Abstract

After the death of the English king Edward IV. in the year 1483, his oldest son Edward was supposed to become king. Due to various circumstances the twelve year old boy never ascended to the throne. With his younger brother Richard of Shrewsbury he disappeared behind the mighty walls of the Tower of London, where he was originally to wait for his coronation. Instead of him his uncle, Richard III. became king, even though Edwards mother and his supporters tried to make his road to power as difficult as possible. Richard ruled England only for two years, but he has left an unforgettable mark on history and all know him as the usurper. But a situation like this hasn't happened for the first time on the British Isles. When the king of Wessex Aethelred died in the year 871, instead one of his sons Aethelhelm or Aethelwold becoming king, his younger brother Alfred took the crown, and history now knows him as Alfred the Great. Here though the situation was completely different to the one of Richard III. and his nephews. Aethelred and Alfred met before the formers death at Swinburg, where both brothers agreed, that after Aethelred's death Alfred will succeed as king of Wessex and Aethelred's children will be well looked after. Because of this the transfer of power in 871 proceeded without incident, because the agreement between the brothers was universally accepted.

But events similar to those that occurred in the year 1483 happened after the death of Richard the Lionheart, when conflict erupted over the succession between Richards younger brother John and their nephew Arthur, duke of Brittany. Thanks to a quick response and the support of the English nobility John ascended to the throne. In later battles he even managed to take his nephew captive and he imprisoned him in a castle in Rouen, where the boy is seen for the last time.