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The First Tudor – Henry VII and the Dawn of Tudor England

Thomas Penn's book is an excellent portrayal of King Henry VII who is often overlooked by historians, but who was credited to have started the Tudor reign. Penn provides a candid and accurate account of the political dealings which were an important characteristic of the king's reign, especially his attempts to unite the Royal Houses of Europe through politically astute marriages.

Penn also unearths some very grisly and unpleasant details about Henry VII, in particular his network of henchmen and his insatiable greed as he proceeded to amass wealth on a hitherto unheard of scale. It is also interesting to note that Henry never got his hands dirty, so to speak but his work was always carried out by someone else. There is also extensive study about his relationship with his two sons with the former, Arthur being groomed for the throne, although it was the younger Henry who was to ascend to the throne after his father and spend virtually all his fortune in a series of expensive wars and other rashly taken financial decisions.

The book is also very successful in that it offers a well-researched comparison between Henry VIII and his father who were as different as one could ever imagine. The elder Henry was a distant, unsociable miser who saw his calling as acquiring vast mounds of cash whilst his son was the complete opposite not only in his physical size, but also in his desire to spend as if there was no tomorrow.

Penn's book is an essential read if you want to discover more about Henry

VII, the king who steered England onto a safe footing after the devastating Wars of the Roses.

References:

Thomas Penn (2012): WINTER KING Henry VII and the Dawn of Tudor England, 448 pp. Simon & Schuster,