

Brian Tuke

Pg 1/2



Born: 1490 Layer Marney, England
Married: Grissell Boughton
Died: 26 Oct 1525 Layer Marney, England
Parents: Richard Tuke & Agnes Bland

Albert Frederick Pollard in Leslie Stephan & Sidney Lee, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1885-1901 [reprint 1993]), v. 19, pp. 1222-1223

Career. TUKE, Sir Brian (d. 1545), secretary to Henry VIII, was apparently son of Richard Tuke (d. 1498?) and Agnes his wife, daughter of John Bland of Nottinghamshire (Essex Pedigrees, Harl. Soc. xiv. 609; Visit. of Notts.) The family, whose name is variously spelt Tuke, Toke, and Tooke, was settled in Kent, and Sir Brian's father or grandfather, also named Richard, is said to have been tutor to Thomas Howard, second duke of Norfolk [q.v.]. Possibly it was through Norfolk's influence that Brian Tuke was introduced at court; in 1508 he was appointed king's bailiff of Sandwich, and in 1509 he was clerk of the signet. On 30 July in the same year he was made feodary of Wallingford and St. Walric, and on 28 Oct. 1510 was appointed clerk of the council at Calais. On 20 Dec 1512 he was placed on the commission of the peace for Kent, and on 28 Nov, 1513 on that for Essex. In 1516 he was made a knight of the king's body, and in 1517 'governor of the king's posts' (For Tuke's account of the organisation of the postal service, see State Papers, Henry VIII, i. 404-6). For some time Tuke was secretary to Wolsey, and in 1522 he was promoted to be French secretary to the king; an enormous amount of correspondence passed through his hands, and there are more than six hundred references to him in the fourth volume alone of Brewer's 'Letters and Papers of Henry VIII.' On 17 April 1523 Tuke was granted the clerkship of parliament surrendered by John Taylor (d. 1534) [q.v.]. In 1528 he was one of the commissioners appointed to treat for peace with France, and in the same year was made treasurer of the household. In February 1530/1 Edward North (afterwards first Baron North) [q.v.] was associated with him in the clerkship of parliaments, and in 1533 Tuke served as sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire. Among the numerous grants with which his services were rewarded Tuke received the manors of Southweald, Layer Marney, Thorpe, and East Lee in Essex. He performed his official duties to the king's satisfaction, avoided all pretence to political independence, and retained his posts until his death at Layer Marney on 26 Oct. 1545. He was buried with his wife in St. Margaret's, Lothbury.

Family. Tuke married Grissell, daughter of Nicholas Boughton of Woolwich, and by her, who died on 28 Dec. 1538, had issue three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Maximilian, predeceased him; the second, Charles, died soon after him, and the property devolved on the third, George Tuke, who was sheriff of Essex in 1567. Of the daughters, the eldest, Elizabeth, married George, ninth or eighteenth baron Audley; and the second, Mary married Sir Reginald Scott of Scott's Hall, Kent [see under Scott, Sir William, d. 1350].

Exact dating of this painting is not possible since the birth date of the person portrayed is not known with certainty; yet the stylistic sequencing of Holbein's works places it most comfortably in about 1528. [directly after the painting of Sir Henry Wyat]. The face and hands are painted as more detailed and lifelike than the copy in Munich, chain and cross are more harmoniously placed in the composition. Just above the left eye there is some damage where it is badly flaked. This is from the Methuen Collection at Corsham House; in 1848 it was acquired by the duke of Westminster in the "Sandersonschen Gant." Sir Bryan Tuke was the secretary of Cardinal Wolsey, Postmaster and Treasurer of the household of Henry VIII in 1528. [At least one version of the many paintings is definitely dated to 1528.]



[Portrait of Sir Brian Tuke: size is 549 KB. Since the painting is cropped on the left, it may also be cropped on the right so that the "in the year of his age" may be 56, 57, or even 58. Note, however, that the version in the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC) is not cropped (so severely?). This beautifully executed copy clearly shows "LVII." It is also possible to read the scripture to which his left hand is pointing: "NVNQVM NON PAUCITAS DIERV // MEORUM FINIETUR BREVI" May the paucity of my days be not completed shortly.]

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