

# Richard III: Victim or Villain?

# SYNOPSIS

As a student in history class my favourite topic was always the Tudors and their monarchs. So, when presented with the opportunity to form an investigation into a historical period of my choice, without hesitation, I chose the Tudors. After researching, I settled on the controversies surrounding Richard III. Many of the contemporary records widely available are written by the Tudors, the family who usurped the English throne from Richard. I also looked into popular culture and the enduring image we see of Richard III in many dramas, due to Shakespeare. This led me to question how much of King Richard's image was created by the Tudors and not necessarily based on historical fact. Hence, this led me to my question: "To what extent has the image of Richard III been shaped by Tudor historians?"

The most prevalent depictions of Richard III are those that have been kept in popular history, most prominently, the Tudor depiction, through Shakespeare's play *Richard III*. To answer my question, I focussed on assessing the role of the early Tudor historians, focussing on the work of Thomas More and Polydore Vergil, in creating the image of Richard III. I then looked at how this image was immortalised by Shakespeare in his historical tragedy *Richard III*. Finally, I considered more modern revisionists attempts, such as Philippa Langley and the team who led the 2012 dig to find Richard's remains, and the impacts these efforts have had on revising King Richard III's image.

Jeremy Potter, through his work *Good King Richard?*<sup>1</sup> was the main source which provided insight into the personal context of key historians Sir Thomas More and Polydore Vergil.

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<sup>1</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* London, United Kingdom: Constable

Another key source I have used is Alison Hanham's work *Richard III and his early historians, 1483-1535*<sup>2</sup> and finally the *Richard III Society*, which provided a modern revisionist approach of the influence of the Tudor's on Richard III's image.

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<sup>2</sup> Hanham, A. (1975). *Richard III and his Early Historians, 1483-1535*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

# ‘TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE IMAGE OF RICHARD III BEEN SHAPED BY TUDOR HISTORIANS?’

Richard III, cruel tyrant or a noble king whose legacy has been grievously misrepresented by contemporary historians? The image of Richard III has caused much debate among scholars and enthusiast alike as his image is brought into question. Ricardians<sup>3</sup> contend that the image presented by Shakespeare in his play, *Richard III*<sup>4</sup>, and by prior Tudor historians, including Polydore Vergil and the early Tudor chroniclers, was merely propaganda to secure their Tudor monarch’s claim to the throne. Whereas Anti Ricardians believe the works of the early Tudor historians are accurate in their representation of Richard as a cruel tyrant. This essay will argue that the image of Richard III was shaped by Tudor Historians to a large extent, with their image still having a long-lasting impact on the view of Richard III we have today. Although there is some awareness now that Richard III may not have been the harsh ruler the Tudor’s depicted, this characterisation has been immortalised in the world of popular culture and popular history due to Shakespeare, who drew his inspiration from the works of Tudor historians such as Thomas More<sup>5</sup>. To further examine this idea, this essay will explore several Tudor Historians<sup>6</sup>, looking at their context and what shaped the version of history

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<sup>3</sup> Name given to supporters of Richard as a noble king.

<sup>4</sup> Shakespeare, W. (2009). *Richard III* (1st ed., pp. Act 3, Scene 4, Lines 68-74). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> More, T., & Logan, G. (2005). *The History of King Richard the Third* (1st ed., p. 43). Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Including Thomas More, Polydore Vergil, the Croyland chronicler, Richard Grafton, Ralph Holinshed and John Hardyng

they presented. Following this, the essay will look at how Shakespeare popularised this Tudor image through his play, *Richard III*, and finally, it will analyse the modern attempts<sup>7</sup> to repair Richard III's image and the impact this had.

The popular image of King Richard III was first created after his death<sup>8</sup> in 1485 by the succeeding family, the Lancastrians<sup>9</sup>. Popular historians at the time include Sir Thomas More and Polydore Vergil, who constructed images of Richard as a cruel tyrant and evil king which.<sup>10</sup> After his rise to the throne, Henry VII employed Polydore Vergil, an Italian cleric and scholar, to be his personal historian and write a history of England<sup>11</sup>, which included a history of Richard III. Polydore Vergil created an image of a Machiavellian ruler and created many rumors about Richard III. Vergil writes that Richard III personally set in motion the execution of Henry VI, murdered his nephews, the princes in the tower, and implicated Richard in the poisoning of his brother Edward VI.<sup>12</sup> Vergil must be considered biased towards Henry VII. Due to his purpose in creating this history, along with his financial backer, it is not surprising that there would be clear bias toward Henry VII in his text. Jeremy Potter, in his work *Good King Richard?*<sup>13</sup>, states, that, 'It is overstating the case to assert that he rewrote English history to the glorification of Henry Tudor, but clearly he had to balance integrity as a scholar with the sharp necessity of currying favor'. Evident bias against Richard in Vergil's work is shown through the abundance of derogatory phrases used when discussing Richard. Some examples of these words include, 'spiteful practice', 'malice', 'graceless',

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<sup>7</sup> Including the work of Philippa Langley, John Ashdown Hill and the Richard III Society.

<sup>8</sup> University of Leicester. (2017). Richard III. Retrieved November 16, 2016, from University of Leicester: <https://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii>

<sup>9</sup> Also known as the Tudors.

<sup>10</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* (1st ed.). London: Constable.

<sup>11</sup> Vergil, P. (1950). *The Anglica historia, A.D. 1485-1537* (1st ed.). London: Royal Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* (1st ed.). London: Constable.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid 102

‘fraud’, ‘wicked’, ‘frantic’ and ‘mad’<sup>14</sup>. Denys Hay<sup>15</sup> describes Vergil’s *Anglica Historia* as one of the most influential histories in all of England. Vergil’s work had a profound impact on British history and ‘Vergil’s judgments on the early Tudors and their ministers were to become the basis of all subsequent accounts of the period.’<sup>16</sup> Hence this biased image of Richard has endured as an accepted view of the English King.

Thomas More continued to create this image of a cruel King in his *History of King Richard III*. This text provides a comprehensive account of the life and reign of Richard III. More’s work was highly influential, being used by succeeding chroniclers<sup>17</sup> to form their histories<sup>18</sup>, and was immortalized through his tale of the princes.<sup>19</sup> More’s work also formed the basis for Shakespeare’s *Richard III*<sup>20</sup>. More spent time living in the household of Morton<sup>21</sup> who took part in uprisings against Richard.<sup>22</sup> More held Morton in high regard as Cresacre More<sup>23</sup> writes in his biography of Thomas More. “Sir Thomas More describes him [Morton] in his Utopia as having incomparable judgment, a memory more than credible, eloquent in speech, and, which is more to be wished in clergymen, of singular wisdom and virtue”<sup>24</sup> Since More held Morton, a Tudor man who had a dislike of Richard, in such high regard, it is safe to assume that More’s account would have been heavily biased with a Tudor view of Richard. However, there is controversy surrounding whether his intentions were satirical or for the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid 104

<sup>15</sup> A British Historian specialising in medieval and renaissance Europe.

<sup>16</sup> Hay, D. (1949). The Life of Polydore Vergil of Urbino. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12, 132-151. doi:10.2307/750260

<sup>17</sup> Chroniclers include John Hardyng and Edward Hall.

<sup>18</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* (1st ed.). London: Constable.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid 112

<sup>20</sup> Both texts attributing the creation of Richard’s withered arm to Shore’s wife.

<sup>21</sup> John Morton (1420-1500) Archbishop of Canterbury from 1486 till his death

<sup>22</sup> Buckingham’s rebellion of 1483

<sup>23</sup> Great-grandson of Thomas More

<sup>24</sup> More, C. (1828). *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (1st ed., p. 17). Wisconsin: W. Pickering.

recording of history. Dr. Hanham<sup>25</sup> believes that More had no more intent to write a historical work than Shakespeare did and calls More's work 'a Lucianic<sup>26</sup>, and so irreverent, comment on the whole craft of history' <sup>27</sup>. On top of this, More's work was not even completed by the time of his death (1535) and was completed by Richard Grafton (in 1543), as a continuation of Hardyng's Chronicle. This raises the question as to whether the final product that we see today was the product More intended on publishing, or whether it is the interpretation of Richard Grafton. Despite this, it is evident that the work of Thomas More, full of Tudor bias, had an impact on the perception of Richard that is still reflected today.

The image of Richard III created by the Tudors is not only limited to written works.

Artworks of Richard III have proven to be a place where the propaganda of the Tudors is just as evident. Most of the general population during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century were uneducated and illiterate so artworks served as an important part of recording history. Portraits were crucial as they sought to reflect the importance of the monarch. Rand and Meyer in their book *The Portrait, Understanding Portrait Photography*<sup>28</sup> state that, "During many periods, portraits were idealised to convey the importance rather than the reality of the person." This makes the artworks of Richard III so crucial as they were altered by the Tudors to reflect the image of Richard propagated by Shakespeare and to support the statements written by Thomas More and Polydore Vergil. They altered the lavish, faultless appearance to make it appear imperfect. This is significant as, during the Elizabethan era, outward imperfections were

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<sup>25</sup> Dr Alison Hanham is a Historian, and author of 'Richard III and His Early Historians, 1483-1535'

<sup>26</sup> Of, relating to, or resembling Lucian or his writings. Lucian (born 120 AD) was a satirist known for his witty nature.

<sup>27</sup> Hanham, A. (1975). *Richard III and his early historians, 1483-1535* (1st ed., p. 155). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>28</sup> Rand, G., & Meyer, T. (2014). *The Portrait: Understanding Portrait Photography* (2nd ed., p. 7). California: Rocky Nook.

believed to represent inward evil<sup>29</sup>. The portrait of Richard in the royal collection<sup>30</sup> has been proven, through x-rays (See Appendix A and B) to have been overpainted, especially over the shoulder.<sup>31</sup> The overpainting extends to the fingers of Richard to make them appear more pointed and to his face where his eyebrows are moved closer together and his expression is more severe. This isn't the only portrait to have been altered. Post Shakespeare<sup>32</sup>, portraits of Richard also include alterations to the originals. Frye in his article titled, 'The "Shakespearean" Portrait of Richard III In Edward Alleyn's Picture Collection', discusses an anonymous portrait of Richard III (See Appendix C) and states that, "Richard's right shoulder was raised so to give him a deformity that was not there in the prototypes."<sup>33</sup> These portraits have stayed in the public eye for centuries as the image of what Richard III and have become the common portrayal of Richard in popular culture.<sup>34</sup> So, due to the Tudor overpainting of Richard III, our image of the king has been skewed to reflect the image the Tudors wanted the public to see.

This image of a cruel tyrant presented by Tudor historians and artists, which we still see reflected today, was popularised by Shakespeare<sup>35</sup>. In his play Richard III, Shakespeare presented an image of a cruel and evil King which paralleled the representation provided by More and Vergil. This is to be expected given Shakespeare's sources were the works of

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<sup>29</sup> Osmond, L. (2013). *Richard III: King in the Carpark*. England: Channel 4.

<sup>30</sup> Through dendrochronology it has been dated to approximately 1518-1523.

<sup>31</sup> Tulloch, I. (2009). Richard III: A study in medical misrepresentation. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 102(8), 315–323. <http://doi.org/10.1258/jrsm.2009.090075>

<sup>32</sup> Portraits of Richard which appeared after the publication of Shakespeare's Richard III

<sup>33</sup> Frye, R. (1981). The "Shakespearean" Portrait of Richard III in Edward Alleyn's Picture Collection. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 32(3), 352-354. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2870252.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Ian McKellen in his portrayal of Richard III in Richard Loncraine's film (*Richard III*. (1995).) plays a Richard who has been deformed since birth, and who murders his way to the throne.

<sup>35</sup> First performance estimated to be around early 1600's



More, Vergil and Chroniclers<sup>36</sup> such as Raphael Holinshed<sup>37</sup> and Edward Hall<sup>38</sup>. The similarity between More and Shakespeare's work is evident as both accuse Shore's wife of practising witchcraft and both give Richard a withered arm. More describes the event as follows;

“Then said the Protector [Richard III]: “You shall all see in what way that sorceress and that other witch of her counsel, Shore's wife, with their affinity, have by their sorcery and witchcraft wasted my body.” And therewith, he plucked up his doublet sleeve to his elbow upon his left arm, where he showed a shrivelled, withered and small arm – as if it were ever otherwise”<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, in Shakespeare's *Richard III*;

“Then be your eyes the witness of their evil. (*shows his arm*)  
Look how I am bewitched! Behold mine arm  
Is like a blasted sapling withered up;  
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,  
Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore,  
That by their witchcraft thus have markèd me.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> British Library. (2017). *Shakespeare quartos: Richard III*. Retrieved April 18, 2017, from British Library: <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/richard3.html>

<sup>37</sup> Raphael Holinshed is an English Chronicler who records a history of Richard III in his work *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* in 1577

<sup>38</sup> Edward Hall is an English Chronicler who records a history of Richard III in his work *The Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and York* in 1550

<sup>39</sup> More, T., & Logan, G. (2005). *The History of King Richard the Third* (1st ed., p. 43). Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

<sup>40</sup> Shakespeare, W. (2009). *Richard III* (1st ed., pp. Act 3, Scene 4, Lines 68-74). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This is one of the many examples where we see More's work heavily influence Shakespeare's, hence showing the influence of Tudor works of history on his play. Furthering this, Shakespeare was writing and performing for Queen Elizabeth I, with the first recorded performance of *Richard III* taking place in 1633 at the Queen's court.<sup>41</sup> Shakespeare would have been careful not to discredit the late grandfather of his Queen, thus creating a character of Richard III as a cruel and evil King who needed to be usurped by Henry VII.

Shakespeare's work was also highly influential during the Elizabethan era as this was how most people learnt about historical figures and events. Several scholars, such as Moore<sup>42</sup>, Kosir<sup>43</sup> and Potter, discuss the influence of Shakespeare's work on the English populous. Potter states; "Indeed the whole of England it was once said, took their ideology from Milton and their history from Shakespeare"<sup>44</sup> This shows the influential impact that Shakespeare's work had at the time.

Shakespeare's work has continued to influence how society perceives Richard III. At least nine films have been made as adaptations of Shakespeare's Richard III since 1911 and his play is still performed<sup>45</sup> and studied to this day. Two notable films are Laurence Olivier's

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<sup>41</sup> However, there is a grey area, and debate on the creation of the play and first performance outside of the Queen's court. With the British Library suggesting it was first performed in the early 1600's.

<sup>42</sup> James A Moore in his article entitled *Historicity in Shakespeare's Richard III*. Found at: Moore, J. (2017). *James A. Moore, "Historicity in Shakespeare's Richard III. R3.org*. Retrieved 23 April 2017, from <http://www.r3.org/on-line-library-text-essays/james-a-moore-historicity-in-shakespeares-richard-iii/>

<sup>43</sup> Beth Marie Kosir in her article entitled *Richard III: A Study in Historiographical Controversy*. Found at: Kosir, B. M. (2013). *Beth Marie Kosir, "Richard III: A Study in Historiographical Controversy,"*. Retrieved October 2017, 23, from Richard III Society American Branch: <http://www.r3.org/on-line-library-text-essays/beth-marie-kosir-richard-iii-a-study-in-historiographical-controversy/>

<sup>44</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* (1st ed., p. 145). London: Constable.

<sup>45</sup> At least 46 notable performances, including that of Ralph Fiennes and Benedict Cumberbatch

1955 film, *Richard III*<sup>46</sup> and Richard Loncraine's 1995 film *Richard III*<sup>47</sup>. Both films are adaptations of Shakespeare's play and present a Richard who is cruel, evil, malevolent and power hungry. An example of this is the tag line of Loncraine's film, "I can smile... and murder while I smile!". Olivier's film earned \$2.6 million (US) at the box office and won a BAFTA (Best Film) and Golden Globe (Best English Language foreign film)<sup>48</sup>. Loncraine's film was also nominated for a BAFTA for best performance by an actor in a leading role<sup>49</sup>, won best director at the Berlin International Film Festival, and had box office earnings of over \$2.6 million (US). It can be concluded that the success of the film would have influenced people's perception of Richard III. Laurence Olivier's portrayal of Richard III is renowned with Guardian Journalist, Von Tuzelmann in a Guardian review praising Olivier's performance calling it, 'magnetic to watch'<sup>50</sup>. Furthermore, a more recent mini-series has been made about the tale of Richard III, again presenting the Tudor propagandistic version of him. *The Hollow Crown*<sup>51</sup> is a British television show that first aired in 2012 with Shakespeare's play forming part of the script. Evidentially, Shakespeare has created an image of Richard which we still see widely reflected today in popular culture. This image originally derived from Polydore Vergil, Thomas More and Tudor Chroniclers.

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<sup>46</sup> Olivier, L (Producer). (1955). *Richard III* [DVD]. United Kingdom: London Films

<sup>47</sup> Loncraine, R (Producer). (1995). *Richard III* [DVD]. United Kingdom: Mayfair Entertainment International

<sup>48</sup> IMDb. (2017). *Richard III (1955)*. Retrieved 3 May 2017, from [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0049674/awards?ref\\_=tt\\_awd](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0049674/awards?ref_=tt_awd)

<sup>49</sup> IMDb. (2017). *Richard III (1995)*. Retrieved 3 May 2017, from [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114279/awards?ref\\_=tt\\_awd](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114279/awards?ref_=tt_awd)

<sup>50</sup> Von Tuzelmann, A. (2015). Richard III: Laurence Olivier's melodramatic baddie is seriously limp. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/apr/01/richard-iii-laurence-olivier-reel-history-accurate>

<sup>51</sup> Cook, D., Eyre, R., Goold, R., & Sharrock, T. (2012). *The Hollow Crown*. England: BBC.

Despite the representation provided by Shakespeare and the later television shows and films based off his work, some people have tried repairing the image of Richard III to reveal the true Richard. The first revisionist was Sir George Buck<sup>52</sup> whom Jeremy Potter labels as the pioneer of [Richardian] revisionism<sup>53</sup>. Buck aimed to answer for Richard III and to clear and redeem him from the scandals and reputation that had been attributed to him<sup>54</sup>. More Modern revisionists include Potter himself, Hanham, John Ashdown-Hill<sup>55</sup> and members of the *Richard III Society*<sup>56</sup>. Potter believes that, “The combined pens of More and Shakespeare have proved deadlier by far than the swords of the king’s enemies at Bosworth”<sup>57</sup>. Langley, from the *Richard III Society*, “Couldn’t understand why his story had never been told”<sup>58</sup> and, “needed to know who the real Richard III was.”<sup>59</sup> These revisionists have made some impact on repairing the image of Richard III, with the most significant contributor being the *Richard III Society* which has gained a large membership with thirty branches alone in the United Kingdom and a further nine worldwide<sup>60</sup>. The Looking for Richard Project established by Philippa Langley<sup>61</sup> in cooperation with Leicester University led the excavations for the

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<sup>52</sup> Sir Buck was the Master of Revels for King James I and wrote a book about Richard III entitled *The History of King Richard the Third*.

<sup>53</sup> Potter, J. (1991). *Jeremy Potter, “Richard III’s Historians: Adverse and Favourable Views”* | *Richard III Society – American Branch*. *R3.org*. Retrieved 21 April 2017, from <http://www.r3.org/on-line-library-text-essays/jeremy-potter-richard-iiis-historians-adverse-and-favourable-views/>

<sup>54</sup> Buck, G. (1982). *The history of King Richard the Third (1619)* (1st ed.). Gloucester: A. Sutton.

<sup>55</sup> Independent historian and author of books specialising in the history of King Richard III.

<sup>56</sup> The Richard III society was founded in 1924 by Surgeon Saxon Burton

<sup>57</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* (1st ed., p. 121). London: Constable.

<sup>58</sup> English Heritage. (2013, December 2). *Who was the Real Richard III?* [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG8c8wGZO5M>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Including the American Branch, Canadian Branch and New South Wales Branch. List of branches can be found at [http://www.richardiii.net/8\\_4\\_0\\_branches.php](http://www.richardiii.net/8_4_0_branches.php)

<sup>61</sup> Richard III enthusiast who led the excavations in Leicester for the remains of King Richard III in 2012.

discovery of Richard III's remains in 2012. The excavation attracted a large media coverage<sup>62</sup> and led to the building of a Richard III visitor center in 2013 to educate tourists on the real Richard. However, even after the discovery of his remains and the use of scientific evidence to conclude that he didn't have a withered arm or a noticeable hunch back, it seems that the enduring image of Richard is still that of the cruel and Machiavellian King which Thomas More and Polydore Vergil describe. Potter, reflecting on this, quotes, "As we learn for example of Aesop and the Greeks, fables and myths are indestructible. The story of the innocent royal babes<sup>63</sup> and their monstrous Wicked Uncle can never be killed, even by the truth."<sup>64</sup> It seems, that even with this growing minority of Richardians, determined and resolute on uncovering the truth of Richard III, the enduring image crafted by the Tudors almost 400 years ago is not an easy one to remove.

In conclusion, it cannot be denied that to a large extent the popular image of Richard III still held today has been shaped by Tudor historians, and not altered by recent finds. The legacy created by the Tudors has lived on, even amongst various attempts to discover the truth about the last Plantagenet King. The evidence to suggest that the Tudors are responsible for this image of Richard III is overwhelming, as it is still heavily represented to this day in popular culture. Revisionists, like Potter, agree that the image manufactured by the Tudors is not something that can be easily disregarded. Even after many attempts and breakthroughs in the study of King Richard III, people still see him as the cruel, hunchback King. As American historian Paul Murray Kendall puts it, '*The forceful moral pattern of Vergil, the vividness of*

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<sup>62</sup> Floods of articles arouse in the media. One article entitled "Richard III dig: DNA confirms bones are king's" (BBC News 2012 article)

<sup>63</sup> Reference to the Princes in the Tower. Nephews of Richard III who mysteriously disappeared before Richard claimed the throne. Tudor historians have accused Richard of murdering them to gain the throne.

<sup>64</sup> Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* (1st ed., p. 266). London: Constable.

*More, fervour of hall and the dramatic exuberance of Shakespeare have endowed the Tudor myth with a vitality that is one of the wonders of the world. What a tribute this is to art, what a misfortune this is for history*<sup>65</sup>

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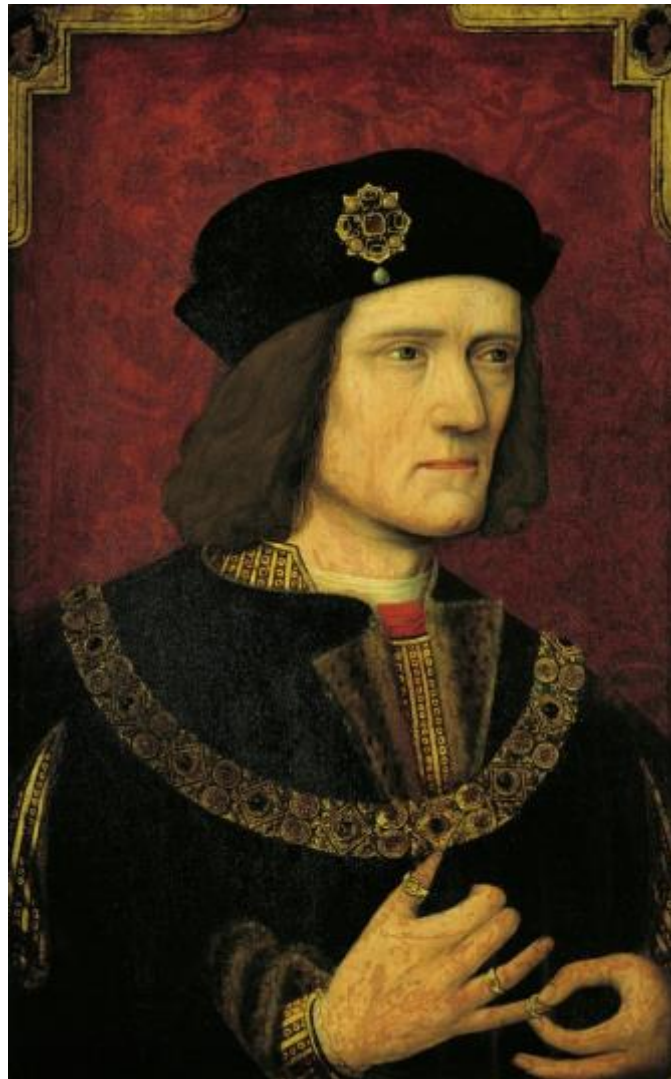
<sup>65</sup> Kendall, P. (1956). *Richard the Third* (1st ed., p. 514). New York: W. W. Norton.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A:

Richard III

Creator Unknown, created c. 1518-1523, Currently held by the Royal Collection



## Appendix B

X-Ray of Appendix A



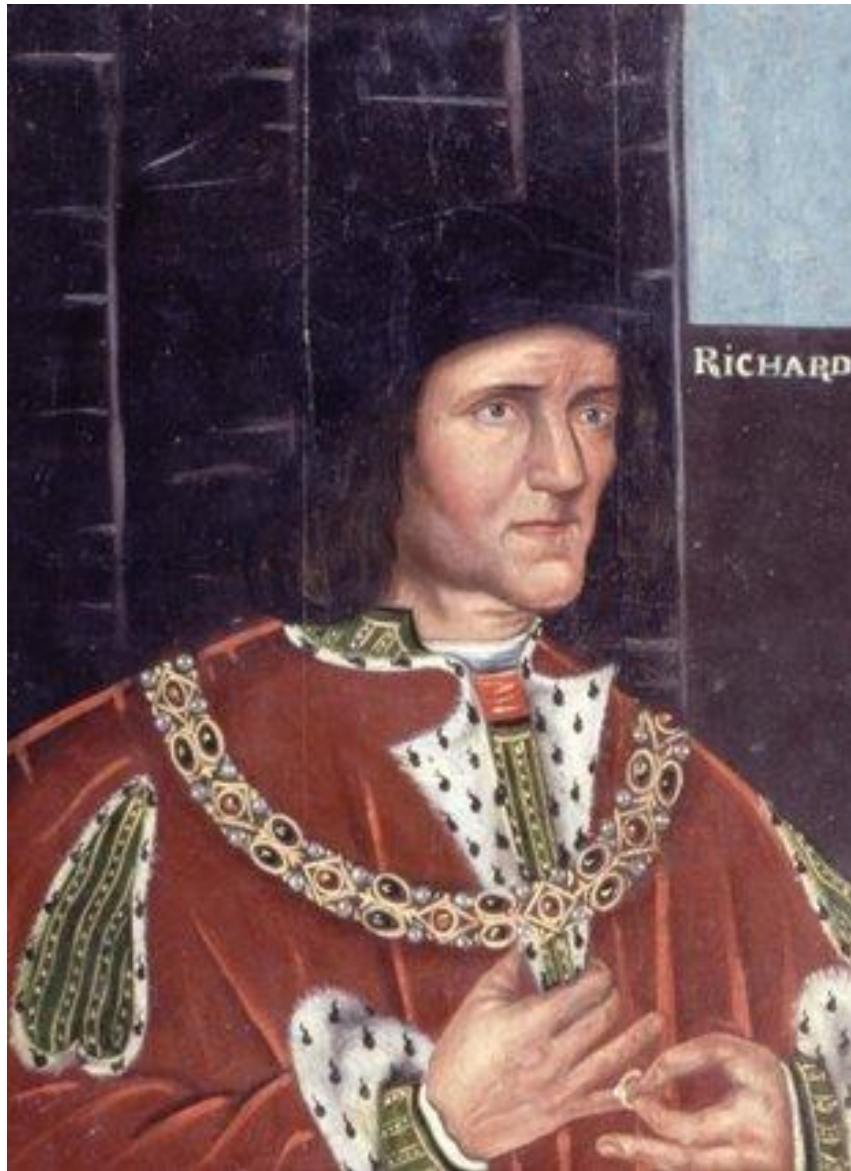
Where the original shoulder  
line was



## Appendix C

Richard III

Creator unknown, created c. 1626, Currently held in the Dulwich Picture Gallery



# SOURCE ANALYSIS

## Source One

Potter, J. (1983). *Good King Richard?* London, United Kingdom: Constable.

Jeremy Potter's work *Good King Richard?* provided me with a revisionist approach to the context and possible motives of key Tudor historians such as Thomas More and Polydore Vergil. This helped me form my central argument as Potter questions and provides evidence for the long lasting impact the histories written by More, Vergil and other various chroniclers have had on the legacy of Richard III.

Potter's agenda in writing the source can be seen as a point of weakness as he is openly pro-Richard, with his mission, undoubtedly the same as that of the Richard III society, to 'reclaim the reputation of Richard III'. Strengths of the source include the corroboration of this work with other sources, including the works of Alison Hanham, and Potter's continual referencing to evidence to support his claims. Potter was the chairman of the Richard III Society from 1971-89. Therefore, Potter isn't just an enthusiast, his position as chairman for almost 20 years shows his dedication. Also his success in determining the position of Greyfriar's nearly 30 years before the remains of Richard III were uncovered, and publication of his book show his deep understanding. All of this shows his extensive knowledge and thus heightens his credibility and reliability as a source.

## Source Two

University of Leicester. (2017). *Richard III*. Retrieved November 16, 2016, from University of Leicester: <https://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii>

The University of Leicester worked with the Looking for Richard Project to discover the remains of Richard III in 2012. Their website was useful as it provided a wide array of information on the king, with links to differing aspects of the controversy surrounding Richard III and the new information discovered from the dig. The site also allowed me to think about the differing role of who the historian is in recording history, with the scientific team at Leicester University playing a huge role in the investigation.

A shortcoming of this source is its medium as it is a website. Because it is a website it would not have undergone the rigorous checking before publication as a book would have.

However, this source was created by the university that examined and searched for the remains of Richard III. This strengthens the information and increases its reliability as it is directly from the experts. This is not just limited to information regarding the dig, as the video on painting alteration was written by Anooshka Rawden, who works at the Society of Antiquaries of London. The website is also intended to inform, evidently with the easy to navigate site and abundance of clear information, hence heightening its reliability.

## Source Three

Hanham, A. (1975). *Richard III and his Early Historians, 1483-1535*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Alison Hanham's work was useful to my research as it provided extensive information on the early historians of Richard III, including More and Vergil, which formed a crucial part of my essay. Hanham considered their various sources and influence. Reading this information, in addition to the information provided by Potter in *Good King Richard?*, helped me in forming my argument on the influence of these key Tudor historians.

Hanham's source was written in 1975 over 35 years before the discovery of the remains of Richard III. This means all her judgments are made without this evidence and thus decreased the usefulness and reliability of this source. Strengths of this work include the thorough footnotes to other scholarly works throughout and to the original manuscripts themselves. Thus increasing the reliability as it shows Hanham's corroboration of other sources and reliance on the primary sources to form her argument. Furthermore, Hanham was an associate professor of medieval history, her qualifications dictating the expected quality of her work, with her audience being people with a keen academic interest in the controversies of Richard III. This increases the reliability of her as a source as its purpose is that of academic integrity and accuracy as she writes.

# References

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Ashdown-Hill, J. (2013). *The Last Days of Richard III and the fate of his DNA*. Gloustershire: The History Press.

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