Who did 'Lambert Simnel' claim to be?

Chris Phillips, 27 April 2024.

In a recent book by Philippa Langley,[1] entitled "The Princes in the Tower: Solving History's Greatest Cold Case" (2023), it is suggested that Edward V and his brother Richard, Duke of York, did not die in the Tower of London, but survived to become the pretenders[2] usually known as Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck. The former of these, whose supporters attempted to conquer England in 1487, is generally believed to have claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick, rather than Edward V, but Langley argues that this belief is the result of hostile propaganda. This note is an attempt to summarise the contemporary and nearly contemporary evidence about who the pretender of 1487 claimed to be.

1. The events.

The background to the events of 1487 is well known. When the Yorkist king Edward IV died unexpectedly in April 1483, he left as his heir his 12-year-old son, who initially succeeded to the throne as Edward V. But a struggle for power ensued between the late king's widow, Elizabeth Woodville, and her family on the one hand, and his brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, on the other. The outcome was that Elizabeth's marriage was pronounced invalid, her children were declared to be illegitimate, and Richard became king, as Richard III. The former Edward V and his younger brother Richard, Duke of York, were confined to the Tower of London, and were later rumoured to be dead.

In August 1485, the Lancastrian claimant to the throne, Henry, Earl of Richmond, invaded England, and Richard III was defeated and killed at Bosworth. As king, Henry VII adopted a conciliatory approach to the supporters of the former Yorkist kings. He married Elizabeth, the eldest of the daughters of Edward IV. On the assumption that that Edward V and his brother were dead, Elizabeth was her father's heir.

There were few other potential Yorkist claimants. The only representative of Edward IV's immediate family in the male line was the 10-year-old Edward, Earl of Warwick, the son of the late king's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, who had been executed for treason in 1478. After Henry VII came to the throne, Warwick was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Another potential Yorkist leader was John, Earl of Lincoln, the son of Edward IV's sister Elizabeth.[3] But initially Lincoln appeared to be reconciled to Henry's rule, and accepted judicial appointments from him, albeit only minor ones. Edward's other surviving sister, Margaret, the dowager duchess of Burgundy, would never be reconciled to Henry VII. She had no children, but would eagerly support both the Yorkist pretenders who later claimed to be her nephews.

In the Spring of 1486 there were abortive Yorkist uprisings, led in Worcestershire by Sir Humphrey Stafford, and in Yorkshire by Francis, Viscount Lovel. Stafford's supporters were accused of taking "Warwick" as their rallying cry, and of spreading a rumour that the Earl of Warwick had been set free in Guernsey and was in York, in Lovel's keeping.[4] There were evidently further rumours about Warwick towards the end of the year. A letter written to Sir Robert Plumpton from London at the

1 Partly written in collaboration with Nathalie Nijman-Bliekendaal, Zoë Maula, Jean Roefstra and John Dike.

2 The term 'pretender' will be used here in the neutral sense of a rival claimant to a throne, with no implication that a false identity was being claimed. This is the sense in which, for example, the term is applied to the later Jacobite pretenders, whose identities were not in doubt.

3 Both Warwick and Lincoln were said to have been named by Richard III as his successor at different times (Leland (1745), p. 218).

4 Williams (1928), p. 183.

end of November 1486 said there was little talk of him at that time, but more was expected after Christmas.[5] Unfortunately the writer did not specify the nature of the talk there had been, but there are other indications that a conspiracy involving the Earl of Warwick may already have been afoot in late 1486. The Flemish chronicler Adrien de But claimed that there were rumours of plots to depose Henry VII and to make the Earl of Warwick king in his place, apparently around September or October.[6] And according to the later history of Henry's reign written by Bernard André, a herald was sent to Ireland by the king to investigate such a plot. The Exchequer records confirm that a herald (or rather a pursuivant, a more junior officer of arms) was sent to Ireland by the king on secret business in Michaelmas Term 1486.[7]

There was indeed more talk of Warwick after Christmas. Henry summoned a council, which met in February 1487 at Sheen.[8] According to the later account of the historian Polydore Vergil, the king had been told that a pretender was in Ireland, falsely claiming to be the Earl of Warwick, and had been believed by members of the Irish nobility, including the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Thomas Fitzgerald. Vergil wrote that messengers had been sent in secret to enlist support for the pretender in England, and also to Margaret of Burgundy, who had promised to help. He added that the council decided to discourage support for the pretender by offering a pardon to those involved.[9] While the council was meeting, there was a convocation, or church council, at St Paul's Cathedral, at which a priest named William Symonds appeared on 17 February and confessed his part in the conspiracy. He said that he had gone with a boy,[10] the son of an Oxford organ-maker, to Ireland, where he was taken to be the Earl of Warwick. Afterwards, Symonds said, he himself had been in Furness Fells with Lord Lovel.[11] At a further session of convocation a few days later, certain lords of the king's council attended, together with the mayor and aldermen of London and many others, and the Earl of Warwick was led in and shown to them.[12]

The hopes that the conspiracy could be deflated by the offer of a pardon and the public exhibition of the Earl of Warwick were soon disappointed. Soon after the council was dismissed, the Earl of Lincoln threw in his lot with the conspirators, fleeing to Flanders to join Lovel.[13] The dowager

5 Stapleton (1839), pp. 54, 55.

6 See Section 2.3.

7 André placed this mission after the coronation of the pretender, but that is chronologically impossible (see Section 2.2). An allegation made in 1490, that on 1 January 1487 John Sant, abbot of Abingdon, had given a sum of money to one John Mayne, who was to leave England to aid the Earl of Lincoln, is sometimes cited as evidence that the plot was already in progress with Lincoln's support. But Lincoln is described as then being a rebel and is perhaps implied to be out of England himself, despite the fact that he did not flee the country until about two months later. So the details of the allegation may not be reliable (Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 6, p. 436; Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (2005)).

8 After Candlemas (2 February) according to the account sometimes known as the Heralds' Memoir (Cavell (2001), p. 280; Cavell (2009), p. 108).

9 Hay (1950), pp. 12-19; see also Sutton's (2005) online version of the 1555 edition of Vergil's History.

10 The boy's name was later given as Lambert Simnel, e.g. in Lincoln's Act of Attainder, though the Heralds' Memoir calls him simply "John" (Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 6, p. 397; Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (2005); Cavell (2001), p. 288; Cavell (2009), p. 117).

11 Pollard (1914), pp. 246, 247, 255; Harper-Bill (1977), p. 194; Harper-Bill (1987), p. 25. Furness Fells was the district of Lancashire where the Yorkist Sir Thomas Broughton's estate was located. According to Vergil's account, Broughton was with Lovel at the time of the council meeting.

12 Harper-Bill (1977), pp. 194, 195; Harper-Bill (1987), p. 25. The exact date of Warwick's appearance is unclear because the official record of convocation apparently omits some material, but it seems to have been on either Monday 19 or Tuesday 20 February. Vergil's account says that the council decided to show Warwick to the people, and that this happened at St Paul's on the Sunday after the council was dismissed. According to another source the council was dismissed on 3 March (Davis (1971), vol. 1, p. 653). But if Warwick was shown to the people on a Sunday, it seems more likely that it was Sunday 18 February, just before his appearance at convocation.

13 According to Vergil (Hay (1950), pp. 18, 19; Sutton (2005)) and the Heralds' Memoir (Cavell (2001), p. 280; Cavell (2009), p. 109), Lincoln left as soon as the council had been dismissed, which according to another source was on 3 March (Davis (1971), vol. 1, p. 653). Consistently with this, the Memoir says that he arrived in Flanders by the beginning of Lent (7 March). But the Act of Attainder passed later that year gives the date of his flight as 19 March (Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 6, p. 397; Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (2005)). By the time Lincoln joined him, Lovel seems to have been in Flanders for several weeks. On 24 January, the Earl of Oxford had written to John Paston

duchess, Margaret, had been widowed ten years earlier, and was living at Mechelen (known to French speakers as Malines), which was part of her dower estate. Her step-daughter had married Maximilian, King of the Romans (the heir apparent of the Holy Roman Emperor), and had herself died after giving birth to a son Philip, who was still a minor in 1487. Margaret, with the assistance of Maximilian, would now provide an army for the Yorkists to invade England and a fleet to take them there. The army consisted of mercenaries led by an experienced German commander, Martin Schwartz. By late April the fleet was ready to set sail, and on 5 May it reached Ireland.[14]

In Ireland, the pretender had now gained the support of most of the nobility, including the king's own representative - the Deputy Lieutenant Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare (the brother of Thomas, the Lord Chancellor). A few weeks after the arrival of the Flanders contingent, the pretender was crowned as King Edward in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin.[15] At some point an Irish parliament was also held in the pretender's name.[16] But the real objective of the conspiracy was to seize the throne of England, and soon afterwards a mixed force of German mercenaries under Martin Schwartz, Gaelic and Anglo-Irish troops under Thomas Fitzgerald, and English Yorkists under Lincoln crossed the Irish Sea, and on 4 June landed on the Lancashire coast.[17]

By 8 June the invading army had crossed the Pennines and reached Masham in Yorkshire. From there, a letter to the mayor of York was sent in the pretender's name, appealing for assistance in the form of food and lodging for the army.[18] But York remained loyal to Henry VII, and in the event the rebels turned southward towards the East Midlands rather than approaching the city. After crossing the Trent near East Stoke in Nottinghamshire, they were met on 16 June by Henry's army, and after a bloody battle they were defeated. Lincoln, Schwartz and Fitzgerald were killed in the battle. The pretender was captured,[19] but his life was spared.[20]

That was the end of this attempt to regain the English throne for the house of York, though in Ireland the Earl of Kildare continued to govern in the pretender's name at least until August. But soon after the Battle of Stoke he is said to have sent messengers to Henry, to ask for his forgiveness. Apparently, at length Kildare received a favourable answer, dependent on his future conduct. But it

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that Lovel "is departyng" with no more than 14 persons (Gairdner (1904), vol. 6, p. 95).

14 As Henry informed the Earl of Ormond just over a week later (Halliwell (1846), vol. 1, p. 171). Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley follow a Dutch chronicle published in 1551 in saying that the fleet departed from Arnemuiden on 15 May, some three weeks later than the date implied by English records (Langley (2023), p. 174 and note 2 on p. 421). According to the later account of the historian Bernard André, the pretender himself was summoned to Flanders by Margaret, and an entry in the municipal accounts of Mechelen may imply that he was there just before the fleet sailed (see Section 2.3 below).

15 The date usually given for the coronation is 24 May, when the Act of Attainder against Lincoln says he caused the pretender to be proclaimed king, and did him faith and homage (Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 6, p. 397; Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (2005)). The Annals of Ulster give the date instead as Sunday 3 June (Mac Carthy (1895), vol. 3, pp. 314-317). But Jones (2014b, pp. 207-209) argues that the date may really have been Sunday 27 May (see Section 2.2 below).

16 Jones (2019), p. 300.

17 Lincoln's Act of Attainder (Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 6, p. 397; Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (2005)).

18 See Section 2.1.

19 Vergil wrote that the pretender's mentor, whom he called Richard Symond (or Simond), was also captured after the battle (Hay (1950), pp. 24, 25; Sutton (2005)). Presumably he meant the same priest William Symonds who had confessed at convocation in February, though it is not clear how he could have been with the pretender at Stoke, having already been in custody in February.

20 According to Vergil, the pretender was taken into the king's service, at first doing menial tasks in the kitchen and later as a falconer (Hay (1950), pp. 24, 25; Sutton (2005)). According to the Book of Howth, on one occasion when Henry VII entertained a number of Irish lords, the man who served them wine was revealed as "King Lambarte Symenell" (Jones (2019), pp. 301, 302, citing Brewer and Bullen (1871), p. 190). He was also recorded as having attended the funeral of Sir Thomas Lovell, who died in May 1524 (Brewer (1870), vol. 4, part 1, p. 150). Because Vergil wrote that he was still alive, Simnel is sometimes said to have survived until 1534, the date when Vergil's work was published. But this part of his account is already found in the original manuscript, which was written in 1512-3, so this is not a safe inference (Hay (1950), p. xiii).

wasn't until July 1488 that he and the Irish lords finally agreed terms with Henry, and formally swore fealty to him.[21]

2. The sources.

In this section the early sources of information about the pretender's claimed identity are summarised. For convenience, the English sources will be dealt with first, then the Irish sources, and finally the Continental sources, which nearly all originate from territory held by the Dukes of Burgundy.

2.1 English sources.

(1) The most detailed account of the events of 1487 is that in Polydore Vergil's "English History". Vergil was an Italian historian who had come to England in 1502, and his history of England was written at the request of Henry VII. It is not a contemporary account of the events of 1487 - the original manuscript was not completed until 1513, about a quarter of a century later. Moreover the published editions, which appeared in 1534, 1546 and 1555, contain significant revisions to the text.[22]

Regarding the claimed identity of the pretender, in the original manuscript Vergil wrote that the priest Richard Symond (presumably meaning the William Symonds who made a confession at convocation) schooled a youth called Lambert Symenell in courtly manners at Oxford, with a view to pretending that he was of royal descent. When it was rumoured that Edward, the son of the Duke of Clarence, had been murdered in the Tower of London, he decided that the time had come to carry out the plan. So he changed the boy's name to Edward and went with him to Ireland, telling the Irish lords that he had saved Warwick from death.

This account was modified somewhat in the published editions, where it was explained that the initial plan of the priest - now called Simond - arose because it was rumoured that the sons of Edward IV had survived by travelling to another country, and also that Warwick either had been killed or was soon to be killed. Therefore he hoped that the boy might be able to take the place of one of these children. The rumour that spurred him into action was now said to be simply that Warwick had died in prison, and the detail was added that the boy was the same age as Warwick[23].

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21 The surviving Irish Letters Patent issued in the pretender's name in August are discussed in Section 2.2 below. For Kildare's communications with Henry in late 1487, see Bryan (1933), pp. 119, 120 (citing the work of the 17th-century historian Sir James Ware), and for his final return to fealty see Bryan (1933), pp. 124-141.

22 The Latin text of the original manuscript covering 1485-1537, together with an English translation, and notes of differences found in the published Latin texts, are given in Hay (1950). An edition of the Latin text of the 1555 and an English translation are available online (Sutton, 2005). Bennett (1987, pp. 133-138) also gives an English translation of the part of the original manuscript dealing with the 1487 rebellion, with some additions from the published editions.

23 Warwick's 12th birthday was in February 1487. In contrast, Lincoln's Act of Attainder says that in May 1487 the pretender was only 10, without indicating who he claimed to be (Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 6, p. 397; Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (2005)). Smith (1996, p. 513) argued that Vergil's description of the pretender as adolescent would normally indicate an age between 13 and 18, but that with some latitude it might fit the Earl of Warwick. Smith also (p. 517) drew attention to Vergil's account of a meeting between William Warham and Margaret of Burgundy in 1493, according to which Warham accused her of having "given birth" to two princes - the pretender of 1487 and later the one known as Perkin Warbeck - after 180 months (rather than the usual eight or nine months), or 15 years. This passage is absent from Vergil's original manuscript, but appears in the published editions of his work. It is true that, at the time of the first rumours in Autumn 1486, Edward V (at about 16) would have been closer to this age than Edward, Earl of Warwick (at about 11 and a half). But at the time of Warbeck's emergence as a pretender, in late 1491, Richard, Duke of York, would have been about 18, so it is difficult to believe that the comment attributed to Warham was meant to be chronologically accurate. A complicating factor in interpreting any of Vergil's comments about the pretender's age is that he incorrectly wrote that Warwick was 15 – rather than 10 - at the time of Henry's accession in 1485 (Hay (1950),

There are not very many contemporary or nearly contemporary English sources that shed light on the pretender's claims, but those that we have tend to confirm what Vergil later wrote.

(2) The letter to Sir Robert Plumpton written in late November 1486, mentioned above, speaks of previous rumours about Warwick that had died down, and the expectation that there would be more talk about him after Christmas.[24] This could plausibly be a reference either to the rumours that encouraged Symonds to launch his scheme, or else to early rumours about the progress of the scheme itself.

(3) Another narrative of Henry's reign, sometimes called the Heralds' Memoir, and believed to have been compiled from near-contemporary records of events written by the officers of arms,[25] provides confirmation of other details. In its account of the council meeting at Sheen in February 1487, it does not explicitly mention the pretender, but it refers to Lincoln's flight immediately after the council. It says he left the country to join Lovel in Flanders, where he spread rumours that Warwick "shulde bee in Irelande", and that he himself knew this and spoke daily with him at Sheen before his departure.[26] The implication seems to be that Warwick had gone to Ireland *after* he was publicly shown to the people at St Paul's.[27] In its later account of the Battle of Stoke, the Memoir says that the pretender was called King Edward by the rebels, but that his "name was in dede John".[28]

(4) The confession of William Symonds at convocation in February 1487, outlined above, is consistent with Vergil's account apart from the difference in the priest's forename. It confirms that the priest took the boy to Ireland, where he was believed to be the Earl of Warwick. The record of convocation also confirms Vergil's statement that Warwick was publicly shown at St Paul's Cathedral, though perhaps with a discrepancy over the exact date.[29]

(5) In one of the York House Books among that city's records is a copy of a letter, dated 8 June 1487 at Masham, written in the pretender's name to the mayor, brethren and commonalty.[30] The letter appeals for assistance in the form of food and lodging for the rebel army. The transcript of the letter has a heading indicating that it was from Lincoln, Lovel and others, "in the name of ther king calling hymself King Edward the vj^{t} ". The implication of the regnal number is clearly that the pretender was claiming to be someone named Edward who was different from the former king Edward V. This description is not part of the text of the letter, which simply opens with the phrase "By the king", so it is not clear whether it reflects written or oral information brought by the bearer, or simply the understanding of the copyist from other sources.[31] In a subsequent entry containing a narrative of events, it is recorded that on 12 June the Lords Scrope of Bolton and Upsall assaulted

pp. 2, 3, 70, 71; Sutton (2005)). The Burgundian chronicler Jean Molinet, who believed that the pretender really was Warwick, gave a description of him which has been interpreted as "full grown, in the flower of manhood, and raised up in force" (Bennett (1987), p. 130). But a more literal translation of what he wrote, in the course of a botanical metaphor, was that this branch of the stock had been ripened, had flowered and had been raised in strength, which might not imply that he was fully grown (Buchon (1828), vol. 3, p. 152; Doutrepont and Jodogne (1935-7), vol. 1, p. 562).

24 Stapleton (1839), pp. 54, 55.

25 Cavell (2001), pp. 38-47; Cavell (2009), pp. 55-59.

26 Cavell (2001), pp. 280, 281; Cavell (2009), pp. 108, 109.

27 It seems unlikely that Lincoln could really have spoken regularly to Warwick at Sheen. Vergil wrote that Warwick was taken to St Paul's from the Tower (Hay (1950), pp. 18, 19; Sutton (2005)). The record of convocation says that he was led into the meeting by the Earl of Derby (who was the Lord High Constable of England) and taken to Lambeth by the archbishop afterwards (Harper-Bill (1977), p. 195; Harper-Bill (1987), p. 26).

28 Cavell (2001), p. 288; Cavell (2009).

29 Harper-Bill (1977), pp. 194, 195; Harper-Bill (1987), p. 26.

30 Raine (1941), vol. 2, pp. 20, 21; Attreed (1991), vol. 2, p. 570. The older publication is available online, but the editor made the crucial mistake of mistranscribing Edward VI as Edward V.

31 It has also been pointed out that on other pages of the same volume there are indications that entries could be made some weeks after the events described, so this may not be a strictly contemporary record.

the city gates at Bootham Bar, crying "King Edward", but were repulsed.[32]

(6) After defeating the rebels at Stoke, Henry wrote on 5 July to the Pope, complaining that the archbishops of Dublin and Armagh and the bishops of Meath and Kildare had lent assistance to the rebels and to the pretender, pretending that he was the son of the late Duke of Clarence and crowning him King of England. The letter concluded with a request for the Pope to institute legal proceedings against the offending prelates.[33] In January 1488 the Pope obliged, reciting the accusation Henry had made and ordering an investigation of the actions of the prelates he had accused, so that he could proceed against them.[34]

(7) A further reference to the pretender comes from a series of annals, apparently written by a private citizen of London soon after the events they describe.[35] The entry for 1486 evidently covers the period in office of Henry Colet, who became mayor in October 1486. It says that a child was carried into Ireland saying he was the Duke of Clarence's son, "and was nat", that he was brought into England with Lincoln, Lovel and others, including Martin Schwartz and many foreigners, and that Lincoln, Schwartz and many others were were killed when the king met them beside Newark. Then it adds that the Duke of Clarence's son and the other child that was in Ireland were shown openly at St Paul's in London on Relic Sunday, 8 July 1487. From this it seems that Henry still felt the need to demonstrate that the pretender's claims had been false, even after his supporters had been defeated in battle.

(8) These contemporary and nearly contemporary English sources confirm Polydore Vergil's statement that the pretender claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick (or in one case a King Edward different from Edward V). But there is one later narrative source from England, Bernard André's "Life of Henry VII", which disagrees. André was of French birth but came to England soon after Henry gained the throne. He was styled poet laureate and afterwards became the tutor of Henry's elder son, Prince Arthur. In 1500 he began work on a life of Henry, which was never completed. In this work, André wrote that a plot was hatched to proclaim that a boy, the son of a baker or cobbler, was a son of Edward IV. He added that there then came word that Edward's second son had been crowned king in Ireland. Henry VII sent several messengers and at length a herald to investigate, but because the boy had been well schooled he was able to answer the herald's questions. Many men, including the Earl of Lincoln, accepted the pretender, and he was summoned by Margaret of Burgundy and secretly went to her from England.[36]

There is support in contemporary records for part of André's account. Among the records of the Exchequer are an entry for the payment of £8 in Michaelmas Term 1486 to Falcon Pursuivant, sent by the king to Ireland on his secret business, and a warrant given by the king at Sheen on 14 February 1487 for payment to him of a further £5 for expenses incurred "in our seruice and maessages into our lande of Irland".[37]

André is obviously wrong in placing Henry's inquiries after the coronation in Dublin. Not only would that be inconsistent with the records concerning Falcon Pursuivant, but also there were only about 10 days at most between the coronation and the rebel army's departure for England, so there would have been no time for inquiries to be made then. Also, while there is one contemporary reference supporting the possible presence of the pretender in Mechelen in April 1487,[38] there is

32 Raine (1941), vol. 2, p. 22; Attreed (1991), vol. 2, p. 572.
33 Gairdner (1861), pp. 94-96; Pollard (1914), pp. 156, 157.
34 Twemlow (1960), vol. 14, pp. 305-309.
35 Green (1981), p. 585, 586, 589.
36 Sutton (2010).
37 Jones (2021), p. 49, citing records transcribed by Quinn (1941), pp. 33, 50 and 51. Falcon Pursuivant was John Yonge or Young, later appointed Somerset Herald and eventually Norroy King of Arms.
38 See Section 2.3.

nothing to suggest he would have gone there from England rather than from Ireland. But the most serious problem with André's account is the implication that the pretender claimed to be Edward IV's second son, Richard, Duke of York.[39] This would contradict not only the contemporary evidence that the pretender claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick (or else styled himself Edward VI), but also the additional evidence that he was called King Edward.[40] It must be dismissed as an error on André's part.[41]

In contrast to the contemporary and nearly contemporary English evidence outlined above, Philippa Langley, in her recent book, "The Princes in the Tower: Solving History's Greatest Cold Case" (2023), argues that the pretender of 1487 claimed to be - and in fact really was - Edward V, the elder son of Edward IV. It is argued that the documents which say he claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick, reflect a false story circulated by Henry VII. Henry is supposed to have believed that this would enable him to discredit the pretender, because the real Warwick was his prisoner and could be publicly exhibited.[42]

It may be noted that, apart from the two historical narratives, few of the documents mentioned in this section were intended for public consumption. Of course, even as such, they might still indirectly reflect false propaganda. But it can also be questioned whether the propaganda theory is a realistic one in the first place. Would Henry, faced with a pretender claiming to be Edward V, really have adopted a strategy of first pretending that he was claiming to be someone else, and then fabricating evidence - the confession of the priest Symonds - to disprove the false claim that he had himself invented? It would be an extremely risky strategy. In England, it might do more harm than good if the truth about the pretender's claims became widely known. In Ireland, where the truth would already be widely known, it would achieve nothing. And as the pretender had the support of Margaret of Burgundy and Maximilian, it could hardly be hoped that foreign rulers would be fooled either.[43]

But fortunately evidence is also available from places outside England, which enables the propaganda theory to be evaluated without any need for speculation about Henry's thinking.

2.2 Irish sources.

Ireland was ruled by the Earl of Kildare in the pretender's name for a period of at least three months

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39 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley (Langley (2023), p. 179) refer to André's statement that the pretender claimed to be a son of Edward IV, but omit his reference to Edward's *second* son having been crowned. André's account is presented as support for the theory that the pretender was Edward's *elder* son.

40 He was called King Edward according to the report of the Battle of Stoke in the Heralds' Memoir, in the York House Book's account of the assault on the city gates by the Lords Scrope, on the Irish coinage attributed to the pretender and on the Irish letters patent issued in his name (see Section 2.2).

41 Given André's history, it was a strange error to make. In view of Vergil's indication that the pretender's mentor had initially considered presenting him as one of the sons of Edward IV (an indication spelled out more fully in the later printed editions of his work), one possibility is that in the very early stages the boy really was claimed to be Richard, Duke of York. In the much later account written by Francis Bacon (Lumby (1885), pp. 23, 24) this is stated explicitly, though it has been suggested that Bacon was merely trying to harmonise André's version with the other evidence (Smith (1996), p. 498). Another possibility is that there was some confusion in André's mind with the later pretender known as Perkin Warbeck, who certainly claimed to be Richard, Duke of York and, like the pretender of 1487, was said to have been first acknowledged in Ireland. Also like the pretender of 1487, Warbeck was afterwards supported by Margaret of Burgundy.

42 Langley (2023), p. 181.

43 One of the strangest implications of Langley's theory would be that in his letter asking the Pope to start legal proceedings against the Irish prelates, Henry made a statement about the pretender's claim that was not only demonstrably false, but also completely unnecessary. Nor was his request to the Pope only a rhetorical one. The Pope really did order an investigation in Ireland, and that was at a time when Ireland had not yet formally submitted to Henry's rule again.

in 1487, so it is a natural place to look for documentary evidence. Unfortunately few official records survive from that period, for two reasons. Firstly, in 1494, after Kildare was finally dismissed as Deputy Lieutenant and replaced by Sir Edward Poynings, the opportunity was taken to declare "All records, processes, stiles, pardons, liveries, acts, and ordinances of Council, and all other acts done in the 'Laddes' name, annulled".[44] Anyone keeping such a document was to be deemed a traitor. Secondly, in 1922 the Public Record Office in Dublin was destroyed by fire, and the losses included the medieval records of the Irish Chancery.

(1) Nor is there much helpful information in Irish narrative histories. The Book of Howth includes an account of the 1487 rebellion apparently written in the mid 16th century by Walter Hussey. But although it includes some original material, it is mostly dependent on Edward Hall's Chronicle, published in 1548. As far as the pretender's identity is concerned, it offers no explicit information of its own.[45]

(2) The Annals of Ulster do offer an identification of the pretender, but unfortunately it is an impossible one. Under 1485, the death of Richard III and the accession of "the son of the Welshman" is recorded, and it is noted that only one young man of the race of the blood royal survived, who was exiled to Ireland in the following year. Under 1487, this man is identified as the son of the Duke of York, is again described as the sole survivor of the race of the blood royal and an exile to Ireland, and is said to have been living with Kildare. There is also a note of his proclamation as king in Dublin.[46] But of course, the pretender could not be a son of the last Duke of York (who was the younger son of Edward IV), and given the description of him as a boy he could not be a son of the Duke of York who was killed in 1460 (the father of Edward IV). Edward IV was himself briefly Duke of York between his father's death and his own accession to the throne in 1461, but it would have been perverse to describe him as a duke of York rather than a king. The most natural interpretation seems to be that the writer thought the pretender was not a boy, but was a younger brother of Edward IV.[47]

(3) A memorandum in the Red Book of the Irish Exchequer was transcribed before the fire of 1922, and notes a coronation in Dublin on the date 27 May. This apparently refers to the coronation of the pretender in 1487, but the word following "coronation" - presumably the king's name - was noted as having been erased.[48] Perhaps this was done in 1494, during the destruction of records relating to the pretender.

(4) Certain coins of this period minted in Ireland bear a Latin legend which translates as "King of England, France and King of Ireland", either without a king's name or with the name Edward.[49] Normally the legend on coinage of the same design was "King of England, France and Lord of

44 Gilbert (1865), p. 606, note 3.

45 Jones (2019). But Jones argues (on pp. 301, 302) that in one of its original passages it does offer some implicit information. A story is included about Henry VII entertaining some Irish lords at Greenwich, and arranging for Lambert Simnel to serve wine to them. Jones argues that one of the English nobles present was Warwick, and that Henry's intention was to show the lords both the former pretender and the man he had claimed to be.

46 Mac Carthy (1895), vol. 3, pp. 298, 299, 314-317.

47 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley (Langley (2023), p. 427, note 27) imply that the *grandson* of the duke who was killed in 1460 might have been intended, but of course this would fit either Edward V or Warwick. Lewis (2018) discusses the possibility that "Duke of York" really did mean Edward IV, but that the writer was unsure whether it would be acceptable to refer to Edward as a king. However, Lewis notes that the 1485 annal refers to Richard III as a king. It might be added that the 1503 annal, recording the death of Elizabeth of York, refers to Edward IV as a king, and also that the only other reference made to a Duke of York is the record of the death of Edward IV's father, in the 1461 annal, which adds that "the son of the Duke of York" [Edward IV] was then made king.

48 Jones (2014b), pp. 207-209.

49 Carlyon-Britton (1941), pp. 133-135; Dolley (1969), pp. xii, xiii; Ashdown-Hill (2009), pp. 72-75. Some authors have denied the significance of the title "King of Ireland" used on the coins, presumably viewing it as just an error. But it is consistent with the title used in the letters patent issued in the name of the pretender in August 1487, discussed below.

Ireland", and this was how English kings styled themselves until Henry VIII assumed the title "King of Ireland" after breaking with Rome (Ireland having been considered to be under papal suzerainty until then). These coins have therefore been attributed to the pretender of 1487, but unfortunately the legend does not include a regnal number or a date, so they can only confirm that the pretender was called King Edward.

(5) None of the Irish evidence discussed so far sheds any new light on the claimed identity of the pretender, but there are two pieces of Irish evidence that do. The first relates to another record destroyed in 1922, but whose contents were noted before its destruction. It was discussed in detail by Randolph Jones.[50] The record was the Exchequer Memoranda Roll for the second year of Henry VII, which included the period of the pretender's coronation, and English abstracts of the entry (or entries) in question were made by two researchers independently, William Lynch in the early 19th century and J. R. Hutchinson in the early 20th.[51] The abstracts both include a reference to a writ ordering the sheriff of Uriel to distrain a number of people, in order to compel them to attend court to answer for the arrears of a former sheriff. In both abstracts, the date of the writ is given as May in the first year of Edward VI (though the day of the month differs, being the 8th in Hutchinson's abstract and the 28th in Lynch's). If the regnal number, VI, is correct it must refer to the pretender, and if the pretender was styled Edward VI, evidently he was not claiming to be Edward V.[52]

(6) The second document is the original letters patent appointing Peter Butler sheriff of Kilkenny. It survived destruction both in 1494 and 1922 because, while the text would have been copied on to the Irish Patent Roll, the original would have been given to Butler and subsequently remained in private hands.[53] It has also been discussed in detail by Randolph Jones.[54] The document is marked out as having been issued in the pretender's name by two peculiarities. Firstly, the king is styled "Edward ... King of England, France and Ireland". This is the same style used on the coinage attributed to the pretender, and it is different from the style of all other English kings before Henry VIII. Secondly, the document is attested by the Earl of Kildare, and he is described as the king's Lieutenant. Under the recognised English kings, Kildare held only the office of Deputy Lieutenant. The document is dated 13 August in the first year of the king's reign. Jones argues that this must refer to August 1487,[55] meaning that Kildare continued to rule Ireland in the pretender's name even after the rebel army had been defeated at Stoke and the pretender had been captured. (The document was attested by the Earl, not by the 'king' himself, so there is no implication that the 'king' was

50 Jones (2014a), pp. 43-45.

51 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley (Langley (2023), p. 425, note 25) suggested that the abstracts might not have been made independently, and instead that Hutchinson's might have been copied from Lynch's. But that is impossible, because Hutchinson's abstract contains information not included in Lynch's. Jones suggested that the abstracts might actually have been based on two different entries in the same roll, as two different membrane numbers were noted.

52 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley (Langley (2023), pp. 426, 427, note 25) further suggested that the regnal year could have been an addition to the original entry, which might have been made at any time between the 15th and the 19th centuries. This suggestion is difficult to understand, because the full date of the writ, not just the month and the day of the month, must have been included in the original entry. As for the possibility that the regnal number could later have been altered for some reason, it is difficult to believe this could have been done without the alteration being evident, because by comparison with corresponding English records it would have been written as a word, "sexto" rather than as a Roman numeral. It is equally difficult to believe that, if the number had been visibly altered, Hutchinson at least would not have noted it, because he added "(sic)" as an indication that the date was unusual. For that matter, it is difficult to understand why anyone would have wanted to insert or fabricate this regnal number, at any time between the 15th and the 19th centuries. If a change had been made under Poynings in 1494, presumably it would have been either to replace the regnal year by "2 Henry VII", or to cancel the entry altogether.

53 Peter Butler succeeded his grandfather's cousin, Thomas Butler, as Earl of Ormond in 1515 (Doubleday *et al.* (1945), vol. 10, pp. 133-136), so this document was preserved among the Ormond Deeds at Kilkenny Castle.

54 Jones (2023), pp. 57-60. An image can be seen at The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (but note that, despite the caption there, the king is not described as "Edward VI" in the document).

55 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley (Langley (2023), p. 425, note 25) accepted that this document was issued in the name of the pretender, though they dated it to August 1486. But that date is impossible, because before the coronation of the pretender, documents continued to be issued in Henry VII's name by the Irish Chancery even as late as 1 May 1487 (Jones (2021), p. 49).

actually present when it was authorised.)

The document does not give the king a regnal number, and at first sight it tells us no more about his claimed identity than that he was called Edward. But in this case, the regnal year turns out to be just as informative as a regnal number would have been. The regnal years of English kings were reckoned from the date of their accession, not from the date of their coronation. If the document had been issued in August 1487 in the name of someone claiming to be Edward V, it would have been dated as of his fifth regnal year, not his first.[56] Jones carefully considered, and rejected, arguments that might be advanced against this conclusion. He pointed out the precedents of Henry VI and Edward IV, who had both temporarily lost the throne. When they later regained it, their regnal years continued to be calculated from their original dates of accession (in Henry's case with an additional specification of the year reckoned from his "readeption", or restoration). In the case of a king acquiring an additional kingdom, there was the precedent of Edward III's assumption of the title "King of France". In that case two regnal years were always specified, one for each kingdom. Alternatively, there was the later parallel of Henry VIII's creation of Ireland as a kingdom, after which he continued to use a single regnal year, counted from the date of his accession in England. But even setting precedent aside, there is a very simple and obvious reason why the same regnal year could never simply be repeated at a later time. For practical purposes the regnal year had to determine a unique calendar date, otherwise it would be rendered useless for dating purposes.

Only two of the contemporary Irish sources provide explicit information about the claimed identity of the pretender.[57] But in both cases that information is inconsistent with the theory that the pretender claimed to be Edward V.

2.3 Continental sources.

As the pretender of 1487 was supported by Margaret, the dowager Duchess of Burgundy, and Maximilian, the King of the Romans, it is to be hoped that sources from Burgundian territory will be relative free of reliance of Tudor propaganda in their statements about his claimed identity.

(1) All except one of the sources to be mentioned here are from Burgundian territory, but the first is not. It is the chronicle of Caspar Weinreich, who is believed to have been a merchant living in Danzig. Weinreich wrote that English lords, with the help of the widow of Charles of Burgundy, assembled an army and a fleet of 19 ships, which sailed from Zeeland to Ireland, to support George,[58] the son of the Duke of Clarence. They then sailed to England but were defeated. Weinreich seems to be unique in thinking that the pretender was then killed.[59]

(2) Moving on to narrative sources from Burgundian territory, first there is the chronicle of Adrien De But, a former prior of the Abbey of the Dunes in Flanders, near Koksijde, between Dunkirk and Ostend. For this period, although the chronicle was not written in precise chronological order, the entries must be very nearly contemporary (they continue to within two months of De But's death in June 1488). It includes several pieces of information about the pretender not found in other sources,

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56 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley evidently did not appreciate that the regnal year given in the document was inconsistent with the theory that the pretender was Edward V. The difficulty would be just as great if the document had been issued in 1486, as they believed.

57 Another purported piece of evidence is an extract from a letter supposed to have been written by the Archbishop of Armagh to the Pope, saying that the pretender was claimed to be "the son of Edward Earl of Warwick". This appeared in 1705 as an addition to a posthumously published translation of Sir James Ware's Annals. But there are strong reasons to suspect that it was a forgery added by Ware's son (Barnfield, 2020).

58 It has been suggested the word translated as “George” signifies "York", but probably it is simply a confused reference to the name of Warwick's father, George, Duke of Clarence.

59 Hirsch et al. (1870), vol. 4, p. 763; Visser-Fuchs (1986), p. 317.

though some of the information is evidently inaccurate.[60]

Firstly, De But referred to the period after the birth of Henry's son Arthur (who was born in September 1486). He recounted a conversation between the king and the mayor of London, who accused him of not treating honourably the city of London or the "nations". After that, the mayor began to drive out the Teutons, and conspired to install as a new king the son of the Duke of Clarence - the "Duke of Warwick" on his mother's side - who was being guarded (or watched over)[61] in Ireland.[62] Then, in November or December, there were said to be rumours of a plot to depose the king and replace him with the son of the Duke of Clarence.

Under June 1487, De But gave an account of the Battle of Stoke, mentioning the deaths of Lincoln, Schwartz and 5,000 men, and the strangling of all the Irish prisoners. The novel feature here was that the "young Duke of Clarence" was said to have been captured, but then rescued by the "Earl of Suffolk",[63] who took him to Guînes, one of the remaining English possessions near Calais. There were then said to be two further attempts by the army of the son of Clarence to overthrow Henry. A second reference to the Battle of Stoke followed (in which Lincoln, Schwartz and this time 4,000 men were said to have been killed). And finally another battle, apparently dated around August, after which the Yorkists were forced to take refuge in Ireland.[64]

(3) The other Burgundian narrative source is the Chronicles of Jean Molinet. Molinet was of French birth, and since 1475 he had been the official historiographer to the dukes of Burgundy. His account of the events of 1487 is thought to have been written only a few years later.[65]

Molinet described the pretender as a branch of the royal stock that had been raised in Ireland, and identified him as Edward, the son of the Duke of Clarence (he also wrote of the pretender's supporters in London crying "Long Live Warwick; to King Edward!"). He related how Margaret had used her influence with Maximilian on her nephew's behalf and raised an army of Germans under Martin Schwartz. His account continues with the voyage to Ireland and the invasion of

60 Kervyn de Lettenhove (1870), pp. 665, 666, 674-676, 678. For biographical information, see Fris (1901), pp. 518-522.

61 Possibly De But's statement about Warwick being guarded (observabatur) can be related to the assertion of the Annals of Ulster that the pretender was in exile in Ireland and living with Kildare, the Deputy Lieutenant (see Section 2.2 above), and to Molinet's belief that he had been in Ireland for some time (see below). Perhaps the pretender's story was not that he had escaped from the Tower, but that he was been sent to Ireland earlier and had been Kildare's prisoner there.

62 The background to this story seems to be the anxiety then felt by the City of London, and by the mercers in particular, about the prospects for trade with Flanders. A long-standing trade treaty was about to expire, and relations were difficult because of the Burgundian sympathy for the Yorkists (see Harper (2015), pp. 76-81). The Teutons who the mayor is said to have expelled would be the rival Hanseatic merchants. It is not clear which mayor of London is meant. Sir Henry Colet, who took office on 13 October 1486, would make sense as a mercer, but other evidence suggests he was a strong supporter of Henry. However, in September 1487 the Lord Chancellor, John Morton, accused one John Colet of being a reputed rebel, because he had supported the recent conspirators in Flanders. John Colet was the clerk of the Merchant Adventurers, a company of London merchants trading with Flanders, and was probably a nephew of Sir Henry Colet. (Sutton (2004); Lyell (1936), p. 300; Lupton (1909), pedigree at p. 313)

63 Ashdown-Hill (2015, p. 151) suggested that "Earl of Suffolk" referred to Lincoln's younger brother Edmund, who agreed to surrender the dukedom in 1493 and became plain Earl of Suffolk. But as De But died in 1488 he could not have been referring to that. It is probably just an error for "Duke of Suffolk", as De But confuses dukes and earls elsewhere (calling Warwick a duke in one passage). But there is no suggestion elsewhere that the Duke of Suffolk was anything but loyal to Henry.

64 Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley (Langley (2023), p. 424, note 12) suggest that because the Abbey of the Dunes was only about 35 miles from Calais, which was still in English hands, it seems likely that De But received his information from English sources there. But given the scope of his writing on Burgundian political and military affairs, it is very difficult to believe such sources could have been his *only* source of information about the pretender. The unique story about the pretender's escape after the Battle of Stoke certainly does not sound like Tudor propaganda. On the contrary, it may suggest De But had contact with Yorkist circles.

65 Buchon (1828), vol. 3, pp. 152-156; Doutrepont and Jodogne (1935-7), vol. 1, pp. 562-565; Bennett (1987), p. 129-131.

England. Molinet's narrative includes detailed information about the military campaign. Some of it is incorrect, while other parts complement what is known from English sources. The overall tenor of his account, suggesting that the rebels carried all before them right up until the final encounter at Stoke, is very different from the official English version. This suggests Molinet had access to Yorkist sources, including eyewitnesses of the later stages of the campaign.[66]

(4) Fortunately, as well as these nearly contemporary narrative accounts, there are three contemporary sets of accounts from Burgundian territory mentioning the pretender. The first, published by Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley, is from the accounts of Voorne, which formed part of Margaret's estate.[67] It is undated but belongs to the year January 1487 to January 1488. It records a large payment for men to support the Duke of Clarence, who is described as [Margaret's] brother's son and entitled to the throne of England. Clearly, as in one of De But's references to him, Warwick was here assumed to have succeeded to his father's dukedom, which in fact had been forfeited because of his treason.

(5) The next record comes from the city accounts of Mechelen, and records a gift of eight flagons of wine to the son of Clarence from England, on the occasion of a procession in honour of St Rumbold, the town's patron saint. It is also undated, and when previously published by Weightman[68] had been thought to relate to a procession on 1 July 1486. It had puzzled Weightman, who found it difficult to account for a reference in Mechelin to the son of Clarence at that time. That dating was based on the assumptions that the procession mentioned was the one in July, soon after the saint's feast day, and that the accounting year ran from early 1486 to early 1487. But Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley redated the entry to 18 April 1487, based on the advice of the city archivist, Koen Vermeulen, that the accounting year began on 1 November, and that there were two annual processions in honour of St Rumbold, the first on the Wednesday after Easter and the second on 1 July.[69] This redating places the gift just a few days before the departure of the fleet for Ireland. It suggests the pretender may have been brought from Ireland to accompany it when it sailed, unless it just means that the wine was given to his supporters.[70]

The theory that the pretender claimed to be Edward V would require the Burgundian court historian, the officials of Margaret's own estate and the civic authorities of Mechelen all to have been mistaken about his claims.[71]

(6) The final record - and the exception in its identification of the pretender - is the one presented by Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley as "Proof of Life" of Edward V.[72] It is described as a discovery made by Albert Jan de Rooij in 2020, but in fact an abstract of it - including the description of the pretender given *verbatim* - was published as long ago as 1895, and it has also been referred to in the

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66 Molinet wrote that the foreign survivors of the rebel army were allowed to leave, in contrast to the Irish and English, who were hanged. Perhaps his information about military matters came from a remnant of Schwartz's mercenary force (Baldwin (2006), pp. 96, 156).
67 Langley (2023), p. 424, note 13.
68 Weightman (1989), p. 158.
69 Langley (2023), pp. 423, 424, note 11. Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley chose the first of these two possible dates because the Yorkist fleet had left before the second. But published sources confirm that it was the procession on the Wednesday after Easter, which was paid for by the city, to which the surviving late-medieval accounts relate (Laenen (1919), vol. 1, pp. 58, 59).
70 Given the pretender's age, presumably he wasn't intended to drink it all himself!
71 Despite Langley's emphasis on the value of foreign sources, she seems not to have mentioned Molinet's statements about the pretender's identity. She did acknowledge (p. 422) that he was often described in European records as the son of the Duke of Clarence, but she offered no clear explanation for this. In one place (p. 293) she wrote that Henry VII had "successfully muddied the waters" regarding the pretender's identity, but then she offered the alternative possibility that the description could have been used in Flanders "to protect Edward's identity and deflect wagging tongues". Elsewhere (p. 424) she suggested it might "simply have been a misnomer that took hold in common parlance."
72 Langley (2023), pp. 176, 177, with a translation in Appendix 2 on pp. 309, 310.

modern literature on the Battle of Stoke.[73]

The document, among the records of the Dukes of Burgundy held by the Archives départementales du Nord at Lille, is dated 16 December 1487. It relates to the purchase of 400 pikes, bought from Jean de Finet (or de Smet)[74] of Mechelin by the order of the king [Maximilian] to be distributed to Martin Schwartz's troops, sent by Margaret in the service of her nephew. The crucial point is that the nephew is described as "son of King Edward", her late brother, who had been ousted from his lordship. This makes it unique among contemporary references to the pretender, in the claim that he was a son of Edward IV.

Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley argue that as this document was "drawn up, inspected and signed by three leading officials at the Burgundian court", its identification of the pretender is extremely unlikely to be wrong. But on closer inspection things are not quite that simple.

According to the published translation, the document falls into in two parts. The first is a receipt for the payment made to the merchant, which was signed at his request (presumably because he was unable to sign for himself) by Florens Hauweel, the secretary of Lienart de La Court (lieutenant of the master of the artillery of the King of the Romans) and of Andrieu Schaffer (controller of the same). This is the part that specifies the identity of the pretender and the intended use of the pikes. The second part of the document certifies only the sale and receipt of the pikes and their delivery to the Lord of Walhain, to be distributed in the manner specified in the first part of the document (but not repeated in the second). This is the part signed by de La Court and Schaffer.

There is an obvious reason for questioning whether these officials verified that what the first part of the document said was true - or whether they even read it. The document says that the pikes were bought in June 1487 for distribution to Martin Schwartz's troops, and were delivered to be so distributed. But on the English evidence, those troops had left Flanders by late April, more than a month earlier. Even the later date of 15 May used by Langley would make the purchase of the pikes more than two weeks too late for them to be distributed to Schwartz's troops. The suggestion of Langley's colleague Zoë Maula is that the pikes may have been diverted for use in Brittany instead.[75] So the document's account of what had happened to the pikes must be inaccurate. But of course for accounting purposes, the use to which the purchased goods had been put was of far more relevance than the identity of the pretender. If the officials signed off an obviously false statement about the former, what reliance can be placed on what the document says about the latter?

It is really only on the secretary Florens Hauweel that the accuracy of the document depends. As Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley wrote (on p. 177), he is the one who would have been responsible for drawing up the text. Those authors described him as "another leading official from the Burgundian-Habsburg court, namely one of King Maximilian’s own secretaries". But is that accurate? It seems that Hauweel's name would not have appeared in the document at all, if he had not had to sign on behalf of the merchant. When he is named, he is described only as the secretary of the two officials concerned. As it happens, Hauweel can be identified, if not as a personal secretary of Maximilian, at least as one of the secretaries employed by the ducal household of Burgundy. His name appears in a list of palace servants and administrators under Maximilian's son Philip, in a work published by the 17th-century Flemish historian Antoon Sanders.[76] But it occurs only as the 14th name in a section containing 21 secretaries. On that basis, he would appear to have been a relatively junior member of the ducal secretariat, rather than a "leading official" of

73 Finot (1895), pp. 265, 266; Bletzer (2013), p. 113 and note xiii. Bletzer's interest was in military history, and he quoted the description of the pikes, but not the description of the pretender.
74 The surname is given as de Finet by Finot and by Bletzer, but as de Smet by Nijman-Bliekendaal and Langley.
75 Langley (2023), pp. 186, 187.
76 Sanders (1659-1660), p. 14 of the section entitled "Status Aulicus ...".

Maximilian.[77]

If Hauweel was just an ordinary secretary, it is perhaps not too hard to believe that he might have made an error about the pretender's claimed identity. Evidently he knew that Margaret had been Edward IV's sister. He also knew that the pretender had been acknowledged as her nephew, and was claiming to be the rightful heir to the English throne. If that were all he knew, it might be natural for him to assume that the pretender was a son of Edward IV. If the pretender were really believed to be Warwick, as indicated by all the other sources from Burgundian territory, the statement in this document might simply be the result of a natural error.

3. Conclusion.

The overwhelming weight of contemporary and nearly contemporary evidence is that the pretender of 1487 claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick. It has sometimes been suggested that the evidence from England can been dismissed as the result of propaganda concocted by Henry VII. That suggestion is questionable, but even if the English evidence is excluded, the same conclusion follows from evidence from places where Henry's writ did not run at the time of the conspiracy, notably Ireland and Burgundian territory.

The surviving records of the government in Ireland, carried on in the pretender's name, are not consistent with the theory that he claimed to be Edward V. The nearly unanimous identification of the pretender in Burgundy territory as the son of the Duke of Clarence is almost as great an obstacle to the theory. In contrast, the only contemporary exception, the receipt from Mechelen that identifies him as an unnamed son of Edward IV, can be seen as the result of a plausible error.[78]

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77 Strangely, Florens Hauweel (or at least someone of the same name), does qualify for a brief footnote in literary history, because he is mentioned in a short whimsical poem written in Dutch by the minor Italian poet Giovanni Giorgio Alione, who describes him as his "favourite friend". Neither the circumstances of the poem's composition nor the occasion of the friendship is known (Mombello (2006), pp. 615, 616).

78 In my opinion, as far as the claimed identity of the 1487 pretender is concerned, the most significant contributions of Langley and her collaborators are the entry in the Voorne accounts and the redating of the record of the gift of wine from Mechelen. But both of these tend to confirm, rather than denying, the conventional view of the pretender's claimed identity.

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