



Article

Shakespeare and the Book of Henry

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Abstract: In this article, I argue that the four plays of the Henriad (*Richard II*, *1 and 2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V*), as presented in the 1623 Folio, constitute a unified whole intended for reading. The plays are connected not only by the endings of one play leading directly into the beginning of the next, but they are also unified by thematic and verbal echoes. I will focus first on establishing the connections between the plays, and then on the thematic resonances. I show how the plays are connected by verbal echoes, some thematically relevant, some not. I then show how Shakespeare provides differing accounts of Richard's fall and invites the reader to compare and contrast them with each other. Finally, I turn to Shakespeare's treatment of the common soldier, which culminates in the confrontation between the disguised Henry V and Michael Williams, Alexander Court, and John Bates, a scene not present in the quarto version of this play. Although this scene can stand alone, one has to have read the previous chapters of the Henriad to comprehend the full force of Shakespeare's revision.

Keywords: Shakespeare; Henriad; politics; relationship to print; unity; historiography; Henry V; popular culture; Falstaff; book history

1. Introduction

I want to revisit a topic that Shakespeareans have long considered closed: the relationship between the four plays comprising the Henriad, Shakespeare's second historical sequence. To be sure, the question of the Henriad's unity is not new. Samuel Johnson observed that Shakespeare "Apparently designed a regular connection of these dramatick histories from Richard the Second to Henry the Fifth" (Johnson 1968, vol. 7, p. 453), and over the years such luminaries as E.M.W. Tillyard (1944, rpt. 1974, p. 262), John Dover Wilson (1946, pp. x–xi), and Harold Jenkins (2001, pp. 1–22), among others, have argued for the Henriad's unity.¹ The controversy flourished during the 1940s and 1950s, a time when New Criticism and the search for unity in literary texts dominated (Crane 1985, p. 282). However, as critics absorbed the lessons of the New Historicism and its cousin, Cultural Materialism, and started paying more attention to cracks, fissures, and contradictions, to the ideological disunity of early modern culture, in other words, this topic drifted so far from the mainstream that by 1991 Sherman Hawkins described arguing for the Henriad's unity as an "adventurous, even audacious" thesis (Hawkins 1991, p. 16).² Since the 1990s, to my knowledge the only recent critic to take up the unity argument is Harry Berger, Jr. (to whom I am deeply indebted).³ But although Berger explored how the Henriad constitutes an "echo chamber," he does not concern himself with the political and historiographical resonances that Shakespeare develops throughout the Henriad.

My thesis—that the Henriad as presented in the Folio constitutes what may be called a book—necessarily overlaps with the debates over whether and to what degree Shakespeare had print in mind when he wrote or revised his plays. At one end are those who claim that Shakespeare had no interest at all in print publication. As David Scott Kastan put it, "Performance was the only form of publication he sought for his plays" (Kastan 2001, p. 5), and Gabriel Egan confirmed that "by the end of the twentieth century, the characterization



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of Shakespeare as primarily a man of the theatre, not an author in the latter sense of someone concerned about readership, was well-established orthodoxy" (Egan 2016, p. 82).⁴

To be sure, there are very good reasons for assuming Shakespeare did not care about print publication. As Tiffany Stern pointed out, by "the time of publication, Shakespeare's plays were considerably distanced from what he had written" (Stern 2004, p. 141). To reach print, they had to travel from his "foul" papers to a professional scribe to a prompter (who might add his own additions or editorial changes) to the Master of the Revels, who could demand his own additions or deletions to the script, to the vagaries of performance and the accidents of the printing house, all described in copious detail by Stern (Stern 2004, pp. 37–158). Given all the stops along the way (doubtless, I have missed a few), each an opportunity to add, delete, or garble bits of text, one might be forgiven for assuming that the quartos and the Folio resulted from an early modern version of broken telephone.

Orthodoxies, however, are inevitably questioned, and, in 2013, Lukas Erne dropped a bomb by proposing that "Shakespeare wrote his plays not only with performance but also with a readerly reception in mind" (Erne 2013, p. 6). Erne proposed that such plays as *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* are far too long to fit within the generally accepted two-hour limit (sometimes stretched to three) for early modern performances; therefore, they were meant for reading, not playing. Erne's *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, however, has not been widely accepted, with one critic describing Erne's claims as "notorious" (Brooks 2006, p. 225n2).⁵ Although there is increasing attention on early modern playtexts as printed *texts*, the notion that Shakespeare intended at least some of his plays to be read as well as performed gets noted but rarely endorsed.⁶

Furthermore, although Emma Smith has written brilliantly on the thematic consequences of the Folio's organization—Heminge and Condell, for example, reprinted the history plays chronologically, not in the order of composition, thereby emphasizing not only their "serial connections" but also how "Sequential reading makes the end of each play provisional"—she attributes the thematic development to the Folio's editors. It is Heminge and Condell's vision Emma Smith describes, not Shakespeare's (Smith 2016, pp. 157, 159–60).

In this essay, I propose to reconsider both the question of the Henriad's unity and the authorial intentionality behind the Folio's version of the Henriad. Granted, each of the individual parts of the Henriad appeared in quarto, so anyone could have purchased the individual plays and read them sequentially, if they so desired. But the quartos do not agree among themselves, and the Folio versions of the Henriad seem to represent Shakespeare's final versions of these plays. While one could dismiss as mere advertising bluster Heminge and Condell's description of the quartos as "maimed, and deformed" and their trumpeting the Folio as presenting Shakespeare's works "cur'd" of their defects, "and perfect of their limbes," the Henriad fulfills these claims (Shakespeare 1623, sig. A3r). In almost every case, the versions in the Folio are superior to the quartos, suggesting that Shakespeare revised the plays with an eye toward later publication, even if he did not live to see the revisions reach print (Egan 2016, p. 69).⁷

The first quartos of *Richard II* do not include the deposition scene, and while this crucial scene gets restored for the 1608 quarto, "the Folio contains a version of the deposition (or abdication scene 4.1.149–311) scene that is different from and superior to that contained in Q4 [1608] and Q5 [1615]" (Stewart 2016, vol. 1, p. 894). In addition, as Greg writes, the Folio *Richard II* seems to have been revised "in the light of historical knowledge" (Greg 1955, p. 236). Similarly, *2 Henry IV* appeared in two quarto editions in 1600, and editors typically grant these editions "a higher degree of authority" than the Folio.⁸ But as the Norton's textual editor for this play, Line Cottignies, writes, the Folio, with its eight passages not found in the quartos, regularized punctuation, and clarified stage directions, may "represent a more polished state of the text than Q," one that includes "authorial revisions of Q" (Cottignies 2016, p. 1255).

The Folio *Henry V* contains three crucial passages not in the quarto—the choruses, the bishops' self-interested plan to endorse invading France, and the addition of Sir Thomas

Erpingham—plus Henry’s meeting with the common soldiers is significantly lengthened and sharpened. *The Chronicle Historie of Henry V* (Shakespeare 1600) does not name the soldiers. Instead, the stage direction says, “Enter three Souldiers,” and they are given speech prefixes of “1. Soul,” “2. Soul,” and “3. Soul” (sig. D4r). The Folio, however, gives the three soldiers proper names: “Enter three Soldiers, John Bates, Alexander Court, and Michael Williams,” and their speech prefixes specify which soldier speaks (sig. i2r; see also Erne 2013, pp. 244–50). The Folio Henriad thus comprises revised plays that we may assume constitute Shakespeare’s final versions, and, as I will show, if read seriatim, they reveal previously unsuspected echoes and thematic developments—a previously unsuspected unity. It is as if Shakespeare wrote a book.

Granted, there is still a great deal we do not know. It is unclear if Shakespeare simultaneously prepared two versions of these plays (one for performance, the other for reading), or if he revised the plays at some later date. If the latter, we do not know what prompted him to revise the plays, or if the revisions were ever performed before the Folio’s publication. Nor do we know if the revisions were written by somebody else (although, to my knowledge, nobody has suggested that anyone other than Shakespeare contributed to the Henriad). We do not know if Shakespeare intended from the start to write a unified sequence, or if the idea occurred to him at some later point. Nor do we know, as we do not have the equivalent of Henslowe’s diary for Shakespeare’s company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, if the plays were performed on successive days (like *Tamburlaine*), or if they were performed either as a complete or a partial sequence.⁹

However, we know that the editors of the Folio presented the history plays in chronological order rather than order of composition. But *King John* is an outlier in Shakespeare’s history plays, and the Henry VI sequence lacks the internal consistency, verbal echoes, and thematic development marking the Henriad. When, however, *Richard II*, the two parts of *Henry IV*, and *Henry V* are read in sequence, they reveal what Harry Berger, Jr. called a “dappled and reverberating field of echoes, reprises, and shadows from the other plays” (Berger 2015, p. 156). Even more, reading the Henriad serially reveals thematic developments obscured when the plays are read or performed individually.

2. Endings and Beginnings

Let me begin with the low-hanging fruit: the ending of each play leads almost seamlessly into the beginning of the next, just as the ending of one chapter in a novel often leads directly into the next. *Richard II* concludes with Bolingbroke promising to make amends for Richard’s death by organizing a crusade: “I’ll make a voyage to the Holy Land/To wash this blood off from my guilty hand” (5.6.49–50).¹⁰ *1 Henry IV* begins with Henry admitting that a year has passed, and while he intended “To chase those pagans in those holy fields,” the nonstop rebellions have blocked his plans: “But this our purpose now is twelve month old, / And bootless ‘tis to tell you we will go” (1.128–29). *1 Henry IV* finishes with the king defeating the Percy rebellion, and *2 Henry IV* picks up the thread, starting with Northumberland hearing rumors about his son’s death and the rebellion’s failure. *2 Henry IV* concludes with Henry giving Hal his famous, or infamous, advice to “busy giddy minds/With foreign quarrels” (4.3.342–343) and Prince John’s prediction, “that ere this year expire/We bear our civil swords and native fire/As for as France” (5.5.1021–102). We all know what happens at the start of *Henry V*.

The successive chapters of the Henriad, in other words, knit together to make a coherent whole, and although it is possible to read each play without reference to the previous one or to see each play in performance without watching the others, one would miss how the endings not only inform the beginnings of each play but also invite the reader to reconsider and reinterpret the ending of the previous play. They invite not only reading, in other words, but rereading. Henry IV’s admission at the start of *1 Henry IV*, for example, that it has been a year since he promised a crusade makes more sense and has further thematic resonance when you know what he promised at the end of *Richard II*. Similarly, Rumor’s mischaracterization of Hotspur’s end takes on further point when you come upon

it after reading the end of *1 Henry IV*. (I will get to the relationship between *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* below.)

3. Thematically Irrelevant Echoes

Along with the beginnings of each play picking up where the previous one left off, Shakespeare includes details that are thematically insignificant but have the effect of tying the plays together. For example, in *Richard II*, 2.1. after Richard has taken Bolingbroke's patrimony and departed for Ireland, Northumberland reports that "Harry Duke of Hereford" has left France, accompanied by several noblemen, including Sir Thomas Erpingham (ll. 280-86). Playgoers familiar with Shakespeare's sources might recognize that Shakespeare repeats the list of names given in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, albeit in a slightly different order.¹¹ But other than emphasizing how the Duke has gathered considerable support, there is no particular reason for the audience to note the names of the people accompanying Henry, especially since they have no lines and do not appear in the play.

However, four years later, in the Folio *Henry V*, 4.1, Sir Thomas Erpingham reappears, joining Henry and Gloucester on stage to trade a joke with the king:

Enter [Sir Thomas] Erpingham
 KING HARRY: Good morrow, old Sir Thomas Erpingham.
 A good soft pillow for that good white head
 Were better than a churlish turf of France.
 ERPINGHAM: Not so, my liege. This lodging likes me better,
 Since I may say, 'Now lie I like a king.' (4.1.13-17)

Henry borrows Erpingham's cloak, and Erpingham offers to "attend your grace," but Henry declines, as "I and my bosom must debate awhile, / And then I would no other company" (4.1.32-33). Erpingham then asks the Lord to bless Henry, and he departs the stage, never to be heard from again.

In terms of the plot, there is no reason for Shakespeare to introduce Sir Thomas Erpingham for this purpose. True, the actual Sir Thomas Erpingham played a major role in the battle to come (detailed in *Holinshed*),¹² but this scene and Henry's subsequent meeting with Court, Bates, and Williams comes from Shakespeare's imagination. Other than perhaps giving his play more historical verisimilitude, it is hard to understand what Sir Thomas Erpingham is doing here. Beyond his brief mention in *Richard II*, Shakespeare ignores the man. He does not include him in *1 and 2 Henry IV* even though Sir Thomas played an important role in Henry IV's government.¹³ Nor does Shakespeare include Erpingham's leading the English archers who won the day for Henry V at the Battle of Agincourt. So why does Shakespeare add Sir Thomas Erpingham for this brief scene? The answer, I suggest, is that Erpingham's appearance (and quick departure) connects *Henry V* with *Richard II*, reminding the reader that the events of the earlier play lead inexorably to this moment in the later one (Berger 2015, p. 163). Again, the connection is present only in the Folio versions of *Henry V*.

Another example of a thematically irrelevant echo that reinforces the Henriad's unity: in *2 Henry IV*, Justice Shallow, reminiscing about his wild days as a student, says: "Then was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk" (3.2.22-23). As with the Erpingham reference, there is no dramatic or historical reason to connect Falstaff (really, Sir John Oldcastle) with Sir Thomas Mowbray, especially since no evidence in *Holinshed* or elsewhere says the young Oldcastle served as Mowbray's page.¹⁴ So why would Shakespeare go out of his way to connect Falstaff with Mowbray? Again, the answer is that Shakespeare wanted the reader to connect *2 Henry IV* with *Richard II*, to emphasize the continuities between the two plays, separated as they are by years in composition, chronology, and performance.

The same applies to the drawer, Francis. In *1 Henry IV*, Poins and Hal keep calling Francis from opposite ends of the tavern, leading the poor drawer to constantly put off one or the other by saying "anon, anon sir" (2.4.4-78), ultimately leading the poor man to

paralysis.¹⁵ In *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff calls “Some sack, Francis,” and the prince and Poin together respond, “Anon, anon, sir” (2.4.248–249). Again, there is no particular purpose I can discern for Falstaff to specify which of the tavern’s employees he wants to bring him sack, or for Hal and Poin to repeat their mockery of the drawer by simultaneously shouting “anon, anon, sir” other than to recall the parallel scene in the earlier play. But unless you know the earlier play, you will not get the joke. This moment in *2 Henry IV*, in other words, *requires* knowledge of the previous play to understand what is happening. Although it is possible that a particularly astute playgoer would recall the earlier scene, since the two plays were, from what we can tell, written the same year, the echo is much more obvious when the plays are read seriatim.

4. Thematically Significant Echoes

The thematically insignificant echoes, however, point toward the thematically significant ones.¹⁶ For example, after Falstaff barges into the new king’s coronation, he yells, “My king, my Jove, I speak to thee, my heart!” (5.5.44), which occasions Henry V’s brutal rejection. In the next play, the Hostess blames Henry for Falstaff’s death using the same term (“The King hath killed his heart” [2.1.82]), and the echo not only recalls Falstaff’s last words to Hal, now Henry V (the two do not speak again), they send the reader back to the earlier plays to review their entire history, how Hal said from the start he would banish Falstaff when he became king (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.438)]. The repetition of the word “heart” in *Henry V* instantiates a rereading of the entire cycle and invites a complex response to what might seem an unqualifiedly good move: Hal’s rejection of “the tutor and feeder of my riots” (5.5.60), especially since in *1 Henry IV*, we see that the Gadshill robbery is Hal’s idea, not Falstaff’s. After Falstaff says that he “must give over this life,” Hal responds: “Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack?” (1.2.83, 86).

Another example: in *2 Henry IV*, the king actually *quotes* the first play in the sequence when he recalls the last meeting between Richard and Northumberland:

You, cousin Neville, as I may remember—
When Richard, with his eye brimful of tears,
Then, checked and rated by Northumberland,
Did speak these words, now proved a prophecy:
“Northumberland, thou ladder by the which
My cousin Bolingbroke ascends the throne”? (3.1.66–71)

These lines allude to Richard’s confrontation with his nemesis—“Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal/The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne” (5.1.55–56)—as does Henry’s next quote from Richard’s speech: “‘The time shall come’—thus did he follow it—/‘The time will come that foul sin, gathering head, /Shall break into corruption.’ So went on, /Foretelling this same time’s condition/And the division of our amity” (3.1.75–79). Once more, these lines send the reader back to *Richard II*, and the reader then can compare Richard’s prophecy of nonstop rebellions and descent into political chaos with Henry’s recollection:

The time shall not be many hours of age
More than it is ere foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption. Thou shalt think
Though he divide the realm and give thee half
It is too little, helping him to all.
He shall think that thou which know’st the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne’er so little urged, another way
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne. (5.1.57–66)

It is as if Henry IV had read *Richard II*, and the effect goes beyond self-reflexivity: by sending his reader back to the earlier play, Shakespeare underscores how the plays are tied together (Tillyard 1944, rpt. 1974, p. 236).¹⁷

One more example of how the Henriad constitutes a unified whole: time, which functions in a manner analogous to what Helen Vendler calls the “KEY WORD” (upper-case in the original) in Shakespeare’s sonnets, i.e., the repetition of a word and its cognates to create “verbal connections” and thematic complexity (Vendler 1997, pp. xiv–xvii; see also Kastan 1982; Forker 1984, pp. 20–34). In *Richard II*, York warns the king that stealing Bolingbroke’s patrimony will have cosmic consequences: “Take Hereford’s rights away, and take from Time/His charters and his customary rights, /Let not tomorrow then ensue today” (2.1.195–197). At the play’s end, Richard recalls York’s warning when he realizes, “I wasted time, and now doth Time waste me” (5.5.49),¹⁸ and in the next play, *1 Henry IV*, the prince recalls York’s warning when he promises that he will “make offense a skill, /Redeeming time when men think least I will” (1.2.191–92). Repairing time is exactly what happens when Prince Hal becomes Henry V and unifies England (albeit temporarily) by invading France.

In *1 Henry IV*, Shakespeare supplements the prince’s and York’s sense of time with a delicate balance between festive and everyday time, famously indicated by Falstaff’s seemingly innocent question, “what time of day is it, lad?” (1.2.1), and Hal’s response: “what a devil hast thou to do with the time of day?” (1.2.5). But in *2 Henry IV*, a play that repeats the form of *1 Henry IV*, that balance is upset and tilts toward everyday. In *2 Henry IV*, in other words, the bill is coming due. For example, in the first play, when Falstaff says during the Gadshill robbery, “They hate us youth” (2.2.75), we understand the absurdity of this statement as an example of Falstaff’s embodying the spirit of carnival. But when Falstaff tries to distinguish between himself and the Lord Chief Justice on the basis of age—“You that are old consider not the capacities of us that are young” (1.2.159–160)—the Lord Chief Justice is utterly incredulous: “Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth, that are written down old with all the characters of age?” (1.2.163–164). But to understand how time has deteriorated in *2 Henry IV*, we need to have read *1 Henry IV*, and to understand the implications of time in *1 Henry IV*, we need to have read *Richard II*.

Shakespeare’s use of time as a unifying factor over the course of the Henriad also extends to much less obvious passages. Throughout the Henriad, characters pay almost obsessive attention to the time. In *1 Henry IV*, 2.1., a carrier enters and declares the time: “An it be not four by the day, I’ll be hanged” (1–2), but he may be wrong, as after Gadshill (another carrier) asks, “What’s o’clock?”, his companion answers, “I think it be two o’clock” (30–31). After the sheriff comes to arrest Falstaff for the Gadshill robbery, Hal assures him that he will take care of the matter and sends him off with a reference to the time: “PRINCE: I think it is good morrow, is it not? SHERIFF: Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o’clock” (2.3.478–479). Hal’s last dig at poor Francis is “What’s o’clock, Francis?” (to which Francis, of course, responds, “anon, anon sir!” [2.4.89–90]). In *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff specifies the very hour of his birth (“I was born about three of the clock in the afternoon” [1.2.170]); after Warwick and others enter to speak with the insomniac king, Henry asks, “Is it good morning, lords?” and Warwick responds, “’Tis one o’clock, and past” (3.1.33–34). References to time, in other words, also function as a kind of thematic glue, tying together *Richard II* and the two parts of *Henry IV*. Consequently, when in *Henry V*, Canterbury asks, “Is it four o’clock?” (1.1.93), the question ties *Henry V* to the previous plays in the quadrilogy.

I hope the foregoing discussion has sufficiently proved that Shakespeare intended the Henriad as presented in the Folio to be read as a unified whole. The question now is to what end. What, in other words, are the larger themes of the Book of Henry? I will detail two: Shakespeare’s providing multiple narratives of the same events, and his treatment of the common soldier.

5. Historiography and the Problem of Cause

In her revisionary account of Tudor historical writing, *Reading Holinshed’s “Chronicles,”* Annabel Patterson argues that “multivocality”—the proliferation of voices—constitutes one of the prime values of this massive project (Patterson 1994, pp. 31–36; see also Griffin 2019, pp. 40–44). Consequently, Holinshed and his collaborators foreground how multiple

sources give differing, even contradictory, accounts of events, leaving it up to the reader to decide between them, assuming a choice is even possible: “I have in things doubtfull rather chosen to shew the diversitie of their writings, than by over-ruling them, and using a peremptorie censure, to frame them to agree to my liking: leaving it neverthelesse to each mans judgement, to controll them as he seeth cause.”¹⁹ For example, Holinshed gives “sundrie reports” of how King Richard died, placing before the reader “what writers have recorded of this matter, with some difference betwixt them that write.”²⁰ Shakespeare follows exactly this procedure with the various reports and interpretations of what caused Richard’s fall and Bolingbroke’s rise, thus encouraging the reader “to move back and forth” between these competing narratives, exactly, as Patterson says, the reader is supposed to do with the *Chronicles* (Patterson 1994, p. 35).

The first version arrives in *1 Henry IV*, 1.3. The king has just walked away from his argument with Northumberland and Hotspur, and Northumberland gives this “summary” of *Richard II*:

I heard the proclamation,
And then it was when the unhappy King—
Whose wrongs in us God pardon!—did set forth
Upon his Irish expedition;
From whence he, intercepted, did return
To be deposed and shortly murderèd. (1.3.147-151)

Three points: first, Northumberland now seems to have a much more sympathetic view of Richard than he did in *Richard II*, when he called him, inter alia, a “most degenerate King” (2.2.262). Second, notice Northumberland’s strategic use of the passive—“to be deposed”—which, to state the obvious, occludes his role in Richard’s deposition. Third, one has to have read *Richard II* to understand the degree to which Northumberland and Hotspur have changed their view of Richard, who is—now that Henry has grown hostile—“that sweet lovely rose” (1.3.174).

The second revision concerns opposing views on the mystique of kingship and how the proper manipulation of mystique is essential to maintaining power. After Richard banishes Bolingbroke, the king notes how Bagot and Greene had:

Observed his [Bolingbroke’s] courtship to the common people;
How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy;
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of souls
And patient underbearing of his fortune,
As ‘twere to banish their affects with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well,
And had the tribute of his supple knee
With “thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends,”
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects next degree in hope. (1.4.24-36)

But in *1 Henry IV*, Bolingbroke, now Henry IV, with an eye toward Hal’s acting like a wastrel and hanging out with Falstaff along with the other denizens of the tavern world, provides a very different perspective. In his telling, it is Richard, not Henry, who wastes his prestige on the unworthy, and that is what ultimately led to Richard’s deposition. Royal power relies on cultivating one’s reputation as somehow special, which means carefully managing one’s visibility, or, in today’s terms, curating one’s brand. In Henry’s analysis, Richard undermined his credibility by acting like a fool and putting himself far too much in the public eye:

The skipping King, he ambled up and down
 With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
 Soon kindled and soon burnt; carded his state [adulterated his royal dignity],
 Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools,
 Had his great name profaned with their scorns (3.2.60-64)

By making himself overly familiar, by being seen too much, the public tired of him: "He was but as the cuckoo is in June, / Heard, not regarded; seen, but with such eyes / As, sick and blunted with community, / Afford no extraordinary gaze" (3.2.75-78). Richard, Henry implies, fell because when he appeared, no one "wondered" at him. Henry, on the other hand, carefully tended his mystique: "By being seldom seen, I could not stir / But like a comet I was wondered at" (3.2.46-47).

That, of course, is not what Bagot and Greene described in the earlier play.²¹ Without evidence (we do not see in these plays either Richard capering with fools or Henry doffing his bonnet to an oyster-wife), it is impossible to decide between them. Instead, Shakespeare, once more following Holinshed's treatment of differing narratives, leaves deciding which one is true to each person's judgment, controlling them "as he seeth cause."

Shakespeare continues to "shew the diversitie" of opinion when Hotspur gives his version of events. After Sir Walter Blount delivers a message from King Henry, Hotspur tells Blount that Henry IV owes his crown entirely to the Percy family—that it was their decision to back Henry, and their decision alone, that caused Henry's rise:

My father and my uncle and myself
 Did give him that same royalty he wears
 [. . .]
 Now when the lords and barons of the realm
 Perceived Northumberland did lean to him,
 The more and less came in with cap and knee,
 Met him in boroughs, cities, villages, (4.3.54-55, 66-69)

In Hotspur's version, Northumberland is the king-maker, and when he chose to abandon Richard and support Bolingbroke, the "more and less" followed. The constitutional and financial crimes that York in *Richard II* described as so fundamental they would destroy "Time," Hotspur treats as merely a blind for ambition:

And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform
 Some certain edicts and some strait decrees
 That lie too heavy on the commonwealth,
 Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep
 Over his country's wrongs, and, by this face,
 This seeming brow of justice, did he win
 The hearts of all that he did angle for (4.3.78-84)

In Hotspur's telling, wasting or cultivating mystique is irrelevant: the key factor is the approval of the realm's most powerful aristocrat. It is Northumberland's approval that tilts the balance against Richard, nothing else.

So far, all the subsequent versions of Richard's fall trace the events to one cause only. Henry, at the play's start, evades responsibility for Richard's deposition with a strategic use of the passive, and his son, Hotspur, shows that as circumstances change, so do our judgments; the once "degenerate" king is now a "sweet, lovely rose." When these two give more in-depth analyses, Henry says that Richard fell because he wasted his reputation, and Hotspur asserts that everything depended on his father's switching sides. Both give short shrift to Richard's crimes against the Ancient Constitution, which are the centerpiece of *Richard II* (Hamilton 1983, pp. 5–17).

Worcester, who gives version 4 of *Richard II*, delivers the most complex analysis so far of Richard's fall. At first, his account agrees with the previous play and, initially, with Henry's and Hotspur's version of events:

It was myself, my brother, and his son
 That brought you home and boldly did outdare
 The dangers of the time. You swore to us,
 And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,
 That you did nothing purpose 'against the state,
 Nor claim no further than your new-fallen right,
 The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster. (5.1.39-45)

So far, Worcester's account accurately reflects the events of *Richard II*, 2.3., when Bolingbroke says to York, "As I was banished, I was banished Hereford; / But, as I come, I come for Lancaster" (112–113), and Northumberland concurs: "the noble Duke hath sworn his coming is / But for his own; and for the right of that / We all have strongly sworn to give him aid" (147–149). Worcester even echoes the last phrase when he says, "To this we swore our aid" (5.1.46).

However, Bolingbroke went on to depose Richard and become king himself. The question is how this happened. While, as we have seen, Hotspur and his father give simple explanations, Worcester gives a more nuanced account:

... [B]ut in short space
 It rained down fortune show'ring on your head,
 And such a flood of greatness fell on you—
 What with our help, what with the absent King,
 What with the injuries of a wanton time,
 The seeming sufferances that you had borne,
 And the contrarious winds that held the King
 So long in his unlucky Irish wars
 That all in England did repute him dead—
 And from this swarm of fair advantages
 You took occasion to be quickly wooed
 To grip the general sway into your hand,
 Forget your oath to us in Doncaster
 [and become king] (5.1.46-58)

Worcester does not say that Henry and Hotspur are wrong. He includes "our help" as essential to Henry's rise. But he adds three additional causes that the other narratives leave out: Richard's absence from England, Henry's injuries, and most important of all, bad weather. Worcester's analysis recalls the short scene in *Richard II* when the captain of the Welsh forces tells Salisbury, "we hear no tidings from the King" and so "'Tis thought the King is dead" (2.4.3, 7). Had they stayed one more day, if the "contrarious winds" had not prevented Richard from returning to England more quickly, then Richard could have remained king. Worcester's analysis, borrowed from Holinshed, shows that historical events often do not have a single cause; instead, they result from multiple, overlapping causes, and possibly the most important cause of all is not political calculation but contingency, bad luck, and, in Richard's case, inclement weather.²²

There is yet one more version of events, and this one requires the reader to return to *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV* to revise their understanding of Henry's actions: Henry's final words of advice to Prince Hal near the end of *2 Henry IV*. This speech is remarkable for two admissions on Henry's part. First, "God knows, my son, / By what bypaths and indirect crooked ways / I met this crown" (4.3.311-313). Earlier, Henry's path to the crown had seemed, in his telling, direct and without deception. But this passage asks the reader to return to Richard's observations about Bolingbroke's courting the common people. Did he have his eye on the crown even then? And what exactly does he mean by "indirect crooked ways"? Is Henry referring to the complicated nexus of unpredictable circumstances that brought him to this place? Or to more dishonest means? It is not obvious, but the implications of his second admission are crystal clear:

Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green,
 And all thy friends, which thou must make thy friends,
 Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out,
 By whose fell working I was first advanced,
 And by whose power I well might lodge a fear
 To be again displaced: which to avoid,
 I cut them off, and had a purpose now
 To lead out many to the Holy Land,
 Lest rest and lying still might make them look
 Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,
 Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
 With foreign quarrels . . . (4.3.332-343)

Henry's shocking admission looks both backwards and forwards. Backwards, because Henry's advice invites the reader to return to the end of *Richard II* and the beginning of *1 Henry IV* and reevaluate Henry's words. At the end of *Richard*, Henry announces: "I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land/To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (5.6.49-50), and at the start of the next play (or chapter), he admits that a year has gone by, "And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go" (1.1.29). When we first encounter these passages, the reader or the audience might suspect a more cynical purpose, but there is no reason to assume Henry is not serious about his plans.

But the king's admission—two plays and several years later—that he planned a crusade, not to wash off Richard's blood but to "busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels," invites the reader to return to the ending of *Richard II* and suddenly understand that Henry was *lying* about his purpose. The goal is not piety, but political calculation. He does not want to expel the infidel from Jerusalem so much as distract his enemies with a foreign quarrel. But this reinterpretation is unlikely to occur in performance. It would require a playgoer with an excellent memory to suddenly realize that Henry was lying at the end of *Richard II*. But if one reads the plays seriatim, the conclusion jumps out at you and is inarguable.

Henry's advising his son "to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels" simultaneously also casts a dark shadow over the beginning of *Henry V*, the final play or chapter in the sequence. When Henry interrupts the Archbishop of Canterbury's lengthy blather about the law Salic (cribbed almost verbatim from Holinshed)²³ with "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (1.2.96), anyone who had just finished *2 Henry IV* would immediately realize that the new king has as much interest in "right and conscience" as his father did in liberating Jerusalem. Just as Henry IV hid his true motivations for going to the Holy Land, so is Henry V lying about the reasons for invading France. (The clerics are also lying about their motivations for endorsing the French invasion, but that is a different story.) Once more, my point is that to understand these connections, the reader has to have read *Richard II*, *1 Henry IV*, and *2 Henry IV* before getting to *Henry V*.

6. Populism and the Common Soldier

Patterson also argues that populism is a constituent element of the *Chronicles*: "it was apparently part of the chroniclers' agenda to allow the fourth class, where possible, to speak for themselves, and to make their case for greater consideration . . . ," and Shakespeare also adopts this approach for the Henriad (Patterson 1994, p. 189; see also Herman 1997, pp. 259–83). Now, it is surely not news that Shakespeare sympathetically represents "the fourth sort," those who "have neither voice nor authority in the commonwealth, but are to be ruled and not to rule other," as William Harrison puts it, or that his plays are critical of aristocratic culture.²⁴ Nor is it news that Shakespeare sympathizes with the plight of the common soldier in both parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* (Patterson 1989, pp. 89–92; Herman 1995, pp. 204–25; Leahy 2003, p. 122; Mardock 2019, p. 44; Smith 2019, p. 77). But because Shakespeareans have shied away from viewing the Henriad as a unity, they have missed how each play's treatment of the common soldier builds on the previous one.

In *Richard II*, the common soldier is absent. We read that the king goes to war against the Irish rebels, and we learn in 2.4 from the “Captain” of the Welsh forces that the soldiers think Richard is dead. But we never see or hear from the soldiers themselves. Richard alludes to how Bolingbroke’s forces are stocked when he says, “For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed / To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown” (3.2.53). Bolingbroke’s soldiers, in other words, are not volunteers but forcibly enlisted. It is possible that a reader or a playgoer might wince at these passages because they allude to the widely hated practice of impressment, which in the 1590s, was mainly for the Irish wars. But this is a passing moment; Shakespeare does not pursue this theme in *Richard II*. Instead, *Richard II* focuses exclusively on those in authority.

That changes once we move to *1 Henry IV*. To state the obvious, Shakespeare expands the range of this play beyond the court to encompass the tavern world, and Falstaff is the chief skeptic toward aristocratic ideology. Certainly, Falstaff demystifies “honor,” nicely showing that only the dead have it. But Shakespeare also unveils the reality behind military service. The prince tells Falstaff that he has “procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot” (3.3.170), meaning, he has given Falstaff a certain amount of money to call up, train, and supply with food, weapons, and armor a certain number of soldiers, which he will then command. But this practice was rife with corruption, and Shakespeare dramatizes both the economic malfeasance and the likely fate of those dragooned into service, whether for the king or the king’s opponents.

Falstaff admits that he has “misused the King’s press damnably” (4.2.12). While Falstaff received three hundred pounds to raise 150 soldiers, and while he has pressed “none but good householders, yeoman’s sons” and “contracted bachelors,” they have “bought out their services” (4.2.20–21), meaning, they bribed Falstaff to let them go. Consequently, Falstaff’s company consists of “slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth . . . and such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded unjust servingmen, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters and ostlers trade-fallen” (4.2.25–27). They are decrepit—“No eye hath seen such scarecrows” (4.3.34–35)—as the prince recognizes: “I did never see such pitiful rascals” (4.2.58).

Although this scene is often played for comedy, it is very close to reality. A 1598 letter to the Privy Council from Ireland reports:

It grieveth us not a little to see the nakedness of the soldiers for want of clothes, and their poverty for lack of their lendings to buy them food; both which wants not only maketh many of them show like prisoners, half starved for want of cherishing, but also it dejecteth of them greatly in heart insomuch as we look daily for some great mutiny and disbanding. (*Calendar 1895*, p. 357)

Unsurprisingly, impressment was widely hated, and Londoners were pressed more than any other group, so it is likely that at least some in the audience and, when the plays were published, some readers had personal experience with a practice rife with class privilege, abuse, and outright fraud (Leahy 2003, p. 128n.31; Cruickshank 1966, p. 291).²⁵

Let me give a few additional examples. In 1580, the Privy Council wrote to the mayor of Chester—the launching point for forces leaving for Ireland—to inform the Council that the soldiers rebelled because their “coat and conduct money” had disappeared, into whose pocket nobody knows. Some were so angry, they said that “rather that they would go into Ireland to serve her Majesty against the Pope and the rebels there, they would commit themselves to the service of any other foreign prince” (*Acts of the Privy Council 1896–1898*, vol. 12, p. 287). In 1588, the Privy Council received another letter informing them of “Frauds at the Musters.” This time, “divers gentlemen and others” promised to deliver good horses but “sent in their steed very bad” ones “ (*Acts of the Privy Council 1896–1898*, vol. 16, p. 217).

The worst abuse, however, was not peculation but how impressment was reserved for the low.²⁶ In 1573, the commissioners in charge of a muster in Kent were forbidden to impress the Countess of Pembroke’s servants, and, in 1577, the same privilege was extended to the servants of the dean and canons of Windsor chapel (Forse 2003, p. 107). In

1602, the need for soldiers to be shipped to Flanders was so great, and the hostility toward the theater so overpowering, that the Lord Mayor of London decided to raid the playhouses “contrary to the Instructions from the Lords of the council” (Gawdy 1906, p. 120; Leahy 2003, p. 128). Consequently, they “did not only presse gentlemen, and sarvingmen, but Lawyers, Clarkes, countrv men that had lawe causes, aye the Quens men, knightes, and as it was credibly reported one Earle” (Gawdy 1906, pp. 128–29). Aside from showing the range of people who attended the public theater, this raid made explicit the class bias in impressment. The Lord Chief Justice said that the mayor acted “quyte contrarye” to his intention—that he meant for the raid to focus only on the low: “they shold take out of all ordinaryes all cheting companions, as suche as had no abylyty to lyve in suche places, all suche as they cold fynd in bawdy howses, and bowling allyes” (Gawdy 1906, p. 129). To ensure this offense against the social hierarchy was not repeated, “the Tuesday following their was a proclamation in London that no gentleman, or serving man shold any more be impressed” (Gawdy 1906, p. 128). Others, perhaps without position but with funds, simply bought their way out of service, bribing “the Commissioners of the Muster to impress others in their place” (Forse 2003, p. 108). Consequently, only the poor or worse found themselves serving the queen in her wars. In 1602, the Commissioners at Bristol reported to the Privy Council that:

there was never man beheld such strange creatures brought to any muster. They are most of them either old, lame, diseased, or common rogues. Few of them have any clothes; small, weak, starved bodies, taken up in fairs, markets and highways to supply the places of better men kept at home. (Calendar 1910, Part XII, p. 169)

Sir Edward Wingfield, writing to Robert Cecil also in 1602, wished he “were a painter that he might have sent a picture of those creatures who have been brought to him to receive for soldiers, and Cecil would have wondered where England or Wales had hidden so many strange decrepit people so long, except they had been kept in hospitals” (Calendar 1910, Part XII, p. 169). These letters show that Falstaff’s actions and the conditions of his “soldiers” accurately reflect the reality of Elizabethan impressment.

Falstaff then says the silent part out loud. It does not matter that his troops are small, weak, starved, pitiful rascals, because their purpose is not to fight, but to die. These men are mere cannon-fodder, nothing more: “Tut, tut, good enough to toss, food for powder, food for powder. They’ll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men” (4.3.59–61).

In *Richard II*, the pressed soldiers have neither lines nor presence. In *1 Henry IV*, Shakespeare makes explicit the corruption underlying impressment, and how the soldiers’ sole purpose is to die. In *2 Henry IV*, Shakespeare elaborates further. Falstaff is again given responsibility to impress men to fight for the king, and the scene begins with Falstaff engaging in exactly the corruption we witnessed in *1 Henry IV*. “We have,” Falstaff says, “a number of shadows to fill up the muster-book” (3.2.124), meaning, as the Norton’s note says, “Fictitious names that officers recorded in order to collect additional pay from the Crown.” Shakespeare, however, makes two adjustments. First, unlike in *1 Henry IV*, Shakespeare gives the people who Justice Shallow rounds up names: Wart, Feeble, Bullcalf, and Moldy. The names are not meant to be realistic, but mocking, and I will show below how Shakespeare revises the soldiers’ names in *Henry V*. Next, Shakespeare takes his depiction of the muster’s corruption one step further. In *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff tells us that he has taken bribes to let men go; the men he has pressed “have bought out their services” (4.2.20). But in *2 Henry IV*, instead of Falstaff telling us what he has done, we see the corruption as it takes place. Bardolph tells Falstaff, in an aside: “I have three pound to free Moldy and Bullcalf” (3.2.221–222). Falstaff accepts the bribe, and Falstaff lets these two go: “I will none of you” (3.2.229). Justice Shallow is surprised, as these two “are your likeliest men, and I would have served you with the best” (3.2.231). Also, Wart is a terrible soldier: “He is not his craft’s master: he doth not do it right” (3.2.250). But military aptitude and skill are irrelevant for the pressed. Wart’s purpose, as we know from *1 Henry IV*, is to die

as cannon-fodder. But if the muster scene in *1 Henry IV* reveals how impressed soldiers have one purpose—filling a pit—the muster scene in *2 Henry IV* reveals the backroom deals allowing those with means to escape military service.

In *Henry V*, Shakespeare takes his treatment of the common soldier yet another step further. This time, they are not given mock names, but genuine ones: Michael Williams, Alexander Court, and John Bates. And unlike in the previous plays, they are not silent. It is as if the poor scarecrows of *1 Henry IV* and the unfortunate Wart were suddenly given voices and transformed into fully rounded characters who have something to say about their lives and their king. It is surely not news that Williams and Bates give voice to the skepticism with which no doubt many impressed soldiers viewed their mission. When the disguised king claims (the end of *2 Henry IV* and the beginning of *Henry V* notwithstanding) that his cause is “just and his quarrel honorable” (4.1.119), Williams pushes back: “That’s more than we know” (4.1.120). But while many have noted how Williams and Bates voice a challenge to aristocratic ideology from below, they have not noted how this scene builds on the earlier plays. When Bates says that he wishes the king “were here alone. So should he be sure to be ransomed, and many a poor men’s lives saved” (4.1.114–115), he recalls and answers the utter dismissal of lower-class lives in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, how their purpose is to die, period. Similarly, while Williams’ warning, “if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make” (4.1.125) could stand alone, this line recalls Henry IV’s advice to Hal to “busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels” in *2 Henry IV*—advice, we should remember, delivered onstage two years earlier, but sharp in the reader’s memory if read just before going on to *Henry V*.

Similarly, Williams’ graphic description of dying in combat—“We died at such a place’—some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afraid there are few die well that die in a battle . . . ” (4.1.128–132)—recalls and answers the treatment of common soldiers in the earlier history plays in two ways. First, the passage reminds the reader what Falstaff’s cold description of a soldier’s purpose—filling a pit—actually entails. Hotspur may describe death in battle as a lark (“Come, let us take a muster speedily. /Doomsday is near: die all, die merrily” [*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.132–133]), but Williams answers Hotspur’s idealization with brute reality. Second, this passage restores the humanity of those impressed to fight in the king’s wars. They are not the faceless, characterless army of *Richard II*, referred to but never seen. Nor the caricatures of *1 and 2 Henry IV* with silly names. Instead, they have wives and children whom they love. Some die in agony, some “crying for a surgeon.” This list reminds the reader—and, again, this passage was added to the Folio version of the play—of everything Falstaff leaves out. Although the confrontation between the disguised Henry V and his soldiers can stand alone, it is necessary to have read the previous chapters of the Henriad to comprehend the full force of this scene, and the echoes strongly imply that is exactly what Shakespeare intended.

There is no doubt that my thesis is counter to the conventional understanding of Shakespeare’s relationship to print. The plays were not (so far as we know) performed together, nor were they sold together. The first time they were brought within the same covers was the 1623 Folio, and, for the most part, they have been performed, read, and analyzed individually. And yet, when one takes into account the large number of echoes—some thematically significant, some not—the multiple versions, interpretations, and reinterpretations of the events leading to Richard II’s deposition, and the increasingly sharp treatment of the common soldier, it becomes difficult to dismiss all this evidence as mere coincidence. Collectively, the weight of evidence points toward the idea that the plays, as presented in the Folio, take advantage of what Emma Smith calls “the immersive experience” of reading the plays serially, and then retracing our steps and reinterpreting earlier passages in light of later ones (Smith 2016, p. 156). In sum, it is as if Shakespeare wrote a book that he never lived to see, and we call it the Henriad.

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Notes

- ¹ See also (Orenstein 1972, pp. 153, 221; Berry 1975, p. 105; Coursen 1982, pp. 4–5; Crane 1985, pp. 282–99). Not everyone agreed with the unity thesis. See, for example, (M. A. Shaaber 1948, pp. 217–27).
- ² Paul Yachnin and Nicholas Grene are representative of the current view. The former calls finding unity in the *Henriad* a “mistaken attempt to force the idea of aesthetic unity upon the genre of Shakespeare’s Histories” (Yachnin 1991, p. 63); the latter writes “in their formal distinctness and the weakness of the links between them, they suggest a set of individual compositions only incrementally accumulating into a series” (Grene 2002, p. 9).
- ³ See Berger’s chapters, “On the Continuity of the *Henriad*” and “*Henry V* as Tetralogical Echo Chamber” in *Harrying: Skills of Offense in Shakespeare’s Henriad* (Berger 2015, pp. 55–67, 155–64).
- ⁴ H. R. Woudhuysen also believes that Shakespeare’s “interest did not extend to attending the press, for there seems to be no compelling evidence that he ever read proofs either of his plays or of his poems” (Woudhuysen 2004, p. 86).
- ⁵ Hooks observes that “Erne’s argument has been influential; it has been widely discussed and widely, but not universally, accepted” (Hooks 2016, p. 22). See also (Stern 2009, p. 121).
- ⁶ Bourne, for example, does not accept Erne’s distinction between “theatrical” and “literary” playbooks because, in her (brilliant) analysis, “all quartos—not just the long ‘good’ ones or the ones with richly descriptive dialogue—are ‘readerly’—for being, to varying degrees, prepared with readers in mind” (Bourne 2020, pp. 16–17). See also (Boeckeler 2022, pp. 133–52).
- ⁷ Egan allows that the differences between quarto and Folio versions of a play might be explained by “Shakespeare thoroughly revising” the play, although he admits that figuring “out just when such a revision occurred is difficult” (Egan 2016, p. 79). The *Henriad* plays are not the only ones Shakespeare seems to have revised. *King Lear* is another example: See, for example, Urkowitz, *Shakespeare’s Revision of “King Lear”* (Urkowitz 1980) and the essays collected in *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare’s Two Versions of “King Lear,”* edited by Taylor and Warren (1983). Also, Simon Foreman attended a performance of *Macbeth* in 1611, and his description suggests that the performed play differs radically from the version printed in the Folio. In the former, Macbeth and Banquo meet “fairies or nymphes,” in the latter, witches. The former seems to endorse the Stuart origin myth; the latter undermines it. See (Peter C. Herman 2020, pp. 29–30).
- ⁸ John Jowett and Gary Taylor also regard the scenes added to the Folio 2 *Henry IV* as “strengthening the links between Part Two and its predecessor,” thus revealing “yet again the hand of Shakespeare revising” (Jowett and Taylor 1987, p. 40).
- ⁹ As Crane points out, two-part dramas were rather common on the early modern stage (Crane 1985, pp. 287–90).
- ¹⁰ All further references will be to (Shakespeare 2016), the Norton edition, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Gordon McMullan, and cited parenthetically.
- ¹¹ *Holinshed*: “he tooke the sea, together with the said archbishop of Canturbu | rie, and his nephue Thomas Arundell, sonne and heire to the late earle of Arundell, beheaded at the Tow | er hill, as you have heard. There were also with him, Reginald lord Cobham, sir Thomas Erpingham, and sir Thomas Ramston knights, John Norbu | rie, Robert Waterton, & Francis Coint esquires” (*Holinshed’s Chronicles* (Holinshed 1587, vol. 6, p. 497), http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_4847 (accessed on 10 February 2023). Here and elsewhere, I have silently adopted modern usage of i/j and u/v).
Shakespeare: “Harry, Duke of Hereford, Rainold, Lord Cobham, /Thomas, son and heir to th’Earl of Arundel, /That, late broke from the Duke of Exeter, /His brother, Archbishop late of Canterbury, /Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir John Ramston, /Sir John Norberry, Sir Robert Waterton, and Francis Coint”.
(2.1.279–284)
- ¹² *Holinshed* (1587, vol. 6, p. 554), http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_5162 (accessed on 10 February 2023). See also Walker, “Erpingham, Sir Thomas”.
- ¹³ Sir Thomas Erpingham was appointed Constable of Dover Castle, warden of the Cinque Ports, chamberlain of the royal household, commander of a division charged with putting down a rebellion, appointed Knight of the Garter, and “the only commoner considered by the council for the post of master of Henry, prince of Wales He became acting marshal of England in October 1404 and his services to the king and the kingdom were specifically commended by the Commons in the Coventry parliament, as they were to be again during the Long Parliament (March–December 1406)” (Walker 2008).

- 14 Shakespeare's play seems to have planted the notion that Falstaff was Mowbray's page. In 1601, an anonymous poem about Oldcastle, *The Mirror of Martyrs* (1601), repeated the connection: "I was made Sir Thomas Mowbraies page" (sig. A4r), which will be taken as fact in the eighteenth century (Fiehler 1962, pp. 144–45).
- 15 See Stephen Greenblatt's classic reading of this scene in "Invisible Bullets," (Greenblatt 1988, pp. 43–45).
- 16 Berger notes how Henry V's speech to the Dauphin's messenger at the start of *Henry V* echoes Hal's "I know you all" soliloquy in *1 Henry IV* and how Canterbury's praise of the new king ("The breath no sooner left his father's body, / But that his wildness, mortified in him, / Seem'd to die too" (1.1.25–27) anticipates Hal's promise to his dying father ("If I do feign, / O let me in my present wildness die, / And never live to show th'incredulous world / The noble change that I have purposed" [2 *Henry IV* 4.5.151–54]; (Berger 2015, pp. 157–60). On how the question of Prince Hal's conversion requires knowledge of the earlier plays, see (Crewe 1990, pp. 225–42). Crewe, however, does not extend his analysis to include *Richard II*.
- 17 Henry's slight alterations of Richard's speech also illustrate the fallibility of memorial reconstruction and, by implication, historical narratives relying on memory. Nor is this the only time when Shakespeare demonstrates the vagaries of memory. Toward the beginning of *1 Henry IV*, Hotspur mistakes where Bolingbroke returned from exile and is quickly corrected:
- HOTSPUR: . . . when you and he came back from Ravenspur.
NORTHUMBERLAND: At Berkeley Castle.
HOTSPUR: You say true. (1.3.246–248)
- 18 It is worth noting that "time" is not capitalized in the 1597 quarto but is capitalized in the Folio.
- 19 Holinshed (1587, vol. 6, p. 4). http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_1425 (accessed on 10 February 2023).
- 20 Holinshed (1587, vol. 6, p. 516). http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_4940 (accessed on 10 February 2023). Another example, this one taken from Holinshed's narrative of Bolingbroke's return from exile:
- few else were there, for (as some write) he had not past fiftene lances, as they tearmed them in those daies, that is to saie, men of armes, furnished and appointed as the use then was. Yet other write, that the duke of Britaine delivered unto him three thousand men of warre, to attend him, and that he had eight ships well furnished for the warre, where Froissard yet speaketh but of three. Moreover, where Froissard and also the chronicles of Britaine avouch, that he should land at Plimmouth, by our English writers it seemeth otherwise: for it appeareth by their assured report, that he approaching to the shore, did not streight take land, [. . .]ho. [. . .]ja [. . .]sing. but lay hovering aloofe, and shew | ed himselfe now in this place, and now in that, to see what countenance was made by the people, whether they meant enviouslie to resist him, or frendlie to re | ceive him. (Holinshed (1587, vol. 6, p. 497), http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_4846 (accessed on 10 February 2023; emphases in the original).
- The marginalia specify the different sources for this passage. See (Patterson 1994, p. 35; Griffin 2019, pp. 35–62).
- 21 Cf. Engel, who argues that we are to take Henry's description of Richard as the "skipping king" as what "Shakespeare wanted recalled from the Henriad's first play" (Engel 2018, p. 166).
- 22 According to Holinshed, after Richard "with all speed made hast to returne into England . . . it fortun'd at the same time . . . the seas were so troubled by tempests, and the winds blew so contrarie for anie passage" that the king had to remain in Ireland for six more weeks (Holinshed 1587, vol. 6, p. 499), http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_4853 (accessed on 10 February 2023). See also (Griffin 2019, p. 46).
- 23 Holinshed (1587, vol. 6, p. 545), http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_4847 (accessed on 10 February 2023). Holinshed also seems skeptical as he calls the archbishop's lengthy and convoluted justification a "prepared tale."
- 24 William Harrison, "The Description of England," in Holinshed (Harrison 1587, vol. 1, p. 156). http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_0084 (accessed on 10 February 2023). On Shakespeare's sympathy for the "fourth sort," see, for example, (Patterson 1989; Leahy 2003, pp. 119–34; Fitter 2012).
- 25 According to Cruickshank, 9515 Londoners were pressed between 1585 and 1602, by far the largest number of any county. The second largest was Kent: 4600 (p. 291). Doubtless, the larger number reflects London's size.
- 26 A 1589 letter to the Earl of Pembroke from the Privy Council details exactly how much the man in charge of the Wiltshire levies, one Gabriel Hanley, received "for the discharging of certaine imprested soldiers." Nicholas Dybell, for example, paid 40 shillings "to staie at home" (*Acts of the Privy Council 1896–1898*, vol. 17, p. 387). The previous letter from the Council to the Lord Treasurer concerns sailors, "imprest to serve . . . with Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake," who refused to give back their ship until they were paid (*Acts of the Privy Council 1896–1898*, vol. 17, p. 387).

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