

## ROBERT RYECE OF PRESTON, 1555-1638

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Robert Ryece (or Reyce) is justly famous for his *Breviary*, the earliest attempt to give an account of Suffolk in the vernacular, following in the tradition of other county historians such as Lambarde, Norden, and Carew. The first, and only, printed edition by Lord Francis Hervey has delighted and informed readers for many years,<sup>1</sup> but very little seems to have been written about the author and his works. In the course of examining and trying to interpret Ryece's important remarks about the English language,<sup>2</sup> I came across a good deal of information which is summarized in the following pages. They comprise some account of Ryece's ancestry, a little about his life, including evidence of his acquaintances and correspondents, contemporary opinions of him and his works—for he wrote more than one—an attempt to reconstruct when and how *The Breviary* came to be written, and a discussion of the relationship between the surviving manuscripts. They are not the fruit of an exhaustive search, but I should like to hope that they might pave the way for others to make the full and authoritative study that Ryece and his works deserve, and perhaps even spur someone better qualified into preparing a new edition of *The Breviary*.<sup>3</sup>

### THE RYECE FAMILY

To begin with the name itself, there seems good ground for breaking with recent tradition and returning to the spelling *Ryece*, because it is the one he himself invariably used in all surviving signatures and in his autograph manuscripts,<sup>4</sup> though it appears not to have been that of any of his forebears. Why he adopted it is not clear; possibly it seemed closer to the name of his supposed Welsh ancestors.

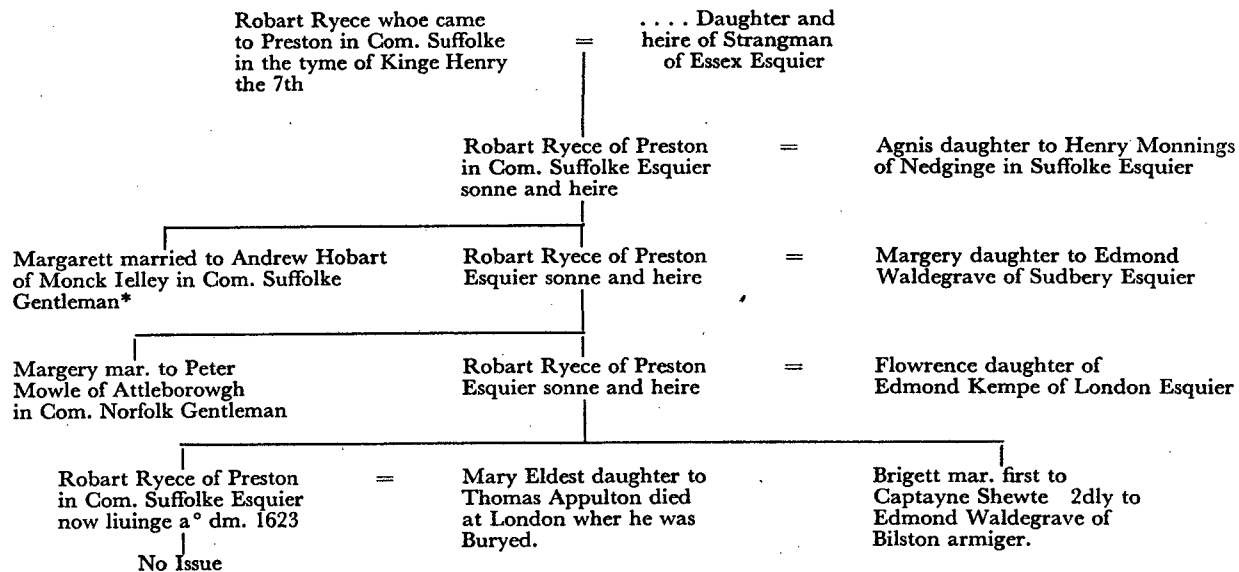
<sup>1</sup> *Suffolk in the XVIIth Century: The Breviary of Suffolk by Robert Reyce, 1618* (London, 1902), hereafter referred to as *The Breviary*.

<sup>2</sup> In an article published in *Review of English Studies*, N.S. XXI, 82, May 1970, pp. 168-175.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from the obvious debt to Copinger, I owe much to the kindness and interest of the archivists and staff of the Bury, Chelmsford, and Ipswich Record Offices; the staff of Ipswich Central Library; Mr. J. P. Brooke-Little, *Richmond Herald*; and to Miss Joan Corder. What I owe to Mr. Norman Scarfe is revealed partially and inadequately in the footnotes.

<sup>4</sup> Some twenty times; also on his tombstone and on the plaque in Preston Church recording his charity. Only in giving the obits of his ancestors does he write *Ryce*, the form used by his father (MS. Tanner 284, f. 14). As far as I can see,

*continued on page 45*



\*The pedigree of Hobart, continued in the manuscript, is omitted here.

FIG. 21.—1623 Pedigree in Harley 1169 f.10.

For one so interested in and knowledgeable about the history of Suffolk families, Ryece is singularly reticent about his own, no pedigree having survived in manuscripts written in his own hand or in later copies of his works. The visitations of 1561, 1577, and 1612-13 are equally silent, and the attempts made early in the 17th century and later to supply the want cannot be accepted without corroboration. The best known attempt is probably that printed by Metcalfe from British Museum MS. Harley 1560, a compilation from the visitations and other sources made by Richard Munday some time around 1620.<sup>5</sup> Metcalfe's choice of manuscript was unfortunate, since there is a better and fuller one, dated 1623, in MS. Harley 1169, which is reproduced here (Fig. 21). The two versions are very similar, Harley 1560 differing only in being much briefer in its particulars, and in omitting Margery who married Peter Mowle, the line of descendants of Andrew Hobart, and the date 1623; so similar are they, indeed, both in detail and in wording, that the one in Harley 1560 could well have been derived, directly or indirectly, from Harley 1169. If the authenticity of these pedigrees is to be tested, it is with Harley 1169 that we should begin.

I believe the origin of this earlier pedigree in Harley 1169 can be determined. A certain William Winchell, who lived at Billingsgate around 1624 (he records his second marriage in that year), assembled a genealogical collection which survives in MSS. Harley 1754 and 1174, as a slip recently inserted in the former points out. These manuscripts consist mainly of his rough notes. Winchell was interested in Suffolk pedigrees because he claimed descent from the family of Wincoll (or Wincold) of Little Waldingfield. A comparison with the hand of Harley 1169 shows at once that that, too, is by Winchell, and consists of fair copies of what he had roughed out or assembled in the other manuscripts. Now one of the latter, Harley 1174, contains a trial for a Ryece pedigree, hastily jotted and squeezed in on an odd scrap of paper; it shows only the first four Ryecees and their wives, together with Margaret and Andrew Hobart. It is clearly an early and incomplete draft of what he eventually incorporated in Harley 1169. Even the finished pedigree in Harley 1169 was not all entered at one time; a change in ink

<sup>4</sup> continued from page 43

the spelling *Ryece* begins with the author of the *Breviary*; *Ryce* is unauthorized, though used as early as 1632 by Guillim (see p. 58). No spelling emanating from him or his ancestors would seem to sanction any pronunciation today other than that of the modern name Rice. The earliest spellings *Rys*, *Ryes*, *Ryse*, later *Ryce*, *Rice*, could indicate one and the same pronunciation, the *s* in the former group showing only an earlier reluctance to spell with *c* words that were not of French or Latin origin (compare *house*). There is one aberrant spelling *Rece* in his great-grandfather's pardon (see p. 49), but only given as an alternative.

<sup>5</sup> W. C. Metcalfe, *The Visitations of Suffolk* (Exeter, 1882), p. 205.

shows that the entry of Margery who married Peter Mowle is a later addition, for which no space had been allowed on the page, so that it had to be added, very awkwardly, *on the verso* (hence, no doubt, its absence in Munday's copy).

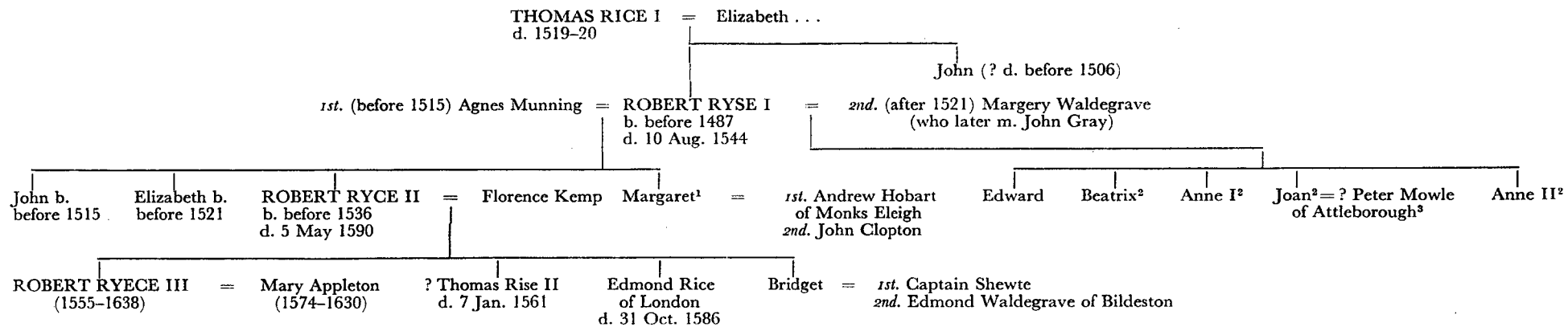
The trial in Harley 1174 and the addition in Harley 1169 thus suggest that the final pedigree is not a copy of one supplied by Ryece himself, but was built up piecemeal, mainly from the genealogies of the families into which the Ryececs married. This piecemeal origin is the more remarkable in that Ryece and Winchell had a common interest in Little Waldingfield, and at least indirect contact between them might be inferred from the fact that the pedigrees of Barrington and Stanhope in Winchell's collection (Harley 1174, ff. 10-11) are apparently in Ryece's hand. From Ryece, or Ryece's acquaintances, Winchell may have heard the tradition about the origin of the earliest Ryece, but, had the pedigree been supplied by him, it would have contained far more detail, and some of it would have been different, as we shall see.

Another pedigree is recorded by D. E. Davy, who took it from a manuscript once in the possession of Sir John Blois, now lost. It adds two generations and differs in several respects from Winchell's, but perhaps the most telling feature is that its compiler knew no single Christian name of husband or wife except those of the author of the *Breviary*, his grandfather (whom it wrongly names Thomas), and the latter's wife Margery Waldegrave. The absence of names surely indicates derivation for the most part from a coat of arms such as that on the Ryece tomb.<sup>6</sup>

If none of the surviving pedigrees can claim to have been authorized by Ryece himself, it would be wiser to use such contemporary sources as survive, including wills; these give a somewhat different picture (see Fig. 22).

Ryece's own belief as to his ancestry is to be inferred from two sources. The first is the arms on his tombstone, now partly illegible but described by D. E. Davy (B.M. Add. 19078, f. 218v.), closely related to which is a set of arms added, though not by Ryece, to a

<sup>6</sup> B.M. Add. 19146, f. 346. The descent goes: Rice=Bisonell; Rice=daughter the heir of Strangeman; Rice=Buers; Rice=Monings; Thomas Rice Serviens ad leges=[two marriages] Margery daughter of Edward Walgrave de les Fryers in Sudbury [and] Jenney of Knatteshall [i.e. Knoddishall]; Rice=Kemp of Gipping; Robert Rice ob. 1638=Apleton daughter of Thomas of Waldingfield ob. 1629. The compiler of this need have had access to nothing more than the Ryece arms and one of the Candler manuscripts—for instance Harley 6071 f. 116v. which gives 'Margeria Waldegrave=Thomas Rice de Preston, serviens ad arma' (sic). Davy also recorded the pedigree found in Harley 1169. In Add. 19147, f. 12, he gives yet another pedigree which is clearly his own attempt to reconcile that in the Blois MS. with that in Harley 1169; it was this blend of Davy's that the Revd. Edmund Farrer published in *The East Anglian Miscellany* (1919) p. 19.



<sup>1</sup> Assumed to be d. of Agnes.

<sup>2</sup> Assumed to be d. of Margery.

<sup>3</sup> See note 33.

FIG. 22—Tentative Reconstructed Pedigree of Ryece.

manuscript otherwise mostly in his hand, the Ipswich MS. (to be described later). They show a series of marriages to families of which the first is unidentified (the Blois MS. identified it as 'Bisonell', the Ipswich MS. as 'Ap Rytherce'), the others being: Strangman, Bures, Munning, Jenney, Waldegrave, Kempe, and Appleton. The second source is a rough note, added by Ryece himself to a terrier of his father's lands, recording family obits.<sup>7</sup> It reads as follows:

Thomas Ryece obiit [. . .] J[. . .] arij  
 1561 Elizabethhe ij<sup>o</sup>  
 Edmondus Ryece obiit 31 Octobris.  
 1586. Elizabethhe xxvij  
 Robertus Ryece obiit quinto Maij  
 1590 Elizabethhe xxxij  
 Robertus Ryece obiit decimo Augusti *die S<sup>ti</sup> Laurentij*  
 1544 Henrici octavj xxxvj<sup>o</sup>  
 Thomas Ryece Cambrobritannus. obiit.  
*1522 Henrici octavi 14*

It should be noted that these names are not in chronological order, and that the words in italics are in a different ink and therefore, presumably, added later, and that damage to the manuscript makes part of the first entry illegible.

If we arrange the names chronologically we get: Thomas I (1522); Robert I (1544); Thomas II (1561); Edmund (1586); Robert II (1590). With the exception of Thomas II, all can be certainly identified from their wills. Edmund was our Robert Ryece's brother, and Robert II his father.<sup>8</sup> Robert I might, from the chronology, be either his grandfather or great-grandfather. However, if the latter were the case, Thomas II is hardly likely to be the grandfather, since Robert I names only two sons in his will, Robert and Edward. Thomas II it seems safe to identify with the Thomas Rise whose death is recorded in Monks Eleigh parish register for 7 January 1560/61.<sup>9</sup> The family lived there for a time,<sup>10</sup> and Thomas II may have been a brother of the author of *The Breviary* who died in childhood. In that case Robert I is the grandfather.

We are left only with Thomas I 'Cambrobritannus' (*ob.* 1522). It may be observed first that the writer apparently did not know the day or month of his death, and even the year was added later;

<sup>7</sup> Bodley Tanner 284, f. 27b.

<sup>8</sup> P.C.C. 55 Windsor, and 10 Sainberbe.

<sup>9</sup> The register is in Bury and West Suffolk Record Office (hereafter referred to as B.W.S.R.O.). The year 1560 appears in the margin roughly set to cover a number of entries.

<sup>10</sup> See below, p. 55.

all he knew was the Christian name, and that he was a Welshman. Ryece would hardly have bothered to record these details in such a list of names if he had not believed him to be his ancestor, and the date and position in the list point to his being the great-grandfather. That Ryece knew so little about him is not remarkable; few of us today, without inquiry or documentary evidence, could give the names of our great-grandparents, let alone the dates of their deaths, and it looks as if Robert Ryece had little to go by.

Winchell's genealogy turns out to be wrong in two respects: the first Ryece was Thomas, not Robert; and an extra generation seems to have been inserted, as other evidence will confirm, between Robert I and Robert II.

Was tradition right in making the first Ryece a Welshman? The implication of the statement in Winchell's pedigree, the 'Ap Rytherce' arms, and the term 'Cambrobritannus', seems to be that Thomas Ryece was a follower of, or came in the wake of, Henry Tudor, as many a Welshman with the name (*Ap*) *Ryce* assuredly did. However, Manorial Court rolls of Preston show otherwise.<sup>11</sup> These date back, though not continuously, to 1408-9 (10 Henry IV), and Thomas Ryse makes his first appearance at the court of the Manor of Swiftes in 1483-4 (1 Richard III). In a Preston Hall entry of 1 Henry VII, he is alleged to have committed an offence in Preston on 27 May 1485, in Richard III's reign: armed with sticks and daggers ('baculis et dagardis') he broke and entered a close in the tenure of William Hogon and abducted a certain John Hogon. Other entries in the same year allege that he assaulted, beat, wounded, and maltreated William Hogon. The quarrel, if such it was, seems to have been settled, for the following year we find William Hogon transferring a cottage and courtyard called Brettes to Thomas Ryse, Elizabeth his wife, and Robert their son, and the later entries (Thomas appears in almost every one) are peaceful, showing Thomas Ryse gradually acquiring more property in Preston. In rolls of Swiftes, Thomas and Elizabeth appear together in 1493-4 (9 Henry VII), Thomas and Robert in 1496-7 (12 Henry VII). A Preston Hall entry for 1494-5 (10 Henry VII) records a son John, otherwise unheard of.

In these circumstances, we can be confident that a still earlier record of the reign of Edward IV refers to the same man, namely a general pardon granted on 20 April 1482 to 'Thomas Ryse, alias

<sup>11</sup> Court rolls for Preston Hall for the following years are in Ipswich and E. Suffolk R.O. (T.1/2/7.1-3). 10-12 Henry IV; 1-3, 8, 10, 12-18, 21 Henry VII; 7, 14, 16 Henry VIII; 7-10, 14, 23, 26, 32, 38-40, 43 Elizabeth. Others are in B.W.S.R.O. Swiftes: 36-38 Henry VI; 1 and 4 Edward IV; 1 and 2 Richard III; 1-3, 6-14, 16-19, and 22 Henry VII; 3, 6, 7, 9, 16, 18, 19, 21, 26-8, 37 and 38 Henry VIII; 2 Edward VI (970/1/1-3). Mortimers: 18 and 20 Henry VI; 10, 22-24 Elizabeth (E7/10/5).

Rece, alias Rise late of Preston, co. Suffolk, "yoman", alias of Colchester, co. Essex'.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps this pardon reflects still earlier disputes at Preston, but its main importance is twofold. It renders suspect the notion that he was a Welshman, since the place of his ultimate extraction would surely have been shown among his aliases; and it connects him with Colchester.

If Thomas Ryce's Welsh origin is doubtful, may he nevertheless be of Welsh parentage? A simple answer cannot be given, but the evidence, such as it is, points elsewhere, for the name Rise is found in East Anglia from an early date. Of numerous families recorded from the 16th century or earlier, two seem the most promising. The first was at Brettenham, only three miles from Preston, where a William Rys was living in 1327. The family presumably gave its name to Ryce manor in Brettenham (the name occurs as early as 1547) and to Ryce Hall.<sup>13</sup> The second was at Belchamp Otten, Essex, some ten miles from Preston and sixteen from Colchester, where John Ryse the elder of Belchamp Otten made his will on 3 September 1498,<sup>14</sup> containing bequests to his sons Yvonn, Thomas, and Richard. The eldest son migrated to Bures, Suffolk, and drew up his will there on 15 August 1521, and his descendants were living there in 1554.<sup>15</sup> The second son, Thomas Rise, would thus be of the right generation. Described as the son of John Rice, deceased, of Belchamp Otten, he disposed of land in Belchamp Walter in December, 1505,<sup>16</sup> and then disappears from Essex records. It is tempting to conclude he was our man, and, like his brother, migrated to Suffolk.<sup>17</sup>

However, John Ryse the elder seems to have been at Belchamp Otten in Richard III's reign, if later records of a charity he estab-

<sup>12</sup> *C.P.R. Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III 1476-1485*, p. 300 (checked with the roll).

<sup>13</sup> For William Rys at Brettenham, as also a Robert Ryse at Worlingham, see S. H. A. Hervey, *Suffolk in 1327*, Suffolk Green Books ix, vol. ii (Woodbridge, 1906), pp. 159 and 86. For Ryce Manor, now spelt to conform to the name of the author of *The Breviary*, see for instance *C.P.R. Edward VI*, V.309.

<sup>14</sup> P.C.C. 28 Horne.

<sup>15</sup> B.W.S.R.O. Book X. 145; the will of his son John (1554), Markes 100. There were Ryces much later at Belchamp Otten, e.g. another John Ryce the elder of Belchamp Otten (1578), P.C.C. 30 Langley.

<sup>16</sup> Essex R.O. D/DO T 2/2.

<sup>17</sup> Was John Ryse a Welshman? His will does not give the impression that the family were newcomers to Essex; there were other Ryces about, for it mentions 'John Ryse my broder' (which explains his title 'the elder') and also 'John Ryse my godson, who is the sone of Leonard'. One thing alone might suggest a Welsh connection, and that is his eldest son's name *Yvonn* (or *Yan*, as it appears in the copy of his own will in B.W.S.R.O.). At this early date, the Scottish *Ian* or the Russian *Ivan* are ruled out, and *Yvonn* would be a most unusual way of spelling the native *Jan*; it might represent the Welsh *Evan* or *Ewan* but equally well the French *Yvain*.



lished there are correct,<sup>18</sup> and this casts doubt on the identification of the two Thomases, not least because our Thomas I might then have been expected to include Belchamp Otten among the aliases in his pardon of 1482, only a little earlier. The name, unfortunately, is all too common. Thus, the son of John could equally well be the Thomas Rys(s)e, of Kedington, who made his will on 1 September 1531.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless a family connection of some kind seems possible.

Winchell's genealogy matches the earliest Ryce of Preston with the unnamed daughter and heir of Strangman of Essex, and Strangman arms appear among Robert Ryece's quarterings. Here we might have another pointer to an Essex origin for Thomas, for the Strangmans of Hadleigh (originally, it appears from the earliest wills, of Rayleigh), Essex, are well-documented, no doubt because they numbered among their 16th-century descendants James Strangman, one of the earliest members of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries.<sup>20</sup> But the Strangman genealogies know neither a daughter Elizabeth nor a Ryece match; the earliest wills, from that of Jane Strangman (1504) on, are also silent about both.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, there is a curious circumstance which suggests that family tradition may have erred, not in recalling a Strangman connection but in attributing it to the Essex branch. Two of the three earliest Preston Hall rolls (1408-10) mention a *John S(t)rangman of Preston*. Could the simple truth be that a Rice son, hailing from nearby Brettenham, secured the family's foothold in Preston by marrying into local Strangmans? If so, Thomas I was possibly not that son; if 'late of Preston' in his pardon means anything, he would seem to have originated there and to have departed at some time in or before Edward IV's reign to Colchester. From his stormy encounters in Preston in Richard III's reign one could build up a not improbable picture of one who was reasserting his rights to property he had lost as the ebb and flow of dynasties in the Wars of the Roses was reflected in the rise and fall of local magnates, like John de Vere, thirteenth Earl of Oxford, and so in the fortunes of much lesser men.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Essex R.O. D/DU 441/96.

<sup>19</sup> In B.W.S.R.O.

<sup>20</sup> See H. W. King in *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, II (1863) and III (1865); also J. H. Round, *ibid.*, N.S. XII. (1913).

<sup>21</sup> Essex R.O.: Jane Strangman D/ABW 33/5; John Strangman (1528) D/AER 4.

<sup>22</sup> An ultimate Welsh extraction for the family is not ruled out. Miss Joan Corder kindly informs me that the spearheads on the Ryece coat are particularly popular in Welsh heraldry, as is the raven which appears as his crest in the arms in Preston Hall (the crest in the Ipswich MS. is a saltire). Robert III believed his coat to be ancient, for he says in a letter that it was 'discended vnto mee from my awncestors' (Harley 380, f. 136v.).

Of Thomas Ryse I, with a wife Elizabeth and a son Robert, not much more can be said. His will, dated 7 August 1506, was proved on 17 February 1519/20,<sup>23</sup> his death occurring probably early in 1520. Robert Ryce in his list of obits mistakenly dated it 1522, doubtless because he found the death recorded in the manor court roll of Preston Hall for that year (14 Henry VIII), which later came into his possession, failing to observe that it is there said to have occurred *before the last court* ('ante vltimam curiam'). The will records all too little about his wealth and interests; his bequests are small, and the rest is left to the disposition of his executors. The court roll names Preston Hall among property in his possession, but without a close study of local nomenclature it is not possible to estimate the extent of the rest. He must have built up a modest establishment, for he leaves 40s. to 'William Kymme my old seruant' and a smaller sum to 'euery other of my seruants', while £20 to pay a secular priest to sing for his soul for three years suggests either prosperity or a very uneasy conscience. The executors are his wife, his son Robert, and Robert Sexton the Elder of Lavenham. Robert Sexton, the son of Aleyne Sexton of Lavenham, seems to have been a wealthy man.<sup>24</sup>

One other clause is of interest: to a gift of £4 he adds the words 'I besech my especiall good maister William Cooke doctor to be superuisour'. Cooke entered Cambridge University in 1479-80, was Doctor of Canon Law of both Oxford and Bologna, and held many Norfolk and Suffolk livings in plurality. Concurrently, he was canon of Ripon and prebendary of Thorpe, Master of the Hospital of St. Michael, Well, Yorkshire, and for a time vicar-general of the Bishop of Durham. Most of these offices are mentioned in Cooke's will, which also names Preston among twelve villages to which he made bequests of wheat, malt and money 'to be doone for my soule'.<sup>25</sup> The terms in which Thomas Ryse refers to him are such as usually imply a master-servant relationship, but are sometimes used between social equals and indicate no more than respect;<sup>26</sup> since William Cooke describes himself as 'parson of Hitcham', three miles from Preston, Thomas I's words prove only that he was a trusted and honoured neighbour. There is no space here to discuss who William Cooke was, but there are some grounds for thinking that he was a connection of Sir Thomas

<sup>23</sup> P.C.C. 26 Aylofffe.

<sup>24</sup> P.C.C. 7 Milles and 6 Aylofffe. Robert Sexton had lands also at Gestingthorpe and at Great and Little Maplestead in Essex. His bequests include £200 to his son and £40 each to his wife and daughter.

<sup>25</sup> A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge, 1963). P.C.C. 25 Maynwaryng, dated 17 May 1522, proved 12 June.

<sup>26</sup> Information, based on *The Paston Letters*, kindly supplied by Prof. Norman Davis.

Cooke, Lord Mayor of London, an extremely wealthy and powerful man.<sup>27</sup> If Ryse's will adds little to our knowledge, at least it shows him in good standing and with rich and influential friends.

Whereas Thomas I may have laid a solid foundation for the family's wealth, his son, Robert Ryce I of Preston, seems to have been the creator of such public eminence as they were to achieve. As we have seen, he first appears in 1486-7 in the manor court rolls of Preston Hall for 2 Henry VII; in a Swiftes roll for 3 Henry VIII, Thomas and Robert appear again, and in the earliest Preston Hall roll of that reign (7 Henry VIII) dated 29 October 1515, his father transfers lands to him, Robert's wife Agnes, and their son John. Agnes, as the genealogies show, and other evidence confirms, was the daughter of Henry Munning of Nedging, and the marriage heralded (perhaps inaugurated) a long association between the families. Her brother Thomas Munning was to supervise her husband's will, her son in turn was to be one of her father's executors and to supervise Thomas Munning's, and her nephew Robert Munning was to supervise her son's will. A great-grandson of Henry was baptised 'Rycece', and the author of *The Breviary* more than a century later, remembered several of the Munnings, including Rycece Munning, in his will.<sup>28</sup>

A pedigree of the Waldegraves in *The Breviary* describes Robert I as 'Justice of Peace and Sergeant of armes to Hen: 8' (Hervey, facing p. 300). The former office is confirmed by state papers, which show that he was appointed to the Commission of the Peace at various dates from February 1538 to 1544, and also to the Commission of Sewers in 1538. I can find nothing to suggest he was a Serjeant-at-Arms; perhaps he has been confused with a Thomas ap Ryce who is listed among Serjeants-at-Arms in 1526—too late to be our Thomas I, and the wrong name for Robert I.<sup>29</sup>

Winchell's genealogy credits the Robert Ryce who married Agnes Munning with two children: a son of the same name who married Margery Waldegrave and a daughter Margaret who married Andrew Hobart of Monks Eleigh. However, the man

<sup>27</sup> On whom see *D.N.B.* His father lived at Lavenham; his brother, Hugh Cooke of Hitcham, had property at Hitcham, Lavenham, Kettlebaston and Monks Eleigh (Will: P.C.C. Luffenham 34).

<sup>28</sup> P.C.C. 13 Pynnyng. J. J. Muskett, *Suffolk Manorial Families* (Exeter, 1884-1914), I, pp. 104-6, according to whom the Munning arms stand in the place of honour in Preston Church. P.C.C. 10 Sainberbe. See also n. 51. Richard Munynge, who appears in Preston Hall rolls for 1487-8 and 1497-8 may be a yet earlier member of the family unknown to Muskett.

<sup>29</sup> J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R. H. Brodie, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London, 1862-1910), XIII, XIV, XVIII, XX. For Thomas ap Ryce, *ibid.*, IV, 868. The pedigree in B.M. Add. 19146 (see n. 6), wrongly naming him 'Thomas', describes him as *serviens ad leges*, i.e. serjeant at law. I find no evidence for this office.

whom I have called Robert I (*ob.* 1544) left a wife Margery, so that, to square with the genealogies, another generation would have to be assumed; the line would be: Thomas—Robert, m. Agnes—Robert (I), m. Margery. This is certainly wrong. The extra Robert leaves no will, he is not identifiable in the court rolls, he is not in the list of obits drawn up by the author of *The Breviary*, and the latter himself provides evidence against his existence. As we have seen, Agnes's daughter Margaret married Andrew Hobart, and (a genealogy of the Cloptons of Kentwell agrees) later married John Clopton. Winchell's genealogy thus makes her the great-aunt of the author of *The Breviary*; but the latter, writing to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, makes her his aunt: 'For Iohn Clopton, that *married my fathers syster*, I knewe hym full well'.<sup>30</sup>

Robert II's attitude to Margery Waldegrave clinches the matter. Under his father's will, Margery inherited her husband's house in Preston. A Preston Hall roll of 8 Elizabeth (1565–66) shows that she had a second husband, one John Gray 'generosus'. In the autograph terrier of his lands, Robert II calls her 'Mrs. Grey' and refers to her as 'my mother in law', which could mean 'stepmother' at this date (*O.E.D.* s.v. *mother-in-law* 2); she had fabricated a title to a piece of his land, 'which I thinke was done by her to defeat me' (Tanner 284 f.13 and f.17). There can be no doubt that Robert I married successively Agnes Munning and Margery Waldegrave (the Bures and Jenney connections are obscure).

By his second marriage, Robert I allied himself to a distinguished Suffolk family. Margery was the daughter of Edward Waldegrave of Sudbury, who died in 1500, according to the Waldegrave pedigree that appears in *The Breviary* (Hervey, facing p. 300),<sup>31</sup> and numbered among her ancestors Sir Richard Waldegrave, speaker of the House of Commons in 1381–2; her brother-in-law was Thomas Eden, Clerk of the Star Chamber, and her nephew Sir Edward Waldegrave of Borley, Essex, a politician who rose to the Privy Council under Mary and died in the Tower under her successor. A Mortimers roll of 1579–80 dates her death after the last court, presumably in 1578–9.

The marriage of Robert I's daughter, Margaret, to Andrew, son of Nicholas Hobart of Layham also speaks for the growing importance of the Ryececs, for Nicholas Hobart was the nephew of

<sup>30</sup> Muskett 1, 143. MS. Harley 380, f. 136v. (my italics). Miss Joan Corder kindly informs me that she had reached the same conclusion about the surplus Robert.

<sup>31</sup> Perhaps quite young, since his father died in the same year. The marriage is confirmed by slightly different pedigrees of Waldegraves in W. C. Metcalfe, *The Visitations of Essex* (London, 1878), 1, p. 308, and W. Rye, *The Visitations of Norfolk* (London, 1891). There were branches elsewhere in the county at Bures and Hitcham, and further afield at Smallbridge, Kent, and Lawford, Essex.



when his father died. As 'Robertus Rise filius suus' he first appears with his father in a Swiftes roll of 1535-6 (27 Henry VIII). Perhaps because his stepmother was left in possession of the family's Preston house until her death, he resided for a time at Monks Eleigh, or so it would appear from the will of Thomas Munning, his uncle, dated 1556, which makes 'Robert Ryce of Moncks Yllye, Gentleman' the supervisor, and from the fact that Thomas Rise II who is listed in the family obits, and was probably his son, died there in 1561. In 1563, however, he is described as 'Robertus Ryce de Preston' again.<sup>36</sup> There is a tradition that Robert II followed his father in being a Justice of the Peace (mentioned, for example, in Hervey, p. 232), but that could result from a conflation of the father and son, such as, we shall see, was made by Tillotson. He married Florence, daughter of Edmund Kemp of London, Esquire,<sup>37</sup> one of the Norfolk family, and three children are known, besides Thomas. Robert, the elder of two sons, was the author of *The Breviary*. Edmond Rice 'of London, Gentleman', died 'sick in body' in 1586 before either of his parents, leaving such small bequests as might be expected of a younger son, with the residue to Robert his brother and their sister, Bridget. His will shows he was one of a number of servants of 'my maister Mr. Richard Brauthwaite Esquire', who was not of sufficient importance to appear in the State Papers of the period.<sup>38</sup>

Robert II died in 1590. His will shows much larger monetary bequests than his father's, but the difference is no more than can be accounted for by Tudor inflation.<sup>39</sup> A terrier of his lands survives among his son's papers.<sup>40</sup> Prosperous Robert II evidently was, but if he vied in any way with Robert I in importance, the evidence for it is not to hand. His will, however, reveals one fact that was to govern the direction of his son's life in no small way: the opening clause, in which he bequeathes 'my sinfull Soule to the great mercye of my Lord God, and my sinfull Body to the Earth', reflects

<sup>36</sup> Muskett I, 105; II, 23. So also in 1568, Robert II appears at Preston—S. H. A. Hervey, *Suffolk in 1568*, Suffolk Green Books XII (Woodbridge, 1909), p. 11. Possibly he built himself a new house there; his will names 'my house that I nowe dwell in called Machons', which may be that referred to by D. E. Davy, in a note (quoted by Edmund Farrer) which I have not traced, to the following effect: 'In another house to the west of and not far distant from the church is an ancient chimney-piece, and on it is carved a shield of arms [of Ryece] . . .' (*The East Anglian Miscellany*, 1919, p. 22).

<sup>37</sup> The marriage is recorded in a Kemp genealogy in Harley 901, f. 142v.

<sup>38</sup> P.C.C. 55 Windsor, dated 30 October. Ryece dates his death on 31st.

<sup>39</sup> P.C.C. 10 Sainberbe, dated 20 April 1590, proved 1 February 1591. Ryece dates his death on 5 May. A graph in R. B. Outhwaite, *Inflation in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London, 1969), p. 11, suggests an overall rise in prices of about 400% between 1540 and 1590. Robert II acquired Priory Manor, Preston, from Robert Spring in 1580 (W. A. Copinger, *The Manors of Suffolk*, I p, 185).

<sup>40</sup> Bodley Tanner 284, f. 12, apparently in Robert II's hand.

unmistakably the shift towards the Protestant wing of the Church that was to make Suffolk a Puritan stronghold in the following century.<sup>41</sup>

#### ROBERT RYECE III, AUTHOR OF *THE BREVIARY*

The best impression of Robert Ryece's personality emerges, of course, from the reading of his book, charged with attentive love for the county of his birth, compassionate, free of rancour at a time when divisions ran deep, gently humorous. But the details of his life help to give that image flesh and blood.

Mere chance tells us the year of his birth. It appears that Sir Simonds D'Ewes had written to him for some information on family history, and took the opportunity to ask him his age. In a postscript to his reply, dated 2 February 1637/38 (MS. Harley 380, f. 136), Ryece writes: 'I was borne an<sup>o</sup> mundi 5555', which D'Ewes glosses '1555. His age 82—1637'. Described as Robert Rice Junior he appears already in the Preston Hall roll of 1565-6 (8 Elizabeth) as son and heir of Robert Ryse 'Armiger', being admitted by his father into three acres of land called Robert's Close; and five more tenements were transferred to him in 1572 (14 Elizabeth). His next appearance in the rolls is in 1580-81 (23 Elizabeth). By 1595-96 (38 Elizabeth), his father being now dead, he holds court in his own name.

In 1589, Robert III, now a man of about 34, married Mary Appleton (1574-1630).<sup>42</sup> She was the eldest daughter of a family of wealthy clothiers in Little Waldingfield, of whom the first brother, Isaac Appleton, was knighted, a younger brother, Samuel, emigrated to America and became progenitor of a famous New England family, a sister, Judith, married Lewis Bayley, the Puritan bishop of Bangor, and another, Sarah, married Henry Smith, Master of Magdalene College. The Appletons were of long standing in Little Waldingfield and probably acquainted with the Ryece family for several generations, for William Appleton, Mary's grandfather, married the daughter of Robert Sexton of Lavenham, who, we have seen, was Thomas Ryse I's executor. An indication

<sup>41</sup> Contrast Robert I's will, which bequeathes 'my soule vnto Allmighty God, to our blessed Lady Saint Mary, and to all the holly and blessed company of heuen'. See further, A. Everitt, *Suffolk and the Great Rebellion 1640-1660*, S.R.S. 3 (1960).

<sup>42</sup> For the Appletons, see Muskett I, 329, W. S. Appleton, *Family Letters . . . from the Bodleian Library* (Cambridge, 1902) and I. A. Jewett, *Memorial of Samuel Appleton* (Boston, Mass., 1850); for the Sexton match, Metcalfe, *Visitations of Suffolk*, p. 180. Mary was buried on 23 February 1629/30, according to the Parish Register (now in B.W.S.R.O.). D. E. Davy dates their marriage on 28 January 1589 (MS. Add. 19165, f. 182v.).

of Robert III's continuing close involvement with the Appletons appears in a letter that he wrote to John Mallowes of Bury on 28 March 1631: He would, he says, have been present at Sir Isaac Appleton's marriage, 'had I not then byn hyndred, by other occasions'; moreover, in 1608 Sir Isaac, 'lyenge vpon his death bedd, called mee, havinge married his syster, to wryte his wyll, which I dyd from his owne mowthe'.<sup>43</sup>

A similar tangle of relationships with the neighbouring gentry confronts us elsewhere when we look into Ryece's family and friends. Thus a local connection of some importance was Sir Robert Crane, for whom Ryece prepared a version of *The Breviary* in 1618-19 (see below), prefacing it with a dedicatory letter to his 'good friend'. Crane, of Chilton, near Sudbury, who came of an old and distinguished Suffolk family, was knighted in 1605, Knight of the Shire in 1625 and High Sheriff of Suffolk in 1632. Crane's widow later married Sir Isaac Appleton, whose brother, John, married Frances Crane. Similarly Bridgett, Robert III's sister, forged a new link with the Waldegraves: having survived her first husband, a Captain Shewte, she married Edmund Waldegrave of Bildeston.<sup>44</sup> All this indicates membership of a close-knit group of prosperous local gentry of Puritan persuasion, whose families championed the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War.<sup>45</sup>

Ryece's letters enlarge the range of his associates, many of whom, as might be expected, were men of antiquarian interests. He corresponded with Sir Simonds D'Ewes of Stowlangtoft, the antiquarian (himself a correspondent of Crane), to whom he was distantly related, Ryece's aunt having married John Clopton, great-great-uncle of Anne Clopton, D'Ewes's wife.<sup>46</sup> Another correspondent and friend, and a second link with America, was John Winthrop from Groton, one of the Massachusetts Puritans and first governor of the colony; several autograph letters to Winthrop, some under pseudonyms because they refer to contemporary theological controversies, survive among the latter's papers. A note in Ryece's hand also indicates some acquaintance with Augustine Vincent (1584?-1626), Windsor herald, who helped John Weaver in the compilation of his *Ancient Funerall*

<sup>43</sup> B.W.S.R.O. K 1/1. Knowledge of this and of a second letter, to the Commissioners at Bury, I owe to Mr. A. R. Allan.

<sup>44</sup> For the Cranes, see W. S. Appleton, *Memorials of the Cranes of Chilton* (Cambridge, Mass., 1868) and Jewett, *Memorial of Samuel Appleton*.

<sup>45</sup> On whom see Everitt, *op. cit.* in n. 41.

<sup>46</sup> Three letters from Ryece to D'Ewes are in Harley 376, f. 149, and Harley 380, ff. 136 and 137. Crane's letter to D'Ewes is printed by J. O. Halliwell, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (London, 1845), II, 238. Another letter from Ryece is in Bodley Tanner 72, f. 200 (endorsement lost, but said in the catalogue to be addressed to Crane).



*Monuments* (1631), according to the latter's 'Epistle to the Reader'.<sup>47</sup> His letter to John Mallowes of Bury is addressed 'to hys very lovinge and most respected good friende'.

Two more acquaintances of antiquarian interests can at least be postulated. One is James Strangman of Essex, who has been mentioned above. Though no direct evidence is forthcoming, Ryece believed their families to be related, and a manuscript purporting to be Strangman's genealogical collection (British Museum Add. 1301), many of the entries in which are dated 1586-89, gives an account of the arms of the Suffolk gentry depicted in the glass of Preston Church (f. 274). This glass is thought to have been set up by Robert Ryece III, who describes it in *The Breviary*, but Strangman's account is not a copy of Ryece's, and is probably, therefore, either the result of a personal visit, or based on an earlier description sent him by Ryece. Another indication of traffic between the two men is the immediately following list of Knights of Suffolk accompanying Henry III on his foreign wars, which agrees with that in *The Breviary* (Hervey, pp. 62-6), even to the melancholy observation that 'scant 6 ar this day to bee found descended in right line from any of them'.

A second possible antiquarian acquaintance is the William Winchell whose collections contained material in Ryece's hand, as we have seen. The Wincolls may have been related to the Ryeces, for the will of John Wincoll, dated 1576, includes a bequest to 'my sister Rice'.<sup>48</sup>

Robert Ryece has been so often the object of praise that it will be unnecessary to do more than call attention to one contemporary, and two very nearly contemporary, references.

The earliest notice occurs in John Guillim's *A Display of Heraldrie* (p. 341 of the second edition of 1632, 'corrected and much enlarged'; it is not in the first edition of 1610), after an illustration and description of the Ryece arms: 'This *Coate-Armour* belongeth to *Robert Ryece* of *Preston* in the *County of Suffolke*, *Esquire*, a worthy Gentleman, whose great charge and care in collecting and preserving the Antiquities of that *country* merits a large *Encomium*'.

Later in time, but the product of longer intimacy and closer knowledge, is the impression given by Robert Appleton, his nephew, in an inscription on the first leaf of a manuscript once in Ryece's possession and partly in his hand: 'Per industriam honesti et Generosi Viri Roberti Ryece de Preston in agro Suffolciensi.

<sup>47</sup> *Winthrop Papers*, Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston, Mass., 1929-47). 'Mr. Vyncente who hath made the surveye & visitation of Northamptonshire a<sup>o</sup> 1619 with the collection of all the Churches & places of noate therein sayeth he cowlde neuer fynde any coate of the surname Bouden' (College of Arms MS., p. 142, on which see below).

<sup>48</sup> Muskett I, p. 70.

Fuit Pauperibus largus, Amicis Bonus, Inimicis Christianus; Omnibus Generosus (Et mihi Avunculus Bonus). Ita Testor Robertus Appleton Viuit post Funera Virtus.<sup>49</sup>

Ryce's care for the poor is amply confirmed by the establishment of a charity at Preston which bears his name and exists to this day, commemorated by a plaque in the church; and also by his efforts, despite his age and infirmity, to prevent the frustration of a charity at Lavenham established by Sir Isaac Appleton, his brother-in-law, which are evidenced by the letter to John Malloves mentioned above, and by another to the Charity Commissioners at Bury (Plate V).<sup>50</sup> His will contains three more charitable bequests to the poor of Preston.<sup>51</sup>

The third early notice of Ryce is by Matthias Candler,<sup>52</sup> vicar of Coddendam from 1629, who compiled a long and important account of Suffolk families in the 1650's. Candler's remarks will be familiar, since they are, directly or indirectly, the source of most later notices of Ryce, but they are here repeated from a manuscript in which they are prefaced by an acknowledged quotation from Tillotson, which is usually overlooked.

Riece was yeoman of the guard to K. Henry 7. Note that all the Kinges guard were gentlemen borne at the first. He was Captain of Riece Banke & came to inhabit in Suffolk with little Iohn Vere E. of Oxford. His sone was Iustice of peace & settled himselfe at Preston—his name Roger—he liued in Preston in the dayes of Eduard 6, Mary, & Elizabeth (Thus farr Tilletson).

Robert Riece his sonne had his education in Geneua in the house of Theodore Beza. He liued in Preston in the days of Q. Elizabeth, K. James, & K. Charles, & died lamented, leauing a good name behind him, but sine prole. He was a man very skilfull in heraldry, and set vp the Royall armes of England in a faire table in the Church of Preston in Suffolk, & in the glasse windowes the coates of very many of the cheife gentry of Suffolk in his time, where they remaine this 25 March 1655.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> In the College of Arms MS., on which see below. It may be paraphrased: 'The labour of the honourable and well-born Robert Ryce of Preston in the County of Suffolk. He was generous to the poor, good to his friends, a Christian to his enemies, chivalrous to all, and a good uncle to me. So I, Robert Appleton, testify. Honour survives death.'

<sup>50</sup> Plate V is reproduced by kind permission of the Archivist, B.W.S.R.O. (K 1/1).

<sup>51</sup> P.C.C. 36 Harvey, printed by Jewett, *Memorial of Samuel Appleton*, pp. 73-82.

<sup>52</sup> On whom see J. J. Muskett in *The East Anglian*, N.S. iv (1891-92), p. 17.

<sup>53</sup> Harley 6071, f. 176v.; similarly in Bodley Tanner 257, f. 178v. There is a slightly different version of this in B.M. Add. 15520, omitting the excerpt from Tillotson. An inscription shows that Harley 6071 was once in the possession of Robert Appleton, Ryce's nephew.

William Tillotson, curate of Capel St. Mary, made a compilation on similar lines to Candler's in the 1590's.<sup>54</sup> His remarks therefore contain very early traditions of the family, but unfortunately they command little credibility. Besides being erroneously referred to as 'Roger', Robert I and Robert II have been conflated. No Riece appears among known 'captains' or governors of Ruys Bank, the fortress in Calais harbour, and Tillotson's spelling suggests rather someone's ingenious etymologizing.<sup>55</sup> The reference to John de Vere, fourteenth Earl of Oxford (1499?–1526) may be nearer the mark, since the manor of Preston Hall was vested in the Earl's family until 1558, but we know now that Thomas Ryse was there before the fourteenth earl was born. This does not make the office of Yeoman of the Guard any more convincing, though there were, of course, many '(ap) Ryses' (in various spellings) in Henry VII's service.

Turning to Candler's own contribution, we find for the first time an oft-repeated reference to Ryece's education at Geneva, which accounts satisfactorily both for his reputation for learning and for the absence of his name from the records of the English Universities and Inns of Court. However, his name is equally absent from the records of Beza's Academy and of foreigners resident in Geneva. The only reference Ryece himself makes to his education (in his letter to Crane) ignores Geneva, saying that Suffolk was the 'Country, vnto the which next vnder God, I doe owe that little that I have, for my birth, education, and habitation'. However, these remarks are hardly conclusive, and the Geneva records are incomplete.<sup>56</sup> On the whole it seems reasonable to accept the testimony of Candler, who ought to be reliable, writing as he was for local consumption only seventeen years after Ryece's death. In particular, it did not meet with disapproval from Robert Appleton, Ryece's nephew, who owned the manuscript later.<sup>57</sup> No evidence exists for Ryece's earlier schooling, though

<sup>54</sup> On Tillotson, see *The East Anglian*, O.S. 1, i, pp. 7, 17, and L. Dow, 'A Suffolk Heraldic Manuscript', *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxv (1952), p. 288.

<sup>55</sup> *C.P.R. Henry VII* II, shows Giles, Lord Daubney as 'keeper, general, governor' (etc.) in 1506, Robert Knyght as 'lieutenant' in 1508, and John Fortescu as 'captain' later in the same year—the titles all refer to the same office.

<sup>56</sup> Dr. Susanne Stelling-Michaud kindly informs me that there is no trace of Ryece in the *Livre du Recteur* of the Academy, in the correspondence of Beza, in the *Livre de l'habitant* of Geneva, or in the records of the lawyers and notaries of Geneva. The *Livre du Recteur*, however, is a far from complete list of students in the earlier years: until 1576, the entry of a name was conditional upon assent to Calvin's *Formula Confessionis Fidei*, which many students were unable to give; no names at all were entered between 1572 and 1576; and entry was not made obligatory until 1584, nor invariably carried out thereafter—see S. Stelling-Michaud, *Le Livre du Recteur de l'Académie de Genève (1559–1878)* (Geneva, 1959), pp. 14–16.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Appleton must have known Ryece well in his last years; see below.

there may be a hint in his chapter on Free Schools, which singles out for mention, with only three others, the small grammar school at Boxford, some eight miles from Preston, which was in existence as early as 1560.<sup>58</sup> In this connection, it is interesting to find that Ryece's father bequeathed twenty shillings 'to my very good friend Mr. Saundes of Boxford'. This must be Henry Sandes, a Puritan preacher, who was born about 1549, died in 1626, and 'instructed the people for forty years in the church of Boxford', according to his epitaph in the church there. Earlier he had been instituted vicar of Preston, on the presentation of Robert Ryece II, on 13 November 1578, but held the living for only a year, a successor being instituted on 25 November 1579. The Ryecees clearly had some interest in Boxford.<sup>59</sup>

Candler is certainly right in his attribution of the Royal Arms in Preston Church, for Ryece refers to them (Hervey, p. 187), and his will leaves 40s. and 'all my boxes of painting colours' to William Mills of Lavenham, painter and glazier, with instructions 'to keep, renew, and amend as need shall require . . . the Tables, Writings, and Incriptions' made for him in the church. These arms are still there, as also many, but not all, of those of the gentry in the windows. Ryece must have set up the latter when quite a young man, if I am correct in thinking that James Strangman knew of them in the 1580's.

Some clues as to Ryece's education are to be found in his work. Latin he obviously knew, and from his use of the word ἀπαις in a Wingfield pedigree (Hervey, facing p. 300; also in a pedigree in Ryece's hand in Harley 380, f. 14) one might infer a smattering of Greek too. He surely possessed a library, but does not record it in his will, which disposes only of 'my Latin bossed Bible of Trimelius in folio'; but he could have given away most of his books before his death, as he would seem to have done with his manuscript collections, equally ignored in his will. Sources of the *Breviary* noted below suggest some of the printed works he may have had on his shelves.

Not much more can be added to this bare outline of Ryece's life. In 1631, when he wrote to the Commissioners at Bury, he was a man of 76 or 77, and feeling his years—'euery wayes vnable to travell withowte greate hazarde of my healthe'.<sup>60</sup> Yet his mind remained clear and his hand steady for several years to come. He could still fill many pages, debating Puritan theological issues with John Winthrop between 1636 and 1637, and his last surviving letter, to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, was written when he was 82. Even

<sup>58</sup> I owe this suggestion to Mr. Scarfe. On Boxford School, see *The East Anglian*, N.S. I, pp. 116, 139.

<sup>59</sup> P.C.C. 10 Sainberbe. I take the information about Sandes from D. E. Davy's *Suffolk Collections*, B.M. Add. 19077, f. 101 and Add. 19078, f. 222v.

<sup>60</sup> See above, n. 50.

his lengthy will, made in the last few months of his life, was 'written with mine own hand'. It is dated 7 February 1637/38, and he was buried on 15 September.<sup>61</sup>

#### RYECE'S WORKS

Besides letters and *dissecta membra* noted above, Rycece was the author or compiler of at least three historical and genealogical works. One, which may not survive complete, is referred to as *Reuerendae antiquitatis in Suffolcia, Norfolcia, et aliubi nonnulla Spicilegia*, and appears to have been an anthology of Latin records relating to East Anglia. It survives only in a copy in another hand to be found in Bodley MS. Rawlinson B. 424 (f. 5ff.). The title is there preceded by the words 'Ex libro Magistri Roberti Rice titulato . . .'. Some of the items which follow are also incorporated in *The Breviary*.<sup>62</sup>

A second work, which bears no title, I shall refer to as *Suffolcia* from the fact that it is divided into sections variously headed *Suffolcia Primaeva*, *Suffolcia Antiqua*, and so on, with epithets *Praeterita*, *In Cinere*, *Que Fuit*, *Quae Olim*, *Nupera*. It survives in a number of copies, two of which are Rycece's autographs, and consists of brief accounts, in something like chronological order, of past royalty, nobility, and gentry of Suffolk, accompanied by descriptions, and in some copies illustrations, of their arms. The opening entry reads:

Uffa a Saxon beganne as the firste kinge of the Eastangles a° d<sup>r</sup> 562, which contayned Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge-shiere & the Ile of Elye; and for that his principall residency oftentymes was at or about Bury where are yet many of hys monumentes & armes seene, I coulde not but deservedly affoorde hym the first place. he bare azure 3 crownes in triangle or.

I have quoted this from a volume entitled *M.S. Collections for Suffolk* in the College of Arms,<sup>63</sup> which is partly in Rycece's hand,

<sup>61</sup> Preston Parish Register. For the will, see n. 51.

<sup>62</sup> Hervey, p. 63, foot, and pp. 101-23.

<sup>63</sup> Earlier owners of the College of Arms manuscript, according to the first page, were: 'P. Parsons, 1750'—(?) Philip Parsons (1729-1812) author of *Monuments and Painted Glass etc. in Kent*; 'R. Gough 1782'—evidently Richard Gough (1735-1809) antiquary, and friend of the next; 'J. Nichols 1782'—John Nichols (1745-1826), printer and author, as is made certain by his *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1817-58), vi. 342 note; and Edward, first Baron Thurlow, who presented it to the College of Arms in 1803. A possible earlier owner was Arthur Collins (1690?-1760), bookseller, genealogist, and historian, for B.M. Add. 15520, which appears to be a copy of the College of Arms MS., has a note saying (3v): 'Rycece's Collections of the Antiquities of Suffolk, Late in the Possession of John [read: Arthur] Collins Esq<sup>r</sup> deceased Author of the Peerage of England etc. Nicholas Revell 1761', unless Collins had his own copy of the College of Arms MS.

partly in that of Robert Appleton, his nephew, and partly in a third, unidentified hand. Ryece begins the volume with *Suffolcia*, which is written on the left-hand page of each opening, while beautifully laid out and coloured arms occupy the right.<sup>64</sup> The work is incomplete, for pencilled outlines of spaces for arms continue to f. 32, but are not filled in beyond f. 13. On f. 25<sup>v</sup>, Robert Appleton takes over and makes his own alphabetically-ordered collection of names and arms and other material, one entry being dated 1675, which continues to f. 48. At this point the old foliation ends, and a fresh numbering, by pages, begins. Pages 1–12 are in Appleton's hand, but thereafter another hand takes over to copy what must be part of Candler's collection. At p. 118 Ryece's hand returns, with more genealogical material, including pedigrees of Bokenham, Barnardiston, and D'Ewes. This section contains entries which date it not earlier than 1626. The unidentified hand returns after p. 157.

How did it come about that the College of Arms Manuscript passed from Ryece to his nephew, Robert Appleton? Appleton, in his tribute on the first page quoted earlier, posthumously acknowledges Ryece's goodness to him; yet curiously enough, though John Appleton, his younger brother, receives several bequests of land and his Trimelius Bible in Ryece's will, Robert Appleton gets no mention. As the elder son, he would, of course, have been better provided for by his own father, but I incline to think that Ryece had already made provision for Robert—who bore his name, one not otherwise found in the Appleton genealogy for several generations back—before he died. In the visitation of 1664, we find Robert Appleton described as 'of Preston'. John Appleton of Chilton, his father, died in 1630, when Robert was a boy of only thirteen or fourteen, and it would be natural for Ryece, childless himself, to take the two boys under his wing.<sup>65</sup> This might explain how a Ryece manuscript, unfinished and partly a formless collection, came into Robert Appleton's hands. Perhaps other books and manuscripts accompanied the gift.

When Lord Hervey edited *The Breviary of Suffolk* in 1902 he remarked that he had reproduced 'the text of the original seventeenth century Manuscript, adhering as closely as possible to Ryece's spelling, punctuation, and syntax' (p. 230). While the result is a commendably accurate transcript (made by a Mrs. Salmon) of Harley 3873, the earliest manuscript known to him, it is

<sup>64</sup> A copy of *Suffolcia*, with a short explanatory preface, follows *The Breviary* in the Ipswich Manuscript (see below). Other copies are in B.M. Add. 15520, and Bodley Tanner 230.

<sup>65</sup> John Appleton, Robert's brother, lived at Preston, dying there in 1650, his wife a year before him. Robert was certainly there from 1660, his three children being baptised in 1660, 1662, and 1664 (Preston Parish Register).

not true that it is in Ryece's hand, as a glance at any autograph letter immediately reveals. The 'signature' of his accompanying letter is also quite different, and the spelling 'Ryece' is not one that the author himself can be shown to have used.

Extant manuscripts of the *Breviary*—no rough draft survives—represent two distinct versions, both stemming from the author:

1) *The Crane Recension*, as I shall call it, was prepared by Ryece as a gift for his friend Sir Robert Crane and bears the date 'this 9th of February 1618' (i.e. 1619) in Ryece's accompanying dedicatory letter. Crane's actual copy does not survive, but a 17th-century transcript of it found its way into the Harleian collection (Harley 3873), a further transcript of which was used by Hervey for his edition, as we have seen.<sup>66</sup>

The Crane Recension contained a general description of the county, including copies of some ancient and some fairly recent records, a number of genealogies, and descriptions of monuments in seven churches, Lavenham, Preston, Bures, Long Melford, Wingfield, Dinnington, and Letheringham. The text is written on the recto only, the verso being blank; this fact, and the numerous blank spaces left at intervals in the text, suggest that Harley 3873 (though not necessarily the manuscript from which it was copied) was designed as a working copy, to be filled out with additional material. There are a number of later annotations, some printed by Hervey as footnotes, in which reference is several times made to Sylvanus Morgan's *Sphere of Gentry* (1661). If I am right in attributing them to the same hand as the text, the copy must date from the latter half of the 17th century, long after Ryece's death.

Unfortunately, Harley 3873 is not an ideal witness to what Ryece wrote, being full of obvious errors, only a small proportion of which could conceivably be due to the author, and other copies of the Crane Recension all stem from Harley 3873 and have no independent value.<sup>67</sup>

2) *Of the Ipswich Recension*, as I shall call it, the original survives in Ipswich Central Library, which acquired it from a Kent bookseller only as recently as 1938.<sup>68</sup> Comparison with Ryece's autograph letters shows it to be in the author's hand. Its readings are generally superior to those of Harley 3873, but it is a fair copy and

<sup>66</sup> Harley 3873 comprises two unrelated manuscripts bound up together. *The Breviary* begins on f. 10, which bears the inscription 'Oxford S M. bought in an Auction 1728/9' in the hand of Edward Harley, second Earl of Oxford, the collector. It contains various marginalia, but I have been unable to trace any earlier owners.

<sup>67</sup> B.M. Add. 8200 and Add. 19157, D. E. Davy's copy of Harley 3873.

<sup>68</sup> I am greatly indebted to Mr. Norman Scarfe for calling my attention to this manuscript, of which he gives an account in *The Suffolk Review*, III (1965).

not an original draft, for it is written continuously, without blank spaces or signs of authorial additions and corrections which the compilation of the original must have entailed, and it has typical copyist's errors.<sup>69</sup>

Copies of the Ipswich Recension may have been made, but only a late copy of an epitome of about half the work is known to me.<sup>70</sup>

The Crane and Ipswich Recensions differ considerably in contents. Though these differences do not in themselves prove that neither is dependent on the other, conclusive proof is to hand. Thus the Crane Recension has three separate lists of knights and gentlemen who supplied horses and lances in the emergency of 1599 (Hervey, pp. 92-97); *Ipswich* has only the first two, ending with Thomas Rowse (Hervey, p. 94, foot), and followed by the statement (not in *Crane*): 'If I had had the lyste or number of the other horses that came owte of the other parte of the Shiere, I knowe thaye woold farre haue exceeded these'. The absence of this list in the Ipswich Recension proves that it here represents a state of the text anterior to *Crane*.

On the other hand, *Crane* cannot be dependent on *Ipswich*, for in referring to Thomas Cheston, a distinguished Suffolk soldier, the Crane Recension describes him as 'a man yett living borne about Myldenhall where hee now liveth' (Hervey, p. 153). The Ipswich Recension makes him dead: 'a man not longe synce lyvinge borne abowte Myldenhall in Suffolk' (p. 147). Had *Crane* been derived from *Ipswich*, Ryece would not have reverted to an anachronism that he had already corrected in the latter.

The evidence points to Ryece having produced copies of the *Breviary* at different times, in one case at least to satisfy a friend. The contents of any one recension might be expected to depend on Ryece's purpose in preparing it, and on the interests of the recipient; it would vary according as he incorporated more or less material from his collections, though the core of the work—a general description of the county—remained fairly constant. *Crane* contains accounts of only seven churches, but Ryece's ambitions reached much further. In the same manuscript he declines, at one point, to say more about ports and havens 'untill in the next part I come to the description of every towne and village' (Hervey, p. 98).

<sup>69</sup> E.g. where the Crane Recension (Hervey, p. 59, l. 18) reads 'with the purity of true religion', in the Ipswich Recension Ryece wrote, as the last words on the page, 'with the true relligeon'. Seeing his omission, he crossed out *relligeon* but overlooked the word *true* before it, thus producing the clumsy reading 'with the true puritie of true relligeon'.

<sup>70</sup> B.M. Add. 5829. I have been unable to confirm a suspicion that the second and later part of Bodley Tanner 310 contains excerpts from the Ipswich manuscript or a version closely related to it.



That he ever carried out this vast project is not likely, but *Ipswich* goes some way towards it by describing the monuments in forty-seven churches. *Crane*, on the other hand, has some pedigrees of famous families that are not found, or not so fully, in *Ipswich*. He made no systematic attempt to bring the *Breviary* up to date, leaving some obvious anachronisms untouched, emending others. At the same time, the Crane Recension suggests that many alterations in the wording, mostly of a minor character, crept in, some perhaps unintentionally, others as deliberate improvements, probably *currente calamo*. There was thus no single definitive version of the *Breviary*.

The Crane Recension has been dated to 1618–19, or shortly before. The Ipswich Recension cannot itself be earlier than 1627, since its list of the Sheriffs of Suffolk ends with that year (p. 59) and it includes a copy of a monument of the same date erected by Sir Gyles Alington (p. 255), nor can it be later than 1631 (see below). But some of the material it contains represents the text in an earlier state than the Crane Recension. Thus, we have seen, it fails to incorporate material that Ryece confessedly desired and was actually to possess in 1618; so that the manuscript from which that part of the Ipswich Recension was copied must antedate that year. The list of Compounders (Hervey, p. 20) gives a similar picture. In the Crane Recension there is a list of dates and names, the dates ending at 1606, but the names continuing for a further eleven lines, the last being presumably the Compounder for 1617. The corresponding *Ipswich* list (p. 11) differs from *Crane* in transposing two names and omitting a third, but continues the dates as far as it goes; the last year given is 1614.

It is uncertain for whom the Ipswich Recension was prepared. It has undeniable associations with the D'Ewes family of Stowlangtoft; a large amount of space is devoted to the family, and there are numerous alterations and additions in the hand of Sir Simonds D'Ewes. These can be dated, some before, and others after, the death of Paul D'Ewes, his father (1631). But the manuscript does not seem to have stayed long in Sir Simonds's hands. It is even doubtful whether he owned it. A marginal note in his hand at the beginning of the section headed 'Of Martiall men' reads: 'Heere the entrance into this discourse shall be enlarged and the first instance bee out of recorde of a Clopton temp. E.1.', which suggests that the manuscript was merely on loan to him for copying. This would explain its absence from the Harleian collection where most of D'Ewes's numerous manuscripts have ended up. If a note inserted in the preliminary sheets is to be trusted, it was also handled by the herald Henry Lilly (c. 1589–1638. Rouge Dragon pursuivant, 1638). It certainly belonged later to another herald, John Anstis I (1669–1744), Garter king-at-arms. Anstis leaves no

signature, but his hand is unmistakable in the inscription on p. ii:

The Armes of Reyce being placed in the beginning of this book, I take it, these were the Collections of Robert Reyce of Preston in the County of Suffolk Esq<sup>r</sup> mentioned in Gwillims Heraldry p. 337 of the Ed. in 1660. Here are some Interlineations in the Handwriting of S<sup>r</sup> Symonds Dewes, and others of Henry Lilly Rouge Rose.<sup>71</sup>

The dating of the original of a work to which additions were constantly being made is more problematic. That Ryece was at work on it in 1603 is proved by a remark about 'this last yeares price 1602 of hopps' (Hervey, p. 32. In the Ipswich Recension the date appears in the margin), and by a reference to 'the laste assizes holden for this Cownty of Suffolk at Bury St. Edmondes the xxj<sup>te</sup> day of February 1602 [i.e. 1603] in the xlv<sup>th</sup> & laste yeere of the reigne of Queene Elizabeth . . .' (Ipswich Recension p. 67. In Harley 3873—Hervey, p. 90—the word *laste* is significantly omitted from 'laste assizes'). From a reference to 'the Queen' (Hervey, p. 155. Ipswich Recension: 'that ever renowned Queene Elizabeth') one might infer that she was still alive when that passage was written, but it could be mere inadvertence. Inadvertence, however, is excluded in the section on Knights of Suffolk, where Ryece names them, 'finding scarce twenty at the most within this shire which are honoured with this worthy order at this day' (Hervey, pp. 60–1); for *at this day* must antedate the accession of James I who, as Ryece observes, at once supplemented the nineteen listed by him (pp. 67–8) by another four on his arrival in London and by another twelve on 23 July. Parts of the original *Breviary*, then, were written shortly before, parts shortly after, the death of Queen Elizabeth on 24 March 1603. The fact that widely scattered parts of *The Breviary* date from around 1603 suggests that the core of the work was written then, except for obvious additions.

It is interesting to observe that Ryece's known literary activity after the original core of the work took shape falls into two periods: around 1618–19, when he prepared a copy for Crane; and around

<sup>71</sup> The last seven words are in another hand. That Anstis actually owned the book is a reasonable conclusion to draw from references to it by John Nichols in *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1812–13), II, p. 707, and *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1817–58), VI, pp. 341–3, and also from the heading of an epitome of the Ipswich Recension, once in the possession of Stephen Soame of Thurlow (now lost?), of which a copy was made by the eighteenth-century antiquarian William Cole (1714–82) into B.M. Add. 5829, headed 'Extracts out of Mr. Reyce's Breviary of Suffolk, now in the Hands of IOHN ANSTIS Esq<sup>r</sup> Garter King at Arms 1718'.

1627–29, to which period belong probably the Ipswich and College of Arms Manuscripts.<sup>72</sup>

Though it would be presumptuous for a layman to pass comment on Ryece's work as a genealogist, it may be remarked that he manifests a healthy scepticism for family tradition. In giving the genealogy of the Waldegraves, he comments: 'I confesse I have seen this discent following which I dare nott expresse it for truth, although some of the family doe much doate in it' (Hervey, p. 210–11). Writing to D'Ewes enclosing a pedigree he remarks in a postscript: 'albeit I doe heere sende you the wholle discente at large . . . , yett I praye you earnestly keepe it to your selfe. I knowe this famyly fearvently do distaste [i.e. dislike] mee for findinge owte the deserts of that Genealogie . . . I knowe mans nature is ambitious of his owne glory & antiquitie . . .' (Harley 380, f. 137). With Crane who sent him his family pedigree for perusal, one can see Ryece exercising tact; he cannot confirm his relationship with distinguished families, he says, but 'the better to acquaynt yourselfe with your Awncestors & Kynsolkes . . . I have heere made [a] boke in my rude hande to sende you what I haue from the beginnyng mette withall, as materiall for your discente' (Tanner 72, f. 200).

The value of his records of church monuments will also be better judged by others. At the very least their early date should commend them; as Ryece himself was only too well aware, man's links with the past are fragile. The monuments of the Waldegraves in Bures St. Mary had deteriorated in his own lifetime (Hervey, p. 204), and brasses in Lavenham had disappeared since he recorded them, purloined by one 'olde Arthur' who sold them to tinkers and hanged himself when caught at last (Harley 376, f. 149).

An assessment of Ryece as a historian would require a proper study of his sources. As a beginning (but one that probably overlooks the obvious) a few observations may be made. The title, if no more, may have been suggested by *The Breviary of Britayne* (1573), Thomas Twyne's translation of Humphrey Llwyd's *Angliae regni florentissimi noua descriptio*, published in the same year. As for the contents, there are general similarities in lay-out to earlier county histories, for instance to William Lambarde's *A Perambulation of Kent* (1576), but the closest model is certainly Richard Carew's *Survey of Cornwall*, with which Ryece agrees not only in the general ordering of contents and the titles of the majority of his

<sup>72</sup> Two letters to John Winthrop date from this period; also in Bodley Tanner 72, f. 200, the letter without addressee (stated to be Crane), dated 8 June 1627, and another long document (ff. 215–25). The latter is headed: *The Argumentes vpon an habeas Corpus*, dated 22 November 1627. It is in Ryece's hand, and concerns the case of Sir John Heveningham and others. Whether Ryece composed it, or merely copied it, is not clear.

sections, but not infrequently in the phraseology also.<sup>73</sup> The *Survey* was completed on 23 April 1602, according to Carew, and the printed work is dated that year. Since the *Breviary* dates from 1603, the conclusion is almost inescapable that the *Survey* was Ryece's immediate inspiration. For particulars of individuals and families he went to original documents: he could not, for instance, trace a certain name 'either in history or others discent, or in any records of knights fees, aydes or tenures' (Hervey, p. 206). Sometimes he quotes these documents entire (p. 100 f.); for Thomas Cheston, he says he has seen 'the severall writings, warrants and commissions', but records only 'the summary notes' (p. 153). At other times, he used printed books; for Wolsey (p. 137), for instance, Holinshed's *Chronicle*, for Thomas Cavendish (p. 156), Hakluyt's *Voyages*.

To a philologist, Ryece's *Breviary* has an interest that has not hitherto been exploited in his remarks about the language of Suffolk. In *The Arte of English Poesie*, published in 1589 but composed probably five to ten years earlier, George Puttenham had observed that the rising standard language of England was confined to the gentry and that even among them one could not trust anyone who lived more than sixty miles from London because they 'for the most part condescend' to the local dialect. Ryece probably knew the work, for he seems to echo Puttenham in rebutting him, and rebutting in terms which not only show that the standard had spread to the gentry throughout Suffolk in the fifteen to twenty years since Puttenham wrote (that is not unexpected), but also give perhaps the first evidence we have anywhere for its wider social currency. 'Our honest toylinge contry villager' still used a 'homely Iargon', i.e. dialect (*O.E.D.* s.v. *jargon* 5 'a barbarous, rude, or debased language'), as he was to do right to the present century, but 'the artificer [i.e. craftsman] of the good towne scorneth to followe them, when he naturally prydeth in the cownter-faitting imitation of the beste sorte of Language', while 'the occupier [i.e. tradesman] in the good towne' presumably followed suit, since Ryece notes that his 'smoothe speeche & cyvill conversation encreaseth the number of his customers'.<sup>74</sup>

A final question remains. All the Suffolk material in Ryece's hand mentioned here is in the nature of fair copy. None of it can have been made without drawing upon rough drafts and notes—indeed he refers in a letter to 'my ydle noates' on Raydon church,<sup>75</sup> and several times to his 'collections'. Yet no part of these original

<sup>73</sup> See *Review of English Studies*, N.S. xxi, November 1970, p. 472.

<sup>74</sup> George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. by G. D. Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 144-5. I cite Ryece's words from the better version in the Ipswich MS. pp. 38 and 40 (Hervey, pp. 54-5, 58). See also n. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Harley 376, f. 149.

collections has been traced. Robert Appleton, we have seen, obtained some miscellaneous and unfinished material in Ryece's hand (but these are not rough drafts), and Bodley Tanner 284 contains some family papers. Perhaps the rest have been destroyed; on the other hand, the fact that a far from intensive search has brought to light a number of Ryece documents in widely scattered places indicates that there is more to be found, possibly even the 'ydle noates' themselves. In the hope that another will be luckier than I have been, a page of the Ipswich manuscript is reproduced here (Plate IV), and a letter (Plate V), showing both his italic hand (used also for his signature) and his everyday and more distinctive 'secretary' form. In the latter, very characteristic are the long flourishes seen in the leftward and almost horizontal loop of *d*, the curling and looping tail of *g* (the final sweep to the right less pronounced in his earliest hand), and the boldly reversing descenders of *h* and *y*. Ryece, too, has certain characteristic spellings, e.g. a preference for medial *aw* and *ow* as in *bycause*, *owte*, for the group *woo*, as in *woorde*, *woolde*, *woorde*, and (I think, invariably) *thay(e)* ('they'); though each is by no means uncommon individually at this date, agreement in all these spellings features would help to confirm his hand.



PLATE V

Right Hon<sup>ble</sup>  
 I would have by my hande, upon y<sup>e</sup> viewe of y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 warrant to mee to see to the after named, to have served  
 my warrant & due satisfaction in y<sup>e</sup> arrears of  
 y<sup>e</sup> 10 demands. But by reason my personal  
 conduct, is already in arrears, upon myne estate, &  
 under my hande, more than y<sup>e</sup> 10 of y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 of y<sup>e</sup> 10. And findinge my goods & value  
 in any condition, make it more any wayes unable  
 to fulfill w<sup>th</sup> oute y<sup>e</sup> service of my estate. I  
 am sure consciencely to have done, not of any great  
 full contempt, but obayn enforced obedience,  
 respect of all I would earnestly entreate y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 1000. Commissioners, to make an order of y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 by hande, that it may not be deemed, to y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 Captains in these times & places, more of y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 singular iniquities & crimes, yet not intended,  
 to abuse y<sup>e</sup> warrant, to have an y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 as by hande. I have no more to saye, but  
 dependinge y<sup>e</sup> Almighty to directe us in all  
 y<sup>e</sup> wayes, I have to the my hande & do  
 200000  
 Witnessed y<sup>e</sup> 10  
 Com<sup>missioner</sup> Robert Ryece

Heaton Apr 12  
 1631

Letter from Robert Ryece to the Charity Commissioners at Bury, 1631.