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Recreating Richard III: The Power of Tudor Propaganda

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Recreating Richard III: The Power of Tudor Propaganda

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While by definition a usurper, King Richard III was not the Machiavellian, hunchback he was portrayed as by his predecessors and in modern, popular culture. A closer examination of the War of the Roses reveals that his seizure of the throne was not an out of the ordinary event. In fact, the rediscovery of Richard III's skeletal remains in 2012 revealed that his negative physical attributes were exaggerated by Tudor supporters in efforts to strengthen their claim to the English throne, because they too could be branded as usurpers. Furthermore, there is a direct correlation to the increase in use of propaganda by the Tudor regime at times when there were other contenders to the throne and a decrease in the vilification of the Plantagenet dynasty after the Tudors were replaced. This paper is a three part attempt to re-evaluate Richard III. The first section is a survey of his life, followed by a bio-archaeological survey, and finally an evaluation of the validity of his image in the primary sources based on the evidence provided by the analysis of his skeletal remains.

On 2 October 1452, Richard III was born to Cecily Neville and Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York. Richard Plantagenet's mother, Anne Mortimer, was the great-granddaughter of Lionel of Antwerp, 1st Duke of Clarence and the second surviving son of King Edward III. His paternal grandfather, Edmund of Langley, 1st Duke of York, was the fourth surviving son of King Edward III (see Appendix 1). This lineage led some to assert that the 3rd Duke of York had a stronger claim to the English throne than that of the reigning House of Lancaster. The problem for Richard Plantagenet was that his claim was through his mother, while King Henry VI claimed descent through John of Gaunt, the third son of King Edward III.¹ The matrilineal claim

¹ Jacob Abbott, *History of King Richard the Third of England* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1900), 17-19 and 33- 36.

was a major reason that King Henry VI's throne was never seriously challenged prior to his mental breakdown in 1453.²

In August of 1453, thirty-one year old Henry VI entered into a trance-like state, from which he was unable to recognize or respond to anyone. Modern psychiatrists believe that the king was suffering from catatonic schizophrenia, because he came from a lineage with a long history of mental illness. His paternal forefathers, King Edward III and John of Gaunt, all exhibited signs of mental illness. As did his maternal great-grandmother, Joanna de Bourbon. His maternal grandfather, Charles VI, King of France, was even a diagnosed schizophrenic.³

King Henry's mental illness set into motion a series of events that made a civil war between the Lancaster and York factions unavoidable. Because he was the closest adult, blood relative to the King, the Duke of York was named the Protector of the Realm during the periods when Henry VI was unfit to rule. As a result, the Duke of York was able to make appointments, which increased his own political power. Arguably the most influential, was that of his brother-in-law, Richard Neville, 5th Earl of Salisbury, as Chancellor. This promotion, along with alliances created by the Percy-Neville feud, allowed Richard Plantagenet to gain the backing of the Neville faction, including the Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick. For the first time, the Yorkist had gained the support of key players among the ranks of the nobility.⁴

Richard III was only two years old when the War of the Roses began at the First Battle of St. Albans in May of 1455. The next half decade was characterized by a back and forth struggle between the major Lancastrian players, including the Duke of Somerset and Queen Margaret of

² A. J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England 1399-1509* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 141-143.

³ Nigel Bark, "Did Mental Illness Change the Course of English History? The Mental Illness of Henry VI," *Medical Hypothesis* 59 (2002), 416-421.

⁴ A. J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England 1399-1509*, 141-143.

Anjou, and the Yorkist faction. As a result of a devastating Lancastrian loss at the Battle of Northampton in July of 1460, Parliament convened to discuss the legitimacy of King Henry VI's claim to the throne. By October of the same year, the Act of Accord, which disinherited King Henry VI's son, Edward, and instead named Richard Plantagenet as the legitimate heir, was passed.⁵

When his father was named heir to the English throne, it seemed very unlikely that Richard III, the eleventh of twelve children and the youngest son, would ever himself be king. His odds of succession were increased by the high infant mortality rate of the fifteen century. In fact, only Richard and three of his elder brothers survived childhood.⁶ Despite this, the crown seemed to slip further from his grasp on 30 December 1460 when the Duke of York and Edmund, Earl of Rutland (Richard III's second oldest brother) were killed at the Battle of Wakefield. This left Richard's eldest brother, eighteen year old Edward, Earl of March, fighting for both his claim to the Dukedom of York and by way of the Act of Accord, the throne of England. As a result, eight year old Richard and his brother George were sent to the Low Countries by their mother to ensure the York lineage continue, should Edward fail.

Throughout the winter and spring months of 1461, Edward of March battled the Lancastrian forces led by Queen Margaret. Even though King Henry VI was still alive, "the King Maker," Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick was able to spin propaganda that turned southern England against Queen Margaret. Fear of plundering northern men led to the citizens of London denying the Lancastrian army entry into the city. Instead, Edward VI was unofficially crowned King based on the claims that Henry VI had violated the Act of Accord by allowing his

⁵ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, 147-157.

⁶ Clements R. Markham, *Richard III: His Life and Character* (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 2011), 1-6.

wife to take up arms against the rightful heir. Edward VI and the Earl of Warwick faced the Lancastrian army at the largest battle of the War of the Roses, The Battle of Towton, in March of 1461. The Yorkist army won a decisive victory, forcing Henry VI and his family to flee to France, while Edward VI made arrangements from his coronation.⁷

After months of exile, Richard and George were able to return to England. Following their brother's coronation in June of 1461, the youngest Plantagenets were sent to Middleham Castle to live in the household of the Earl of Warwick. Because Edward VI had bestowed upon Richard the titles of Duke of Gloucester, Knight of the Bath and Knight of the Garter, the Earl of Warwick was paid a tutelage of about £1000 for overseeing his education and knightly training. Richard was believed to have spent most of the 1460s at Middleham, until he reached the age of majority in 1468.

King Edward VI and Richard III seemed to have been fond of one another. Throughout his reign Edward granted his youngest brother several titles and estates, making him one of the wealthiest and most powerful nobles in England. At an early age Richard was granted the Duchy of Gloucester, the lordships of Pembroke in Wales and Richmond in Yorkshire, and the lands that John de Vere, Earl of Oxford had been forced to forfeit. For his tenth birthday, Richard was given the titles of Governor of the North, Admiral of England, Ireland and Aquitaine, and Constable of Corfe Castles and Gloucester. By the end of the decade he also held the positions of Chief Justice of North Wales and Constable of England. In return, Richard remained loyal to his King.⁸

⁷ E. F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century 1399 – 1485* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), 525-532.

⁸ Richard Cavendish, "The Birth of Richard III," *History Today* 52 (2002): accessed February 13, 2016.

A strife between the Crown and the Earl of Warwick had been brewing since 1464, when King Edward secretly married Elizabeth Woodville. This marriage did little for the security of the Yorkist dynasty or the creation of a foreign alliance for England. Its secrecy also made Warwick look foolish, because he had been pursuing a royal marriage to a French princess, even after the king had married Woodville. The rapid rise of the Woodville faction further alienated much of the nobility, thus in the summer of 1469 Warwick, aided by the King's own brother, George, 1st Duke of Clarence, rebelled against Edward IV. For a brief period in 1470, known as "the Readeption of Henry VI," Edward VI and Richard were forced into exile in Burgundy after a plot by Warwick, Queen Margaret and Louis XI, King of France restored Henry VI to the throne.

Backed by troops raised in Burgundy, Edward VI and Richard sailed home to reclaim the English throne in the spring of 1471. There the royal brothers were rejoined by some leading nobles, including the Duke of Clarence, who wished for reconciliation with his brothers. Based on the large number of casualties within his personal household, it is believed that Richard was given command of the Yorkist vanguard at the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury. If contemporary sources are accurate, eighteen year old Richard outflanked the much more experienced Duke of Exeter and Duke of Somerset during this campaign. The deaths of the Earl of Warwick during the Battle of Barnet and the Lancastrian heir, Edward, Prince of Wales, at the Battle of Tewkesbury, ensured that Edward IV was restored to the throne.⁹

The first real blight on Richard's reputation began as a dispute with his brother, George, Duke of Clarence over the division of the lands of the late Earl of Warwick. The Duke of

⁹ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, 276-292.

Clarence had married Isabel Neville, the eldest daughter of Richard Neville, in 1469. Neville's younger daughter, Anne, had been married to Edward of Westminster, who was killed at the Battle of Tewkesbury. In efforts to further unite the houses, Edward IV betrothed Anne Neville to Richard in 1472. After years of conflict, Parliament passed two successive acts in 1474 and 1475, which gave Gloucester control of the northern lands and Clarence control of the south. Despite receiving more lands, Clarence remained at odds with his brothers. After the death of his wife in 1476, the possibly mentally unstable, Duke of Clarence was once again involved in a plot to overthrow King Edward IV. The trial was overseen by the King himself, and Clarence was sentenced to a private execution within the Tower of London for the act of treason.

It is unclear as to what role Richard played in the execution of his elder brother. While he was well rewarded for his support, the Duke of Gloucester made the claim that he had been in opposition to his brother's execution. No matter his actual stance, it appears that the execution of the Duke of Clarence did not leave a major stain on Richard's image during his life. Throughout the latter part of King Edward IV's reign, Richard spent much of his time fighting military campaigns in the North or on the continent. Victories in both France and Scotland earned him much fame and respect. In fact, if not for his brother's sudden death on 9 April 1483, history may have remembered Richard III much differently.¹⁰

King Edward V was twelve years old when he inherited the crown in 1483. Parliament came to the decision that the King's uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester would serve as the chief councilor during Edward V's minority. Upon hearing of his brother's death, Richard's first acts were to publically pledge his allegiance to his nephew and to begin correspondence with two

¹⁰ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, 305-309.

men who were out of favor with the Woodville faction at court, Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham and William, Lord Hastings. On the 29 April the combined retainers of Buckingham and Gloucester met with Anthony Woodville, 2nd Earl of Rivers, who was the brother of the Dowager Queen Elizabeth and the man charged with the protection of the King's person, at Northampton. Gloucester had the Earl of Rivers and his associates arrested, before traveling to retrieve King Edward V from Stony Stratford and traveling south to London.

On the 10 May, Richard was made Lord Protector of the Realm. Although the city of London was reassured by the requirement of the swearing of an oath of fealty to the young king, the Dowager Queen and her other seven children fled to sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. She eventually turned over custody of her youngest son, Richard, Duke of York, to the Archbishop of Canterbury so that he might attend Edward's coronation. On the 22 June, the day to which the coronation had been postponed, Ralph Shaw proclaimed that Richard was the only legitimate heir of York during a sermon at St. Paul's Cross. The argument was put forth that Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was invalid, because he had already entered into a pre-contract with Lady Eleanor Talbot. This claim, which was aided by the fact that their marriage occurred in secret, declared Edward V and Prince Richard illegitimate.

Over the next few weeks Richard's claim to the throne was repeated, as a sizeable army assembled in northern England. On the 6 July 1483, with the support of an army of 4,000 men, Richard III was crowned King of England. Around the same time, Edward V and Richard of York were taken into the inner rooms of the Tower of London. The young boys were reportedly seen less and less over the course of the summer of 1483, thus giving rise to the "legend of the princes of the Tower." Richard III's reputation was harmed by the rumors that spread across the

continent. It was believed that by mid-September the two boys were dead, likely on the orders of the King himself.¹¹

These rumors did not help Richard III, as his reign was already plagued by rebellion and unrest. Only months after he took the throne, former ally, the Duke of Buckingham, joined the Woodville-Beaufort rebellion, which aimed to put Henry Tudor on the throne. Henry Tudor's claim was tenuous at best. His mother was Lady Margaret Beaufort, the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and fourth surviving son of Edward III. Her father, John Beaufort, was the son of Gaunt and his third wife, Katherine Swynford. Lady Swynford was Gaunt's mistress for twenty-five years prior to their marriage and all four of their children were born out of wedlock.¹² To strengthen his claim, Tudor planned to marry Elizabeth of York, the eldest daughter of the late Edward IV. Storms and unfavorable tides resulted in a failed landing for the rebels. The Duke of Buckingham was executed and the rebellion temporarily crushed. Despite his victory, King Richard III still had to contend with the claim of Henry Tudor and the gossip mill of London. The death of his wife, Queen Anne, led to the rumors that Richard had poisoned her so that he might solidify his claim to the throne by marrying his own niece, Elizabeth of York. It is unlikely that this was Richard's intent, because he had Parliament declare Elizabeth illegitimate with the passing of *Titulus Regius*.

In August of 1485, Henry Tudor landed in England with the backing of about 2,000, mainly French, troops. By the time he met King Richard III on the battlefield, his forces had grown to around 5,000 men. Despite this, Tudor was facing a royal army that was at least twice

¹¹ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, 328-332.

¹² Marilee Hanson, "House of Tudor Genealogy Chart and Family Tree," http://englishhistory.net/tudor/genealogy-chart-family-tree/, February 4, 2015.

as large. At the Battle of Bosworth Field, on the 22 August, Richard divided his three groups, giving commands to John Howard, 1st Duke of Norfolk and Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland. The less experienced Henry Tudor gave command of the majority of his troops to the Earl of Oxford. The failure of the vanguard, which was led by the Duke of Norfolk, and inaction by both Lord Stanley and the Earl of Northumberland led Richard III to attempt to end the battle quickly. The king made a rash decision to personally lead a cavalry charge around the battle into the personal guard of Henry Tudor. An accomplished soldier, Richard was believed to have killed Henry Tudor's standard-bearer, Sir William Brandon, before Sir William Stanley intervened on the behalf of Tudor. Cut off from his troops, Richard III and his small command were quickly overrun.¹³

The death of Richard III signified the end of the reign of both the House of York and the Plantagenet dynasty. The newly crowned Henry VI had Richard declared a usurper, and his body stripped naked before being strapped to a horse. For two days the dead man was displayed in Leicester in order to eliminate rumors that he had survived the battle and to crush Yorkist opposition. For more than five centuries, after the destruction of his original tomb during the Protestant Reformation, the body of Richard III remained unaccounted for. It was not until the 4 February 2013 that a mixed team of archaeologists, historians and forensic scientists confirmed that the remains found at a site, formerly the location of the Greyfriars Priory Church, in Leicester were beyond a reasonable doubt those of King Richard III.¹⁴

¹³ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, 334-348.

¹⁴ Jo Appleby, Guy N. Ruttly, etc. al. "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," *The Lancet* 385 (2015): 253.

Leicester has been an urban area since the Roman Empire, so there is nearly 2,000 years' worth of archaeological record beneath the city. A population of nearly 330,000 makes archaeological excavations in Leicester difficult to get approved and costly. It is also against anthropological ethics to set out with the sole intentions of finding the remains of an important or famous individual. Thus, the project began, not as a search for a lost king, but as an effort to gain more information about the Greyfriars, a friary of the Franciscans that was shut down during the Protestant Reformation.

While the friary was believed to be located in the center of the city, its exact position was unknown. Luckily, much of the groundwork in finding the church was laid out by twentieth century historians, Charles Billson, David Baldwin and Richard Buckley. The project, which had originally begun in 2011, was paused after Ground Penetrating Radar surveys revealed a web of underground pipe lines, but little else. Because of a lack of building stones in the area, materials were often reused after a structure had been abandoned. This resulted in archaeologists finding "robber trenches" rather than actual walls, making Ground Penetrating Radar less effective. Instead, the team was forced to do survey digs. Two 30m x 1.6m trenches (Trench 1 and 2) were dug to see if the first of three potential locations, a social services car park, was the former location of the friary. The archaeological team was lucky in discovering sections of two robber trenches in Trenches 1 and 2. The orientation of the features revealed that the remains of an east to west facing structure were buried at the site. It was determined that this was most likely the site of friary, because the majority of Christian churches have an east-west orientation.

On the very first day of the dig, the 1 September, human remains were discovered in Trench 1. Because of lack of knowledge about the orientation of the entire site, the bones were left intact and recovered. The digging of a third trench gave the archaeologists a better idea of

how the site was laid out. It was believed that the actual church was located at the north end of the site, near Trench 1. The widening of this trench revealed that there was a division between the choir, the place inhabited by churchgoers, and the presbytery, which was only entered by the friars. The discovery of this division meant the remains in Trench 1 were in the exact location that John Rous claimed Richard III was buried in his work, *Historia Regum Angilae* (The History of the Kings of England.)¹⁵

On the 5 September, Dr. Jo Appleby began the exhumation of the human skeleton in Trench 1 (labeled Skeleton 1.) There were immediate signs that grave was unusual for its estimated time period. The average Leicester grave from the medieval period was dug with clean, squared sides, but the grave in question was described as having “messy, sloping side and was smaller at the top than the bottom, as if it had been dug quickly.”¹⁶ Positioning of the skeleton suggests it was not wrapped in a shroud, which was equally as common as coffin burials among the lower class of the time period. There was also no evidence, such as nails, hinges or remnants of wood, to indicate the body was buried in a coffin. In fact, all material artifacts found within the grave appeared to have been accidentally incorporated and had no ceremonial attachment to the burial itself. It is even possible that the body was buried naked, which was very uncommon for the time. Because the friary was considered consecrated grounds, the individual in the grave would have received at least some type of Christian burial. The lack of associated artifacts makes it impossible to determine the degree of respect the body received in terms of burial.

¹⁵ Maev Kennedy and Lin Foxhall, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered* (Great Britain: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 5-20.

¹⁶ Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 21.

There were also interesting oddities about the skeletal remains themselves. While the feet were missing (common in ancient burials because of the small size of the tarsal bones), the bones of the hands were present. Their odd positioning may be indicative of the hands being tied together at the time of burial, but this cannot be proven. When approaching the grave from the head end, it appeared that the skull might have belonged to another individual, because it was on a different plane/level than the rest of the skeleton (see Appendix 2). The most unusual aspect of the remains were discovered when Dr. Appleby reached the thoracic vertebra (middle of the back.) Upon first glance, it appeared that the spine was only partially preserved, but when excavating a few inches further to the left than the predicted normal placement, Appleby discovered the spine was fully intact. Skeleton 1, much like the hunchback that Richard III was famously portrayed as by later historians, had an extremely curved spine.¹⁷

While the burial location and curved spine led scientists to believe the skeleton could potentially be the long lost remains of King Richard III, there was still many tests to be run before this hypothesis could be confirmed. The first questions asked when recovering skeletal remains, “is it bone?” “is it human?” and “what is the minimum number of individuals?” were already answered beyond a reasonable doubt by the time the bones were transferred to a laboratory. Following the standards of conduct set by the Forensic Anthropology Society of Europe, which is a subsection of the International Academy of Legal Medicine, researchers from various departments (archaeology, ancient history, forensic pathology, engineering, and genetics) and universities began to construct a biological profile that would attempt to access the identity of the human remains.¹⁸

¹⁷ Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 20-22.

¹⁸ Cristina Cattaneo, “Forensic Anthropology: Developments of a Classical Discipline in the New Millennium,” *Forensic Science International* 165 (2007): 186.

Direct examination of the skeleton and CT images were used to complete the biological profile, which includes age at time of death, sex, population affinity (race), stature, signs of trauma, pathologies, taphonomy, and manner of death. Prior to evaluation, the entire skeleton was placed in anatomically correct position before undergoing a post-mortem CT-scan.¹⁹ A computed tomography (CT) scanner generates cross-sectional images that can be reformatted in multiple planes, including three-dimensions. This allows for the magnification and better examination of smaller bones and signs of trauma, and an internal view of the bones without cutting them open.²⁰ In addition to the full body scan, the skull, limbs, spine and pelvis were each scanned separately using an Aquilion 64-slice scanner and then reconstructed to 0.5 or 1.0 mm.

Sex assessment was based on the sexually dimorphic features of the os pubis and the skull. The os pubis of Skeleton 1 was characterized by a flat auricular surface and narrow sciatic notch. Prominent cranial features included, a mastoid process that was much larger than the external auditory meatus (ear), a large brow ridge, increased definition of the occipital bones (back of skull) from the attachment of larger muscles and a heavy, square chin/jawline. All of these traits are indicative that skeleton 1 was male.²¹ These assessment was confirmed by the presences of a Y chromosome during preliminary DNA analysis.²²

Age at time of death was calculated based on the complete fusion of the medial clavicle (collarbone), wear of the auricular surface of the ilium and os pubis, rib end morphology and

¹⁹ Appleby "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," 253.

²⁰ Melissa Conrad, "CT Scan," Medicine Net, http://www.medicinenet.com/cat_scan/article.htm. Accessed February 17, 2016.

²¹ Appleby "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," 253.

²² Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 60-61.

cranial suture closure.²³ For adult remains, the morphological changes to the auricular surface of the pubic symphysis is the most accurate method for determining age. Erosion to the surface over time occurs in a predictable manner, regardless of sex or population affinity. The skeleton in question exhibited signs of erosion the auricular surface, but no signs of increased porosity. This is evidence that the individual was within the age range of thirty to thirty-four when they passed away.²⁴ It is also consistent with what is known about Richard III, who was believed to be thirty-two years of age when he was killed at Bosworth Field.²⁵

Because of the Shakespearean play, Richard III was one of the most famous “hunchbacks” in history. This made the clinical diagnosis of Skeleton 1 with scoliosis a monumental occurrence. Polymer replicas of the spine were created based on CT 3D reconstructions (see Appendix 3). The Cobb angle, which must be at least 10 degrees for the diagnosis of scoliosis, was 75 degrees from the upper border of T6 to the lower border of T11. The apex of this right curve was located between vertebrae T8 and T9. Experts estimate that the curve would have been closer to the range of 70 to 90 degrees during life.

The pathologies of Skeleton 1 was likely the result of adolescent onset idiopathic scoliosis, which began around the age of ten. The abnormalities of the vertebrae (such as lateral angulation of spinous processes, asymmetry of facet joints, and wedging of vertebral end plates) were only present in the thoracic region. This, combined with the normal shape and size of the foramen magnum and the absence of structural spinal abnormalities (such as unilateral bars or hemivertebrae), make congenital scoliosis improbable. Neuromuscular causes were also ruled

²³ Appleby “Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis,” 253.

²⁴ Daniel L. Osborne, Tal L. Simmons and Stephen P. Nawrocki, “Reconsidering the Auricular Surface as an Indicator of Age at Death,” *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 49:5 (2004): 1-2.

²⁵ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, 334-348.

out due to normal cortical thickness of the hips and legs and a normal amount of muscle markings on the bones. Experts believe that while the curve of the spine was present, it would not have been severe enough to cause the individual to walk with an overt limp or be unable to participate in strenuous physical activity.²⁶

The manner of death proved to be more difficult to determine, because the lack of overlapping wounds/fracture lines made it impossible to establish the specific sequence of injuries. The forensics team identified eleven perimortem, or around the time of death, injuries on Skeleton 1. Perimortem wounds are characterized by a lack of evidence of remodeling/healing. Of the eleven injuries, nine to the cranium and two to the post-cranium, three had the potential to have caused death.²⁷ It is possible that some of the eleven cut marks and fractures were the result of taphonomic action, such as ground pressure and root activity, rather than trauma. These include a fracture to the mandible, a zygomatic injury, a fracture running from the first premolar towards the mental eminence and the separation of the right zygomaticomaxillary suture.

A 10mm linear, incised wound was located on the right side of the mandible (jaw bone.) The outer aspect of the cut was triangular in shape, while the cross-section was smooth, with a narrow V-shape. This is highly consistent with the marks created by a dagger or large knife rather than a sword. Swords typically cause conchoidal flaking or chipping, which was not present, and have an uneven cross-section with a roughened wall. The shorter length of the wound (experimental analysis show that swords tend to leave a mark of at least 20mm) is also

²⁶ Jo Appleby, Piers D. Mitchell, etc al. "The Scoliosis of Richard III, Last Plantagenet King of England: Diagnosis and Clinical Significance," *The Lancet* 383 (2014): 1944.

²⁷ H.E. Bonney, "Richard III: Skeletal Evidence of Perimortem Trauma," *The Lancet*, 385 (2015): 210.

consistent with a smaller weapon. If this wound occurred while the individual was still alive, it would not have resulted in death.

A sharp force wound on the anterior aspect of the ramus of the mandible also did not appear to be fatal. The marks are consistent with striations created by many different tools. The small size (5mm by 4mm) and lack of severity of the wound led scientists to determine that the steps necessary for determining the mode of production would have been more of a risk to the condition of the skeleton than the results were worth. The matching up of a 10mm hole on the right maxilla with a 14mm fracture line on the posterior aspect of the same bone, has led to the conclusion that the two are entry and exit wounds. These injuries were most likely the result of a stab wound inflicted by a dagger with a stiff, square blade. If inflicted in life, the stab would not have been life threatening, because it did not penetrate the skull. Another sharp force wound was inflicted to the left parietal bone. The blow resulted in a shallow (30mm by 25mm) scooped injury that cut the diploe and removed the outer table. A similar wound was inflicted to the right parietal bone. Analysis of the striations led experts to believe that both injuries were caused by the same blade, but they are unable to pinpoint the exact weapon.²⁸

A keyhole shaped injury located 65mm behind the Bregma, on the sagittal suture. "This injury was associated with an interior inner table injury: two bone flaps were pushed inwards toward the location of the meninges and brain."²⁹ Generally, this type of injury is associated with a glancing ballistics impact, but the interior table injury is evidence that this particular wound was the result of blow from a right angle. An illustration from a late fifteenth century manuscript depicts this type of injury occurring when the victim is struck from above by a dagger. If the

²⁸ Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," 253-256.

²⁹ Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," 256.

blow was struck while the individual was alive, it would have caused internal bleeding into the extradural space but not immediate death.

The right tenth rib exhibited signs of outer sharp force trauma 70mm from the rib head. The cross-section of the injury is consistent with that of a blow from a fine-edged dagger, which occurred from behind and slightly to the right. The thoracic cavity was not penetrated, so the injury would not have been fatal. Despite this, the injury is interesting because it would not have occurred if the victim had been wearing armor. As the reigning king at the time of his death, Richard III would have been dressed in full plate armor. It was customary at the time for leaders to wear a cuirass of steel plates, which would have been impenetrable by a small dagger. This has led scientists to believe the post-cranial injuries were inflicted post-mortem, after the body had been stripped of its armor.

Three shallow cuts to the scalp's surface is the first of the three potentially fatal wounds. The shaving style cuts would have caused a significant amount of blood loss, which if left untreated, would have resulted in death. Appleby makes a point to clarify that the cuts were not likely the result of scalping. Although there are some cases of scalping during the medieval period, it was not a common occurrence on the battlefield. The act of trophy taking generally does not leave cut marks on the bone, or if it does leave marks, they are located closure to the front/forehead than the wounds described here.³⁰

The second potentially fatal wound was present on the inner aspect of the right innominate bone. The superior pubic ramus was penetrated above the medial border of the obturator foramen, which resulted in its separation from the innominate bone. This injury was

³⁰ Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," 253-256.

likely caused by a fine-blade weapon penetrating the right buttock with enough force to “transverse the right side of the pelvic cavity through to the anterior aspect of the pelvic bone.”³¹ If the injury occurred while the victim was alive, it would have caused significant internal injury to the pelvic organs, which had the potential to be life-threatening. As with the wound to the ribs, experts believe the pelvic wound likely occurred after death. Not only would he have been clad in protective armor, the war saddle would have offered additional protection. The angle of entry of the wound is also consistent with the account of Richard III’s body being thrown over a horse and suffering blows.

The injury that has been deemed to be the most likely cause of death was a sharp force blow to the trabecular bone. The injury was penetrating, with an entry diameter of 32mm by 17mm. A 25mm radiating, linear fracture situated medio-posteriorly from the site of entry has led scientists to believe that the weapon penetrate through the bone and brain to the opposite side of the skull (a distance of 105mm.) Diagnostic tests revealed that the injury was likely caused by a large bladed weapon, such as a bill/halberd or sword. This direction of entry is consistent with the victim kneeling with their head pointed downward. If they were alive at time of death, the blow would have caused a fatal subarachnoid hemorrhage (bleeding of the brain) or an air embolus.

The team found that the trauma analysis was consistent with near-contemporary accounts of the Battle of Bosworth Field. Historians suggested that Richard III’s war horse became stuck in the mire, so the king abandoned it during the fighting. This hypothesis is supported by the amount of wounds that were most likely caused by hand-to-hand combat. None of the cranial

³¹ Appleby, “Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis,” 257.

wounds are consistent with that of a victim wearing any type of helmet that was common during the 15th century, so it is likely that Richard III's helmet was lost during the fighting or assaulted after his helmet was forcibly removed. Experts believe that the helmet was more likely to have been lost during fighting, because of a lack of parry (defensive wounds) to the hands or arms.³²

In order to get a better understanding of the types of weapons and wounds common during the life of Richard III, scientists compared the wounds present on Skeleton 1 to those from a well-documented mass grave from the Battle of Towton. The battle took place only twenty-four years before the Battle of Bosworth Field, so military technologies would have been very similar. The mass grave at Towton was discovered in July of 1996 during a construction project. At least sixty-one individuals were buried in the pit, but those in the portion disturbed by construction were reburied without in-depth examination. The undisturbed portion of the 6m by 2m pit was excavated by a team from the University of Bradford. Thirty-eight individuals, all male, between the ages of sixteen and fifty years, were recovered. These remains are housed at the Bioarcheology Research Center in Bradford, so Dr. Appleby was able to do a comparative analysis of the specimen with Skeleton 1.

Appleby found significant similarities between the wounds of Skeleton 1 and those from the Towton pit. Of the thirty-eight individuals, twenty-seven (98%) exhibited major wounds to the head. Each skull had between one and thirteen injuries. Sharp force trauma, caused by swords, halberds and daggers, were much more common than puncture wounds or blunt force trauma. The majority of wounds were inflicted to the left face, which is evidence of direct hand-to-hand combat with a right handed opponent. The frequency of "insult injuries" is evidence that

³² Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III: A Skeletal Analysis," 253-258.

Richard III's body was not treated any harsher than any other enemy during the War of the Roses. In fact, several of the Towton skulls suffered savage blows that disfigured their faces. This did not happen to Richard III's body, because it was necessary for Yorkist supporters to see proof that he had been slain.³³

While the osteological evidence suggested that Skeleton 1 was the remains of King Richard III, the scientists had to exhaust all possible tests before making the announcement. Samples taken from a rib were sent to two radiocarbon labs in Glasgow and Oxford for dating. Because carbon-14 decays at a quick and known rate, it makes measuring its relative proportion to carbon-12 and carbon-13 a reliable way of determining the age of a sample within a range of a few years. There are some problems with this method, such as influence of diet, which have to be corrected for. An individual with a diet more rich in nutrients appears to be older than it really is.³⁴ The presence of intestinal parasites (roundworm eggs) in the sacral area of the pelvis revealed that while alive Skeleton 1 consumed a more diverse diet. The absence of fish tapeworm, liver fluke and beef/pork tapeworms suggests that the food was thoroughly cooked to avoid the transmission of parasites, which would be associated with an individual of the upper class.³⁵

As predicted, both radiocarbon labs received uncorrected dates that were close to King Richard III's known time of death. The Oxford lab dated the bones to 1412 to 1449, and the Glasgow lab came back with a range of 1430 to 1460. Both had a 95 percent probability. Once the dietary factor was corrected via Bayesian statistical modeling, the labs were able to get a

³³ Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 64-65.

³⁴ Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 73-76.

³⁵ Piers Mitchell, Hui-Yuan Yeh, Jo Appleby and Richard Buckley, "The Intestinal Parasites of King Richard III," *The Lancet* 382 (2013): 888.

more narrow range of dates. The bones were dated to 1430 to 1530 with a 96 percent probability or 1475 to 1530 with a 68.3 percent probability. This confirmed that the bones were from the lifetime of Richard III.³⁶

The final step in confirming whether or not the remains belonged to King Richard III was the completion of a DNA analysis. Because Richard III had no surviving, legitimate children, his lineage had to be traced through the descendants of siblings. In 2003 John-Ashedown-Hill, a historian, traced the only surviving and clearly documented Yorkist line, that of Anne of York, to a British immigrant living in Canada, Joyce Ibsen. Joyce's DNA sample had been taken in hopes of identifying bones recovered from the Mechelen church sites as those of Margaret of York. Although Joyce passed away in 2008, she has three surviving children. Her son, Michael Ibsen, gave the sample that would be used to confirm the identity of Richard III.

The DNA analysis occurred in two phases. The preliminary analysis, completed prior to February 2013, was focused on determining the sex of Skeleton 1 and comparing the mitochondrial DNA from the skeleton with that of Ibsen. Two separate ancient DNA labs in Toulouse and York used well-established methodology for profiling degraded DNA to analysis the mtDNA. The results showed that the sample taken from Ibsen and that taken from Skeleton 1 were an exact match, therefore confirming the skeletal remains belonged to Richard III beyond a reasonable doubt.

The announcement of the rediscovery of Richard III's remains at a press conference on the 4 February 2013 captured the attention of historians and the general public alike. This interest has resulted in many taking a second look at what the life of a man once held as the epitome of

³⁶ Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 73-76.

tyranny was truly like. While the biological profile can identify the skeletal remains of Richard III, they do little to tell us about his personality. Despite this, they do give us a standard to judge the propaganda of the Tudor era and later historians by.³⁷

Until the latter half of the twentieth century, the legacy of King Richard III divided historians into two main camps. The first group of historians and other writers (many of those writing contemporary or near-contemporary accounts held positions as play writes, lawyers and clergymen rather than trained historians) held the traditional, Shakespearean view of Richard the hunchback, usurper and serial murderer. Unchallenged for nearly two hundred years, these works tended to focus largely on Richard's deformed physical appearance, the legend of the Princes of the Tower and seizure of the throne. These writers created the image of Richard as a man with a humped back, severe limp and a withered arm that has reappeared in popular culture.³⁸

A second view of Richard, referred to as the "white legacy," appeared later in the historiography. Writing as in response to the "black legend," Sir George Buck and Horace Walpole became the first to defend Richard III's claim to the throne in the late 1600s and early 1700s. Writers of this style also make the claim that the king was the victim of the Tudor propaganda machine and the belief that a twisted mind would be housed in a twisted body.³⁹ In more modern times those dedicated to proving the innocence of Richard III are often referred to as the "Ricardians." The most notable of the societies dedicated to changing the posthumous reputation of Richard III are the Richard III Foundation Inc., the Richard III Society and the

³⁷ Kennedy, *Bones of a King: Richard III Rediscovered*, 118-148.

³⁸ Desmond Seward, *Richard III England's Black Legend* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 15-16.

³⁹ Giles St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings: 1483* (New York: Athenaeum, 1983), 56-57.

Plantagenet Alliance. These organizations played a key role in the rediscovery of the skeletal remains in Leicester.⁴⁰

In the 1960s, there was a historiographic shift toward a “grey legend” of Richard III. Many historians conceded that Richard was not England’s most evil tyrant, but was likely responsible for the deaths of his nephews. Despite this trend, many prominent historians held to the black legend theory. For example, in his 1984 work, *Richard III: England’s Black Legend*, Desmond Seward criticizes the writers of both the white and grey legacies, including Charles Ross and Paul Murray Kendall, as authors of works of fiction. Seward also cites his contemporaries, including James Gairdner, Dr. Alison Hanham, and J.R. Lander, who support the black legend model.⁴¹

All three models use the same primary sources to defend their differing arguments. Within a year of Richard III’s death at Bosworth Field, written accounts of his reign and death were published. One of the first accounts (the earliest was actually written by Dominic Mancinus, but was lost until the 1930s therefore had no direct influence on Tudor era writers) was *The Croyland Chronicle*, which was finished in 1486. *The Croyland Chronicle* was a history record written at the Benedictine Abbey of Croyland in Lincolnshire, England. The work gives an incomplete history of the years 655 to 1486, including a look into the regime of Richard III.⁴²

The entire Chronicle was first translated and republished by William Fulman in 1684. Fulman believed that the portion finished on the 30 April 1486 was the first-hand account of John Russell, Bishop of Rochester and Lincoln, rather than the second-hand account of a

⁴⁰ “Richard III: The Sources What Did We Know When?” University of Leicester (2013), Accessed March 9, 2016.

⁴¹ Seward, *Richard III England’s Black Legend*, 15-21.

⁴² Pseudo-Ingulf, Ingulph’s *Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland: With the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers*, Trans. Henry Thomas Riley (London: H.G. Bohn, 1854).

Croyland monk. It is believed that Bishop Russell is the author of *The Croyland Chronicle*, because the text asserts that the writer was an envoy sent to Charles the Bold in 1471, served as a counselor to Edward VI and was a Doctor of Canon Law. There is also record of Bishop Russell visiting the Croyland monastery in April of 1486.⁴³

If *The Croyland Chronicle* was written by Bishop Russell, it has the potential to be a biased source. While it unlikely that the not-well known source, written within mere months of Richard III's death, was the product of Tudor propaganda, it is possible that Bishop Russell had an unfavorable view of the late King. A trusted advisor to Edward IV, Russell had been charged with the execution of King Edward's will. This could have made the declaration of Edward V's illegitimacy a point of contention between the Bishop and the King.⁴⁴ In fact the author, throughout the work the author refers to Edward IV as "King," but Richard as only the Protector or man who assumed himself "king."⁴⁵

Despite the author's claim of setting ". . . forth an accurate 'recital of the facts, without knowingly intermingling therewith any untruthfulness, hatred, or favor whatsoever'" strongly disapproved in the methods Richard III employed to gain the throne.⁴⁶ This can be seen from the passage ". . . the Protector Richard assumed the government of the kingdom, with the title of king . . . and on the same day, at the great Hall of Westminster, obtruded himself into the marble chair. The color for this act of usurpation . . ."⁴⁷ Like the author, Bishop John Russell is believed to have disapproved of Richard III's methods. In fact, when John Russell was selected to replace

⁴³St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 66-67.

⁴⁴ Rosemary Horrox, *Richard III: A Study of Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 100 -102.

⁴⁵ *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, trans. Henry T. Riley (London, 1854), in *To Prove a Villain: The Case of King Richard III*, ed. Taylor Littleton and Robert R. Rea (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 90-95.

⁴⁶ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 66-67.

⁴⁷ *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, 92.

Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York as the Lord Chancellor on the 10 May 1483, he was believed to have accepted the position unwillingly. Surviving correspondences between Richard and his Lord Chancellor show that Russell's health or own motives prevented him from efficiently fulfilling his duties. On 29 July 1485, Bishop Russell was dismissed from his position, for reasons unspecified.⁴⁸

Interestingly, the Croyland Chronicle does not cite Richard III as being physically deformed. It was not until the reign of Henry VII that a negative description of Richard's attributes was written by the English historian and antiquarian, John Rous. Born circa 1420 in Warwick, England, Rous was a contemporary to Richard III. After studying at Oxford he served as Chaplain of the Chantry Chapel at Guy's Cliff and the canon of the collegiate church at Warwick.

Because his patron was the Earl of Warwick, Rous actually spent the majority of his career in service of the Yorkist faction. In fact, he even praised Richard III in the English edition of his 1483 the Chronicle Roll of the Earl of Warwick (also referred to as the "Rous Roll").⁴⁹ The passage, "The most mighty Prince Richard, by the grace of God, King of England and of France, and Lord of Ireland . . . by heir male lineally descending from King Harry the Second . . ." demonstrates that in the 1480s, Rous did not view, or was not willing to admit he viewed, Richard III as a usurper.⁵⁰ The historian went on to praise Richard as a defender of the common people, who had the ". . . love of all of his subjects, rich and poor, and great laud of the people of others lands about him."⁵¹ Despite these lavish praises, upon hearing the results of the Battle of

⁴⁸ Horrox, *Richard III: A Study of Service*, 158-159.

⁴⁹ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 67-68.

⁵⁰ John Rous, The Chronicle of Warwick Roll (1483) in *The Crown and the Tower: The Legend of Richard III*, ed. William H. Snyder, (New York: Richard III Society, Inc., 1981), 25.

⁵¹ Rous, The Chronicle of Warwick Roll, 25.

Bosworth Field, John Rous was said to have removed his name from the Latin edition of the “Warwick Roll.”

Although John Rous died at the age of eighty-one in January of 1492, his famous work, *Historia Regum Angliae*, was not made public until 1716. Written between the years of 1485 and 1491, *Historia Regum Angliae* was an antiquarian interpretation of history, which was dedicated to Henry VII. In this work, Rous reversed his positive opinion of the Yorkist dynasty, especially of Richard III. Claiming to have seen the king when he visited the Earl of Warwick in August of 1483, Rous portrayed Richard as the physical manifestation of evil. According to Rous, Richard stayed inside his mother’s womb for two years, before emerging feet first, with a mouth full of teeth and hair down to his shoulders. Born under a hostile star, Richard was said to be cursed to walk with a limp, had a withered arm and his right shoulder was higher than the left.⁵²

Historians who support the white and grey legends of Richard III reject the face value of John Rous’s account. William Snyder, whose work was published by the Ricardian organization, the Richard III Society, Inc., argued that Rous completely made up the story, because contemporary accounts do not support Rous’ claims.⁵³ Even those, such as Desmond Seward, who are proponents of the black legend, believe that Rous was writing in order to gain the favor of the Tudor government. Seward does argue that Rous’s writings may contain a “grain of truth.” The historian put forth the argument that Rous’s account may be evidence that Richard III’s mother may have had a difficult pregnancy. The Duchess of York would have been around thirty-seven years of age when Richard was born. In the fifteenth century, her age combined with ten previous pregnancies, would have increased the chance of complications. Seward argued that

⁵² St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 67-68.

⁵³ William H. Snyder, *The Crown and the Tower: The Legend of Richard III* (New York: Richard III Society, Inc., 1981), 24-26.

if “. . . he came into the world with the feet forward” meant that Richard was breeched, his physical deformities, including a withered left arm and uneven shoulders, could have been the result of a midwife damaging his body during birth.⁵⁴

Unfortunately for Seward’s theory, the rediscovery of Richard III’s skeletal remains proves that John Rous’s description was not completely accurate. The skeletal analysis conducted by the scientific team led by Dr. Jo Appleby does not give any indication that Skeleton 1, which has been confirmed to be the remains of Richard III, exhibited any signs of damage, misshape or any other abnormalities of the arm bones. The arm bones were examined individually and was twice subjected to post-mortem CT scanning, so any deformations caused by trauma or pathology would have been recorded.⁵⁵

The recovery of Richard III’s well-preserved remains also allows for a comparison to the more modern, famous case of a breech birth injury, of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Prussia. In 1859 Berlin’s most prominent obstetrician could not be found when Victoria, Princess Royal went into labor. The less practiced doctors, who were forced to work beneath the Princess’s skirts due to royal etiquette of the time, faced the difficulty of a breech birth. The Prince was injured when the doctors used forceps to drag him out of his mother. Originally presumed dead, the blue baby was vigorously rubbed in efforts to revive him. This is likely to have increased the severity of the nerve damage. As a result, Wilhelm II suffered from Erb-Duchenne or Erb’s palsy, which is the paralysis of the arm due to the injury of the nerves of the upper trunk, especially the neck, spine and upper arm regions.

⁵⁴ Seward, *Richard III: England’s Black Legend*, 22.

⁵⁵ Appleby, “Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III,” 253.

Today, Erb's palsy can be treated through rehabilitative therapy or surgery, but in the nineteenth or fifteenth centuries, there was no cure. Within the first six months of life, it became clear that Wilhelm II's left arm was not growing properly. Described much like John Rous's account of Richard III, the young Prince was said to have a shrunken arm and a claw like left hand. By the time he reached adulthood, Wilhelm's left arm was a full six inches shorter than his right.⁵⁶ If Richard III suffered from a similar affliction, the proof would be in the bones of his left arm. The long bones, the humerus, ulna and radius, of the left and right arm are proportional. Although the markings from muscle attachments showed a slightly stronger right arm, this is not uncommon and is more likely to signify right-handedness than a left side disability.⁵⁷ What is believed to be known about Richard III's active life style and military prowess, would have not been possible if he suffered from Erb's palsy. While it took Wilhelm II years to learn how to ride a horse, Richard III was said to have led the vanguard at the Battle of Barnet and Battle of Towton.⁵⁸ Although Rous was correct in that Richard III's right shoulder was higher than his left, skeletal analysis discredits John Rous' claim of giving an accurate, first hand description of Richard III. In fact, the damaged arm is not described again until the writings of William Shakespeare.

The next work to appear in the historiography was a reaction against the English monastic chronicles, and gained its author the title of "Father of English History". Polidoro Virgili of Urbino (Latinised as Polydorus Vergilius or Anglicised as Polydore Vergil) was a sixteenth century Italian diplomat to England. The humanist, who also served as a priest and historian, was sent to St. Paul's Churchyard in England in 1502 by Pope Alexander VI to collect

⁵⁶ Julia Armfield, "Treating the Kaiser's Withered Arm," British Library, accessed March 11, 2016.

⁵⁷ Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III," 253.

⁵⁸ Michael Hicks, *The War of the Roses* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010), 160-163.

papal taxes. Already moderately famous for his 1490s works, *Perotti's Cornucopiae* (1496), *Proverbiorum Libellus* (1498), and *Des Inventoribus Rerum* (1499), King Henry VII invited Vergil to court. At Henry VII's request, Vergil began writing an account of English history around 1505.⁵⁹

The first manuscript of the work, *Anglica Historia*, was finished around 1513. Having moved to England nearly two decades after the death of Richard III, Vergil relied heavily on the writings and recollections of his surviving contemporaries. Although criticized by Ricardians as “the paid historian of the Tudors, who misrepresented facts to please his patrons and to gratify his spite,” the majority of historians believe that Vergil sought to write an accurate version of history.⁶⁰ This is based on the fact that he was trained in the humanist school, therefore he sought to correct the monastic chronicles, which he believed to be deceitful, biased, and chaotic. The *Anglica Historia* also challenged the legends of King Arthur, even though the work was dedicated to the Prince of Wales whose name sake was King Arthur.⁶¹

Even if Vergil's goal was to remain unbiased, it is likely that his sources of information were. It is believed that he relied heavily on the first-hand accounts of Lord Stanley, King Henry VII's stepfather, Queen Elizabeth Woodville and King Henry VII himself. The claim that the “hostility Vergil displayed toward Richard III was the product of his research, not of a fawning desire to please the Tudors” loses some of its credibility when one takes into account the fact that all of the individuals Vergil spoke to were part of the Tudor court.⁶² Lines from the *Anglica Historia* such as: “Henry perceived Richard coming against him, and, since all his hope was in

⁵⁹ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 67-68.

⁶⁰ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 68.

⁶¹ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 67-69.

⁶² St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 69.

his arms, he eagerly entered the fray” and “. . .after he [Henry Tudor] had commended his soldiers, and commanded to cure the wounded, and to bury them that were slain . . . promising that he would be mindful of their benefits” are indicative that the work was intended to glorify the heroics of Henry Tudor.⁶³

While Vergil’s work does not include a physical description of Richard III, it does give insight into his performance at the Battle of Bosworth Field. Vergil claimed that upon seeing the battle stall and that Henry Tudor was only protected by his personal guard, Richard “. . . spurred forward his horse and attacked him from the flank, riding outside the battle-line.”⁶⁴ It is clear from this line that Richard III was a well accomplished rider. As demonstrated earlier in the paper with the case of Wilhelm II, if Richard suffered from a disability of the left arm, he would have had difficulty simply riding a horse. Based on the fact that Richard is believed to have killed Henry Tudor’s standard bearer, William Brandon, it is safe to assume that he was also holding a weapon. It would have been nearly impossible for a man with only the use of a single arm to charge into battle on horseback while fighting with a heavy weapon. Vergil’s claim that Richard III continued to fight (even after John Cheyney, an accomplished combatant, unhorsed him) for a period of time long enough to be lead to the remark that “. . . Henry had withstood this attack longer than even his own soldiers expects, for they had almost despaired of victory . . .” also shows his military capabilities.⁶⁵

Although the *Anglica Historia* was not published until 1534, it is believed that Vergil shared the first manuscript with his close friend, Sir Thomas More. Sir Thomas’s work, *The*

⁶³ Polydore Vergil, *Anglica Historia* (1534) in *The Crown and the Tower: The Legend of Richard III*, ed. William H. Snyder, (New York: Richard III Society, Inc., 1981), page 88 and page 89

⁶⁴ Polydore Vergil, Book XXV of *Anglica Historia* (1534), republished <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/25eng.html>. Accessed March 11, 2016.

⁶⁵ Polydore Vergil, Book XXV of *Anglica Historia*.

History of King Richard III, is often described by historians as the most influential and one of the least reliable of the early accounts of the era.⁶⁶ Having been born in 1478, More was only seven years of age when the Battle of Bosworth Field occurred. From a young age he was beholden to the Tudor administration. His father, Sir John More, was a lawyer, who served King Henry VII's Lord Chancellor, John Morton the Archbishop of Canterbury. Believing that Thomas had great potential, Morton recommended that the boy study at Oxford University. By the early 1500s, More, a trained lawyer and highly religious man, entered into political office as an under-sheriff in London. In 1509 Henry VIII had succeeded his father as King of England, after his older brother, Arthur, Prince of Wales had died of sweating sickness in 1502. By 1517, More had become one of Henry VIII's favored servants. He was promoted several times throughout the 1520s, (knighted in 1521, elected to be speaker of the House of Commons 1523 and made chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1525) before replacing Thomas Wolsey as Henry's Lord High Chancellor in 1529.⁶⁷

In *The History of King Richard III*, some of More's facts are incorrect. For example, he stated that Richard was the third son of the Duke of York, but contemporaries prove he had three older brothers who survived to adulthood.⁶⁸ More also was incorrect about Edward IV's date of birth, confuses Eleanor Bulter and Elizabeth Lucy, and is wrong about the Christian name of Lord Hasting.⁶⁹ It is also important to point out that More's writings, like Vergil's, were heavily dependent upon the accounts of Richard III's contemporaries. It is unlikely that More, who would have been at most seven years old, remembered detailed accounts of seeing Richard more

⁶⁶ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 69.

⁶⁷ "Thomas More (1478 – 1535)," *BBC History*, (2016) accessed March 11, 2016.

⁶⁸ Sir Thomas More, *The History King Richard III* (1557) in *The Crown and the Tower: The Legend of Richard III*, ed. William H. Snyder, (New York: Richard III Society, Inc., 1981), 58.

⁶⁹ Seward, *Richard III: England's Black Legend*, 20.

than two decades later. This is assuming the two ever met, because there is no conclusive proof that they did.⁷⁰

Sir Thomas described Richard III as “. . . in body and prowess far under them [George, Duke of Clarence and King Edward IV], little of stature, ill featured of limbs, crook backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right . . . he was malicious, wrathful envious and, from before his birth, ever forward.”⁷¹ The examination of Richard’s bones prove that More’s description was incorrect. As has been demonstrated in response to the writings of John Rous, it was unlikely that Richard III had malformed arms. Because More is unspecific with his use of the words “ill featured of limbs,” an examination of the leg bones of Skeleton 1 was necessary. The report by Dr. Appleby’s team does not suggest that there were any abnormalities with the bones of the legs; the femur, patella, tibia or fibula. Like the arm bones, the leg bones twice underwent post-mortem CT scanning with an Aquilion 64-slice scanner, which would have revealed any afflictions.⁷² In fact, Richard’s leg bones were described as “symmetric and well formed” by Dr. Appleby.

The examination of Richard III’s spine revealed that Sir Thomas was also incorrect about his mismatched shoulders. A macroscopical analysis and the creation of a 3D polymer model of the spine revealed that the spine curved to the right side. The apex of the thoracic curve is at the T8-T9 vertebra, with a Cobb angle between the range of seventy and ninety degrees. The other vertebra, cervical and lumbar, were reasonably well aligned and the thoracic curve was well-balanced. This has led experts to conclude that Richard’s right shoulder was higher than his left, not the other way around, as More claimed. Because of the balance of the thoracic curve, the

⁷⁰ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 69.

⁷¹ More, *The History of King Richard III*, 58.

⁷² Appleby, “Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III,” 253-254.

right shoulder was likely to have only been slightly higher than the left, so a good tailor and custom-made armor would have minimized or completely hidden the disfiguration.⁷³

More also gives a descriptive account of the treatment of Richard III's body immediately following the Battle of Bosworth Field. "King Richard himself, as ye shall hereafter hear, slain in the field, hacked and hewed of his enemies' hands, harried on horseback dead . . ." ⁷⁴ The finding of eleven confirmed perimortem injuries on Richard's skeleton supports More's claim. ". . . His hair in despite torn and togged like a cur dog" ⁷⁵ suggests that Richard was not wearing a helmet around the time of his death. This is also supported by the severity of the wounds to the skull. ⁷⁶

The argument has been made that Sir Thomas More's death refutes the claim that his work on Richard III was Tudor propaganda. ⁷⁷ On the 6 July 1535, More was executed on the charge of high treason against King Henry VIII. This occurred after More refused to support Henry's declaration of himself as the Supreme Head of the Church of England and his attempts to annul his marriage to Queen Catherine of Aragon. ⁷⁸ This argument holds little merit, because the work was written by circa 1515, which was more than a decade before More and King Henry VII clashed over the Protestant Reformation. *The History of King Richard III* was published two decades after More's death by his nephew, William Rastell. It is unclear the extent to which Rastell edited his uncle's work, but he is credited with the title. ⁷⁹

While Sir Thomas More may intended for his work to remain unpublished, it became the foundation for the most famous portrayal of Richard III in the works of William Shakespeare.

⁷³ Appleby, "The Scoliosis of Richard III, Last Plantagenet King of England," 1944.

⁷⁴ More, *The History of King Richard III*, 76.

⁷⁵ More, *The History of King Richard III*, 76.

⁷⁶ Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III," 258.

⁷⁷ Seward, *Richard III: England's Black Legend*, 21.

⁷⁸ "Thomas More," *BBC History*.

⁷⁹ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 69-73.

Born in 1564, Shakespeare grew up during England's Elizabethan period. The famous actor, poet and playwright primarily wrote comedies and histories based on the past monarchs of England. Circa 1591-1592, Shakespeare was believed to have written his first major plays, *Richard III* and *Henry VI*, Parts 1 through 3, which covered the entirety of the War of the Roses. Richard III appears in the second and third parts of *Henry VI* as the malicious, younger brother of King Edward IV.⁸⁰

In Shakespeare's work, 3 *Henry VI*, Richard III's deformed physical appearance is often mentioned in passing. For example, Edward of Lancaster describes Richard as a "... scolding crook-back" before he was murdered by the three Plantagenet brothers after the Battle of Tewkesbury.⁸¹ All sources contemporary to the time of the battle, the *Tewkesbury Chronicle*, the *Croyland Chronicle* and *The Historie of the Arrival of Edward IV* in England, all suggest that the Prince of Wales was actually killed during the battle.⁸² The play, 3 *Henry VI*, ends with a dying King Henry VI accusing Richard III of being monstrous since birth with a description that sounds very similar to the writings of John Rous. In fact, Shakespeare was the next after Rous to claim, with the lines "... To with an indigent deformed lump . . . Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born" that Richard III was born with a mouth full of teeth.⁸³

Richard III, the second longest of Shakespeare's plays, covers the period of English history from the death of King Edward VI to the aftermath of the Battle of Bosworth Field. In this work, Shakespeare offered a more detailed description of Richard's deformed physical appearance. The line "[t]o shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub" is in conjunction with John

⁸⁰ "William Shakespeare," Folger Shakespearean Library, accessed March 12, 2016.

⁸¹ William Shakespeare, Act V, Scene VI, 3 *Henry VI* (1591) accessed March 12, 2016.

⁸² Seward, *Richard III: England's Black Legend*, 54-55.

⁸³ Shakespeare, Act V, Scene VI, 3 *Henry VI* (1591) accessed March 12, 2016.

Rous and Thomas More's incorrect claim that Richard suffered from a shrunken arm.⁸⁴ Another assertion that has been falsified by the analysis of the skeletal remains, "[to] shape my legs of an unequal size" also appears in the play.⁸⁵

The famous, archetypal "hunchback" description of Richard III also appears in this play with the line "[t]o make an envious mountain on my back, where deformity to mock my body."⁸⁶ The extremely painful medical condition described by Shakespeare is kyphosis, which is when a "hump" forms on the back as the result of a convex curvature of the thoracic and sacral regions of the spine. A normal thoracic spine (upper-middle back) should curve outward at a Cobb angle (the standard for measuring spinal curvature) of between twenty and forty-five degrees from the first to the twelfth vertebra. An individual with a convex Cobb angle of more than forty-five degrees is likely to be diagnosed with kyphosis.⁸⁷ While the skeleton of Richard III had a Cobb angle of seventy to ninety-five degrees, the curve was to the right side rather than convex. The direction of the curve is a strong indication that Richard III suffered from scoliosis, not kyphosis and Shakespeare's famed portrayal was incorrect (see Appendix 4).⁸⁸

There is also no pathological evidence that Richard suffered from the underlying causes of the disease. Kyphosis is generally caused by trauma to the spinal region or degenerative diseases, such as osteoporosis and advanced arthritis.⁸⁹ There was no evidence of pre, peri or post-mortem trauma to the spinal region of Richard's skeleton. All spinal abnormalities were associated with the deformed thoracic region. The king also did not appear to suffer from

⁸⁴ William Shakespeare, Act III, Scene II, *Richard III* (1592) in *To Prove a Villain: The Case of King Richard III*, ed. Taylor Littleton and Robert R. Rea (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1964), 1.

⁸⁵ Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.

⁸⁶ Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.

⁸⁷ S. Goh, et al. "A Comparison of Three Methods for Measuring Thoracic Kyphosis: Implications for Clinical Studies," *Rheumatology* (2000): 310-315.

⁸⁸ Appleby, "The Scoliosis of Richard III, Last Plantagenet King of England," 1944.

⁸⁹ Goh, "A Comparison of Three Methods for Measuring Thoracic Kyphosis," 311.

arthritis or osteoporosis, which is consistent for an individual who was only thirty-two years of age at time of death.⁹⁰ Osteoporosis occurs when the formation of new bones does not keep pace with the depletion of old bone and results in weakening bone structures. The condition manifests on bone as lytic lesions, which can be identified due to the loss or erosion of cortical (hard, protective outer layer of bone) and/or trabecular (spongy inside) bone. Degenerative forms of arthritis, known as osteoarthritis, manifests on bone in the form of osteophytes. Osteophytes are boney growths that occur in regions, such as joints and along the spine, when cartilage has broken down.⁹¹ Neither of these conditions were listed in Dr. Appleby's report, therefore it is unlikely that Richard III suffered from the diseases or was the hunch back Shakespeare's actors portrayed him to be.⁹²

For more than three centuries the tyrannical image of Richard III remained unchallenged. For the majority of this time (1485 to 1603) a Tudor monarch sat on the throne of England. It was not until 1768 that an English historian, Horace Walpole, dared to put forth a defense of Richard. Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford was born in 1717 to British Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. Horace grew up in Georgian London before receiving an education of Eton College in Bexley and King's College at Cambridge.⁹³ Published in his work, *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third*, Walpole argued that English historians held to tradition rather than challenging past writers and assumed truths. He claimed that many historians simply copied the works of others without having any expertise on the subject, and

⁹⁰ Appleby, "The Scoliosis of Richard III, Last Plantagenet King of England," 1944; and Appleby, "Perimortem Trauma in King Richard III," 253-259.

⁹¹ Steven N. Byers, *Introduction to Forensic Anthropology: A Textbook* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), 330-332.

⁹² Appleby, "The Scoliosis of Richard III, Last Plantagenet King of England," 1944.

⁹³ "Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford," *British Encyclopedia*, accessed March 12, 2016.

that in many cases the “. . . testimonies on either side have been multiplied, the stronger is the conviction; though it generally happens that the original evidence is wondrous slender . . .”⁹⁴

On the topic of King Richard III specifically, Walpole defends the late king against the claims that he murdered Edward V and Richard of Lancaster. He attacked the legitimacy of the writing of Sir Thomas More as being full of “notorious falsehoods” and contradictions. The main weight of Walpole’s defense lie upon the fact that King Henry VII made no use of Sir James Tyrell’s confession of murdering the male children of Edward IV on the direct orders of Richard III and the use of extremely general terms to describe the event. According to Walpole, the use of “the king” rather than King Richard III and “infant’s blood” rather than the names of Princes Edward and Richard suggest that King Henry VII lacked sufficient evidence to prove that Richard III had the boys murdered and was instead launching a slander campaign.⁹⁵

In 1934 a second source, *De Occupatione Regni Anglie per Riccardum Tercium (The Occupation of the Throne of England by Richard III)* that was contemporary to Richard III’s life was discovered in the Municipal Library in Lille, France. The work was first translated and published by an English scholar, C. J. A. Armstrong, in 1938. The account written by Dominic Mancini in 1483 gave a first-hand look into London at the time of Richard’s usurpation. Because Mancini’s manuscript was held by private collectors and was undocumented by the academic community for more than four centuries, the work had no influence on earlier historians. This allows the work to serve as a “yardstick” for determining the accuracy of earlier writers.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Horace Walpole, *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third*, (1768) in *To Prove a Villain: The Case of King Richard III*, ed. Taylor Littleton and Robert R. Rea (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 105.

⁹⁵ Walpole, *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third*, 105-106.

⁹⁶ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 64.

Dominic Mancini was born on the Italian peninsula circa 1434. As a “man of letters,” Mancini worked in the service of his patron, Angelo Cato. An influential man, Cato was the astrologer, physician and councilor to King Louis XI of France and the Archbishop of Vienne. It is believed that Cato sent Mancini to England in the summer of 1482, but the specific reasons for this visit are unknown. There are no records of Mancini actually meeting King Richard III, so his work is unique in that it is based on the gossip and rumors of London in 1483. As an Italian, Mancini was unlikely to have been fluent in English. It is believed that Dr. John Argentine was one of his primary contacts. Dr. Argentine, a Lancastrian supporter, eventually became a member of Henry VII’s court. The doctor is also alleged to have treated Prince Edward V while he was held in the Tower, and may have been one of the last people outside of Richard’s inner circle to see the princes alive.

The majority of the work focused on the suspicion that Richard III had Prince Edward V and Prince Richard murdered. Interestingly, Mancini does not include a physical description of Richard III. Writing in the late 1960s, a translator of *Des Occupatione*, C. A. J. Armstrong, pointed out how unusual it was for Mancini to not include a physical description of Richard. Long before the rediscovery of his remains or the creation of a facial reconstruction, Armstrong operated under the assumption that Richard III suffered from physical deformities. This encouraged Armstrong to expect a physical description, which would have brought the work in-line with contemporary writings. In hindsight, Mancini probably did not include a physical description of King Richard III, because it was not the subject of London gossip. The potential

murder of the boy-king of England makes for a far more interesting story, than the fact that Richard III's right shoulder was slightly higher than his left.⁹⁷

The rediscovery of Richard III's skeletal remains prove that there is a disconnect between the historical sources and the biological evidence, but it does not explain why. In his 2010 work, *The War of the Roses*, Dr. Michael Hicks puts forth the argument that this was the result of Tudor propaganda, which began the moment the Battle of Bosworth Field was won. Hicks contended that the complete vilification of Richard III and the Plantagenet dynasty was necessary for the Tudor succession for two major reasons. The first reason was Henry Tudor had the weaker of the claims to the English throne (see Appendix 1). With the assertion that Richard III had been a usurper, who had wrongfully declared the children of his brother illegitimate, Henry Tudor actually gave Elizabeth Woodville the strongest claim to the throne, because she was the eldest legitimate child of King Edward IV. This threat to the throne was negated by the marriage agreement between Elizabeth's mother, Elizabeth Woodville Dowager Queen and Henry's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort and by the fact that *Titulus Regius* was not repealed until after Henry Tudor had secured his position on the throne.⁹⁸

Although the marriage to Woodville significantly strengthened Henry Tudor's claim to the throne, it was still unsound. Lady Beaufort was the granddaughter of the fourth surviving son of King Edward III, John of Gaunt. The biggest barrier to succession was the fact that Beaufort's father, John Beaufort, was born before the marriage of John of Gaunt to his long-term mistress, Lady Katherine Swynford.⁹⁹ The maternal claim and history of illegitimacy were not

⁹⁷ C. A. J. Armstrong, *The Usurpation of Richard the Third* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 1-26.

⁹⁸ Hicks, *The War of the Roses*, 235.

⁹⁹ Hanson, "House of Tudor Genealogy Chart and Family Tree." Accessed March 13, 2016.

the only issues for Henry. The fact that Lady Beaufort was still alive meant that she actually stood in front of her son in the line of succession.

When Henry Tudor was crowned King of England on 22 August 1485, he was seventh in line to the throne behind the five surviving daughters of King Edward IV and his mother. To counter this, Dr. Hicks believed that Henry VII and his supporters demonstrated that his victory at Bosworth proved that God supported his claim to the throne.¹⁰⁰ Evidence of the use of this religious propaganda can be seen in the primary sources. For example, Polydore Vergil claimed that immediately after the fighting that “Henry . . . gave forthwith thanks unto Almighty God . . . meanwhile the soldiers cried, “God save King Henry, God save King Henry.”¹⁰¹

Hicks made the argument that the continued dynastic fighting throughout the reign of King Henry VII and into the reign of Henry VIII was the second motivation for the vilification of Richard III. For the Yorkist faction, the Battle of Bosworth Field was not viewed as a decisive end to the War of the Roses, and Henry Tudor was seen as “an outlaw under attainder.”¹⁰² Anti-Tudor sentiment grew in northern England, which had gained significant amounts of power during the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III. The passing of the Act of Resumption, which revoked all rights to land holdings since 1461, had the greatest, negative impact on the North. Thus, within two years of the Battle of Bosworth Field, the crown of England was once again being defended on the battle field.¹⁰³

In 1487 Lambert Simnel, a ten year old boy of unknown, but likely common birth, was declared the figure-head of a rebellion organized by William Simonds, John de la Pole, the Earl

¹⁰⁰ Hicks, *The War of the Roses*, 235.

¹⁰¹ Vergil, *English History*, 89.

¹⁰² Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 66.

¹⁰³ Hicks, *The War of the Roses*, 233-252.

of Lincoln and Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare. Simnel was claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick, who was the son of Edward IV and Richard III's brother, George, Duke of Clarence. The real Edward of Warwick had been held prisoner at Sheriff Hutton in London by Edward IV and then Richard III after his father's rebellion against the Crown. At the time of the 1487, the real Edward was the prisoner of King Henry VII. Simnel's claim was given legitimacy when Margaret, Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, who was the older sister of Richard III, gave her support.

The extremity of King Henry VII's reaction gives insight into the extent to which the Tudors feared the Yorkist faction. In 1487 Elizabeth Woodville, the Queen consort's mother, was stripped of her titles and sent to a monastery out of fear that she was involved in the Yorkist plotting. Her eldest son, who was from her first marriage to Sir John Grey of Groby (a Lancaster), the Marques of Dorset, was placed in the Tower of London. Dorset, who was described as "temperamentally unreliable," and his mother had no real motivation to be involved in a plot to put a pretender on the throne. Rather than deter the plot, the treatment of the Woodvilles further antagonized Yorkist supporters.

Despite the fact that Henry VII had the real Edward of Warwick paraded around London, Simnel landed in England on 4 June 1487 with an army of about 1,500 German mercenaries and 4,000 Irish. This invading force of a pretender was both larger and composed of more Englishmen than the army that had won Henry Tudor the battle at Bosworth Field. Luckily for the Tudor dynasty, the size of the royal army and technology was on Henry VII's side. The majority of Simnel's soldiers were from the Ireland highlands, therefore were trained in hand to hand combat, rather than ranged warfare. Simnel's forces were crushed and he was taken prisoner. The young pretender was placed into service in Henry's court.

Not long after Simnel's defeat at the Battle of Stoke Field, another Yorkist pretender emerged to challenge Henry VII's throne. Perkin Warbeck (Pierrechan de Webecque) was born in Tournai in 1474, which would have made him roughly the same age of Richard, Duke of York. Warbeck claimed that he was the younger son of Edward IV and had escaped from the Tower of London. Because the body of the real Richard of York had not been found, seventeen year old Warbeck was able to gather the support of the anti-English and/or anti-Tudor factions of Western Europe. As the War of the Roses had time again proven the value of investing in a claimant to the English throne, Warbeck initially received the support of Charles VIII, King of France. This support was revoked after Henry VII prepared for a full scale attack in 1492.

Margret of York, Dowager Duchess of Burgundy once again backed the Yorkist imposter. In 1492, she accepted Warbeck as her nephew and helped him establish an alliance with Maximilian, King of Germany and the Holy Roman Emperor. King Henry VII did not take Warbeck's threat lightly. Throughout the early 1490s the Crown circulated propaganda around the entirety of Europe to weaken his claim. The King's second son, Prince Henry, was granted the title Duke of York in efforts to further illegitimate Warbeck's claim. Henry's fear of rebellion was so great that when his spies revealed that Sir William Stanley, his step-uncle and the man who had saved his life at the Battle of Bosworth Field, was a Yorkist sympathizer, the King ordered that he be executed on the grounds of treason.

Warbeck harassed Henry VII throughout the majority of the 1490s before the conflict came to a head in July of 1497. Warbeck had lost the interest of his major foreign backers, therefore launched an invasion of Exeter with the support of a few thousand Scotsmen. His campaign was cut short by Edward Courtney, Earl of Devon. In less than a month the rebellion

was put down and Warbeck was captured. Like Simnel, Warbeck and his wife, Lady Catherine, were put into service at Henry VII's court.

For a short time it seemed that Henry VII had pacified the realm and succeeded in establishing his dynasty. His oldest son and heir, Prince Arthur, was married to Catherine of Aragon, which gave England powerful alliances with Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor. His daughter, Princess Margaret, was engaged to marry James VI of Scotland in 1503, thus finally bringing an end to the Auld Alliance. The bright future of the Tudor dynasty dimmed significantly on 2 April 1502, when Arthur, Prince of Wales died from a wasting disease at the age of fifteen. Within a year, Henry's uncle, Owen Tudor, Queen Elizabeth (11 February 1503) and the baby girl, Katherine, whom the queen had given premature birth to, were dead.

The loss of his heir and wife left Henry VII even more suspicious of threats to his throne. The last of Yorkist faction was the family of John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk and Elizabeth Plantagenet, the sister of Edward IV and Richard III. Of the Duke of Suffolk's five male children, only three were considered a political threat by the 1500s. The eldest, the Earl of Lincoln, was killed at the Battle of Stoke and Humphrey was a monk, therefore politically uninvolved. After coming into conflict with the Tudors, Edmund, Earl of Suffolk and his younger brother Richard de la Pole fled to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor where he made the claim that he was the rightful heir to the English throne.

In reaction to de la Pole's claim, Henry Tudor had all of those connected to the Yorkist faction eliminated. Sir William de la Pole, who had not fled with his brothers, was placed in the Tower of London, where he remained until his death in the 1530s. Sir James Tyrell, Sir John Wyndham and many others were executed. William, Lord Courtenay, who was married to the late Queen's sister and whose father defeated Warbeck, was placed in the Tower for more than a

decade. The Earl of Suffolk's position was weakened by the death of Margaret of Burgundy in 1503. Her heir, Philip, Archduke of Burgundy and his wife, Joanna became Henry VII's prisoners in 1506 after they were ship wrecked. Henry agreed to exchange Philip and Joanna in exchange for the Earl of Suffolk, who was thrown into the Tower of London for the rest of his life.

When seventeen-year old Henry VIII became King on 21 April 1509, it became clear that he had inherited the Yorkist plight that had plagued his father's reign. Although he had the original "White Rose," Edward de la Pole, beheaded on 4 May 1513, another man with the same nickname rose up to challenge the Tudor's throne in the late 1510s. Edward's younger brother, Richard, had also escaped Tudor England. The last of the de la Pole's received pension from Ladislaus II, King of Hungary and gained fame as a skilled military man. When Henry VIII invaded France in 1513, King Louis XII formally recognized Richard as the rightful King of England and promised him an army of twelve thousand men. In efforts to peacefully eliminate the Yorkist claim, Henry VIII arranged a marriage between his sister, Mary, and the French King.

Throughout the 1520s, rumors of the rise of Richard IV circulated across Europe. This threat dominated foreign policy throughout the early part of Henry VIII's reign, until the unexpected outcome of a battle halfway across Europe finally brought an end to the dynastic wars. On 24 February 1525, Richard de la Pole was fighting along-side Francis I of France in a siege of Pavia. When the French and Spanish armies clashed, the French were unexpectedly crushed. Among those killed in the battle were de la Pole, thus ending the male line of Richard

Plantagenet.¹⁰⁴ Nearly forty years after the establishment of the Tudor dynasty, the Yorkist line was finally defeated. “. . . [T]he cycle of violence that had engulfed the English Crown . . . seemed finally to be coming to an end . . . it was only because there were so few left to kill.”¹⁰⁵

It was not just the reigns of King Henry VII and VIII that were plagued with strife. England was largely unstable during the reign of the Tudors, which explains the continued need for pro-Tudor, anti-Plantagenet propaganda. With the exception of Henry VIII's sickly heir, Edward VI, every Tudor monarch's claim to the throne was challenged. Queen Mary I's throne was seized by the supporters of Lady Jane Grey, who was the great-granddaughter of King Henry VII. Queen Elizabeth I's throne was also threatened by a French invasion to put Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne in 1558, and from the powerful Spanish Armada.

Throughout the Tudor era, there is a correlation of instability and anti-Yorkist propaganda. A major component of this propaganda was the attempt to sale the Renaissance image of the Tudors as the rightful monarchs who saved England from the “dark ages” and the brutality of the Plantagenets. Beginning with Henry VII, and being most prominent during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, the Tudors attempted to establish an “image of royal supremacy.” This attempt is evident in the significant increase in the number of royal portraits on the plea rolls beginning after 1515 and in the vilification through physical deformation of the Plantagenet line. Richard III's deformed body became a symbol for tyranny and evil which could be contrasted with the likes of Henry VIII, who was widely known as physical fit and handsome. This style of propaganda was adapted over time to fit the need of the Tudor monarchs.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Dan Jones, *The War of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: A Penguin Random House Company, 2014), 307-331.

¹⁰⁵ Jones, *The War of the Roses*, 318.

¹⁰⁶ Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, pages 75-80 and 131 – 140.

While the recovery of King Richard III's remains cannot give us insight into his personality or reveal if he was truly a murderer, the skeletal analysis does prove that his physical deformities were exaggerated by near contemporary historians. Because Henry Tudor's claim to the English throne was weak and the Tudor dynasty was challenged for nearly its entirety, anti-Plantagenet propaganda was heavily relied upon. While the Tudors were immortalized by William Shakespeare as the saviors who vanquished a hunchbacked, Machiavellian tyrant, Richard III was "... overthrown by a few well aimed sword thrusts in a bog, not a national uprising."¹⁰⁷ Another rising, that being of his body out of the ground, has demonstrated that Tudor propaganda vilified Richard III with the notion that malformed bodies house twisted minds.

¹⁰⁷ St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings*, 216.

Appendix 1

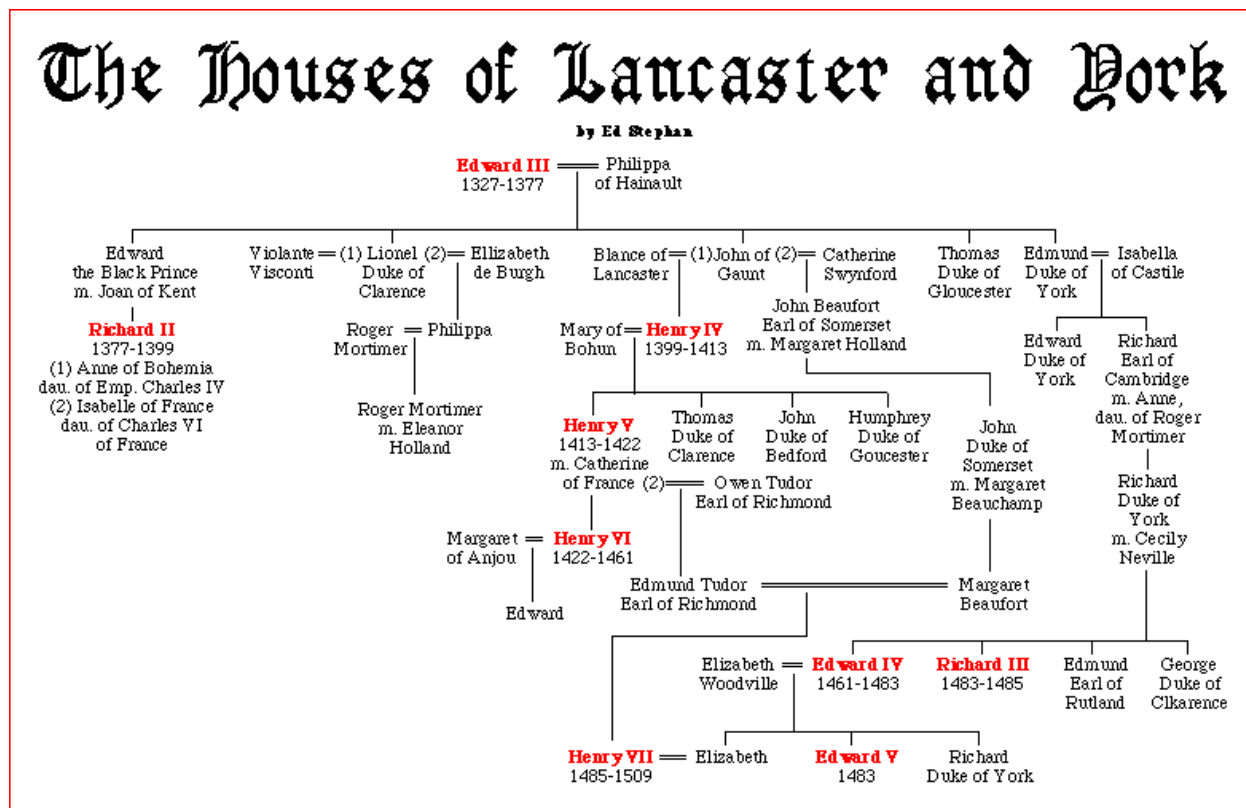


Image 1: Descendants of King Edward III of England.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Maev Kennedy, "Questions Raised over Queen's Ancestry after DNA Test on Richard III's Cousins," *The Guardian* (2014): accessed March 23, 2016.

Appendix 2



Image 2: Skeleton 1, which was later confirmed to be the remains of King Richard III, found in Trench 1.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Kennedy, "Questions Raised over Queen's Ancestry after DNA Test on Richard III's Cousins."

Appendix 3



Image 3: 3D Model of King Richard III's spine. The right-ward curve is indicative of right-side scoliosis.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Appleby, "The Scoliosis of Richard III," 1944.

Appendix 4

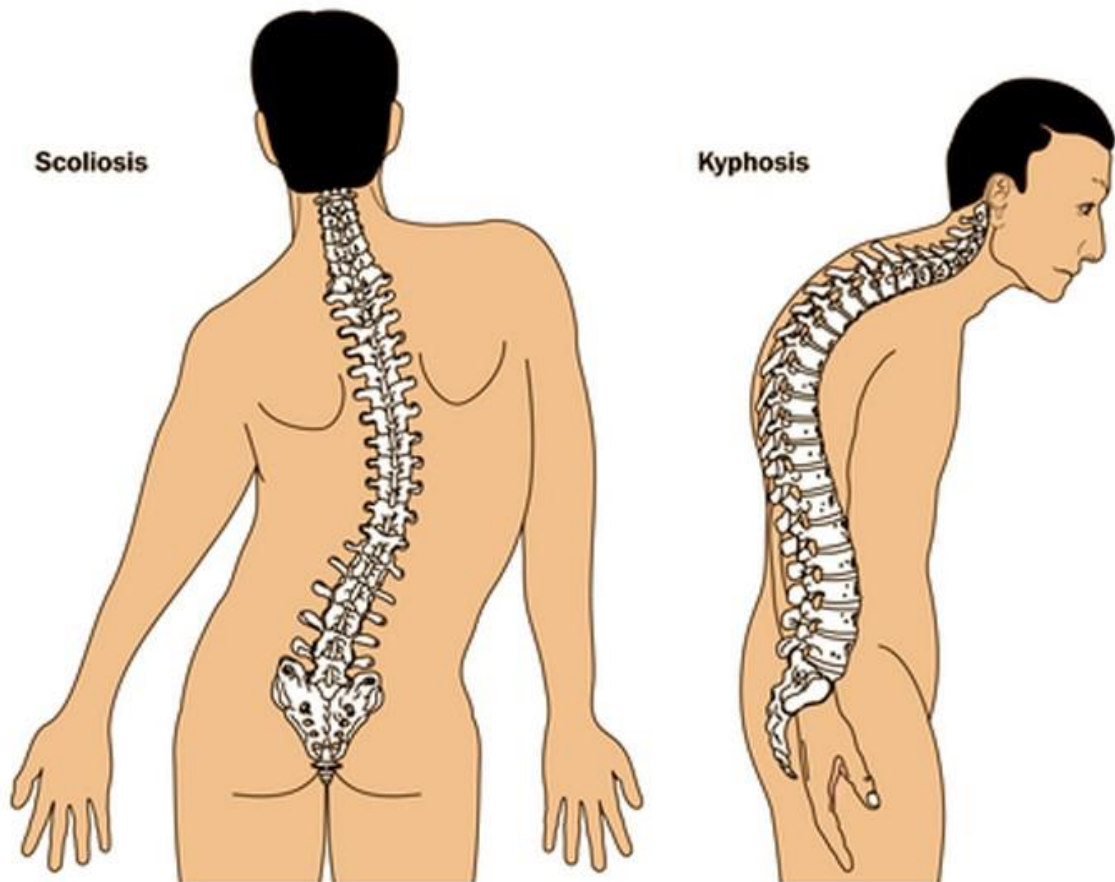


Image 4: Comparison of scoliosis (left) and Kyphosis (right).¹¹¹

¹¹¹ "Kyphosis," *Heathtool*, accessed March 23, 2016.

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