

The Paternity of Lady Lumley: Some New Evidence

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King Edward IV was reputed to have had many mistresses, Mancini recording: 'He was licentious in the extreme He pursued with no discrimination the married and unmarried the noble and lowly'.¹ Nonetheless, we have definite proof of the existence of no more than two or three children born outside Edward IV's union with Queen Elizabeth Woodville: the 'lord bastard' who was clothed by the great wardrobe for the marriage of King Edward's second legitimate son, Richard, Duke of York, to Anne Mowbray;² Arthur Wayte *alias* Plantagenet, the future Viscount Lisle (who may or may not have been identical to the lord bastard of 1477); and 'Maistres Grace, a bastard daughter of kyng Edwarde,' who accompanied Elizabeth Woodville's remains on their final journey from Bermondsey to Windsor.³ Another individual generally believed to have been a bastard child of Edward IV is Margaret (later known as Elizabeth), c.1462-1503, the wife of Sir Thomas Lumley (d. 1487), eldest son of George, third Lord Lumley (d. 1507). That her name was Margaret, rather than Elizabeth as claimed from 1530 onwards,⁴ is proved by an entry in the patent roll of William Dudley, Bishop of Durham, dated 10 March 1479, granting licence to William Bille and William Blenkarne to enfeof three manors to Thomas, second Lord Lumley, and after him to Thomas Lumley, his grandson, and Margaret his wife.⁵ She has generally been accepted as an illegitimate daughter of Edward IV, as claimed in a pedigree dating from the first decade of the sixteenth century and repeated by later Tudor writers.⁶ Solid evidence for such paternity has hitherto eluded us but appears to have been available for some time.

First, the above licence was granted at the urging of Edward IV, the king thus displaying an unusual interest in the Lumleys, and particularly in the second Lord Lumley's young grandson Thomas and his wife Margaret since

¹ D. Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard the Third*, trans. C. A. J. Armstrong, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1969, p. 67.

² C. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV*, 2 vols, London, 1923, vol. 2, p. 56.

³ P.W. Hammond, 'The illegitimate children of Edward IV', *The Ricardian*, vol. 13 (2003), pp. 229-33.

⁴ The earliest reference to Lady Lumley as Elizabeth comes from Tonge's visitation of 1530, W.H.D. Longstaffe, ed., *Heraldic Visitation of the Northern Counties in 1530, by Thomas Tonge, Norroy King of Arms*, Surtees Society vol. 41 (1834), p. 27.

⁵ The National Archives (TNA), Palatinate of Durham, Chancery Court, Patent Rolls, DURH 3/54/22.

⁶ There have been two articles in *The Ricardian* that have accepted Lady Lumley as a daughter of Edward IV, viz. Hammond, 'Illegitimate children of Edward IV', and J. Ashdown-Hill, 'The elusive mistress', *The Ricardian*, vol. 11 (1997-99), pp. 490-505. Details of the early-sixteenth-century references to Lady Lumley are given in 'The illegitimate children of Edward IV', p. 231.

these manors were to pass directly to them on Lord Lumley's death, bypassing his son and heir, George. But more direct evidence of Lady Margaret's paternity lies in the dispensation for the marriage of her son Richard Lumley to Anne Conyers granted in 1489 by Giuliano della Rovere, Bishop of Ostia, the cardinal in charge of the office of the Papal Penitentiary.⁷ The text of this dispensation has long been available in the registers of the archbishops of York,⁸ whilst much more recently Peter Clarke and Patrick Zutshi have published details of the supplication on which it was based, as recorded in the Penitentiary registers in the Vatican Archives.⁹ These documents show that on 28 January 1489 Richard Lomley of the diocese of Durham and Anne Conyers of the diocese of York requested from the Penitentiary a dispensation from an impediment of consanguinity in the third and fourth degrees, and this was granted to them on that day. As the entry in the register of Archbishop Rotherham reveals, however, the dispensation was incorrectly made out, referring only to consanguinity in the fourth degree, so that two days later the Cardinal Penitentiary had to issue a second letter declaring the true nature of the impediment and (on the basis of a decree of Pope Clement VI) pronouncing the dispensation to be nonetheless valid. These two letters were forwarded to England and ratified by the Archbishop of York at Cawood on 1 September 1489 (see Appendix 2).

The history of canon law regarding the impediment of consanguinity is complex. Suffice it to say that at this period the Church forbade marriages between couples who were related by blood up to the level of third cousins,¹⁰ and used the Germanic method of calculating these relationships, which involved counting the number of generations ('degrees') between a common ancestor or ancestral couple – known as the common stock – and the prospective groom, and also the number of degrees between the common stock and the prospective bride.¹¹ Where the relationship was uneven, the dispensation would state the number of degrees between each partner and the common stock. Consanguinity in the third and fourth degrees was therefore a single relationship whereby the common stock was great-grandparent to one of the parties and great-great-grandparent to the other.

⁷ The future Pope Julius II.

⁸ Borthwick Institute, Archbishops of York's Registers No. 23 (Thomas Rotherham), ff. 244r-45r. It should be noted that the published summary, in J.W. Clay and J. Raine, *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry of York*, vol. 3, Surtees Society vol. 45 (1865), p. 355, refers only to the relationship in the fourth degree stated in the original dispensation, and not to the correction to third and fourth degrees issued two days later.

⁹ P.D. Clarke and P.N.R. Zutshi, eds, *Supplications from England and Wales in the Registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary 1410-1503*, 3 vols, vol. 2: 1464-1492, The Canterbury and York Society, vols 103-05 (2013-15), item 2899. Sir Richard's surname is here transcribed as 'Lomlex'.

¹⁰ R. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England*, Cambridge 2007, p. 78.

¹¹ J. Beal, J. Coriden and T. Green, eds, *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, New York 2010, p. 1293.

If Edward IV was Margaret's father, then her son and Anne Conyers would indeed have been related in the third and fourth degrees, through their shared descent from Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmorland, and Joan Beaufort. In order to check that there were no other connections in the Conyers and Lumley families that would raise the need for such a dispensation, the other ancestral lines of each family were also traced to the fourth generation. The difficulty here is that, even if one accepts Edward IV as Margaret Lumley's father, no definitive proof exists of her mother's identity. The sixteenth-century sources do not identify her mother. It was not until the early seventeenth century that Sir George Buck named Lady Lumley's mother as Elizabeth Lucy, that is to say, as the mistress of Edward IV described by More as 'Dame Elizabeth Lucy, whom the king had also not long before [his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville] gotten with child'.¹² Buck also claimed that Elizabeth Lucy was the mother of Edward IV's illegitimate son Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, and was the daughter of 'one Wayte of Southampton.' Another century further on, John Anstis, Garter King of Arms, added a little more to the developing theme by describing Lord Lisle as the 'natural son of Ed. IV. by Eliz. the Daughter of Thomas Waite of Hampshire, the Widow of Lucy ...'.¹³ Attempts to identify this lady have, however, proved inconclusive. In 1989, John Ashdown-Hill, following Buck and Anstis, suggested that she would have been a daughter of Thomas Waite of Segenworth near Southampton and Wayte's Court, Isle of Wight, who died in 1482 and whose family was to acknowledge Arthur, Viscount Lisle, as one of its members.¹⁴

Beguiling though this solution is, however, it is not without its problems. Margaret Plantagenet must have been born very early in Edward IV's reign since she married in 1476 and produced her first child shortly thereafter. This fits well with the claim that she was a daughter of More's 'Dame Elizabeth Lucy', a mistress of King Edward's single years, yet there seems to have been no Dame Elizabeth Lucy living during the early years of King Edward's reign. Arthur Plantagenet's career span, on the other hand, suggests that he would have been born well after Edward's marriage, as he was first recommended to his half-sister Elizabeth of York in 1501, jousting with the young King Henry VIII in 1510, married for the first time in 1511, and lived until 1542, having been active as Deputy of Calais from 1533 until his arrest and detention in the Tower in 1540.¹⁵ Given the high rate of childhood mortality at this period, it cannot be assumed that he was the same 'lord bastard' who attended the marriage of Richard, Duke of York, in January 1478, and all the other evidence

¹² St T. More, *The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*, ed R.S.S. Sylvester, New Haven and London 1976, p. 65.

¹³ John Anstis, *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, 2 vols, vol. 2, London 1724, p. 366, note g.

¹⁴ Ashdown-Hill, 'Elusive mistress', pp. 490-94.

¹⁵ D. Grummitt, 'Plantagenet, Arthur, Viscount Lisle (b. before 1472, d. 1542)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edition, last amended Jan. 2008.

suggests that he would have been conceived towards the end of Edward's life, making it unlikely that the 'Dame Elizabeth Lucy' of Edward's bachelor years was his mother. Furthermore, though contemporaries acknowledged his relationship to the Segenworth Waytes there is no evidence that either he or they were linked to any family named Lucy;¹⁶ the extant pedigree of the Waytes of Waytes Court includes no Lucy marriage, nor indeed any issue of Thomas Wayte; the inquisitions held into his Hampshire and Wiltshire properties after his death would seem to confirm that he died without legitimate issue since the heir to all of these was found to be his younger brother, William.¹⁷ This raises the distinct possibility that Buck conflated two separate mistresses, one surnamed Lucy who bore Lady Lumley, and another surnamed Wayte who was the mother of Viscount Lisle.

For the above reasons, Michael Hicks cast about elsewhere for a candidate for Dame Lucy.¹⁸ Having ascertained that Lady Lumley's first name was actually Margaret rather than Elizabeth as previously believed, he surmised that the mother's correct name may also have been Margaret. As it happens, there was a Dame Margaret Lucy of suitable age and background living during the early 1460s. This was Margaret FitzLewis (d. 1466), the young widow of Sir William Lucy of Dallington in Northamptonshire who had been killed on the Lancastrian side at Northampton (cut down, as one chronicler claimed, by the hand of Margaret's lover, who met his own death in battle a few months later). Towards the end of 1462 the Oxfordshire lawyer Thomas Danvers began suing for Margaret FitzLewis's hand,¹⁹ but this leaves a period of more than eighteen months during which she could have become the king's mistress and borne him a child, a period that fits very well with Margaret Plantagenet's probable age of at least fourteen at her marriage to Thomas Lumley. Through her Montagu mother, Warwick the Kingmaker was Margaret's first cousin once removed, and her stepbrother, Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, was the estranged husband of Edward IV's sister Anne, so this *femme fatale* would have had plenty of opportunity to become acquainted with the new king.

Nonetheless, no documentary evidence has been found linking Dame Margaret Lucy either to Edward IV or to Lady Lumley and, as S.J. Payling has recently pointed out, in the Latin version of his history, More described Dame Elizabeth Lucy as a virgin deflowered by Edward.²⁰ If More was wrong about the first name of Edward's early mistress, however, he could also have been wrong about other details concerning her. Indeed, Hicks had already surmised that, in naming her Elizabeth, the Londoner More was confusing her with

¹⁶ M. St Clare Byrne, ed., *The Lisle Letters*, London 1983, pp. 24, 83, and 134-35.

¹⁷ Ashdown-Hill, 'Elusive mistress', p. 495. TNA, Chancery Inquisitions Post Mortem, Series 1, Edward IV 140/82/16.

¹⁸ M. Hicks, *Edward V: the Prince in the Tower*, Stroud 2003, pp. 34-37.

¹⁹ S.J. Payling, 'Widows and the Wars of the Roses: the turbulent marital history of Edward IV's putative mistress, Margaret, daughter of Sir John Lewis of West Horndon, Essex', *The Fifteenth Century XIV: Essays Presented to Michael Hicks*, ed L. Clark, Woodbridge 2015, p. 108.

²⁰ Payling, 'Widows and the Wars of the Roses', p. 115.

Edward's later, London-born, mistress Elizabeth Lambert, better known to him by her married name of Mistress Shore;²¹ if so, then this could also explain More's belief that 'Elizabeth Lucy' was still a virgin when she came to Edward's bed. As More also claims, Mistress Shore (Elizabeth Lambert) was married off to William Shore 'ere she were well ripe';²² it is now also known that she had obtained an annulment from her marriage on the grounds of Shore's impotence, so she would indeed have been a virgin when she entered into her liaison with the king.²³

The results of the consanguinity test are illustrated on a table (see Appendix 2).²⁴ The parents, grandparents and so on back to the great-great-grandparents of Richard Lumley and Anne Conyers are shown in successive rows above their names, just as they would be on a conventional family tree. The table is based on Margaret Lumley's mother having been Margaret FitzLewis.²⁵ Substituting Elizabeth Wayte for Margaret FitzLewis would produce the same result; although the names of Thomas Wayte's first wife and mother are unknown, given his family's obscurity and extreme southern location, a genealogical connection to the family of Anne Conyers seems most unlikely. It can therefore be seen from the table that the only possible relationship needing dispensation was that caused by Anne Conyers' great-grandparents, Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, and Joan Beaufort, also being – on the assumption that Edward IV was father of Margaret Lumley – great-great-grandparents of Richard Lumley. This relationship is the required third-and-fourth-degree impediment.

Acknowledgements

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²¹ 'Most probably our problem is that she was not called Elizabeth – this was a mistake of More's, a natural confusion with the notorious lady around in his own day – but Margaret' (Hicks, *Edward V*, p. 34).

²² More, *Richard the Third*, p. 56.

²³ J.A. Twemlow, ed, 'Lateran Regesta 761: 1475-1476', *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 13, 1471-1484, London 1955, pp. 487-95.

²⁴ The sources used in drawing up this table are as follows: *A Visitation of the North of England, circa 1480-1500*, Part 3, Surtees Society vol. 144 (1930), pp. 92-93, 139; W.P. Bailden and J.W. Clay, eds, *Inquisitions Post Mortem Relating to Yorkshire of the Reigns of Henry IV and Henry V*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, vol. 59 (1918), pp. 68, 105, 132, 156-57, 180-81; J. Hodgson, *A History of Northumberland*, in 3 parts, 7 vols, Newcastle 1820-58, part 2, vol. 1, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1827, p. 317; G. Poulson, *The History and Antiquities of the Seigniorship of Holderness, in the East Riding of the County of York*, 2 vols, Hull 1840-41, vol. 1, p. 403; C. Rawcliffe, 'Haryngton, Sir James (d.1417) of Fishwick, Lancs', and 'Thornton, Roger (d. 1430), of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumb.', and L.S. Woodger, 'John, Lewis (d. 1442)', in L. Clark, C. Rawcliffe and J.S. Roskell, eds, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1386-1421*, 4 vols, Woodbridge 1993; R. Surtees, 'Parish of Chester-Le-Street', *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, 4 vols, London 1816-40, vol. 2, Chester Ward, pp. 136-206.

²⁵ The identities of Lewis John's Welsh parents are not recorded, and all that may be observed is that his surname was probably a patronymic, i.e. his father's first name, Woodger, 'John, Lewis'.

Appendix 1: Lumley and Conyers Consanguinity Table
(based on Dame Margaret Lucy as mother of Margaret Plantagenet)

DEGREE OF CONSANGUINITY	LUMLEY										CONYERS																					
4 th degree (great-great-grand-parents)	John Lumley	Felicia Redman	Sir James Harrington	Ellen Urswick	Roger Thornton d.1430	Agnes Watton	John, Lord Greystoke	Elizabeth Ferrers	Richard Earl of Cambridge	Anne Mortimer	JOAN BEAUFORT	RALPH, EARL OF WESTMORLAND	?	?	John Montagu, 3 rd Earl of Salisbury	Maude Francis	John Conyers	Margaret St. Quentin	Thomas Rolleston	Beatrice Hawley	John Lord Darcy	Margaret Grey	Henry Lord FitzHugh	Elizabeth Grey	John Lord Neville	Maude Percy	John of Gaunt	Katherine Swynford	Walter Fauconberg	Maude de Pateshull	Thomas Bromfiote	Margaret St. John
	Thomas, 2 nd Lord Lumley	Margaret Harrington	Roger Thornton d.1483	Elizabeth Greystoke	Richard, Duke of York (1411-1460)	Cecily Neville	Lewis John	Anne Montagau	Christopher Conyers	Ellen Rolleston	Phillip, Lord Darcy	Eleanor FitzHugh	JOAN BEAUFORT	RALPH NEVILLE, EARL OF WESTMORLAND	Sir Thomas Fauconberg	Joan de Bromfiote																
	2 nd degree (grand-parents)	George, 3 rd Lord Lumley (d. 1507)			Elizabeth Thornton	King Edward IV (1442-1483)	Margaret FitzLewis, Lady Lucy	Sir John Conyers (d. 1489)	Margaret Darcy	William Neville, Earl of Kent	Joan Fauconberg																					
		Sir Thomas Lumley																														
	1 st degree (parents)	Sir Thomas Lumley			Margaret Plantagenet			John Conyers, Esquire (d. 1469)			Alice Neville																					
	Ego (the couple)	Richard Lumley (later 4 th Lord Lumley)										Anne Conyers																				

Appendix 2:

Ratification of the Dispensation by the Archbishop of York

(Borthwick Institute, Archbishops' Registers of the Diocese of York, No. 23, ff. 244v-245r)

[f. 244v] Quibus quidem literis nobis exhibitis visis et intellectis, easdem literas execucioni debite demandare cupientes, priores commissionis literas super impedimentis consanguinitatis per prefates Ricardum et Annam primo obtentas, quas timebant ex eo fore surrepticias et invalidas quod unus eorum exponencium tercio, alter vero quarto gradibus a stirpite (*recte* stirpite) communi distabant et quod alter eorum distaret tercio in prioribus literis obtentis mencio aliqua facta non fuit, iuxta Apostolicam declaracionem auctoritate nobis in hac parte commissa, sufficientes et validas per inde existere decernimus ac si in eisdem de distancia terciij gradus mencio facta fuisset.

Et insuper quia, per fidelem inquisitionem auctoritate nostra in hac parte captam, omnia et singula suggesta in ipsis literis Apostolicis contenta veritatem per omnia in se continere, dictosque Ricardum et Annam in tercio et iijto consanguinitatis gradibus invicem fore coniunctos, dictamque Annam propter hoc ab aliquo rapta [f. 245r] non fore, comperimus, cum eisdem Ricardo et Anna quod, impedimento consanguinitatis huiusmodi non obstante, possint inter se matrimonium contrahere et in eo postquam contractum fuerit licite remanere auctoritate predicta nobis in hac parte commissa misericorditer dispensamus, prolem exinde sucipiendam legittimam decernentes.

In cuius rei testimonium atque fidem literas nostras exinde fieri fecimus testimoniales Sigillo nostro signatas.

Data in castro nostro de Cawod primo die mensis Septembris Anno Domini millesimo quodringentesimo octogesimo nono, et nostre translacionis anno decimo.

Translation

These letters having been shown to us, and seen and understood, and wishing to put the same letters into proper effect, we decree the former letter upon the impediments of consanguinity first obtained by the foregoing Richard and Anne (which they feared would be clandestinely made and invalid through the fact that one of them is known to be removed from the common stock in the third degree and the other in the fourth degree, and no mention was made in the earlier letter obtained that the one is removed in the third degree), by the authority granted to us in this regard according to Apostolic decree, to be just as sufficient and valid as if mention of removal in the third degree had been made in it.

And moreover, because we found, by faithful inquiry undertaken on the basis of our authority in that behalf, each and every thing put forward and contained in those Apostolic letters to be truthful in every way, and that the

said Richard and Anne are joined in the third and fourth degrees of consanguinity, and the said Anne has not to been abducted from anyone for this purpose, we, by the foresaid authority granted to us in this regard, compassionately grant dispensation to the said Richard and Anne that, as this impediment of consanguinity does not stand in the way, they may contract a marriage between them and lawfully remain therein after it has been contracted, decreeing that the children born from it will be legitimate.

In testimony and faith of this, furthermore, we have caused our letters testimonial to be made, signed with our seal.

Given at our castle of Cawood on the first of September in the year of Our Lord fourteen eighty-nine and the tenth year of our translation.