

One Monarch, Two Interments

By: THL Beatrice de Winter

- I. Who was Richard III?
 - a. Succeeded his brother King Edward IV, after Edward V deemed ineligible
 - b. King of England June, 1483- August, 1485
 - c. Died at the Battle of Bosworth by Henry Tudor's army

 - II. What were the events that led him to this shallow grave?
 - a. Last major skirmish of the "War of the Roses" over the right of English royal succession between the House of York (Richard III) and House of Lancaster (Henry Tudor).
 - b. Richard III boldly charges forward with his cavalry, stopped short by Henry's pikemen and then Richard III's horse loses its footing, throwing him to the ground (Molinet)
 - c. Once on the ground, his helm was likely cut off from behind, leaving his head exposed after which a fatal blow by halberd to the back of his skull (Dr. Jo Appleby)
 - d. Body lies in place after death until later discovered, stripped of armor until transported back to Leister by horseback; temporarily on public display for proof of Henry's victory
 - e. Finally, body taken to Franciscan Priory Church (Greyfriars) and buried.

 - III. Richard III, First Interment
 - a. August 25, 1485 - Private funeral, likely seen only by friars
 - b. No shroud or coffin used, no "pompe"
 - c. Shallow, irregularly shaped hole too small for body, suggestive of hasty interment
 - d. Minimal Christian burial rites such as a Requiem Mass and the Office of the Dead

 - IV. Prelude to the Second Interment
 - a. Discovery of Franciscan Priory Church and Richard III's remains
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- b. Drama surrounding the coffining of the remains at the University of Leicester
- c. Casket created by Michael Ibsen, Richard III's 17th great grand nephew who's DNA was used to confirm the remains as the former king
 - i. Hand carved from oak and yew, 5'10" long
 - ii. Contains 132lbs of lead
 - iii. Bones wrapped in woolen fleece and linin, fully articulated
- d. Coffin taken by horse drawn carriage on walking procession to Leicester Cathedral
- e. Coffin lay in repose for three days with full Catholic rites performed

V. The Second Interment

- a. March 26, 2015 – Leicester Cathedral; solemn service for the re-interment of human remains, based on a service used from the 14-16th C. for reburial of aristocrat originally buried after death in battle and then moved (Dr. Alexandra Buckle)
- b. Allowed for public veneration, included music and foliage; Richard III's Book of Hours utilized
- c. Members of both Anglican and Catholic Church participated
- d. Benedict Cumberbatch, Richard III's third cousin 16 times removed, poetry reading
- e. Two ton Swaledale stone placed on and used to seal grave

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Photographs by: Nicolette Scapens



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