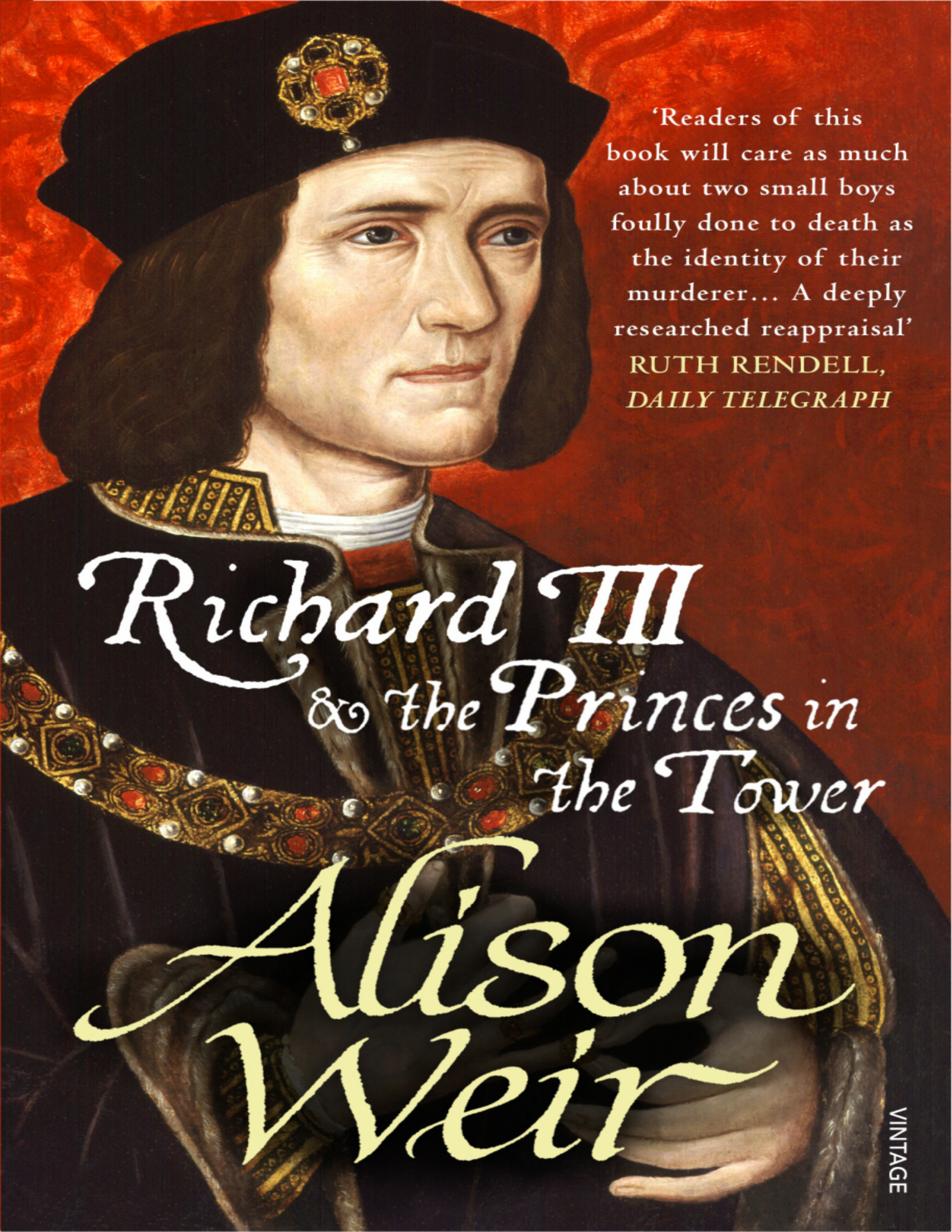

'Readers of this book will care as much about two small boys foully done to death as the identity of their murderer… A deeply researched reappraisal'
RUTH RENDELL, *DAILY TELEGRAPH*

# Richard III & the Princes in the Tower

## Alison Weir

VINTAGE

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# About the Book

The story of the death, in sinister circumstances, of the boy-king Edward V and his younger brother Richard, Duke of York, is one of the most fascinating murder mysteries in English history. It is a tale with profound moral and social consequences, rich in drama, intrigue, treason, scandal and violence.

In this gripping book Alison Weir re-examines all the evidence – including that against the Princes' uncle, Richard III, whose body was recently discovered in Leicester. She brilliantly reconstructs the whole chain of events leading to their murder and reveals how, why and by whose order they died.

# About the Author

**Alison Weir** lives and works in Surrey. Her non-fiction books include *The Six Wives of Henry VIII, Children of England, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry VIII: King and Court, Mary, Queen of Scots, Katherine Swynford* and *Elizabeth of York*. Her novels include *Innocent Traitor, The Lady Elizabeth* and *A Dangerous Inheritance*.

ALSO BY ALISON WEIR

Non-fiction

*BRITAIN'S ROYAL FAMILIES: The Complete Genealogy*

*THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII*

*LANCASTER AND YORK: The Wars of the Roses*

*CHILDREN OF ENGLAND: The Heirs of Henry VIII 1547–1558*

*ELIZABETH THE QUEEN*

*ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE*

*HENRY VIII: King and Court*

*MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS AND THE MURDER OF LORD DARNLEY*

*ISABELLA: She-Wolf of France, Queen of England*

*KATHERINE SWYNFORD: The Story of John of Gaunt and His Scandalous Duchess*

*THE LADY IN THE TOWER: The Fall of Anne Boleyn*

*MARY BOLEYN: 'The Great and Infamous Whore'*

*ELIZABETH OF YORK: The First Tudor Queen*

*THE LOST TUDOR PRINCESS: A Life of Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox*

As co-author

*THE RING AND THE CROWN: A History of Royal Weddings, 1066–2011*

Fiction

*INNOCENT TRAITOR*

*THE LADY ELIZABETH*

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*A DANGEROUS INHERITANCE*

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# Lancaster and York: A Simplified Genealogy

† = murdered
⚔ = killed in battle
ex. = executed

Edward III 1312-1377

Edward, Prince of Wales 1330-76
Richard II 1367-1400†

Lionel, Duke of Clarence 1338-68
Philippa 1355-1381
m. Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March and Ulster 1352-1381
Elizabeth
Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland d.1489†
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March and Ulster 1373-1398
Anne Mortimer 1390-1411

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster 1340-1399
m. 1. Blanche of Lancaster 1345-1369
Henry IV 1367-1413
Henry V 1387-1422
Richard of Conisburgh, Earl of Cambridge c1375-1415 ex.
1. m. Katherine of Valois 1401-1437
Henry VI 1421-1471†
m. Margaret of Anjou 1429-1482
Edward of Lancaster, Prince of Wales 1453-1471†
m. 2. Owen Tudor c1400-61 ex.
Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond 1430-1456

2. Constance of Castile 1354-1394
3. Katherine Swynford c1350-1409

Edmund of Langley, Duke of York 1341-1402
m. Margaret Beaufort 1443-1509

Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester 1355-1397†
Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham 1355?-1483 ex.

Edward IV 1442-1483
m. Elizabeth Wydville 1437-1492
Edward V 1470-1483†
Richard, Duke of York 1473-1483†
The Princes in the Tower
Elizabeth of York 1466-1503
m. Henry VII 1457-1509
Royal House of Tudor
Others: Mary, Cecily, Margaret, George, Anne, Katherine, Bridget

George, Duke of Clarence 1449-1478 ex.
m. Isabella Neville 1451-1476
Edward, Earl of Warwick 1475-1499 ex.
Margaret, Countess of Salisbury 1473-1541 ex.

Richard III 1452-1485 ⚔
m. Anne Neville 1456-1485†?
Edward of Middleham, Prince of Wales 1476-1484

Elizabeth 1444-1503/4
m. John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk d.1491
John, Earl of Lincoln 1462?-1487 ⚔
Edmund, Earl of Suffolk 1472?-1513 ex.

This book is dedicated to
my cousin,
Christine Armour,
and in loving memory of
Joan Barbara Armour

ALISON WEIR

# Richard III and the Princes in the Tower

VINTAGE BOOKS
London

‘… look back with me unto the Tower. –
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes,
Whom envy hath immured within your walls!
Rough cradle for such little, pretty ones!
Rude, ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow
For tender princes …’

*Richard III*, Act IV, Scene I

‘Ah me, I see the ruin of my House!
The tiger now hath seiz’d the gentle hind;
Insulting tyranny begins to jet
Upon the innocent and aweless throne:–
Welcome destruction, blood and massacre!
I see, as in a map, the end of all.’

*Richard III*, Act II, Scene IV

# *Foreword to the 2014 edition*

*Richard III: The Man and the Myth*

This book was first published in 1992, and it came about almost by accident. Back in the Sixties I had read Josephine Tey's hugely influential novel about Richard III, *The Daughter of Time* – something of a museum piece now – and Paul Murray Kendall's sympathetic 1955 biography of the King, which I thought was the last word on the subject; and for twenty-five years I firmly believed that Richard had been much maligned.

After finishing *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, I did a lot of research for an ambitious project on the fall of the Plantagenet dynasty, spanning the period from 1399 to 1563. I found that I was collating a lot of source material on the Princes in the Tower, but felt there was really not much more to be said on the subject, especially after a marathon television trial of Richard, featuring numerous experts, had been screened by Channel 4 in 1984 – and had acquitted him. Then I obtained the transcript of the trial – and found that much had been omitted. It was at this point that I pursued the idea of writing a book on the Princes, with the aim of clearing my mind of all past conclusions and studying the subject afresh. Once the book had been commissioned, I came to study the sources for the period objectively and in greater depth – and realised that I had to revise my views.

I have found no reason since to change them, although I have no axe to grind and am open to new evidence or

arguments, even if it would mean serious rewriting. Those are not empty words, as I am currently extensively revising two of my earlier books for republication, at my own choice. And I have completely revised my views on one chapter in *Richard III and the Princes in the Tower*, that concerning Elizabeth of York and Richard's plan to marry her. My new findings are discussed in my recent biography of Elizabeth, which also contains further arguments that bolster my conclusions in *Richard III and the Princes in the Tower*.

The discovery of Richard III's remains in Leicester has reignited debate about his involvement in the disappearance of the Princes in the late summer of 1483. (It also means that my account – derived from John Speed – of Richard's bones being dug up at the Reformation and thrown into the River Soar is now redundant.) The problem with researching the disappearance of the Princes is the paucity and bias of the source material. The fate of Edward V and his younger brother, Richard, Duke of York, is unknown, and there is no certain proof that they were murdered. But the weight of circumstantial and other evidence points to a likely resolution of the mystery.

Chroniclers writing under Henry VII and the later Tudors rarely have a good word to say about Richard. It is often said that they are responsible for impugning his reputation, and that in so doing they were following official policy, although there is little evidence that the early Tudor monarchs actively pursued a policy of character assassination against Richard III. By the time Shakespeare wrote his play *Richard III*, audiences would have found his portrayal of Richard as an evil but charismatic villain largely credible, for by then the so-called 'Black Legend' of the King was firmly entrenched in the English national consciousness, thanks to the printed works of Polydore Vergil, Robert Fabyan, Edward Hall, Sir Thomas More and Raphael Holinshed, all sources on which Shakespeare

drew. But the origins of that ‘Black Legend’ were entrenched in Richard’s own lifetime, and writers like Polydore Vergil, Henry VII’s official historian, and, famously, Sir Thomas More were not men to compromise their integrity, even to please their royal masters. Vergil mightily offended Henry VII with his debunking of the Arthurian legends that were so essential to the mythology of the Tudor descent. And we all know what happened to More for defying Henry VII.

Richard III was shaped by the age and political climate in which he lived. His formative years were overshadowed by war, treachery and violent death. He was eight when his father and brother Edmund were killed in battle. He grew up in an insecure, ever-shifting world, and twice suffered the misery of exile. He probably became hardened early on to the realities of political expediency.

Richard was a typical late-medieval magnate: acquisitive, hungry for wealth and power, brave in battle, tough and energetic. He took a keen interest in warfare and heraldry, and loved hunting and hawking. He was loyal to his brother, Edward IV, and was a good lord to his dependants, but there were instances where he did not scruple to ride roughshod over the rights of others. Ambition drove him – as would later become clear. But he was an able man, hard-working and conscientious in dealing with state business, and had that in him which inspired loyalty, and ‘a sharp courage, high and fierce’. He was pious, and his devotional books suggest he had a conscience. During his reign, his only Parliament passed some good legislation, although his policies – and his alienation of Crown lands – were aimed largely towards consolidating his precarious hold on the throne.

Shakespeare, of course, took the prevailing view of his age: that Richard III was a tyrant, a usurper and a murderer. Drawing on the calumnies of hostile chroniclers, Shakespeare portrays Richard as a grotesque, ugly

hunchback who is ‘rudely stamp’d’, ‘deformed, unfinish’d’ and cannot ‘strut before a wanton ambling nymph’. In Tudor times many believed that outward deformity reflected inward evil, and Shakespeare’s Richard acts true to those expectations: ‘I am determined to prove a villain. Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous …’ He makes no secret of his determination to become King.

Contemporaries spoke only of Richard’s small stature and slightness of body. After his death in 1485, the hostile historian and antiquarian John Rous asserted that Richard had a humped back and unequal shoulders. In 1491 a schoolmaster of York, where Richard was well known, was the first to nickname him ‘Crouchback’. Vergil wrote that he was ‘deformed’. Tudor portraits of Richard were painted with a raised shoulder, or it was added later, as X-ray photography proves. But when Richard’s skeleton was discovered recently, it was found that he had suffered from a severe curvature of the spine that would have accounted for him having one shoulder higher than the other. Although five foot eight inches tall, he would have appeared shorter because of the curvature.

Several contemporaries suspected that, from the time Richard learned of his brother Edward IV’s death in 1483, his ambition focused on gaining the throne, which he usurped less than three months later. Dominic Mancini, an Italian then visiting England, wrote that Richard was driven by ambition and lust for power, and that he had set his thoughts on removing everyone who stood in the way of his mastering the throne. His elimination, by execution without trial, of the men most likely to oppose him was the act of a tyrant, and there were conspiracies against him almost from the beginning of his reign.

Richard’s assertion that Edward IV’s children were illegitimate and had no rightful claim to the throne remains highly controversial; certainly the ‘revelation’ came at an opportune moment for him, and was made public only after

he had tried unsuccessfully to convince the people that his brother Edward IV had been the fruit of adultery and not the rightful King. The matter was one on which only the ecclesiastical courts could adjudicate, but Richard chose instead to have Parliament endorse the assertion, and no proofs were ever made public.

The facts remain: the Princes disappeared shortly after Richard III's usurpation; they were held in the King's custody as high-security prisoners of state in a secure part of the Tower; he had a compelling motive for doing away with them, the means and the best opportunity; and they were never seen again.

Circumstantial and other evidence against Richard is strong. Probably the case against him would not stand up in a court of law, but a historian must rely on contemporary evidence and credible inference, and must reach a conclusion on a balance of probabilities. It worries me when people say that Richard III was 'rather a nice man', as I read recently in an academic article, or that his reconstructed face is not that of a tyrant. One can only go on the evidence, which many serious historians find convincing. If you study history objectively you do not try to make the facts fit a theory; you wait to see what you can discover and infer from original sources. Historians sometimes study the same sources and draw different conclusions, but with Richard III there often seems to be a high degree of bias and denial, and indeed emotional investment, as was seen in the media following the discovery of his remains, when one almost got the feeling that this sensational find equated to Richard being vindicated.

Much of the evidence against Richard comes from the detailed account of the murder of the Princes written by Sir Thomas More around 1513. It is unfinished and only appeared in print after More's death. Roger Ascham, the great Elizabethan scholar, described it as a model of

historical writing, and it certainly ticks all the boxes in regard to Tudor expectations of history. More went to great trouble to research his narrative, seeking out first-hand evidence; he used it to illustrate a moral lesson, and he invented speeches for his characters that are based on his source material, an accepted practice at that time. His account is rich in authentic detail, although in places, as he makes clear, he had to 'divine upon conjectures'. He had no motive for making anything up, yet for all his integrity and scholarship, his account is often rejected by revisionists. Even so, his sources were probably people who had been pretty close to events, and other evidence fits with his account.

In the autumn of 1483 rumours accusing Richard III of the murder began to surface in England and abroad. Public opinion generally held that he had had the Princes killed, and speculation focused not on who had done the deed, but on how it had been done. It was said that Richard had 'put to death the children of King Edward, for which cause he lost the hearts of the people. And thereupon many gentlemen intended his destruction.' Ruthlessness in war and politics was tolerated; the usurpation of the throne by a man tried and tested in government and the field of battle was accepted, because his rule was preferable to that of an untried boy; but child murder was a step too far. The Tudor historian Bernard André wrote that, in the wake of the rumours, 'the entire land was convulsed with sobbing and anguish. The nobles of the kingdom, fearful of their lives, wondered what might be done against the danger. Faithful to the tyrant in word, they remained distant in heart.' We must allow for a degree of exaggeration from a partisan observer, but this was written less than twenty years later, when many people would have remembered the events of 1483. The rumours were believed as far away as Danzig, as Caspar Weinreich's contemporary chronicle recorded that year: 'Later this summer, Richard had himself crowned

King of England; and he had his brother's children killed.' The rumours irrevocably damaged the King's reputation and undermined his support, but he never denied them, or gave the lie to them by producing the Princes alive, even when it was strongly in his interests to do so. It would also have been in Richard's interests to make it known if they had died natural deaths. Claims that one or both of them survived are fascinating, but unconvincing, and cannot be substantiated by good evidence.

There have been theories that Richard's enemies – the Duke of Buckingham, Margaret Beaufort and her son, Henry Tudor, the future Henry VII – might have arranged their murder, which would have been as advantageous to them as it would have been to Richard III. But while a handful of contemporaries suggested that Buckingham was involved, none of them – even Margaret of Burgundy, his mortal enemy – ever accused Henry Tudor of the deed, and only one seventeenth-century source accuses Margaret Beaufort. When, late in 1483, a rebellion led by Buckingham was suppressed by Richard, and Buckingham was captured and executed for treason, Richard had the perfect opportunity to lay the blame at his door and so give the lie to rumour. He did not seize it.

After Richard was killed at Bosworth in 1485, Henry VII's first Parliament passed an Act attainting Richard as a traitor. It made no direct mention of the Princes, but included 'homicides and murders, in shedding of infants' blood' among the many crimes attributed to the late King – the kind of crimes of which traitors were often accused. The repeal of the Act *Titulus Regius* confirming Richard's title had legitimated Edward V and Richard, Duke of York, so Henry might have been expected to publicise their murders in order to show that their sister, Elizabeth – his intended bride – was the undoubted heir of York, and to stain Richard's name more foully. But he did nothing of the kind. This suggests that he did not know for certain what

had happened to the Princes. In those days there was a legal presumption of ‘no body, no murder’, which persisted until 1954; therefore no official accusation against Richard could be made.

The discovery of Richard III’s remains changes our perception of the so-called propaganda against him. Confirmation that he was indeed the ‘Crouchback’ of legend suggests that we should reevaluate other hostile sources. Might they reflect the truth? Maybe, once Richard was dead, people felt free to speak out against him.

Shakespeare’s *Richard III* demonstrates how the historical record can be distorted and misinterpreted. Yet it has been enormously influential. We have seen in our own time how popular films and novels inform and distort our perceptions of historical figures. Drama in any form is a powerful medium, and it is often more entertaining than history books. Many people accept it as the truth. A rich and powerful dramatic portrayal such as you see in *Richard III*, which has endured for centuries, is bound to have had some impact on our understanding and our view of the historical Richard. But the historical evidence that you are about to read – much of which was not available to Shakespeare – is far more complex than the fiction, and in places it raises more questions than it answers.

Alison Weir
Carshalton, May 2014

# *Author's Preface*

This is a book about the deaths, in tragic circumstances, of two children. It is a tale so rich in drama, intrigue, treason, plots, counterplots, judicial violence, scandal and infanticide, that for more than five centuries it has been recounted and re-interpreted in different ways by dozens of writers. And it is easy to see why: it is a mystery, a moral tale, and – above all – a gripping story. More compellingly, it is the story of a crime that has never been satisfactorily solved.

There are few people who have not heard of the Princes in the Tower, just as there are few people who do not relish a good murder or mystery story. In the case of the Princes, we have an especially fascinating mystery, not only because they were royal victims who lived in a particularly colourful age, nor because there are plenty of clues as to their fate, but because speculation as to what happened to them has provoked controversy for so many hundreds of years. Even today, the battle still rages between those who believe that the Princes were murdered by their uncle, Richard III, and the revisionists, who have forwarded several attractive theories to the contrary.

It has to be said, at the outset, that it is unlikely that the truth of the matter will ever be confirmed by better evidence than we already have. We are talking about a murder that was committed in the strictest secrecy half a millennium ago in a period for which sources are scanty and often evasive. It is true that documents occasionally come to light which add yet another tiny piece to this

extremely complex jigsaw-puzzle, but a historian can rarely hope to produce, in such a case, the kind of evidence that would convince a modern court of law of the identity of the murderer. The historian's job is to weigh the evidence available, however slender and circumstantial, and then – on a balance of probabilities – reconstruct what probably happened. Thus are history books written, and we should not hope for anything better.

For three centuries and more, the revisionist view of Richard III has prevailed, and in recent years the efforts of the Richard III Society have ensured that textbooks are now being cautiously rewritten to present a kinder view of the last Plantagenet king. Yet since the discovery in 1934 of Dominic Mancini's contemporary account of Richard III's usurpation, which corroborated many details in the *Croyland Chronicle* and other contemporary works hostile to Richard, the majority of serious historians have rejected the revisionist view and stressed the huge amount of circumstantial and other evidence against Richard III.

I have therefore tried to approach this book with as open a mind as possible. I have studied all the contemporary works on the subject, as well as dozens of modern ones, and I have collated all the evidence available. I am now confident that the solution to the mystery presented here is the only plausible one. In my research, I have analysed every sentence written about the disappearance of the Princes in original sources, even rearranging information into its correct chronological sequence, and I have found – somewhat to my surprise – that it is indeed possible to reconstruct the whole chain of events leading up to the murder of the Princes, and to show, within the constraints mentioned above, how, when, where, and by whose order, they died. The truth of the matter is there in the sources, for those who look carefully enough. We are dealing here with facts, not just speculation or theories, which I have tried very hard to avoid.

I realise, of course, that my claims are highly contentious, but I am confident that they can be substantiated by good evidence, as I will demonstrate in the text. Thus I hope to entertain, inform, and convince all those who read this book.

Alison Weir

# 1
# *Richard III and the Chroniclers*

MODERN WRITERS ON the subject of the Princes in the Tower have tended to fall into two categories: those who believe Richard III guilty of the murder of the Princes but are afraid to commit themselves to any confident conclusions, and those who would like to see Richard more or less canonised. It is time therefore for the evidence to be re-evaluated and the events surrounding the disappearance of the Princes in 1483 to be reconstructed with greater confidence, because there does exist a considerable amount of contemporary evidence for a solution to this mystery.

It has been said by several writers that both the traditionalist and revisionist views of Richard III fit the known facts, but this is not the case: there are many blind alleys in this mystery, and many authors who have made the mistake of wandering up them. There also exist a great number of misconceptions about Richard III and the Princes, and because the subject still provokes furious debate, one gains the impression that to venture a firm view on the matter is to step into a minefield. However, this book was not written with the intention of fuelling the controversy, but because there is a need for the subject to be dealt with from an objective viewpoint based on common sense and sound research.

The subject of the Princes in the Tower cannot be studied without first evaluating the reliability of the few surviving original sources – virtually all we have to rely on. The late

fifteenth century is a poorly documented period of English history. Few contemporary chronicles survive and some official records still await examination. Thanks to a growing interest in the period, however, much research has been done over the last century and many excellent books have been published. Nevertheless, the second half of the fifteenth century remains in some respects very much a twilight world to the historian.

This book is mainly about the years 1483–5, the period spanning the reigns of Edward V and Richard III. Nearly all the narrative sources for this period have a partisan bias: most were written in the south of England and reflect anti-northern sentiment, for Richard III was identified very much with northern interests.

Few royal letters survive, and of the great collections of letters of the period – the *Paston Letters*, the *Cely Letters* and the *Stonor Letters* – fewer than ten refer to Richard III's usurpation of the throne in 1483. Much of what we know about the period comes from later sources, because for the years 1483–5 there are very few reliable contemporary narrative sources, and only two major ones.

The first of these is Dominic Mancini's account of the events leading up to July, 1483 – *De Occupatione Regni Anglie per Riccardum Tercium (The Occupation of the Throne of England by Richard III*). Mancini was an Italian monk who lived in France and died after 1494. *De Occupatione* was his only prose work. Mancini came to England late in 1482 in the suite of the French ambassador. His brief was to report back to the Archbishop of Vienne on English affairs. He remained in London until July, 1483, leaving England the week after Richard III's coronation.

Mancini's book, which he completed on 1st December, 1483, at Beaugency, was an official report on recent events in England. His stated intention was 'to put in writing by what machinations Richard III attained the high degree of kingship', and he fulfilled this in the most vivid and

objective manner. It is Mancini's objectivity that makes his book an invaluable source; he had no reason to write anything hostile to Richard III. A man of integrity, he confined himself only to the facts, and avoided falling into the habit affected by so many contemporary writers, that of using historical facts to illustrate a lesson in morality. Furthermore, he avoided referring to Richard's accession as a usurpation: 'occupation' is his preferred word.

Mancini's credibility as an historian is further reaffirmed by independent corroboration of his account by other sources, notably the *Croyland Chronicle* and the later accounts of Polydore Vergil and Sir Thomas More, none of whom had access to Mancini's book. Indeed, it was lost for centuries; no one knew of its existence until 1934, when it was discovered by Professor C.A.J. Armstrong in the archives of the Bibliothbèque Municipale at Lille, and subsequently published.

Mancini was reluctant to name his sources, but his account suggests that he had contacts at court, some of whom were apparently hostile to Richard III. The only source mentioned by name is Dr John Argentine, physician to Edward V, who could speak Italian. Mancini could also have made use of Italians living in London, in particular Pietro Carmeliano, a court poet to both Edward IV and Henry VII.

There are flaws in Mancini's book, of which he himself was aware, stating his reluctance to commit his account to paper as he did not know the names of some of those mentioned nor their motives. He admitted his account was incomplete in details. He lacked an understanding of English and a knowledge of English geography, and he paid little regard to chronology, although, in fairness to him, this was a period when recording dates was not considered of prime importance by historians. Nor is there in his book any physical description of Richard III – perhaps we should assume he never saw him. This, and the fact that the latter

part of the account is less detailed, suggests that Mancini was no longer able to make use of some of his former court informants.

The second major source for the period 1483–5 is the *Second Continuation of the Croyland Chronicle.* The magnificent Abbey of Croyland (now spelt Crowland) in Lincolnshire was at this time the most important and wealthiest religious foundation in the east of England, and its mitred abbot ranked with the bishops. Royal visitors to the abbey in the late fifteenth century included Henry VI, Edward IV, and Richard III when he was Duke of Gloucester. Several chronicles detailing the history of England and of the abbey were written at Croyland. Those prior to 1117 are spurious, but the three anonymously written continuations, spanning the periods 1144–1469, 1459–86 and 1485–6, are genuine.

The author of the *Second Continuation* (1459–86) states that it was written in the ten days ending on 30th April, 1486. The last events he describes are the marriage of Henry VII and the northern uprising of that spring. His work is without doubt the best source for the period. Where verifiable, it is highly accurate, and its author was a man who could write authoritatively and from personal knowledge of many of the events he describes. It is clear too that he withheld information that was politically sensitive: his silence on certain subjects sometimes speaks volumes. Much of what he did write is substantiated by other writers, such as Mancini, Vergil and More, who never read his manuscript.

The author of the *Croyland Chronicle* did not approve of Richard III. As a churchman, he was shocked by Richard's behaviour, denouncing him for sensuality, holding an execution on a Sunday, and overspending. However, he declared his intention of writing his history 'in as unprejudiced a manner as we possibly can', asserting that he was presenting the reader with 'a truthful recital of the