

**“The English King, Richard the Second,
One of His Influences on Poetry, on Chaucer and Shakespeare”**

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1. Introduction: The boy, the young man and the man the King, Richard II lived around 33 years, he was neither like other people nor like other kings. His short life, which was nearly 33 years, seemed very peculiar. Firstly, he did not spend his childhood like other mates; he became King of England in 1377 after his grandfather, Edward III, the black prince, ⁽²⁾ died. He was the king because Richard11's father had died in 1376 and this had left Richard heir to the English throne. Secondly, the young boy, Richard II had to stand firmly against strong ambitious relatives, his unassisted uncle, John of Gaunt and other nobles who dominated England as he was only 10 years. Thirdly, he also inherited the devastated results of the Black Death ⁽³⁾ which economic problems were brought on, and the latter ones were the main reasons behind the Peasant's Revolt (1381). He had to face the Revolt and he was about 14 years old. However, the following years his major dependence was on a small number of countries which resulted in a discontent in the political issues. Fourthly, big problem had started when the Lords Appellant, the noblemen in 1387, took over the power of the government, Richard11 could regain the control of the country within a year. Fifthly, he governed the country in correspondence with his relatives and his opponents up to 1396, during that, precisely in 1396 Richard II married the second one, Isabelle of France (1389-1409), who was seven years old. After that, in 1397 a change had appeared in the direction of ruling the Kingdom, and Richard11 could revenge from his Appellants in 1397 and he executed and exiled them. Lastly but not the least, the following two years were decisive; because the king had appeared an aggressive tendency, for that reason, Richard II was described as “Tyranny” by the historians. Finally, the death of John of Gaunt in 1399 put the end of the young King, and it made the King disinherited Gaunt' son, Henry of

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(2) There is no record of the name "Black Prince", during Richard's 1 lifetime, nor for more than 150 years after his death. He was instead known as Edward of Woodstock (after his place of birth), or by one of his titles, Scott L. Waugh, Vol. 35, No 1 (2003, 95-97), The Black Prince, By David Green.

(3) Black Death was one of the most overwhelming epidemic in human history, 75to 200 million people in Europe in the years 1348-50. ABC/Reuters (29 January 2008). "Black Death discriminated between victims (ABC News in Science)"

Bolingbroke. In June 1399, Henry, who firstly claimed for his patrimony, but very soon it proved that he was after the throne for himself. Finally, Bolingbroke deposed the King, Richard II, and crowned himself as King Henry IV, and Richard II died in imprisonment early in 1400, it was said that his death was a murder.

2.1 Richard II's Features Personality: Richard II, who was the eldest son, became king of England in 1377 after the death of his grandfather Edward III, because Richard's father died before his latest father himself in 1367, and he was the eldest son who inherited the throne of England. It was said that he was tall, good looking, white rounded and feminine face, namely lacking of manliness, athlete and intelligent. Furthermore, it was said that when he felt anxious he had stammered. ⁽¹⁾ As a religious belonging, he was an orthodox but, at the end of his reign he turned over and became a strong opponent of the Lollard heresy. But, what is Lollard? Lollard is a radical religious movement and it was considered as unorthodox, that movement had appeared in late medieval England, after 1382. Moreover, the name Lollard, which was used disapprovingly, derived from the Middle Dutch *lollaert* ("mumbler"). It is worth mentioning that Wycliffe, ⁽²⁾ who was at Oxford in the 1370s, was one of those who increasingly advocated those radical religious views. He declared publicly the cult of transubstantiation ⁽³⁾ and he showed the importance of chanting and he took into the priority consideration of spiritual states and the holy writing as the source of the principle of Christian. The first one who led that movement was Nicholas of Hereford as Wycliffe's colleagues at Oxford in 1382. Lollard movement drew the attention of followers outside Oxford who were opposed the suggestions of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. It is to be added that William Courtenay, who was one of the archbishops of Canterbury, imposed some of the Oxford Lollards to reject their views and conform to Roman Catholic doctrine in 1382. ⁽⁴⁾

2.2 Richard II's Family: Richard II was the younger son of Edward, who was called the Black Prince. ⁽⁵⁾ Edward was nominated as a military

(1) See www.thehistoryblog.com. When the tomb of Richard II was opened in 1871, it was found that he was six feet tall.

(2) John Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire in 1324. The spiritual life in England and much of Europe were influenced by Wycliffe; he was called "The Morning Star of the Reformation". www.epc.org.au

(3) The belief, especially by Roman Catholics, that during Mass (a religious ceremony) bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 3rd edition, 2008

(4) Encyclopedia Britannica a Dictionary of Arts, Science, Literature and General Information, Eleventh edition, Volume 1V Bisharin to Calgary, by The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the university of Cambridge, 2011, New York.

(5) No record was fixed for the name, "Black Prince" during his life, he was called, "Edward The Woodstock" Ibid

commander in the Hundred Year's War. When he was in Spain in 1370, he caught dysentery after the military adventures. There was no sign for recovering, he returned to England in 1371. ⁽¹⁾ Edward was the eldest son of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault. Edward did not become a king himself, moreover he died before his father, but his son Richard II became the next king of England.

2.2.1 Richard's Mother: Joan, who was known as the "Fair Maid of Kent", was born in 1328 and died in 1385. Joan, the 4th Countess of Kent, was known that because she was beautiful and she was concerned with love affairs as well. Joan was the daughter of Edmund and the granddaughter of King Edward I. Queen Philippa took care of the family after the death. There, Joan met Prince Edward the Queen's son. Thomas Holland married Joan when was twelve in a secret ceremony. Leaving home, Holland left to fight abroad. The Earl and Countess arranged another marriage for Joan to William Montagu. The pope legal agreement to approve the marriage between Joan and Montagu took several years. Then they had several children, but Holland died in 1360. At that time, Edward was still unmarried. Finally the two were married in October 1361. Joan had more children before the death of the Edward in 1376. ⁽²⁾

Richard II was born at the Archbishop's Palace, in Bordeaux, Duchy of Aquitaine on the 6th of January 1367. ⁽³⁾ During his boyhood, 10 years old, Richard II ascended the throne on Edward's death and the coronation was on the 16th of July 1377. It is worth mentioning that his uncle John of Gaunt and other nobles dominated the rule. When elder brother Edward of Angouleme died in 1371, Richard became his father's heir. Finally, on the 21st of June the next year, Richard's grandfather Edward III died, and Richard II was crowned king on 16 July 1377. There were fears of John of Gaunt ambitions influenced political decisions appeared again as they were before, and regency, led by the King's uncles, was avoided. Instead, his kingship was nominally put on by the king himself, during that time he was helped by a series of councils from which John of Gaunt was excluded.

There were three characters; Gaunt, with younger brother Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Buckingham, affected the business of the

(1) Barber, Richard (2004). "Edward, prince of Wales and of Aquitaine (1330-1376)" Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford. Oxford University Press

(2) Ibid

(3) Three kings; Castille, Navarre, and Portugal were present at his birth and this anecdote, of his birth fell on the feast of Epiphany, was later used in the religious imagery of the Wilton Diptych, Barber, Richard (2004).

government. Richard II's second wife was Isabelle of France (1389-1409), the oldest daughter of King Charles VI, in 1396.

2.3 Political Situations :

2.3.1 Political Circumstances influenced Richard 11's Rule: In his early ruling as king, as it was mentioned above Richard II's government was in the hands of a series of councils, whereas the political community would rather grant this to the regency when he was led by the king's uncle, John of Gaunt remained highly influential, but the first prime challenge of his reign was the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 (see page 6). The young king played a successful major part in this crisis. The king was depending on a small number of courtiers when there was dissatisfaction in the political public. In 1387, Lords Appellant, a group of noblemen, took over the control of government for nearly two years, but by 1389 Richard II retook the reign again. The following eight years, he governed it in coordination with his relatives and former opponents. Then, in 1397, his revenge on the Appellants represented on many of them whom were executed or exiled. In the following two years, historians described Richard's as "Tyranny", because of the execution and exile that he had committed. In 1399, after John of Gaunt died, the king disinherited Gaunt's son, Henry of Bolingbroke, who previously had been exiled.

Richard II rule's era had witnessed several political situations. In 1388, a group of lords headed by the King's uncle Gloucester, who were hostile to Richard II, issued sentences of death for many of the nearest people to the king and Richard II, was forced to renew his coronation oath. Another isolation position was added to Richard II when Anne of Bohemia, the first queen, died in 1394 and at the same time the arbitrary activities of the King disaffected people further.

The king pursued for peace politically with France, where his second wife was Isabella of Valois came from, meanwhile, Richard II still considered himself as the King of France and refused to give up Calais, but his reign was in accord with a 28 year truce in the Hundred Years' War. ⁽¹⁾ Another important event of Richard II's life was the second expedition to Ireland which failed to reconcile the Anglo Irish lords with the Gaels. Richard II's expedition to Ireland between October 1394 and May 1395, and the Scottish border uproar in July 1388. ⁽²⁾ Earlier historians believe that Richard II was not insane, and he may have

1- "Hundred Years War" was a series of conflict waged from 1337 to 1453, pitted the Kingdom of England against the Valois Capetians for control of French throne. En.wikipedia.org

2- Calendar of Patent Rolls 1350-1354 (CPR) (London, 1907), p.425; CPR 1381-1385 (London, 1897), p.185.

suffered from a personality disorder towards the end of his reign. In less worry than his father and his grandfather Richard II seriously sought to bring an end to the Hundred Years' War that Edward III had started. He believed firmly in the royal entitlement that led him to put away the power of his nobility, and to rely on a private retinue for military protection instead.

2.4 Economic Situations: The era of Richard II rule had also witnessed critical economic situations, the most serious one was the disaster, "Black Death" which resulted in economic problems to the country and was the direct reason of leading to the Peasant's revolt in 1381 (see page 6). The effects of the Black Death had left a terrible proportion of the country's population dead. In 1381 a series of revolts set up in England protesting against the enforced high taxes. The protestors killed some of the tax collectors as they tried to gather the taxes. Some of the revolts started in Yorkshire and Kent, whereas revolts in London planned to join the leadership of the mysterious Wat Tyler. ⁽¹⁾ Rebels killed the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon of Sudbury. Richard II had his own step and met the rebels twice in London, first at Mile End and then at Smithfield the following day. At this second meeting Wat Tyler was killed and the peasants were stopped from escalating their violence by a heavy-duty campaign headed by Richard the King himself. Then he moved towards the rebels and promised to hear their complaints and respond to them positively.

Richard's enemies, the nobility, did their best to lay down restrictions on his royal power (1386-89) but, in return he took revenge on them later on. Firstly, he banished John of Gaunt's son, Henry, and secondly, removed and seized his vast Lancastrian estates. But Henry successfully exploited the opportunity of Richard's absence in Ireland and invaded England (1399) and seized power as Henry IV. ⁽²⁾

2.5 The Circumstances before and after Peasant Revolt: It is significant point to refer to the circumstances surrounded the Peasant Revolt, namely the conditions that occurred before and after the Revolt. Firstly, there were fears that Richard's uncle, John of Gaunt, would seize the throne before Richard II was crowned king in 1377. This pushed the prince quickly to invest with the principality of Wales and his father's other titles. Secondly, John of Gaunt had great ambitions which

1- Wat Tyler was a leader of the 1381 Peasant's Revolt. He marched a group of protesters from Canterbury to the capital to oppose the institution of a poll tax. He was killed by King Richard II's officers during negotiations at Smithfield in London. Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 2006

2- Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 2006, pp. 1578-79.

influenced the decisions on policy and provoked worries, and the King's uncles evaded the regency. Gaunt with his younger brother Thomas of Woodstock, and Earl of Buckingham, had left noticeable impacts on the business of government. However, these were due to many points:

1-Simon de Burley and Robert de Vere increased the control of royal affairs and abuse the concerns of the House of Commons to the point where the councils were halted in 1380.

2-The dissatisfaction of the situation reflected an increasingly heavy burden of taxation levied through three poll taxes between 1377 and 1381. Those were spent on unsuccessful military expeditions on those areas.

3-By 1381, there was bitterness against the governing classes in the lower levels of English society.

4-The risk of the French incursion did not lessen; as a substitute it raised stronger into 1386.

5-In October of 1386, Michael de la Pole, as a chancellor of the parliament, requested an extraordinary taxation for the sake of the realm's defence. Instead of approving the consenting, the parliament responded negatively and refused to take any request until the chancellor was removed.⁽¹⁾

Richard considered that as an offend step, which made him worry a lot, against him and his royal privilege. Accordingly, he went on a tour round the country from February to November 1387 to get support for his cause.⁽²⁾ On his return to London, the king was confronted by Thomas of Woodstock, Arundel and Thomas de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who brought an appeal of betrayal against de la Pole, de Vere, Tresilian, and two other loyalists: the mayor of London, Nicholas Brembre, and Alexander Neville, the Archbishop of York. Richard delayed the negotiations to gain more time, because de Vere was expected to arrive from Cheshire with military reinforcements. The three Earls, who known as the Lords Appellant, joined forces with Henry, they were Earl of Derby (Gaunt's son, who became King Henry IV after Richard II), and Thomas de Mowbray, and Earl of Nottingham. On the 20th of December 1387 they seized de Vere at Radcot Bridge, where he and his

1- C. Barron, 'The Deposition of Richard II', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth Century England*, (Gloucester, 1990), pp.132-49.

2- H. Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337-1396*, ed. G. H. Martin (Oxford, 1995), pp.402-4; N. Saul, *Richard II* (London, 1997), pp.171-2.

forces were moved and he was obliged to flee from the country. ⁽¹⁾ Richard now had no choice but to obey to the appellants' demands; Brembre and Tresilian who were later convicted and executed, whereas a sentence to death in absentia at the Merciless Parliament in February 1388 was issued against de Vere and de la Pole, who had left the country. The trails went further, and a number of Richard's knights were also executed, among them, Burley. The Appellants had now succeeded completely in breaking up the circle of the preferred people around the king. ⁽²⁾ After the months of negotiation with the Merciless Parliament Richard gradually re-get the royal authority. In their aggressive foreign policy, Lords Appellants did not succeed in achieving their goals, and the exertions to build a wide, anti-French coalition resulted to nothing, and the north of England became victim to a Scottish invasion. When Richard¹¹ was over twenty-one years, he claimed with confidence his right to rule in his own name. Richard undertook full control of the government on 3 May 1389, claiming that the difficulties were he faced due to bad councilors. The policy he drew limited the actions of the Appellants; looking for peace and reforming measurements with France, he also gave his word to reduce the weight of taxation on the people in sensible way. Richard ruled the following eight years in peace. When reforming the dispute with his former enemies, Richard began negotiating a long-lasting peace as a secured stabile national step. A proposal put forward in 1393, it would greatly expand the territory of Aquitaine possessed by the English crown. However, the plan failed because it included a requirement that the English king pay homage to the King of France, but that condition was unacceptable to the English public. ⁽³⁾ Instead, in 1396, a truce agreed upon was planned to last twenty eight years. Richard agreed to marry Isabella, daughter of Charles VI of France, who was six years old when she grew up, as part of the truce. There were some doubts about the engagement, because the princess would not be able to produce an heir to the throne of England for many years.

Indeed, Richard ran two opposing situations; (1) he pursued for peace in France, (2) and he invaded Ireland. The English lordships in Ireland were in danger of being overrun, and the Anglo-Irish lords were begging for the king to interfere. Richard left for Ireland in 1394, there he remained

1- Ibid

2- Cokayne, G. E, *The Complete Peerage*, vol. ii (London, 1912), Appendix D. Baronial service in royal administration will be discussed in Chapter 3.iii.

3- Ibid

until May 1395. The invasion was a success, and a number of Irish rulers submitted to English over lordship. It was one of the most successful achievements of Richard's reign, which strengthened the king's support at home, although the consolidation of the English position in Ireland proved to be short-lived.¹

2.6 Military Situations: When the Peasants' Revolt broke out in 1381 Richard was 14 years old, yet, he was strong enough to meet the rebels at Smithfield, London. When the principal leader of the peasants, Wat Tyler, was killed, the uprisings in the rest of the country were crushed over within few weeks. Later, Richard's Council forced him to cancel the royal pardon. That was not enough for him; he took his revenge in 1397, he arrested or banished many of his opponents such as his cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke. On the death of Henry's father, John of Gaunt, Richard removed the wide possessions of Duchy of Lancaster and divided them among his supporters.² For example, when Lord Dispenser was 15 he accompanied Richard, Earl of Arundel on his naval expedition, their relationship was friendship rather than lordship, but after a decade he condemned the same lord to execution.^{(3) (4)} Other examples were Gloucestershire Baron who was at the service of Lord Gilbert, and Lord Talbot 1387.

2.7 Literature: The most important event the era Richard 11 witnessed is the enormous mark on the English language and literature of England by Geoffrey Chaucer who was born in London 1340-1400,⁽⁵⁾ the Middle Age was closed by the death of Chaucer, which was the same time of the death of Richard 11. Chaucer was enjoyed by the royal esteem throughout the raging rule of Richard 11; his major work after "*The House of the Fame*" was "*The Parliament of Fowls*" which was written to celebrate Richard's marriage to Anne of Bohemia in 1382.

1- Details of E 101/402/20, fos. 32r-33v were kindly provided by Dr David Simpkin from as yet unpublished research for the Soldier in Later Medieval England project.

2- J. Sherborne, War, Politics and Culture in Fourteenth Century England (London, 1994), p. 15; N. B. Lewis, 'The Last Medieval Summons of the English Feudal Levy, 13 June 1385', *English Historical Review*, lxxiii (1958), pp.17-21; D. Biggs, *Three Armies in Britain* (Leiden, 2006), p.63.

3- CPR 1385-1389, p.416. It had always been assumed that Dispenser was given licence to go to Prussia with another of the Appellants, Thomas, duke of Gloucester in 1391. However, Lawrence has recently shown the 'Lord Dispenser' referred to be his cousin Hugh Dispenser: CPR 1388-1392, p.413; Lawrence, "'Too Flattering Sweet'", p.147n.

4- For Dispenser's royal service, in the context of his family's history of such service, see: Lawrence, 'Power, Ambition and Political Reconciliation', ch.3.

5- Geoffrey Chaucer was the worshipful father and first founder and embellisher of ornate eloquence in our English, he was not the father of English fiction but the father of English literature, *Adventures in English literature*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980, p 55.

Meanwhile, Richard 11's reign was marked by two kinds of conflicts; home conflict home and abroad conflict including "*The Peasant Revolt*".

2.8 Noticeable Contribution of Richard 11: Richard 11 left his prints on several things; (1) a new form of address developed; where the king previously had been addressed simply as "*highness*", in his era "*royal majesty*", or "*high majesty*" was often used. (2) It was said that Richard would sit on his throne in the royal hall in magisterial ceremonies for hours without speaking. On that who stood in front of the King, and his eyes fell on the King's eyes had to bow to him. ⁽¹⁾(3) Richard was one of the greatest royal patrons of the arts; patron of Chaucer, he was highly cultured (4) it was Richard who ordered the technically innovative transformation of the Norman Westminster Hall to what it is today. (5) Richard's authority programme was to work on improving the royal image. (6) Unlike English kings before him, Richard had himself depicted the paintings of the highly majesty, for example Westminster Abbey who portrayed of the king 1390 and the Wilton Diptych (1394–99). ⁽²⁾ Such work probably was to show Richard on his Irish campaign. ⁽³⁾ (7) the remaining example is the polite and formal Gothic English style of painting which was developed in the continent, particularly Prague and Paris. ⁽⁴⁾

2.9 Richard 11 on Shakespeare's Eyes: The popular view of Richard has more than anything been influenced by Shakespeare who had his own view about the king, *Richard II*. Shakespeare described Richard 11 as a

1- Ormrod, *Political Life*, pp.47-51 (quotation at p.47).

2- N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), p.261.

3- Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, pp.258-62. Saul's emphasis on the role of the county courts builds on the work of Maddicott who argued for their development in this period into political gatherings and institutions for the shire polity: J. R. Maddicott, 'The County Community and the Making of Public Opinion in Fourteenth Century England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series*, xxviii (1978), pp.27-43. Other studies in other parts of the country have however shown the contrary, that neither the county courts nor peace sessions were regularly attended by significant proportions of the shire elite: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp.267-72, 340-2; N. Saul, *Scenes from Provincial Life: Knightly Families in Sussex, 1280-1400* (Oxford, 1986), p.58; S. J. Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England: The Greater Gentry of Nottinghamshire* (Oxford, 1991), pp.174-80; E. Acheson, *A Gentry Community: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c.1442-1485* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.1267; S. Walker, 'Yorkshire Justices of the Peace, 1389-1413', *English Historical Review*, cviii (1993), pp.281-311. For the idea of 'occasional communities' where the shire community could be mobilized for a specific purpose or in times of crisis see: M. J. Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge, 1983), ch.2; Acheson, *A Gentry Community*, pp.83-92.

4- S. M. Wright, *The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century* (Chesterfield, 1983), esp. ch.5 (quotation at p.66). Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism*, ch.2. Bennett argued a similar thing with regards to the Stanleys in the North-West where the crown was the largest landholder. King also showed that in spite their efforts, neither the Percies nor John of Gaunt were able to establish effective hegemony over the Northumbrian gentry, nor were particularly successful in dominating local political society there: A. King, 'War, Politics and Landed Society in Northumberland, c.1296-c.1408', Unpublished PhD thesis, Durham (2001), pp.197-255.

cruel, vindictive and irresponsible king, who showed appearance of greatness only after his fall from power as a king. Shakespeare's play was based on works by writers such as Edward Hall and Samuel Daniel, whose their writings in turn based on contemporary storytellers such as Thomas Walsingham. Hall and Daniel were part of Tudor historiography, which was highly insensitive to Richard. The orthodoxy, Tudor, who was reinforced by Shakespeare, saw the continuing of civil disharmony, which started with Richard's misrule and ended with Henry VII's accession in 1485. Richard II, the King who was blamed by few recent historians for the later 15th century Wars of the Roses was prevalent as late as the 19th century, but came to be challenged in the twentieth. More recent historians prefer to look at the Wars of the Roses in isolation from the reign of Richard II. ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

2.10 The Mental State of Richard II: The historians argued about Richard's mental state since the first academic fields appeared. Bishop Stubbs, diocese of Oxford 1885, discussed up to the end of his reign, Richard's mind "*was losing its balance altogether*". Anthony Steel, another historian wrote a full-scale biography of Richard II in 1941, traced a psychiatric approach to the issue, and came out that the king suffered from schizophrenia. ⁽³⁾ V.H. Galbraith, a historian at Manchester University, Balliol College, Oxford 1889, challenged and argued that there was no historical evidence for such a diagnosis, an idea that has also been followed by later historians, like Anthony Goodman and Anthony Tuck. Nigel Saul, who wrote the most recent academic biography on Richard II, agreed that there was no sign of mental illness, but he showed clear signs of narcissism, and towards the end of his reign gradually became weaker and weaker, though he was in thirties. ⁽⁴⁾

2.11 Richard's Agenda: One of the primary historiographical questions surrounding Richard is his agenda and the reasons for that agenda's

1- I. J. Sanders, *Feudal Military Service in England* (Oxford, 1956), p.26; Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, pp.107-14; D. Crouch, 'From Stenton to McFarlane: Models of Societies of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, v (1995), pp.179-200.

2- Stenton, *The First Century*, ch.3; Doubleday, 'Earldoms and Baronies', p.653; D. A. Carpenter, 'The Second Century of English Feudalism', *Past and Present*, clxviii (2000), pp.32-6. These were 'honourial' because Stenton saw the honour (or fee) as a self-contained largely autonomous institution which was central to baronial power. He has though been criticised for placing too much stress on the autonomy and integrity of the honour. e.g.: Crouch, 'From Stenton to McFarlane', p.186.

3- Bracton mistakenly recorded it as being at this level in the interim period: H. Bracton, *Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England*, vol. ii, ed. S. E. Thorne (Massachusetts, 1968), p.244.

4- J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta* (Cambridge, 1965), pp.316-37; J. H. Round, 'Barons and Knights in the Great Charter', in H. E. Malden (ed.), *Magna Carta Commemoration Essays* (Aberdeen, 1917), pp.46-77; Carpenter, 'The Second Century', pp.36-7.

failure, which is required to be highlighted. His kingship was thought to contain elements of the early modern absolute monarchy as exemplified by the Tudor dynasty⁽¹⁾, More recently, Richard's concept of kingship was not different a lot from his antecedents, and he preserved traditional framework of monarchy. Yet his actions were too risky, and too unexpected. For example, when there was no war there was a reducing of the burden of taxation and that helped Richard to increase his popularity with the House of Commons in parliament. However, that procedure was never achieved for many reasons, (1) because of the cost of the royal retinue, (2) and because of the lavishness of court and the Richard patronage that proved it was as expensive as war, without remarkable benefits.⁽²⁾ But, Edward IV and Henry VII emulated that sort of military policy whereas Richard's exclusive reliance on the county of Cheshire hurt his support from the rest of the country.⁽³⁾

2.11.1 The Crisis Faced Richard 11: One who passes reading the biography of Richard 11, the King of England, finds that his short term life, 33 years, was full of crises and difficulties, the following sections are exclusive on two main crises and the peace which occurred between, which was described as fragile peace.

2.11.1.1 First crisis of 1386–88: Michael de la Pole, the chancellor of parliament in October 1386 requested taxation of an unprecedented level for the defence of the Kingdom. Instead of responding positively to the chancellor's request the parliament refused the request until the chancellor was removed.⁽⁴⁾ The parliament, which later described as the Wonderful Parliament, apparently worked to support Gloucester and Arundel, but the king's responding would not dismiss as much as a scullion (chef's assistance) from his kitchen at parliament's request. When Richard felt that he was threatened to deposit, he gave in and let de la Pole go.⁽⁵⁾ From February to November 1387 Richard went on a tour of the country to gather supporters because he was really confused by that insult to his royal honour. On the other hand, when de Vere installed Justice of Chester, he began the work of creating a loyal military power base in Cheshire. He also assured a legal ruling from Chief Justice Robert Tresilian, asserting that parliament's conduct had been both unlawful and

1- J. R. Maddicott, "'An Infinite Multitude of Nobles': Quality, Quantity and Politics in the Pre-Reform Parliaments of Henry III", in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Thirteenth Century England XII* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp.17-46.

2- Carpenter, 'The Beauchamp Affinity', pp.514-32 (quotation at p.515).

3- Sanders, *Feudal Military Service*, p.27.

(4) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/richard_ii_ofengald

(5) Ibid

treasonable. ⁽¹⁾On his return to London, the king was confronted by Thomas of Woodstock, who was Duke of Gloucester at that time, Arundel and Thomas de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who brought an appeal of treason against de la Pole, DeVere, Tresilian, and two other loyalists: the mayor of London, Nicholas Brembre, and Alexander Neville, the Archbishop of York. Richard stalled the negotiations to gain time, as he was expecting DeVere to arrive from Cheshire with military reinforcements. The three Earls then joined forces with Henry, Earl of Derby (Gaunt's son, later King Henry IV), and Thomas de Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, the group known to history as the Lords Appellant. On 20 December 1387 they interrupted de Vere at Radcot Bridge, where he and his forces were routed and he was obliged to flee the country. Nothing left for Richard, but to comply with the Appellants' demands. Later, Brembre and Tresilian were condemned and executed, while de Vere and de la Pole, who had by then left the country, were sentenced to death *in absentia* at the merciless Parliament in February 1388. The proceedings went further, and a number of Richard's chamber knights were also executed, and among those was Burley. The Appellants had now succeeded completely in breaking up the circle of nearest people around the king. ⁽²⁾

2.11.1.2 Brittle Peace: Few months after the delivering of Merciless Parliament up, step by step Richard could re-establish his royal authority. The aggressive foreign policy of Lords Appellant failed when their efforts to build a wide, anti-French coalition came to nothing, and the north of England was victim to a Scottish invasion. ⁽³⁾ Richard 11, the King was over twenty-one years old at that time and with confidence could claim the right to govern in his own name. Furthermore, John of Gaunt returned to England in 1389 and made up his differences with the king, after which the old statesman acted as a moderating influence on English politics. Richard assumed full control of the government on 3 May 1389, claiming that the difficulties of the past years had merely been due to bad councillors. He drew a foreign policy that reversed the actions of the Appellants by seeking peace and reconciliation with France and promised to lessen the burden of taxation on the people significantly. Richard ruled peacefully for the next eight years, having reconciled with

(1) Chrimes S.B. (1956). "Richard 11's questions to the judges". Law Quarterly Review. Ixxii: 365-90

2- Given Wilson C. (1993). The manner of King Richard's renunciation: A Lancastrian narrative? "English Historical Review 427:365-71 doi:10.1093/her/CV111.427.365.

3- Goodman, Anthony (1971). The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard 11. London: Routledge. ISBN 0-7100-707-8

his former adversaries. Later events would show that he had not forgotten the humiliations he had previously suffered from. In particular, the execution of his former teacher Sir Simon de Burley was an insult which was not easily forgotten⁽¹⁾.

With national stability secured, Richard began negotiating a permanent peace with France. In 1393 a proposal put forward in 1393 would have greatly extended the lands of Aquitaine possessed by the English crown. However, the plan failed because it included a requirement that the English King paid homage to the King of France, such condition was unacceptable to the English public. Instead, in 1396, a truce was agreed to, which was planned to last twenty eight years. As part of the truce, Richard agreed to marry Isabella, daughter of Charles VI of France, when she came of age. There were some misgivings about the engagement, because the princess was then only six years old, and thus would not be able to produce an heir to the throne of England for many years.⁽²⁾

2.11.1.3 Opposed Situations: Richard sought two opposed approaches; a peace approach towards France, an aggressive approach towards Ireland. The approach to France was to apply long-lived peace, whereas the approach to Ireland was to invade Ireland. The English lordships in Ireland were in danger of being overrun, and the Anglo-Irish lords were begging for the king to interfere. In the autumn of 1394, Richard left for Ireland, where he remained until May 1395. His army of more than 8,000 men was the largest force brought to the island during the late middle Ages⁽³⁾. The invasion was a success, and a number of Irish rulers submitted to English over lordship. It was considered as one of the most successful achievements of Richard's reign, which mirrored strength on the king's support at home, although the consolidation of the English position in Ireland proved to be short-lived.⁽⁴⁾

2.11.1.4 Second Crisis of 1397–99: It is worth mentioning that this period the historians referred to as the beginning of "tyranny" stage of Richard II which started in 1397 and ended in 1399. The king arrested Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick in July 1397. The motivation and the timing of these arrests by Richard were not entirely clear. Although one councillor suggested that a plot was being planned against the king, but

1- Ibid

2- Pollard, A.J. (1988), *The Wars of the Roses*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education. P. 12. ISBN 0-333-40603-6

3- Keen, Maurice (1973). *England in the Late Middle Age*. London: Mathuen, ISBN 0-416-75990-4

4- Ibid

there was no evidence that this was the case. ⁽¹⁾ But, it is more likely that Richard had simply come to feel strong enough to safely react against these three men for their role in events of 1386–1388 and eliminate them as threat to his power. Arundel was the first of the three to be brought to trial, at the parliament of September 1397. After a heated quarrel with the king, he was condemned and executed. Gloucester was being held prisoner by the Earl of Nottingham at Calais while awaiting his trial. As the time for the trial drew near, Nottingham brought news that Gloucester was dead. It is thought likely that the king had ordered him to be killed to avoid the disgrace of executing the prince of the blood. ⁽²⁾ Warwick was also condemned to death, but his life was spared and he was sentenced to life imprisonment instead. Arundel's brother Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was exiled for life. Richard then took his oppression of his opponents to the local positions. Richard arraigned the men who were loyal to the Appellants whereas he recruited followers for himself in various counties. At the same time, the imposed fines on those men brought great profits to the crown. ⁽³⁾

2.12 End of Richard 11's Reign: Particularly in the months after the suppression of the Appellants in 1397, the king was enjoying the control on power in the country. When Richard was in Ireland in 1399, Henry of Bolingbroke returned to claim his father's inheritance. In June 1399, Louis, Duke of Orleans, gained control of the court of the insane Charles VI of France. Louis's political ambitions were not met with the policy of re-soothing with the English Kingdom, and for this reason he found it suitable to allow Henry to leave for England. Bolingbroke with small group of followers landed at Raven spur in Yorkshire on June in 1399. After that men from all over the country rallied around the duke shortly. Bolingbroke insisted through the meeting with Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who had his own misgivings about the king that his only purpose was to regain his own patrimony. ⁽⁴⁾ Percy took him at his word and declined to interfere. When the king went to Ireland he had taken most of his household knights and the loyal members of his nobility, so Henry came across little resistance as he moved south. Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, keeper of the realm, rarely had a choice but to support Bolingbroke. Meanwhile, in his return Richard delayed from getting Ireland and did not land in Wales until 24

1- Saul, Nigel (2005). *The Three Richard* 1,11,111. London: Hambledon .ISBN 1-85285-286-0

2- Ibid

3- Ibid.

4- Bennett, Michael J. (1999) *Richard 11and the Revolution of 1399*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing. ISBN 0-7509-2283-4

July. He went to Conwy, where he met the Earl of Northumberland for negotiations on 12 August. Finally, Richard II surrendered to Henry at Flint Castle on 19 August, and he promised to be removed from power if his life were saved. Then both men, Richard and Henry, returned to London, and the furious and angry king was riding all the way back behind Henry. When they arrived, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London on 1st September. Henry fully took the throne, but presenting a basis for this action proved a dilemma. It was argued that Richard had decreed himself unworthy of being king. However, meanwhile, Henry was not the next king to be ascended the throne; the heir was supposed to be Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, who descended from Edward III's second son, Lionel of Antwerp. Bolingbroke's father, John of Gaunt, was Edward's third son. Finally, they solved the problem by emphasizing Henry's descent in a direct male line, whereas March's descent was through his grandmother. Richard willingly agreed to be abdicated for the sake of Henry on 29 September. When the parliament met on 30th of September, it accepted Richard's resignation. Then, Henry was crowned as King Henry IV on 13 October. ⁽¹⁾ The deposition of Richard II was not clear. He remained in the Tower, and then shortly before the end of the year, he was taken to Pontefract Castle. Firstly, King Henry let him alive, but that did not go on for a long. It was revealed that the Earls of Huntingdon, Kent, Somerset and Rutland, and Thomas Despenser, all were demoted from their ranks which they had been given by Richard, were planning to murder the new king and restore Richard power as king in the Epiphany Rising. The plan of that plot drew Henry's attention of the dangers of letting Richard to live. It was thought to let him starved to death in his detention around 14 February 1400, although there is some question over the date and manner of his death. His body was taken south from Pontefract and displayed in the old St Paul's Cathedral on 17th of February before burial in Kings Langley Church on 6 March. ⁽²⁾

3. Conclusion: Previewing the action, deeds, political situations, literature contribution, crises, conspiracy, and military alliance showed that Richard II's life was full of divergent and distinguished aspects as most of his predecessor's kings of England. It can be said that reign of Richard II had two aspects; positive and negative sides. The positive side could be political, social, and artistic.

1- Ibid.

2- Saul, Nigel (2005). *The Three Richard* 1,11,111. London: Hambledon .ISBN 1-85285-286-0

The most influential political situation was the Peasant Revolt 1381, which was indispensable one of the outcomes of the Black Death. The King confronted the Revolt violently; through killing Wat Tyler, one of the famous leaders of the Revolt, and the rest vanished eventually. The second political important situation was taking over the throne again in 1397 from the Appellants. Thirdly he committed a deadly fault, when he banished John of Gaunt's son in 1399 that was the main cause to overthrow Richard 11 throne. Finally, he had contradictive attitudes and measurements, while he had a long-life peace with France; he invaded Ireland and spent a lot of money on his military expeditions.

For the distinguished social situations, Richard 11 second marriage of Isabella of France 1389. She was only about seven and he tried and actively sought for the approval of the church on his marriage, and after along argument he had it.

What distinguished Richard's reign that his life was very short, from 1367 to 1400, and his period of rule was dripping out and kept shifting from time to time and faced a lot of heavy difficulties. Being crowned as King of the age ten was a huge responsibility on his shoulders. People surrounding the King, particularly his eldest uncle John of Gaunt, noble and Appellants, were usurpers over the authority and power in various periods of time, they mimicked many plot to overthrow the throne of Richard 11.

Finally, his death at prison in 1400 was mysterious and suspicious. He was young when he died. Historically, his death was considered as the end of the middle Age.

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