Before and After Bosworth

1. Introduction: the Battle of Bosworth, 1485
   a. Henry Tudor or Tudor a (bastard) Lancastrian, the descendant of John of Gaunt
   b. Henry Tudor lands at Milford Haven in 1485: an usurper?
   c. 1485, not kingship but legitimacy that needed to be restored
   d. The Story so far (rehash of week 2)
      i. 800 B.C. Celts, originally from central Europe, conquer Southern England
      ii. 450-600 A.D. Anglo-Saxons, but also Jutes, Frisians, etc., invade
      iii. 7th cent. A.D. Anglo-Saxon kingdoms Christianized
      iv. 871-899 King Alfred of Wessex and the Reconquest of the Danelaw
      v. 1016-1035 King Cnut and the Danes
      vi. Norman invasions?
         (1) 1042-1066 Edward the Confessor
         (2) 1066 Harold
         (3) 1066-1087 William the Conqueror
      vii. Angevin/Plantagenet
         (1) 1154-1189 Henry II
         (2) 1199-1216 King John

2. The Roots of the Wars of the Roses I: the inheritance of the 13th and 14th centuries
   a. officially, the Wars of the Roses (1453-71, or -1485, or even -1509) were struggle between descendants of Edward III
      i. Edward I (1272-1307)
         (1) English nationalism and Celtic Fringe: Prince of Wales, Stone of Scone
      ii. Edward II (1307-27)
         (1) Weakness and baronial council
      iii. Edward III (1327-77)
         (1) Chivalry and 100 Years' War for French claim
         (2) Interruption of the Black Death

3. The Roots of the Wars of the Roses II: Crisis of Monarchy in the 14th and early 15th centuries
   a. The sons of the (many) sons of Edward III
      i. Richard II (1377-99)
      ii. Henry IV (1399-1413)
      iii. Henry V (1413-22)
      iv. Henry VI (1422-61, longest minority reign in history of Britain)
   b. Wars of the Roses: Causes
      i. the myth: White Rose, badge of House of York; Red Rose, badge of House of Lancaster
      ii. loss of opportunities and loss of faith caused by end of French claim and 100 Years War
      iii. Multitude and power of great magnates
      iv. Weak claim of the Lancastrians
      v. Bastard Feudalism

4. War and Faction
   a. pre-1453: Open War preceded by Jack Cade’s Rebellion in 1450, a popular rising in Kent
      i. poor joining the rebellion in opposition to the Statute of Laborers
      ii. but rebels not just the poor
   b. 1453, the first open conflict between Yorkist and Lancastrians, also a year of complications
      i. loss of most of French possessions
      ii. 1456-59, Henry VI regains sanity (2nd time) and power; York and followers flee into exile
   c. 1454-9
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   d. 1460-61
      i. 1461, Yorkists defeat Lancastrians at battle of Mortimer’s Cross. In March, Edward, 19-year old son of duke of York, enters London and proclaims himself, King Edward IV.
      ii. Edward defeats Lancastrians again in the north at battle of Towton; Henry VI flees to
Scotland, but four years later (1465) is imprisoned in the Tower; Lancastrian rule ends

5. Yorkist rule, 1461-85
   b. Continuation of disorder in countryside, at least until 1471
   c. From 1471, Edward IV works to strengthen his position and monarchy
      i. allowed Henry VI to die in 1471
      ii. reversed the trend of giving large land grants to favorites
      iii. worked with Parliament to ensure taxes and customs revenues
      iv. threatened war with France, but refused to get bogged down in costly continental war
      v. strengthened royal bureaucratic power

6. Lessons of the Wars of the Roses?
   a. Aristocratic factions could disintegrate into private warfare under a weak King.
      i. Country desired and found a succession of strong kings; but Kings needed noble factions.
   b. Make sure there is a strong heir to the throne of age to succeed.
      i. Edward IV’s son, Edward V, was only 12, obviously open to control by the Woodvilles.
      ii. Edward’s uncle, Richard III, seized power.
      iii. Henry Tudor, son of a Welsh knight—and claimant to Gaunt’s Lancastrian line through an illegitimate line—and Beaufort’s heiress, lands with an army and in Wales in 1485.

7. Lancastrian Kingship Restored
   a. Henry VII’s victory and usurpation threatened to revive the anarchy of the Wars of the Roses
      i. Yorkist opposition remained
   b. Strengthened dubious claim to throne by marrying Elizabeth of York, sister to Edward V.
   c. Yorkist groom a series of Pretenders to the throne.
      i. 1487, Yorkist groom Lambert Simnel, a trader’s son, to be the Earl of Warwick.
      ii. 1490s, Yorkists try again with Perkin Warbeck, who impersonated Richard “IV” (dead).
      iii. 1490s, a new fake Earl of Warwick arose.
   d. If Henry VII secure in his claim to the throne by 1500, what power did the throne have?
      i. Wars of the Roses had seen growth of aristocratic power and violence
      ii. Henry VII also needed money: it will turn out that raising money was Henry’s forte
      iii. Henry VII also not afraid to increase taxes.
      iv. direct taxation (property taxes) not used much because of need to call Parliament
      v. Benevolences (forced loans) hit rich
      vi. feudal “taxes”?
      vii. Henry’s financial rapaciousness by Henry’s own historian, Polydore Vergil

   a. Henry VII was successful in consolidating his rule. But,
      i. He made it appear that his major purpose was not to revive justice and suppress violence,
         but to raise money; and
   b. Henry’s younger son Henry, acceded to the throne easily at the age of 18, to the spectacle of much feasting, dancing, and rejoicing at Henry VIII’s accession.
      i. Henry VIII arrested his father’s advisors—Richard Empson and Edward Dudley. In 1510, executed them on trumped up charges.
      ii. Henry VIII also decided in the first two days of his rule to marry his brother’s widow—Catherine of Aragon—seven years older than himself.
   c. Henry VIII was the darling of the new humanist intellectuals and of the noble class
      i. War and play-acting
   d. The anarchy of the 15th century had two central causes
      i. the anarchy of the barons
      ii. the distress caused by pretensions to the French throne.