

# King Richard III's Anatomy

Luis Marquez

Richard III (1461-1483), also known as Richard Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, was the King of England from 1452 to 1485. He was known for having usurped the crown from his nephew Edward the V and for being defeated in the Battle of Bosworth Field by Henry Tudor, who would later become King Henry VII ("Richard III"). For more than 551 years, the location of Richard's remains was a mystery, with only approximate data on where he had fallen and supposedly buried. It wasn't until 2012 that a group of Archeologists from Leicester University uncovered a body buried under a parking lot, which they suspected belonged to Richard III. After DNA analysis, it was confirmed that they had finally found the controversial king.

The article and videos about Richard's III project that we read in class were extremely interesting, especially since I have lately been learning more detail about the anatomy of the neck and head, as well as tooth/oral anatomy. The content presented a very thorough account of the archeological process of recovering King Richard's III remains, as well as the scientific findings by analysis of anatomical structures and genetic studies. For example, as the scientists were describing the injuries that may have killed the king, they showed a top view of the skull, and even when they do not name the bones themselves, I was able to recognize that they were describing lesions in the maxilla, parietal, and occipital bones ("Richard III: Identifying The Remains").

My knowledge of anatomy helped me recognize not only the name of the bones, but also specific structures and orientations as they showed the archeological samples. I was able to clearly identify parts like the maxillary tuberosity, palatine process of the maxilla, coronoid process, mandibular condyle, and others. At one point, when they were describing an injury just below the mental foramen, I was able to instantly determine that they were on the right side, which shows how Oral Anatomy lessons impacted the way I perceived the audiovisual content.

One of the pieces of information that really struck me is how long the enamel and underlying tooth structures can withstand the pass of time without decomposing ("Richard III: Identifying The Remains," "Richard III's Rich Diet of Fish and Exotic Birds"). Moreover, I was fascinated to learn that teeth can protect enclosed DNA material, which in fact is where the scientists were able to extract the most from.

Above all, what I found the most interesting is the way that anatomy serves as a road map to determine what happened to a person thousands of years ago. Just by looking at anatomical structures, as well as the shape and extent of injuries, researchers were able to determine the type of weapon, the direction of the injury, and whether such injury happened before or after death, among other key factors such as gender and age.

Ever since I started my studies in Biology and Healthcare, I have always said that the human body is the perfect machine. It is fascinating to me that every single structure that we have in our bodies has a reason to be there, a specific function, no matter how minimal it might seem. By watching and reading this material, I now understand that anatomy not only helps healthcare providers orientate themselves in order to assess and provide treatment, but also applies to other scientific fields like Forensics, Bioengineering, and in the case of the Richard III project, archaeology.

#### Works Cited

Hicks, Michael. "Reign and Fall." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 28 Sept. 2019, [www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-III-king-of-England/Reign-and-fall](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-III-king-of-England/Reign-and-fall)

The Lancet, director. Richard III: How Was the King Killed? YouTube, YouTube, 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6S0ku1R9nE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6S0ku1R9nE)

Quenqua, Douglas. "Richard III's Rich Diet of Fish and Exotic Birds." The New York Times, The New York Times, 25 Aug. 2014, [www.nytimes.com/2014/08/26/science/richard-iiis-rich-diet-of-fish-and-exotic-birds.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/26/science/richard-iiis-rich-diet-of-fish-and-exotic-birds.html)

"Richard III." Biography.com, A&E Networks Television, 15 May 2019, [www.biography.com/royalty/richard-iii](http://www.biography.com/royalty/richard-iii)

University of Leicester, director. "Richard III - Identifying the Remains." YouTube, 2013, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfi6gOX0Nf4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfi6gOX0Nf4).