

RDOY Perkin Warbeck Proclamation from Scotland, Sept 1496 - copy dated 1616 - BL Harley MS 283, ff.123v-124v

Modern translation

The original of this document, in old-fashioned handwriting, is in the possession of Sir Robert Cotton 18 August 1616 } Perkin Warbeck, his proclamation published at the time of his rebellion in the early years of the reign of Henry VII.

Richard by the grace of God King of England & of France, Lord of Ireland, Prince of Wales, to all those who see, hear or read this proclamation we send greetings. In our tender age we escaped, with God's help, from the Tower of London, and were secretly taken overseas (to various countries), where we remained for a number of years. Then Henry, son of Edmund Tudor, created earl of Richmond, son of Owen Tudor, who was born in Wales in lowly circumstances, came to our realm of England, and by dishonest means obtained the Crown that was rightfully ours.

Henry Tudor is our mortal enemy. As soon as he found out that we were alive, he tried various means to bring about our destruction. Not only has he tried to trick you by declaring that we are an imposter, and giving us false names, he has also tried to prevent us from reaching this realm. He has offered large sums of money to the rulers of several countries to apprehend us, and has tried to persuade some of our personal servants to murder us, and to persuade others, such as Sir Robert Clifford, to leave our service and our cause. In order to fund these malicious intentions he has exacted money from the people of this realm to their great detriment and impoverishment. Yet, by God's grace, we have safely crossed land and sea and are now with the high and mighty prince, our dearest cousin the King of Scots, who, without any inducement, has kindly and lovingly supported us and has crossed into England with us. We shall openly show ourselves to you and expose Henry Tudor's lies. Everyone of reason and discretion will understand that Tudor would not have gone to the aforesaid expense and trouble if he really believed that we are an imposter. Regarding yourselves, it is the intention of our dearest cousin [the King of Scots], that if he sees our subjects and vassals giving us sufficient allegiance and support to defeat our enemies, he is determined to return quietly with his forces to Scotland without inflicting any suffering on the inhabitants of England.

In order to bolster his false position Henry Tudor has caused to be murdered many nobles of our realm, whom he feared, and whose loyalty he doubted. These include Lord Fitzwalter, Sir William Stanley, Sir Robert Chamberlain, Sir Simon Mountford, Sir Robert Ratcliffe, William Daubeney, Humphrey Stafford and many others who have paid dearly with their lives. Some nobles are now in the Sanctuary and Henry Tudor has long kept in prison our right entirely beloved cousin Edward, son and heir to our uncle the duke of Clarence, as well as other nobles, withholding from them their rightful inheritance in order to stop them giving us their rightful support. He has also forced certain of our sisters, and the sister of the earl of Warwick, as well as other ladies of royal blood, to marry his own kindred and supporters of low estate, thus undermining the established nobles who were most likely to support us. The only people he trusts and favours are wretches of low birth such as Bishop Foxe, Smyth, Bray, Lovell, Oliver King, Sir Charles Somerset, David Owen, Rysley, Sir John

Turberville, Tyler, Robert Lytton, Guilford, Cheyne, Emson, James Hobert, John Cutt, Garth, Hanson, Wyatt and other such wretches and villains, who by clever means and by robbing the people, have been the principal agents of the misrule that now pertains in England.

We have also been reliably informed that Tudor, with complete disregard for the wealth and prosperity of this realm and with regard only for his own safety and well-being, has sent his adherents out of this country with the nation's treasure, so that he can take personal possession of it, if he is forced to flee. This will bring peril and insecurity to the whole population. In order to protect yourselves and the well-being of this land it is necessary for you to use every means and effort to prevent Henry Tudor escaping. Whoever apprehends him will be rewarded according to their estate and degree, so that the most lowly will be given a thousand pounds in money, as well as property with the yearly value of 400 marks in perpetuity.

We are also aware of the great offences daily committed by Henry Tudor and his adherents in destroying the liberties and authority of our holy mother church to the great displeasure of almighty God, besides committing manifold treasons, abominable murders, manslaughters, robberies, extorsions, the daily robbing of the people by the imposition of tithes, taxes, feudal levies, benevolences, and other unlawful exactions to the great detriment of this realm. We will make it our personal responsibility to protect you and redress the damage done to you by Tudor's administration. We will act, not as a stepmother but as a true mother who sees their child languishing or in peril, and we will put an end to misrule, and punish those responsible. We will also by God's grace and the help and assistance of the great lords of royal blood, and with the counsel of other wise people of approved policy, prudence and experience, ensure the proper administration of justice based on the good laws and customs that were established by our noble predecessors the Kings of England, according to their original purpose and meaning. Those who have been wrongly disinherited will find justice, and all other wrongs and injuries, both spiritual and temporal, inflicted on the subjects of our realm will be redressed.

Trade with other countries will be conducted in a manner that will benefit the whole realm and all the aforementioned levies and unlawful impositions and exactions will be exposed and abolished except in those circumstances that have been established by custom and use.

We desire that all those who have actively or covertly acted against us since the reign of Henry Tudor (excepting those who have plotted to kill us), will receive a full pardon and have their rightful lands and goods restored to them if they henceforth support us with their bodies and their goods. Be assured that those who continue to stand with our enemies and act against us will be treated as traitors and rebels and punished accordingly. Those subjects who aid and support us to the best of their ability, or provide food for our forces (for which they will be paid) we will treat lovingly and justly, provided that upon hearing our proclamation, they will, according to their duty and honour, equip themselves for battle and join us wherever we shall happen to be. In so doing, they shall find us to be their right, especial and singular good lord and their services will be rewarded as they deserve.

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