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Notes on Portraits of Sir Edward Massey

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NOTES ON PORTRAITS OF SIR EDWARD MASSEY

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SIR Edward Massey is, I hope, a sufficiently well-known person to readers of our *Transactions* to make a few notes respecting his portraits acceptable. The glamour which surrounds a career so brimful of excitement may partially redeem them from a dulness that would otherwise be theirs. I do not propose to say much of his personal history, or to allude to any of the heroic deeds or hairbreadth escapes which make Massey's life so dramatic, beyond reminding my readers that the successful resistance of Gloucester when besieged by an army of 30,000 men (which is pretty generally allowed by historians to have been the turning point in the first civil war), was undoubtedly due to Massey's courage and tactical ability, and that the same qualities were even more conspicuous in a series of less-known events which subsequently occurred during a blockade which lasted more than eighteen months, when he checkmated an attempt of the royalists to reduce the city to submission by starvation.

Edward Massey was a son of John Massey (or Massie), of Coddington in Cheshire, and his mother was Anne, a daughter of Richard Grosvenor of Eaton. Very little is known for certain of his family history. There is, indeed, no reliable evidence of the year of his birth. It is given in the Dictionary of National Biography as 1619? I should think it was earlier, as he was a lieutenant-colonel and deputy governor of Gloucester in 1642, and is said to have been in the early prime of life in that year. Almost all that we know of his military career and of the active aid he rendered Charles II during his exile is to be found in Webb's valuable notes to the *Bibliotheca Gloucester-*

trensis. His career after the Restoration would be a blank, but for occasional references to him in the Calendars of State Papers. From these it appears that he retained the King's favour almost to the end of his life. In the same year as Charles II was crowned he granted to Massey "the ironworks yet standing in the Forest of Dean, with the iron of all sorts, cut wood, coal, etc., for making it, notwithstanding any pretended orders to the contrary." These works had been formerly granted to Massey by the Parliamentary party while he was in their service, but he had been deprived of them after his sesession by the Rump Parliament, which explains the reference to "pretended orders" in the King's grant. A year or two later, Charles demised to Massey "the manor and site and abbey of Leix and other lands in Queen's County," at a rent of £50 a year for fifty-one years. Massey found that he could not get tenants who would take the land for building purposes unless he could give them a longer term. This was brought to the notice of the King, who, on Feb. 28, 1663, directed the lord lieutenant of Ireland to grant to Massey these lands at a rent of £12 a year for ninety-nine years.

He held an appointment as a Commissioner of Prizes at Dover for which he received in 1667, £500 as salary for a year and a quarter. During his term of office he seems to have earned the respect of the inhabitants of Dover, one of whom, fearing that the town was in danger from fire and invasion, and distrusting the Mayor and the Magistrates, wrote desiring that authority might be given to Sir Edward Massey "an honest active soldier and much loved by the people."

I have seen it stated (without authority) that Massey was Governor of Limerick towards the end of his life. It is not unlikely, as he is mentioned on Sept. 11, 1667 as a Privy Councillor for Ireland. Possibly his possession of lands at Abbeyleix led to these appointments. He is also mentioned in this year as one of those who, it was likely,

would be placed on a Board of Trade which the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland was setting up. In March, 1673, he, with other Irish Privy Councillors, supported in the House of Commons an Address to the King, complaining of Irish grievances at which "some think the King is not very well pleased." Perhaps it was for this reason that later in that year he did not receive the appointment of Master of the Ordnance which the King had promised him.

He died in 1673 or 1674, as his Will was proved in Dublin in the latter year, and he was buried at Abbeyleix.

Fortune usually smiled on him in military operations and personal adventures, but in promotion he was unlucky. He never held the rank in Cromwell's army to which his achievements in the field entitled him. He was an ardent Presbyterian, and after the rupture between those whose opinions he shared and the Independents, his military career on the side of Parliament came to an end. Consequently, his name does not figure in history like that of Fairfax or Waller, of Skippon, Ludlow or Ireton. His position as a public character was certainly not such as would lead one to expect that many likenesses of him would have been taken. Nevertheless, it is our good fortune to have at least eight reputed portraits of him, and judging from appearances not one of them was a copy of any of the others. We may, indeed, have more; for I have seen two prints mentioned of which I have never seen copies, and do not know whether any are extant. One of these is noticed in the list of portraits in Granger's *Biographical History* (1824, ed., vol. 3, p. 70), where it is described as "The undaunted Col. Massie. . . W. Bressie f. whole length 4to, scarce," and the other is said to be a 4to by Vanderbergh in Evans' *Catalogue of Portraits*, 1835, where it is no. 7024.

The following is a list of the eight portraits. Copies, with works (if any) in which they are to be found, are

mentioned under their respective originals. I have done my best to place them in chronological order, but in some cases my best has been little better than guesswork.

I. Portrait by Van Dyck, in the possession of G. L. Basset Esq., of Tehidy, Cornwall.

Manual of Gloucestershire Literature, Supplement, p. 290, and (from same plate) at p. 244 of this article.

II. Portrait in the possession of Col. W. J. Massy, of 38 Brandenburg Road, Chiswick.

Half-tone print, 3 by 2½in., unpublished.

III. Portrait in the Mayor's Parlour at the Gloucester Guildhall.

Half-tone print, 5¾ by 4¾in., unpublished.

IV. Engraved portrait in Ricraft's *Survey of England's Champions*, 1647, p. 49:—

(a) *The Civill Warres of England*, 1649 (from same plate), p. 49.

(b) Rodd's reprint of above, 1818, p. 49.

(c) Anonymous reprint of same (c. 1830), p. 73.

(d) *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis*, Pt. 1, frontispiece.

(e) *Portraits of Parliamentary Officers*, 1873, p. 22.

(f) Line-engraving (3¾ by 2¾in.) from an unknown publication.

(g) *Gloucester and her Governor*, 1891, frontispiece.
A copy of iv (f).

(h) *Gloucester in National History*. A copy of iv (d).

V. Engraved portrait in Vicars' *England's Worthies*, 1647, p. 60:—

(a) Rudge's *History of Gloucester*, 1811, p. 29.

(b) Smeeton's reprint of above, 1819, p. 37.

(c) Russell Smith's reprint of same, 1845, p. 60.

(d) Miss Woods' *Newnham-on-Severn*, 1912, p. 108.

VI. Portrait (believed to be) by Robert Walker in Weald Hall, Brentwood, belonging to a grandson of Christopher J. H. Tower, Esq., of Wealdside.

VII. Portrait belonging to W. F. E. Massey, Esq., now in Pool Hall, Nantwich.

Manual of Gloucestershire Literature, Supplement, vol. 2, frontispiece, and (from same plate) at p. 250 of this article.

VIII. Engraved equestrian portrait in the "Sutherland Clarendon" in the Bodleian Library. Collotype copy at p. 251 of this article.

As may be seen from this list, five of the eight portraits are oil paintings and three are prints. The dates of two of the pictures (nos. I and III) can be approximately fixed, and two of the prints (nos. IV and V) were issued in 1647. We have little to help us to arrive at the dates when the remaining three were taken, but the costume and apparent age of their subject.

I. The first on my list is undoubtedly the earliest. It is said to be by Van Dyck—an attribution which has never been questioned. Bryan includes it in his list of Van Dyck's portraits in the *Dictionary of Painters*, and it was exhibited as a Van Dyck in the Historical Portrait Gallery at the Kensington Exhibition in 1866. It must, therefore, certainly have been painted before 1642, as Van Dyck died in 1641, and probably before the latter year, as his health was completely broken during the only month of 1641 that he spent in England. It may have been painted when Massey was in the Netherlands before 1639; but for the following reasons it is more probable that it was painted in England in 1640.

The report that Massey had, in his youth, gained military experience as 'a soldier of fortune' in Holland is generally accepted; and Clarendon tells us that he had been an officer in the king's army under Colonel William Legge, in one of the expeditions prepared to quell disturbances in Scotland. Legge held such an appointment in 1639-40, so Massey's service under the Prince of Orange must have ended not later than 1640. When it commenced

we do not know. Van Dyck was painting in the Netherlands from March, 1634 to September, 1635, so this picture may then have been painted. If, however, this was so, Massey must have been born four or five years earlier than the date suggested in the D.N.B., and even then he would not have been more than twenty in 1634. He looks more than 25 years old in this picture. It seems, therefore, more likely that it was taken when he was serving under Colonel Legge, as Van Dyck was painting in England from 1635 to 1640. Judging from photographic copies it must be a fine picture.

II. Of the pedigree of this picture we know next to nothing.

Col. Massy bought it at a sale at Sotheby's, in the catalogue of which it was described as a portrait of Sir Edward Massey. It had been in the possession of the Marquis of Townshend's family, by one of whom it had been made an heirloom. Having no value as a work of art it could only have been prized because it was a reputed portrait of Sir Edward, and this gives some colour to its authenticity. Moreover, I think there can be no doubt that it and the Van Dyck are portraits of the same person.

With regard to its date, if I had nothing to go by but the apparent age of its subject, I should have called it no. I, as Massey appears a younger man in it than in the Van Dyck. The uniform, however, is, to the best of my belief, that of a Parliamentary Officer. The collar in this picture and in no. III are the same—and no. III (if it is the picture it is reputed to be) was almost certainly painted when Massey was Governor of Gloucester, *i.e.* between 1643 and 1645. I believe no. II was painted between the same dates, and I have only placed it before no. III because of the more youthful appearance of its subject.

III. This is reputed to be the portrait of Massey which was included in the inventory of articles belonging to the Council of the City of Gloucester between the years 1645



SIR EDWARD MASSEY

From a picture by Van Dyck, at Tehidy, Cornwall

and 1650, in which it is described as "one fair table of Colonel Massie's picture." It was presented to the City by a Captain Seager, and there is an entry in the Council Books, dated 1645, October 23, that "the Stewards shall give him thanks for the same and five pounds in money." This gift to the Stewards took place five months after Massey's governorship of Gloucester had terminated. I would hazard a guess that before he left some young local artist persuaded him to sit for his portrait that he might try his prentice-hand in depicting the Governor. The portrait was, no doubt, on its reception a prized possession, as all that Massey had done for the City during the past three years was still fresh in the minds of the authorities. But after 1650 the mention of this portrait disappears from the inventories, and presumably it was no longer in the Tolsey. Nor is this surprising, seeing that it was common knowledge that Massey had become an ardent adherent of Charles II, and Alderman Pury, who was Mayor of Gloucester in 1650, would never have tolerated the portrait of a royalist on the walls of his Council Chamber. Nothing seems to be known of its domicile for more than two hundred years, but it is generally believed that it is the picture which I have called no. III. This picture was presented to the Mayor and Corporation of Gloucester by Mr. W. P. Price when he was M.P. for Gloucester. I do not know the year, but it must have been between 1852 and 1873. I believe there is no record of the presentation in the Minute Books of the Council. We should like to have known what Mr. Price's reasons were for believing he had acquired the lost picture. As far as I know, the only scrap of evidence in existence of its authenticity is that it is painted on an oak panel, and it is consequently assumed to be the "fair table of Colonel Massie's picture." At the same time there can be but little doubt that it is a portrait of Massey, although a very unpleasing one. There is sufficient resemblance between

the features in it and in the authentic portraits to justify this belief, but it is a badly painted picture and probably (it is to be hoped) a bad likeness. Physiognomy is, as everyone knows, an uncertain index of character; but it is inconceivable that anyone with the personality of the subject of this picture could have been capable of a single heroic action.

IV and V. I will treat these two prints together because they were published in the same year, and their origins have much in common. Both must have been taken from life, or from drawings which have disappeared. The two little volumes in which they were issued, both dated 1647, were printed during the cessation of hostilities between the first and second civil wars, and were intended to glorify officers in the Parliamentary Army who had distinguished themselves.

The foot-lettering on the two portraits is as follows:—

No. IV—"Edward Massey Esqr., Major Generall of the West."

No. V—"Collonell Massie Appoynted Lievtenant Generall of the Horse rayسد for Ireland by the Parliament."

As Massey was promoted to be a major-general and given a command in the Western counties in June, 1645, and appointed Lieutenant-General in the army that was to be sent to Ireland on or about April 2, 1647, it looks as if no. IV had been executed before no. V. The title of the work at page 73 of which no. IV appeared is "A Survey of Englands Champions and Truths faithfull Patriots or A Chronologicall Recitement of the principall proceedings of the most worthy Commanders of the prosperous Armies raised for the preservation of Religion, the Kings Majesties Person and Priviledges of Parliament, and the liberty of the Subject, &c. . . . With the lively pourtraitures of the severall Commanders. By Josiah Ricraft .. Printed by R. Austin .. 1647." And the one in which no. V will

be found (at p. 60) is entitled "Englands Worthies. Under whom all the Civill and Bloudy Warres since Anno 1642 to Anno 1647, are related .. London. Printed .. at the Sun and Fountain in Pauls Church-yard, 1647."

The author was John Vicars, whose name appears at the end of Massey's Life, on p. 70.

Both works consist of brief accounts of the exploits of certain officers in Cromwell's army couched in very eulogistic terms. The authors were Presbyterians and consequently great admirers of Massey. John Vicars attacked Church and Crown in doggerel verse and scurrilous prose, for which he was gibbeted in *Hudibras*.

Thou that with ale, or viler liquers,
Didst inspire Withers, Pryn, and Vickers,
And force them, though it was in spite
Of nature, and their stars, to write.

Ricraft was a better scholar and a more sober controversialist. The letterpress, however, of both works is next to worthless. Their historical value (such as it is) depends entirely on the "lively pourtraitures" they contain. Of these there are eighteen in *England's Worthies*, and twenty-one in the *Survey of England's Champions*. Portraits of fifteen of the same Parliamentary commanders will be found in both works, all of which are from different plates though three or four appear to be copies of the same picture. They are all line engravings, and they differ considerably in execution. Those in the *Survey* are, for the most part, the best. Both works have been reprinted more than once.

Ricraft's *Survey* was pirated two years after its publication by John Leycester, who printed it in a work entitled *The Civill Warres of England*. All the portraits in this edition were from the same plates as those in the *Survey*, and will be found at the same pages. It was reprinted in 1818 for T. Rodd with the title page to Ricraft's work prefixed. This edition contains the same portraits, which

are all faithful copies of the originals. They are signed "R.S. sc.," said in the British Museum Catalogue of Engraved Portraits to be "R. Sawyer." Rodd's edition was again reprinted a few years later without date. This reprint has the water-mark 1821 and 1822 on some of the leaves and is entered in the B.M. Catalogue as [? 1830]. All of the prints in it are from the R.S. plates. Some 1,000 copies of this edition were issued. The R.S. plates also appeared in a little book entitled *Portraits of Parliamentary Officers*, which was published in 1873. The portraits in it are differently arranged and the letterpress is new.

England's Worthies was first reprinted by G. Smeeton in 1819. The portraits are rather pretty pictures in sepia, but they are feeble copies of the originals. The work was again reprinted by Russell Smith in 1845. In this edition the portraits are excellent copies, so good indeed that they might be from the original plates. The seventeenth century editions of these two works are very scarce, but the latter reprints are occasionally in the market at moderate prices.

The portraits of Massey in these two works are very different, indeed, at first sight it might be thought that they could not be of the same person. But on closer inspection all doubts of this sort will disappear. Though there is not much similarity between some of the features, the nose is much the same in both, and the mouth, moustache and imperial are identical.

The Ricraft print is a half-length, three-quarter-face portrait looking to the left, Massey is represented in armour and his long, curly hair reaches down to his shoulders. He has more the appearance of a cavalier than a roundhead.

The Vicars print is also a three-quarter face portrait, but it is looking the other way, and it is only of the head and shoulders. In it the hair is shorter and the expression more thoughtful and sadder. It has more character in it,

and consequently looks as if it were the better likeness of the two. Nevertheless it does not leave the impression that its subject was a dashing cavalry officer. In point of execution it chances to be about the best in the work; indeed (excepting the frontispiece to Ricraft's *Survey*, which is by W. Faithorne) it is, I think, the best in either work. This print was also used as the frontispiece to "The Verses on the Siege of Gloucester and Colonell Massey," which were prefixed to the 1647 edition of Corbet's *Military Government of Gloucester*.

The frontispiece of the *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis* (pt. 1, 1823); engraved by Cooper, is a copy of the Ricraft print, but does not purport to be a facsimile. It is smaller and of much finer workmanship, but has even less character in it than the original. I have a much more faithful proof-copy of this print, but, as it has no lettering except Massey's name, no. IV (f), I do not know in what publication it appeared. A facsimile of this copy forms the frontispiece of my *Gloucester and her Governor*, 1891.

There are two small oval portraits of Massey in two broadsides, one entitled "A Perfect list of all the Victories obtained . . . both by sea and land," printed respectively in 1646 and 1647. They are little like each other, but they are both very rough in execution and not like any of the portraits mentioned. I doubt if they have any more value as likenesses than most of the portraits in the daily newspapers; so I have not included them in my list.

VI. I have placed this picture as no. VI on my list because it is said to be of "General Massey," and was; therefore, probably painted while he was serving under Cromwell, and nos. VII and VIII must be dated after the Restoration. It has been in the possession of the Tower family for seven generations. I am told that it has not much artistic merit; but Robert Walker, the artist to whom it is attributed, was the chief painter of the parliamentary party during the Commonwealth. His

portrait of Oliver Cromwell is famous. He died about 1658.

VII. This is, in my opinion, the most interesting portrait of Massey that we possess. It is an exceptionally fine picture; indeed, if it had the magic of a great artist's name attached to it, we should probably prefer it to no. I, as it has more character in it; the modelling of the face is, at least, as good. It has certainly the best pedigree of any of the portraits on my list. In 1823 (when the *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis* was published) it was in the possession of a Mrs. Massey of Dee Bank, Chester, who is referred to as the mother of "William Massey Esq. of Codrington." As this was the home of Edward Massey's father, this portrait must have been recognised as genuine close upon a hundred years ago by members of his family. It is now in Pool Hall, Nantwich, and is the property of W. F. E. Massey Esq.

I am much puzzled about the artist to whom it is attributed. It is said by Washbourne and Granger to be by "Coker;" and Walpole, in his *Anecdotes of Painting*, says that "K. Coker painted a head of Colonel Massey preserved at Coddington in Cheshire." I can find no other trace of any works by a painter of that name. The picture is so good that it is difficult to believe that it was painted by an unknown artist. It might well be by one of Van Dyck's best pupils, taken when Massey was in attendance on Charles II in Holland, between 1652 and 1660, or more probably after the Restoration, between 1660 and 1670 when Massey was in England. It represents him as an older man than he appears to be in any of the portraits that I have previously mentioned.

VIII. There is little to be said about this portrait beyond what can be gleaned from an almost illegible line engraved or (?) written on the print, below the engraved foot-lettering. I have selected it for reproduction on account of its excessive rarity. I only know for certain of one



Emery Walker Ph. 11

*Sir Edward Massey
From a portrait at Pool Hall, Nantwich*



SIR EDWARD MASSEY

From a rare print in the Bodleian Library

extant copy, which is the one here reproduced. It is in the unrivalled collection of Civil War portraits comprised in the extra-illustrated copy of the *History of the Rebellion* in the Bodleian, known as the "Sutherland Clarendon." The copy of it facing this page is a faithful facsimile, slightly reduced in size. The original measures $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. by 5 in., the copy $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. If the collection of portraits made by Granger is in existence and perfect (as to which I have failed to obtain any information), there is a second copy of this print extant, as Granger's collection contained a portrait of "Edward Massey on horseback," by W. Sherwin, and that is almost certainly the name at the end of the second line on the Bodleian print. The first part of that line Mr. Falconer Madan (the president of the Bibliographical Society and at one time Bodley's librarian) suggests may be read "Sould by Matt: Collins at the blackbird in Cannon Street," and he thinks that those words were engraved.

Sherwin was an engraver who made some reputation for himself, and is said to have flourished between 1670 and 1710. The first English mezzotint bearing a date was by him; but most of his portraits are line-engravings, some of which have considerable merit, and all are said to be scarce. If this portrait of Massey was taken from life and Sherwin commenced engraving in, or about, 1670, it must have been taken during the last three or four years of Massey's life. It certainly makes him an older man than the portrait which I mentioned last. Judging from the Tehidy and Pool Hall pictures, we should know it to be a portrait of Massey, were it unlettered. It is moreover a spirited and pleasing likeness, and it gives him more characteristics of an able military commander than any of the other portraits on my list, which, or copies of which, I have seen.