp. 353f., 357, 361, 369d.

<sup>60</sup> *The Ancient and Noble Family of the Savages of the Ards*, ed. G.F.F. (London, Belfast and New York 1888), pp. 34f.

<sup>61</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. viii.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 p. 359; *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>65</sup> CA Ms Vincent 151 p. 361. On the sense of 'continuity' expressed in heraldic obsequies, see M. James, 'Two Tudor funerals', in *Society, Politics and Culture*, ed. M. James (Cambridge 1986), pp. 176-187 at 177.

<sup>66</sup> 'Two Tudor funerals', p. 181; see also p. 177 on the relation of 'heraldic family symbols' and 'persistence of the line'.

In Holme's account of Savage's funeral, the aspect of the deceased's virtue that is emphasized is his public service. In one note, Holme states that a Mr Minshull was charged with carrying the colours or 'great Ensigne' of the deceased 'in regard he [Savage] had served for his prince in defence of his Countrey & for the sayd good service was K<sup>ted</sup> in the field'. In the second instance, Holme explains the presence of the 'square banner' of the quarterings of Savage's arms, 'in representation he was her mai<sup>ties</sup> Leiftenant & genrall of his Countrey [...] for that he dyed Leiftenant of the County Palatine and City of Chester'. Holme further reports, 'Then his Gauntlets silvered also carried by a gent in a cloke shewing by stroke of hand he did defend his knighthood, his prince and countrey'.<sup>67</sup> An additional expression of respect for Savage's public consciousness may be seen in the fact that the eighty poor citizens who processed in mourning gowns carried pensels that bore the deceased's crests, which they subsequently delivered to the heir.<sup>68</sup>

While the deceased's public service and virtue were common themes, there was no mention of God or the deceased's religion in the accounts of either Savage or Derby's funerals. There was only one cursory reference to the 'Epystle and Gospel' in Derby's funeral account and three mentions of the sermon in Savage's; all references employed as temporal aids in recounting the order of events.<sup>69</sup> Savage's funeral monument, like Derby's effigy, rests in a family chapel with those of his ancestors. His public persona, like the earl's, is depicted in his effigial representation in full armour (**Plate 2**). There is a small cherub centred above the top inscription on Savage's monument, but otherwise the monument bears no religious symbols. The family coat of arms rests in a place of esteem: at the pinnacle of the arch. *Memento mori* imagery decorates the monument: two obelisks flank the effigies of Savage and his wife, hourglasses and skulls are carved along the side borders to contribute to the secular feel.<sup>70</sup>

Savage's public image and commanding regional influence, like Derby's, was reflected in the prominent men who participated in his obsequies. Many of the foremost local families were represented; among those from Cheshire were the Astons, Breretons, Cholmondeleys, Duttons, Davenports and Warburtons; among those from Lancashire, Sir Richard Molyneux and Sir Robert Salisbury (perhaps of the Salisburys of Sterney, in neighbouring Derbyshire).<sup>71</sup> Molyneux, Sir Hugh Cholmondley and Sir Richard Bulkely were all assistants to the chief mourner, John Savage.<sup>72</sup> Molyneux was M.P. for Wigan in 1572 and Lancashire in 1584, 1593 and

<sup>67</sup> All quotations in this paragraph taken from *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. ix.

<sup>68</sup> Julian Litten notes that the pensel, 'the diminutive of penon', was widely used at heraldic funerals but 'chiefly if not entirely' to decorate the hearse; *The English Way of Death*, p. 176; *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, pp. vii, xv.

<sup>69</sup> CAMs Vincent 151 pp. 353-60; *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, pp. vii-x.

<sup>70</sup> On the significance of hourglasses and skulls as *memento mori* imagery and the use of obelisks in funerary architecture, see James Stephen Curl, *Death and Architecture: an introduction to funerary and commemorative buildings in the western European tradition, with some consideration of their settings* (Stroud 2002), pp. 3f.

<sup>71</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, pp. vii-x.

<sup>72</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. x.



1604, and held several hereditary offices in Liverpool where he inherited the lordship from his grandfather.<sup>73</sup> Bulkeley and Cholmondeley were from leading Cheshire families. Cholmondeley was M.P. for Cheshire in 1584.<sup>74</sup> Like Savage and Stanley, he served on a committee concerned with Catholic recusancy. The Bulkeleys, although from Anglesey, had landed ties to Cheshire and Sir Richard was M.P. for Anglesey 1547, (April and November) 1554 and 1571.<sup>75</sup>

Whilst both the Savage and Stanley funerals shared a demonstration of the strength of their following and kinship ties and testament to their service and virtue, another prominent feature that Savage's obsequies shared with Stanley's was the emphasis on the celebration of ancestry, birth, continuation and extension of the line by marriage through elaborate heraldic display. There were '6 banner roubles of descent one after an other that his house hath matched withall' carried by six gentlemen and representing Savage and Walkington, Savage and Daniers, Savage and Swynerton, Savage and Brereton, Savage and Stanley, and Savage and Vernon, 'Lo(rd) of Shepbrooke'.<sup>76</sup>

The celebration of the familial bond at the heraldic funeral of Sir Peter Legh on 17 February 1635/6 is not evident in the rather abbreviated account of his obsequies. No descriptions of mourning attire or the deceased's heraldic achievements are given. The sense of familial and kinship ties, however is evident in Legh's 1635 will.<sup>77</sup> He asked that 'some fewe of my owne and my wyves friends and kinsfolcks shall bee invited therto'. Further, like Savage and Stanley, in an expression of familial solidarity, Legh requested he be laid to rest in his parish church of Winwick, 'near unto the place ere my ffather and and forefathers were interred'. He specified that 'no tombe to bee sett over the place of my burial, but onely a stone to cover it, with some inscription of brasse declaringe the tyme of my lyfe and death accordinge to that which was laid over my great great grandfather'. Similarly, his grandfather forty-eight years earlier used his will to make a similar request that he be buried 'in my Chapel situate in the parishe Church of Winwicke in the countie of Lancaster where now my ancestors doe lie'.<sup>78</sup> And whilst the brasse which bears Peter Legh's name is worn and faded, the ram which makes up part of the family crest is still prominently visible (**Figure 3**).

Although Sir Peter asked that he 'may bee buried with little and small pompe and funeral charges', he was given an heraldic funeral with hundreds of mourners that traversed two counties and nearly thirty miles before arriving in Winwick, Lancashire for burial.<sup>79</sup> Whilst Legh was not of the same standing in the area as Derby or Savage, his obsequies engendered a similar sense of a celebration of kinship and loyalty, albeit on a smaller scale. There were no poor men leading Legh's cortège, as prescribed by Holme's order of a knight's funeral.<sup>80</sup> This is understandable given that the poor would process on foot and the thirty mile distance from Lyme to Winwick

<sup>73</sup> *Hist. Parl.: the Commons 1558-1603* vol. 3, pp. 62f.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 1, p. 606.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p. 514.

<sup>76</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>77</sup> Legh's will, Cheshire and Chester Archives (henceforth CCA): WS 1635.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted by Lady Newton, p. 45.

<sup>79</sup> CCA: WS 1635; Newton, p. 147.

<sup>80</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. xv; Newton, pp. 147-148.

Figure 3. Legh chapel, church of St. Oswald, Winwick, Lancashire: brass plate to Sir Peter Legh of Lyme (d. 1635).



would preclude their involvement.<sup>81</sup> Their absence then cannot be taken to reflect Legh's disregard for his less fortunate neighbours. Lady Newton remarks on Legh's 'charity' and his 'many acts of kindness' and notes that at Christmas the poor at Lyme 'were not forgotten'.<sup>82</sup> In his will Legh leaves bequests to all of his servants and asks that 'twelve gray coats bee made and given to twelve ould psons of my neighbours such as my executo<sup>rs</sup> shall thinke fitt'.

Leading Legh's funeral procession were his tenants, followed by his cousin, Peter Venables, feudal baron of Kinderton. Several of his close kinsfolk were in attendance, including six members of the Leghs, both of Lyme and Adlington.<sup>83</sup> Legh's nephew, Lord Molyneux – who with Venables was entrusted in Legh's will to oversee the executors' work – had been ill at the time of Legh's death, and as such his absence from Legh's obsequies is explicable.<sup>84</sup>

There is no mention in the funeral account of the attendance of Sir William Brereton, M.P. for Cheshire in 1597, 1614 and 1621 who was considered 'an intimate friend' of Sir Peter.<sup>85</sup> In a condolence letter Brereton penned to Legh's son, Francis, the extension of honour and loyalty to the family is evident, as is the expressed desire to continue in the family's service. Brereton writes, '[...] soe shall I bee of nothing more ambitious then of the Occasion whereby I may deserve to endear my selfe in some measure unto yor selves, as much as I was sometimes obliged to the Person of yor Noble Father, the Memorie of whose Worthe will much survive the number of his Dayes: & in whose absence, if you please thereof to accept, I will make this tender of those services unto yor selves wch I owed unto yor Father [...]'.<sup>86</sup> Whilst Legh was in no way as powerful as Savage or Derby, Brereton's letter hints at the close kinship

<sup>81</sup> I am grateful to Dr Richard P. Cust for this observation.

<sup>82</sup> Lady Newton, *House of Lyme* pp. 73, 149.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147f.

<sup>84</sup> From a letter from Ralph Richardson to Thomas Legh in which he reflects that both Thomas and Lord Molyneux 'have been dangerously sicke'; Newton, p. 145; CCA: WS 1635.

<sup>85</sup> Newton, pp. 145, 147-148; *Hist. Parl.: the Commons 1558-1603* vol. 1, p. 483.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted by Lady Newton, p. 145.

ties similar to an 'affinity' and retinue. Furthermore, however, this missive, like the notation Sir Piers left in his will regarding his hope that his heirs would remain in the Stanley favour, hints at the anxiety felt by a community of followers, and dependants upon the death of an influential individual.<sup>87</sup>

This idea may have manifested itself in the number and rank of the participants at Legh's funeral. Several members of leading north-west families are listed as mourners.<sup>88</sup> According to Holme, a knight is allowed only five mourners.<sup>89</sup> Yet, based on the arranged list of the men immediately after the corpse, it appears that Legh had at least six (and possibly seven) in addition to the chief mourner. They included Francis and Peter Legh, second and sixth son of the deceased respectively;<sup>90</sup> Mr. Thomas Legh of the Leghs of Adlington (most likely the first son of Sir Urian Legh, knight);<sup>91</sup> 'Mr. Venables' of the Venables family of Kinderton, one of the oldest families in Cheshire;<sup>92</sup> Sir Anthony St. John and Sir George Booth, of the Booths of Dunham Massey.<sup>93</sup> Sir Richard Wilbraham may have served as an additional mourner, as not only was he a distant kinsman to Sir Peter, but his name follows below (albeit separately from) the names of the other mourners.<sup>94</sup>

Legh's funeral, like the obsequies of the third Earl of Derby, Sir John Savage and Sir Philip Sidney, demonstrate further that heraldic prescription did not always ordain practice. Although he was only a knight, the additional mourners at Legh's funeral appeared to rank him between a baron, who was allowed seven, and an earl or viscount, who was allowed nine.<sup>95</sup> Sidney's also rivalled that of a baron.<sup>96</sup> Stanley's obsequies with three Kings of Arms, additional esquires with added bannerols accompanying the chariot that bore his body, and a procession of at least 830 mourners, set the earl's funeral apart from other peers. Savage's funeral included 'Queristers and singinge men' who sang a requiem as the body was interred, as well as two trumpeters 'dolfuly soundinge'.<sup>97</sup> And there were further intricacies beyond

<sup>87</sup> James suggests this in regards to a peer in 'Two Tudor Funerals,' pp. 176f.

<sup>88</sup> Newton, pp. 147f.

<sup>89</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. xiv.

<sup>90</sup> 'Sir Peter Legh', *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. 123.

<sup>91</sup> 'Thomas Legh of Adlington', *ibid.* pp. 124f.

<sup>92</sup> Newton, p. 148; *Hist. Parl.: the Commons 1558-1603* vol. 3, p. 555.

<sup>93</sup> This would have to be the Sir George Booth, Baronet, who died in 1652, as his grandson and namesake, Sir George, who was to become an M.P. and J.P. in the 1650s and lead the rebellion in Cheshire and Lancashire in 1659, would have only been fourteen years old at the time. See 'Sir George Booth', *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. 22; Coward, pp. 177f.

<sup>94</sup> Newton, p. 148.

<sup>95</sup> Randle Holme, 'The Number of Murners at Funeralls According to the Degree & Estate of the Defunnct', *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. xiv

<sup>96</sup> Day, 'Death be very Proud', p. 191.

<sup>97</sup> BL, Harl Ms 2129 fos. 64r-65v ('Copy of the funeral of John Savage'). The singing of a requiem is curious, as it was part of the Catholic burial mass and one would expect it to be omitted after the Reformation. It is unknown whether Savage had Catholic sympathies. He was constable of Halton Castle, which under Elizabeth was a prison for recusants. The privy council deemed him a 'fit and godly person' which generally meant he conformed to the prescribed religion. See *The Ancient and Noble Family of the Savages* (note 60 above), p. 35 note 1; *Hist. Parl.: the Commons 1558-1603* vol. 3, pp. 62-63 ('Molyneaux, Richard II').

those which Savage's rank prescribed. Though he wielded exceptional power, he too, was technically only a knight.<sup>98</sup> His funeral however, in its order and appurtenances, follows very closely to that of a lord or earl, as outlined in Harleian Ms 2129, and was costly. According to Holme, the Savage family was charged £57 10s 8d for the 'funerall worke'.<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps the funerals that were afforded these men, whose ancestors had lived and served in the area since the time of Richard III,<sup>100</sup> in part served as a demonstration of civic pride. The area was known for welcoming visiting dignitaries with great ceremony and 'pomp',<sup>101</sup> and we might expect they would do no less to bid farewell to their native sons. The Savage and Stanley ancestors after all, had participated in the decisive battle of Bosworth Field, which put the Tudors on the throne.<sup>102</sup> More importantly however, just as Day suggests, Sidney's funeral was 'meant to honour a man who epitomised the best that aristocracy could produce, an aristocracy which theoretically rooted its privileges in virtue and was still keenly aware of its role in society at large'.<sup>103</sup> Perhaps the additions to the rank-prescribed order of the Legh, Savage and Stanley obsequies were a manifestation of the same intent.

## Conclusion

The heraldic funerals of Legh, Savage and Derby, were not cookie-cutter affairs. From what we know about the Savage and Derby obsequies, they were costly. They spanned a sixty-four year period from 1572 to 1635/6. When considered with the funeral account of Lord Assley in 1688 and later monuments from Savage and Legh descendants – Earl Rivers (1694) and Thomas Legh (1687) – they demonstrate that throughout the seventeenth century families in Cheshire and Lancashire found sufficient value in the heraldic funerary ritual to wish to spend some of their inheritance to ensure their relative had one. Sir Richard Grosvenor's family wished it so much that though he died at the height of the Civil War, with hostilities in the area, he was honoured with a full heraldic funeral marshalled by Randle Holme.<sup>104</sup>

To be sure, the deaths of Legh, Savage and Derby, to a lesser or greater extent, will have torn a hole in the social fabric that blanketed their dependants, followers, and poorer neighbours in Cheshire and Lancashire. Whilst Savage and Derby were the dominant authorities in their areas, all three men were known for their generosity and, like their ancestors, for their public service. If the intent of the heraldic funerary ritual was, as Clare Gittings suggests, 'almost to deny that a death had taken place at

<sup>98</sup> *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. vii.

<sup>99</sup> BL, Ms Harl 2129 fo. 65r ('Price for Savage funeral work').

<sup>100</sup> See the list of 'Justices Itinerant' in George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester* (three vols., London 1882), vol. i, pp. 67f.

<sup>101</sup> *A History of the County of Chester*, edd. C. P. Lewis and A. T. Thacker (five vols., Institute of Historical Research 1997-2003), vol. v part 1 (2003), p. 109.

<sup>102</sup> William Pollard, *The Stanleys of Knowsley* (Liverpool 1868), p. 26; Tim Thornton, 'Savage Family' in *Oxford DNB*.  
<sup>103</sup> Day, p. 181f.

<sup>104</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Richard P. Cust for this observation; *Cheshire and Lancs Funeral Certificates*, p. xxi.



all',<sup>105</sup> why did the families of these men and the local heralds call attention to their deaths through elaborate heraldic displays, the ceremonial passage of responsibility to the heir, and commemorative monuments? Why in particular, did the Legh family expressly ignore the wishes of Sir Peter and ensure he had an heraldic funeral?

One explanation is that in the society of the north-west – a *Gemeinschaft*, not in terms of an historic unity of political or religious beliefs, but rather for the family and kinship ties that characterized it – the heraldic funeral and commemorative monuments erected after it served to repair the hole that had been rent by a great death. They provided an outlet for mourning, demonstration of civic pride, and appreciation for the contributions of the men and of their ancestors long deceased. Not by denying the individual, but rather, by celebrating the deceased and his lineage through elaborate heraldic display in the procession, at the home, on the coffin and on commemorative monuments. Through the open display, and granting of an heraldic funeral, the Legh, Savage and Stanley relatives received public affirmation of their family's importance through recognition of the service and virtues of the dead. The tribute given these men through the care and deference shown to the corpse, by mourners of a certain rank and degree, with elegiac verses, sermons and monuments, contributed to their 'social memory',<sup>106</sup> but also to the honourable capital that would help to advance their family's place in the social order.

And whilst throngs of mourners processing in their black hooded cloaks contributed an air of melancholy, the vivid, colourful heraldry adorning bannerols, standards and penons and the sight of the chief mourner immediately following the corpse, added a note of optimism for the future; the heir, not a replacement, but a successor.

With some divergence from heraldic prescription, Legh, Savage and Stanley were sent off to that 'undiscovered country' not with 'extravaganzas',<sup>107</sup> but with the tribute of a regional heraldic funeral that offered dependants and followers bound by the reciprocal bonds of the 'lineage culture' a chance to engender favour from the heir, and a final opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to, and respect for, their deceased 'good lord'. And perhaps it was done with a similar sentiment as that articulated by Sabinus in the anonymous Jacobean drama *The Faithful Friends*:

the funeral obsequies and true shed teares  
which to his everlasting bed shall bring  
[...] shall expresse  
Howe deare I prized his goodness.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> 'Sacred and Secular: 1558-1660' in *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester 1999), pp. 147-173 at 159.

<sup>106</sup> For the idea of the funeral sustaining one's 'social memory', see Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c.1500-c.1800* (London 1997), p. 66.

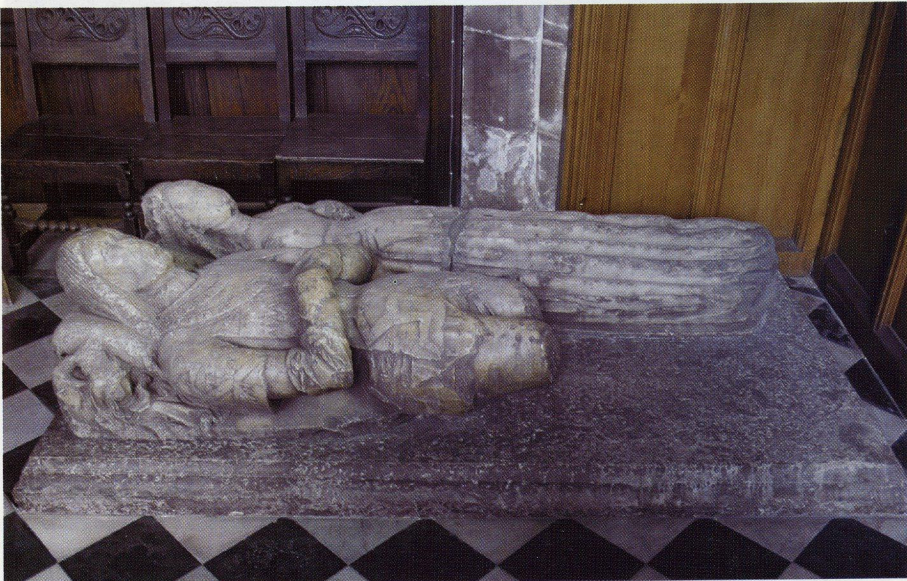
<sup>107</sup> Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual* (note 4 above), p. 180.

<sup>108</sup> Act III, sc. iii, lines 2197-2201 (fo 29a in the Malne Society reprint of 1975); probable date of composition early 1620's.

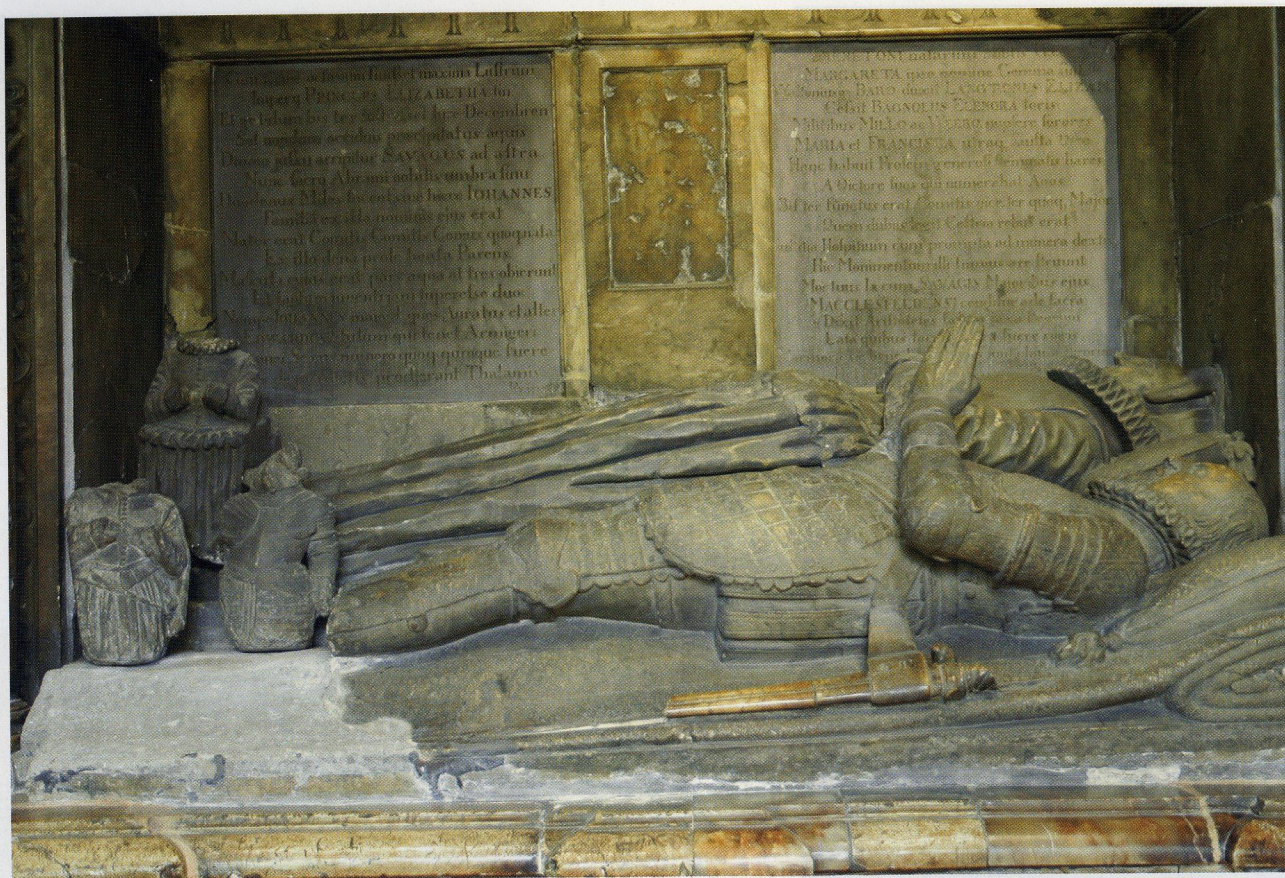
# PLATE 1



Derby Chapel, parish church of St Peter and St Paul, Ormskirk, Lancashire: above (a), Stanley family vault; below (b), truncated effigies reputed to be of Thomas, first Earl of Derby (d. 1504) and his first countess, removed from Burscough Priory at its dissolution; *see page 104*.







Savage Chapel, parish church of St Michael and All Angels, Macclesfield, Cheshire: effigies of Sir John Savage (d. 1597) and his wife Elizabeth. *See page 111.*