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Talbot's Death as Passion Play in Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*

This article examines the death of John Talbot in Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI *against late medieval passion plays. It argues that Shakespeare adapted common features of medieval pageants, and particularly those representing Christ's crucifixion, harrowing of hell, and resurrection, to enhance the tragic impact of his secular history play. Finally, it theorizes Talbot's secular martyrdom in relation to developments unique to the reformation of saintly devotion and the* imitatio Christi *in Elizabethan England.*

Thomas Nashe, writing in defense of London's professional theatre in 1592, extolled the dramatization of the historical John Talbot in what was most likely Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*:

> How would it have ioyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred years in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at seuerall times), who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.[1]

This passage, the earliest known printed response to a Shakespeare play, indicates that re-enactments of history in the theatre involved tragic presentation and an audience's response that perhaps touched upon religious fervour. Source studies have traced exactly how Shakespeare's histories align with the chronicles, but these texts cannot alone account for Nashe's complex reaction to the play. Classical models are also of limited help in explaining how English spectators developed their unique taste for blending tragedy with native history.[2] By convention, however, late medieval religious theatre often intermingled formally

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disparate elements when conveying salvation history, and we are increasingly aware that stage traditions involving the 'representation of human history organized into patterns of rebellion, punishment, and redemption' provided situational and dramaturgical models for events depicted throughout many of Shakespeare's history plays.[3] I will argue that one such event, the death of Talbot at Bordeaux in *1 Henry VI,* relies on late medieval passion plays that blend history, religion, and tragedy, and that these sources in turn can help to clarify the saintly appeal of Talbot, whose incarnational qualities align with features typical of Elizabethan hagiography.

Talbot's certain demise and death take up most of act 4 of *1 Henry VI,* but the script's account is a fictional re-envisioning that intentionally departs from Hall's *Chronicle,* which otherwise serves as the source for this portion of the play.[4] Beginning with Talbot's parley at Bordeaux and his isolation from English reinforcements, the scene turns to the battle where he and his son, John Lord Lisle, are killed.[5] Although in the play Talbot and his son fall together in combat, Shakespeare inaccurately conflates the siege of Bordeaux with the battle at Castillon, where in fact the English general was defeated and killed.[6] Shakespeare also problematically includes the characters of Joan of Arc, who was burned as a heretic more than twenty years earlier in 1431, and Sir William Lucy, who apparently never fought in the Hundred Years' War. Individually such infidelities demonstrate flexibility in the ways that early modern theatre could alter any historical event according to theatrical need. Shakespeare's accumulation of factual disregard resembles the established tendencies of companies such as the Queen's Men in staging Elizabethan history plays, but errors in *1 Henry VI* further indicate his intentional transformation of Talbot's story to a dramaturgical model that substantially draws upon conventions unique to medieval religious theatre.[7] If in 1592 Thomas Nashe responded to Talbot through the tragedian who played the part, then examining *1 Henry VI* against the long-standing theatrical legacy of historical tragedy in England could offer productive insight into Shakespeare's play.

Talbot's Passion and the Medieval Theatre of Crucifixion and Resurrection

Emrys Jones argues that 'Christ's ministry and death was the supreme narrative, the prototype of all suffering and all tragic action', and that despite great theological upheaval the centrality of Christ's passion remained a model of tragic sentiment for medieval and early modern audiences alike.[8] In the analysis that follows, I will demonstrate that Shakespeare realized the emotional and thematic

potential of Talbot's death in *1Henry VI* by integrating iconic staging and recognizable dialogue common to late medieval plays on Christ's passion and resurrection. The text's clear indication of the *planctus Mariae* [Mary's lament] will be of specific interest due to its thematic and iconographical congruity with the eucharistic allegory of the pelican in her piety. I will further examine Sir William Lucy as a character who repeatedly alludes to theatrical versions of the descent from the cross and the resurrection. These examples should illustrate how Shakespeare imparts a Christological quality to Talbot, ultimately bestowing a tragic dimension and poetic complexity to the historical ruin of a much-celebrated English hero.

The image of the pietà, as a visual analogue to the narrative genre of the *planctus Mariae,* grounds several medieval theatrical allusions in *1 Henry VI*. After skirmishes leading to the English army's defeat at Bordeaux, soldiers bear the lifeless body of John Lisle to his mortally wounded father. Talbot laments the loss of his son and instructs his men to,

> Come, come, and lay him in his father's arms,
> My spirit can no longer bear these harms.
> Soldiers, adieu. I have what I would have,
> Now my old arms are young Talbot's grave.   (4.4.141–4)

Although this moment includes no explicit stage direction, an audience will see the visual representation of young Talbot laid at rest in his father's dying embrace — an arrangement that editor Edward Burns claims is emblematic of a pietà.[9] Mary's iconic embrace of her dead son appears in theatrical versions of the passion story, with the following instruction provided by the burial play from the N-Town manuscript:

> *Here Joseph and Nychodemus takyn Cryst of þe cros, on on o ledyr*
> *and þe tother on another leddyr. And quan [he] is had down,*
> *Joseph leyth hym in oure Ladys lappe.*   (34.121 sd)[10]

The likelihood that *1 Henry VI* contains a pietà is reinforced by a direct textual reference when Burgundy, who has approached with other French commanders, comments on John Lisle's death.

> Doubtless he would have made a noble knight.
> See where he lies inhearsed in the arms
> Of the most bloody nurser of his harms.   (4.4.156–8)

Burns points to the double meaning of these lines, explaining that Talbot is the 'cause and the maintainer, and so the *nurser*' of John's bloody inclination to warfare; likewise he is the responsible agent for the injuries his son incurs in battle.[11] Nursing is a familiar topic throughout various literatures of the *planctus Mariae,* and in Chester's passion play Mary begs of Jesus,

> Alas, sonne, my boote thou bee,
> thy mother that thee bare.
> Think one, my fruyte, I fostred thee
> and gave thee sucke upon my brest.
> Upon my pyne thou have pittye;   (16A.243–7)[12]

This example reveals the mechanics of Shakespeare's promotion of tragic sentiment. By placing the younger Talbot in the arms of his father, the archetypal emblem of the mourning mother is rendered into a patrilineal arrangement with John Lisle embodying the dead Christ and his father John Talbot standing in as Mary. Sandro Sticca explains the humanizing effect of the *planctus,* as Mary's profound anguish 'transcends the eschatological and spiritual character of her divine motherhood and finds expression in the representation and evocation of a mother's tenderness'.[13] In this regard the *planctus* matches the general shift from an emphasis on the divinity of Christ to the humanity of Jesus in the late medieval period, a transformation reliant on alterations of passion imagery in a number of religious media. The overall effect upon Shakespeare's adaptation, drawn from long-standing devotional traditions, ranges among the lyrical, emotive, sorrowful, and compassionate.

   By carefully intermingling dialogue associated with nursing and blood, Shakespeare may also engage with the topic of eucharistic sacrifice through the invocation of the comparable tradition of the pelican in her piety. Commonly included in bestiaries, the pelican was usually illustrated in the act of reviving her offspring with an aspersion of blood drawn from her own breast.[14] Once allegorized, this image symbolic of Christ's spiritual nurture and self-sacrifice bore eucharistic connotations that survived England's Protestant Reformation. The allegory remained popular enough to appear in a sermon by Thomas Playfere, who in 1595 preached that 'Christ is that tender Pellican, who by wounding his owne breast, doth restore his owne to life againe by his bloud'.[15] Because of its thematic and visual congruity with the *planctus,* this referent should have imparted a Christological quality to Talbot that by convention is nurturing and vital; instead we find that he is rendered to audiences as a wretched father who is complicit in his son's demise. Karl Tamburr explains that the pelican's sacrificial blood, like

Christ's, signified 'the nourishment that flows from a mother to the children she nurses and that strengthens them in their new lives'.[16] If Shakespeare intended to competitively situate eucharistic iconography against the identification of Talbot as a 'bloody nurser', then the image of Talbot with his dead son destabilizes into a set of utterly opposed connotations, promoting continuance, life, and nurture while also thematically confusing these with mortality, loss, and bereavement. This binary structure persists throughout the sequence of Talbot's passion, and Shakespeare's pietà grounds a poetic complexity that emerges through the tragic interplay of the human and divine aspects of Talbot's fictive characterization.

Mary's lament exists in passion plays alongside many distinct responses by other witnesses to Christ's death, and Shakespeare primarily refers to these sequences through the character of Sir William Lucy. Whereas the historical Sir William Lucy was a contemporary of John Talbot, his omission from Hall's *Chronicle* reveals that his appearance as an English emissary in *1 Henry VI* is fabricated. Michael Hattaway observes that his inclusion might have honoured his descendant Sir Thomas Lucy, a magnate of Charlecote who could have befriended Shakespeare.[17] As such Lucy is uncomfortably situated as a non-fictional person whose appearance in the play is entirely imagined. In the sections that follow, I will trace this character through short episodes relating to the burial and the resurrection of Christ. As an instrument of the scene's medieval theatricality, Sir William Lucy advances passion imagery through coherent structural patterns, characterization, and, remarkably, linguistic citation.

Upon the conclusion of battle, Lucy parleys with the French to 'know what prisoners thou hast ta'en, / And to survey the bodies of the dead' (4.4.168–9). The French King Charles anticipates Lucy's search for Talbot, and his response is deeply suggestive of medieval plays that comment on the resurrection:

> CHARLES For prisoners ask'st thou? Hell our prison is.
>   But tell me whom thou seek'st.
>
> LUCY But where's the great Alcides of the field? —
>   Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury,   (170–3)

Readers of liturgical drama may detect a vague resemblance in this exchange with the *visitatio sepulchri,* a category of medieval liturgical drama that celebrated the resurrection through the story of three women who encounter an angel at Christ's empty tomb. The play exists in countless dramatic versions, but its central exchange remains stable:

> ANGEL *Quem quaeritis*   [Whom do you seek?]

MARYS *Jsesum Nazarenum*   [Jesus of Nazareth][18]

The angel then reveals that Christ has arisen from the grave, and he instructs the women to report the resurrection to others. Shakespeare's use of some variation of this dramatic exchange can be detected through the structural and linguistic similarities of Charles's line, 'But tell me whom thou seek'st', with medieval predecessors.[19] While Shakespeare's direct knowledge of any version of the liturgical *visitatio* is implausible, at some point its features were transferred to vernacular mystery plays.[20] The women from the Chester pageant are greeted by Angelus Primus, who asks of them,

> What seeke ye women here
> with weepinge and unlykinge chere?
> Jesus, that to you was deare,
> ys risen, leeve you mee. (18.345–8)

The Towneley resurrection casts the exchange in more recognizable language:

> Ye mowrnyng women in youre thoght,
> Here in this place whome haue ye sought?   (26.399–400)[21]

As such, Shakespeare employs two of the more celebrated lines from the long history of medieval theatre, and his thoughtful integration of this familiar story may have elicited proportional emotional responses among audiences for *1 Henry VI.*

   To experience the full potential of Talbot's fall, spectators would need to recognize the play's passion imagery as a vehicle for tragic sentiment. Emrys Jones insists that popular theatre must first of all 'establish a more or less instantly recognizable relation to traditional expected forms; however innovative in detail, it must in essence work through a modification of what is already known'.[22] However, Shakespeare characteristically intervened against any uncritical association even as he promoted the empathetic conflation of Talbot with Christ through longstanding theatrical conventions. Medieval spectators mourning Christ's death by crucifixion would anticipate his resurrection, but such a victory would not be possible for Talbot whose utter mortality is conspicuous throughout the remainder of the scene. Despite his freshly killed body, Joan refers to Talbot's corpse as already 'Stinking and fly-blown' (4.4.188) and urges that Talbot and his son be quickly removed because 'to keep them here, / They would but stink, and putrefy the air' (201–2). These are excessive descriptions, possibly intended by the playwright to escalate the scene's tragic tone by accentuating the symbolic disparity of Talbot's human and divine dispositions. This treatment underscores French villainies in

a profoundly nationalistic play, engendering an epic sense of communal loss for English spectators who realized that their mythic Talbot, unlike Christ, could never overcome death.

Dramatic conflict in medieval crucifixion plays is by convention shaped through the various responses to Christ's execution by devout and disbelieving observers. Viewers actively function as intermediaries between the spectacle of the relatively passive Jesus and an audience's developing anguish as his suffering unfolds onstage. Shakespeare's treatment of Sir William Lucy recalls the story of one such character, Joseph of Arimathea, who removed Jesus from the cross to bury him. When Lucy learns of Talbot's death from Joan, he requests possession of the bodies so that they might be buried with honour.

> Is Talbot slain, the Frenchmen's only scourge,
> Your kingdom's terror and black Nemesis?
> …
> Give me their bodies that I may bear them hence
> And give them burial as beseems their worth. (4.4.189–90 and 197–8)

Shakespeare here evokes a popular feature that appears in every surviving English crucifixion play. In the Towneley manuscript, for example, Joseph of Arimathea is emboldened by his service as a loyal councilor to plead for Christ's body:

> JOSEPH For my long seruyce I the pray,
>   Graunte me the body — say me not nay —
>   Of Iesu dede on rud.
>
> PILATUS I graunte well, if he ded be.
>   Good leyfe shall thou haue of me;
>   Do with hym what thou thynk gud.   (23.695–700)

There are structural correspondences between this excerpt and Shakespeare's rendering of Sir William Lucy: a single character requests leave from a figure of authority to provide an honourable burial for a mythic figure. The petitions are also presented in comparable language, and Joseph pleads for Pilate to 'Graunte me the body' while Lucy more courageously demands of Charles to 'Give me their bodies'.

More convincing still is the N-Town play in which Pilate allows Joseph to dispose of the body in whatever manner he sees fit:

> PYLAT Sere Joseph of Baramathie, I graunt þe;
>   With Jesuis body do þin intent.
>   …
>   And þan lete Joseph do his wylle,
>   What þat he wyl with Jesu do.   (34.57–8 and 67–8)

This characteristic language is later repeated for emphasis:

> PYLAT Sere, all ȝoure lest ȝe xal haue.
>   With Jesuis body do ȝoure intent.
>   Whethyr ȝe bery hym in pyt or grave,
>   þe powere I grawnt ȝow here present.   (34.77–80)

In *1 Henry VI,* Joan urges the Dauphin to dispense the corpses to Lucy's custody; in doing so she reinforces Lucy's association with Joseph of Arimathea:

> JOAN For God's sake let him [Lucy] have him: to keep them here,
>   They would but stink, and putrefy the air.
>
> CHARLES Go, take their bodies hence.
>
> LUCY I'll bear them hence;
>   But from their ashes shall be reared
>   A phoenix that shall make all France afeared.
>
> CHARLES So we be rid of them, do with him what thou wilt. (4.4.201–7)

By permitting Lucy to 'do with him what thou wilt', the king fittingly echoes Pilate in the N-Town play when he commands, 'lete Joseph do his wylle, / What þat he wyl with Jesu do'. Similar dialogue appears throughout versions of late medieval burial plays.[23] Lucy's final remark also fittingly invokes the regenerative phoenix as a culminating statement (205–6 above), as many medieval crucifixion plays close with a hopeful vision of the coming resurrection. This promise is offered by Joseph's companion, Nichodemus, at the close of the Towneley play:

> He that dyed on gud Fryday
> And crownyd was with thorne,
> Saue you all that now here be–
> That lord that thus wold dee,
> And rose on Pashe-morne!   (23.720–24)

These transitional lines serve a double purpose for medieval audiences, providing closure to the tragedy of the crucifixion while anticipating Christ's eventual defeat of death. Lucy's allusion to the regenerative phoenix resonates with the

promise of the resurrection, but his feeble defiance betrays the ruin of England's heroic spirit, so perfectly embodied in brave Talbot, which cannot persist against the loss of Talbot's son and the factious state of Henry's army in France.

Talbot, the incarnation, and the harrowing of hell

Passion imagery establishes the quality of Talbot's tragedy, and by alternating poetic focus on both the human and the divine aspects of Christ's identity *1 Henry VI* additionally engages with incarnational theology as an intellectual matter worthy of thematic exploration. In the section that follows, I will revisit *1 Henry VI*'s passion sequence for the perceptible inclusion of incarnational theology unique to the harrowing of hell, an event of Christ's afterlife that directly pertains to the crucifixion's role in medieval salvation history.[24] Shakespeare's royal characters often vacillate between majesty and mundanity, and Ernst Kantorowicz attributed to English constitutional law the struggles of characters like King Henry V, who is 'Twin-born with greatness' but also 'subject to the breath / of every fool' (*H5* 4.1.234–5).[25] More recent inquiries into Henry's duality have demonstrated the influence of New Testament dramas that theologically relate to the role of the incarnation in the fulfillment of salvation history. These rediscovered sources fundamentally shift our understanding of Shakespeare's characters in the history plays, many of whom repeat variations of Henry's ambivalent qualities. Beatrice Groves for instance links Hal's redeeming promise to 'wear a garment all of blood' (*1H4* 3.2.135) to Christ's humanity in the mysteries, whose enfleshment distracts the devil much in the same way that Hal's indolence misleads Hotspur.[26] Karen Sawyer Marsalek has also shown that medieval Antichrist dramas inform Falstaff's unseemly and false emulation of Christ's resurrection at the Battle of Shrewsbury, where he nevertheless finally concedes that 'I am not a double man' (*1H4* 5.4.138).[27] In each case Shakespeare draws upon the incarnation to emphasize the willingness of human characters to manipulate Christological associations. This tendency perhaps even begins with *1 Henry VI,* the earliest of the plays listed here, where incarnational overtones become discernable when examined alongside late medieval plays on the topic of the harrowing of hell, at the core of which exists a theological debate about the dual nature of Christ as jointly human and divine.

In passion plays, audiences of the crucifixion watch Christ's human suffering before seeing his powerful divinity revealed in glory during the subsequent episode of the harrowing of hell. This story's apocryphal origin, which told of Jesus's rescue of Old Testament prophets from the prison house of *limbo patrum* [limbo

of the patriarchs], rendered it highly contestable despite official efforts to indulge reformed tastes in England. As a result multiple versions of the story were hotly debated throughout the 1580s-90s, so that the characteristically medieval harrowing still remained vital to audiences of *1 Henry VI*.[28] Late medieval prototypes typically open with a militaristic Christ advancing upon hell's gate, whereupon he commands infernal fiends to open their doors in acquiescence to his divine authority. Talbot's approach at Bordeaux refers to this apocryphal sequence. Upon arriving with his army, Talbot demands that the city's defenders 'open your gates, / Be humble to us, [and] call my sovereign yours' (4.2.5–6). This command evokes the central feature of every medieval harrowing play as Jesus discards his human vestment and demands entry through hell's gates as the son of God. Jesus in the Chester play instructs the devils to

> Open up hell-gates anonne,
> ye prynces of pyne everychon,
> that Godes Sonne may in gonne,
> And the king of blys.   (17.153–156)

In *1 Henry VI* Bordeaux's captain appears on the walls for parley, but his words, accompanied by the distant boom of French drums, only portend Talbot's doom.

> The period of thy tyranny approacheth.
> On us thou canst not enter but by death:
> …
> And no way canst thou turn thee for redress
> But death doth front thee with apparent spoil. (4.2.17–18 and 25–6)

The encounter indicates Shakespeare's awareness of the theological necessity of the crucifixion to Christ's sovereign authority over hell's dominion, which as a concept in medieval texts is reduced to the simple question of his right to enter hell's gate. The captain's declaration that Talbot 'canst not enter but by death' invokes the function of the sacrifice of Christ's human form, which deceives the devil from recognizing his truly divine nature. The crucifixion is a precondition often referred to in plays on the harrowing, as in the Towneley manuscript where Christ first announces 'My deth need must I take' (25.4) as an introduction to his confrontation with the wardens of hell.

   1 Henry VI cleanly aligns with the plot of the medieval harrowing, and in so doing extends the capacity of Talbot's passion to involve the complexities of incarnation theology. In medieval theological terms, the crucifixion beguiles Satan, who is not fully aware that he plotted the unjust killing of an innocent man.[29]

Patristic theory attributed to Gregory of Nyssa clarifies this idea through the metaphor of the 'bait and hook' — to ensure that Satan accepted Christ as ransom for humankind, 'the Deity was hidden under the veil of our nature, that so, as with ravenous fish, the hook of the Deity might be gulped down along with the bait of flesh'.[30] Associated theologies on the human incarnation of the divine Christ were eventually applied to the legalistic *disputatio* section of some harrowing of hell dramas. The York play contains an extended example of this device, where Satan scoffs at Jesus's claim to divine lineage in light of his human birth:

> SATTAN God sonne? þanne schulde þou be ful gladde,
> Aftir no catel neyd thowe crave!
> But þou has leued ay like a ladde,
> And in sorowe as a simple knave.
> …
> JESUS Mi Godhede here, I hidde
> In Marie modir myne,   (37.241–4 and 49–50)

Talbot's demise emulates this fundamentally medieval debate, and Bordeaux's captain simultaneously acknowledges and dismisses Talbot's ambivalent duality.

> Lo, there thou stand'st a breathing valiant man
> Of an invincible unconquered spirit:
> …
> These eyes that see thee now well coloured
> Shall see thee withered, bloody, pale and dead. (4.2.31–2 and 37–8)

Talbot's mortality is distinguished from his 'invincible unconquered spirit', and Bordeaux's captain plainly discerns his enemy's double nature. The captain does not threaten Talbot's spirit but instead goes out of his way to 'glory of thy praise' (33) before separately threatening corporeal harm. The French thematically dismantle the aura of English invincibility, and the captain's clarity of observation prepares the ground for Talbot's death.

The captain's grasp of Talbot's dual nature can also sustain comparative analysis with plays from the second tetralogy. Beatrice Groves contends that the harrowing fundamentally informs the 'self-fashioning' narrative by which Hal masks his nobility through 'Covering discretion with a coat of folly' (*H5* 2.4.38).[31] For Groves this metaphorical allusion echoes Hal's tendency to disguise himself in borrowed clothes in clever emulation of Christ who cloaked himself in humanity.[32] Hal's dissimulation, as with Christ's, results in confusion on behalf of friends and enemies alike who cannot discern his true nature, and he ultimately

attains political magnificence through the cultivation of an ignoble pretense; in contrast, the mythic Talbot is estranged from his 'invincible unconquered spirit' and exposed as ordinarily human in anticipation of his death at Bordeaux. Skill in dissimulation resolves these characters' fates, and the confusion, or lack of confusion, engendered in their enemies ultimately results in success or failure. Whereas incarnational dissimulation and the deception of the devil are important themes throughout medieval dramas on the life of Christ, even serving to organize dramatic action in plays as diverse as those depicting the nativity and temptation, the revelation of Christ's true nature occurs only once, in the event of the harrowing of hell.

Many of Shakespeare's characters demonstrate contradiction and paradox, but these qualities alone do not mark an incarnational aesthetic. References to crucifixion and resurrection dramas define the parameters of Talbot's passion, but an explicit textual reference to the harrowing of hell confirms the core of his incarnational disposition. Upon the entrance of English soldiers bearing aloft the body of his dead child, John Talbot begs his son to once more

> Speak to thy father ere thou yield breath:
> Brave death by speaking, whether he will or no;
> Imagine him a Frenchman, and thy foe.
> Poor boy, he smiles, methinks, as who should say,
> 'Had death been French, then death had died today'.(4.4.136–40)

The distinctive patterning of 'death' here is ultimately attributable to 1 Corinthians 15:26, which reads 'And death once dead, there's no more dying then'.[33] Middle English versions of the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus apply this passage to their description of Christ's victory at limbo patrum. The Harley manuscript reports 'All patryarkes and ilk prophete / And other saintes all' rejoice that 'Ded thurgh ded es destroit'.[34] We find a later dramatic correspondence in the N-Town play titled 'Christ's Appearance to Mary':

> JESUS Now, dere modyr, my leve I take.
>   Joye in hert and myrth 3e make.
>   For deth is deed and lyff doth wake,
>   Now I am resyn fro my graue.
>
>   …
>
> MARIA Now all mankynde, beth glad with gle!
>   for deth is deed, as 3e may se,   (35.117–120 and 125–6)

Some similar dramatic exchange between Christ and Mary has likely influenced Talbot's final appeal to his dead son at the point at which enduring mythopoeia gives way to the finite limits of their mortal condition.

Instead of thinking that medieval theatrical sources seeped into *1 Henry VI* through the unaware reminiscences of a playwright who was indirectly influenced through an array of liturgical, print, and dramatic sources, we might instead consider that Shakespeare knowingly applied the conventions of late medieval religious drama for poetic and theatrical cohesion. The medieval theatricality of Talbot's passion is probably not the work of another playwright or even the result of collaborative effort. Based on stylistic analysis Gary Taylor and others have already assigned this portion of *1 Henry VI* to Shakespeare's sole authorship, and the two Bordeaux scenes at question here total only 152 lines, providing a striking concentration of medieval citation within a clearly defined sampling of text.[35] The comparative classification of characters from other history plays who demonstrate incarnational traits also supports the attribution. Shakespeare's recycling of the passion story is notable but not entirely remarkable when compared to works by other secular playwrights of the period. His penchant for restaging the harrowing of hell, though, represents a unique dramaturgical feature separating his work from that of every other playwright of his generation — *1 Henry VI, 1 Henry IV, Twelfth Night, Macbeth,* and *Henry VIII* all bear the imprint of Shakespeare's enduring interest in the harrowing.[36] Through source study readers may apprehend Talbot's passion within the scope of tragic form and incarnational characterization, but it is a separate task to explain the viability of the play's medieval features against the cultural and theatrical expectations of Elizabethan audiences.

Shakespeare's Medievalism and the English History Play

1 Henry VI may never be regarded by modern theatre makers as anything other than apprentice work, but our growing awareness of the play's formal complexity corrects its famous critical disregard as 'that drum and trumpet thing'.[37] In the following section I wish to speculate on some implications of Shakespeare's medieval dramaturgies, extending attention to the theatrical experience of Elizabethan audiences who witnessed the surge of English history plays during the late 1580s and early 1590s. Roland Wymer points out that, aside from the established exception of Shakespeare and perhaps Marlowe, no other Elizabethan or Jacobean dramatist shows evidence of having witnessed a mystery play.[38] If Wymer is correct, it is worth revisiting Shakespeare's access to the mystery plays at Coventry before then reassessing the passion's greater viability to the community of

London's professional theatre. These are important matters that bear upon *1 Henry VI* because at some level Talbot's death re-enacts divine sacrifice when state censorship seemingly would have forbidden any such representation. Within this framework I will argue that Talbot may be construed as a national martyr whose individual traits align with major shifts in Reformation England regarding the devotion and veneration of saints.

There are convincing reasons to think that Shakespeare attended the pageants at Coventry, that he made use of some of their features in many of his plays beyond *1 Henry VI,* and that versions of the passion were generally accessible to London audiences well into the early modern period. Michael O'Connell notes that Shakespeare's combined 'generational and geographical positioning' provided him with access to the mysteries, access that may not have been feasible for other contemporary playwrights.[39] Whereas the cycles of York and Chester were terminated in 1575 and 1576, Coventry's presentation of wholly New Testament material persisted until 1579 — meaning that these plays remained accessible to within a day's journey from Stratford for most of Shakespeare's youth.[40] The manuscript of Coventry's passion play has been lost to time, but we may detect its effect upon Shakespeare's career. Emrys Jones and John D. Cox have independently demonstrated that the passion sequence appears in the other installments of *Henry VI.* For instance, Gloucester's fall in Part 2 forms the perfect 'tragedy in little' according to conventional phases — like Christ, he is isolated by the careful plotting of malevolent conspirators who first bait their victim before publicly besetting him with minutely legalistic accusations.[41] Later in Part 3 we find features of Christ's buffeting and scourging in the treatment of York's death, where Margaret jeers at York's claim to kingship, sets him upon a molehill, drapes him in a napkin of Rutland's blood, and humiliates him with a paper crown before killing him.[42] Discernable visual elements emerge through implied staging, so that distraught parents like Queen Margaret and King Lear embrace their dead children in stage arrangements reminiscent of pietàs while speaking their grief in narratives that mimic the structure of the *planctus Mariae.*[43] Critics have also long recognized that characters from Shakespeare's history plays aspire to the symbolic authority of Christ, if only imperfectly. As an example of this trend, Jeffrey Knapp points to Richard II's surrender to 'Pilates' who 'have here deliver'd me to my sour cross' (*R2* 4.1.240–1). Rosalie Osmond has also observed Hal's invocation of the passion, likening his responsibility for the 'debt I never promised' (*1H4* 1.2.199) to Christ's payment on the cross for the 'debt I never owed'.[44] There is no better example of Shakespeare's medieval theatricality than *Macbeth*'s porter scene, saturated with prolonged comic dialogue and stage business suggestive of

medieval drama (but not of apocryphal or poetic sources), a staged version of the harrowing of hell.[45] Because direct theatrical borrowing seems to be the case here, we may fittingly accept Michael O'Connell's call to 'eliminate the *if* and say with virtual certainty that Shakespeare saw the Coventry play in the last decade of its existence'.[46]

Shakespeare's intricate debt to medieval drama is now acknowledged by scholars who are familiar with the continuous transmission of theatre practice into the early modern period; however, general consensus still maintains a more abstracted category of influence that can be discerned at the structural level only. Exact borrowings, if any, at the level of language, characterization, or theme have been thought to be unrecoverable due to the loss of manuscripts from Coventry.[47] Even as he identified a range of medieval theatrical sources for Shakespeare's histories, Emrys Jones nevertheless contended that 'There is nothing to warrant such a hunt for adumbrations of the Christian story. The resemblances in structure and conception … were not meant to be noticed, and … nothing is gained by tracing any connection between them'.[48] Jones discounts the impact of Shakespeare's proficient use of medieval dramaturgy and in doing so he effectively eliminates one discernable theatrical mode that in turn carries many of the playwright's thematic inquiries into historiography, political theory, and theology. Certainly the story of the passion remained theatrically viable for significant portions of Shakespeare's theatre-going public. Considering that he sometimes emulated Marlowe's verse, Shakespeare may have been impressed by Christological associations abounding in the dramatic treatment of Edward II's assassination, where Marlowe inserts several features from medieval devotional work that told of Christ's 'secret passion'.[49] Other theatrical productions apparently eluded government censorship well into the seventeenth century. William Prynne once reported that thousands of Londoners attended a Good Friday production of 'the acting of Christ's Passion' sometime between 1620 and 1624.[50] If this example indicates even sporadic popular interest, then spectators who witnessed Talbot's stage death in *1 Henry VI* at some point could have attended theatrical depictions of Christ's crucifixion outside of the context of the medieval mystery tradition. Even if they had not, audiences might still recognize elements of the crucifixion, the deposition, or the resurrection that reinforced superficially secular plays like Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* as late as 1604.[51] If anything, these plays illustrate that certain verbal and visual components of the medieval drama were indeed reducible to generic citation for use in plays like *1 Henry VI,* and that the effective presentation of Talbot's death likely relied on the orchestration of dialogue and stage pictures identifiable by spectators regardless of regional difference.

The full impact of Talbot's passion, then, was accessible to many of Shakespeare's original audiences, and they may have responded instinctively to the affective piety in which his death was cast. *1 Henry VI* presents us with a rich example whereby medieval religious tragedy as a mode of theatrical expression translates into contexts that are primarily historical and nationalistic. Perhaps as spectators witnessed Talbot's theatrical death they engaged in a type of feigned eucharistic enactment conveyed through the play's deployment of the passion of Christ. According to Anthony Dawson, such experiences in early modern theatres may not have been entirely rare; underlying the allure of the period's tragedy could have been a 'peculiar theatrical magic' whereby a protagonist's stage death accedes to the phenomenon of a participatory sacrifice in the 'temporary and secular reenactment of Eucharistic community'.[52] Following from Deborah Shuger's investigation into the period's 'habits of thought', Dawson claims that England's ongoing eucharistic controversies were 'unconsciously appropriated' by the early modern theatre, which he describes as a 'greedily appropriative institution, ingesting and transforming a whole range of cultural phenomena and making them its own'.[53]

This is an appealing formulation, but as a model for the secularization of the theatre it favours the study of ideological interiority and institutional agency in ways that inadvertently diminish the purposeful craft of theatre makers, who, along with their London audiences, were immersed regularly in the deep culture of English Reformation debates.[54] Broader secularization theories are helpful to understanding the cultural poetics of devotional transformation in early modern theatres, but they can mystify Shakespeare's observable refashioning of medieval plays. His deliberate care with adaptation belies the 'unconscious appropriation' of pre-existing dramatic forms. External evidence indicates that Shakespeare's associates were fully aware of the religious dimensions of their work. In November 1589, representatives of Lord Strange's Men were summoned with other London theatre companies for their inappropriate presentation of 'certain matters of Divinity and of State unfit to be suffered'.[55] The lord mayor indefinitely suspended all theatrical activity in the city, but further steps were taken against some of Strange's players who were jailed for non-compliance — among those committed to the compters were presumably actors who later performed in *1 Henry VI.* Sally-Beth MacLean and Lawrence Manley even recommend that political and religious controversy made for a core feature of the company style, probably because these subjects remained theatrically viable for London's paying audiences.[56] This incident cannot be tied directly to the conception of *1 Henry VI,* but there remains an allowance for the play's foray into religious topics considering

that it was first produced by Lord Strange's company. As Helen Cooper points out, from explicit documentary evidence we know the names of only a few Elizabethans who attended both a mystery play and a play from London's professional theatre, and the city of Chester presented selections drawn from their civic pageants to Ferdinando Lord Strange and his father the earl of Derby in 1578. [57] While this contact with medieval theatre cannot establish a predilection by Lord Strange for medieval theatrical topics, the Chester plays offer an interesting and rare point of irrefutable contact with both theatre traditions for Shakespeare's early patron.

Shakespeare's audiences were probably complex enough to emotionally engage with elements of the passion while maintaining a critical awareness of the radical discontinuity of Talbot from his Christological gloss. Talbot's imperfect emulation of Christ as a divine model may even align with conventional Elizabethan models for saintly reform. Whereas Protestants targeted the veneration of saintly images, saints still provided a redeemable function within the aims of England's reform movements. According to Carol Piper Heming, 'the medieval worldview deemed saints perfect and thus incapable of being emulated'.[58] Medieval saints were models of perfection and therefore suited to glorification and adoration, but reformed attitudes held that humans were innately limited in their capacity to imitate pure divinity. Reformers such as Zwingli and Luther provided a solution to this disconnect by instead celebrating saints as 'weak humans and thus sinners; this made them more realistic models for other fallible mortals'.[59] By complementing virtue with frailty, saints became examples for the pursuit of human piety rather than unobtainable models suited to holy adoration.[60]

Talbot's inadequate emulation of divine essence is appropriate to the Elizabethan period, and literatures widely available to Shakespeare theorized the innate disparities involved in the *imitatio Christi,* or the human imitation of Christ as exemplar. Thomas Rogers's translation and adaptation of Thomas à Kempis's pre-Reformation book, *Imitatio Christi,* was reprinted in England on the average of every other year between 1580 and 1609.[61] Nandra Perry explains that according to popular conceptions of the *imitatio,* 'true Christian imitation is mindful of the distance between human subject and divine object, between contingent sign and transcendent referent. It is a necessary but always imperfect and potentially dangerous element of Christian piety'.[62] The model warned against imitating those characteristics of Christ that were 'unimitable' by humans such as certain forms of creation, the raising of the dead, and any attempt to perform miracles.[63] With conspicuous similarities to Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser also explored the devotional limitations of the *imitatio Christi* by presenting a human protagonist's

emulation of the harrowing of hell in the *The Faerie Queene* (1590). In book 2, canto 7, the chivalric Guyon descends to the house of Mammon where he resists various temptations for three days, at the end of which time he is compelled to depart because 'No liuing wight / Below the earth might suffred be to stay' (66.2–3).[64] In many of Shakespeare's plays a similar theme emerges in the existential inability of humans to fulfill the sacral archetypes they might otherwise attempt to emulate. Talbot importantly dies having gained the clarity that his earthly harrowing of French castles provoked hubristic tendencies, and his tragedy closes with the lucid observation that, 'Had death been French, then death had died today'. John D. Cox argues that although Shakespeare uses medieval models to assure the 'emotional impact' of his history plays, the result is ultimately one of contrast and not likeness, 'always with the effect of analyzing the political process empirically rather than identifying the hand of God in the government of humankind'.[65] What emerges is a style of 'political realism' that is observable through the disparities of characters who act pragmatically, in opposition to the 'sacral archetypes' according to which they were modelled.[66]

Even while directly referring to the passion *1 Henry VI* curiously accumulates the traits of a saint play, and by way of theatrical genealogy Talbot's saintly demeanor comfortably situates Shakespeare's work within the established, if vague, genre of the secular history play of the 1580s and 1590s. John Wasson and others point to the structural and thematic resemblances of secular history plays with earlier saint plays that celebrate characters like Becket, Swithin, and Meriasek as indigenous figures worthy of dramatic treatment for their significance to English history, and their combined focus on religious and nationalistic themes possibly made English saint plays appealing for adaptation by later writers.[67] If we follow the secular conversion narrative of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* to Hal's transformation in *1 Henry IV,* we realize that Shakespeare grasped the major conventions of the saint play.[68] Of course, Shakespeare's works alone do not define the genre of the English history play, and relatively secular iterations of saintly characters range among representative plays such as John Bale's *King Johan* (1538) and *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (entered into the Stationer's Register in 1602). James Simpson explains that for English reformers, 'authentic saints eventually become sites of memory, but not channels of grace, unable as they are to intercede on behalf of a living suppliant'. [69] Perhaps the unique features of Talbot's character, marked by the recycled formulas of late medieval religious theatre, presented a viable saintly conduit for the phenomenon of England's secular history play.

Shakespeare's medieval dramaturgies have been subsumed within increasingly nuanced but abstracted models that extend to the secularizing tendencies

of early modern theatre in general but often without reference to individual plays or the people who produced them; these tendencies in turn are usually thought to involve passive substitution in the redeployment of sacral modes of experience to the play world of the theatre.[70] Secularization theories now form a naturalized discourse within Shakespeare studies, but their epistemological assumptions do not sit comfortably with some medievalists, who suspect that a too-convenient linearity compromises the productive study of various medievalisms at play in the early modern period, and especially in the appreciation of individual works such as *1 Henry VI.* Progressive secularization requires a retrospective and long view of history that effaces the benefit of the direct analysis of any single play, implicitly valuing what Catherine Sanok identifies as the 'central typological paradigm of modernity: premodern religious types are at once canceled and fulfilled in a later secular iteration'.[71] By refusing the foundational premise of Shakespeare's medieval dramaturgical practice, we not only mistake the unique tragic qualities of early English history plays; according to Sanok, we also obscure 'how late medieval religious phenomena are themselves complexly related to political social formations'.[72] Our comprehension of Shakespeare's dynamic medievalism has suffered as a result: scenes bearing identifiably medieval aesthetics are often branded as interpellations and reassigned to other writers; late medieval religious themes that are not schematically Protestant are routinely taken to be intentional Roman Catholic subversions; and we almost certainly maintain unhelpful methods for assessing play texts such as *1 Henry VI* as imperfect works of literature when sometimes they should be understood as limited records of performance.

Notes

1   See *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Diuell* as reprinted in R.B. McKerrow (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe,* 5 vols (London, 1910), 1.212.

2   Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1977), 52. See also John D. Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power* (Princeton, 1989), 82, http://dx.doi.org /10.1515/9781400860012.

3   Rowland Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', *English Literary Renaissance* 34.3 (2004), 273–4, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0013–8312.2004.00044.x.

4   Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* 8 vols (New York, 1960), 3.72–4.

5   Editors assign scene breaks differently in act 4 of *1H6,* which in F is comprised of a single continuous scene. I follow editor Edward Burns in numbering the 'Bordeaux' scenes as 4.2 and 4.4. All references to the play derive from Edward Burns's Arden edition (London, 2000).

6   Most chronicle sources agree on Castillon as the site of Talbot's defeat, but Crompton alone lists the site as being 'Burdeaux'. See John Dover Wilson's edition of the play (Cambridge, 1968), 176n. See also Michael Hattaway's edition (Cambridge, 1990), 64.

7   Brian Walsh observes that the Queen's Men 'discovered fundamental incongruities inherent in representing the past' that provoked their aesthetic experimentation with fictive modes in plays about English history. They are considered to be innovators of the genre, with a signature style for medley and allegory that introduced new dramaturgical possibilities for writers like Shakespeare, who perhaps advanced their tendency to experiment with chronicle sources. The Queen's Men significantly influenced the genre of the Elizabethan history play, although for coherence I keep a diachronic focus on Shakespeare's direct adaptation of medieval theatrical sources. See Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge, 2009), 34–5, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511657498. For a catalogue of the company style of the Queen's Men's history plays, see the indexical listing for 'medley, as style' in Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998).

8   Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare,* 51.

9   Burns, *1H6,* 250n.

10 Stephen Spector (ed.), *The N-Town Play,* 2 vols (Oxford, 1991). All further references to the N-Town plays derive from this edition.

11 Burns, *1H6,* 250n.

12 R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills (eds), *The Chester Cycle: Text* (London, 1974), 1.315. All further references to the Chester plays derive from this edition.

13 Sandro Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages,* trans. Joseph R. Berrigan (Athens, 1988), 2.

14 See for example Wilene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary* (Woodbridge, 2006), 52.

15 Thomas Playfere, *A most excellent and heauenly sermon. Vpon the 23. chapter of the gospel by Saint Luke* (London, 1591; STC: 20014), D1r.

16 Karl Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), 167.

17 See Hattaway, *1H6*, 64.

18   David Bevington (ed.), *Medieval Drama* (Boston, 1975), 27–8. Text here is re-formatted and excludes editorial expansions.

19   A less obvious symbolic allusion lies in Lucy's response, in which he describes Talbot as 'the great Alcides of the field' (4.4.172). Alcides, or Hercules, was a not uncommon classical metaphor for Christ in the literature of early modern England — an association that was perhaps most memorably employed by Milton in *Paradise Regained*. Lucy then, true to the structural pattern of the *visitatio*, essentially responds to Charles that he seeks 'Christ'. See E.M.W. Tillyard, 'The Christ of "Paradise Regained" and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition', *Studies in Philology* 36.2 (1939), 247–57.

20   Documentary evidence suggests that the play's popularity declined in England over the late medieval period, and a reliance on Latin service books hastened its complete demise upon the advent of the Reformation. See Clifford Davidson, *Festivals and plays in Late Medieval Britain* (Aldershot, 2007), 26.

21   Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley (eds), *The Towneley Plays* (Oxford, 1994). Further references to the Towneley manuscript or the Wakefield plays derive from this edition.

22   Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 33.

23   It may also be that the Bastard's call to 'Hack their bones asunder' (4.4.159) aligns with another storyline connected to Joseph of Arimathea, who refuses to break Jesus's bones in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. See the N-Town play, where the soldier accompanying Joseph observes, 'Methynkyth Jesu is sewre anow — / It is no ned his bonys to breke. / He is ded, how þinkyth 3ow?' (34.81–3).

24   Traditionally the harrowing represents a closely aligned but categorically separate event from Christ's passion, but some Calvinists equated the harrowing of hell with Christ's torments on the cross, disavowing Christ's 'literal descent'. See Beatrice Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer: The Harrowing of Hell and *Henry IV Part 1*', *Shakespeare Survey* 57 (2004), 237, doi: 10.1017/ccol0521841208.019.

25   Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), 24.

26   As cited in Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer', 241.

27   Karen Sawyer Marsalek, 'Marvels and Counterfeits: False Resurrections in the Chester *Antichrist* and *1 Henry IV*', Curtis Perry and John Watkins (eds), *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2009), 217–40, esp. 235.

28   Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer', 237–8.

29   See excerpt and discussion of the Gospel of Nicodemus 23 in C.W. Marx, *The Devil's Rights and the Redemption in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1995), 49.

30   Gregory of Nyssa, 'The Great Catechism', Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (eds), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd series (Oxford, 1893), 5.495.

31   Beatrice Groves, *Texts and Traditions: Religion in Shakespeare 1592–1604* (Oxford, 2007), 127, http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199208982.001.0001.

32   Ibid, 126.

33   Burns, *1H6*, 249n.

34   With slight variation only this passage consistently appears in the Galba, Sion, and Additional GN manuscripts. See William Henry Hulme, *The Middle English Harrowing of Hell* (Oxford, 1978), 118–19.

35   Gary Taylor, 'Shakespeare and Others: The Authorship of *Henry the Sixth, Part One*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* (1995), 145–205, esp. 182. Some editions combine the play's 'Bordeaux' sequences into a single scene. See note 5 above.

36   See Paul Dean, 'The Harrowing of Malvolio: the Theological Background of *Twelfth Night*, Act 4, Scene 2', *Connotations* 7.2 (1997–98), 203–14. For *Macbeth*'s Porter scene as a harrowing of hell, see Glynne Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and Its Door-Keeper', *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966), 68–74, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521064325.007. See also John B. Harcourt, 'I Pray You, Remember the Porter', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.4 (1961), 393–402, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2867456. For the influence of the harrowing in *1H4* see Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer', 236–48. Scene 5.3 of *Henry VIII* stages porters who refer to *limbo patrum* (l 59), which when combined are clear markers for the influence of the medieval theatrical harrowing of hell.

37   Originally coined by Maurice Morgann, as cited by Anthony David Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven, 2007), 24.

38   Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 268.

39   Michael O'Connell, '*King Lear* and the Summons of Death', Perry and Watkins (eds), *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages,* 199–216.

40   Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 269–70.

41   Jones, Origins of Shakespeare, 35–54.

42   See Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, 89. Cox also suggests that characteristics of Queen Margaret and Cardinal Beaufort in *2H6* may derive from passion plays.

43   Katharine Goodland, 'Inverting the Pietà in Shakespeare's *King Lear*', Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins (eds), *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama* (Aldershot, 2007), 47–74.

44   Jeffrey Knapp, 'Author, King, and Christ in Shakespeare's Histories', Kenneth Graham and Philip Collington (eds), *Shakespeare and Religious Change* (New

York, 2009), 227–9, http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9780230240858. See also, Rosalie Osmond, 'Prince Hal's Parody of the Passion', *Notes and Queries* (1978), 132.

45 Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and Its Door-Keeper', 68–74.

46 As cited in Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 269.

47 Groves, *Texts and Traditions*, 41. However, fresh research on the topic of Shakespeare's medievalism continues to identify new lines of influence. See Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London, 2010), http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472555243. See also Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper, and Peter Holland (eds) *Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents* (Cambridge, 2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139060905. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* issue 40.1 (2010) is themed 'Premodern Shakespeare', http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2009-011. For broader inquiries into early modern medievalisms, including those of Shakespeare, see Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (eds), *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007).

48 Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 54. Scholars still (understandably) avoid the direct allegorical implications of Shakespeare's medieval theatricality. See for example David Bevington's examination of *Richard III* in 'Conclusion: The Evil of "Medieval"' in Morse, Cooper, and Holland (eds) *Medieval Shakespeare*, 230–33.

49 Patrick Ryan, 'Marlowe's "Edward II" and the Medieval Passion Play', *Comparative Drama* (1998–99), 465–95.

50 William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge or Actors Tragedie* (London, 1633), 117. As cited in Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 270n.

51 See Alice Dailey, 'Easter Scenes from an Unholy Tomb: Christian Parody in *The Widow's Tears*', Buccola and Hopkins (eds), *Marian Moments*, 127–40.

52 Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge, 2001), 12.

53 Ibid, 28–29. Also see Debora Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley, 1990), esp. 9 and 254.

54 Elizabeth Williamson, 'Things Newly Performed: The Resurrection Tradition in Shakespeare's Plays', Graham and Collington (eds), *Shakespeare and Religious Change*, 111–13.

55 See items 48 and 49 in Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram (eds), *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660* (Cambridge, 2000), 93–5. This incident likely reflects the involvement of various theatre companies in the religious and political satire of the Martin Marprelate affair of 1588–89.

56 Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (New Haven, 2014), 216, http://dx.doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300191998.001.0001.

57 Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World*, 57.

58   Carol Piper Heming, *Protestants and the Cult of the Saints in German-Speaking Europe, 1517–1531* (Kirksville, 2003).

59   Ibid, 108.

60   Robert Kolb, 'Festivals of the Saints in late Reformation Lutheran Preaching', *The Historian* (1990), 613, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6563.1990.tb00789.x.

61   Elizabeth K. Hudson, 'English Protestants and the Imitatio Christi, 1580–1620', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19.4 (1988), 543, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2540986.

62   Nandra Perry, 'Imitatio and Identity: Thomas Rogers, Philip Sidney, and the Protestant Self', *English Literary Renaissance* 35.3 (2005), 375–6, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2005.00063.x.

63   Ibid.

64   Text from the edition by A.C. Hamilton (Harlow, 2001), as cited by Christopher Bond, 'Medieval Harrowings of Hell and Spenser's House of Mammon', *English Literary Renaissance* 37.2 (2007), 180–1, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2007.00100.x.

65   Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, 90–1.

66   Ibid, 84 and 103.

67   John Wasson, 'The Secular Saint Plays of the Elizabethan Era', Clifford Davidson (ed.) *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe* (Kalamazoo, 1986), 243 and 248. See also Benjamin Griffin, *Playing the Past: Approaches to English Historical Drama 1385–1600* (Woodbridge, 2001), 150.

68   Wasson, 'Secular Saint Plays', 248.

69   James Simpson, 'Diachronic History and the Shortcomings of Medieval Studies', McMullan and Matthews (eds) *Reading the Medieval*, 22.

70   Anthony B. Dawson, 'The Secular Theatre', Graham and Collington (eds), *Shakespeare and Religious Change*, 246. Dawson cites Tom Bishop's use of Giorgio Agamben's theory.

71   Catherine Sanok, 'Good King Henry and the Genealogy of Shakespeare's First History Plays', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40.1 (2010), 40, http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2009-013.

72   Sanok, 'Good King Henry', 42.