



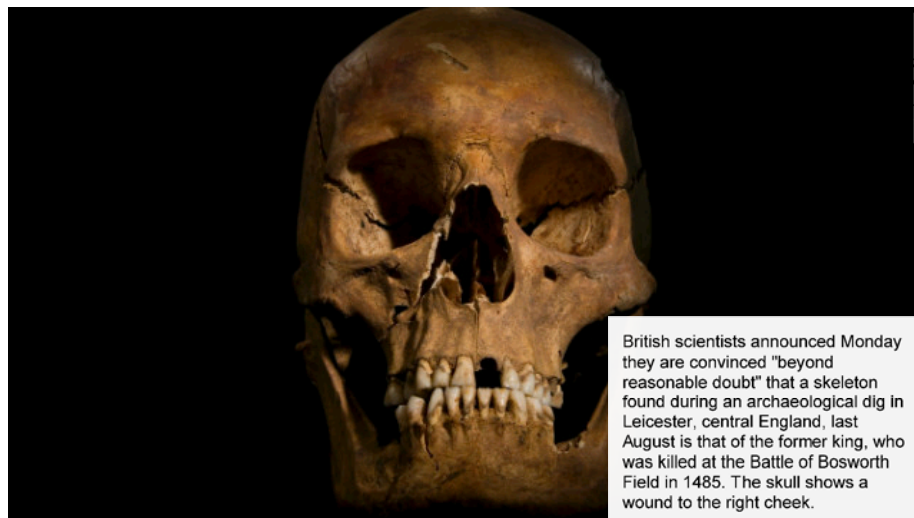
Skeletal sleuthing team uncovered royal remains and the story behind them

By Alden Mahler Levine, CNN
updated 1:05 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013

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British scientists announced Monday they are convinced "beyond reasonable doubt" that a skeleton found during an archaeological dig in Leicester, central England, last August is that of the former king, who was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485. The skull shows a wound to the right cheek.

The remains of King Richard III

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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

University of Leicester team pursued a rumor about the body of King Richard III

After digging, they found a body that matched the 15-century king's description

Wounds on the body matched those from period-appropriate weapons

Team also found two of king's living relatives, whose DNA matched that of the body

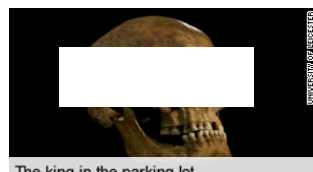
(CNN) -- Shakespeare's villainous, deformed Richard III frets just before his death, "If I die, no soul shall pity me." Science can't tell us anything about whether anyone pitied Richard, but it certainly is the case that nobody kept track of his body.

Historians knew that his opponents had displayed Richard after his death in 1485 as a trophy and that the body had been buried in a nearby church. But the church vanished into British history, and common wisdom held that Richard's body had been thrown into a river.

A team of scientists and academics at [the University of Leicester](#) decided to pursue an alternative rumor that implied that Richard's body was right where it had been buried. After finding what they thought might have been the long-lost church under a parking lot, they dug a few experimental trenches and almost immediately stumbled upon a body. And not just any body: a body of a person who had been disfigured in life and died a violent death.

Could this possibly be Richard? The team set about systematically comparing what the world thought it knew about the Plantagenet king with what we can definitely tell about the remains.

[Scientists: Body found under parking lot is King Richard III](#)



The king in the parking lot

The Leicester body, according to Dr. Jo Appleby, was in his late 20s or 30s, and had a slender, "almost feminine" build. While he would have been of above-average height for the time, his spine showed clear evidence of scoliosis. (His arms, however, were both normal and healthy; so much for Shakespeare's "wither'd up" description!)

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How scientists solved Richard III riddle

updated 5:25 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



Scientists say the remains of a man found beneath an English car park are almost certainly those of the long-lost King Richard III.

Photos: The remains of King Richard III

updated 12:40 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



DNA tests have confirmed that human remains found buried beneath an English car park are those of the country's King Richard III.

Should we still fear al Qaeda?

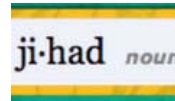
updated 11:04 AM EST, Sun February 3, 2013



Western politicians who claim the al Qaeda linked groups in North Africa are a threat to the West unnecessarily alarm their publics, Peter Bergen writes.

Activists aim to reclaim 'jihad' word

updated 9:28 PM EST, Sun February 3, 2013



The MyJihad ad campaign is using print ads and social media to educate the public about what they say is the true meaning of the word "jihad."

Breaking J-pop 'bushido' code

updated 7:25 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013

The skeleton also showed marks that could have come from period-appropriate weapons. In particular, a large wound at the base of his skull seemed likely to have been made by a blade like a halberd. Other wounds seemed similar to those inflicted by daggers and knives of the time.

Several of the skeleton's wounds were on parts of the body that should have been covered by armor, and were inconsistent with the magnitude of similar wounds on other battle-damaged corpses of the era. The weaker blows, Appleby said, may indicate that these wounds were "humiliation injuries" inflicted on a dead body by enemies. In fact, if the historical record held true and Richard's body was stripped of its armor and flung face-down over a horse after the battle, he would have been in exactly the right position to allow someone to stab him upward in the right buttock, explaining one strike to the skeleton's pelvis.

[Lastly](#), the position of the bones interested the Leicester team. The body hadn't been laid out full-length with its arms by its sides, as bodies usually were at the time. Instead, it was in a grave that was a bit too small, with its head propped up on a wall. Moreover, the wrists were crossed at the skeleton's waist, almost as if the dead person's hands had been tied when he was tossed into a hastily dug grave.

Lead archaeologist Richard Buckley warns that science can never fully prove the latter theory, however, as any bindings would have disintegrated long ago.

[Read more: Richard III: The mystery of the king and the car parking lot](#)

The Leicester parking lot body was in the right place, dated to the right time, died the right way and probably looked the way many contemporaries said Richard looked. But modern science might be able to take the investigation one step further. So the team set about seeing if they could extract viable DNA from the skeleton, and they succeeded.

Professor Kevin Schurer acted as the project's genealogist and set about seeing if he could find living descendants of Richard III's immediate family. The team needed to find matrilineal relatives. Mitochondrial DNA is passed down from mothers to their offspring, so only all-female lines of descent can be traced using those indicators. Fortunately, the team knew of one such living relative: Michael Ibsen, who volunteered his DNA.

[Read more: Where does skeleton revelation leave legend of Richard III?](#)

Then Schurer created a built-in double-check for the DNA tests. Using historical documents as varied as ship manifests, wills and baptism registers, he found a second Plantagenet heir, who prefers to remain anonymous but also volunteered his DNA. Interestingly, Ibsen and the second donor are the last of their genetic line; if the experiments had occurred even a generation later, no such DNA would have been available.

Armed with three samples of mitochondrial DNA, Dr. Turi King, the project geneticist, was able to prove that the new descendant Schurer had found was, in fact, related to the known Plantagenet Michael Ibsen. Their mitochondrial DNA was identical. Their known descent was from Richard III's sister; since Richard and his sister shared a mother, their mitochondria, too, should have been identical. And indeed, centuries later, King found that the DNA of the two living donors exactly matched the DNA of the body in the Leicester parking lot.

So what now for the last Plantagenet king? His remains have been handed over to the Leicester Cathedral, where he will be laid to rest.



If Japanese starlet's shaven head and tearful mea culpa looked more like a disgraced samurai, then it owes much to pop phenomenon "AKB48's."

Family: Fake pot wrecked teen's brain

updated 4:23 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



Emily Bauer wound up in ICU after her family says she smoked synthetic marijuana.

Inside a North Korean school...in Japan

updated 5:55 AM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



It resembles just about any other high school. Except for the portraits of North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung scattered throughout the building.

Tears, prayers for late Cambodian king

updated 4:28 AM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



The ear-splitting crack of 101 rounds of artillery will mark the final moment before late Cambodian King-Father Norodom Sihanouk is cremated.

Residents of Nile island struggle

updated 4:25 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



CNN's Ben Wedeman visits residents on a doomed island in the Nile river to find out more about their struggle to keep their homes.

Italy's small retailers face grim times

updated 5:10 AM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



CNN's Ben Wedeman looks at the struggle of many small local businesses in Italy that are being forced out by big multinational retailers.

And the most expensive city is...

updated 8:16 AM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



Despite Japanese deflation, a weaker yen and rising prices throughout the world, Tokyo has resumed its position as the world's most expensive city.

2013 Super Bowl: The best photos

updated 1:10 PM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



The Baltimore Ravens stave off a furious San Francisco 49ers second-half rally to win Super Bowl XLVII 34-31. Here are the best photos.

Selling ballet to masses in South Africa

updated 6:56 AM EST, Mon February 4, 2013



How to make money from ballet is a question puzzling many art executives. A dance group in South Africa is hoping that a new initiative will help.

Webber vows to battle Vettel for F1 title

updated 12:23 PM EST, Sun February 3, 2013

At a Monday news conference, David Monteith, a church representative, reminded all present that "this was a person ... an anointed Christian king." Now, he can finally be buried as such.

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