

Sir Thomas Hesketh 1548-1605; story

A Lawyer

On the north choir aisle of Westminster Abbey is a wall monument with a full length coloured effigy of Sir Thomas Heskett or Hesketh (1548-1605), reclining on his left elbow. The Latin inscription can be translated:

"Sacred to the memory of Thomas Heskett, Knight, descended of the ancient and honourable family of the Hesketts in the County of Lancashire. Attorney of the Court of Wards and Liveries, and one of the Council appointed for the north; a man of deep acquaintance with the law, so of singular integrity of life. Julian his most afflicted wife, out of her love and duty to her most dear husband, erected this monument. He died 15 October 1605"

He was buried in the north transept on 17 October. Originally a kneeling figure of his widow stood in front of the tomb but this disappeared in the early 19th century. His coat of arms (argent, on a bend sable three garbs or, a crescent gules for difference) is shown, together with the arms of Singleton, as he was granted the wardship of Thomas Singleton of Staining (argent, three chevronels gules between three martlets sable). The Court of Wards and Liveries handled matters of inheritance relating to lands, estates and under-age heirs.

Thomas was the second son of Gabriel Hesketh of Aughton in the county of Lancashire, and Jane, daughter of Sir Henry Halsall. He was educated at Cambridge and became a lawyer and Member of Parliament. He married Julian or Juliana daughter of Edward or Edmund Fusey of London and they had one son Thomas. Hesketh was said to be "sound in religion" with "wisdom and ability" and did good service for Elizabeth I in the north of England, being knighted in 1603. He lived at Heslington, Yorkshire, towards the end of his life and left lands there to his brother Cuthbert. His other brothers were Bartholomew and Richard. His widow married secondly Sir Ranulphe Crewe and she was buried in the Abbey on 12 August 1629.