

◆ A monumental palimpsest

THE DACRE TOMB IN HERSTMONCEUX CHURCH

By George Elliott

According to Pevsner, the Dacre Tomb at Herstmonceux is ‘the one really spectacular piece in the church’. The effigies on the tomb had traditionally been taken to represent Thomas Fiennes, second Baron Dacre of the South (c. 1470–1533) and his son, Sir Thomas Fiennes (c. 1490–1528). But in these Collections in 1916, J. E. Ray cast doubt on that attribution, and on other aspects of the monument. Based on its style and heraldry but without undertaking any structural investigation, Ray demonstrated that the effigies had originally belonged to the tomb of Thomas Hoo, Lord Hoo and Hastings (d. 1455) and his half-brother Thomas Hoo (d. 1486) at Battle Abbey. In 1969, the restoration of the tomb provided an opportunity to test Ray’s ideas. This article, written by the Master Mason who undertook the work, not only confirms most elements of Ray’s hypothesis, but also provides important new evidence of the approach of those who created the monument as it now stands.

INTRODUCTION

Following his death in 1962, Mrs Elizabeth Dacre wished to provide a memorial to her late husband, Air Commodore George Bentley Dacre (1881–1962). To this end, she provided the funds to restore the Dacre Tomb, at that time in poor condition. In 1969, as work progressed, it soon became apparent that it was not all of one build but rather the culmination of a number of separate alterations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOMB

Until 1916, it was generally assumed that the monument commemorated Thomas Fiennes, second Baron Dacre of the South (c. 1470–1533) and his son, Sir Thomas Fiennes (c. 1490–1528), and that the effigies and stonework, with the exception of the marble table-tomb on which they rest, were roughly contemporary with the death of Lord Dacre¹ (Figs 1 and 2). But in that year, the Hastings solicitor and experienced antiquary John E. Ray cast doubt on that attribution, and on other aspects of the monument. Based on its style and heraldry, but without undertaking any structural investigation, Ray demonstrated that the effigies had originally belonged to the tomb of Thomas Hoo, Lord Hoo and Hastings (d. 1455) and his half-brother Thomas Hoo (d. 1486) at Battle Abbey.²

The monument, situated between the north chapel and the chancel, is worked from three

types of stone: Purbeck marble, Caen stone and Greensand, also called Bonchurch. It consists of a table-tomb, latest Gothic in style, datable to around 1450, and decorated on both sides with panels of four quatrefoils, cusped and sub-cusped, each separated by narrow trefoiled niches. The moulded upper edges have provision for a brass inscription fillet (now missing), which extended the whole length of the original tomb-chest on both sides and returned to the wall at the west end (Fig. 3). These fillets were held in place by rivets located in lead plugs, the holes for which remain.

On the table-tomb rest two recumbent effigies beautifully carved in Caen stone. The facial features are particularly life-like, and both figures are dressed in Milanese armour of about 1480. Their heads rest on tilting helms and their hands are in the attitude of prayer; both figures wear the Lancastrian collar of SS. Each rivet and strap of the armour is accurately portrayed, and the rendering of the chain mail is very realistic. They are in very good condition, and are the work of an exceptionally skilled mason. The armour and style of the effigies are in many ways similar to those of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382–1439), whose tomb was built between 1443 and 1464 and was the work of John Massingham, one of the most talented craftsmen of his time (Figs 4, 5 and 6).

At the feet are badly defaced animals. Enough is left of the north side animal to distinguish it as the red bull of Dacre; traces of red paint still remained



Fig. 1. The tomb from the south or chancel side.



Fig. 2. The north side of the tomb in the Dacre Chapel.



Fig. 3. The north side of the tomb-chest showing where an inscription fillet would have been.



Fig. 4. The north effigy showing the chisel marks on the helmet where the crest has been cut away.



Fig. 5. Close-up of the north effigy, thought to be Thomas Hoo KG, Lord Hoo and Hastings, showing the collar of SS.



Fig. 6. Close-up of the effigy on the south side, thought to be Sir Thomas Hoo, again showing the collar of SS.



Fig. 7. The cornice on the south side showing the central eagle crest, carved in oak, and the flanking gryphons crests.

in the crevices. Of the animal on the south side only the torso is left and all that can be said for certain is that it was carved with a furred coat. This was most likely an alant (wolf hound), the ancient supporter of the Fiennes family, which appears on the south façade of Herstmonceux Castle, carrying a banner charged with the Fiennes' arms. The bull and the alant are the supporters of the arms of Gregory Fiennes (d. 1595) and can be seen on his tomb in Chelsea Old Church.³

At some time, these animals were broken. Whoever replaced them put them on the wrong feet and, in the case of the bull, the wrong way round! It has clawed feet facing backwards while the alant has cloven hooves. It is regrettable that large quantities of modern neat cement were used to reinstate them. This medium is so hard that any attempt to reposition them would probably have resulted in destruction of the soft Caen bodies. It was considered wiser to leave them as they were. There is a significant joint between the bases of the animals and the effigies. This shows that the animals and effigies are separate, although made to look as if they were carved from one block of stone.

Springing from the ends of the table-tomb is a vaulted canopy, divided in the centre by a heavy moulded rib, this division corresponding with the effigies beneath (Fig. 1). Both sides are divided into three panels decorated with rich blank tracery. On the outside are spandrels, also decorated with blank tracery. Above, on each side, is a frieze of alternate trefoliated niches and quatrefoils which contain six shields, displaying the arms of the alliances of the Fiennes and Dacre families. These will be dealt with in detail later.

The chancel side carries an intricately carved cornice of leaf mouldings, blank tracery and vine ornamentation; on this are carved, in high relief, three shields with their associated helmets, crests and mantling. The central helmet bears an eagle crest and the shield carries the arms of Fiennes (Fig. 7). The two flanking shields were blank, the helmets carrying gryphon crests. The central crest and lions face sinister, which is unusual and puzzled Ray until Louis Salzmann, editor of the *Collections*, suggested that the lions 'like good Christians ... should not turn their backs to the altar'.⁴

At each corner are elaborately carved niches which have been added to the original tomb at a later date and seem to have been part of another construction. When the joints between the spandrels and niches were raked out for re-pointing, it was found that the mouldings and crockets went right round into the joint, indicating that they were originally carved to be freestanding. Had they been made for their present position, the mouldings and crockets would have ended on 'stops' where they meet the spandrel column.

Below the niches and returned on the east end are single panels of quatrefoils, single-cusped only, each containing a shield. The moulding above the quatrefoil exactly corresponds with the mouldings on the tomb-chest, and even the sinking which contained the brass inscription fillet is reproduced. It is noticeable, however, that no fixing-holes for such a strip occur on the returns. It seems more than a coincidence that such a panel, the exact height, width and moulding, could have come from elsewhere. These particular panels must have been made especially to support the imported niches when they were added.

The effigies, niches and cornice are worked in Caen stone. The tomb-chest, spandrels and vaulted arch are of Purbeck marble except for the two easternmost springing panels of the arch, which, curiously, are worked from a green sandstone. Present-day masons know this stone as Bonchurch because it was last quarried there, but there was a substantial quarry at Eastbourne and its output can be seen in a number of churches and secular buildings in the vicinity.⁵

RESTORATION

Preparation for restoration included a thorough cleaning and careful search for traces of pigment, the location and colour of which were carefully recorded. Repair of any broken parts was carried out only where detail was known; otherwise the damage was left as it was. Repainting was undertaken only where the original colouring was certain. The effigies could not be lifted for fear of damage, but during restoration the inside central joint of both was raked out and widened. The slab beneath was found to be quite flat, indicating, contrary to Ray's speculation, that it never bore any brasses.

Restoration began on the cornice, which was in danger of collapse because its iron ties, which

had rusted and expanded, had badly split the stone. It had been laid on oyster shells, a common practice for keeping an even joint space while the mortar hardened. It soon became clear that the cornice was not originally made to fit the tomb. It was discovered that the eagle crest on the central helmet was carved from oak and the stone leafwork on each side had been roughly cut away (Fig. 8) to accommodate it. The flanking helmets, with their gryphon crests, were carved integrally with the surrounding leaf-moulding and so, to begin with, was the central crest; but the original crest had been cut off and the oak eagle dowelled in its place.

The spandrels are significant in that the stone work on the south side is in relatively good condition. The blank tracery has clean lines and the arrises are still sharp. The stonework on the north side, however, is so badly eroded that it is difficult to discern the shape of the traceried decoration. Experience shows that Purbeck, a shell marble, is not very durable once it has been exposed to the elements and the protective polish has worn off.⁶

The state of the tomb-chest mirrors that of the spandrels — quite good on the south, but worn away on the north side. This suggests that the whole of the north side of the Purbeck parts of the tomb was exposed to the weather for some considerable time. It would be logical to suppose that the Purbeck parts constitute the original tomb and that it was built some time before the Dacre Chapel. This would have brought the north face of the tomb in line with the original north wall of the church and thus exposed it to the weather. At this time it may well have been used for the site of an Easter Sepulchre, where the image of the Saviour or a crucifix would be laid until Easter Day. Canopied altar-tombs of benefactors were commonly recessed into the north wall of the sanctuary and used for this purpose. It must be stressed that the original tomb would not have formed the Easter Sepulchre itself, but was the place where the sepulchre would have been placed at Easter.⁷

There is much evidence to show that the tomb is in its original position, rather than having been moved from the chancel as Ray suggested. When the hole was cut through the church wall, no end was found to the tomb. If it had stood free in the chancel it would have required quatrefoil ends to match the sides. At the west end, where the tomb-chest returns to the wall, inspection revealed merely the return of the trefoiled niche motif



Fig. 8. Close-up of the cornice. Evidence of cutting down can be seen clearly both behind the crest and to its right.

and then a flat plane, indicating that these pieces were especially made for their present position. Had the original monument incorporated a complete end, it would have been cut to fit this wall so one would have expected to find part of a quatrefoil cut through. Lastly, there is the weathering on the north face. This must have occurred shortly after erection, and is another pointer that the tomb is in its original position. No weathering of this face could have taken place in the chancel, inside the body of the church.

Outside, at the east end of the church, one can see above the buttress, which otherwise masks the straight joint made by its addition, where the Dacre chapel was added to the main fabric of the church. An exploratory hole was cut through the church wall, just south of the buttress and in line with the end of the tomb chest. The addition of the chapel became very plain. The exterior face of the church wall was built of random rubble which was a mixture of Bonchurch, sandstone and ironstone. The inner core consisted of flint in lime mortar and the interior face was of heavy ironstone blocks laid

in courses. These must have been the components of the original church construction.

Beyond the inside face was a brick lining to the tomb. The inside face of the stone tomb-chest had been plastered and the brick lining built hard against it. On breaching the brick lining, the chest was found to contain brick rubble and lime mortar, laid on earth. Some of the rubble was taken out and a joint left open in the side of the tomb to enable air to circulate. This would help reduce the dampness that rises in the winter months.

It is worth noting that the Dacre chapel is built in brick and the east wall is faced with brick, except for the first four feet from ground level. Bricks were not used for church building in East Sussex in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but the proximity of the church to Herstmonceux Castle may be significant. Sir Roger Fiennes began building his castle, one of the most substantial brick buildings still standing in England, in 1441, and it may not have been quite finished at the time of his death in 1449. The size of the bricks used in the walls of the chapel, as well as those lining the tomb, was the



Fig. 9. One of the unidentified shields on the north side of the tomb, filled holes where fixings for an attached shield can be made out.

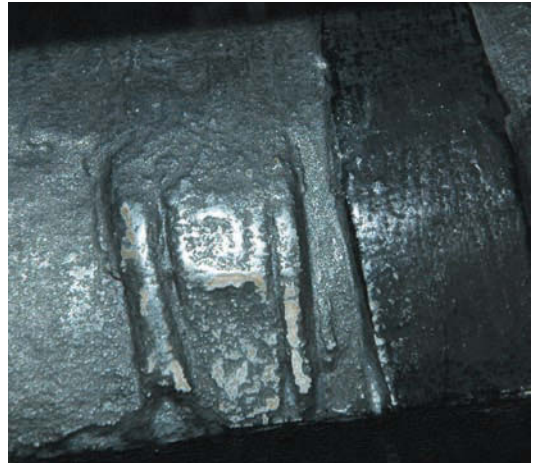


Fig. 10. The remains of the garter. The photograph was taken with a mirror and then reversed so that it appears the correct way round. What appears to be the beginning of lettering can just be seen.

same as those peculiar to the castle — nine to ten inches long, five inches wide and two and a quarter inches thick. They are also of similar appearance.

The quatrefoils on the tomb chest were cleaned very carefully and it was found that the sunken faces were originally painted deep red. In the centre of three of these on the chancel side were the vestiges of painted shields. Only an outline and scraps of bright red occurred on two of them, and tracings were made, but there was not enough evidence to identify the shields. The third was in better condition and could be identified as Ufford — sable, a cross engrailed, or, differenced with a bendlet argent. This differencing is most probably due to the fact that the Sir Robert Ufford, whose granddaughter Joan Dacre married Sir Richard Fiennes, was of a cadet branch of the family. His grandfather Ralph Ufford was the younger brother of the Robert created Earl of Suffolk in 1337, so the presence of the Ufford arms with some difference is not untoward. This shield occupies the centre of the second quatrefoil from the east on the chancel side. The paintwork in the remaining seven quatrefoils was too far decayed to make out the shields, but it seems certain that the tomb-chest once had eight more shields of arms painted in the quatrefoils (Fig. 9). It was noticed that these shields were painted over the filled dowel-holes, showing that the quatrefoils once contained either metal or stone shields, as appear on the returns at the east end and

on the frieze. Additionally there is a further row of dowel-holes just above the frieze panels on both sides. These were almost certainly for the fixings of another inscribed metal fillet which ran the whole length of the frieze panel directly above the shields.

The cleaning of the effigies proved a problem. At some time in the past they had been painted all over with silver paint and at the time of restoration were only a dull grey. When the top layers of paint were removed from the jupons, or surcoats, the first and fourth quarterings on both were found quite clearly to be quarterly, or and gules, which are the arms of the de Saye family. The other quarterings revealed little apart from very small indications of red. This was not conclusive since the background of the blank tracery above is also red, and paint could have dropped down at the last time of painting. The rest was only dull grey and, although blue and silver usually turn grey in time, there was no definite proof of what the original colours had been on the second and third quarters.

Turning again to the arms as they are carved on the jupons, after delicate removal of the paint, certain marks indicated that a charge of cross-crosslets had been chiseled off the second and third quarters. This raised another question: if they had been cut off, what else had been removed? A close inspection of the legs revealed the remains of a garter just below the left knee of the north effigy (Fig. 10). Inside and underneath the leg,

where it is hidden from view, is a two-inch (five-centimetre) length of the garter strap. It is in a very inconspicuous place and very hard to see without a mirror. The mason who altered the effigy would have had difficulty in reaching this part and could not remove all of it, so left this remnant. The strap differs from the armour straps in that it has a raised edge and what seems to be the start of lettering. It appears to be the letter *H*, which would be the first letter of the motto of the order, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. There is no sign of a strap in the same position on any of the other legs, whereas all the armour straps and rivets are repeated religiously. A slight indent where it was chiseled off and rubbed down can be felt. On the outside of the leg the garter passed over part of the strap which holds the greave together. Whoever cut it off did not allow enough raised stone to re-carve that part of the greave strap and buckle, so it was necessary to sink it into the armour plate to portray it.

INTERPRETATION

When these facts are weighed, it becomes obvious that all the Caen stone parts — the effigies, niches and cornice — were elements of a different tomb. It must have been a monument of some size, for the cornice has been cut down to accommodate the monument in Herstmonceux Church.

These discoveries allow Ray's hypothesis of 1916 to be confirmed in its essence and refined in certain particulars; it will be useful to summarize it here.

Ray's contention that the monument is a composition of two or more parts was amply confirmed by the process of restoration, which, however, disproved his suggestion that the flat top of the table-tomb was originally furnished with brasses and that it had been moved from an original free-standing position in the chancel. But nothing was discovered to disprove his argument that the elements of the tomb are of three radically different dates. The tomb-chest resembles that of Archbishop John Kemp in Canterbury Cathedral, dating from shortly after his death in March 1454, the effigies wear Milanese armour of the 1480s, and the niches and tabernacle-work are paralleled by Bishop Nicholas West's chantry chapel at Ely, erected in 1534. Largely based on an analysis of the heraldry borne on the tabards of the two figures, Ray concluded that they represented not Thomas

Fiennes, Lord Dacre (d. 1533) and his son Thomas Fiennes (d. 1528), but Thomas Hoo, Lord Hoo and Hastings (d. 1455) and his half-brother Thomas Hoo (d. 1486), and were originally installed, as part of an elaborate monument, at Battle Abbey where Lord Hoo and Hastings was almost certainly buried. Ray was not entirely happy with the heraldry of Thomas Hoo's tabard. He identified the arms of its second and third quarterings as those of the Welles family, but observed that the lions had single tails, whereas the Welles lions enjoy two. And although he pointed out, and his diagram showed, that the lions are superimposed on a chief (which is absent from the Welles arms), he did not attempt to resolve the difficulty, nor did he speculate on the circumstances of the removal of the monument from Battle Abbey.

The alterations necessary to adapt the monument to two half-brothers of the Hoo family to commemorate two generations of Fiennes were made amply clear by the process of restoration. Discussion of these works can be usefully divided between structural adjustments to the masonry and the re-painting of the heraldic charges on the tabards.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE MASONRY

We have already noticed that the leg of the northern effigy bore traces of the distinctive badge of the Order of the Garter, which those responsible for the re-use of the monument had attempted to remove. Neither Thomas Fiennes, Lord Dacre, nor his son, Thomas Fiennes, was a Knight of the Garter, but Thomas Hoo, Lord Hoo and Hastings, was admitted to the order on 16 August 1445. This also furnishes the answer to the oak eagle. The flanking helmets on the cornice have gryphon crests, which is the Hoo crest, so it is more than likely that the central helmet also had a gryphon crest. This must have been cut off and replaced by the eagle crest of Fiennes when the arms were emblazoned. The disguised joint between the effigies and the animals at the feet should also be remembered, as this shows that the bull and the alant were also added at this time. Lastly, the crest of the helmet on the north side (that under the head of Sir Thomas Hoo, KG), has been roughly cut away, suggesting that it also originally bore the Hoo crest (Figs 4 and 5).

The chiseling away by the same mason of the cross-crosslets from the tabard of the southern effigy was carried out to remove elements of

the heraldry which were inconsistent with the proposed re-use. But before that process is discussed, we must address the question of the armorial bearing originally depicted on the Hoo effigies, which the process of restoration has done much to explain.

REPAINTINGS OF THE HERALDIC CHARGES

Ray blazoned the arms of the effigy of Lord Hoo and Hastings as quarterly sable and argent (for Hoo), and azure, a fess between six cross-crosslets or (for St Omer), and on a shield of pretence, azure, fretty argent, a chief gules (for St Leger). Following earlier writers, Ray described the arms on Thomas Hoo's tabard as quarterly sable and argent (for Hoo), or a lion rampant sable (for Welles), and on a shield of pretence azure, a fess between six cross-crosslets or (for St Omer). Whereas the former description is impeccable, that of the arms borne by the younger man presents problems. Ray acknowledged, but did not explain, that the lion depicted on the third and fourth quarterings had a single tail, and that the charge incorporated a chief. In attributing these arms to the Welles family, he did not comment on the incongruity of their appearance on the younger man's tabard, when the only available alliance was the marriage of his half-brother Thomas Hoo, commemorated by the *other* effigy, with Eleanor Welles.⁸

It is fortunate that the advice of C. W. Scott-Giles, Fitzalan Pursuivant of Arms Extraordinary, was available at the time of the restoration. He wrote:

'If the lion overlies a chief, the arms would probably be: – azure, a chief gules, over all a lion rampant, or – borne by a family of Hastang or Hastings which petered out (through leaving heiresses) about the end of the fourteenth century. It looks to me (though subject to further investigation) as if Sir Thomas Hoo K. G. when he was made Lord Hoo and Hastings, quartered this coat of the former Hastings family to represent the Hastings part of his title. Hoo was not created Lord Hastings as such, but 'Hoo and Hastings' and I think we shall find he bore: Quarterly Hoo and Hastings (or Hastang) with St Omer in pretence. Since, after the death of Lord Hoo and Hastings, the Lordship and Honour of Hastings was held by Thomas, his half-brother, it would be quite likely that he would quarter the Hastange coat to

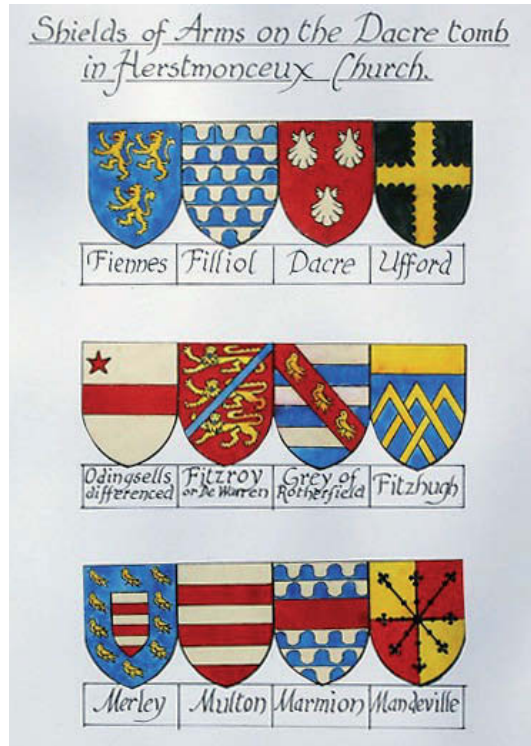


Fig. 11. Coats of arms.

represent it in his arms. I think that we may finally identify the effigies as:

North side: Thomas Lord Hoo of Hoo and Hastings. Arms – quarterly Hoo and St Omer with St Leger in pretence.

South side: Thomas Hoo, his half-brother. Arms – quarterly Hoo and Hastange (azure, a chief gules, over all a lion rampant or) with St Omer in pretence.

I am prepared to recommend that the effigies be painted with these coats and if anyone enquires about Hastange we shall have to admit that the identification is conjectural, but it is the most likely one having regard to all the known facts'.⁹

Having established with little doubt that the effigies were of the Hoo half-brothers, on this advice the jupons (or tabards) were restored and painted as recommended. They were distinguished persons in their own time, and All Saints could be proud to have the effigies even though they had been buried elsewhere.

Once repairs had been completed, the shields on the frieze above the tomb were repainted. The arms depicted in Figure 11 and described in Table 1 show the alliances of the Fiennes and Dacre families and are as follows, starting with the eastern end on the south side.

The tomb chest once had eight shields in the quatrefoils. After careful cleaning only one could be identified. This was Ufford — sable, a cross engrailed or, differenced with a bendlet argent. The quatrefoils are returned at the east end below the niches and each contains a shield. On the north side, in the chapel, **Filliol** – vair, a canton gules – and on the south side, **Fiennes** – azure, three lions rampant (Fig. 11).

The cornice on the south side has three shields helmets and crests. The central helmet bears the eagle crest, and the shield the arms of **Fiennes**, as above (Fig. 7). The two flanking shields were blank and the helmets have gryphon crests. These flanking shields were painted with the Dacre arms at the request of Mrs Dacre, who bore the cost of the restoration. It must be recorded, however, that the painting of Dacre arms on these shields is erroneous. Simplified pedigrees of the Hoo and Fiennes families are shown in Figures 12 and 13.

DISCUSSION

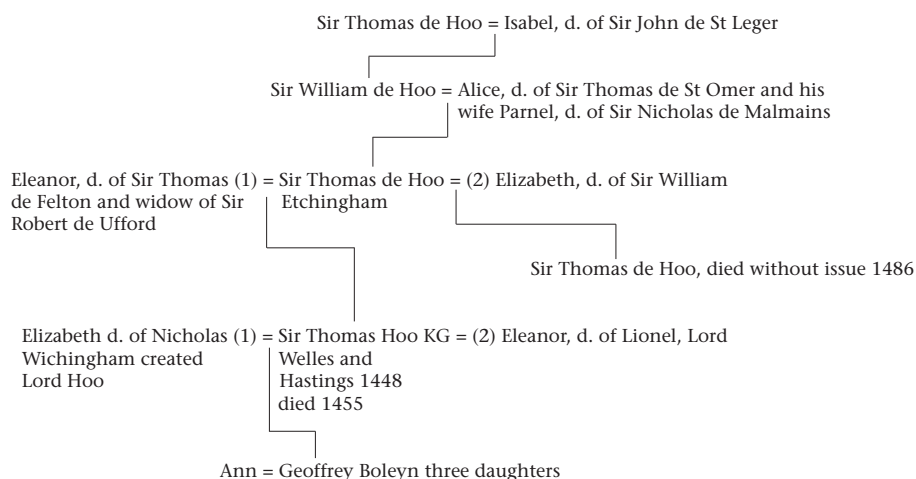
It remains to be discussed when and why the two effigies and other parts of the Hoo monument were removed from Battle Abbey Church and brought to the Dacre Chapel. At this point it will be helpful, as a preliminary, to describe the original Purbeck table-tomb at Herstmonceux and to attempt to establish the identity of its first occupant.

The tomb of Archbishop Kemp, as mentioned earlier, is an almost identical structure and is dated 1454. On stylistic grounds, the only possible candidates, since the flanking generations of the main line died 80 years apart in 1403 and 1483 respectively, are Sir Roger Fiennes, the builder of Herstmonceux Castle, who died in 1449, and his brother James Fiennes, Lord Saye and Sele, who was executed by Cade’s rebels in 1450 (Fig. 13).¹⁰ Since the latter was buried, according to the wishes expressed in his will, in the church of the London Greyfriars on 11 July 1450, we must conclude that the table-tomb was built to commemorate his brother Roger Fiennes, whose own will requested burial at Herstmonceux.¹¹

Roger’s son Richard Fiennes, whose marriage to Joan Dacre in 1446 brought the barony into

Table 1. Alliances of the Fiennes and Dacre families.

<i>Eastern end, south side</i>	
1. Moulton	Barry of six, argent and gules. Brought in by the marriage in 1446 of Sir Richard Fiennes (d. 1483) with Joan Dacre.
2. Marmion	Vair, a fess gules. Through the marriage c. 1466 of Sir John Fiennes to Alice, daughter of Lord Fitzhugh. It had previously been painted as azure, a fess gules, which is incorrect heraldry.
3. Mandeville	Quarterly or and gules, an escarbuncle sable. From the marriage of Sir William Fiennes with Joan de Saye (who bore quarterly, or and gules).
4. Dacre	Gules, three escallops argent. Brought in by the marriage of Sir Richard Fiennes with Joan Dacre, whence the Fiennes family derived the barony. Previously wrongly painted as Oddingsells.
5. Grey of Rotherfield	Barry of six argent and azure, on a bend gules, three martlets or, from the Fitzhugh family.
6. Ufford	Sable, a cross engrailed or. Through the Dacre family, it had previously been wrongly painted as a plain cross.
<i>North, or chapel side, from the east</i>	
1. Marmion	As no. 2 on the south side. Previously attributed to Oddingsell. Detailed examination revealed traces of paint indicating the Marmion arms.
2. De Warren	Gules, three lions passant guardant in pale or (for England) over all a sinister bendlet azure. This is for Richard Fitzroy or de Warren, a bastard son of King John. An alliance of the family of Fitzhugh.
3. Odingsell	Argent, a fess gules, in dexter chief a mullet gules. The differencing (mullet) was just visible in 1970 and is appropriate to the branch of Odingsells whose heiress married into the Fitzhughs.
4. Grey of Rotherfield	As no. 5 on the south side, traces of the martlets were visible in 1970.
5. Fitzhugh	Azure, three chevrons braced in the base or and a chief or for Alice Fitzhugh, wife of Sir John Fiennes.
6. Merley	Azure, an orle of ten martlets or, an inescutcheon barry of six argent and gules. Brought in by Dacre.

Arms

Hooe: Quarterly, sable and argent.

St Leger: Azure fretty argent, a chief gules (alternatively, or).

St Omer: Azure, a fess between six cross-crosslets or.

Malmain: Azure, three hands argent.

Fig. 12. Simplified pedigree of the Hoo family Lords Hoo and Hastings.

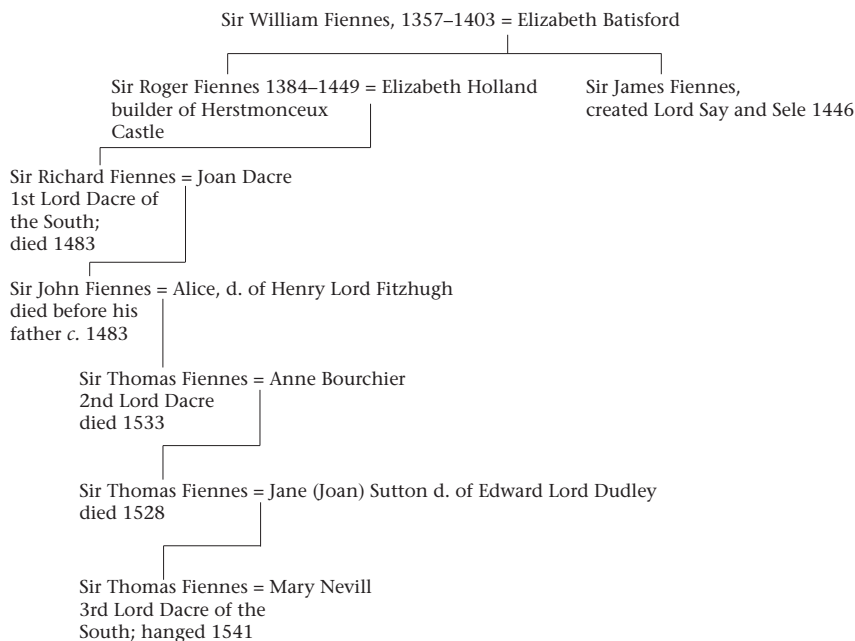


Fig. 13. Simplified pedigree of the Fiennes family, Lords Dacre of the South.



Fig. 14. Hans Eworth: Mary Nevill, Lady Dacre, 1558; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa 3337.

the Herstmonceux family, seems also to have been buried in the same tomb. In 1485 she directed that her body should be 'buried in the choir of the parish church of All Saints of Herstmonceux between the high altar of the same church and the tomb of Richard Fiennes; knight, my late lord'.¹²

At the date of its erection, the table-tomb was set in the north wall of the chancel, which was also the exterior wall of the church. The north face of the tomb was open to the elements and became weathered. There are slots cut into the arch of the tomb, just inside the north face. These may indicate where shutters would have been secured to close off the inside of the church. It is unclear when what is now known as the Dacre Chapel was built. It could have been provided for the tomb of Sir Richard Fiennes, the first member of that family to possess the title, who died in 1483, but since there is no early reference to the chapel by name, it must remain an open question.¹³

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, three generations of the Fiennes family died in the space of 13 years. Sir Thomas Fiennes, heir to his father the second Baron Dacre, died in October 1528, Sir Thomas Fiennes, the second baron, himself

died in September 1533, and his grandson Sir Thomas, third Lord Dacre, was hanged at Tyburn in 1541 for complicity in the murder of a Pelham gamekeeper. It is in the context of these events that the monument in its final form must be considered.

Ray's suggestion that the tomb as it stands is a palimpsest was amply confirmed by the work described here, and his contention that elements of the monument to the Hoo half-brothers were obtained from Battle Abbey in order to create it cannot be faulted. It is almost inconceivable that the abbot and convent would have sold standing monuments during the abbey's existence, and highly unlikely that they would have embarked on major building works which would have rendered the monument redundant in the mid-1530s, when the impending end of English monasticism must have been plain to see. Battle was surrendered on 27 May 1538, and it can be assumed that the disposal of lead, bell-metal and valuable architectural salvage began almost immediately.¹⁴

So we must conclude that, if the monument at Herstmonceux was intended to commemorate Sir Thomas Fiennes (d. 1528) and his father the second baron (d. 1533), the work cannot have been undertaken until at least five years after the latter's death. Sir Thomas's widow, Lady Jane Fiennes, was buried at Herstmonceux in August 1539, when responsibility would have passed to her son Sir Thomas, the third baron. Had he shouldered it immediately, it is perhaps unlikely that Lord Dacre, whose landed income amounted to almost £1200 a year, would have skimmed the task by using second-hand materials salvaged from Battle Abbey. More probably Dacre had neglected to do anything about the tomb of his father and grandfather, and any idea of a grand project was abandoned on his premature death on the gallows on 29 June 1541.

Thomas, who was buried at St Sepulchre Newgate, left a wife and three children. The wardship of the eldest, just 15 years old, was sold by the crown to the courtier Thomas Darcy, first Baron Darcy of Chiche (1506–1558).¹⁵ As late as 1559, the queen's feodary in Sussex was still sending large amounts of lead from Pevensey Castle to repair the Dacre mansion at Herstmonceux, and it is conceivable that the monument was created as part of a similar process of maintenance.¹⁶

A far more likely explanation is that the obligation to erect a worthy monument to the previous generation passed to Lord Dacre's

Table 2. Glossary of heraldic terms used in the article.

Argent	Silver
Azure	Blue
Barry	A shield divided by a number of alternately coloured, horizontal bars
Bend	A diagonal division running from the top right of a shield, as viewed, to bottom left
Bendlet	A half-width version of the bend
Chief	The upper third of the shield
Crest	A device originally worn on the helmet of a knight to help identification in battle
Cross-crosslet	A cross with additional, small arms at right angles to and towards the end of the main arms of the cross
Cross engrailed	A cross drawn with scalloped edges, points outwards
Dexter	The right side of the shield, <i>viewed as if by its bearer</i>
Differencing	Where a device is overlaid on a coat of arms to distinguish a cadet branch from the main line of a family
Escallop	A shell, often oyster
Escarbuncle	A precious stone drawn as eight sceptres radiating from a central annulet
Fess	A horizontal division of the shield, in the centre and being one third of the area
Fretty	A diagonal criss-cross pattern
Gules	Red
In pale	Vertically, one above another
Inescutcheon	A small shield born on another, usually indicating marriage with an heiress
Jupon	An armless cloth coat worn over the upper part of armour, emblazoned with the wearer's arms
Martlet	A mythical bird shown with feathers instead of feet
Molet, also mullet	The rowel of a spur. Cadency mark of third son
Or	Gold
Orle	A border of individual but identical items
Passant guardant	Used of an animal walking with its head full face
Quarterly	The coat or shield is divided into quarters
Rampant	Used of an animal standing on its hind legs
Sable	Black
Shield of Pretence	<i>See</i> Inescutcheon
Sinister	The left side of the shield, <i>viewed as if by its bearer</i>
Tabard	<i>See</i> jupon
Tincture	The colouring of the arms, either metals – silver or gold – or colours such as red, blue, etc.
Vair	Heraldic representation of fur, shown as rows of small shields alternately reversed

formidable widow Mary Nevill, depicted by Hans Eworth in two iconic portraits (Fig. 14).¹⁷ Her management of the Herstmonceux estate during the minority of her children has left no documentary trace, but this bold and magnificent monument can be interpreted as the pragmatic response of the widowed baroness to the problem posed by her husband's neglect of his filial duty to commemorate his father and grandfather.

Once brought to Herstmonceux and structurally altered to fit the available space, the heraldry of the Hoo effigies was doctored to make it conform as much as possible with that of their new Fiennes owners. Further intervention was clearly required to disguise the fact that the figures were second-hand, and to that end, it seems that they were painted with the or and gules arms of de Saye, the only family connected with the Dacres who had

borne a quarterly coat.¹⁸ The brass inscription on the original table-tomb of Sir Roger Fiennes was removed, and the existing (possibly brass) shields on the tomb-chest were probably replaced in order to bring the monument up to date. It is noticeable that no arms of the wives of Thomas, second Baron Dacre and his son are present. Lord Dacre married Anne Bouchier, daughter of Sir Humphrey Bouchier, Lord Berners. His son, Thomas Fiennes, married Jane (Joan) d. of Edward Sutton, Lord Dudley. It would be expected that the arms of these alliances would be displayed; perhaps these were two of the lost shields painted on the tomb chest.

If the ruthless economy of the project revealed by this investigation speaks of the straightened circumstances of the Dacres in the immediate aftermath of the execution of the third baron in 1541, then the care taken to disguise the origin of

the effigies suggests both a family still determined to retain its local standing, and an audience with a heraldic literacy sufficient to appreciate its efforts. Over the course of 17 years, Lady Dacre conducted a vigorous campaign to have the Dacre titles restored. That was achieved by an Act of Parliament in 1558, and it is no coincidence that Eworth's portrait of the same year depicts the baroness holding a prayer-book in one hand and a quill pen in the other. The provision of this monument, albeit on the cheap, can be seen as part — and indeed an early part — of her project to rehabilitate the reputation and restore the standing of the Fiennes

family in Sussex after the disaster of 1541.¹⁹

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NOTES

¹ Typified by Edmund Venables, 'The castle of Herstmonceux and its lords', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter SAC) **4** (1851), 125–202 and 191–4.

² John E. Ray, 'The parish church of Herstmonceux and the Dacre tomb', SAC **58** (1916), 21–64.

³ The family name has been variously spelt, for instance Fenys, Fynes or Fienles. For the sake of uniformity, the modern spelling has been used in this article.

⁴ Ray, 'Dacre tomb', 46.

⁵ For the Eastbourne quarry, see SAC **53** (1910), 92; there are documentary references between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries; East Sussex Record Office SAS/CP 183, SAS/G20/625. A number of neighbouring churches are built mainly of this stone, such as Pevensey, Westham, Eastbourne St Mary and Wartling, and it is used in the construction of Pevensey and Herstmonceux castles.

⁶ Purbeck marble was quarried in the upper beds of Swanage and could be obtained in blocks seven or eight feet long but rarely more than a foot thick. In medieval times there was a very good trade in Dorset arising from the demand for Purbeck marble for tombs.

⁷ As was assumed by Venables, SAC **4** (1851), 193–4, based on a misreading of the will of Thomas Fiennes, Lord Dacre, of 1531; The National Archives, Public Record Office PROB 11/25.

⁸ For the Hoo family, see William Durrant Cooper, 'The families of Braose of Chesworth and Hoo', SAC **8** (1856), 97–131 (which includes a pedigree) and G[eorge] E[dward] C[okayne], *The Complete Peerage* **6** (1926), 561–7.

⁹ Correspondence in the author's possession. The identification was confirmed by Richmond Herald, who independently suggested to Scott-Giles that the lion coat might be that of Hastange of Staffordshire and used to stand for the Lordship and Honour of Hastings from which the Hastanges derived their name.

¹⁰ Their father, Sir William Fiennes, is commemorated by a brass in the chancel.

¹¹ Joseph A. Nigota, 'Fiennes, James, first Baron Saye and Sele (c. 1390–1450)', *Oxford Dictionary of National*

Biography (Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, Jan. 2008. [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9411, accessed 4 Jul. 2010]; Lambeth Palace Library, Register of John Stafford, f. 178 (Roger Fiennes), proved at Lambeth on 18 Nov. 1449, f. 190 (James Fiennes), proved 22 Jun. [recte Jul.] 1450.

¹² SAC **58** (1916), 53.

¹³ *Victoria County History of Sussex* **9** (1937), 134 states that the chapel was built 'about 1440', presumably based on the similarity of the bricks to those used in the castle, licensed in 1441; it does mention the weathering.

¹⁴ *VCH Sussex* **2** (1907), 54; on 15 Aug. 1539 the house and site of the late monastery were granted to Sir Anthony Browne, the Master of the Horse, who continued the process of demolition, leaving only the abbot's lodging, refectory, dormitory and the gatehouse standing, along with the perimeter wall.

¹⁵ For whom see David Loades, 'Darcy, Thomas, first Baron Darcy of Chiche (1506–1558)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, Jan. 2010 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70579, accessed 5 Jul. 2010].

¹⁶ SAC **49** (1906), 29.

¹⁷ K. Hearn (ed.), 'Eworth and his contemporaries', in *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530–1630* (London: Tate, 1995) 68–9.

¹⁸ The last of the Sayes bearing this principal coat was John de Saye who died 27 Jul. 1382. He left a sister and three aunts. The sister had two husbands but no children. The Saye barony then passed to one of the aunts, who married Sir John Clinton, but it was finally assigned to the descendants of another aunt, who married William Fiennes (died 31 Nov. 1359). His grandson, James Fiennes, became Lord Saye and Sele but he bore the arms of Fiennes — azure, three lions rampant or. These were the arms seconded for him as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in John Philpot's roll.

¹⁹ For Lady Dacre's portraits as a culmination of her struggle to restore the Dacre titles, see Barbara Harris, 'Defining themselves: English aristocratic women, 1450–1550', *Journal of British Studies*, forthcoming, 2010.