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Shakespearean Medievalism in Performance: The Second Tetralogy

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Shakespearean Medievalism in Performance: The Second Tetralogy

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I would like to begin by explaining briefly how I have come to teach Shakespeare. A medievalist by training, I have concentrated primarily on the high to late Middle Ages in my work. One area of that work—medieval liturgy and early English drama—has led me ever closer through the years to the Elizabethan-Jacobean stage: a return of sorts back to the site where my interest in early drama began in high school and was fostered in college. At my home institution, I developed some years ago and regularly teach our undergraduate theater history sequence: a year-long survey from the Greeks to what is happening now, with a significant dose of Elizabethan-Jacobean theater near the end of the first semester. I suspect like many professors of early English studies, I also incorporate early English drama into other syllabi whenever possible—a first-year introduction to literature course, a second-year survey in medieval and Renaissance literature, a fourth-year seminar. I once even taught a third-year topics course on early English drama *sans* the Elizabethans. And on two occasions, when my Department's Shakespearean was on sabbatical, I had the good fortune to focus solely on the Bard himself: an entire course devoted to Shakespeare. Though not a Shakespearean, I have taught nineteen of the plays (several multiple times) as well as the sonnets and the long narrative poems over the course of the past several years. Such are my credentials.

As a playwright, Shakespeare was a bit of a magpie, collecting images, stories, and ideas from life's various sources—the fields around Stratford, the streets of London, the forest of Arden, a fairly wide-ranging reading habit, even fellow playwrights—while drafting and revising his plays for the stage. Like many of his contemporaries at all levels of society, he was interested in England's past, as a quick glance at the table of contents in any modern complete edition reveals. Of the thirty-eight plays collected in the *Riverside Shakespeare*, for instance, modern editors categorize ten as histories. This move is not a surprise, of course, as they follow the list as laid out in the First Folio, a 1623 record of reader reception, if not of authorial intent, organized in historical sequence by subject rather than the historical sequence of composition and production.¹ Of these ten plays, eight dramatize events from English history beginning with the trial of Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray in April, 1398 (*Richard II* 1.1) and concluding with the death of King Richard III—of recent archeological fame—at the hands of Henry, Earl of Richmond, during the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485 (*Richard III* 5.5).² Concerning the histories, Shakespeare's medievalism—his recasting of medieval material for the Elizabethan stage—found a particular focus on the fifteenth-century: the nearly ninety years preceding Henry VII's ascension to the throne and the beginning of the Tudor dynasty. In this essay, I trace what we know of the early performance history and conditions of Shakespeare's so-called second tetralogy (*Richard II*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V*) in an effort to determine how demands of the late sixteenth-century stage shaped the playwright's choices when dramatizing the story of Henry Bolingbroke and his son, Hal, for an Elizabethan audience. Though I touch on all four plays here, I focus primarily on *1 Henry IV* and *Henry V*. Much of my thinking about all four plays stems from my teaching experiences, shaped in

¹ The First Folio lists and organizes the plays as follows: *The life and death of K. John*, *The life and death of K.R. the 2*, *The life and death of K. H. 4*, *The second part of K.H. the 4*, *The life of King Henry the 5*, *The first part of K. Henry the 6*, *The 2 part of K. Henry the 6*, *The 3 part of K. Henry 6*, *The Tragedie of Richard the 3*, *The famous history of Henry 8*. See Charlton Hinman, ed., *The Norton Facsimile First Folio of Shakespeare* (New York: Hamlyn, 1968). This organization gives the impression Shakespeare conceived the plays as a series: production history indicates otherwise. *The Riverside Shakespeare*, in contrast, organizes the plays by sequence of composition, following what is known of production history.

² All in-text references to Shakespeare's plays are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1997).

part by other scholars' work and firmly grounded in performance studies.

When I teach a Shakespeare play—whether in a lower-level survey or an advanced author course—I tend to emphasize performance as both a pedagogical strategy and a means for placing the play within its historical-cultural contexts.³ Drama is, after all, a performance art and, as drama, Shakespeare's plays are fundamentally performance pieces. In a certain sense, each of his plays exists—has its life, if you will—primarily in performance: players embodying text before an audience. Because most of us first encountered Shakespeare in a school room, however, where we read a play, and many of us continue to enjoy them most frequently in private reading, we can forget this obvious, yet fundamental point about Shakespeare: he wrote plays to be performed. Venues like summer Shakespeare festivals, university theater departments, professional theater companies, even the occasional high school program, remind us of the need to experience Shakespeare in performance, and give us opportunities to do so. For the remainder of this essay, I unpack some of what it means to say the plays of the second tetralogy are performance pieces by reviewing briefly bits of theater history: the kind of study I work through with students. My focus here and in the classroom is on the plays in relation to elements of their performance setting in late sixteenth-century London: such cultural-historical study provides fundamental context for understanding Shakespeare's medievalism as expressed in the second tetralogy.

Now, one fact that makes my task somewhat light is that we know very few facts about particular performances of any Shakespeare play during the playwright's twenty or so active years in the London theater scene. Any discussion of initial performances of a Shakespeare play, I think, ought to be rooted then in a concise understanding of the playwright's professional milieu. When he came on the scene of the London professional theater in about 1589 or 1590,⁴ Shakespeare entered a lively commercial environment that was relatively young: a grocer, John Brayne, anticipating an opportunity, had constructed the first purpose-built performance venue for theater, The Red Lion, in Whitechapel in June and July of 1567, just some twenty years previously.⁵ An open-air, galleried theater modeled in part on the inn yard venues so familiar to traveling companies and audiences, and quite near two such venues, the Boar's Head Inn and the George Inn, both of which doubled as playhouses during the 1560s, Brayne's venture failed almost before it started, apparently closing after a brief late summer run (only one play, *The Story of Sampson*, is known to have been staged at The Red Lion). Though difficult to determine definitively, the venture's demise does not seem the result of a lack of interest in playgoing; rather, its failure seems more tied to location—Whitechapel is to the East of London at the then-edge of the suburbs, and it already had two inn yard venues nearby—and perhaps to poor construction—Brayne brought a pair of lawsuits against his sub-contracted

³ When I teach dramatic texts with performance in mind, I explore with students how a text suggests original performance conditions and how performing it now opens up interpretive possibilities. For theory, see Henry Bial, ed., *The Performance Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004); Henry Sayre, "Performance," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 91-104; and Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006). For performance and Shakespeare, see among others Cecily Berry, *The Actor and the Text*, New and Revised (New York: Applause Books, 1992); John Russell Brown, *Studying Shakespeare in Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Louis Fantasia, *Instant Shakespeare: A Proven Technique for Actors, Directors, and Teachers* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002); and Milla Cozart Riggio, ed., *Teaching Shakespeare through Performance* (New York: Modern Languages Association, 1999).

⁴ Shakespeare's whereabouts from 1585 to 1592 are notoriously sketchy. For a quick review of his life, see Henry Levin, General Introduction to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 3-5; and Jean Wilson, *The Shakespeare Legacy: The Material Legacy of Shakespeare's Theatre* (Godalming, Surrey: Bramley Books, 1995), 1-16.

⁵ I base my summary of Brayne's Red Lion venture on Christopher Phillpotts, *Red Lion Theatre, Whitechapel: Documentary Research Report* (London: The Museum of London Archaeology Service and Crossrail, 2004), 5-6.

carpenters, charging shoddy work.⁶ He won the first: there is no record of the court's decision on the second. Not entirely put off the idea by this experience, Brayne returned to theater building in 1576 when he partnered with his brother-in-law, James Burbage, to build The Theatre North of the City in Shoreditch near Burbage's home. Burbage was at the time leader of Leicester's Men, a company of professional players who'd been granted a royal patent in 1574 "to perform throughout the city and liberties of London and all over England."⁷ This time Brayne—the money behind the venture—had no difficulties with carpenters as Burbage, a joiner by trade as well as an actor-manager, oversaw The Theatre's construction. With the first Blackfriars, an indoor theater, built in the same year, and the Curtain, another amphitheater, going up a few hundred yards south of The Theatre just a year later in 1577, English-professional theater entered a new era.⁸ As Andrew Gurr observes:

By enclosing the plays inside a special building the players made the customers who paid to see what was on offer more selective, and no doubt more demanding. Only those who paid got in. They got in for the exclusive purpose of seeing a play, and they handed their money over to the impresarios and players whose sole interest was in satisfying their demand for entertainment. Moreover, a single fixed venue needed a much larger turnover of plays than what was needed when the players were on their travels from one town to another. So the London playhouses became a massive stimulus to the production of new plays.⁹

As these venues gave impresarios like Burbage and their acting companies control over performances, and increased demand for new plays, the professional playwright, too, reached a new level of importance. Enter Will Shakespeare (and many other playwrights, of course).

The first record of Shakespeare's presence in London is Robert Greene's 1592 snarky remark in his posthumously-printed pamphlet *Groatsworth of Witte* about "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a cuntry."¹⁰ This critique—addressed to Greene's fellow gentlemen playwrights—suggests Shakespeare was already a force to be reckoned with. Greene's phrase—"Tygers heart wrapped in a Players hyde"—parodies "O Tiger's heart wrapp'd in woman's hide," a line Richard Duke of York says to Queen Margaret in *3 Henry VI* (1.4.137). Clearly the line had stuck in Greene's memory. And his accusation of Shakespeare as a "Johnny-did-all" (a "Jack of all trades; a master of none") perhaps alludes further to the Bard's double-threat: both playwright and player. In 1594, Shakespeare became a charter member and one of eight share-holders in a newly forming company under the management of James Burbage and the patronage of Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey. This company—The Lord Chamberlain's Men—included at the time Richard Burbage, Will Kempe, Thomas Pope, Augustine Phillips, George Bryan, John Heminges,

⁶ Phillpotts, *Red Lion Theatre, White Chapel*, 6.

⁷ Janette Dillon, *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 72.

⁸ For excellent reviews of evidence for and the development of purpose-built theaters in London from 1567 to 1642, see Dillon, *Early English Theatre*, 44-53; Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14-26, and *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 115-54; and Wilson, *The Shakespeare Legacy*, 59-103.

⁹ Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 11.

¹⁰ Robert Greene, *Groats-Worth of Witte, bought with a million of Repentence* (London: Printed by William Wright, 1592), accessed May 6, 2013. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

and Cuthbert Burbage in addition to Shakespeare.¹¹ All but Cuthbert were players. From 1594 through 1598, the company performed in several venues but most consistently at The Theatre until 1597, when James Burbage died before a contested lease with the landlord Giles Allen was settled and the company abandoned the space. The Theatre stood empty while the Lord Chamberlain's Men played at the Curtain through 1598. During this period, Shakespeare wrote mainly love comedies and histories, including the second tetralogy. In 1599, the company opened The Globe, built in Southwark from timbers salvaged from the dismantled Theatre. In 1603, the newly-crowned King of England, James I, took over sponsorship of the company, which then became known as The King's Men, and Shakespeare became the King's playwright until he retired to Stratford-upon-Avon in about 1611. He died in 1616 on St. George's Day.

Again, few facts are known about particular performances of Shakespeare's plays during his lifetime. In the case of *Richard II*, its earliest recorded performance during this period was on December 9, 1595: a private showing of the play at Canon Row, Westminster, before Sir Edward Hoby, Sir Robert Cecil, and others following dinner.¹² It later figures prominently in the Essex Rebellion of 1601, when conspirators hired the company to perform the play at the Globe on February 7, the eve of the Rebellion, in spite of its no longer being part of the company repertory: Queen Elizabeth later complained to William Lambarde, her Keeper of the Records at the Tower, about the popularity of the play, declaring "I am Richard. Know ye not that?"¹³ And on September 30, 1607, sailors aboard the *Dragon* off the coast of Sierra Leone staged its first known amateur performance on the ship's deck at the instigation of Captain Keeling, who "believed that amateur dramatics kept the sailors from 'idleness and unlawful games or sleep.'"¹⁴ The earliest recorded performance of *1 Henry IV*, on the other hand, occurred March 6, 1600, at the royal court as part of the entertainment for the Flemish ambassador while *2 Henry IV* is mentioned as having been "sundrie times publicly acted by the right honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine his servants" on the title page of the 1600 Quarto edition, but no known performances are recorded.¹⁵ *Henry V*, too, has only one firm performance date during this early period: a January 7, 1605, revival at the Royal Court though John Russell Brown speculates that its celebratory nature and the Chorus' reference in the Prologue to "this wooden O" (15) suggest the Company used the play to inaugurate the Globe in 1599.¹⁶

Though evidence of performance dates is scant, other evidence suggests these plays were quite popular among audiences. Francis Meres, for instance, mentions *Richard II* and *Henry IV*, along with ten other plays Shakespeare wrote, in his 1598 book of wit and wisdom *Palladis Tamia*.¹⁷ In the same year Sir Matthew Toby, son of the Archbishop of York, quoted Falstaff's honor catechism from *1*

¹¹ Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage*, 44. I base the following summary on Dillon, *Early English Theatre*, 71-83; Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage*, 44-9; Levin, General Introduction, 3-5, 14-8; and "Patrons and Performances" (REED: Records in Early English Drama), accessed May 6, 2012. <http://link.library.utoronto.ca/reed/>.

¹² *Riverside Shakespeare*, 1963.

¹³ Kenneth Muir, "Richard II on Stage and Screen," in William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. Kenneth Muir, Signet Classic (New York: New American Library, 1988), 232.

¹⁴ Muir, "Richard II on Stage and Screen," 232.

¹⁵ Barnet, Sylvan, "Henry IV, Part One, on Stage and Screen," in William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One*, ed. Maynard Mack, Signet Classic (New York: New American Library, 1998), 232; William Shakespeare, *The second part of Henry IV* (London: Printed by Andrew Wise and William Aspley, 1600), accessed May 6, 2013. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

¹⁶ John Russell Brown, "Henry V on Stage and Screen," in William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. John Russell Brown, Signet Classic (New York: New American Library, 1998), 212.

¹⁷ Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (London: Printed by Cuthbert Burbie, 1598), accessed May 6, 2013. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

Henry IV (5.1.130-41) in a letter to Dudley Carleton dated September 20.¹⁸ A year later, in 1599, in their play *Sir John Oldcastle*, about the historical contemporary of Henry V, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathwaye, Anthony Munday, and Robert Wilson distance themselves from Shakespeare's Sir John Oldcastle, that is, Falstaff, declaring in the Prologue:

It is no pamperd glutton we present,
Nor aged Councillor to youthfull sinne,
But one, whose virtue shone above the rest,
A valiant Martyr, and a virtuous peere.¹⁹

And, in Francis Beaumont's 1607 parodic-comedy *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the character Rafe demonstrates his huffing acting ability by reciting in the prologue five lines from one of Hotspur's speeches (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.201-5).²⁰ Though Shakespeare himself seems to have taken no interest in seeing his plays in print, the second tetralogy plays' printed publication history points to continued interest in them outside the theater itself, with quarto editions of each appearing prior to his death: *Richard II* in 1597, 1598 (two editions), and 1608; *1 Henry IV* in 1598 (two editions), 1599, 1604, 1608, and 1613; *2 Henry IV* in 1600; and *Henry V* in 1600 and 1602.²¹

Based on close readings of the play texts, and on evidence external to the plays such as these bits I just reviewed, most scholars date *Richard II* to 1595, *1 Henry IV* to 1596/7, *2 Henry IV* to 1598, and *Henry V* to 1599. Having written a four-part history in the early 1590s, *1, 2, & 3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*, Shakespeare evidently decided to continue to meet audience interest in history by writing a second group of plays. Whether or not he intended to write a second tetralogy, or four-part history, when he first drafted *Richard II* in 1595—an as-yet-unsettled question—he obviously considered continuing the tale of Henry IV and Henry V worth doing. Though clearly part of a larger staging of history in their relation to each other, *Richard II*, *1 Henry IV*, and *Henry V* stand quite well on their own as individual plays. Only *2 Henry IV* is arguably indispensably connected to *1 Henry IV*. Except for the interregnum, the eighteen-year period between 1642 and 1660 when the London theaters were closed, each of these plays has remained popular on English and American stages, as well as elsewhere—and for good reason: they perform well.²²

While such evidence gives us a view of these plays' early and subsequent reception, the play texts themselves remain our best primary source for exploring original production values and performance conditions. As with all his plays, Shakespeare structures these four using the scene as

¹⁸ Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 237.

¹⁹ Michael Drayton, Richard Hathwaye, Anthony Munday, and Robert Wilson, *The True and Honourable Historie of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle, the good Lord Cobham* (London: Printed by Thomas Pavier, 1600), accessed May 5, 2013. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

²⁰ The lines—with slight modifications—are as follows:

By heauen me thinks it were an easy leap,
To plucke bright honour from the pale-fac'd Moone,
Or diue into the bottome of the sea,
Where neuer fathome line touch't any ground,
And plucke vp drowned honor from the lake of hell. (Prol.)

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (London: Printed by Walter Burre, 1613), accessed May 5, 2013. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.

²¹ *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 879, 923, 965, and 1015 respectively.

²² Muir, "Richard II on Stage and Screen," 232-42; Barnet, "Henry IV, Part One, on Stage and Screen," 232-42; and Brown, "Henry V on Stage and Screen," 210-25.

the basic unit of exposition and order, building momentum in the story as each scene follows on the previous: *Richard II* is built on 19 scenes; *1 Henry IV* on 19 (or 20 depending on editing); *2 Henry IV* on 18; and *Henry V* on 23. With the exception of *Henry V*, with its six Choric speeches setting up and punctuating the play into five larger sections, the five-act structure to which we are all accustomed does not seem to be Shakespeare's intent in most of his plays; rather, Jonson, Condell, and Heminges—the editors of the First Folio—added the act divisions when preparing texts for publication in 1623. Again, like Marlowe and other playwrights, Shakespeare's structuring unit is the scene, each of which opens when a character or group characters enter the playing space and begin speaking and closes when all have left. This structure allows for tremendous flexibility in terms of establishing setting, time, and action, and it points to the kind of theater space for which Shakespeare wrote: a neutral space turned into specific settings through dialogue and action as performed by players. This sort of flexibility in staging fit well with what we know about how performing troupes of players like The Lord Chamberlain's Men worked. Frequently on the move, staging plays at court or in halls like Cannon Row and The Middle Temple Hall, at amphitheaters like The Theatre, The Curtain, and The Globe, at indoor theaters like Blackfriars, and at various indoor and outdoor venues when traveling in the hinterlands of England, these professional troupes sought flexibility and mobility in their plays. And audiences, trained to listen carefully—to hear the play perhaps even more than see it—more or less followed right along with the performers.²³

The Lord Chamberlain's Men likely first published, that is staged, *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV* at The Theatre, *2 Henry IV* at The Curtain, and *Henry V* either at The Curtain or The Globe. The only facts about The Theatre are its location in Shoreditch, its polygonal shape, its enclosed structure surrounding a yard, much like an inn, and that dismantled it supplied timber for the first Globe, which the Company constructed on a similar pattern.²⁴ The Globe—a 20-sided polygonal building—was relatively large at 100' in diameter: its stage was approximately 5' high X 45' wide X 30' deep. Like The Theatre and The Curtain stage, The Globe's stage was a thrust, extending out into the building's yard and establishing a three-quarter performance space: when on the stage, actors had audience members on three sides. The fourth side was the façade of a tiring house: a multi-level structure with openings for entrances and exits and a roofed ceiling covering approximately half the stage. As amphitheaters, these buildings had roofed-gallery seating surrounding the stage and yard, but the yard remained unroofed, open to the elements and natural light. Because players and audiences needed optimum daylight for performances, plays usually began about 2 or 3:00 p.m.²⁵ Keeping these constraints and possibilities in mind, we can see why Shakespeare wrote into his plays so many references to time of day: in *1 Henry IV*, for instance, the Carriers in the fourth scene talking about it being 4:00 a.m. not only emphasizes the play's theme of fleeting time but also signals to an audience standing in broad daylight that in the imagined world evoked by the play it was pitch dark and the lanterns the Carriers were holding were indeed necessary. Similarly, in the play's fifteenth scene, on the morning of the Battle of Shrewsbury, when Henry IV says “How bloodily the sun begins to peer / Above yon bulky hill! The day looks pale / At his distemp'ature” (5.1.1-3), he is both describing the anxious mood of the moment reflected in the sun's apparent illness and letting the audience know it is dawn in the world of the play—again, even though it is broad daylight in the every day world of the audience, standing on achy legs or sitting on hard-bench seats.

²³ Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 102-16.

²⁴ Helen Dawson, *Shakespeare's Theatre? Archaeology at 4-6 New Inn Broadway, Hackney* (London: The Museum of London Archaeology, 2008), 11-6, 22-4. I base the following discussion on Dillon, *Early English Drama*, 44-53; Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage*, 118-54; and Wilson, *The Shakespeare Legacy*, 68-81.

²⁵ Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 38.

There is one final bit for our consideration in terms of the play's early performance. In addition to the theater space and theatrical conditions, Shakespeare wrote the second tetralogy for a particular theater company: a company that retained acting rights for all his plays until 1642. As he developed the plays, he had particular performers in mind for different roles: most likely Richard Burbage—the company's lead player—for Richard II and Prince Hal/King Henry V; Will Kemp—the company's chief clown and jig master—for Falstaff; and so on. Working with these players, knowing what they were capable of, must have shaped to a degree how he constructed his characters though we shall never know with surety without a diary or drafting notes, something that just does not exist. Still, it is interesting to wonder as we consider the plays within what is known about their early performance context.

As Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton recently reminded us, Shakespeare wrote his historical plays of the 1590s within a culture steeped in history, engaged in a protracted war in Ireland, and anxious about Royal succession. Surrounded by monuments commemorating past deeds and personages, such as Henry V's chantry chapel and tomb in Westminster Abbey Church, above which on a chestnut crossbeam were displayed until 1972 the King's funeral achievements, the helm, shield, saddle, and armor carried in his funeral procession on November 22, 1422,²⁶ Shakespeare sought to present living monuments in his plays, re-creating the past through performance and using it as commentary on the present. Conflating time in each of these plays, he compressed in the space of some 79 total scenes the history of twenty-two years, "Turning th' accomplishment of many years, / Into an hourglass" (30-1) as Chorus says in the Prologue to *Henry V*. And just as *Henry V* ends on a celebratory note of triumph, with the comic promise of a bright future through marriage, the Chorus in an epilogue sonnet reminds the audience of what "oft our stage hath shown" (13): the story of Henry VI and the Wars of the Roses which "made his England bleed" (12). This reminder serves as a bookend of sorts, for those in the audience who had seen *1 Henry VI* would remember that the play opens with this triumphant king's funeral procession (1.1): a dramatization of the event the static relics of Henry V's Chantry Chapel and Tomb sought to recall in its visitors' imaginations.

As much as any other force or source we might consider when studying the second tetralogy, the stage for which Shakespeare wrote, and the company of players and audience for whom he wrote, affected the artistic and dramatic choices he made. Shakespeare worked with these resources to stage the medieval—with its political usurpations and bloody wars, its "Cry God for Harry, England, and St. George," its momentary "Band of Brothers" unity, and its funereal ceremonial—as a reminder, a cultural memorial, that life is fragile, community precious, and peace precarious: a lesson we all would do well to attend to as we draw out for students Shakespeare's medievalism in performance.

²⁶ Jonathon Bate and Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 107.