

**Posudek oponenta na diplomovou práci Jitky Štollové
“My Fearfull Shadow that Still Followes Me”: Literary and Artistic Representations of
Richard III before Shakespeare**

Although king for only three years, Richard III is one of the most controversial and enigmatic figures in English history. His deeds, his appearance and the manner of his death have fascinated people for centuries. This is probably the result of one of Shakespeare's masterpiece creations - the exquisitely villainous hunchback with his schemes, dreams and fantasies is not a conventional Machiavellian plotter but a rich interior being. Although today viewers of drama connect the kings' image with Shakespeare's play, versions were already circulating shortly after the king's death. It is these pre-Shakespearean sources (dating from the 1480s to the 1590s) and the diverse image of Richard III that they construct which are the focus of Jitka Štollová's MA thesis.

The sources are neatly organized into three types (correspondingly dealt with in three chapters): historical writing, poetic representations and, finally, drama. The thesis is a piece of scrupulous scholarship, research and minute analysis. All relevant material is dealt with an eye towards the concepts of history, writing strategies and the creation of dramatic effects. All is presented in a clear, informative, yet immensely readable manner. Even the title of the thesis is chosen with much care and wit. I especially appreciate part 3.1. (devoted to “The Song of Lady Bessy”) as an example of brilliant essay writing in organization and structure.

I have only two questions:

1. Page 29: the strategy of invoking ghosts: Could Ms Štollová connect it to Homer? In what ways does the early modern version differ from this? What do the poems add?
2. A more general question pertaining to chronicles as largely unorganized collections of heterogeneous documents, facts and narratives. Polydore Vergil's chronicle has a reputation for narrative coherence, while the later chronicles are loose and diffuse. In her book *Reading Holinshed's Chronicle*, Annabel Patterson has argued that Holinshed's chronicle and others are miscellaneous not by ignorance but by design: conceived as “documentary history”, they present diversity of opinion, competing views, are shaped by “the right to know”, i.e. they present information on which the readers decide for themselves. Would you agree that the form of English chronicles is so deliberate?

I recommend the thesis for defence with the preliminary mark excellent (výborně).

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