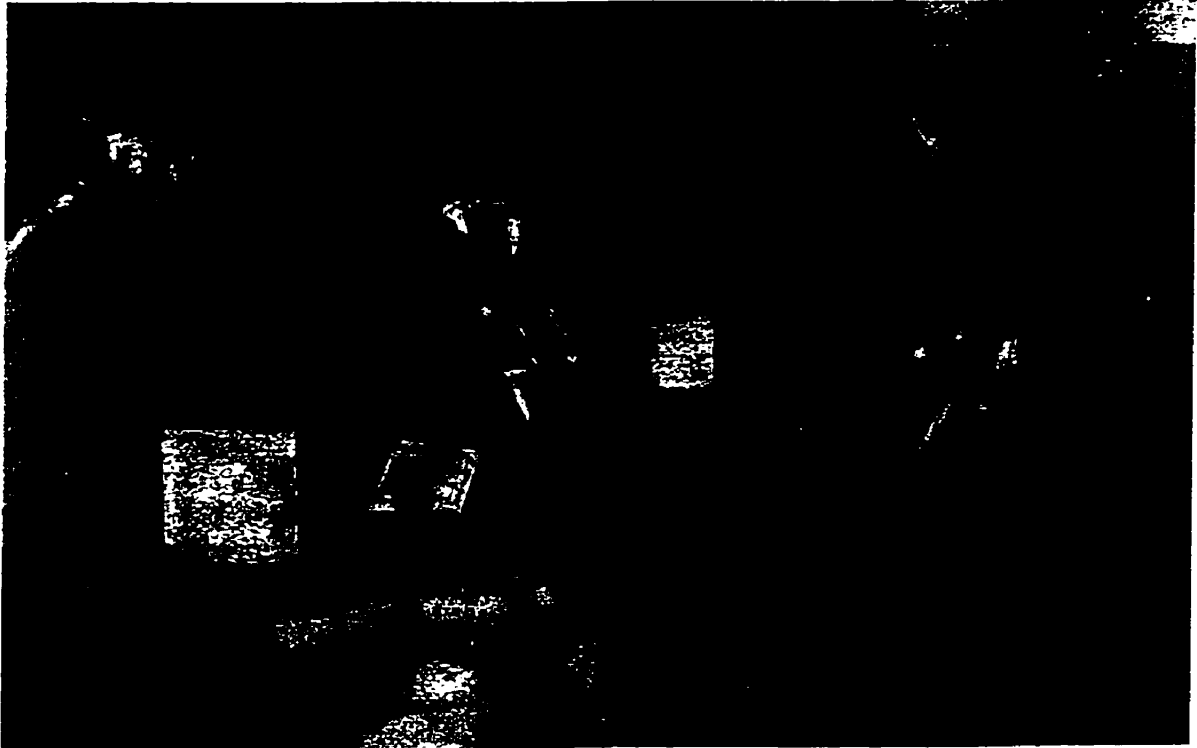


"A field of Golgotha" and the "Loosing out of Satan":  
Protestantism and Intertextuality in Shakespeare's *1-3 Henry VI*  
and John Foxe's *Acts & Monuments*.



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## Abstract

Challenging the currently orthodox "New Historicist" conception of Shakespeare's English history plays as a kind of "radically secular" historiography, this thesis attempts to show how Shakespeare's first chronicle play, 1-3HenryVI, was informed by and expressive of Protestant providential historiography. By comparing the texts of the plays with Foxe's Acts and Monuments, the central text of Elizabethan Protestant historiography, the author attempts to show how Foxe's influential history functioned both as an important *source* for Shakespeare's view of the past in 1-3HenryVI and as a vital *intertext* in terms of which the play would have been construed as history by Shakespeare's audience. At the heart of this source/intertext dynamic is the figure of Antichrist, a powerful historiographical symbol in Foxe which is adumbrated in Shakespeare's dramaturgy, giving the plays' representation of the violence of the Wars of the Roses era an ineluctably providential character. Having traced the Foxeian intertext in Shakespeare's play, the author concludes by suggesting that, again contrary to the secularizing bent of much recent "New Historicist" criticism, it is precisely because 1-3HenryVI spoke the language of Protestant providential history that Shakespeare's play was significantly "political" in its original late-Elizabethan historical moment.

## Résumé

Par une mise en question de la conception "New Historicist" des pièces shakespeariennes sur l'histoire anglaise - une conception orthodoxe en ce moment et selon laquelle les pièces forment une sorte d'historiographie "radicalement séculière" - cette thèse tente de montrer dans quelle mesure la première pièce chronique de Shakespeare exprime et a été informée par l'historiographie providentielle protestante. A partir d'une comparaison entre les textes des pièces et Acts and Monuments de Foxe, le texte central de l'historiographie protestante élisabethaine, l'auteur tente de montrer comment l'histoire influente de Foxe fonctionnait à la fois comme une *source* importante du point de vue shakespearien sur le passé dans 1-3HenriVI et comme un *intertexte* fondamental sous l'angle duquel la pièce aurait été prise par les spectateurs pour de l'histoire. Au coeur de cette dynamique se trouve la figure de l'Antéchrist, un symbole historiographique puissant chez Foxe, qui est esquissé dans la dramaturgie shakespearienne, ce qui donne un caractère inéluctablement providentiel à la représentation de la violence inhérente à l'ère de la guerre des Deux-Roses. Ayant tracé l'intertexte foxien dans la pièce de Shakespeare, l'auteur conclut par encore une mise en question de la tendance sécularisante d'une grande partie de la critique "New Historicist" récente. L'auteur suggère que c'est précisément parce que 1-3HenriVI parlait le langage de l'histoire providentielle protestante, que la pièce shakespearienne était considérablement "politique" lors de l'époque originale vers la fin de la période élisabethaine.

## Acknowledgments

In addition to my wife Sara, without whom this thesis simply could not have been written, I would like especially to acknowledge the help and encouragement of my supervisor, Professor Leanore Lieblein. I would also like to thank Professors Maggie Kilgour and Kerry McSweeney for helping to welcome this prodigal paper home, and Professor Daniel Woolf, for encouraging me to pursue the Foxeian intertext in the first place.

Rory Leitch



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*We cannot deny the demands of our own age, but this need not prevent us turning to the faith of another age with sympathetic understanding, and recapturing imaginatively some of its vanished power.*

*Hilda R. Ellis Davidson*

*The survival value of the god meme in the meme pool results from its great psychological appeal....God exists, if only in the form of a meme with high survival value, or infective power, in the environment provided by human culture.*

*Richard Dawkins*

#### INTRODUCTION: 1-3HENRYVI AND THE ACTS&MONUMENTS

Like Shakespeare's *Henry V* and other Renaissance epics which begin with an invocation to the muses, discussions of Shakespeare's English history plays often start with a reference to E.M.W. Tillyard. Unlike epical invocations, these references are almost invariably negative: the modern critic demonstrates that he or she rejects all reductive Tillyardian attitudes and then proceeds to the task of writing about Shakespeare's history plays, historically. The following analysis of the relationship between Shakespeare's 1-3*HenryVI* and John Foxe's *Acts&Monuments* begins with Tillyard, but with the emphasis reversed. In *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943) and *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944) Tillyard was, above all else, perfectly correct to stress the importance of religion within the culture of Renaissance England. Near the beginning of *The Elizabethan World Picture*, Tillyard allowed that he had been perhaps "too insistent on the theological side," but urged that this was necessary to counteract an ingrained misconception about Elizabethan culture: the belief that "the age of Elizabeth [was] a secular period between two outbreaks of Protestantism: a period in which religious enthusiasm was sufficiently dormant to allow the new humanism to shape our literature"(Tillyard 1943, 3). Tillyard

stressed the religious because, as he said, “anyone who has realized how general the opposite error has recently become can hardly avoid excess”:

When the most authoritative history of English literature calls Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum* “une sorte d'anomalie en ce temps de madrigaux et de pastorales,” it is difficult to speak moderately. How can anyone believing that begin to understand the Elizabethan age? ... For it is insufficient to prove the seriousness of Daniel if the *Fairy Queen* is still counted pageantry and *Arcadia* a pastoral romance, the high philosophical rapture of the *Garden of Adonis* or the fierce Protestantism of Pamela in prison quite ignored. There has indeed been a mistaken trend to think of the Elizabethans as specialists in things secular or religious, as if no Elizabethan explorer could be a theologian, and no Londoner who heard a Puritan sermon ever saw a play (21).

What is remarkable about *this* Tillyard, as opposed to the straw version that has been railed at by Shakespeareans, is how in retrospect the central thrust of his work has been confirmed. Social and cultural historians have generally validated Tillyard's insistence on the saturation of Renaissance culture by religious phenomena, intellectual history no longer rigidly divides Humanist and Christian thought, and Humanism, the Renaissance, and the Reformation are seen as having been thoroughly intertwined.<sup>1</sup> Confirmed, that is, except by Shakespeareans, for whom the name “Tillyard” has come to symbolize critical malfeasance, and for whom the idea of a “secular” Shakespeare dominates. This is particularly true for the history plays: the idea that Shakespeare's histories were religious or providential is generally considered anathema, and the reverse notion, that the plays were “radically secular,” has become solidly orthodox.

However, if it is true that, especially after Greenblatt and Renaissance Self-Fashioning, Shakespeare criticism no longer views the English Renaissance as a pastoral Arcadia, it is perhaps equally evident that the “opposite error” described by Tillyard is still largely in force. By and large, criticism of Shakespeare's history plays has failed to recognize the ineluctably providential character of all Elizabethan historiography,

including the chronicle plays. In other words, the real value of Tillyard's work, then and now, lies in the way it vigorously challenges any historical criticism which occludes the religious component of Shakespeare's plays.

Deborah Shuger is one modern critic who has challenged this secular orthodoxy on numerous occasions.<sup>2</sup> She argues that it is utterly unreasonable to “base our entire understanding of Shakespeare” on some kind of “secular miracle” by means of which the plays could have extricated themselves from the “theocentric orientation informing the discourses of politics, gender, social order, and history” (Shuger 1996, 46). Somewhat like Tillyard, Shuger points to the “paucity of our own cultural models” as the reason why the possibility of a positive or formative role for religion in Shakespeare has been elided:

[Religion] has been ignored as a result of the identification of “religion” in Shakespeare with a defense of the social order, with, that is, a conservative, aristocratic, ideology. If the plays are religious in some meaningful sense then (the assumption is) they are politically incorrect and proof that the canon is an elitist, reactionary construct. Contemporary critics of Shakespeare have therefore tended to bypass or subvert any religious content of the plays in order to reclaim their authority for more radical, politicized, skeptical--and therefore more congenial--allegiances (Shuger 1996, 47).

Again, Shuger's analysis pertains especially to the study of Shakespeare's English history plays. In the last decade, influential studies by John D. Cox, Graham Holderness, Phyllis Rackin, and Michael Hattaway have all contributed to the belief that Shakespeare was a radically new kind of Renaissance historian.<sup>3</sup> The mode of historical analysis these critics tend to see embodied in the plays is not only secular in an absolute sense, eschewing in one form or another a religious or providential understanding of the past, but is potentially “radical” precisely because it destabilizes or demystifies the putatively “traditional” or

“orthodox” relationship between God, history, and, especially, politics. Thus, in his discussion of Shakespeare’s putatively “radical historiography” in *1-3HenryVI*, Michael Hattaway insists that “God’s purposes are in no way to be deduced from the play[s].” Rather, he argues, the meaning of *1-3Henry VI* “depends upon a clarity of historical analysis that can be understood only if a reader or spectator attends closely to the play’s particular analytic techniques and does not interpret it in terms of any grand design”(2*Henry6*, 7-8). Similarly, John D. Cox titles his chapter on *1-3HenryVI* “Inventing Secular History.”

In addition to the way these arguments about Shakespeare’s “radical” historiography tend to simply conflate religious discourse and political orthodoxy, a critical tendency which Shuger’s work has very effectively challenged<sup>4</sup>, the fundamental problem with this conception of Shakespeare as a “radical historian” is that it is so obviously implicated in what Frank Pecora once described as the “New Historicist” tendency “to conflate methodological self-definition with the historical subject’s self-definition”(Pecora, 26). That is, while these critics have very usefully focused on Shakespeare’s chronicle plays as a kind of Renaissance historiography, the historical Shakespeare that has emerged often appears to be little more than a simulacra of the aesthetic interests and epistemological concerns of the critics themselves. Michael Hattaway admires Brecht and Walter Benjamin, and so defines Shakespeare’s Renaissance historiography as a Brechtian “art of demonstration,” in which the playwright is “concerned with an accurate concatenation of definite events,” but not at all with “the way these events are embedded in the great inscrutable course of the world”(2*HenryVI*, 7). Phyllis Rackin’s enthusiasm about the possibilities of a skeptical historical analysis *today*

is reified in her reading of Shakespeare's plays as quasi-metahistorical allegories of epistemological uncertainty and historiographical skepticism. Without any apparent sense of anachronism, Rackin announces that "the history I write is like the Renaissance history-making it describes"(Rackin, ix). Graham Holderness' depiction of Shakespeare's plays as radical "chronicles of feudalism" is virtually indistinguishable from his own, Marxist-inflected, thinking. Shakespeare's history plays, he argues:

[O]ffer empirical reconstruction and theoretical analysis of a social formation firmly located in the past, and distinctly severed from the contemporary world. In this historiographical reconstruction...society is seen as a historical formation built on certain fundamental contradictions, and incapable of resolving or overcoming them within the framework of political and ideological determinants provided by the historical basis itself (Holderness, 19).

The point of this criticism is not to disparage the critics: after all my own interest in Shakespeare as an Elizabethan historian, and hence in the relationship between his English history plays and the *Acts&Monuments*, has in large measure been stimulated by reading their work. I simply want to suggest, along the lines argued by Pecora and Shuger, that the idea of Shakespeare as a radically secular kind of historian has been predicated more on a desire to idealize Shakespeare in certain ways than it has on exigent historical considerations. Aside from "secular miracles" there is no pressing reason to believe that Shakespeare did not incorporate, in a significantly functional way, aspects of the rich language of Tudor providentialism in his plays. He did not, after all, write his plays to confirm the values of modern philosophers and literary critics, he wrote them to entertain, and perhaps to educate and influence, his Elizabethan audiences. If the question is: How did Shakespeare's plays function as history in their original context?, there is no escaping (and really no good reason to want to escape) the fact that the plays were

articulated within what historian John Pocock has called “the idiom of grace,” a sense of the past “in which time appeared as the dimension of providence, prophecy, or eschatology” (Pocock 1984, 107).

A renewed emphasis on the religious component of Shakespeare's English history plays does not mean, however, a reassertion of the old nostrum that the plays simply “mirrored” the providential patterning of Polydore Vergil, Hall, or the confused and often contradictory providentialism of “Holinshed.” This is because Vergil, Hall and Holinshed do not exhaust the possibilities of Tudor providential historiography. Shakespeare was free to incorporate the various idioms of providential history that were current and authoritative in his day, and in ways not in these chronicle sources. Thus, as Shuger has urged, there is room for a fresh consideration of the ways “religious ideology,” or perhaps better, religious *idioms*, functioned in the history plays as part of Shakespeare's “cultural system” (Shuger 1996, 48).

In this paper I want to examine how *1-3HenryVI* drew upon and functioned within the idiom of Protestant historiography exemplified by Foxe's immensely popular and influential *Acts&Monuments*. Despite the enormous influence Foxe's book exerted in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, there has been no attempt to explore the relationship between the early history plays and the Protestant historiography of the *Acts&Monuments*. We know that the *Acts&Monuments* functioned as a source for details such as the Saunders Simpcox episode in *2HenryVI*, but there has never been any attempt to consider how Foxe's history might have significantly influenced Shakespeare's view of the English past.s Perhaps equally importantly, there has been no consideration of how the popular authority of the *Acts&Monuments* might have shaped an Elizabethan audience's response

to the action represented on stage. I will argue that Foxe's work did in fact have a definitive impact on Shakespeare's conception of 15th-century English history, on his representation of the War of the Roses era *as an era*, and, moreover, that the *Acts&Monuments* was a key intertext for Shakespeare's dramatic portrayal of that violent segment of the English past. I want to illustrate how *1-3HenryVI* embodies a particularly Protestant mode of historical representation and analysis. This "Protestant Shakespeare" is the product of the playwright's imaginative engagement with the *Acts&Monuments* and, at the same time, a result of the interpretive agency of an audience whose own sense of the past was profoundly influenced by the *Acts&Monuments*.<sup>6</sup>

From the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, *1-3HenryVI* offers a series of dramatic historical emblems which, rather than simply representing chaotic events and the careers of tumultuous individuals, provide a moving and intensely probing interpretation of the violent civil war era. Contrary to the notion of Shakespeare's radically secular historiography, this dramatic interpretation points unmistakably towards providence as the reality underlying the violent history represented in the plays. The role of the *Acts&Monuments* in this process was twofold. On one hand, fundamental ideas and attitudes about the past expressed in the plays, and the rhetorical patterns in which they are represented, were patterned on key features of the *Acts&Monuments*. On the other, this patterning would have been so evidently Foxeian, so seemingly reflective of Foxe's popular and authoritative history, that a recognition of this intertextual engagement would have been a constitutive element of many playgoers' experience of the plays. I want to suggest, in other words, that the *Acts&Monuments* represents a complete historiographical context for *1-3HenryVI*. It is both a source and influence, and an authoritative intertext in



terms of which the meaning of the plays would have been understood by Shakespeare's audience.

Now, given that Foxe's history has never been accorded any real significance within the provenance of the history plays, this is obviously asking a lot of the *Acts&Monuments*. Yet, in terms of its influence on the historiographical imaginations of Elizabethans, on the way they understood the past and their ongoing relationship with it, the *Acts&Monuments* was literally *sui generis*. My analysis begins, therefore, with an examination of the remarkable popular authority that was exercised by the *Acts&Monuments* within the mental world of Shakespeare and his audience. Recognizing the inherently intertextual character of the chronicle play genre, I will discuss the specific historical themes and rhetorical attitudes which Shakespeare seems to have drawn from Foxe as he formulated his own dramatic version of the War of the Roses era. From there, I will turn to the plays themselves and attempt to illustrate how the presence of this Foxeian intertext would have helped to establish the plays, *qua* history, in the context of a contemporary performance.

## Notes

1. The continuing animus against Tillyard over the last decade is without question one of the most curious features of the "New Historicist" approach to Shakespeare. Tillyard asserted that major categories of Tudor thought such as history and political philosophy were structured, rhetorically and conceptually, in terms of a series of specifically religious attitudes. He argued, moreover, that while these ideas (such as "Order," "Sin" and "The Chain of Being") were changing, their use by Tudor writers retained essentially Medieval characteristics throughout the Renaissance. This was not an argument about Elizabethan culture as a whole, but rather a description of the discursive practices of an elite, literate sub-culture to which, reasonably enough, Tillyard assumed Shakespeare belonged. Presumably, had Tillyard called his essay *An Elizabethan World Picture*, which would be a more accurate depiction of what he actually wrote, his recent detractors would be largely disarmed. Rather than denying or occluding the possibility of ideological conflict and

opposition in the Elizabethan period, Tillyard's contribution was to illuminate a substantial portion of the conceptual and rhetorical context (i.e. religious discourse) *in which that ideological conflict took place*.

For an excellent account of the relationship between Renaissance and Reformation with a particular emphasis on early modern historiographical practices, see Kemp, The Estrangement of the Past. My point is not, of course, that Shakespeareans are typically unaware of this basic historical principle, but rather that the neglect of religious issues which is typical in criticism of the History plays, the way Shakespeare's plays are almost never linked to religious discourse except negatively, tends to reinscribe the misunderstanding of the "Renaissance" which Tillyard tried to correct.

2. See especially Chapter One of Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance. Shuger's definition of religious culture quoted as a headnote to the conclusion of this paper is from her more recent article, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects."

3. Holderness, Shakespeare Recycled; Rackin, Stages of History; Cox, Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power, especially 82-103 on 1-3HenryVI; Michael Hattaway argues aggressively for a resolutely secular Shakespeare in the series of "Introductions" which he wrote for his New Cambridge Shakespeare editions of 1-3HenryVI. References to these essays will be cited in the text by play and page number.

4. See Habits of Thought, 1-16, and, more recently, the Introduction to Religion and Culture in Renaissance England by Shuger and Claire McEachern.

5. Perhaps the most remarkable single example of how Foxe has been occluded in studies of the English history plays is the fact that Henry A. Kelly's often-cited study Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's History Plays does not mention the Acts&Monuments even once, despite the fact that Foxe's book was by far and away the most influential work of Providential history in the period. The exception which proves the rule is Shakespeare's Henry VIII, which has been discussed as an expression of Foxeian historiography by Judith Doolin-Spikes in her article "The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation." For a typically dismissive "New Historicist" response to Shakespeare's dramatization of Foxeian historiography in Henry VIII, see below, Chapter One, note 4.

6. My assertion that Shakespeare was a Protestant playwright clearly runs counter to the venerable critical tradition of Shakespeare's sympathy for and possible adherence to the Catholic faith. While there is some evidence of an early association with Catholicism, there is nothing to suggest that the adult Shakespeare was a particularly devout Catholic, Protestant, or indeed, anything other than an average member of the Elizabethan church. In any case, my purpose here is not to try to discover evidence of Shakespeare's personal faith or beliefs. Such evidence may in fact be in plays such as 1-3HenryVI, but would be, I think, impossible to confidently assess. Rather, my interest here is to explore Shakespeare's very demonstrable use of Protestant iconography and historiography as a public playwright, his imaginative response to the representation of English history in the Acts&Monuments. It is the way 1-3HenryVI participates in the discourse of Elizabethan Protestantism, in other words, which underlines the notion of "Protestant Shakespeare."

*When one recollects that until the appearance of the Pilgrim's Progress the common people had almost no other reading matter except the Bible and Foxe's Book of Martyrs, we can understand the deep impression that this book produced; and how it served to mold the national character....Take a people just awakening to a new intellectual and religious life; let several generations of them, from childhood to old age, pore over such a book, and its stories become traditions as individual and almost as potent as songs and customs on a nation's life.*

Douglas Campbell

## CHAPTER ONE:

### 'THAT FULL AND PERFECT HISTORY': FOXE'S POPULAR AUTHORITY

In *Eastward Hoe!*, Woolf, the jailer, describes the apparent transformation of his prisoner, Francis, with an allusion to the *Acts&Monuments*: "I never heard his like! He has cut his hayre too. He is so well given, and has such good gifts! Hee can tell you almost all the stories of the *Book of Martyrs*" (5.2.55-57). In *Every Man Out Of His Humour*, the *Rustici* express a similar sentiment about the "conversion" of Sordid:

2nd Rustic: O miracle! See when a man ha's grace!

3rd Rustic: Had't not been a pittie, so good a man should have been cast away?

2nd Rustic: Well, I'll get our clarke put his conversion in the *Acts and Monuments*.

4th Rustic: Doe, for I warrant him hee's a *Martyr* (3.8.58-63).

Whatever the playwrights' feelings about the *Acts&Monuments* may have been, for Woolf and the *Rustici* the authority of the book as an indicator of virtue is clear; the truth of a moral history, the conversion of Francis or Sordid, is guaranteed by collocation with the *Acts&Monuments*. Similarly, in the *Induction* to *The Unfortunate Traveler*, Thomas Nashe's narrator suggests that his "chronicle" will become an authority among the courtiers by alluding to the authority of Foxe's history:

Secondly, whereas you were wont to swear on a pantofle to be true to your puisant order, you shall swear then on nothing but this Chronicle of the King of Pages henceforward. Thirdly, it shall be lawful for anie whatsoever to play with false dice on a corner of this aforsayd *Acts & Monuments* (13).

The idea that Nashe plays with here is that of a book with remarkable popular appeal and authority. It will be “a pawn in times of famine and necessity,” and an object of deference: “whether by daie or by night, they shall put off theyr hats too and make a lowe legge, in regard their grand printed Capitano is there entombed”(14). Another London wit, “Martin Marprelate”, alluded to the *Acts&Monuments* in his controversial *Epistle* of 1588: “his grace threatened to send mistris Lawson to Bridewell because she shewed the good father D. Perne a way to get his name out of the *Book of Martyrs* where the turnecoat is canonized for burning Bucer’s bones” ( in Lander, 69). In this instance the *Acts&Monuments* is not an indicator of rectitude, but rather, as Jesse Lander suggests, a “register of iniquity” that can be used against the repressive tactics of members of the established church (69).

These allusions to Foxe's book illustrate an important cultural reality: the profound and continuing impact the *Acts&Monuments* had on the mental world of the Elizabethans. By the end of the century, it would seem, the book had become a recognized popular authority that could be used in various contexts and to various ends. Popular authority here simply means having a wide or popular appeal, a kind of ubiquity, and being accepted as authoritative by a wide range of opinion. In these allusions the popular authority of Foxe's book is revealed dramatically by the characters, all of whom use the *Acts&Monuments* because to them it is an authority. And, more indirectly,

because it is the object of parody, the authority of the book is embedded in the allusions themselves, even if they are satirical.

This image the of popular authority exercised by the *Acts&Monuments* has been thoroughly confirmed by recent scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Foxe's book has been described as "one of the most influential English books ever written"(Wooden, 93). It has been called an "inescapable text"(Knott 1993, 2) which "became a folk tradition in Foxe's own lifetime"(Christianson, 39) and which "at the close of Elizabeth's reign...had achieved the status of magisterial and unimpeachable orthodoxy"(Lander, 72). Patrick Collinson refers to the *Acts&Monuments* as having "exercised a critical and enduring influence on the civilization of English-speaking peoples"(Collinson 1985, 31), and suggests that "an account of the Protestant nation without Foxe is like *Hamlet* without the Prince"(Collinson 1988, 12). William Haller, whose *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* established modern Foxe scholarship, argues that "there has never been any doubt about the historical importance of a book which...in the reign of Elizabeth [was] accepted as an expression of the national faith second only to the Bible as an unanswerable defense of England's ideological position in the contemporary struggle for national independence and power"(Haller, 14). The centrality of Foxe's work within late Elizabethan culture has been persuasively characterized by Helen C. White:

There can have been few books in the world like it, few that would give an innocent reader such a sense of being in the know, past, present, and future, that would give a man so complete a picture of the world in which he found himself and how it came to be so; few books that would so completely furnish forth an untutored mind with a whole intellectual world, so perfectly suited to its tastes and adapted to its powers, so completely to arm it against the challenges and pressures of an age of unprecedented moral and mental aggression (White, 2).

The particular historiographical significance of the *Acts&Monuments* has also been attested to. Referring to Foxe as “the English Plutarch,” Patrick Collinson has suggested that “for the three generations which intervened between the Elizabethan settlement and the puritan commonwealth the Bible and Foxe between them entirely satisfied the demand for edifying biographical history” (Collinson 1983, 507). In his ground-breaking study of late Elizabethan and early Stuart historiography, D.R. Woolf argues that the *Acts&Monuments* was “perhaps the most influential book ever printed in Elizabethan England in terms of its general influence on public perceptions of the nation's religious history” (Woolf 1990, 37). Woolf has also emphasized Foxe's historiographical authority by alluding to the way the *Acts&Monuments*, “perhaps the most widely read book in Reformation England apart from the Bible,” was “often seen as a [biblical] supplement, an uncanonical *Book of Martyrs* to follow the books of prophets and chronicles in the Old Testament” (Woolf 1994, 23). Similarly, Haller writes that the “stories told in Foxe's book became, along with the stories told in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, an essential part of that familiar code of reference and expression which no one sharing in the life of that age could do without...it supplied a history of the Church and the nation, seen by the light of what was taken to be the truth of Revelation; that is to say, of a conception of the meaning of history which almost everybody who thought about the matter took for granted”(14-15). F.J. Levy places the *Acts&Monuments* in the vanguard of the development of modern historical analysis because it “served as a model of how to combine research with organization and with a point of view.” Levy stresses that Foxe “was read by every literate, historically-minded Englishman and not just theologians”(Levy, 104-105). Anthony Kemp summarizes this

theme of popular authority by arguing that “more than any other book, it is to the *Acts&Monuments* that one must turn in order to see what the past looked like to the post-Lutheran world” (Kemp, 84).

This impressive scholarly consensus about the impact of the *Acts&Monuments* on Elizabethan historical thought is based on solid evidence. First published in English in 1563, the *Acts&Monuments* went through six more editions by 1610 (1570, 1576, 1583, 1589, and 1596). The second edition (1570), consisting of over two thousand pages in two volumes, was the first complete version of Foxe's history (Haller, 128-29). It was this edition which, famously, was by order of Convocation set next to the Bible in various places of worship:

Every Archbishop and bishop shall have in hys house The holy Bible in the largest volume...and also that full and perfect history, which is intituled Monuments of Martyrs...the same bookes [must be purchased by all Deans] and bestowed in his Cathedral Church, in such convenient place, that the vicars...and other ministers of the Church, as also strangers and foreigners may easilie come unto them, and read thereon ( in Lander, 69-70).

Similarly, the Mayor of London had the *Acts&Monuments* installed in a number of city orphanages and in the halls of various city companies and, as was remarked in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, at Elizabeth's court “every office hath either a Bible, or the Books of the Acts and Monuments of the Church of England...for the exercise of such as come into the same”(in Haller, 221).

The public display of the *Acts&Monuments* is a striking and unparalleled feature of the book's history. In terms of the idea of popular authority, the way the *Acts&Monuments* is spoken of in the same breath as the Bible is in itself remarkable, but perhaps moreso is the simple fact that it was made so accessible to the public. Although

the book itself was expensive, well beyond the range of most playgoers, in a very real sense it was free. It is certainly worthwhile to recognize that whereas it is at least doubtful that a significant portion of Shakespeare's audience would have had the opportunity (or the inclination, or the ability) to read the chronicles of Hall or Holinshed, it is entirely likely that most if not all would have had some personal knowledge of the *Acts&Monuments*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is hard to exaggerate the public awareness of Foxe's history because, unlike other examples of contemporary historical writing, the message of the *Acts&Monuments* was not confined to print. Because Foxe's work was so immediately accepted and authorized by the Elizabethan church, it became a choice text for sermons, especially among the very popular urban lectureships which "not only outdrew bearbaiting and morris dancing but even in sophisticated London...attracted larger audiences week after week than Shakespeare and Jonson in their prime" (Seaver, 5,). Thus, as Haller points out, "echoes of the Book of Martyrs were to be heard throughout the period from countless pulpits"(Haller, 14). Heard, that is, by the same public who attended Shakespeare's history plays.

The history contained in the *Acts&Monuments* was also uniquely accessible to the public because the book was so richly illustrated. The 1570 edition contained over 160 woodcut illustrations, many of which were carefully integrated with the text to provide what Foxe called a "plain visible argument" (5. 236).<sup>3</sup> Thus, as D.R. Woolf has argued, while it is a remarkable achievement of elite scholarship, the *Acts&Monuments* is also "a work thoroughly attuned to the requirements of those on the margins of literacy":

His book provided the channel between the oral tales of martyrdoms which required reading and replication, at the same time digesting the enormous weight of church history into a popular



form that could be read by the literate but also understood by the illiterate....The text and various charts and tables were designed for those who have the skills to consult the printed word; the woodcuts translated and simplified this information into graphic images capable of perception by the ordinary parishioner, images which in turn would reinforce the effect of hearing the tales read aloud from time to time; frequently these illustrations were even detached from the book, coloured, and stuck on walls to provide godly decoration (1994, 6).

Despite its “extraordinary propagation” and “peculiar attractiveness to the ideological moment” (Kemp, 84), it might nevertheless appear that a work of Protestant propaganda, martyrology, and specifically ecclesiastical history would have been entirely remote from the world of the theater and Shakespeare's chronicle plays. Fundamentally, the *Acts&Monuments* was a humanist chronicle devoted in large part to English history. Within its broad providential framework, the *Acts&Monuments* was organized, like Hall, Shakespeare, and other chronicle histories, in terms of the reigns of English kings. Like them, Foxe focused on the relationship between the character and actions of the kings and the relative state of the realm under them. As well, the *Acts&Monuments* provided readers with a substantial interpretation of the significance, past and present, of the War of the Roses. There is a tendency among Shakespeareans interested in Renaissance historiography to portray providential historiography as something which was rapidly becoming outdated in Shakespeare's time.<sup>4</sup> The *Acts&Monuments* belies this view. By virtue of its Erasmian spirit of probing and skeptical analysis, its dedication to documentation and historical veracity based on sources, and, in particular, on the strength of its effort to provide readers with a substantial *interpretation* of the significance and meaning of the past, rather than simply an account or annal of events, Foxe's book exemplifies exactly the advanced humanist historiographical currents that seem to have energized Shakespeare's historical imagination.

If the popular authority of the *Acts&Monuments* derived from its advanced historiographical methods, it was also a product of its very popular content and rhetoric. Typically, Shakespeareans have emphasized the way contemporary chronicles excluded the commonality to suggest that, by mingling clowns and kings, Shakespeare was engaging in a very radical kind of historiography.<sup>5</sup> “That Tudor chroniclers ignored social history and that their works were exclusively ‘the bokes of great prynces and lordes’ is a fact,” one recent critic asserts, arguing that it was only in “the secluded space of the playhouse...in Shakespeare's plays” that common people, the “unknown, invisible individuals...were allowed to speak”(Pugliatti, 181-3). This critical commonplace loses purchase, however, when considered in light of the content of the *Acts&Monuments*. Although it does involve monarchs, Popes, and great heroes of reform such as Luther and Wycliff, the bulk of the *Acts&Monuments* is in fact devoted to bringing to the foreground of history a host of figures drawn from the popular ranks of society. As Helen C. White argues, Foxe presented “a gallery it would be hard to rival for the time, of men and women of humble life who took the spotlight in at least one scene of their lives and acquitted themselves with the best for courage and resolution and often, from Foxe's point of view, intelligence and wisdom”(White, 191). For readers of Foxe, characters like Michael Williams in *Henry V*, who upbraids the King on the eve of Agincourt, or the Messenger in *1HenryVI* who exhorts the English nobles to “awake” from their collective “sloth”(1.1.78-9), would not have appeared as radical innovations, but rather as natural components of an historical argument.<sup>6</sup>

The *Acts&Monuments* not only represents popular figures in history, it also represents history in popular modes. Beyond church history and religious polemic,

rhetorical modes which were themselves undeniably enjoyed by Elizabethans, the *Acts&Monuments* consists, as Warren Wooden has shown, of a “medley of literary forms...ranging from sermons, tracts, and epistles to doggerel rimes, self contained stories of romantic adventure...beast fables, mock-epistles, moments of high dramatic conflict, and scenes of heart-wrenching pathos,” so that “it must have been a rare Protestant reader who could find nothing to suit him [or her] in the *Acts&Monuments*” (Wooden, 42). D.R. Woolf has illuminated a strong romance narrative element in the *Acts&Monuments*, and he has shown how Foxe incorporated a range of typically comic rhetorical elements, such as popular celebration, irony and other forms of verbal play, providential “jokes,” comic reversals, in which the high-and-mighty are bested by their social inferiors, and the grotesque. Thus, Woolf argues, Foxe “gave a work of epic proportions and high sacred purpose a rhetoric that is distinctly 'low-mimetic,' grounding his own version of eschatological history in the dirt, flesh, and cloth of the experiential world”(1994, 6-7).

Finally, no account of the popular authority of the *Acts&Monuments* would be complete without mentioning the way the popularity of the book was buttressed by the almost legendary popularity of Foxe himself. During the last fifteen years of his life (1571-1587) Foxe gave a series of notable occasional sermons at Paul's Cross, and he preached on a regular basis at St.Giles, Cripplegate. During these heydays, Foxe lived in a house in Grub Street, just outside the old city wall. His son has described how “no man's house was in those times thronged with more clients than his. There repaired to him both Citizens and Strangers, Noblemen, and common people of all degrees, and almost all for the same cause; to seek some salve for a wounded conscience.” Foxe's popularity was so great that he began to be regarded as a kind of Protestant saint, to the

point where he had to forbid the sick from coming to him looking for cures. “It so fell out,” Simeon wrote, showing some of his father’s flair for irony, “that now some began, not as a good man to honour him, but as one sent from Heaven, even to adore him, through the folly of mankind, madly doting upon any thing”(in Wooden, 13-15).

There is a wealth of anecdotal evidence which attests to the celebrity to which the elder Foxe attained. Sir Francis Drake brought a copy of the *Acts&Monuments* on his voyage around the world, “and on occasion plied his Spanish prisoners with it and whiled away dull days by colouring the pictures.” After his monumental victory at Cadiz in 1587, Drake wrote to Foxe to thank him publicly for his prayers (Haller, 221). Foxe’s reputation was also enhanced by the courageous stance he took against judicial violence. His hatred of religious persecution, massively testified to in the *Acts&Monuments* itself, was put into practice in several highly publicized instances, such as his support for the Duke of Norfolk, executed for treason in the wake of the Ridolfi Plot, his attempts to save two Dutch anabaptists from execution in 1571, and his intervention on the part of the Jesuit Edmund Campion and his co-conspirators, ten years later. As Warren Wooden has commented, Foxe’s “steadfast opposition to capital punishment, whether the victim was a friend or a foe, in an age of intolerance is one of the noblest aspects of his character”(14). There can be little doubt that Foxe’s personal celebrity enhanced the status of the *Acts&Monuments*, adding not only to its popularity, but also to its truth value, its status as “that full and perfect history.”

## Notes

1. There is a small but solid body of scholarly work on the *Acts&Monuments*, all of which alludes to the tremendous influence Foxe exerted, conceptually and rhetorically, throughout the Elizabethan era and

beyond. The account of Foxe's popular authority in this chapter is based in particular on the discussions of Foxe's popularity and influence in the works of Massingham, Haller, Helen C. White, Lamont, Levy, Christianson, Bauckham, Olsen, Kemp, Woolf, Wooden, Lander, Knott, and Collinson.

2. For a discussion of the decline in popularity of these authors compared to the continuing popularity of the Acts&Monuments, see Woolf, "Genre into Artifact," 337.
3. All references to the Acts&Monuments in this essay are by volume and page to the Cattley-Pratt edition republished by AMS Press in 1965.
4. Ivo Kamps, building on the earlier efforts of Phyllis Rackin, is the most recent exponent of this view. In his "Historiography and Legitimization in HenryVIII" Kamps announces that he "will show there is reason to conclude that Cranmer's unifying historiography sounded archaic and unsophisticated not only to more learned Jacobeans but also to those who were raised on the popular histories of Holinshed, Hall, Grafton and others" (195). However, compare Kamps' view of the supposed archaism of prophetic politics and history in the Early Stuart era with Christianson, Reformers in Babylon, and Collinson, "The Protestant Nation" in Birthpangs of Protestant England and "The English Nation and National Sentiment in the Prophetic Mode." Typically, and despite his insistence that he is describing a "kind" of early Jacobean history, Kamps constructs an image of Shakespeare's history plays as a kind of dramatic metahistoriography which (very much like Rackin's "anti-history") bears little or no relationship to the actual practices of Jacobean history writers:

Taken as a whole, therefore, the play focuses not on the inevitable outcome of historical process, as Cranmer submits [i.e. in the baptism scene] but on the various historiographical strategies that can be employed to make the outcome *appear* inevitable. *Henry VIII* draws our attention to the operations by means of which historiography and historians mystify those operations by sanctifying them"(197).

5. This notion was also a key argument in Rackin's influential Stages of History.
6. All references to 1-3HenryVI are to the New Cambridge edition of the plays edited by Michael Hattaway. All other references to Shakespeare's plays are to the Riverside Shakespeare.

## CHAPTER TWO:

## 'THE LOOSING OUT OF SATAN': 1-3HENRYVI AND THE FOXEIAN INTERTEXT

The historiographical milieu in which Shakespeare set out to produce chronicle history plays was in a very real sense dominated by the figure of Foxe and his authoritative book. The popular authority exercised by the *Acts&Monuments* converges with Shakespeare's chronicle plays because, as historiography, the plays functioned *intertextually*: that is, by virtue of a dynamic relationship between authorial representation and audience interpretation. To be clear, this dynamic was not in itself *textual*: it was, rather, a function of the complex intellectual and emotional response of playgoers to the history represented on a stage by actors. It is *intertextual*, however, in that it is apprehended by us, historically, through analyses of the texts of the plays, scripts we use to imagine what performances of the plays would have been like, in conjunction with the various texts of contemporary historiography, which, however limited the result may be, provide the basis for our understanding of the body of historical concepts and rhetoric in terms of which the plays were able to function as history. This intertextual process is admirably summarized in Irving Ribner's definition of the chronicle play genre as:

[A] play *drawn* from a chronicle source which we know that a large part of the audience *accepted* as factual [and which] appears *to fulfill* what the Elizabethans *considered* to be the legitimate purposes of history (Ribner, 25; my emphasis).

The verbal sequence in Ribner's definition underpins his useful characterization of the chronicle play as the successful fulfillment of a kind of intellectual contract between the play and its audience. As such, Ribner's common-sense understanding of how chronicle

plays worked is similar to the notion of “concretization” which is central to the “reception theory” of critics like Roman Ingarden and H.R. Jauss. According to Jauss' famous formula:

[A] literary work, even when it appears to be new, does not present itself as something absolutely new in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions...it awakens memories of that which was already been read, brings the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and, with its beginnings arouses expectations for the 'middle and end,' which can then be maintained intact or altered, reoriented, or even fulfilled ironically in the course of the reading (Jauss, 23).

Although Ribner and reception theory are hardly more fashionable today than Tillyard, it difficult to imagine a better framework for understanding Shakespeare's chronicle plays as a kind of Elizabethan historiography. This way of thinking is particularly valuable because it makes essential the shared agency of playwrights, whose authority was expressed, however imperfectly, through the actors, costumes, and other components of theatrical representation, and of playgoers, who authorized the plays, so to speak, by recognizing their authentic historiographical character. As examples such as the *Prologue* to *Henry V* make clear, Shakespeare was keenly aware of this authorial agency:

Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:  
 Into a thousand parts divide one man  
 And make imaginary puissance  
 Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them,  
 Printing their proud hoofs i'th' receiving earth;  
 For tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings (23-28).

Rather than an irrelevance or incidental after effect, the authority of the audience was written into the plays themselves. Thus, while there was some room for innovation, the more pressing epistemological reality is that for Shakespeare the act of fashioning

dramatic historiography was carried out with the authority of the audience firmly in view: creating chronicle plays involved conforming to an idea or complex of ideas which the bulk of the audience could be expected to accept as history. While this might seem to be a general rule, applying equally to Shakespeare as, say, Oliver Stone, it is also a distinctive feature of a particular late Elizabethan cultural context in which conformity to pre-existing models and authorities, rather than the production of radically new ideas and perspectives, was understood as the cornerstone of authentic history (Woolf 1990, 29-30).

Emphasizing the essentially intertextual character of the chronicle play genre brings the relationship between Foxe and Shakespeare clearly into focus. Given its unique popular authority, the *Acts&Monuments* was undoubtedly a key component in the “that which was already read,” which allowed the plays to be realized as history in their original Elizabethan context. That is, assuming that Shakespeare was not only aware of Foxe's popular authority, but that he also accepted and participated in it, we can reasonably expect to find, *written into the plays themselves*, a Foxeian intertext in terms of which the action represented on stage can be understood as history, *from the perspective of the Acts&Monuments*. *1-3HenryVI* does in fact contain just such a Foxeian intertext, one which works, overall, to position Shakespeare's representation of the violence of the Wars of the Roses firmly within Foxe's providential understanding of the same terrible era of England's 15th-century past. As a kind of prolepsis, the staging of Henry's piety in *1-3HenryVI* provides an excellent example of how the *Acts&Monuments* did in fact figure, intertextually, in Shakespeare's dramatic historiography.

Following his sources, Shakespeare represented the king as an extremely pious man. Moreover, as an historian, Shakespeare *interpreted* Henry's piety by making explicit



the notion that the terrible disasters which befell the country during Henry's tenure were in part a causal reflection of the king's over-zealous religiosity. However, Henry is not portrayed as simply over-pious, but as pious in a specifically Catholic sense; Shakespeare does not merely allude to Henry's Catholicism, he insists on it over and over again. Thus, according to Margaret in *2HenryVI*:

...all his mind is bent to holiness,  
 To number Ave-Maries on his beads;  
 His champions are the prophets and apostles,  
 His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,  
 His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves  
 Are brazen images of canonized saints.  
 I would the College of Cardinals  
 Would choose him Pope and carry him to Rome  
 And set the triple crown upon his head:  
 That were a fit state for his holiness (1.3.50-59).

Shakespeare's Henry is not just a religious king, he is, from the perspective of Protestantism, an apostate one. Now to a modern reader, this moment is a classic instance of Shakespeare's remarkable ambiguity. It works, to borrow a phrase from one of the best modern readers, David Bevington, by "setting up a conventional moral appeal," the inappropriateness of Henry's overzealous Catholic piety, but in a "morally indefensible context," the seditious plotting of Margaret and her fellows (Bevington, 217). As a result, this dramatic moment contributes to what looks like a quintessentially Shakespearean questioning of the relationship between morality and politics. However, from the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, the effect is somewhat altered. While the rhetorical ambiguity is still central, the charge of "popery" still problematized by the fact that it is made by the seditious adulteress Queen Margaret, the overriding impression of "popish"

error remains. That is, whereas for a modern reader Henry's zealous Catholicism can be dissolved into a generalized "piety" or "morality," for Shakespeare's audience it invokes a world of specifically Protestant, and perhaps specifically Foxeian, historical thought. As will be discussed more fully below, Foxe's readers had not only been inculcated with the notion that royal apostasy was perhaps the most devastating of historical problems, but had, moreover, been trained to understand England's 15<sup>th</sup>-century civil war era as a manifestation of precisely the kind of "zealous popery" attributed to Henry. Thus, by invoking a panoply of "popish" errors in the context of a causal interpretation of the Wars of the Roses era, Shakespeare's language produces an emblem of royal apostasy which, in turn, invites a Foxeian reading. Shakespeare encourages the audience to "deck out the King," so to speak, in terms of Foxe's Protestant providential view of history.

The staging of Henry's seemingly debilitating "popish" apostasy can be viewed as a Jaussian "announcement," signaling not only the presence of a Foxeian intertext in the play, but also that the play intends to take its history seriously. To be sure, Shakespeare's deliberately ambiguous portrayal of royal piety is an important part of the relationship between *1-3HenryVI* and the *Acts&Monuments*.<sup>1</sup> Much more central, however, is the way Shakespeare's staging of historical violence throughout *1-3HenryVI* resonates with Foxe's interpretation of the meaning of the Wars of the Roses era. Before turning to the plays, then, it is necessary to see how this dark era was represented by Foxe in the *Acts&Monuments*.

#### THE LOOSING OUT OF SATAN

In *Richard II*, the Bishop of Carlisle prophesies that the immediate future will be marked by the “woefullest division...That ever fell upon this cursed earth”:

The blood of England shall manure the ground,  
 And future ages groan for this foul act.  
 Peace shall go to sleep with Turks and infidels,  
 And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars  
 Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound.  
 Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny  
 Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd  
 The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls (4.1.136-144).

For viewers, Carlisle's prophecy works retrospectively to define the action already represented in *1-3HenryVI* in terms of an apocalyptic vision of total societal breakdown. At the nadir, Carlisle predicts, English society will descend into a violent disorder worse than that of the notorious Turks; England will become a scene of death linked, typologically, with the biblical crucifixion. As Tillyard demonstrated, Carlisle's prophecy relates the violent action of the earlier plays to the “Tudor Myth” of English history, the idea that the 15<sup>th</sup>-century was an era of unprecedented and chaotic violence.<sup>2</sup> When Tillyard discussed the English history plays as an expression of the Tudor Myth he focused, naturally enough, on what he considered to be the relevant source for this idea, the providential argument of Hall and, to a lesser extent, Polydore Vergil. Hall provided Shakespeare with one version of the 15th-century; John Foxe provided him with another.<sup>3</sup>

In writing the *Acts&Monuments*, one of Foxe's main goals was to prove, historically, that the Reformed religion was the true Christian faith and the direct descendent of the apostolic church of Christ.<sup>4</sup> To do so, Foxe effectively brought to bear the entire rhetorical arsenal of humanist scholarship in an effort to prove the existence of an unbroken succession of true believers stretching back to apostolic times. Moreover, in

addition to claiming that Protestantism was the true church, Foxe charged that the Roman church, which had falsely asserted its own apostolic succession, was in fact one manifestation of the Antichrist foretold in Apocalypse and other prophetic parts of the Bible. These two streams of Protestant historical thought--that a "hidden church" of true Christians existing since apostolic times had recently emerged as the reformed religion of Wycliff, Luther, and the Elizabethan settlement, and that the Roman church ruled by the Popes was the apocalyptic Antichrist--coalesce in the *Acts & Monuments* in the martyrological narratives themselves. As both Jane Facey and D.R. Woolf have pointed out, Foxe would have liked to have been able to show an unbroken succession of practicing Protestants since the time of Christ, but, since no such doctrinal continuity could be truthfully asserted, he developed a complex rhetorical structure in which persecution and martyrdom themselves functioned as the key indices of both the existence of the true church over time and of the fact that Roman Catholicism was the historical Antichrist. Thus, at the heart of Foxe's immensely influential history was a modally diverse yet tightly controlled and expressive rhetoric of antichristian persecution and true Christian martyrdom. This rhetorical paradigm, a kind of anatomy of persecution, was itself imbedded in the firmament of providential explanation and biblical prophecy.

As D.R. Woolf has shown, Foxe's distinctive rhetoric of persecution and martyrdom worked by combining what is essentially modern historical scholarship--the realistic depiction of discreet historical events unfolding within a tightly specified chronology and supported by incisive argument and documentary evidence--and a richly articulated metaphorical idiom. In this way, the discreet reality of historical persons and

events was simultaneously asserted and yet reduced to a single dialectical opposition of persecutors and their prey, members of Antichrist and true Christians. As Warren Wooden has suggested, the effect of this remarkable synthesis was to create a “paradoxical combination of an anachronistically modern and realistic foreground within a mythic controlling framework”(Wooden, 24). As mentioned, Foxe's mythic framework was based on eschatology and biblical apocalyptic. Unlike the eternal dualism of Augustine, Foxe's providential dialectic functioned as a dynamic process within history, with the relationship between persecutors and martyrs changing in nature and intensity as time unfolded according to the pattern laid out by God and predicted in the scriptures.<sup>5</sup> Following the historical exegesis of Luther, Tyndale, and, especially, John Bale, Foxe developed a millennial conception of history which revolved around the idea of God's providential “binding up” and “loosing out of Satan” as the key process underlining the course of human history. Although he continued to revise his interpretation of biblical prophecy throughout his life, in the *Acts & Monuments* itself Foxe outlined a persuasively simple three-part providential pattern:

*The years and time of the loosing out of Satan*

By these words of Revelation, here recited, three special times are to be noted.

First, the being abroad of Satan to deceive the world.

Secondly, the binding up of him.

Thirdly, the loosing out of him again, after a thousand years consummate, for a time (2.724).

While he allowed for numerous kinds of providence to function within this pattern, it is the relative state of antichristian power which, for Foxe, ultimately defined the nature of historical events at any given point in time.

As Christopher Hill among others have illustrated, the Protestant apocalyptic conception of providential history exemplified by Foxe's time scheme required a systematic redefinition of the nature of Antichrist. The older conception of Satan as a mythic figure who would return and be defeated by Christ at the end of time was supplanted, in Protestant exegesis, by a radically historical Antichrist understood, in the words of Foxe's contemporary, William Fulke, as "a whole succession of men, in one state of devilish government"(in Emerson, 210). This Protestant Antichrist existed not in the extra-historical past and future, but functioned primarily within history as a kind of energy or power which pervaded human institutions, politics, and individuals. The Roman church could be viewed as one Antichrist, or group of Antichrists, the Ottoman Turks another, King Henry V another, because, as Hill has argued, Antichrist was understood to represent essentially all kinds of "political repression in the name of religion, for the coercive organs associated therewith, and especially for the persecution of the righteous"(Hill, 5). Thus, while it is still linked with the mythical figure of Satan in one sense, Foxe's conception of Antichrist more emphatically stresses the translation of a spiritual reality, satanic apostasy, into the secular realm of human behaviour and institutions: while it is infused with eschatological fervor, Foxe's Antichrist is really the politics of persecution in history.

If Foxe did not exactly invent this historical Antichrist, he certainly developed and embellished it, putting his stamp on an idea that became central to Protestant historical thought. As William Lamont has suggested, Foxe "domesticated the apocalypse," making the "pursuit of the millennium respectable and orthodox"(Lamont, 33-4). One way Foxe appears to have deepened the appeal and relevance of apocalyptic history for his English

readers was by altering the eschatological time-frame he inherited from Tyndale and Bale so that it could be used to explain that cynosure of Tudor historical thought, the Wars of the Roses. Whereas both Tyndale and Bale had dated the millennial binding of Satan from the time of Christ, Foxe moved it forward to the 4th-century conversion of Constantine. As a result, the end of the millennium and the “loosing out of Satan,” now coincided perfectly with the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV, the period which all Tudor historians since Polydore Vergil had identified as the origin of the civil war era.<sup>6</sup> The first period, then, which lasted roughly 300 years, was dominated by the terrible persecutions of the early Christians by Roman emperors. Paradoxically, though, this satanic raging failed to wipe out the faith and the early church flourished. In the second period, which lasted 1000 years, Satan was bound by God and so persecution ceased, but, again paradoxically, this worked as a kind of backsliding time in which the Roman church grew and the true church almost disappeared. The final period, to which the bulk of the *Acts & Monuments* is devoted, begins in earnest with the persecution of Wycliff under Richard II, “at whose time this furious fire of persecution seemed to take his first original and beginning”(2.791). Again, paradoxically, the “fire of persecution” works to reveal Antichrist in the Reformation, and hence ensures the imminent triumph of the godly.

The relevance of Foxe's revised chronology of the millennium for the period of the English civil wars is unmistakable: by placing these epochal shifts in the nature of human history where he did, Foxe effectively subsumed existing historical attitudes about the 15th-century era of unrest within his Protestant providential scheme. In this “time of

Antichrist and loosing out of Satan,” Foxe argues at numerous points in the book, “both doctrine and sincerity of life were utterly, almost, extinguished” (1.4-5):

[T]his is out of all doubt, that at that time, the world was in a most desperate and vile estate, and that the lamentable ignorance and darkness of God's truth had overshadowed the whole earth...the whole state and condition, not only of worldly things, but also of religion, was depraved and corrupted (2.792).

As a ecclesiastical historian devoted to exposing the antichristian character of the Roman church, Foxe naturally focuses on the Papacy and the Catholic clergy as the chief exemplars of satanic persecution: “the whole glut of monks and friars was set in a rage and madness, who, even as hornets with their sharp stings, did assail this good man [i.e. Wycliff] on every side” (2.796-7). However, as the quotation just previous illustrates (2.792), Foxe's portrait of apostasy is intended to include the “whole state and condition” of society, and not just the church. The image of the clergy, consumed by “rage and madness,” and transformed into a swarm of vicious insects is symbolic of the way the whole country, with the exception of a godly minority, had descended into apostasy and antichristian persecution.

From the perspective of the rise of satanic power, the already well-established “Tudor Myth” of a dark period of societal upheaval and unprecedented violence, culminating in the “Wars of the Roses,” became a natural component of Foxe's argument. Near the beginning of the *Acts&Monuments*, Foxe makes the antichristian character of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century civil war era explicit when he identifies it with the “furious rage of persecution” of Roman emperors like Domitius Nero, who “reigned fourteen years, with such fury and tyranny, that he slew the most part of the senators, and destroyed the whole order of knighthood in Rome”(1.90). Just as the Romans in the first era of Satanic



liberty were “consumed and plagued by their own emperors, but also by civil wars”(1.91), likewise in 15<sup>th</sup>-century England:

[N]ot many years past, God, seeing idolatry, superstition, hypocrisy, and wicked living, used in this realm, raised up that godly-learned man John Wycliff, to preach unto our father's repentance; and to extort them to amend their lives, to forsake their papistry and idolatry, their hypocrisy and superstition, and to walk in the fear of God. His exhortations were not regarded, he, with his sermons, was despised, his books, and he after his death, were burnt. What Followed? They slew their right king and set up three wrong kings on a row, under whom all the noble blood of the realm was slain up, and half the commons in addition thereto. What in France, with their own sword in fighting amongst themselves for a crown; while the cities and towns [i.e. in England] were decayed, and the land brought half into a wilderness, in respect of what it was before. O extreme plagues of God's vengeance! (1.93).

Here in a nutshell is the material of the “Tudor Myth,” only set in an entirely different providential context. Like earlier Tudor apologists Foxe places the origins of the “long division between the two houses of York and Lancaster”(3.739) in the reign of Richard II, but his interpretation has little to do ultimately with God's displeasure with one noble lineage or the other. Rather, what is important is the way the nation as a whole had descended into a “state of devilish government,” manifestly indicative of the renewal of Satanic power in the world. Again, while Foxe's main focus is the history of the church, the *Acts&Monuments* is in no way a strictly ecclesiastical history. When he describes 15<sup>th</sup>-century English history, Foxe makes it perfectly clear that the renewal of antichristian power had been manifested as much in the apostasy of the English monarchy and ruling aristocracy as it had in the church. This apostasy was manifested in the violence and divisiveness of the Wars of the Roses. In one of the prefaces to the 1570 edition, Foxe urges readers to compare their “present felicity” with the “state and times of our other countrymen and blessed martyrs aforepast”:

[W]hat storms of persecution they sustained, what little rest they had, with what enemies they were matched, with what crosses pressed, under what princes, under what prelates, they lived, or rather died, in the days of King Henry the fourth, King Henry the fifth, King Henry the seventh, King Henry the eighth; queen Mary, etc....at what time children were caused to set fires to fathers, the father adjured to accuse the son, the wife to accuse the husband, the husband the wife, brother the sister, sister the brother; examples whereof in this book plenty are to be seen (1. xxxiv).

Later, near the beginning of his account of the reign of Henry VI, Foxe again highlights the theme of royal apostasy as the defining reality of the violent era:

[T]hus it may appear how Kings and Princes have been blinded and abused by the false prelates of the church insomuch as they have been their slaves and butchers, to slay Christ's poor innocent members. See therefore, what danger it is for Princes not to have knowledge and understanding, themselves, but to be led by other men's eyes, and especially trusting to such guides, who, through hypocrisy, both deceive them [i.e. Princes], and through their cruelty, devour the people (3.229).

Naturally, Foxe contrasts the “great and troublous times and horrible darkness” of life under this succession of tyrannical “slaves and butchers” with the fact that, under the godly Princes Edward VI and Elizabeth, the “true, natural, and imperial crown” had been restored and the “brightness of God's word was set up again to confound the dark and false-vizored kingdom of Antichrist”(7.466).

Although it has been virtually ignored by Shakespeareans, Foxe's providential interpretation of the degraded state of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century monarchy and of the violence of the civil war period was, thanks largely to the *Acts&Monuments* itself, at least as familiar to Shakespeare's Elizabethans as Vergil, Hall, or “Holinshed.” More importantly, there can be no doubt that, by Shakespeare's time, Foxe's view of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century past as having been shaped by Satanic power was profoundly more authoritative. To borrow a phrase from William Haller, the way Foxe harnessed the already well-established “Tudor

Myth” to his account of the historical “loosing out” of Antichrist is a perfect example of how in the *Acts&Monuments* “history was authenticated by prophecy and prophecy was confirmed by history”(Haller 1962, 27).

In what follows, I want to show how Shakespeare's representation of the civil war era was influenced by Foxe's Protestant providentialism. The staging of historical violence in *1-3HenryVI* is constructed around a Foxeian intertext which reflects the historical Antichrist adumbrated in Foxe's account of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century English past and, indeed, throughout the *Acts&Monuments*. Of course, given the extreme secularizing tendency of criticism of the English history plays since Tillyard, the suggestion that *1-3HenryVI* was not only providential, but deeply indebted to the apocalyptic providentialism of a church historian and martyrologist, will no doubt seem highly unlikely. However, as John Pocock has argued, it is not altogether surprising to discover new levels of meaning even in well-studied writers such as Shakespeare:

[T]he author's use of this or that language may not be indirect or concealed but perfectly explicit; it may simply have been neglected by scholars who have been trained to look only for forms of thought considered important for reasons sometimes not historical at all (Pocock 1987, 27).

## Notes

1. This thesis originally contained a chapter on the relationship between Shakespeare's representation of King Henry and the *Acts&Monuments*. Very briefly, there is a strong resemblance between Foxe's deeply ambivalent view of the 15<sup>th</sup>- and early 16<sup>th</sup>-century English monarchs and Shakespeare's structurally ambiguous portrayal of the saintly King Henry. Writing from the perspective of a total commitment to the concept of godly rule, Foxe's narrative charted the near eclipse of true Christian kingship in England in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century and then its miraculous recovery under Edward VI and Elizabeth. This was a kind of “skin-of-our-teeth” story which found a natural conclusion in the remarkable power and authority of the pious boy-king Edward VI and the miraculous survival of the young Elizabeth under Marian rule. Foxe's view of the earlier monarchs was deeply divided between his sense of the continuing righteousness of the Crown as an institution over time and the fact that a whole series of apostate English monarchs had played the role of

antichristian persecutors. The most expressive example of this ambiguity is Henry VIII, whom Foxe celebrates as the instigator of the Reformation on one hand, but castigates as a terrible persecutor of the godly on the other. Foxe represents Henry VIII as type of the true Godly Monarch and yet, in a remarkable apostrophe addressed to the dead King, he goes as far as to suggest that Henry may have been consigned to hell for killing Christians. Similarly, because of its explicitly “popish” content, Shakespeare’s staging works to place Henry VI at the center of an emblem of royal apostasy on one hand, and yet, because it is also the root of his pacifism and dramatically exigent moral goodness, Henry’s piety also positions him very much outside of the descent into antichristian violence dramatized throughout *1-3 Henry VI*. In short, the play can be read along with the *Acts & Monuments* as a dramatization of the *preservation* of godly kingship in the figure of Henry VI, even as Henry VI, like Foxe’s Henry VIII, also *stands for* its opposite. This Foxeian reading gains credence, moreover, in light of the distinct parallels between Shakespeare’s emphasis on Henry’s child-like and pious “bookish rule” and Tudor iconography of Edward VI, a great deal of which was actually preserved in the *Acts & Monuments*. As John N. King has illustrated, in Edwardian iconography the image of a pious boy king armed with a book was a potent symbol of royal power. In a fashion similar to the relationship between Joan and Queen Elizabeth which will be discussed in Chapter Three, Shakespeare’s Henry VI both parodies the Edwardian image of Protestant kingship *and* looks forward to its recovery in the future: Henry’s “bookish rule” pulls England down; Edward’s sets it up again.

On Foxe and the concept of Godly Rule see Haller *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* and Lamont, *Godly Rule*. On Edwardian iconography see King 1989, 90-101 and 1983, 161-68. The anonymous painting “Edward VI and the Pope” (c.1548-49) shown on the cover page of this essay is an excellent example of idealized Protestant image of true kingship by a pious and “bookish” youth.

2. See *Shakespeare’s History Plays*, 235.

3. Margaret Aston’s essay “Richard II and the Wars of the Roses” is still by far the best survey of the varieties of the “Tudor Myth” in English historiography leading up to Shakespeare. Aston has identified the three basic characteristics which defined the “Tudor Myth” of the Wars of the Roses era: an exaggerated emphasis on the violence and chaos of the conflicts, the belief that the origins of the troubles were in the reign of Richard II, and the belief that Providence was reflected in the events. It is perfectly evident, at least from the perspective of Aston’s research, that Shakespeare’s English chronicle history plays constituted a dramatic version of the “Tudor Myth.” Indeed, as Aston points out, providential interpretation of course notwithstanding, what is striking to medievalists is the persistence with which Shakespeare’s plays continue to propagate the “Tudor Myth” today (280-81). In addition to establishing the historiographical context of Shakespeare’s version of the Wars of the Roses era, Aston is the only writer I have found who has recognized the authority of Foxe’s Protestant version of the 15th-century crisis in the late Elizabethan period. Unfortunately, because she focuses solely on Foxe’s view of the reign Richard II, Aston neglects Foxe’s Apocalyptic framework and thus largely misrepresents Foxe’s view as an

ecclesiastical *version* of Hall (291-300). Although it is not exactly argued in opposition to Hall's providentialism, Foxe's view of the period is nevertheless quite different. In particular, because it is based on the millennial "loosing out of Satan," Foxe's account places no particular stress on God's anger towards the houses of Lancaster or York. Consequently, while he is an antichrist, Richard III has no special role to play. Nor, for that matter, does Henry VII, who is a very negative figure in Foxe's view. In Richard III Shakespeare's thinking became much more closely aligned with the providential pattern in Hall than was the case in 1-3HenryVI, but that does not mean, as both Hattaway and Cox have argued, that the earlier plays had no mythic or providential content whatsoever.

4. The following account of Foxe's historiography is indebted in particular to D.R. Woolf's outstanding essay "The Rhetoric of Martyrdom." Professor Woolf was kind enough not only to provide me with a copy of his article prior to publication, but also to spend some time talking with a complete stranger about the shape of Foxe's historical thought and its impact on 16th- and 17th-century political culture. Woolf's work on late Renaissance historiography offers, I think, a model of what truly interdisciplinary literary historical scholarship should be. In addition to Woolf, I have tried to make my account consistent with the discussions of Foxe's historical method in Christianson, Haller, Wooden, Facey, Bauckham, Olsen, and Levy. The emphasis I have placed on the 15<sup>th</sup>-century civil war era within Foxe's Apocalyptic framework, the suggestion that existing attitudes about the Wars of the Roses era might have influenced Foxe's dating, and that this would have contributed significantly to the authority of his work, are my own. On Foxe and the Protestant redefinition of Antichrist and antichristianism, see especially Hill 1-40; Emerson, 204-236; Bauckham, 91-144; and Christianson, 9-46.
5. The difference between Foxe's providential dialectic and the Augustinian dualism is discussed in detail by Kemp, 66-105.
6. This point is illustrated in detail by Aston, 284-86.

## CHAPTER THREE:

'ANTICHRIST DECIPHERED SEE': JOAN AND APOSTASY IN *1HENRYVI*

In the opening scene of *1HenryVI*, the Duke of Bedford vows that he will make “Bonfires in France...To keep our St. George's feast withal” (1.1.153-4). In Act Five, these fires are seemingly materialized in the burning, albeit offstage, of a pregnant woman. This transformation of a celebratory vision of future martial victory into one of terrible judicial violence arguably reflects the deflationary attitude towards militarism displayed in *1HenryVI* and typifies the basic anti-war stance which characterizes *1-3HenryVI* as a whole. It also suggests, by virtue of the potent resonance between the burning of Joan and many similar persecutions in the *Acts&Monuments*, that there is a Foxeian subtext operating in the play which links the action to the providential pattern of history in Foxe. In *1HenryVI*, Shakespeare begins his dramatic account of the Wars of the Roses era with a representation of foreign war centered on Joan. Tracing the relationship between Shakespeare's Joan and the *Acts&Monuments* reveals how the playwright used Foxeian thematics to represent the French as an emblem of royal apostasy. This essentially comic portrait then becomes a mirror in which the spiritual degradation of the English nobility is revealed.

## FRANCE'S SAINT

In her well-known “topical” reading of *1HenryVI*, Leah Marcus has argued that Shakespeare's treatment of the war in France is centered on the “disquieting figure of

Joan,” and her resemblance to the “real-life Queen Elizabeth”(Marcus, 52). Marcus is right, but her reading largely ignores the Protestant iconographical and historical modes in terms of which Joan is portrayed, and hence would likely have been interpreted by many playgoers. As John N. King has demonstrated, Tudor iconographers represented monarchs typologically in terms of exemplary royal figures and, simultaneously, in terms of inverted parodic opposites of those figures. Moreover, after the break with Rome, royal iconography was virtually always produced and interpreted in terms of religious polemic. Thus, to summarize a very large topic, Elizabethan iconography typically involved elaborate comparisons with royal figures representing positive Protestant virtues and simultaneously contrasting or parodic images of false, Catholic, and hence satanic, power.<sup>1</sup> A familiar example is Spenser's Una, the poet's “archetype for a faithful princess or queen,” who reflects Elizabeth positively in terms of the Apocalyptic figure of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, and negatively, in terms of her demonic parody “the harlot Duessa, modeled on the Whore of Babylon”(King 1989, 262). Similarly, Redcross Knight is both a type of princely virtue when he champions Una and its opposite, princely apostasy and error, when he falls under the spell of Duessa. Because it is so apposite to Shakespeare's representation of Joan, King's point about the dual registers within Elizabethan iconography is worth quoting fully:

Although explicit references to the Blessed Virgin were effaced by Protestants hostile to the mariological cult, Elizabeth I took over many of the virgin's epithets as part of an effort to channel traditional devotional forms in support of her regime. These titles include Virgin, Bride, Mother, and Queen.... *The many vestiges of Catholic iconography in the praise of Queen Elizabeth as a wise and faithful Queen incorporate a critique of Catholic ritualism, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and even the Marian regime associated with those practices* (1989, 203; emphasis mine).

Contemporary iconographic practice, then, confirms Marcus' suggestion that playgoers would have recognized in Joan "a distorted image of Queen Elizabeth"(53), but not her assumption that this would have been something disquieting, unorthodox, or subversive. The essential point to be made about Elizabethan iconography, one which Marcus occludes, is that it was totally predicated on the ability to distinguish between true and false images of royalty. That is not to say that Protestant iconographers weren't concerned with the possibility of error, contamination and idolatry. Spenser's *Redcross Knight* does fail to distinguish between Una and Duessa, but surely the point is that Spenser's readers never would have.

Readers of the *Acts&Monuments* in particular were well schooled in the art of distinguishing between true princes and false, apostate, counterfeits. This education is exemplified in the title page of the *Acts&Monuments*, which includes paired woodcut emblems contrasting true religion with its false double (**fig. 1**). Although the images are very similar, the parody is easily discernible by virtue of its popish content: prayer beads, incense and candles, raised idols, and other symbols of Catholic worship. Similarly, royal iconography in the *Acts&Monuments* constructs numerous examples of contrasting true Protestant and apostate Catholic royalty. The most expressive of these, one easily interpreted even by those incapable of reading, is the "Proud Primacie of Popes" woodcut series (**fig. 2**). These satirical illustrations show a series kings and emperors variously prostrating and abasing themselves before the Pope, and thus adumbrate a parody of true kingship, rendered false by Catholic apostasy. This composite image of false rule is contrasted elsewhere in the book by mirror-like images of Edward VI, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I triumphing over the Pope.<sup>2</sup>



At the risk of belabouring the point, Marcus' analysis fails precisely because she obscures the language of religious polemic which structures and gives dramatic meaning to the portrayal of Joan in the play: "all the popish rites with which the French surround their venerated martial maid eerily resemble the quasi-religious ritual that surrounded England's virgin Queen"(Marcus, 67). There was, however, nothing "quasi-religious" about Elizabethan iconographic practice—it was accepted and endorsed by an overwhelming majority of Protestants as an expression of Elizabeth as a true Christian monarch. Nor is there anything particularly "eerie" or covertly subversive about the resemblance between Joan and Queen Elizabeth in *1HenryVI*. Rather, Shakespeare's drama explicitly imitates contemporary iconographic practice in a way that would have been readily understood by playgoers. Precisely because she mirrors Elizabeth, Joan is shown to be a false prophetess Queen, a type of the biblical Whore of Babylon who becomes the object of idolatrous worship by the French. Such a dramatic project might have been suggested to Shakespeare by Hall, who also emphasized Joan's satanic falseness in order to deprecate the French leaders:

[R]ehersyng to hym, visions, traunces, and fables full of blasphemy, supersticion and hypocrazy, that I marvel moch that wise men did believe her...I write how she declared such privy messages from God, our lady, and other saintes to the dolphyn...so was he deluded, & so was he deceived by the devil's means...This wytych or manly-woman (called the maide of God) the Frenchmen greatly glorified and highly extolled, alledgying that by her Orleance was vitailed: by her, King Charles was sacred[sic] at Reynes, and that by her the English were oftentimes put backe and overthrowen. O lord, what dispraise is this to the nobilitie of France: what blotte is this to the French nacion...this woman was not inspired with the holy ghoste, nor sent from God, (as the Frenchmen believe) but an enchanteresse, an organe of the devill, sent from Sathan, to blind the people and bring in unbelife (in Bullough, 3:57-61).

While Shakespeare was neither an iconographer nor a religious polemicist, his use of these modalities subserves an effort to create dramatic emblems which express his sense of the real historical past.

Gabriele Bernhard Jackson has suggested that Joan should be interpreted in terms of

[T]he way in which a character is perceived by the audience at a particular moment of dramatic time...it is a matter of the character's consonance with the key into which the movement of the play has modulated.... [this] permits us to recognize and give individual value to the phases of her portrayal, which, not untypically for Shakespeare, is partially continuous and partially distinct (Jackson, 43-44).

Although Jackson's analysis of Joan follows a much different trajectory than mine, her view of Joan's dramatic role clarifies rather precisely Shakespeare's use of Foxeian motifs in the play.<sup>3</sup> As an historical character, Joan has a distinctly realistic identity which is continuous throughout the play: she is a resolute, sexually intrepid, and energetic, but also naive and deeply deluded, peasant girl. As such, Joan has a distinctly Foxeian provenance in that she recollects the many poor, illiterate women who are foregrounded in the *Acts&Monuments*. Like them, Joan emerges from social obscurity due to her religious vocation, challenges authority, and, as a result, is burned at the stake.<sup>4</sup> In the course of the play, Joan's essential and historically realistic identity is placed in a series of emblematic dramatic contexts in which significant meaning is produced as a result the audience's assessment of the way various male characters interact with her. The first of these dramatizes a process analogous to the one illustrated in Foxe's "Proud Primacie" series: the rise of the spurious whore/saint/queen Joan la Pucelle through the apostasy of the Dauphin and the French nobility. The second centers on the struggle

between Joan and the English champion Talbot, and modulates, to use Jackson's terms, from the essentially comic key of French apostasy to a much more serious examination of the spiritual malaise that lies at the heart of Talbot's death. This shift in historiographic tone is completed in Act Five, where the Foxeian language of persecution and martyrdom is used to reveal the deeply degraded state of the English nobility.

Again, these dramatic emblems should be viewed as fundamentally historiographical: they work to establish the action of the plays in terms of an interpretation of the shape of the English past. Although *we* don't see God's hand at work in the events, Elizabethan playgoers could have readily identified the providential pattern at work because of the way the play evokes Foxe's conception of the civil war era as one of universal apostasy and the "loosing out" of Antichrist into the world. Initially located in the figure of Joan, the enemy, the play forcefully illustrates the working of an Antichrist-like power among the English.

Read as an inversion or parody of Elizabethan iconography, it is easy to see how Act One dramatizes royal apostasy and the rise of a popish idol. Joan is introduced to the three French rulers, the Dauphin, Reignier, and Alencon, by the *Bastard* of Orleans, an innovation which allows Shakespeare to introduce the leitmotif of falsehood and sexual misconduct. This sexual leitmotif is associated, from the outset, with prophecy: "The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,/ Exceeding the nine sibyls of Old Rome"(1.2.55-6). For readers of the *Acts&Monuments*, this allusion to the sibylline prophecies might have had a familiar ring because the sibylls were something of a favourite topic for Foxe. He refers to them as having predicted, among other things, the birth of Christ and the Reformation (3.721; 4.115-16). This potentially positive association is immediately undermined when

Joan describes her vision in terms of the cult of Mary, thus identifying her with the new, rather than the “old” Rome, and so with false prophesy, idolatry, and error:

Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased  
 To shine on my contemptible estate.  
 Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs  
 And to suns parching heat displayed my cheeks,  
 God's mother deigned to appear to me  
 And in a vision full of majesty  
 Willed me to leave my base vocation  
 And free my country from calamity; (1.2.74-81).

As in the many images of false worship in the *Acts&Monuments*, the mariological content of Joan's story identifies her new vocation as the spurious product of popish error. Joan's belief in her vision and calling remains steadfast and consistently Catholic throughout the play, suggesting a pointed inversion of the true faith which structures the lives of Foxe's many women martyrs. Whereas true faith was the key to Christian life, such “deceitful delusions,” Foxe argued, were a powerful force working to undermine both individual Christians and Christendom as a whole:

By such deceitful prophecies it cannot be lamented enough to see what inconvenience, both public and private, groweth to the life of men, either causing them falsely to trust where they should not, or else wickedly to perpetrate what they should not....to this pertain also the great inconvenience and hindrance that grow by the fear of such prophecies in the vocation of men, forasmuch as there be, who, fearing some one danger, some another, leave their vocations undone, and follow inordinate ways (3.757-58).

Charles' response to Joan's narrative—“Thou hast astonished me with thy high terms” (1.2.94)—which only partially conceals his sexual excitement, is the antithesis of Foxe's advice to “Christian men” who, he says, should “be well instructed, neither to marvel greatly at them, though they seem strange, nor yet believe them, though they happen true”(3.756). To see just how explicitly Shakespeare is using the Protestant rhetoric of

“popish” apostasy here, we can compare Charles' enthusiastic desire to make “proof” of Joan's “valor”(1.2.94) with Duke Humphrey's emphatically *Protestant* response to the popish “miracle” of Saunders Simpcox's restored vision in *2HenryVI*.

The identification of Joan as a false prophet, and the Dauphin's failure to see her as such, establishes the play's pointed dramatization of royal apostasy because, as King has illustrated, the link between the monarchy and biblical evangelicalism and prophecy was central to Protestant iconography (1989, 7-8). Thus, in an encomium of Elizabeth which he wrote for a 1560 performance of *King Johan*, John Bale associated the Queen with “that Angell, as St. John doth hym call,” and with the prophet Daniel: “In Danyel's sprete she hath subdued the Papistes/ With all the offsprynge of Antichrist's generacion”(in Bauckham, 129). As Richard Bauckham explains, the angel referred to is from Revelation, a figure which Bale associated with all true prophets and preachers, and “Danyel's sprete” refers to “the spirit of Daniel's prophetic denunciation of antichrist”(129). Explicitly Catholic, Joan's prophetic power is thus a parodic inversion of true Protestant royalty.

It is worthwhile to look closely at Joan's “spirit of deep prophesy” because the ironic pattern it develops underlines the more obvious allusions to Elizabethan iconography which follow. Charles praises Joan as “an Amazon” who “fightest with the sword of Deborah”(1.2.104-5), both of which figures were common aspects of Elizabeth's iconographic identity as a Protestant champion. Whereas Deborah was a Hebrew prophetess who rescued Israel from Canaanite idolatry, Joan seduces the French into error. Bale's Elizabethan epigram, “Nam Iesabel quondam tortrix, sed Deborah vindex” (in King 1989, 225) prefigures Shakespeare's dramatic point perfectly. Joan's comic aside

about her sword, “The which at Touraine, in Saint Katherine's churchyard/ Out of a great deal of old iron I chose forth”(1.2.101-2), is a source detail from Hall (Bullough, 3:57) which Shakespeare pointedly highlights as a parody of an Elizabethan iconographic motif made famous by Spenser:

But at her feet her sword was likewise layde,  
Whose long rest rusted the bright steely brand;  
Yet when as foes enforst, or friends sought ayde,  
She could it sternely draw, that all the world dismayde (*FQ* 5.9.30).

The aside pointedly contrasts Joan's Tamburlaine-like militarism with Elizabeth's reputation as a Prince of Peace, while at the same time revealing Joan's “valour” to be a sham and an imposture. The Dauphin's praise of Joan as “Astraea's daughter” (1.6.4) is an even more obvious parody. As Frances Yates has amply demonstrated, Astraea was a central figure in Elizabethan iconography. Yates describes George Peel's 1591 pageant *Descensus Astraeae*, where Astraea/Elizabeth appears as a virgin shepherdess opposed by “Supersticion, a friar, and Ignorance, a priest, who attempt in vain to poison the flock from which her flock is drinking” (Yates, 60). Shakespeare's Joan perfectly inverts the pattern by abandoning her pastoral vocation in order to “poison” the French nobility with her false prophesies and rule over them as a perverse whore/saint.

These are just a few examples of the series of densely packed allusions which clearly establish the Dauphin's response to Joan as a parody of Elizabethan iconography. One which is unmistakably Foxeian is the Dauphin's reference to “Helen, mother of great Constantine”(1.2.142). This recollects Foxe's distinctive and elaborate portrayal in the *Acts&Monuments* of Elizabeth as a second “Constantine the greate and mightie Emperour, the sonne of Helen an Englyshe woman of this youre Realme and countrie

(moste Christian and renowned Pryncesse Queene Elizabeth)” (8.appendix, np.). This prose encomium was accompanied, in the 1563 edition, by a famous woodcut image of Elizabeth as Constantine trampling on the Pope. (fig. 3) Thus Shakespeare has the Dauphin parody a piece of well-known and explicitly Foxeian iconography which was, at least according to Yates’ reading of the *Acts&Monuments*, “the climax of the whole book”(Yates, 44). The dramatic effect of these allusions, clearly enough, would not have been to confuse Joan and Elizabeth, but to cast Joan and her followers in the light of the many similar Protestant royal parodies.

Behind these allusions, moreover, the fundamental parallel which structures Shakespeare's portrait of royal apostasy is between “la puzle,” the whore, and the biblical Whore of Babylon. Playgoers would have readily seen Joan's rise as a reflection of how the apostate Roman church had “set up that great idol, the Whore of Babylon, Anti-christ of Rome, whom they call pope”( in Emerson, 205). This apocalyptic historical idea, quoted here from Tyndale's widely read *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, was central to the argument of the *Acts&Monuments*, and was easily among the most familiar ideas in Elizabethan England. Very typically, Andrew Willet's 1591 emblem book, *Sacorum Emblematum Centuria Una*, describes “the harlot” in terms of the royal apostasy that creates her power:

To her euen Kings do bow the knee  
 Thus antichrist deciphered see  
 As if in marble graven were hee (in Emerson, 205).

Both the powerful image of a king kneeling before a harlot and the latent homosexual implications in the iconographical tradition are an obvious part of Shakespeare's staging. Probably responding to Hall's claim that Joan's “foule face” was commonly known (in

Bullough, 3:56), Shakespeare has Joan refer to her miraculous beauty in a comic aside which calls attention to the fact that “she” is a boy actor and that her beauty has been created by a wig and stage make-up:

In complete glory she revealed herself;  
And whereas I was black and swart before  
With those clear rays which she infused on me  
That beauty am I blest with, which you may see (1.2.83-6).

Thus, the Dauphin's desire to “buckle” with Joan is not just a comically sexual *double entendre*, it can be seen as a Shakespearean counterpart to the scene in Bale's *King Johan* where Sodomy is seduced by Idolatry.

It is Foxe, however, in his play *Christus Triumphans*, who provides perhaps the most expressive dramatic link between Joan and the biblical Whore. Foxe's play, which was written while he was in exile, dramatizes the essential features of the providential historical scheme which he later developed in the *Acts&Monuments*. The Apocalyptic figure of the Whore of Babylon is represented in the play by a naive girl named Pornapolis (Rome). In Act Four, following the release of Satan from his millennial captivity, Satan describes how Pornapolis is to be “decked out in exquisite clothes and completely abandoned to the clamour of royalty”:

You'll also give her this cup of fornication with which to intoxicate kings with the poison of harlotry. You'll infect everything with lechery and pleasures. So it will happen that you'll sink these people into ignorance—for pleasure unteaches men virtue (4.4.80-88).

This fairly typical piece of Protestant typology comes to life, dramatically speaking, when Pornapolis herself comes on stage to describe how she has met “three kings” and “toasted them with this cup of fornication”:

Then and there they all fell down and adored me exceedingly. Why they even kissed the tracks of my feet. Soon three kings came to meet me. I toasted them with this cup of fornication. When the



wine grew warm in us, first everyone expression began to slacken, and then they began to whisper back and forth to each other...and when we were alone, they began: what my beauty and their prime--well, how uncontrollable the shaft of love would be on either account....They said, The more we look at your face, the less we can bear up." What to do then? "Do grant us the riches of one night." They urged, begged, implored, sighed. I paid close attention to the men's faces, their eyes and gestures; I watched everything they did. When I saw that they were serious about it, I began to be a little coy, as we courtesans usually do when we want to make our eager clients more eager. Finally, when I saw that they were on fire, I began to appear more friendly to them. At last, to be brief about it, I took their pledges, and I told them to return tomorrow (4.8.11-40).

I have quoted Pornapolis' speech at length because it is such an interesting

intertext for Shakespeare's portrayal of Joan. Using conventions derived from medieval religious drama and Roman comedy, Foxe's play offers an emblem of royal apostasy which is linked in historical time to the era represented in Shakespeare's play, and which is rendered in the strikingly familiar image of an earthy young prostitute slyly and purposefully enthralling three princes with the promise of future sexual favours. Foxe's Pornapolis prefigures both the content and the tone of Shakespeare's dramatization of the rise of Joan la Pucelle, and hence suggests how Joan might have been recognized by playgoers in terms of Protestant historiography. This is almost certainly true at least for readers of the *Acts&Monuments* who were also familiar with Foxe's play.<sup>5</sup> Again, the fundamental dramatic emphasis is not Joan's quasi-mythical status—Joan is always essentially Joan—but rather on the way the French prostrate themselves before an idol of their own devising. There seems to be no doubt that Charles' enthusiastic encomium at the end of Act One establishes the theme of royal apostasy as the main dramatic thrust of the play thus far:

Divinest creature, Astraea's daughter  
How shall I honour thee for this success?

...

France, triumph in thy glorious prophetess!

...

'Tis Joan not we, by whom the day is won;  
For which I will divide my crown with her,  
And all the priests and friars in my realm  
Shall in procession sing her endless praise.

...

No longer on St. Denis will we cry,  
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint (1.6.4-29).

#### JOAN AND TALBOT

Rather than an eerily subversive portrait of the real monarch, or a “tangle of contradictory allusions”(Jackson, 48), Shakespeare's initial representation of Joan functions as a controlled translation of Protestant iconography onto the stage. In *Joan and the Dauphin*, the playwright creates a resonant dramatic symbol of royal apostasy which would have worked to structure the audience's response to the main action of the play, the tragic career of John Talbot.

Although the play ends with a victory of sorts, the dominant theme of *1 Henry VI* is certainly English military defeat. The death of Talbot at Bordeaux is therefore the climax of the play, and so, consequently, Shakespeare's extended representation of Talbot's demise is designed to evoke as much pathos as the stage could afford. That he was successful is confirmed by Nashe's famous image of Talbot “newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least”(in Evans 1837). Shakespeare's staging of this climactic scene culminates in a tableau-like image of Talbot, the “great Alcides of the field,” lying “stinking and fly-blown” at the feet of a triumphant Joan la

Pucelle(4.7.60,76). This moment recollects, albeit in a very different emotional register, the earlier “victory” of Joan over the Dauphin. Seemingly in order to evoke just such a recollection, Shakespeare has Lucy express the same familiar language of Elizabethan iconography used in Act One: “but from their ashes shall be rear’d/ A phoenix that shall make all France afear’d” (4.7.92-93). The sense of dramatic doubling or mirroring becomes even more pronounced in light of the way the play has already made an explicit comparison between Joan's victories in single combat over first the Dauphin and then Talbot in Act One. In the former, the tone is essentially comic and the audience participates in the dramatist's satirical portrayal Joan's specious beauty overcoming a Dauphin who is clearly eager to be made a “prostrate thrall:”

Impatiently I burn with thy desire;  
My heart and hands thou hast at once subdu'd  
Excellent Pucelle, if thy name be so,  
Let me thy servant and not sovereign be (1.2.117, 108-111).

This comic combat is mirrored in the fight between Joan and Talbot in Act One, scene five. Although it doesn't involve a great deal of speech, this crucial scene shows not just a hand-to-hand fight between Joan and Talbot, but also a fairly elaborate depiction of Joan in the role of military commander gaining a decisive victory. The two-part single combat between Joan and Talbot is sandwiched between two large scale battle scenes in which Joan's soldiers drive off Talbot and the English. The French recapture Orleans and thus confirm Joan's “vision” that she was “ordained...to raise this tedious siege”(1.2.53). Joan accurately predicts a future, this time conclusive and fatal, victory over Talbot just as she had earlier promised the Dauphin future sexual conquests:

I must not yield to any rites of love

For my profession's sacred from above;  
 When I have chased all thy foes from hence,  
 Then will I think upon a recompense (1.2. 113-116).

Talbot, farewell, thy hour is not yet come; (1.5.13).

These episodes of Joan in combat, then, offer parallel images or emblems of what could be called *Joan Triumphant*, and hence invite some kind of cognate interpretation: How is the Dauphin like the Talbot? Moreover, the play amply demonstrates that Talbot's defeat at Bordeaux was caused by the treachery of York and Somerset, rather than by the virtue of Joan and the French forces alone. Even the egotistical Dauphin acknowledges that "Had York and Somerset brought rescue in,/ We should have found a bloody day of this" (4.7.33-34). Thus, the historical problem raised in the play seems to be: How does the loss of France, an unmitigated military disaster symbolized by Talbot's pathetic demise, constitute an historical process analogous to the apostasy of the French?

Recent criticism has addressed the problem of Joan's power by focusing solely on gender; that is, by showing how the play stages the release of a female power, repressed in Elizabethan culture, which triumphs, temporarily, but which is eventually contained or retrenched by the burning of Joan at the play's end.<sup>6</sup> As relevant as this approach undoubtedly is, it fairly begs the question of how Shakespeare's representation of the defeat of the English champion at the hands of a woman contributes to the historiographical project of *1-3HenryVI* as a whole. While there were doubtless numerous interpretive possibilities inherent in Shakespeare's staging of Joan's victories, for readers of the *Acts&Monuments* the treachery of York and Somerset, and the consequent military disaster, Talbot's failure to defeat Joan, would have been readily interpreted as

manifestations of the same historical phenomenon already adumbrated in Joan's relations with the French. That is, in the behaviour of York and Somerset, to which can be added the contention between Duke Humphrey and Cardinal Winchester, and the origins of the York/Lancaster feud in the Temple Garden episode, the play creates a dramatic image of internal division which is materially and symbolically identified with Talbot's inability to vanquish Joan. From the Protestant historical perspective offered by the *Acts&Monuments*, this combination of bitter military defeat and profound internal divisiveness would have been readily identifiable as an emblem of English apostasy, a serious version of the popish idolatry earlier represented by the Dauphin.

Despite his valour, his military intelligence, demonstrated in his besting of the Countess Auvergne, and his obvious physical prowess, Talbot simply cannot defeat Joan:

Where is my strength, my valor, and my force?  
Our English troops retire, I cannot stay them;  
A woman clad in armour chaseth men.

...

Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?  
My breast I'll burst with straining of my courage  
And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder  
But I will chastise this high minded strumpet (1.4.1-3,9-12).

In the course of the struggle, in which he singularly fails to "chastise" the "strumpet"

Joan, Talbot tries to comprehend his defeat by attributing Joan's success to witchcraft:

Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee:  
Blood will I draw on thee--thou art a witch--  
And straightway give thy soul to him thou serv'st (1.4.5-7).

However, just as Joan's generalship belies the notion that she is a mere strumpet, the concept of witchcraft adduced by Talbot here hardly seems to offer a serviceable explanation of Joan's power. As Keith Thomas has demonstrated, contemporary attitudes

towards witchcraft, especially among urbanites like Shakespeare's audience, were characterized by a growing skepticism about the efficacy of magic power and by a recognition of the social fact that recourse to witchcraft was largely a product of desperation, poverty, and impotence (Thomas, 517, 620-24). It is this contemporary attitude which seems to be dramatized later in the play when Joan desperately tries to use black magic to avoid defeat but is easily overcome by York. Talbot's reference to the belief that a witch's power can be broken by a scratch suggests weakness rather than supernatural strength and, while he identifies Joan as a witch, Talbot expects to defeat her nonetheless. Similarly, while he refers to Joan as a "strumpet," there is no suggestion that he is in any way charmed by Joan's sexuality, feminine or otherwise. Unlike Spenser's Redcross Knight or Artegall fighting the Amazon, Radigund, Talbot is neither tempted nor softened by Joan's femininity. Quite the opposite: he relishes the thought of literally ripping Joan (and the Dauphin) to shreds. It is this kind of Senecan violence, the desire to literally obliterate Joan's body, which underlines Talbot's identity as the "terror" and "bloody scourge" of France (4.2.16):

Puzel or Pucelle, dolphin or dog-fish

Your hearts I'll stamp out with my horse's heels.

And make a quagmire of your mingled brains (1.4.106-108).

Seemingly, the sexual lust which characterized the relationship between Joan and the Dauphin is transformed, in the figure of Talbot, into an unnatural lust for blood.

The play raises the specter of black magic, just as it has evoked the image of the biblical Whore, in a dramatically ironic fashion. What the audience actually sees is that Talbot is defeated by "a woman clad in armor" in spite of his ferocious strength, because of the fearful credulity of his troops, and through the pernicious divisiveness of York and

Somerset. It is precisely this kind of thorough analysis of causes which has led critics to insist upon the anti-providentialism of these plays. However, there is a palpable continuity between the degraded state of the English troops, typified by the figure of Sir John Fastolf, Talbot's bloodthirsty but ultimately impotent militarism, and the "vulture of sedition" which, as Lucy exclaims, "feeds in the bosoms" of the English nobility (4.3.47-8). This continuity points towards a deeper historical causality, a sense of general apostasy which, in the interpretive context of the *Acts&Monuments*, points ineluctably towards the providential pattern of Foxe's apocalyptic historical scheme. The English cannot win because, in a very real sense, their enemy is the antichristian spirit raging within themselves. Shakespeare carefully constructs his representation of complex political causes so that his audience can discover the underlying providential reality. Moreover, recollecting the intertextual character of the chronicle play genre outlined above, it is precisely because Shakespeare accommodates this providential reality that the play could be understood as authentic history.

Thus, to return to the resonant figure of Joan triumphing over Talbot, Shakespeare's dramaturgy works to create a dramatic emblem of bitterly tragic defeat in which a series of moral maladies—credulity, bloodlust, and rancorous division—internal to the English are manifested in an enemy who is cast in terms of idolatry, witchcraft, sexual perversion, and, as well, a threateningly real military power. This staging, which arrestingly redefines the comic apostasy of the Dauphin, can be read with remarkable precision in terms of the dominant themes of Foxe's view of the same historical period as a dark age of satanic apostasy.

The theme of division, for example, is one of the key terms in Foxe's composite figure of the historical Antichrist. As D.R. Woolf explains, "the real rebels in Foxe's stories are not the martyrs who guard the Gospel, but the ecclesiastical and civil forces that over the course of centuries have divided Christendom, just as more recently they have divided, through mutilation, the physical bodies of the saints"(Woolf 1994, 13). This historical theme, in which popish apostasy, persecution, and rampant militarism are facets of the same divisive satanic force, is hammered home by Foxe in numerous examples, ranging from the endless squabbling of monks to the constant fighting among Christian nations. Foxe dwells so insistently on this truth, he argues, so that:

[I]t may notoriously appear to all readers, what strife and debate, what dissention and division, what little unity and concord hath always followed the pope's catholic church, wheresoever the corrupt religion and usurped ambition of the pope prevailed...upon which continual strife and variance among them, the reader hereof may judge...in the mean time, my judgement is this; that where such dissension dwelleth, there dwelleth not the spirit of Christ (2.296-98).

Shakespeare's dramaturgy invests political division, the "vulture of sedition," with a symbolic weight which belies a purely "politic" interpretation; the *Acts&Monuments* provides a providential heuristic in terms of which the play's emphasis on division could have been interpreted as history by playgoers.

Foxe's exhaustive historical treatment of the theme of real Christian unity versus false satanic division culminates, in the first volume of the 1570 *Acts&Monuments*, in the remarkable figure of the Turk. In a lengthy account of the Ottoman empire, centered on the numerous failed attempts by Christian armies to destroy it, Foxe presents the rise of Turkish power as a kind of false imperium, analogous to the apostasy of Christendom under the papacy. Thus, the ubiquitous and pernicious dissension among Christians is



represented in terms of a contrast with the false unity of the Turks. The apostate Christendom in the west is seen in the mirror of the counterfeit religiopolitical unity of the Turks centered on their “devilish Mahomet” and his “ridiculous Alcoran”(4.21). The complex irony of Foxe's interpolated history of the Turks is difficult to paraphrase, but the essential point is that rather than a conflict between “good” Christians and “evil” Turks, Foxe urges his readers to recognize both the Turks and their Christian foes as aspects of the same satanic force operating in history. There is a remarkable similarity between Foxe's treatment of the failed effort to defeat the Turk and Shakespeare's representation of the war in France. Like Foxe, Shakespeare uses ironic mirroring to both contrast and identify the false unity of the French, centered on the “devilish” Joan and her “ridiculous” prophecy, with the divisiveness of the English. And like Foxe, Shakespeare uses dramatic irony to position his audience so that they can perceive the fundamental historical reality which underlies the action of the play. Fighting and dying in a fruitless struggle in France reveals, as in Foxe's account of Turkish history, the first stage in a providential process by which England sinks into apostasy.

At the beginning of his account of Turkish history, Foxe raises a question which is identical to that asked by Talbot in the wake of his defeat at the hands of Joan la Pucelle. That is, Foxe asks how it can be that the Christian armies have time and time again been defeated by the Turks: “now how we have fought these many years against the Turk, though stories have kept silent, yet the success declareth”(4.19). The answer to Talbot's desperate question, “Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?,” is answered, so to speak, intertextually by Foxe:

[T]he causes of these great divisions and victories were the division and discord, falsehood, idleness, inconstancy, greedy avarice, lack of truth and fidelity, among the Christian men of all states and degrees, both high and low...and what marvel then if Christ fight not with us, fighting against the Turk? The Turk hath prevailed so mightily not because Christ is weak, but because Christians be wicked, and their doctrine impure...the name of God is in our mouths, but his fear is not in our hearts. We war against the Turk with our works, masses, traditions and ceremonies; but we fight not against him with Christ, and with the power of his glory; which if we did; the field were won (4.19).

Substitute “French” for “Turk” and “English” for “Christians,” and it would be difficult to find a more resonant intertext for the ironic perspective of Shakespeare's play. Bedford, we recall, wanted to make bonfires in France to “keep our great St. George's feast withal” (1.1.154), and Talbot, devoted to the “ordained” Knights of the Garter (4.1.33-4) fights for “*God and Saint George, Talbot and England's right*”(4.2.55, emphasis mine). What the play shows, however, is that these heroic aspirations cloak a vicious spirit the effluence of which can only be ignominious degradation and defeat. Thus Shakespeare, very much along with Foxe in the *Acts&Monuments*, seems to argue that “he that bringeth St. George or St. Denis, as patrons, to the field, to fight against the Turk, leaveth Christ, no doubt, at home”(4.19).<sup>7</sup>

Like his Pornapolis, Foxe's explanation of Turkish power, which is appropriately glossed as “dissensions among the Christians makes the Turks strong” (4.23), is a fascinating intertext for Shakespeare's representation of the struggle between Talbot and Joan. We have already seen how Joan is associated with the Whore of Babylon, so it is not surprising to find her at least potentially identified with another antitype of the Protestant Antichrist, the Turk. Defined as an exigent political reality which is nevertheless a product of the spiritual failings of the Christians, Foxe's Turk seems to capture perfectly the essence of Joan's power during this invincible phase of her career.

Talbot cannot defeat Joan because his antichristian bloodlust, like the divisiveness of the other English nobles and the sexual depravity of the Dauphin, is by definition self-defeating. The idea that Shakespeare's audience would have recognized the figure of Mahomet behind Shakespeare's Joan, and hence may have interpreted her victory in Foxeian terms, gains purchase when it is recognized that the play explicitly connects Joan with Turkish triumphs. As David Riggs has suggested, Joan's initial self-portrait contains an unmistakable allusion to Tamburlaine, the invincible pagan tyrant popularized in Marlowe's dramatization of Turkish history (Riggs, 105-7). As part of his comic encomium in Act One, the Dauphin suggests that Joan is an even greater warrior/prophet than the founder of the Ottoman empire: "Was Mahomet inspired with a dove?/ Thou with an eagle art inspired then" (1.2.140-41). Joan recollects this comment in her emblematic moment of triumph over Talbot by referring to "the Turk, that two-and-fifty kingdoms hath"(4.7.73). It is interesting to note, moreover, that the historical Talbot, whose death caused Shakespeare's audience to weep, actually died in 1453, the same year that Mahomet the Great conquered Constantinople, an event which was said to have made all of Europe weep. As suggested above, the pattern of the play echoes Foxe's historical irony in that Joan's seemingly Turkish power is used as a mirror to reveal the Turkish weakness of her opponents, Talbot and the English nobility. In addition to the long account of the rise of the Turks discussed above, Foxe also interpolated a description of the fall of Constantinople into his account of the reign of Henry VI. His graphic description of "the bloody victory of the Turks" and their "terrible tyranny" (3.723 *gloss*) is worth quoting because it works as an intertext both for Joan's triumph and for the

violent destruction of Joan and the French that Talbot and the English hoped for, but never achieved:

The city of Constantinople thus being got, the Turks sacking and ravaging about the streets, houses, and corners, did put the sword unmercifully to whomsoever they found, both aged and young, matrons, virgins, children and infants, sparing none...these things thus being done, and the tumult ceased, after three days Mahomet the turk entereth into the city; and first calling for the heads and ancients of the city, such as he found left alive, he commanded them to be mangled and cut to pieces. It is also (saith my author) reported, that in the feasts of the Turks, honest matrons and virgins, and such as were of the king's stock, after other contumelies, were hewn and cut in pieces for their disport (3.723).

#### JOAN AND MARTYRDOM

By portraying Joan's military triumph as an emblem of antichristian apostasy among the English, Shakespeare shifts the focus of the play from a satirical portrait of the French to a serious examination of the providential realities underlying the failed conquest of France. In Act Five, Shakespeare completes the picture of English apostasy by portraying Joan's death in terms of the most explicit and unmistakably Foxeian intertext: the burning of a female heretic. The persecutorial treatment Joan receives at the hands of York and the English dramatizes a kind of vicious misogynistic violence that, for readers of the *Acts&Monuments*, would have served a palpable register of satanic iniquity, and hence a clear index to the providential reality underlying the action.

The killing of Joan in Act Five is typically understood by critics in terms of the persecution of witchcraft. Gabriele Bernhard Jackson, for example, assumes that "the witch is Joan's last topical role" (Jackson, 61), and David Riggs argues that Joan is "exposed and burnt as a witch" in order to "make unmistakably plain the truth that lies

behind her claim to be the chosen agent of God” (Riggs, 107). Because she is associated with witchcraft throughout much of the play, it is quite reasonable to see Joan's death in terms of the persecution of witches. However, the language of Joan's last scene suggests a different topical identity: that of a Foxeian martyr. As Jackson herself points out, the English did not burn witches, they hanged them (Jackson, 62; see also Thomas, 532-34). Remarkably, Shakespeare alludes to just such a distinction in the parting lines of Joan's father: “O burn her, burn her: hanging is too good” (5.4.33). Joan herself vigorously denies that she is a witch, claiming that she “never had to do with wicked spirits”(5.4.43). Rather, Joan defines her persecution in terms which precisely echo Foxe's rhetoric of martyrdom. She is the faithful and godly victim and York and Warwick are the graceless and satanic persecutors:

But you that are polluted with your lusts,  
 Stained with the guiltless blood of innocents  
 Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices  
 Because you want the grace that others have,  
 You judge it straight a thing impossible  
 To compass wonders by the help of devils.

Her “maiden blood,” Joan concludes, “thus rigorously effused/ Will cry for vengeance at the gates of Heaven”(5.4.43-54).

Joan's disavowal of witchcraft is at best a factitious half-truth, and there is no question of playgoers actually confusing Joan with one of Foxe's martyrs; yet, her attempt to implicate York and the English within the Foxeian paradigm of satanic persecution works because it is one that the play has been moving towards from the start. Without altering Joan's essential identity, Shakespeare creates a powerful scene of antichristian persecution by allowing Joan's voice to meld with that of Foxe and the

female martyrs, and by identifying York and Warwick with the ranks of Foxe's persecutors. We can compare Joan's attack on York with Foxe's prefatory "Address to the Persecutors of God's Truth" appended to all editions of the *Acts&Monuments* from 1570 onwards:

[S]ee and behold, I beseech you, here in this story, the pitiful slaughter of your butchery! Behold your own handiwork! consider the number, almost out of number, of so many silly and simple lambs of Christ, whose blood you have sought and sucked; whose lives you have vexed; whose bodies you have slain, racked, and tormented; some also you have cast on dunghills, to be devoured of fowls and dogs; without mercy, without measure, without all sense of humanity! See, I say, and behold here present before your eyes, the heaps of slain bodies, of so many men and women, both old, young, children, infants, new born, married, unmarried, wives, widows, maids, blind men, lame men, whole men; of all sorts, archbishops, bishops, priests, ministers, deacons, laymen, artificers, yea, whole households and whole kindreds together; father, mother and daughter; grandmother, mother, aunt and child, etc.; *whose wounds, yet bleeding before the face of God, cry vengeance!* (1.xii; emphasis mine).

Joan's high moral tone might be dismissed as desperate hypocrisy, but it is at least as reasonable to stress the impact that the Foxeian intertext could have had on playgoers' response to this scene. The *Acts&Monuments* impressed on its readers, in example after countless example, the idea that wherever people were burned for their religious beliefs, Antichrist was to be detected. The prodigious mass of rhetorical material in the *Acts&Monuments* is devoted to the single historical argument that the fact of religious persecution itself proves the reality of Foxe's Protestant apocalyptic history. For Foxe's readers, York and Warwick's behaviour would have recollected a very familiar image of evil, understood in Protestant providential terms as the historical Antichrist. The identification of York and Warwick as, in effect, antichrists in the world, would have thoroughly confirmed the sense that the play was representing history in terms of the "loosing out" of Satan.

Joan's denunciation of her persecutors and her rhetorically arresting defense of her beliefs is only one detail which would have elicited the kind of intertextual response that I have been suggesting. In fact, Shakespeare's language foregrounds the rhetoric of persecution and martyrdom throughout the dramatization of Joan's arraignment. Immediately following Joan's rejoinder, Warwick orders the guards to "[s]pare for no faggots; let there be enow./ Place barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake/ That so her torture may be shortened"(5.4.56-58). This detail appears designed to literally graft the audience's sense of what is to occur offstage onto the already well-established imagery of fiery persecution from the *Acts&Monuments*. Warwick's momentary act of kindness recalls several famous instances in the *Acts&Monuments* when the horror of persecution is worsened by the failure to create a good fire. Foxe's account of the burning of John Hooper, along with the accompanying woodcut, provides an excellent example of the powerful image of public burning that Shakespeare's staging tries to evoke:

*Fire put to Hooper*

Anon commandment was given that the fire should be set to, and so it was. But because there were put to no fewer green faggots than two horses could carry upon their backs, it kindled not by and by, and was pretty while also before it took the reeds upon the faggots. At length it burned about him, but the wind having full strength in that place (it was a lowering and cold morning) it blew the flame from him, so that he was in a manner no more but touched by the fire.

*A new fire made*

Within a space after, a few dry faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with faggots (for there were no more reeds), and that burned at the nether parts, but had small power above, because of the wind, saving that it did burn his hair, and scorch his skin a little. In the time of which fire, even as at the first flame, he prayed, saying mildly and not very loud (but as one without pains), "O Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy on me, and receive my soul!"

*He calleth for more fire*

After the second was spent, he did wipe both his eyes with his hands, and beholding the people, he said with an indifferent loud voice, "For God's love, good people, let me have more fire!" And all

this while his nether parts did burn: for the faggots were so few, that the flame did not burn strongly at his upper parts.

The third fire was kindled within a while after, which was more extreme than the other two: and then the bladders of gunpowder brake, which did him small good, they were so placed, and the wind had such power.

*His last words*

In the which fire he prayed with somewhat a loud voice, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me; Lord Jesus have mercy on me, Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" And these were the last words he was heard to utter.

*The blessed martyr long tormented in the fire*

But when he was black in the mouth, and his tongue swollen, that he could not speak, yet his lips went till they were shrunk to the gums: and he knocked his breast with his hands, until one of his arms fell off, and then knocked still with the ends, until by renewing of the fire his strength was gone, and his hand did cleave fast, in knocking, to the iron upon his breast. So immediately bowing forwards, he yielded up his spirit (6.658).

Joan's reunion with her father also has a distinctly Foxeian quality, one which links Joan to Foxe's women martyrs in particular. As Ellen Macek has shown, women martyrs "who made the choice to serve their faith above all often experienced violent rejection by loved ones"(Macek, 74). Joan's father's attempts to cajole her out of her "obstacle" beliefs(5.4.17), her complete rejection of him, and his violent response, all recollect the familial strife that was often central to Foxe's stories of the women martyrs. Again, the point is not that Joan herself is a true martyr, but that Shakespeare's language keeps the *Acts&Monuments* consistently in view. This intertextual presence can also be seen in terms of the two most striking features of York's and Warwick's behaviour in the course of this scene: the vicious pleasure they take in the exposure and mocking of Joan's false virginity, and their willingness to burn a pregnant woman. We can compare the attitude of York and Warwick to the image of antichristian behaviour in Foxe's account of the arraignment of Elizabeth Young. What sticks out in Foxe's account is how the



examiners repeatedly stress how Young's steadfast religious beliefs make her a "rebel whore and a traitor heretic"(8.536). In page after page of dramatic narrative, Young's persecutors strive to make her admit to being a "rebel whore," a "traitorly whore," an "ill-favored" or "evil-favored whore" and, bizarrely, a "spirit and faith whore"(8.536ff). The more Young defends both her beliefs and her virtue—she is a married woman with children—the more obsessively prurient becomes the men's mocking insistence that she is a whore. Although Foxe prefaces his account of Young's trials by encouraging readers to "note how fiercely she was assaulted, how shamefully she was reviled, and how miserably she was handled" (8.536), Foxe rhetoric here and throughout the *Acts&Monuments* works by carefully dramatizing the men's behaviour and by allowing readers to infer its antichristian character. The mocking response of York and Warwick to Joan's confession that she is pregnant might have had a similar rhetorical effect:

York: Now heaven forfend, the holy maid with child?

Warwick: The greatest miracle that e'er ye wrought!

Is all your strict preciseness come to this?

York: She and the Dauphin have been juggling.

...

Why, here's a girl! I think she knows not well

(There were so many) whom she may accuse.

Warwick: It's a sign that she hath been liberal and free.

York: And yet, forsooth, she is a virgin pure!--

Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee (5.4.65-84).

Finally, like this perverse mocking, and the image of the poorly-made fire, the image of a pregnant women being burned is one which playgoers would have readily associated with Foxe's accounts of the satanic violence committed against the women martyrs. The theme of infanticide in general, "the filthiness and murdering of

infants”(1.xiii), is an ongoing part of Foxe's image of the Antichrist in history. Towards the end of the book, Foxe relates the story of Perotine Massey, a French women living in Guernsey, who was burned in the final stages of her pregnancy. Supported by an accompanying woodcut, Foxe's graphic account is quite literally unforgettable:

The time then being come, when these three good servants and holy saints of God, the innocent mother with her three daughters, should suffer, in the place where they should consummate their martyrdom were three stakes set up. At the middle post was the mother, the eldest daughter on the right hand, the youngest on the other. They were first strangled, but the rope brake before they were dead, and so the poor women fell in the fire. Perotine, who was then great with child, did fall on her side, where happened a rueful sight, not only to the eyes of all that there stood, but also to the ears of all true-hearted Christians that shall hear this history. For as the belly of the woman burst asunder by the vehemency of the flame, the infant, being a fair man-child, fell into the fire, and eftsoons being taken out of the fire by one W. House, was laid upon the grass. Then was the child had to the provost, and from him to the bailiff, who gave censure that it should be carried back again and cast into the fire...and so the infant, baptized in his own blood, to fill up the number of God's innocent saints, was both born and died a martyr, leaving behind to the world, which it never saw, a spectacle wherein the whole world may see the Herodian cruelty of this graceless generation of catholic tormentors (8.229-30). (fig. 4)

Typically, Foxe identifies the “pope-holy clergy, which wrought her death” as the “authors principal” of this horrific, extra-judicial persecution, even though the actual burning was done by secular authorities(8.239). Interestingly, Shakespeare's text offers the possibility that in performance the scene of Joan's persecution in *1HenryVI* might also have been presided over by a member of the same “pope-holy” cadre, the newly-made Cardinal Winchester. As Michael Hattaway has argued, most editors of the play place Winchester's entrance after York's final condemnation: “Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes, / Thou foul accursed minister of hell!”(5.4.92-93). However, Hattaway reasonably suggests that Winchester could enter earlier, so that “he could effectively watch over the raging of York”(5.4.91n). Given the unmistakably Foxeian provenance of

this scene, it would certainly seem appropriate to have Winchester on stage to complete the dramatic emblem of antichristian persecution.

Joan's career ends with a curse on England which recollects the funereal darkness—"Hung be the heavens with black! Yield day to night!" (1.1.1)—of the play's opening:

May never glorious sun reflex his beams  
 Upon the country where you make abode;  
 But darkness and the gloomy shade of death  
 Environ you, till mischief and despair  
 Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves! (5.4.87-91).

Like many such curses in the English history plays, Joan's vision is "proven" both in retrospect, we have already seen an image of England sunk into darkness, and in the unfolding of future events: it predicts the descent into the darkness of civil war in 2 and 3*Henry VI*. At the same time, Joan's transposition of her impending suffering and death into a vision of English national suicide encapsulates the theme of apostasy by casting her tormentors, and by extension England as a whole, in terms which seemed designed to recall Spenser's famous portrayal of apostasy, Redcross Knight trapped in the darkness of Orgoglio's dungeon and his subsequent near-defeat at the hands of Despair:

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce  
 These piteous plaints and dolores did resound;  
 "O who is that, which brings me happy choyce  
 Of death, that here lye dying every stound,  
 Yet live in balefull darkenesse bound?  
 For now three Moones have changed thrice their hew,  
 And have beene thrice hid underneathe the ground,  
 Since I the heavens cheareful face did vew,  
 O welcome thou, that doest of death bring tydings trew" (1.8.38).

....

Than gan the villein [Despair] him to overcraw,  
 And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,  
 And all that might him to perdition draw;  
 And bad him choose, what death he would desire:

For death was due to him, that had provokt God's ire (1.9.50).

However unlike Redcross Knight, who is rescued from Despair by Una, *1HenryVI* does not seem, as Marcus points out, to “portray anyone on the English side as a positive, redeeming image of female authority to set up opposite its demonized travesty in Joan”(Marcus, 88). From the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, this absence would appear to be the point of the play. There is no redemption for the English at this time, because the play is devoted to representing the first stage in England's decline into satanic apostasy as an undeniable feature of the past. It is also evident, however, that because it is centered the remarkable figure of Joan, the play points to a future redemption in the form of Elizabeth herself. As such, the play recalls Foxe's view that it was only under Elizabeth that the “true, natural, and imperial crown” had been restored and the “brightness of God's word was set up again to confound the dark and false-vizored kingdom of Antichrist”(7.466).

Through a series of allusions to fundamental rhetorical features of the *Acts&Monuments*—popish royal apostasy, Turkish militarism, and martyrdom itself—Shakespeare's *1HenryVI* represents the notorious failed conquest of France as a chapter, so to speak, in the providential history of Antichrist. In *2-3HenryVI*, this intertextual pattern becomes even more evident as Shakespeare continues to draw upon the *Acts&Monuments* to represent the events and characters of the 15<sup>th</sup>–century past.

Notes

1. This is the central thesis of King's Tudor Royal Iconography, which attempts, *inter alia*, to correct the over-emphasis on neoclassicism in earlier studies of the English Renaissance iconography.
2. Foxe's "Proud Primacie..." woodcut series is discussed at length by King in Tudor Royal Iconography, 138-151. With the exception of Figure Three: Queen Elizabeth as Constantine, all of the illustrations used in this paper were included in the 1570 and various subsequent editions of the Acts&Monuments. The image of Elizabeth (unfortunately reversed) was used only in the 1563 edition. Figures 1, 5-7 can be found in the AMS edition of the Acts&Monuments, figures 2-3 are reprinted in King, Tudor Royal Iconography, and figure 3 can be found on Rebecca Bushnell's web site: [www.english.upenn.edu/~bushnell/english-330/materials](http://www.english.upenn.edu/~bushnell/english-330/materials). The comments printed along with the illustrations are my own.
3. Jackson's article covers much of the same territory as Marcus' chapter, and from a very similar perspective, but does so, I would argue, in a much more convincing fashion. Both writers see Joan as an initially powerful or subversive figure who is degraded during the course of the play and contained at its end, a view which seems to have influenced Rackin's discussion of Shakespeare's Joan in Stages of History. My own view reverses this reading: Joan is at first the center of a comic parody, then she becomes a serious military threat, and then she attains a martyr-like status. Viewed from the perspective of the Acts&Monuments, Joan's last moments, like those of her tormentor York, are also her best moments.
4. On the particular qualities of the women martyrs, see Ellen Macek's article on "The Emergence of a Feminine Spirituality in The Book of Martyrs." See also Bainton, Women of the Reformation, 211-230.
5. Foxe's apocalyptic comedy was in fact fairly well-known. As John Hazel Smith points out in his edition of the play, Christus Triumphans was not only very likely acted at both Oxford and Cambridge, but appears to have been used by instructors at both schools as a model for Latin prose style. About the play Wooden concludes that the "record of its printings in the sixteenth century and its revival as a school text in the seventeenth century indicate that Foxe's experiment was not altogether unappreciated during the Renaissance" (Wooden, 83). If the connection between Joan and the Pope seems overly clever, it is worth recalling the fact that Elizabethan writers like Foxe got enormous mileage out of the apocryphal story of "Pope" Joan. In fact, Foxe refers to "Pope" Joan's infamous pregnancy in his account of the persecution of Perotine Massey discussed below.
6. See Jackson, Marcus, and Rackin, Stages of History, 146-200.
7. Foxe's "History of the Turks," an essay of over 100 pages in the modern edition, is just one of the many fascinating segments of the Acts&Monuments which begs more critical attention. For example, Roy Battenhouse and W.J. Brown have established that Marlowe used Foxe's account of Turkish tyranny in writing 1-2 Tamburlaine, but this has not led to any reexamination of Marlowe's works in relation to the Acts&Monuments. For example, Marlowe's ironic sense of the continuity between degraded Christian society, Jews like Barabas, and the Turks in The Jew of Malta has a distinctly Foxeian resonance which, in light of Foxe's popularity, seems worth investigating. In one of the more interesting recent works on Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy, Richard B. Hillman has suggestively illustrated how the character of

Henry V seems to be constructed in terms of an allusion to Turkish violence and tyranny. Hillman strikingly fails to recognize, however, that in the Acts&Monuments Shakespeare had a complete Turkish intertext for Henry's character at hand, one which not only makes quite explicit the exact comparison between Henry and the Turk which is at the heart of his essay, but which we know Shakespeare and his audience would have read. See Hillman "Not Amurath an Amurath Succeeds."

## CHAPTER FOUR:

'A PERSECUTOR I AM SURE THOU ART': ANTICHRISTIAN VIOLENCE IN 2-3*HENRY VI*

A persecutor I am sure thou art;  
 If murdering innocents be executing,  
 Why then thou art an executioner (3*Henry VI*, 5.6.31-33).

King Henry's succinct indictment of the Duke of Gloucester at the end of 3*Henry VI* is a remarkably precise statement of the historiographical logic which structures the *Acts&Monuments*. As the perpetrator of a certain kind of violence, "murdering innocents," Richard is identified as an historical type, as a "Persecutor." From the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, Henry's denunciatory logic places Richard among the ranks of persecutors which, both in the first age of the church and since the loosing out of Satan from his millennial captivity, are the worldly manifestations of Antichrist in history. Henry's subsequent prophecy, which situates Richard at the center of a universalized vision of "much more slaughter after this"(5.6.59), can be compared with the image of "pitiful slaughter" and "butchery" which, as we have seen, Foxe developed in his prefatory "Address to the Persecutors...":<sup>1</sup>

And many an old man's sigh, and many a widow's,  
 And many an orphan's water-standing eye--  
 Men for their sons', wives for their husbands',  
 Orphans for their parents' timeless death--  
 Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born (5.6.39-43).

Leaving aside the way it anticipates Richard's later emergence as a demonic monarch whose "Kingdom is Hell," (*Richard III*; 1.3.143)<sup>2</sup>, Henry's evocation of the image of the Persecutor of Innocents can be seen as a summation and retrospective assessment of the violent action of the 1-3*Henry VI* series. 1*Henry VI* works to cast the English nobility in the shadow of antichristian violence, a dramatic process which culminates in the "martyrdom" of Joan La

Pucelle. Shakespeare's careful manipulation of the Foxeian intertext in *1HenryVI* suggests a pattern of staging and response for *2* and *3HenryVI* as the playwright's examination of the dark era of civil war moves from France back to England. By continuing to focus on the intertextual presence of the *Acts&Monuments* it is possible to read the action of *2-3HenryVI* as a series of emblematic murders which link aristocratic assassination, violent popular rebellion, and battlefield executions as different aspects of a satanic continuum. From this perspective, Richard's murder of the "prophet" Henry emerges as the last in a series of Foxeian "persecutions," and the essential historiographical argument of the plays is to reveal the providential figure of Antichrist which unites a series of apparently disparate episodes of historical violence.

Taken together, the action of *2* and *3HenryVI* can be divided into three fairly distinct dramatic phases: the fall of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the Cade Rebellion, and the outbreak of full-scale civil war which, at the conclusion of *3HenryVI*, completes the reign of Henry VI and ushers in the period of Yorkist rule.<sup>3</sup> Each of these segments invites interpretation in terms of the *Acts&Monuments* because each contains a rich vein of Foxe's rhetoric of martyrdom and persecution. The murder of Humphrey, and the immediately subsequent death of his antagonist, Winchester, would have offered unmistakable evidence of the antichristian persecution of true Protestant nobility. Humphrey's death ushers in Cade's rebellion which, besides offering a "mirror" for the degraded state of the English nobility, functions as a full-blown dramatic emblem of satanic apostasy on a national scale. Finally, the series of battlefield murders in *3HenryVI* reduces the complex realm of politics to an atavistic world of persecutors and persecuted, a barbarous "spectacle" which is manifestly emblematic of Foxe's providential view of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century civil war era.



## THE DUKE AND THE CARDINAL

Shakespeare's portrayal of the events surrounding the murder of Duke Humphrey in the first half of *2HenryVI* was evidently based, in the traditional sense of a "source," on Foxe's account of the same events.<sup>4</sup> For readers of Foxe, Shakespeare's Humphrey must have seemed to step right out of the pages of the *Acts&Monuments*:

*Duke Humphrey commended for his learning*

Of manners he seemed meek and gentle, loving the commonwealth, a supporter of the poor commons, of wit and wisdom, discreet and studious, well affected to religion, and a friend to verity; and, no less an enemy to pride and ambition, especially in haughty prelates, which was his undoing in this evil world (3.712).

Humphrey's allusion in the opening scene of *2HenryVI* to the "ancient bickerings" between him and the Catholic Cardinal Winchester, a division that he would prefer to resolve were it not for the very Foxeian "rancour" and "fury" of the "proud prelate"(1.1.139-41), recalls the strife between them in *1HenryVI*, but recasts it in terms of an instinctive and irreconcilable antagonism between Humphrey's commitment to the commonwealth and the pride and ambition of the Cardinal. Humphrey's emphatic response to the news of Henry's ill-advised wedding match—at first he is physically overcome by a "grief" which is not only personal but also "the common grief of all the land" (1.1.50sd; 73-74) and then he tries to unite the other "pillars of the state" in an effort to reform the situation(1.1.72)—leads to the rapid formation of an aristocratic cabal united, ironically, solely by their desire to destroy him. Although York's soliloquy at the end of scene one is arresting and portentous, the attack on Humphrey is more directly centered on the Cardinal. In performance, the emphatically Catholic figure of Winchester, suitably dressed in "popish" attire, would have been an obvious cynosure for a

Protestant audience well-versed in the symbolism of religious polemic. It is, moreover, largely Winchester's dubious rhetoric which creates the league against Gloucester, and it is the Cardinal who takes the most active role in each stage of Humphrey's fall. Salisbury's commentary on the group forming in opposition to Gloucester very appropriately focuses on the Cardinal in terms of the allegorical dramatic tradition of *King Johan*, just as it resonates precisely with the language of the *Acts&Monuments* quoted above:

Pride went before, Ambition follows him.  
 While these do labour for their own preferment  
 Behoves it us to labour in the realm.  
 I never saw but Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester,  
 Did bear him like a noble gentleman.  
 Oft have I seen the haughty cardinal--  
 More like a soldier than a man of the church,  
 As stout and proud as he were lord of all--  
 Swear like a ruffian and demean himself  
 Unlike he were the ruler of a commonweal (1.1.177-86).

David Riggs has suggested that there emerges here in the character of Humphrey a "new type of ideal ruler...the Ciceronian Governor," and hence that the process leading to his murder "represents the most severe possible judgement on the ambitious nobles"(115-16). This seems right; but, by defining Humphrey's exemplary attributes solely in terms of neoclassical topoi and values, Riggs' analysis of the scene effectively occludes the modalities of Protestant historiography which Shakespeare's staging clearly deploys. Riggs is no doubt correct to assert that the play invites a harsh judgement on the court. What is needed is to recognize how that castigatory historical perspective is generated by making Humphrey an exemplar of specifically Protestant nobility who is first alienated from, and then destroyed by,

a court portrayed in a manner easily assimilated within the Foxeian pattern of antichristian violence.

Immediately following his encomiastic portrait of the Duke quoted above, Foxe recounts in lively detail the “false miracle” at St. Alban's which Shakespeare, in turn, dramatized in the Saunders Simpcox episode. For Foxe, this anecdote of “a false miracle espied” and “dissimulation well punished” serves to illustrate further the Duke's “discreet wisdom and singular prudence.” More pointedly though, he includes it so that “it may be seen, how Duke Humphrey had not only a head to discern and dissever truth from forged and feigned hypocrisy; but study also, and diligence likewise, was in him, to reform that which was amiss”(3.712-13). Thus for Foxe Humphrey's bravura demonstration of the “crafty working of false miracles in the clergy” is essential because it dramatizes the Duke's historical identity as a hero of active protoprotestant reform. Humphrey emerges from this anecdote as an exemplar of true Christian nobility, what Salisbury would call a “right ruler of the commonweal,” qualities which according to Foxe's historical scheme had been almost, but not totally, extinguished in England in that period of its history. Humphrey thus invites comparison with those biblical figures who:

[H]ave not bowed their knees unto Baal, as in times past the Pharasiacal people had their Nicodemus and Gamaliel: although that these people are very rare and hard to be found; and few of them, either for fear of peril, or loss of substance, dare openly profess that which they think (3.724).

Moreover, in addition to illustrating Gloucester's essentially Protestant character, the St.Alban's episode also serves as a pointed illustration of the fact that, in a world dominated by Satan, the seemingly inevitable fate of actively virtuous men like Humphrey is isolation, antagonism, and persecution:

[T]he nature of true virtue is commonly such, that, as the flame ever beareth his smoke, and the body his shadow, so the brightness of virtue never blazeth, but hath some disdain or envy waiting upon it...this good duke of Gloucester, albeit being both the king's sole uncle, and having so many well-wishers through the whole realm, yet lacked not he his Satan, lacked not he his secret maligners. Of whom, specially, was Henry Beaufort, cardinal, bishop of Winchester (3.714).

As the imagery of blazing virtue in this passage underscores, the main thrust of Foxe's account of Gloucester's "troubles" is to situate this ostensibly political assassination squarely within the pattern of satanic persecution and godly martyrdom. Consequently Gloucester plays a key role in Foxe's argument that Henry VI's reign was major chapter in an era dominated by apostasy and "the grievous and sundry persecutions raised up by Antichrist" (3.582).

The way the action of the opening scene of *2HenryVI* effects a rapid isolation of Gloucester in relation to the venomous cabal led by Winchester dramatizes not only the details but also the point of Foxe's view of Humphrey's downfall. The obvious dramatic irony which underlines Salisbury's attempt to help Gloucester by aligning his forces with Warwick and that other "secret maligner," the Duke of York, further substantiates Humphrey's isolation, as does the subsequent scene in which he returns home to find his ambitious wife plotting sedition. As the presence of the Foxeian intertext works to suggest a parallel between Humphrey and biblical stand-outs like Gamaliel and Nicodemus, Shakespeare confirms the impression by having Humphrey storm off stage as a prophet: "Lordings, farewell: and say when I am gone,/ I prophesied France will be lost ere long"(1.1.142-43). Moreover, recognizing Humphrey's martyr-like status goes a long way towards clarifying his seemingly pointless refusal to take steps defend himself. Humphrey's passive resistance in the face of mounting threats to his life can be compared with the behaviour of numerous of Foxe's martyrs, and his equanimity exemplifies their particular kind of heroic fortitude. Patrick

Collinson has described the attitude of Foxe's martyrs as a kind of protestantized "classical *apatheia*...a true Aristotelian courage midway between cowardice and temerity" (*Godly People*, 513), a description which works quite well for Shakespeare's Humphrey. Also, as will be discussed more fully in relation to Cade, the slaughter-house imagery used by the King to describe Gloucester's fall in Act Three--

Thou never didst them wrong nor no man wrong.  
 And as the butcher takes away the calf  
 And binds the wretch and beats it when it strains,  
 Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,  
 Even so remorseless have they borne him hence; (3.1.209-13)

--thoroughly implicates the proceedings against Humphrey within Foxe's rhetoric of antichristian persecution and martyrdom.

It is in the context of these general parallels that the playwright's decision to include the Saunders Simpcox episode should be understood. By choosing to dramatize this unmistakably Foxeian anecdote, Shakespeare infused his version of the characters and events with a specifically Protestant historical identity that no reader of the *Acts&Monuments* could have ignored or misunderstood. Indeed Shakespeare not only dramatizes the *Acts&Monuments*, melding his own authorial voice with that of the martyrologist, he invents details which add considerable focus to the Foxeian content of the scene. For example, the factitious story of Simpcox's youthful fall—"Alas, good master, my wife desired some damsons, and made me climb, with danger of my life"(2.1.100-101)—palpably echoes the earlier domestic situation between Gloucester and Eleanor, and so contrasts Simpcox's error with Humphrey's virtuous refusal to countenance his wife's ambitious pleading. At the same

time, the image of Saunders and his wife striving after plums is an obvious comic reflection of the ambitious plotting of the other nobles, one which effectively casts the aristocrats' behaviour in the shadow of the Simpcoxes' popish error and idolatry. Perhaps even more pointedly, Shakespeare uses the identification of the colours of cloaks to link Saunders' imposture and the popish credulity of his followers with its more deadly counterpart, Winchester:

Gloucester: Sayst thou me so? What colour is this cloak of?

Simpcox: Red, master, red as blood.

Gloucester: Why that's well said. What colour is my gown of?

Simpcox: Black, forsooth, coal-black as jet (2.1.107-110).

The visual pun here, clearly enough, is that Humphrey first touches Winchester's sumptuous red Cardinal's attire and then his own plain black dress. In doing so, Humphrey exposes Simpcox and, at the same time, makes a point about popery and bloodshed which would have been readily understood by Shakespeare's Protestant audience.

At virtually every point, Shakespeare's representation of the fall of Duke Humphrey invites playgoers to view his character in martyrological terms, an intertextual process which is most apparent in the Saunders Simpcox episode. Watching Humphrey expose Saunders, the audience is made to feel that the Duke is literally alone in the kingdom, surrounded on all sides by vicious apostasy and error. In addition to the central role played by Winchester, Shakespeare adumbrates the specifically antichristian persecutorial character of the plotters in the rhetorical patterning of Humphrey's trial itself. In Act Three, scene one, each of the plotters steps forward to accuse Humphrey of some offense. Margaret begins the process, depicting the Duke's supposedly arrogated "majesty" and his "proud" and "rancorous" mind as a serious threat to the throne(3.1.4ff). Referring to Eleanor, Suffolk charges that Humphrey

“[d]id instigate the bedlam brain-sick duchess/ By wicked means to frame our sovereign's fall” (3.1.51-52). Winchester himself accuses the Duke of devising “strange deaths for small offenses done” (3.1.59), and, finally, York claims that Humphrey is responsible for the military disaster in France because he supposedly absconded with money levied for the campaign. The dramatic point of these accusations is not just that they are false, but that they are palpable projections of the guilty attributes of the accusers themselves. It is the haughty arrogance and violent ambition of the aristocrats that threatens the kingdom, and they suborned Hume to entrap Eleanor; it is Winchester who is devising a “strange death” for Gloucester, and it was York’s refusal to supply men and money in *1 Henry VI*, that led to the loss of France and the death of Talbot.

As they invent charges to add legitimacy to the process against the Duke, the plotters in effect demonstrate a level of unified commitment to violent sedition of which they themselves are perhaps unaware. Emerging out of these accusations then is something very much like an allegorical figure of Hypocrisy to go along with Pride and Ambition introduced earlier. Shakespeare's explicit dramatic irony—each accuser is guilty of the exact offense he or she attributes to Humphrey—can be compared to a similar pattern of ironic reversals in the *Acts&Monuments*. Foxe's use of the same rhetorical device reflects the fundamental Protestant belief that it is the Catholic church, not the Reformed one, which is the heretical, antichristian innovation. Thus in answer to the charge that Protestantism is a form of seditious apostasy, Foxe replies that:

they [Protestants] are not any swerving from the church of Rome, but rather the reducing of it to the church of Rome. Whereas contrary, the church that now is nothing but a swerving from the church of Rome which then was, as partly is declared, and more shall appear, Christ willing, hereafter...Wherefore as it is false, that we have renounced the faith of our godfathers wherein we were baptized, so it is not

true, that we are removed from the church of Rome; but rather we say and (by the leave of Christ) will prove, that the church of Rome hath utterly parted from the church of Rome (1.10).

This logic, whereby whatever charges are leveled against the reformers are reversed to reveal the degraded antichristian character of the Catholics, “to the intent that it may be seen whether we, or the church of Rome, have more apostatized from the church of Rome”(1.10), is one of the most ubiquitous and distinctively Foxeian rhetorical patterns in the *Acts&Monuments*. A more subtle and arresting example of this rhetorical patterning can be found in the story of Bishop Reynold Peacock, a set-piece which, like the story of Gloucester, plays an important role in Foxe’s account of the reign of Henry VI. Directly following the story of Humphrey, the persecution of the godly Bishop Peacock is a perfect compliment to that of the exemplary magistrate Gloucester, and Foxe makes the parallel pattern of their respective “troubles” explicit:

This man, after he had received into his heart some sparks of the pure and sincere religion...foreseeing and providing for his own safeguard as much as he might, yet could he not so lurk, or lie hidden, but that at length he was perceived. These men have so many marks, so many eyes, so many suspicions, that there can be none so small a thing which may pass or scape them; no so high estate or dignity, unto which these men, through their cruel and unshamefaced tyranny, will not give assault: in so much that now they began not only to be feared of the common people, but also to be a terror unto kings and princes (3.724).

Peacock, like Humphrey, is arraigned by a cadre of ecclesiastical and secular powers, and is charged with “the presence of the bread in the sacrament,” which is to say with denying the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, the literal presence of Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist. Foxe interrupts the narrative at this point with an impressive sermon comparing the Reformed view of the sacrament with its Catholic opposite. He begins by bemoaning how “the knot of amity and concord which was ordained by Christ [i.e. through participation in the sacrament]...through the envy of Satan, is turned into a matter of most grievous discourse [i.e.



heresy trials and persecutions] among Christians”(3.724). He goes on to intimate how such accusations of heresy, predicated as they are on the insistence upon a literal presence in the sacrament, reveal much more than just a misreading of the biblical text. Focusing on the images of blood and meat, Foxe develops a startling contrast between the spiritual longings of true Christians, which are analogous to natural bodily hunger and thirst, and the degraded spirituality of the Catholics, which results in a satanic raging and hunger to literally consume the body and blood of the godly. As they accuse Peacock of heresy, in other words, the Catholics expose their own apostasy in an image of bloodthirsty cannibalism:

[A]nd whereupon now is this great frowardness sprung up amongst Christians, that they, envying their own so great felicity, that they now convert and turn that into a snare of their own destruction, which is given us by the Lord to be our comfort and consolation...but where now is this love, thanksgiving, and charity become? when, for our salvation, received of the Lord, we destroy our brother, shed *his* blood whom the Lord redeemed with his own precious blood; and for none other occasion, but only for that which ought to teach us all kind of meekness and gentleness towards all men...How many, before this man Peacock, and how many since his death, have been devoured and swallowed up by bloody bishops! (3.724-29).

This kind of argument, in which the Eucharist defended by the Catholics through heresy trials turns out to be a satanic sacrament of bloodthirsty persecution, is literally everywhere in the *Acts & Monuments*. It encompasses more-or-less entirely Foxe's understanding of the workings of Antichrist in history. From the perspective of error and apostasy, Foxe says, true virtue can be perceived only as an enemy, as a reflection of its own degraded nature, and hence in terms of a destructive satanic hypocrisy which seeks to devour it. Over and over again, Foxe demonstrates how innocent men and women are singled out for persecution by persecutors who are prodigiously guilty of the supposed “heresy” which they claim, hypocritically, to be wiping out. Rhetorically, Shakespeare's staging of Humphrey's trial invites interpretation in terms of this same view of antichristian hypocrisy and violence. This is *realpolitik* to be sure,

but it is *realpolitik* viewed in terms of a belief in the active presence of Antichrist in history; not just political allegory, but Protestant political allegory. Margaret's urging that "the welfare of us all/ Hangs on the cutting short of that fraudulent man"(3.1.81) rings true, but only as the special pleading of a satanic party of "forged and feigned hypocrisy" whose natural enemy is the active reformism of the "Good Duke."

Shakespeare's dramatization of Humphrey's fall does not end with the murder of the Duke, which very likely "happened" off stage, but rather with the death of his chief antagonist Winchester.<sup>5</sup> Michael Hattaway has pointed out that the early stage history of *2HenryVI* is dominated by an interest in the conflict between the Cardinal and the Duke, and that the scene of Winchester's death in particular "seized the imagination of those who produced illustrations of the play"(*2HenryVI*, 45-46). Yet, in his own analysis Hattaway does not try to interpret the Cardinal's death as part of the overall design of the play. This neglect is not surprising. As mentioned, Hattaway wants to show that, as "radical historiography," a key purpose of the play is to render providential interpretation "comic and inadequate" (*2HenryVI*, 40). Directly linked as it is in dramatic time with the murder of Humphrey, Winchester's death is explicitly cast as providence: in terms of causes, there is simply no other way Winchester's end could be understood. Hattaway's interpretive fiat notwithstanding ("God's purposes are in no way to be deduced from the play"), there can be no doubt that Winchester's spectacular collapse would have been understood, in the words of Foxe's gloss, as a "judgement of God upon those who persecuted the Duke"(3.716). Winchester's earlier response to the news of Humphrey's death—"God's secret judgment: I did dream tonight/ The duke was dumb and could not speak a word"(3.2.31-32)—both introduces the idea of providential judgement and ironically foreshadows his own immanent demise.

In addition to the somewhat perfunctory statement of the providential cause of Winchester's death contained within Foxe's account of the reign of Henry VI, Shakespeare's staging can be usefully compared with the much more expressive essay on providential revenge, "The Severe Punishment of God upon the Persecutors of his People and Enemies of his Word...", a sermon-like essay which from 1570 onwards functioned as a kind of conclusion to the *Acts&Monuments* as a whole. Stretching over forty-five pages in the modern edition, Foxe's peroration on divine judgement is a remarkable compendium of what D.R. Woolf has called Foxe's "providential joke[s], where by God revenges the deaths of his Saints by inflicting on sinners and persecutors ends that mirror their own deeds"(1994, 10). The "stinking death" of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Cardinal Winchester naturally takes its place in Foxe's litany of "the dreadful taking away and murrain of so many persecuting bishops, so many bloody promoters and malicious adversaries...and without man's hand but only by the secret working's of God's just judgement"(8.667). More striking, however, is how Shakespeare's representation of Winchester's death seems to invite interpretation in terms of another Cardinal Winchester, the infamous Tudor prelate, Stephen Gardiner.

Described variously as "the arch-persecutor of Christ's church," and "slaughter-man of Christ's saints"(8:628,293), this other Cardinal Winchester is the chief figure of antichristian violence and persecution in the *Acts&Monuments*. Gardiner's demonic identity is alluded to at one point by Foxe in an arresting rhetorical paralipsis:

I will not here speak of that which hath been constantly reported to me touching the monstrous making of this man and the mishapen fashion of his feet and toes, the nails whereof were said not to be like to other men's, but to crook downward, and to be sharp like the claws of ravening beasts (7.586).

As Warren Wooden has shown, Gardiner receives "the most attention [and] the most space" in the *Acts&Monuments* because he is the narrative locus for Foxe's representation of the

historical Antichrist as a combination of “duplicitous cunning” and “bestial violence”(55-57). Although clearly uncomfortable with the reliability of such fabulous tales, Foxe includes the report of Winchester's claw-like feet because it so obviously reflects the spiritual reality which the Cardinal, in Foxe's view, actually represents. The language of ravening beasts and claws used here echoes, in a general way, Shakespeare's use of similar animal imagery throughout *1-3HenryVI*, and so is not, in itself, particularly suggestive. However, in the aftermath of Gloucester's murder the parallel between Shakespeare's Winchester and Foxe's Gardiner is registered in a much more suggestive verbal echo:

Warwick: Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh  
 And sees fast by a butcher with an axe,  
 But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?  
 Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,  
 But may imagine how the bird was dead,  
 Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?  
 Even so suspicious is this tragedy.

Margaret: Are you the butcher, Suffolk? Where's your knife?

Is Beaufort termed a kite? Where are his talons? (3.2.188-96).<sup>6</sup>

Suffolk defends his honour—“I wear no knife to slaughter men”(3.2.197)—and it would seem he is to be believed. Winchester, on the other hand, simply sneaks away, suggesting that, like Gardiner, he is both a “slaughter-man” and a “kite.”

As the central villain of the history, a kind of “native English” version of the papal Antichrist (Wooden, 56), Gardiner's “poisoned life and stinking end” is the narrative center and climax of Foxe's essay on providential revenge. In addition to the suggestive verbal parallel alluded to above, readers of Foxe would have been inclined to read Shakespeare's scene in terms of this paradigmatic namesake because, as D.R. Woolf has shown, such comparisons are a fundamental narrative principle of the *Acts&Monuments* as a whole.

Discussing how Foxe's stories "frequently challenge the reader to find himself in the game of finding similitudes," Woolf refers, as an example, to the way "the 'Good Duke' Somerset, in the reign of Edward VI is identified with the 'Good Duke' Humphrey a century earlier" (Woolf 1994, 16-20). *Mutatis mutandis*, Somerset's arch-enemy Gardiner/Winchester is easily conflated with Beaufort/Winchester, the arch-enemy of Gloucester. A more instructive example of this rhetoric can be seen in Foxe's account of the providential punishment of the Marian cleric Bishop Morgan:

[Morgan was] stricken by God's hand after a strange sort, that his meat would not go down, but rise and pick-up again, sometimes at his mouth, sometimes blown out of his nose, most horrible to behold; and so continued unto his death (8.629).

This gruesome tale, which displays a forensic emphasis quite similar to Shakespeare's staging of the paired deaths of Humphrey and Winchester, "brings me in remembrance" Foxe says:

[O]f Justice *Morgan*, who sat in the death of the Lady Jane [i.e. Grey] and not long after the same fell mad, and was bereft of his wits; and so died, having ever in his mouth, 'Lady Jane, Lady Jane' (8.629).

Here madness replaces physical revenge as God's method and, in a precise echo of

Shakespeare's staging, Morgan's career as a persecutor is mirrored in the way he is "haunted" by his victim at the end.

Foxe's pairing of Morgan with Morgan within this distinctive rhetorical pattern of divine retribution amply suggests how playgoers might readily have interpreted Winchester's demise in terms of the paradigmatic example of Stephen Gardiner. There is, at the very least, nothing in Shakespeare's staging of Winchester's death which would work against such a Foxeian providential response to the scene. Indeed, what is particularly striking about Shakespeare's staging is the way it works to emphasize Winchester's fatal collapse as an *immediate* consequence of Gloucester's murder. In Foxe's essay, the same sense of immediacy

produced by the play is consistently symptomatic of providential causes. Thus we read of a “cruel chancellor, stricken with a sudden death,” and of “the sudden death of Berry, a commissary”(8.629). God's excellent timing, so to speak, is also key to the account of the death of Gardiner himself:

The same day, when bishop Ridley and Master Latimer suffered at Oxford (being about the 19th day of October), there came into the house of Stephen Gardiner the old duke of Norfolk...The old aged duke, there waiting and tarrying for his dinner, the bishop, being not yet disposed to dine, deferred the time to three or four of the clock at afternoon. At length, about four of the clock, cometh his servant, posting in all possible speed from Oxford, bringing intelligence to the bishop what he had heard and seen: of whom the said bishop diligently inquiring the truth of the matter...that fire most certainly was set unto them, cometh out rejoicing to the duke, “Now,” saith he, “let us go to dinner.” Whereupon, they being set down, meat immediately was brought, and the bishop began merrily to eat. But what followed? The bloody tyrant had not eaten a few bits, but the sudden stroke of God's terrible hand fell upon him in such sort, as immediately he was taken from the table, and brought to his bed; where he continued the space of fifteen days in such intolerable anguish and torments, that all the meanwhile, during those fifteen days, he could not avoid, by urine or otherwise, anything that he received: wherein his body being miserably inflamed within, (who had inflamed so many good martyrs before), was brought to a wretched end (8.592-93).

Like his namesake Gardiner, who dies “stinkingly and unrepentantly” in his bed (8.293), Shakespeare's Cardinal Winchester “dies and makes no sign”(3.3.29). Tracing the Foxeian intertext, which clearly stamped the martyrologist's imprimatur on the scene of Winchester's death, shows again how Shakespeare's staging of a crucial moment in the play works to create a Foxeian emblem of apostasy by melding the authoritative voice of the play with that of the martyrologist. Henry's chorus-like commentary—“Ah, what a sign it is of evil life/ Where death's approach is seen so terrible”(3.3.5-6)—exactly reproduces the main point of Foxe's peroration on divine judgement:

What else be all these, I say, but plain visible arguments, testimonies, and demonstrations even from heaven, against the pope, his murdering religion, and his bloody doctrine? *For who can deny their doings not to be good, whose end is so evil?* (8.667; my emphasis)

From the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, Winchester is not just a bad person, he is a Persecutor, a figure of antichristian violence whose distinct historical identity underlies the whole process against Humphrey. Thus the action of the first half of the play, from the formation of the anti-Gloucester cabal through to the providential revenge wreaked on its chief “promoter,” can be read as a dramatic emblem of Foxe's providential historiography.

#### JACK CADE

If the murder of the Good Duke of Gloucester at the hands of his popish adversaries was the center of earlier interest in *2HenryVI*, more recently that position has been usurped, so to speak, by the figure of Jack Cade. Modern interest in Cade is characterized, for the most part, by an emphasis on class antagonism within Shakespeare's staging of popular rebellion. Whereas some critics, Michael Hattaway in particular, have highlighted what appear to be aspects of an authentic populist strain of social critique in the rebels' program, others, such as Richard Helgerson and Richard Wilson, have viewed the rebellion as evidence of the playwright's antagonism towards popular politics and culture.<sup>7</sup> While these critics differ quite markedly over Shakespeare's attitude towards popular culture and the instrumental force of Shakespeare's dramatization of rebellion, both views tacitly reject the older critical conception of the rebellion as a seriocomic “mirror-scene” in which the disorder of the rebels is understood primarily as a reflection or mirror of the “real” politics of aristocratic malfeasance. As lively as this debate over Shakespeare's class allegiances no doubt is, the effort to displace the notion of mirror-identity with one of class difference in the Cade episode is very difficult to square with way Shakespeare's staging determinedly resists just such a

disentanglement. Thus, no matter how authentic-sounding Cade's populism might be, it is unavoidably undercut by the rebels' monstrous violence and Cade's prodigious hypocrisy. Similarly, the attempt to portray the rebellion as the product of Shakespeare's fear and loathing of the mob necessarily stumbles over the fact that Cade is York's "double" and the rebellion as a whole so clearly recalls the attitudes and behaviour of the English nobility.

Shakespeare's representation of the Cade rebellion does evoke deep class divisions—the rebels hate the nobles and vice versa—but he very deliberately structures his staging so that class conflict alone cannot explain the nature of the events. Somewhat like his treatment of the various causes of military defeat in *1HenryVI*, Shakespeare's dramatization of the rebellion in *2HenryVI* points to a deeper level of historical reality which both informs divisive class-hatred, and yet goes beyond it to encompass the whole nation within the same seditious and blood-thirsty continuum. From the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, this historical reality is established intertextually as satanic apostasy and in terms of Foxe's conception of Antichrist in history. By focusing on the three most distinctive features of Shakespeare's dramatization of the rebellion—Cade's effusive and megalomaniacal self-fashioning, the rebels' hatred of literacy, and the leitmotif of rebellion as "butchery"—it is possible to show how the Cade episode, like the fall of Humphrey, produces a remarkably resonant emblem of the "loosing out of Satan."

Unlike "Saint Joan" or Cardinal Winchester, Jack Cade is not obviously assimilable within the Foxeian pattern of antichristian persecution. Apart from the initial association between Cade and Ireland, that notorious breeding-ground of popish apostasy, there is no real link between Cade and Catholicism. Yet, from the outset, Shakespeare does suggest that, if successful, Cade's rebellion will issue in a religious as well as political revolution, a kind of



counter-reformation to go along with the killing of the lawyers. In the opening dialogue between Bevis and Holland, Bevis' prophetic-sounding language suggests how, with their mangled understanding of the biblical injunction to "labour in thy vocation," the rebels will establish Cade as their religious leader as well as their king. This new theodicy will be constructed, quite literally, out of the divided bodies of their victims:

Bevis: I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap on it.

...

Holland: I see them! I see them! There's Best's son, the tanner of Wingham.

Bevis: He shall have the skins of our enemies, to make dog's leather of.

Holland: And Dick the butcher.

Bevis: The sin is struck down like an ox, and iniquity's throat cut like a calf.

Holland: And Smith the weaver.

Bevis: Argo, their thread of life is spun.

Holland: Come, come, let's fall in with them (4.2.4-25).

Later, in a dramatic gesture which, as Michael Hattaway usefully notes, not only parodies the historical Henry VI's coronation triumph, but also recalls the miracle performed by Moses in Exodus, Cade strikes his staff on "London Stone," and orders that the "Pissing Conduit" run with "nothing but claret wine" (4.6.0-4*n*). Cade's self-identification with both the real king and the biblical monarch further underscores his theocratic pretensions and deepens the irony that Cade, as a perverse reflection of Moses, the lawgiver, will be the source for all the laws of England. Indeed Cade goes one better, for whereas Moses received the laws from God, in Cade's "commonwealth" all "biting statutes" will issue directly from his "stinking" mouth (4.7.5-14). Cade's claim that he is "the besom that must sweep the court clean" (4.7.25) further illuminates his biblical self-fashioning, echoing the prophetic "besom of destruction" in

Isaiah, so that Cade identifies his own ascendancy with the millennial return of Christ himself.<sup>8</sup>

The rich vein of biblical rhetoric in Cade's self-fashioning plays a significant role in establishing Cade's dramatic identity as, to use Richard Wilson's nice phrase, a "strident cartoon" (Wilson, 27). An important component of his comically gargantuan will to power is Cade's singular sense of proprietorship over all realms, secular and religious. It defines not only his own prodigious ego, but also the curiously divided loyalty of his followers, as a kind of massive false consciousness: Cade pretends to be Lord Mortimer but he believes he is the King of Kings; his followers know he is a fraud, yet they believe in him nonetheless. Although he is, much like Joan and Falstaff, a singular creation whose dramatic identity cannot be constrained in any single direction, Shakespeare's Cade can be compared quite closely with the composite image of the Pope-as-Antichrist that emerges out of the pages of the *Acts&Monuments*. Like Shakespeare's Cade, Foxe's image of the papal Antichrist is centered on the notion of a grotesque satanic egotism, a false consciousness that has usurped both political and religious authority, and which relies on outrageous acts of violence to maintain its position. Cade's edict—"and henceforth it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer" (4.6.5-6)—followed as it is by the brutal slaying of a nameless soldier, is in fact a perfect reflection of Foxe's portrait of "popish rule."

The rich intertextuality that exists between Cade and the figure of apostate power in the *Acts&Monuments* is best illustrated in terms of Foxe's seriocomic set-piece, "The Image of Antichrist, exalting himself in the Temple of God, above all that is named God" (4.145-64). This rhetorical piece is an extended exercise in what Foxe called "*prosopoeia*, or invented speech," in which the martyrologist takes on the voice of the papal Antichrist in order that his

true character can be revealed to readers.<sup>9</sup> Although “invented,” this remarkable monologue is actually constructed of over two hundred quotations drawn from various papal sources, strung together to create a unified monologue. Thus, quite brilliantly, the “voice” of the piece is Antichrist but the statements themselves actually derive from the comments of real historical Popes. As the title implies, the effect Foxe tries to produce is that of a titanic ego “exalting itself” in a paroxysm of comically self-aggrandizing and hyperbolic boasting. At the heart of this rant is the assumption, the core of false-consciousness, that he is Christ on earth:

[W]hereas all others are subjects, yea and emperors themselves ought to subdue their executions to me, only I am a subject to no creature, no not to myself, except I list...superior to all men, whom all persons ought to obey...whereas I began, so I conclude, commanding, declaring, and pronouncing, to stand upon necessity of salvation, for every human creature is subject to me (4.155-64ff).

This rant goes on for page after page, making excessive verbal self-dramatization itself a significant feature of the image of antichristian false consciousness. By combining, precisely as Foxe does, the rhetoric of a series of historical rebels in one figure, Shakespeare constructs Cade as a generalized figure for popular rebellion which shares this same verbally excessive rage to rule:

Away with him, do as I command ye. The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his shoulders, unless he pay me a tribute; there shall not a maid be married, but she shall pay to me her maidenhead ere they have it; men shall hold of me *in capite*, and we charge and command that their wives be as free as heart can wish or tongue can tell (4.7.102-6).

As a concentrated dramatization of the figure of apostate power which is constructed throughout the *Acts&Monuments*, Foxe's “Image of Antichrist...” is a fascinating intertext for Shakespeare's Cade. In particular, Foxe's rhetorical balancing of an exaggerated cartoon-like figure with real violence and horror, the reality of historical popes and their flesh-and-blood victims, shares a striking affinity with Shakespeare's representation of a “popular” rebellion in which “swords of lath” are used to commit acts of graphic violence.

A second attribute of Cade's rebellion which is intertextually linked with the *Acts&Monuments* is the rebels' hatred of literacy. Although Cade's efforts to justify this aspect of the rebel program has evoked a curiously sympathetic response among some literary critics, the play clearly shows it to be a part of Cade's satanic rage to power. Just as Cade is York's "double," the killings of the Clerk and Lord Say, and the rebels' "infantile hatred of literacy and law" (Wilson, 27), are a translation into the field of popular revolt of the same antichristian principle which earlier led to the murder of Gloucester. Thus, from the apostate perspective of Cade and the rebels, literacy appears to be a source of inhumane and illegitimate punitive power—"Is not this a lamentable thing, that the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment, that parchment being scribbled o'er should undo a man?(4.2.64-66)—yet it is the rebels who are treating men as if they were livestock, making "dog's leather" out of the skins of their perfectly innocent "enemies." The rebels' hatred of literacy can be compared with the positive, essentially Protestant, vision of popular literacy glimpsed very briefly in *2HenryVI* Act One, where the Petitioners attempt to present their carefully written "supplications in the quill" to Duke Humphrey (1.3.3). Appropriately enough, these supplications are intercepted by Suffolk and Margaret and, in a dramatic gesture obviously mirrored in the rebels, wrathfully torn to shreds by the Queen (1.3.34sd).

Given the importance of lay reading and teaching in reformed religious culture, it is hardly surprising that the theme of popular literacy is a dominant one in the *Acts&Monuments*, and that the attempts by various Catholic powers to wipe out literacy is a key component in Foxe's portrait of the historical antichrist. Popular literacy takes on a pronounced triumphalist quality in Foxe's play *Christus Triumphans*, where it is shown as the key instrument in the eventual defeat of Antichrist and his cohorts:

Pornapolis: They're all diligently reading scriptures—stonecutters, smiths, potters, everybody. And, what I think is bad, the dregs of the people are starting to be wise now. What's more, they're even weighing our traditions in the scales of the gospel.

...

Anabasius [Messenger from Hell]: You've jumped from the frying pan into the fire!

Pseudamnus [Antichrist; the Pope]: Why so?

Anabasius: Because the world, long blinded, is now beginning to see. Men won't be led by the nose much longer. Everywhere they're being refined by letters and languages. Nothing is achieved by deception. Everywhere they're farting at your orders and shitting on your bulls. Your keys are worthless, and your thunder and triple crown are scorned... They say your pomp, extravagance, lust, savagery, doctrine, poisonings, crimes, trickeries and trumperies, and the tumult of your tragic life easily proves who you are: they firmly believe that you are the Antichrist (5.3.5-43ff).

In the *Acts&Monuments* itself this idea is massively recapitulated in historiographical form. The story of Elizabeth Young alluded to earlier, for example, begins when Young is arraigned for bringing books into England. Young's story is one of literally countless episodes in the *Acts&Monuments* in which some form of lay literacy leads to persecution. In an episode strikingly similar to Shakespeare's staging of the killing of the Clerk of Chartham by Cade and the rebels, Foxe recounts the story of a "godly book-seller with two bibles about his neck burnt in Avignon" (4.486*gloss*):

In the same place, there was a foreign bookseller, who had set out sale certain bibles in French and Latin, with divers other books; which when the prelates beheld, they were greatly moved thereat, and said unto him, "Darest thou be so hardy to set out such merchandise to sell here in this town? dost thou not know that such books are forbidden?"... Let him be taken," said he, "and examined what he is." And incontinently the book-seller was taken and carried into prison, and spitefully handled; for a company of knaves and ruffians, who waited on the prelates, began to cry out, "A Lutheran! A Lutheran!" "To the fire with him!" And one gave him a blow with his fist, another pulled him by the hair, and others by the beard, in such sort that the poor man was all imbrued with blood before he came to prison (4.485-6).

There follows a brief "trial" which, like the mock examinations carried out by Cade, is a foregone conclusion. The book-seller refuses to renounce his belief that bibles should be

available in the “vulgar tongue” and is burned. Similarly, Shakespeare's Clerk “confesses” to the charge of literacy—“Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name”(4.2.86-7)—and is immediately put to death by the rebels:

All: He hath confessed: away with him! He's a villain and a traitor

Cade: Away with him , I say! Hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck (4.2.88-90).

Shakespeare's dramatic image of summarily executed innocence combined with a perverse spectacle of the triumph of satanic raging over literacy is precisely echoed in Foxe's account:

Then the bishop of Aix and the other bishops began to rage, and gnash their teeth against the poor prisoner. “What need you,” said they, “of any more examination? Let him be sent straight unto the fire, without any more words.”

*A godly bookseller with two bibles about his neck burnt in Avignon.*

Hereupon he was immediately condemned to be burned, and the sentence was executed the very same day; and for a sign or a token of the cause of his condemnation, he carried two bibles hanging about his neck, the one before, the other behind him (4.484).

In this particular episode Foxe's narrative actually works to contrast one form of popular literacy, a “godly” reading, with “base images and pictures, with filthy rhymes and ballads annexed to the same, to move and stir the people up to whoredom and knavery”(4.486). This note of “puritanical” censoriousness is, however, quite un-typical of the *Acts&Monuments* as a whole. More typically, as in *Christus Triumphans*, Foxe represents literacy in all forms as a potent force for social justice in the world and, as well, as a key phase in the larger Apocalyptic scheme of history. Even the enemy's writing can be used against him: Foxe's “Image of Antichrist...” itself is an excellent example of how through lay literacy “common people” are “farting at” and “shitting on” Antichrist's “bulls” and “orders.” As a result, antichristian power in the *Acts&Monuments* is pictured as a deeply rooted opposition to all forms of popular literacy, not just vernacular bibles and other forms of distinctly Protestant reading and writing. This antichristian principle comes to the foreground in Foxe's set-piece,

“The Invention and Benefit of Printing,” an ode-like celebration of the invention and spread of printing which Foxe interpolated into his account of the reign of Henry VI:

[I]n this very time so dangerous and desperate, where man's power could do no more, there the blessed wisdom and omnipotent power of the lord began to work for his church; not with the sword and target to subdue his exalted adversary, but with printing, writing, and reading: to convince darkness by light, error by truth, ignorance by learning (3.719).

Just as Winchester and the aristocratic cabal feel that Gloucester must be killed, and as Cade and the rebels instinctively see the literacy of the Clerk and Lord Say as “monstrous,” so literacy appears to apostate, antichristian power as an enemy that must be eradicated:

Wherefore I suppose, that either the pope must abolish printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over: for else, as this world standeth, printing must abolish him...so that either the pope must abolish knowledge and printing, or printing at length will root him out (3.720).

Like Foxe's Antichrist, Cade seeks to “reign over” a “new world” by abolishing literacy, to create an illiterate theodicy in which his “stinking mouth” will be the demonic source of all law and religion. It is hard to imagine a more expressive dramatic emblem of Foxe's concept of the historical Antichrist as “darkness,” “error,” and “ignorance” “exalting itself” than Shakespeare's Cade.

Perhaps even more than Cade's remarkable self-fashioning or the rebel's hatred of literacy, the most memorable aspect of Shakespeare's staging of the rebellion is the extremity of its violence. As D.R. Woolf has shown, violence and persecution in the *Acts&Monuments* is consistently represented in terms of a fairly limited set of repeated binary images. This imagistic patterning helps Foxe to substantiate his view of the fundamental sameness or identity which links otherwise distinct historical persons and events:

[T]o maintain the integrity and distinctness of individual martyrological identity, the existence of discrete *subjects* rather than hagiographic *types*, without subverting a central theme of the book as a

whole; the essential unity and wholeness of the church, and the spiritual sameness of its adherents [and its adversaries] through time and space (Woolf 1994, 11).

Central to this metaphorical rhetoric, Woolf shows, is the language of biblical pastoral, of “devouring and ravening wolves” preying on “innocent lambs and sheep” and, relatedly, of “false shepherds” and “wolves in sheep’s clothing”(1994, 16-17). The same biblical pastoral language, which can be found on almost every page of the *Acts&Monuments*, is also used by Shakespeare throughout *1-3HenryVI*. In a further example of the self-accusatory language discussed above, Queen Margaret effectively alludes to her own wolvisness when, responding to Henry’s belief in Gloucester’s innocence, she asks:

Is he a lamb? His skin is surely lent him then  
For he’s inclined as is the ravenous wolves (3.1.77-78).

Soon after, Gloucester adopts the same language of biblical pastoral to define the outcome of his trial:

Thus is the shepherd beaten from thy side  
And wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee first (3.1.191-2).

As mentioned above, however, Henry’s response to the same events modulates from the poetic language of pastoral wolves and shepherds to a more literalistic and artisanal mode centered on the real-life figures of the “butcher” and the “bloody slaughter-house.” This imagistic transformation is reiterated, in spectacular fashion, during the Cade episode as Cade and his chief confederate, Dick the Butcher, transform England into their own bloody slaughter-house:

Cade: Where’s Dick, the Butcher of Ashford?  
Dick: Here Sir.  
Cade: They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, thou behaved’st thyself as if thou hadst been in  
thine own slaughter-house; therefore thus will I award thee: the Lent shall be as long  
again as it is; and thou shalt have a license to kill for a hundred lacking one.  
Dick: I desire no more (4.3.1-8).



As Richard Wilson has suggested, in the figure of Dick the Butcher, potentially “festive images of meat and gluttony are literalized as cannibalism”(30). However, where Wilson sees only anti-populist class bias, it is possible to trace the presence of a Foxeian intertext which powerfully underlines the violence of the rebels as emblematic of antichristian persecution. This is not popular politics *per se*, but a degraded, apostate form of it. In example after example Foxe uses the same trope—butchery and the slaughterhouse—to characterize the efforts of the persecutors as a kind of perverse, cannibalistic labour.<sup>10</sup> The language of butchery and the slaughterhouse is pervasive, for example, in Foxe’s prefatory address “To the Persecutors....” quoted earlier in Chapter Three. More subtly, it provides a grim level of irony in the story of Stephen Gardiner’s last meal, and, similarly, helps Foxe to define the apostate Eucharist as cannibalistic persecution. The language of butchery is particularly focused, however, in Foxe’s treatment of the notorious Marian Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner. “Bloody Bonner,” as he is commonly referred to, is a major figure in the second volume of the *Acts&Monuments*. Interestingly, he appears most often as the helper of Cardinal Winchester, and so is a brutal henchman whose role is in fact quite similar to that played by Dick the Butcher. In a letter to the Bishop quoted approvingly by Foxe, an anonymous woman refers to Bonner first as a “ravening wolf against the poor lambs of Christ” and then, immediately after, as:

[T]he common cut-throat and slaughter-slave to all the bishops of England; and therefore it is wisdom for me and all other simple sheep of the Lord, to keep us out of your butchers’ stall as long as we can; especially seeing that you have such store already, that you are not able to drink all of their blood, lest you should break your belly: and therefore let them lie still, and die for hunger...I hear say, my lord, that some of the butcherly curs came of late to seek their prey, and that they go round about the city grinning and grudging that they have not meat enough: therefore they have killed my poor brethren and sisters that have lain so long on the butcherly stall, and eaten them up (7.712).

As the source of this letter suggests, Foxe did not invent the idea of persecution as butchery, he learned it from the martyrs. What he did do was concentrate and expand upon it in the *Acts&Monuments* to create an unmistakable component of the Foxeian rhetoric of antichristian persecution.

The process of establishing the connection between persecution and literal butchery can be seen in Foxe's account of the martyrdom of another anonymous women in the reign of Henry VII, one which Foxe uses to make explicit his "comparison between butchers and the pope's murdering ministers"(4.128*gloss*):

It happened in the mean time, that as the catholic executioners were busy in slaying this silly lamb at the town's side, a certain butcher was as busy within the town, slaying a bull; which bull he had fast bound in ropes, ready to knock him on his head. But the butcher, (belike not so skillful in his art of killing beasts, as the papists be in murdering Christians) as he was lifting his axe to smite the bull, failed in his stroke, and smote the bull a little too low, or how he smote, I know not"(4.128).

This partially comic anecdote concludes with a providential "joke" whereby the bull escapes and kills the Catholic "butcher," Dr. Wittington, "carrying his guts, and trailing them with his horns, all the street over, to the great wonder of all them that saw it"(4.128).<sup>11</sup> A considerably more chilling version of the motif can be found in Foxe's account of the reign of Henry VIII, where Foxe tells the horrific story of "Eighty-eight martyrs in one Day, with one butcherly knife, slain like sheep"(4.472):

In Calabria likewise, at the same time, suffered a blessed number of Christ's well-beloved saints, both old and young, put together in one house, to the number of eighty-eight persons; all which, one after another, were taken out of the house, and, being laid upon the butcher's stall, like the sheep in the shambles, with one bloody knife were all killed in order: a spectacle most tragical, for all posterity to remember, and almost incredible to believe (4.472).

Foxe goes on to relate a vision of butchered humanity which is, like the martyrdom of Perotine Massey, literally unforgettable:

And truly the manner of their putting to death was to be compared to the slaughter of calves and sheep; for they, being all thrust up in one house together, as in a sheep fold, the executioner cometh in, and amongst them taketh one, and blindfoldeth him with a muffer about his eyes, and so leadeth him forth to a larger place adjoining, where he commandeth him to kneel down; which being so done, he cutteth his throat, and leaving him half dead, and taking his butcher's knife and muffer all of gore blood, cometh again to the rest, and so leading one after another, he dispatched them all, to the number of eighty-eight...and so dispatching them all no otherwise than doth a butcher kill his calves and sheep (4.473).

As these examples clearly suggest, Foxe's use of the language of butchery and cannibalism provides a powerful intertext for Shakespeare's staging of violence in the Cade rebellion. Coming to the theater, readers of Foxe would have been readily able to visualize "sin struck down like an ox" and "iniquity's throat cut like a calf" as a powerful image of antichristian persecution. Like Cade and the rebels, Foxe's Antichrist has a distinct artisanal identity: he is a butcher.

Cade's fantastic megalomania, the rebels' hatred of literacy, and the leitmotif of butchery all provide intertextual links between Shakespeare's staging and Foxe's historiography. From the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, the play points beyond class antagonism to reveal the figure of Antichrist in Cade and the rebels. The Cade episode is a "mirror-scene" in that it translates into popular terms the aristocratic vision of antichristian persecution developed in the first half of the play. However, the overall effect of this mirroring is cumulative rather than merely echoic: Cade's effort to create his own demonic theodicy mirrors the machinations of Winchester and his cohorts, but in doing so expands and deepens the theme of national apostasy. In *3HenryVI*, the series of battlefield executions which by-and-large constitute the action of the play complete the process by showing England almost totally eclipsed by the spectacle of satanic violence.

SATANIC SPECTACLE IN *3HENRYVI*

In his account of mass-murder in Calabria, Foxe extends his focus beyond persecuting “butcher” and persecuted “sheep” to include the impact the scene might have had on an imaginary audience. This is not just a brutal killing, it is a ritualized “spectacle most tragical for all posterity to remember”(4.472). Likewise, the story of Dr. Wittington and the bull is a “great wonder [to] all them who saw it”(4.128). In fact, a similar emphasis on the spectacular or theatrical character of antichristian violence is foregrounded in all the Foxeian intertexts for the Cade episode alluded to earlier. Foxe’s monologue “Image of Antichrist...” is also a theatrical soliloquy, an example of satanic self-dramatizing which is reflected in Cade, and the murder of the book-seller involves a pageant-like “triumph” over literacy which is echoed in the murders of Lord Say and the Clerk of Chartham. As the overtly theatrical quality of these episodes suggests, Foxe drew a fundamental connection between satanic identity and certain forms of theatricality. Consistently throughout the *Acts&Monuments*, in fact, Foxe revealed the historical Antichrist to his readers in terms of a kind of demonic play acting.

Noting the influence of Foxe’s early efforts as a dramatist, Warren Wooden has argued that “stage metaphors are so frequent” in the *Acts&Monuments* “that they ultimately suggest a way of looking at history as pageant”(67). For Wooden, the essential focus of this theatricality is the “performance,” so to speak, of the martyrs themselves, who provide exemplary dramatizations of the “art of holy dying”(44-66ff). Foxe’s use of theatrical metaphors also produces, however, a resonant image of demonic theatricality and acting which is a definitive feature of his portrait of the historical Antichrist. Thus, when he introduces the concept of the “loosing out of Satan” at the beginning of the *Acts&Monuments*,

Foxe urges his readers to imagine a theater populated by popish, rather than godly, players:

“so up started a new sort of players, to furnish the stage, as school-doctors, canonists, and the four orders of the friars”(1.xxi). This fairly innocuous-sounding stage metaphor is repeated in more violent terms when Foxe comes to the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century civil war era:

[S]uffer me a little by your license, gentle reader, to talk with these cruel bloodsuckers; whereby they, being admonished, may repent; or they will or not, that they may behold, to their great shame and rebuke, whether they will or no, their wicked cruelty and great slaughters, laid before them, on a stage (3.98).

Much more than just an echo of his earlier interest in the stage, Foxe's theatrical rhetoric is an essential part of the argument of the *Acts&Monuments*. By highlighting the spectacular quality of antichristian violence, Foxe was in fact translating into the historiographical mode one of the key concepts of early Protestant theater: the idea that Antichrist is a Vice-like actor and that apostate consciousness is a kind of demonic playing.<sup>12</sup> Reading the *Acts&Monuments*, Foxe's audience learned to see their own history as a pageant of satanic executions in which the antichristian character of the persecutors is revealed by their rage, literally, to play the devil.

In *2HenryVI*, the intense theatricality of the rebels—from the “swords of lath,” to the mock trials and bloody pageantry of the rebellion proper, to the self-dramatizing end of Cade—is readily apparent. According to Richard Helgerson, the rebels are in fact so theatrical that the rebellion works as a kind of quasi-allegorical image of the popular theater itself (Helgerson, 215-228). Theatricality in *2HenryVI* is not, however, a unique attribute of the lower orders; Cade's spectacle mirrors the equally theatrical behaviour of the seditious aristocracy. Although the historical *form* is different, distopic carnivalesque clowning versus carefully stage-managed political attack and assassination, the historical *identity* is the same.

Thus the mock trials of Say and the Clerk palpably mirror the trial of Humphrey. In both cases, the overt theatricality of the aggressors, the desire to play a role in the spectacle of persecution, is used by Shakespeare to create a controlled level of dramatic irony. By producing their own violent spectacles within the historical play staged by Shakespeare, these characters dramatize their essential historical identity.

As the presence of a very similar kind of dramatic irony in the *Acts&Monuments* suggests, for Foxe's readers Shakespeare's manipulation of the theatrical metaphor in *2HenryVI* would have been immediately recognizable as Foxeian history, as a dramatic emblem of satanic apostasy. In *3HenryVI*, the connection between theatrical behaviour and violent persecution becomes, if not exactly more pronounced, at least more central to Shakespeare's effort to create a dramatic chronicle of the civil war. What is particularly striking about *3HenryVI* is the way Shakespeare's representation of the conflict itself, essentially a series of large-scale military engagements leading, after much effort on both sides, to the victory of the Yorks, is in fact dramatized as the murders of a series of helpless victims at the hands of overpowering enemies. In Acts One and Two, the focal point is the execution of the Duke of York, a spectacular mock crucifixion paralleled before and after by the killings of Rutland and Clifford. Murder gives way to marital maneuvering and the peregrinations of the King in the middle of the play, but in Act Five the renewed conflict is again defined by the executions of Prince Edward and the King. By staging the civil war as a series of executions, translating military history into a history of persecution, Shakespeare's treatment of the conflict becomes inherently Foxeian. That is, readers of the *Acts&Monuments* would have immediately recognized *as history* the way Shakespeare's play adumbrates the

presence, operating beneath the complex level of political events, of a deeper reality based on the simplified pattern of persecutors and victims, wolves and sheep.

Thus, at Towton York expresses his sense of being pursued and overwhelmed by an implacable force using the familiar imagery of biblical pastoral:

And all my followers to the eager foe  
Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind,  
Or lambs pursu'd by hunger-starv'd wolves (1.4.3-5).

This is a natural expression of the Duke's fatigued sense of military and political defeat. For playgoers, however, York's language points to a level of historical reality in which political allegiances and motives, York versus Lancaster, are somehow epiphenomenal. York sees his side as "lambs" and the Lancastrians as "wolves," an impression intimated earlier by the slaughter of Rutland at the hands of Clifford—

So looks the pent-up lion oe'r the wretch  
That trembles under his devouring paws;  
And so he walks, insulting oe'r his prey,  
And so he comes, to rend his limbs asunder (1.3.12-15).

However, following York's murder this imagistic pattern is reversed, so that by the end of Act Two it is the Lancastrians whose "friends are fled," and who, "like a fearful flying hare" hunted by a "brace of greyhounds," are being pursued to death by the "chafed bull" Warwick (2.5.125-133). The point Shakespeare wants to make, evidently enough, is that both sides in the conflict engage in animalistic violence. Beyond this basic anti-war stance, however, seems to be the suggestion that the politics of civil war, quite unlike the rational process described by "politic" historians such as Hayward and Bacon, is in reality a grotesque spectacle of violence driven by the desire of a series of characters to act out in the role of wolvisish persecutors.<sup>13</sup> Rutland's image of Clifford as a "pent-up lion" is a response to Clifford's own very dramatic

sense of the transcendent hellishness of his blood-thirsty “fury”: “And till I root out their accursed line,/ And leave not one alive, I live in hell”(1.3.33). For Clifford, fighting in a civil war is like playing in a Senecan revenge drama, and the result of this playing is the very real spectacle of the slaughter of an innocent boy. Henry’s comment upon the entrance of Richard, Duke of Gloucester—

“What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?”(5.6.10)—perfectly captures the sense that the violent theatricality of the persecutors is in fact the key to the historical meaning of the “scenes of death” which constitute the main action of the play.

Henry naturally identifies Richard Gloucester as the chief actor in this violent pageant, an attribution which accurately recalls the flair for the dramatic which is central to the portrayal of Richard throughout the play. It is Richard who defines political “acting” when he says

I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,  
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could  
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.  
I can add colours to the chameleon,  
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,  
And set the murderous Machiavel to school (3.2. 188-93).

However impressive-sounding these theatrical credentials might be, the kind of acting Richard actually does in the play is like that of the opening scene, where he produces the severed head of Somerset in a dramatic gesture designed to upstage the martial vaunting of his confederates:

Edward: Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,  
Is either slain or wounded dangerous:  
I cleft his beaver with a downright blow.  
That this is true, father, behold his blood.  
Montague: And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,  
Whom I encountered as the battles joined.



Richard: Speak for me, and tell them what I did.

*[Throwing down the Duke of Somerset's head]*

York: Richard hath best deserved of all my sons—

But is your grace dead, my lord of Somerset? (1.1.10-18).

Compared to the remarks of Edward and Montague, which are violent but nevertheless natural protestations of military valour, Richard's flourishing of the severed head is pure theater—he did not, after all, even kill Somerset—and hence displays the workings of a self-conscious theatricality which is of an entirely different order. Moreover, Richard's gesture not only wins the boasting contest, it initiates a broader Yorkist spectacle, transforming the manly comparison of military prowess into a degraded and monstrously child-like playing as the future king and the other Yorkist “boys” take turns railing at and shaking the bloody severed head.

This spectacle, in which the Yorks effectively dramatize their own degradation, is repeated in an even more expansive emblem of demonic playing in Act Two, when they discover Clifford's corpse on the battlefield at Towton. Although it is easily missed in reading the play, the dramatic impact of this macabre scene, its grotesque comedy, derives from the way the Yorks' treatment of the corpse takes the form of an obviously theatrical clowning as, once again, the characters take turns buffeting and railing at a dead body:

Richard: 'Tis but policy to counterfeit

Because he would avoid such bitter taunts

Which in the time of death he gave our father.

George: If thou think'st, vex him with eager words.

Richard: Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.

Edward: Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

Warwick: Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.

George: While we devise fell tortures for thy faults (2.6.65-72).

If the obvious use of stichomythia here suggests that the Yorks, like Clifford earlier, have taken on the roles of Senecan revengers, the physicality of the action, especially the efforts of the actor playing Clifford to “counterfeit” death, are more redolent of the violent clowning of the Cade episode. What is perhaps more remarkable is how, in their efforts to make a spectacle of Clifford, the Yorks play the parts of priests in a degraded parody of the sacrament of penance. Or, rather, to read the scene from the Protestant perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, in their comic raging at Clifford's corpse, the Yorks unconsciously imitate the equally degraded spectacle of “popish penance”(3.598*gloss*), a sub-species of religious persecution which is described in detail at numerous points in Foxe's history. He describes, for example, a series of harsh public penances exacted in Norwich during the reign of Henry VI:

The like also happened unto John Finch...who being suspected of heresy, was attached at Ipswich...and brought before the bishop there, before whom he, being convicted of the like articles, as all the others before him, was enjoined penance, namely three disciplinings at solemn procession about the cathedral church of Norwich three several Sundays; and three disciplinings about the marketplace of Norwich three principle market-days; his head, neck, and feet being bare, and his body covered only with a short shirt or vesture, having in his hands a taper of wax of a pound weight, which, the next Sunday after his penance, he should offer to the Trinity; and that for the space of three years after, every Ash-Wednesday and Maundy-Thursday, he should appear in the cathedral church at Norwich, before the bishop...to do open penance among the other penitentiaries for his offenses (3.598).

The irony in Foxe's account is that Finch's “offense” is to be a true Christian and, more importantly, that the attempt to make a solemn spectacle of penance by devising such “fell tortures” only serves to dramatize the priests' own apostate, antichristian raging. Like martyrdom itself, “popish penance” is a form of failed theatrics because it ultimately works to confirm the revelation that Catholicism itself is profoundly antichristian. Shakespeare's staging not only recalls the “unsavoury and heathenish doctrine of penance”(1.77) described at length in the *Acts&Monuments*, it recreates Foxe's ironic perspective perfectly.

The way the Yorks like to engage in comic raging at heads and corpses in *3HenryVI* can also be compared with several key episodes in the *Acts&Monuments* where antichristian persecution takes the form of a similar necrophiliac playing. Foxe recounts, for example, how the Catholics exhumed the bones of Wycliff, the hero of early Protestantism, in order to burn them:

What Heraclitus would not laugh, or what Democritus would not weep, to see these so sage and reverend Catos occupying their heads to take up a poor man's body, so long dead and buried before, by the space of forty-one years; and yet peradventure, they were not able to find his right bones, but took up another body, and so of a catholic made a heretic! (3.95-6).

Displaying a perfect command of ironic historical narrative, Foxe's account shows how the effort to make a solemn spectacle of public exhumation and posthumous burning results in a remarkable instance of failed theatrics. Instead of demonstrating their righteousness and Wycliff's heresy, the prelates degrade themselves in a grotesque comic spectacle. Accompanied by a woodcut image of the ghoulish priests digging out the bones and burning them, Foxe's satire on the "mad folly" (3.95) of the priests is only partially comic, inevitably recalling and reflecting the violence done to the live bodies of the martyrs. (**fig. 5**) The seriousness of the scene is also grounded by Foxe's concluding suggestion that the priests are in fact identical to the "Pharisees and Sepulchre-knights" in the gospels who "when they had brought the Lord unto the grave, thought to make him sure never to rise again" (3.96).

Similarly, the grotesque comedy of the York's treatment of Clifford's corpse reveals the presence of a spirit of unquenchable raging which is anything but humorous. Like the priests in Foxe's narrative, Richard would bring Clifford back to life, paradoxically, in order to silence him again:

What not an oath? Nay then, the world goes hard

When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.  
 I know by that he's dead; and, by my soul,  
 If this right hand would buy two-hours' life,  
 That I in all despite might rail at him,  
 This hand should chop it off and, with the issuing blood,  
 Stifle the villain whose unstaunched thirst  
 York and young Rutland could not satisfy (2.6.77-84).

It is, however, Richard's unquenchable blood-thirst, not Clifford's, which is being dramatized.

Richard here is acting—he wouldn't really cut off his hand—but, at the same time, his theatrical raging is literally true in that it reveals how his own violent desires are “unstaunched” by Clifford's death. Reflecting a spirit of misanthropic raging which transcends both natural and “politic” revenge, Richard's urge to both kill Clifford and yet resurrect him to “stifle” again can be compared with the following comments on antichristian “cruelty” in Foxe's account of the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer:

I think there was never cruelty more notably or better in time deluded and deceived; for it is not to be doubted that they looked for a glorious victory and a perpetual triumph...[so they] began to let down their ears, to rage, to fret and fume; and so much the more because they could not revenge their grief—for they could no longer threaten or hurt him. For the most miserable man in the world can die but once...he could not be killed twice of them. And so, when they could do nothing else of him, yet, lest they should say nothing, they ceased not to object unto him his falsehood and dissimulation (8:90).

With its subtle evocation of the theatrical Vice, Foxe's commentary on the “deluded cruelty” of Cranmer's enemies provides another remarkably resonant intertext for Shakespeare's staging of violence. Like these Antichrists, Richard finds no satisfaction in military triumph and cannot “revenge his grief” on Clifford. The result is the grotesque spectacle of Clifford's “penance.”

Although they excel at it, the Yorkist “boys” are not alone in their addiction to demonic playing: Yorkist theatrics in these “scenes of death” are more than matched by Queen

Margaret's remarkable staging of the mock crucifixion of the Duke of York. Shakespeare's staging of the death of York in Act One of *3Henry VI* has long been recognized as a kind of parody of the biblical crucifixion.<sup>14</sup> The "source" for this motif, in traditional terms, is "Holinshed's" comment that:

[S]ome write that the Duke was taken alive, and in derision caused to stand upon a molehill, on whose head they put a garland in steed of a crowne, which they had fashioned and made of sedges or bulrushes; and having so crowned him with that garland, they kneeled downe afore him (as the Jews did unto Christ) in scorne, saeing to him; haile king without rule, haile king without heritage, hail Duke and Prince without people or possessions. And at length, having thus scorned him with these and diverse other the like despightful wordes, they stroke off his head (Bullough, 3:210).

In the chronicle, the comparison between historical execution and scriptural crucifixion takes the form typically cautious "some write," combined with a simile which is separated from the main narrative by parentheses. In Shakespeare's play this cautious attribution becomes unqualified assertion as the players act out the mock crucifixion on stage. Beyond simply alluding to the crucifixion, Shakespeare's play dramatizes a killing in which the theatricality of the murderers becomes the key to the relationship between York's death and the scriptural model.

Thus, in *her* play, Margaret consciously evokes the christological pattern in order to mock York's royal pretensions:

Come make him stand upon this molehill here  
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,  
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.  
What, was it you that would be England's king? (1.4.67-70).

Her satire fails, however, because it is embedded in a larger pattern of dramatic irony of which she is, of course, unaware. Margaret wants to make a spectacle of York's guilt by having him play a mad man, to make him "stamp, rave, and fret" or, at the very least, to make him

“grieve, to make [her] merry” (1.4.86-91). York’s silence, his refusal to play the role assigned to him in Margaret’s play—“Thou would’st be feed, I see, to make me sport”(1.4.92)—is described in terms which also recollect the fortitude of Foxe’s martyrs: “What, hath thy fiery heart so parch’d thine entrails/ That not a tear can fall for Rutland’s death?”(1.4.87-8). For readers of the *Acts&Monuments*, this combination of bitterly blasphemous taunting with images of blood, fire, and parch’d entrails, set against York’s resolute perseverance, would have been unmistakable. Moreover, York’s impressive “orisons”(1.4.110), held back until Margaret’s theatrical raging has spent itself, recall the many verbal triumphs of Foxe’s martyrs. In the passage which Greene found so offensive, York describes the Queen as a “she-wolf...but worse than wolves” and as “a tiger’s heart in a woman’s hide”(1.4.111;137), echoing literally countless moments in the *Acts&Monuments* where either Foxe or the martyrs themselves denounce the persecutors as “murdering wolves in sheep’s clothing”(3.328*gloss*).

York dies, finally, with a pious exclamation which could have been lifted from any number of Foxe’s martyrdoms: “Open thy gates of mercy, Gracious God!/ My soul flies through these wounds to seek out thee”(1.6.177-8). Although, like Joan of Arc, York is not to be confused with the martyrs, he does undoubtedly achieve a martyr-like status in this scene. John R. Knott has discussed how actual human suffering, rendered in graphically realistic terms, is, for Foxe, the “locus of the sacred”(Knott 1996, 721). This allows Foxe to allude to the biblical archetype, the crucifixion, and still “keep the reader’s attention fixed on the actual scene and the human drama acted there [i.e. in the historical martyrdom]”(728). Moreover, Knott shows how Providence in Foxe’s narratives is not registered by any miraculous or unreal effects as in medieval hagiographies, but rather in the martyrs’ steadfastness and “boldness of speech”:

The martyr's ability to display boldness and courage in the face of death depends upon God's supportive and comforting presence although this does not for Foxe involve the kind of divine intervention that miracles imply (726).

God's presence is suggested by the way that, within the exigent world of historical violence and persecution, the martyr "speaks with a voice that asserts an enhanced moral and spiritual authority"(727). As Knott suggests, it is precisely this political realism which makes Foxe's providentialism "more astonishing and at the same time more tangible"(731).

If Margaret palpably fails to make a spectacle of York, the pervasive Foxeian irony of Shakespeare's staging is deepened by the reactions of Northumberland, who plays the role, so to speak, of Margaret's audience. Rather than being caught up in the spirit of Margaret's blasphemous playing, Northumberland seems to be literally converted by the scene of York's torment:

Beshrew me, but his passions moves me so  
That hardly can I check my eyes from tears.

...

Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,  
I should not for my life but weep with him (1.4.150-70).

The ironic implications of Northumberland's response are clear: Margaret wants to make a grotesque comedy of the Duke but her audience weeps; her theatrical gesture is intended as an instrument of vengeance but Northumberland declares that he has been moved beyond all thoughts of revenge.

Shakespeare's staging allows for a kind of transfiguration of both Margaret and York into types of the persecutor and the persecuted using a form of dramatic irony which explicitly recalls the rhetorical irony of Foxe's martyrological narratives. Persecution in the *Acts&Monuments* is almost always carried out as a public spectacle designed to ridicule the faith of the godly and to dissuade others from following their example. Equally consistently,

these efforts fail: the martyrs mock their mockers and prove their spiritual strength just as the persecutors display their apostasy. Thus, the burning of a typical martyr, Robert Samuel, forcefully *illuminates* the truth of his reformed beliefs and *enlightens* those who witness his martyrdom:

The report goeth among some that were there present, and saw him burn, that his body in burning did shine as bright and white as new tried silver in the eyes of them that stood by: as I am informed by some which were there, and did behold the sight (7.374).

Unlike hagiographies, there is no miracle here, just the providential revelation of the spiritual reality—the struggle between Christ and Antichrist—which underlines all persecution. Because many of its most eloquent denunciations of antichristian persecution are direct transcriptions of the testimony of the martyrs themselves, the *Acts&Monuments* is both a chronicle of the “acts” of the martyrs and a massive record of the failed theatrics of their antichristian persecutors.

The strong intertextual link between Foxe's use of the theatrical metaphor and Shakespeare's representation of York's murder as failed theatrics is perhaps best viewed in comparison with Foxe's account of the martyrdom of Cranmer, a key figure in the Marian persecutions and, according to Foxe, “almost the middle-man of all the martyrs that were burned”(8:90). From the outset, Foxe represents the process of Cranmer's execution as a theatrical spectacle stage-managed, so to speak, by Queen Mary. He relates how the Queen and her clerical minions, having coerced Cranmer into recanting his beliefs, plan to dramatize his capitulation and return to the church. There is to be a public spectacle co-starring Dr.Cole, a cleric who, like Cranmer, was “ready to play his part”(8.83). Foxe likens Dr. Cole to an actor not only because he will be participating in the spectacle, but, more importantly, because



he will be quite literally acting. The public recantation is a farce, because Cole and the Queen have already conspired to have Cranmer killed:

In the mean-time, while these things were adooing (as I said) in the prison among the doctors, the queen, taking secret counsel how to dispatch Cranmer out of the way...appointed Dr. Cole, and secretly gave him a commandment, that against the 21st of march, he should prepare a funeral sermon for Cranmer's burning (8.83).

However, unbeknownst to the plotters, Cranmer has written another script for the scene and plans to upstage his enemies, using their play to recant his recantation:

But yet the archbishop [i.e. Cranmer] being not ignorant whereunto their secret devices tended, and thinking that the time was at hand, in which he could no longer dissemble the profession of his faith with Christ's people, he put secretly in his bosom his prayer with his exhortations written in another paper, which he minded to recite to the people, before he should make the last profession of his faith, fearing lest, if they had heard the profession of his faith first, they would not afterward have suffered him to exhort the people (8.83-4).

In the event, Cranmer is “set up upon a stage”(8.84*gloss*) where he makes—at least according to Foxe—a wonderfully sincere demonstration of his true faith. Others in the audience were, however, decidedly hostile:

[A]nd when he began to speak more of the sacrament and of the papacy, some of them began to cry out, yelp and bawl, and specially Dr.Cole cried out upon him, ‘Stop the heretics mouth and take him away.’...and then Cranmer being pulled down from the stage, was led to the fire, accompanied by those friars, vexing, troubling, and threatening him most cruelly” (8.85).

The spectacle does not of course end with Cranmer being pulled from the stage. Rather, Cranmer's rhetorical victory leads to the inevitable climax of the narrative: the violent spectacle of public burning. Foxe provides an account of Cranmer's last “act” in the graphic style which has made him famous:

*Cranmer tied to the stake.*

Then was an iron chain tied about Cranmer, whom when they perceived to be the more steadfast then that he could be moved from his sentence, they commanded the fire to be set unto him.

*He putteth his right hand which subscribed, first into the fire.*

And when the wood was kindled, and the fire began to burn near him, stretching out his arm, he put his hand into the flame, which he held so steadfast and immovable (saving that once with the same hand he wiped his face), that all men might see his hand burned before his body was touched. His body did so abide the burning of the flame with such constancy and steadfastness, that standing always in one place without moving his body, he seemed to move no more than the stake to which he was bound; his eyes were lifted up into heaven, and often times he repeated, 'this unworthy right hand,' so long as his voice would suffer him;

*The last words of Cranmer at his death.*

And using often the words of Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' in the greatness of the flame he gave up the ghost (8.89-90).

It is difficult to exaggerate the stress Foxe places on the theatrical metaphor in this paradigmatic account martyrdom. Clerical details notwithstanding, Foxe's description of Cranmer's entrance onto the stage of Marian persecution reads like an excerpt from the *Apology For Actors* or, perhaps, a playgoers account of the final moments of Shakespeare's York:

[T]he psalm-saying friars brought him to his standing, and there left him. There was a stage set over against the pulpit, of a mean height from the ground where Cranmer had his standing, waiting until Dr. Cole made him ready to his sermon...The lamentable case and sight of that man gave a sorrowful spectacle to all Christian eyes that beheld him. He that late was archbishop, metropolitan, and primate of England, and the king's privy councilor, being now in a bare and ragged gown, and ill-favouredly clothed, with an old square cap, exposed to the contempt of all men, did admonish men not only of his own calamity, but also of their state and fortune. For who would not pity his case, and bewail his fortune, and might not fear his own chance, to see such a prelate, so grave a councilor, and of so long continued honour, after so many dignities...judged to die and in so painful a death to end his life, and now presently from such fresh ornaments, to descend to such a vile and ragged apparel (8.84).

If Cranmer's "act" of burning his right hand suggests a godly counterpart to Richard's demonic theatricality, the details in Foxe's account—the repeated emphasis on Cranmer's "steadfastness," the Queen's use of "ragged apparel" in an attempt to degrade him, the way he admonishes his persecutors of their "state and fortune," the timing of his "sermon," and his

dramatically highlighted “last words,”—provide a remarkable intertext for the spectacle of York's mock crucifixion in *3HenryVI*.

Just as Shakespeare carefully positions Northumberland as the ironic witness to Margaret's spectacle, Foxe interrupts his narrative in order to focus readers' attention on the various expectations and responses of the spectators, and thereby deepens the irony of Queen Mary's failed theatrics:

Also of the other multitude on every side (as is wont in such a matter) was made a great concourse, and greater expectation. For first of all, they that were of the pope's side were in great hope that day to hear something of Cranmer that should stablish the vanity of their opinion: the other part, which were endued with a better mind, could not yet doubt, that he who by continual study and labour for so many years, had set forth the doctrine of the gospel, either would or could now in the last act of his life forsake his part. Briefly, as every man's will inclined, to this part or to that, so, according to the diversity of their desires, every man wished and hoped for. And yet because in an uncertain thing the certainty could be known of none what would be the end; all their minds were hanging between hope and doubt. So that the greater the expectation was in so doubtful a matter, the more was the multitude, that was gathered hither to behold (8.83).

For Foxe, what is important is not just the act in itself, it is the way the spectacle divides the audience into opposing “parts” which is emphasized. This focus on the spectators is also articulated in the two expressive woodcuts which accompany the narrative. In the first, Dr.Cole watches with consternation as Cranmer is “plucked from the stage” by an audience which consists almost solely of angry “papists”(fig. 6). In the second the composition of the audience changes, creating an allegorical subtext which is remarkably easy to read. On the left, behind the pyre, stands a small group identified as clergy; on the right, in front of a building, there is a much larger group of lay men and women. The figures on the left recede quite dramatically into darkness while the faces of those on the right are illuminated by the flames of Cranmer's immolation. In addition to Cranmer himself, the burning is being

performed, so to speak, by a priest and a soldier, representing the allegiance between Mary and the Pope, but the stage is also occupied, as in the theater, by three seated aristocratic figures who watch intently and debate the scene. A yeoman-like figure watches the reactions of these aristocrats, obviously concerned to see what their response to the spectacle will be. While the moment captured by the illustration emphasizes, like the previous passage, the uncertainty of the outcome, the imbalanced composition of the illustration proves the ironic failure of Mary's theatrics. The large group, an enlightened Protestant *civitas*, clearly outweighs the smaller group which is receding into the dark wilderness of satanic apostasy (fig. 7).

Together, Foxe's narrative and illustrations represent Cranmer's execution as a spectacle of violent mockery which works, despite the best efforts of the Queen and Cole, as a kind of instrumental drama which creates a world of persecutors and their prey. The former "fall in" with the spectacle, like Bevis and Holland and the York "boys," becoming eager participants in the demonic pageant of history. Conversely, the latter, like Shakespeare's Northumberland and the Protestant spectators in Foxe's illustration, are converted by the spectacle of antichristian persecution. Central figures, like Margaret and Mary, become satanic impresarios or, like York and Cranmer, refuse to play their assigned roles in the demonic pageant. As suggested above in relation to the public exhumation and burning of Wycliff's remains, the underlying pattern for Foxe's ironic use of the theatrical metaphor is biblical crucifixion itself. Just as the priests inadvertently reveal their antichristian character by playing the roles of "Pharisees and sepulchre-knights," Foxe argues, so too are the Marian persecutions linked, typologically, with the persecution of Jesus:

[A]ll readers and rulers may not only see how the Lord did work against her [i.e. Queen Mary] therefor, but also by her may be advertised and learn what a perilous thing it is for men and women in authority, upon blind zeal and opinion, to stir up persecution...lest it prove in the end with them, (as it did here), that while they think to persecute heretics, they stumble on the same stone as did the jews, in persecuting Christ and his true members to death, to their own confusion and destruction (8.628).

By dramatizing Margaret's mock crucifixion of York as the paradigmatic "scene of death" in *3HenryVI*, Shakespeare translated "Holinshed's" cautious comment into a dramatic emblem of civil war which, by virtue of its ironic theatricality, resonates quite precisely with Foxe's idea of history as a pageant of spectacular murders linked typologically with the biblical crucifixion. At what is arguably the definitive moment in his dramatization of the dark era of civil war, the execution of York, Shakespeare presents his audience with a scene which points unmistakably towards providence as the reality underlying history—England, sunk into the darkness of apostate playing, has become "a field of Golgotha, and dead men's skulls."

In the penultimate scene of *3HenryVI*, King Henry identifies Richard Gloucester as a Persecutor using an imagistic equation which no reader of the *Acts&Monuments* could fail to recognize:

'Good Gloucester' and 'good devil' were alike  
 And both preposterous: therefore not 'good lord'.  
 ...  
 So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf;  
 So first the harmless sheep doth lose his fleece  
 And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.  
 What scene of death hath Roscius now to act? (5.6.4-10).

Richard is a Persecutor/devil/wolf/butcher/actor, and this metaphorical identity underlines the way Shakespeare's staging of the violence of the civil war era in *2-3HenryVI* recollects, intertextually, that other great Persecutor/devil/wolf/butcher/actor, the historical Antichrist

which Foxe constructed so unforgettably in the *Acts&Monuments*. For us, Henry's denunciation of Richard registers most emphatically as a foreshadowing of things to come, the emergence of the quintessential stage-villain, Richard III. Within the play of *1-3HenryVI*, however, imagined as being performed before *Richard III*, the effect was at least as likely to have been retrospective. Richard is on the verge of becoming the singular expression of the satanic devil/wolf/butcher/actor/persecutor factor in Shakespeare, but in these plays that identity is unconstrained, touching virtually every character and encompassing the entire nation in a vision of persecutorial violence. For readers of Foxe that vision would have been understood as emblematic of the "loosing out of Satan," the principle of antichristian violence which, in Foxe's Protestant historiography, was the essential providential reality underlying England's dark era of civil war.

## Notes

1. See above: Chapter three, page 55.
2. Anthony Hammond's reasonable-sounding suggestion that "though diabolical in his interests and behaviour [Richard] is not actually intended to be a representation of Satan or Lucifer" (Hammond, 102) is misleading because it fails to adequately historicize the notion of Satan. In the Protestant historiography of Foxe and his contemporaries, the Antichrist was not understood as a single mythological figure located in the extrahistorical past or future, but rather as a series of evil men operating in the real world of historical events. In Foxe, men are antichrists precisely because they are identified, just as Henry labels Richard, as "persecutors." See above Chapter Two, note 4.
3. The idea that *1-3HenryVI* is a complete chronicle play was argued persuasively by Emrys Jones in *The Origins of Shakespeare*, 127-141. Jones' view, like my own, is based on the notion that actual Tudor historiographical practices, such as the use of reigns as definitive epochs, should guide our understanding of how the chronicle plays worked *as history*.
4. See Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, 3:32, 90. Typically though, Bullough's essay on "Historical Authorities Available to Shakespeare" (3:1-15) does not even mention the *Acts&Monuments*. Shakespeare read Foxe for the career of Duke Humphrey and the playwright's version of events in the first half of the play is emphatically Foxeian. In addition to the Saunders Simpcox episode, Shakespeare follows Foxe by emphasizing the fact that Dame Eleanor's downfall was engineered by a cabal devoted to the destruction of Gloucester. Only

hinted at in Hall, the plot against Eleanor is greatly expanded on by Foxe. Foxe emphasizes the plot behind Eleanor's fall in order to illustrate the antichristian character of the process against Humphrey. Interestingly, this section of Foxe's account of the reign of Henry VI became the locus for one of Foxe's famous arguments with his Catholic opponent Alanus Copus (3.704-709).

5. See Claire Saunders, "Dead in his Bed." Saunders usefully underlines how, in performance, these scenes would emphasize the providential notion that "murder will not go unpunished"(30). My own reading adds a further, Foxeian, component to Saunders' excellent analysis.

6. Imagery based on butchery and the slaughterhouse will be discussed more fully below in relation to the Jack Cade episode.

7. Hattaway devotes a large part of his Introduction to *2HenryVI* to an effusively sympathetic reading of the Cade episode. Compare Wilson, "A Mingled Yarn," 28-30, and Helgerson's chapter on "Staging Exclusion" in *Forms of Nationhood*, 195-245.

8. The connection between Cade and Moses could be taken much further. As John N. King has shown, the figure of "Henry VIII-as-Moses" was a key iconographical motif used by Protestants to represent the ushering in of the Reformation itself. Cade's self-dramatizing gesture, from the perspective of Protestant iconography, suggests a degraded parody of the definitive moment in England's religious and political history. See King, "Henry VIII as David," 78-84.

9. For an interesting account of Foxe's use of *prosopoiia* in his *Sermon of Christ Crucified*, the 1570 Good Friday sermon at Paul's Cross which was one of Foxe's most notable public appearances, see Wooden 85-86. Wooden argues that Foxe's use of this "particular rhetorical stratagem made Foxe's sermon one of the most famous of its age"(85). It is interesting to compare Foxe's closing comments in the *Sermon of Christ Crucified* to the words of Carlyle's prophecy cited earlier:

For the *Turke* with his sword is not so cruell, but the Byshop of *Rome* on the other side is more fierce and bitter against us...Such dissension and hostilitie Sathan hath set amongst us, that the *Turkes* be not more enemyes to Christians, then Christians to Christians, Papists to Protestants...(in Wooden 86).

As a "wild Morisco" (3.1.365), Cade is also, like Foxe's "cruell Turke," a figure of violent Pagan apostasy which can be used to mirror the antichristianism of English society. The set-piece "Image of Antichrist..." is yet another example of the singular rhetorical scope and power which made Foxe's prose so popular among the Elizabethans.

10. Although he doesn't discuss it directly, the imagery of human butchery and the slaughterhouse is a key component of the "Rhetoric of Martyrdom" described by Woolf.

11. In his discussion of the *Acts&Monuments*, Richard Helgerson has suggested that this episode illuminates the essentially subversive, anti-hierarchical concept of the "nation" that is constructed in Foxe's book. Like his chapter on Shakespeare, Helgerson's reading of the *Acts&Monuments* is notable largely for its lack of balance. Helgerson fails to note, for example, how in this case and indeed throughout the

Acts&Monuments, violent revenge does not constitute a pattern for legitimate political action nor for authentic Protestant identity precisely because it is carried-out by a non-human agent of God's providence. In his essay on Providential revenge, Foxe's Catholic persecutors are either struck down by afflictions which reflect God's providential irony or, as in Joan of Arc's concluding curse on the English, they commit suicide. Helgerson's somewhat facile suggestion that "the violence of the wounded bull and the violence of Foxe's antipapal narratives are closely allied" (268) is at best a very poor description of a book which totally disavows violence as a legitimate political tool. Foxe in fact *never* advocates the destruction of Catholics in the Acts&Monuments. Rather, he urges Catholics to stop persecuting Christians and to repent and rejoin the true church. As mentioned above, Foxe himself repeatedly challenged his own government not to persecute Catholics and other non-conformists. Moreover, while Helgerson's observation that the bulk of Foxe's "narrative energy" is devoted to "the conflict between the godly and the established authority of church and state" is obviously correct, his assertion that the Acts&Monuments was therefore "profoundly antithetical to the hierarchical order of the English state"(268) is a perfect example of how the failure to recognize and distinguish between Protestant and Catholic forms of authority can totally debilitate our understanding of the real political force of Elizabethan texts such as Shakespeare's plays or the Acts&Monuments. Foxe's book was "profoundly antithetical" to *Catholic* authority, but, at the same time, his book massively inscribed the image of a godly monarchy and hierarchical magistracy within the mainstream Protestant conception of both statehood and individual political identity. As Paul Christianson has detailed, and he is just one of many historians who have discussed this process, the emergence of a truly subversive Protestant ideology in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century was in part made possible by the erosion and redefinition of Foxe's hierarchical and obedient conception of Protestant identity. The fact that later writers adapted the Protestant martyrological identity forged in the Acts&Monuments in order to define forms of Protestant selfhood in opposition to the state religious settlement should not obscure the fact that, perhaps more than any other work in the period, the Acts&Monuments created a sense of Protestant political identity for which being the obedient subject to the Elizabethan regime was the *sine qua non*. I have paused over this issue in order to press the point that eliding the world of difference which for the Elizabethans lay between Catholic and Protestant forms authority, as Helgerson does, can only result in a profound misunderstanding of the actual political valences of contemporary writing.

12. Illuminating discussions of the relationship between Protestant antichristianism and the stage can be found in Kendall, Drama of Dissent, and White, Theatre and Reformation. In his discussion of John Bale, Kendall describes how Bale's effort to expose the "cloistered imagination" of apostate Catholicism and the "ineluctable conflict between the world of grace and the world of demonic self-sufficiency" is "concentrated in the demonic play of the Vices"(100-122). The connection between Antichrist and various forms of illicit acting is explored in a number of instances by White (35-41). Although neither author discusses Shakespeare directly, these two books have been instrumental in shaping my thinking about the providential implications of theatricality in 1-3HenryVI.



13. See Woolf, Idea of History, (145-58) and Levy, Tudor Historical Thought, (237-285). My point is simply that it is difficult to reconcile Shakespeare's highly stylized, affective, and resonantly biblical representations of violence in 3HenryVI with the dispassionate analysis of the past characteristic of court biographers like Bacon, Hayward, and the other "Taciteans." Bacon, for example, argued that politic historians could learn most by focusing on *peaceful* periods of history. It also seems difficult to square Shakespeare's play with that Machiavellian/Tacitean mode of historical analysis in which the study of past events and the behaviour of illustrious figures was intended primarily to produce "politic" maxims of good government for a ruling elite. Rather, I find that Shakespeare, like Foxe, is centrally concerned to illuminate for his audience the profound moral realities underlying the politics of England's past.

14. See Emrys Jones, Origins of Shakespeare 54-56.

Figure One: Title page to the *Acts & Monuments*.

In addition to iconic markers such as the pilgrimage to an idol and prayer beads, the contrast between true and false worship is also registered dramatically in the paired illustrations. Notice, for example, the spiritual anxiety and consternation exhibited by the woman in the foreground of the image of Catholic worship, and also the cloudy darkness that envelops the scene. These are contrasted by the brightness and sense of spiritual clarity suggested by the image of Protestant worship on the left.

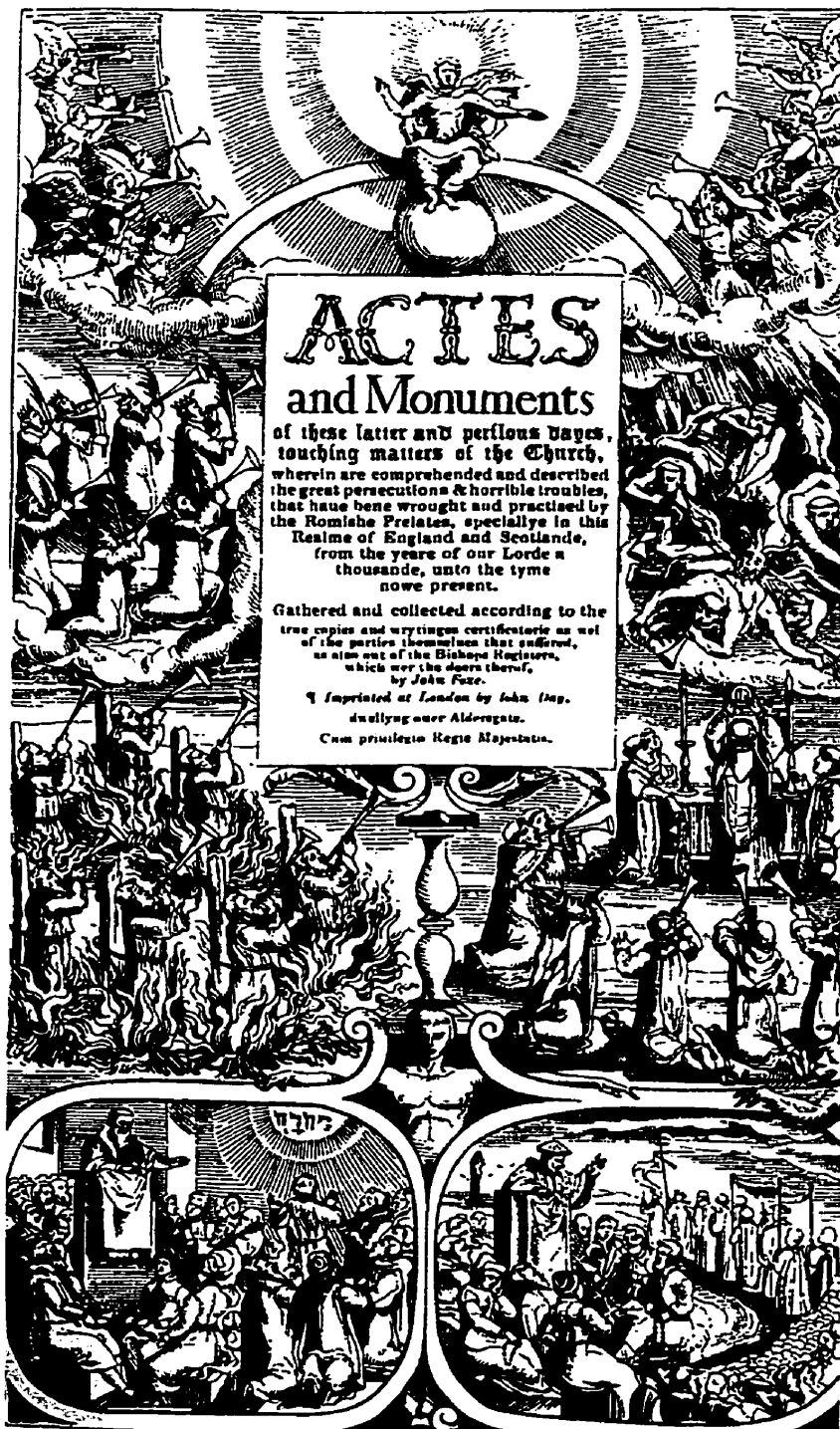


Figure Two: From the "Proud Primacie of Popes" woodcut series. The series of twelve dramatic woodcut images places royal apostasy at the center of the historical argument of the *Acts&Monuments* as a whole.

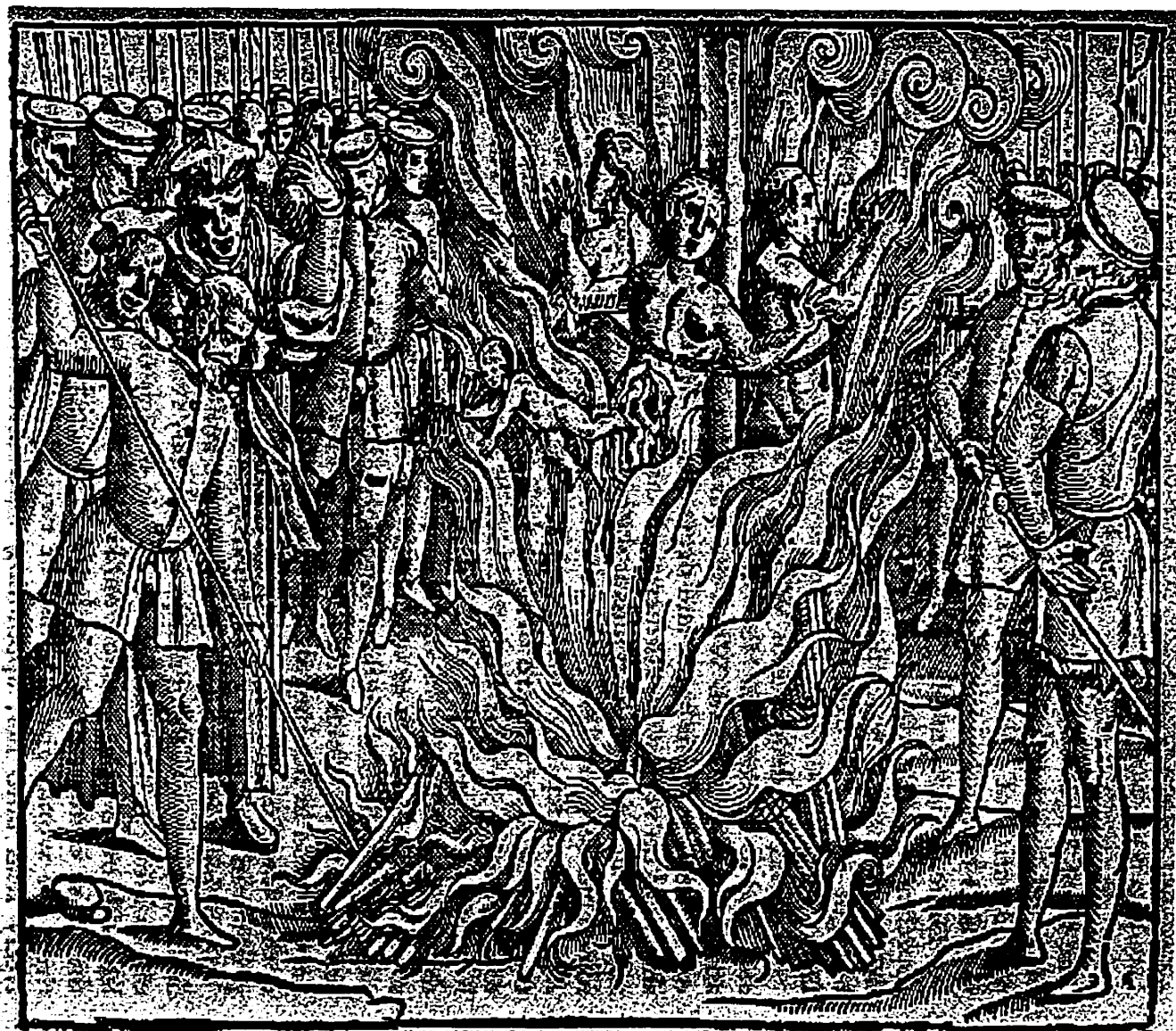


Figure Three: Queen Elizabeth as Constantine.

Enshrined in the capital "C," Elizabeth triumphs over the figure of the Pope. The three men flanking the Queen are Foxe, the printer John Daye, and Thomas Norton, the author of *Gorboduc*.



Figure four: The burning of a pregnant woman. The image of a French woman, Perotine Massey, being burned alive despite her pregnancy lies at the heart of Foxe's portrait of the historical Antichrist. Notice how the woodcut emphasizes not only the violence of antichristian infanticide, but also the jeering, mocking attitude of Perotine's English murderers.



'A lamentable spectacle of three women, with a sillie infant brasting out of the mothers wombe, being first taken out of the fire, and cast in againe, and so all burned together in the Isle of Garnsey-1556. July 18.'

Figure Five: The public exhumation of Wycliff's remains.



Figure Six: Cranmer “plucked from the stage” of Marian spectacle.



Figure Seven: The burning of Cranmer. Notice the similarity between Cranmer's last words in the banderole and the dramatically highlighted pious last words of York.



*When Elizabethan playwrights turned to their own history, they had no classical models to guide them and therefore no ascribed social expectations to meet in shaping their material.*

-John D. Cox

*Religion during this period supplies the primary language of analysis. It is the cultural matrix for explorations of virtually every topic: Kingship, selfhood, rationality, language, marriage, ethics, and so forth. Such subjects are, again, not masked by religious discourse but articulated in it; they are considered in relation to God and the human soul. That is what it means to say that the English Renaissance was a religious culture, not simply a culture whose members generally were religious.*

-Deborah K. Shuger

## CONCLUSION: PROTESTANT SHAKESPEARE

By focusing on the Foxeian intertext in *1-3HenryVI*, I have tried to show how Shakespeare's first chronicle play sequence might have functioned as history in its original Elizabethan theatrical context. In the *Acts&Monuments*, a book which Frances Yates has referred to as "the prism through which many Elizabethans saw the history of their country" (Yates, 68), John Foxe developed an influential image of England as a Protestant nation which had just recently emerged out of a dark era of civil war and violent persecution, a period of royal and national, as well as ecclesiastical, apostasy. Using a powerfully effective historical rhetoric of martyrdom and persecution, Foxe taught his readers to view political history from the perspective of providence and prophecy. While the actors in the dark pageant of England's past were real flesh-and-blood people, and their stage the *realpolitik* world of history, there was an unmistakable providence underlying these events: the millennial binding up and loosing out of Satan prophesied in the scriptures. In its most memorable dramatic moments *1-3HenryVI* stages history and invites interpretation in terms of a whole series of key rhetorical features of



the *Acts&Monuments*. Through an intertextual process which arguably defined the chronicle play genre itself, the historical Antichrist which raged throughout the pages of Foxe's book became an integral feature of Shakespeare's staging of the civil war era: from the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, *1-3HenryVI* was providential history.

Evidently enough, my reading of *1-3HenryVI* as Foxeian providential history runs entirely counter to the idea of Shakespeare's "radical historiography" which has dominated recent criticism of the history plays. By showing just how deeply involved Shakespeare was with the *Acts&Monuments*, I have tried to link the drama to a world of specifically Protestant thought, a body of providential concepts and rhetoric which was central to the historical imagination of Shakespeare and his audience, but which has been ignored by Shakespeare criticism. Whether in the form of John D. Cox's image of Shakespeare "inventing secular drama" in a vacuum of "no ascribed social expectations" and consequently representing "the process of history without recourse to myth of any kind" (Cox, 82-103), or Michael Hattaway's ringing assertions that "politics" in *1-3HenryVI* is antithetical to providence, "that kind of history that derives from theology and reads human chronicles as chapters in a book of God" (*1HenryVI*, 14), this "radical" Shakespeare lacks explanatory value because it reconstructs the plays in terms of a conceptual and rhetorical stance which is simply not plausible as a kind of Elizabethan history. That is, as historians from Tillyard to D.R. Woolf and Deborah Shuger have amply illustrated, the idea of "history" which informed Shakespeare's chronicle plays, both conceptually and rhetorically, *presupposed God's providence as an ineluctable historical reality*.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we should probably accept that, for Shakespeare's audience, God's purposes could *always* be deduced from Shakespeare's plays because the history he

staged in the late Elizabethan public theatre *is not like* the history we write today.

Understood historically, as rooted in the “religious culture” defined by Shuger, the idea that Shakespeare's history plays somehow excluded providence makes as much sense as a historian today rejecting economics or a natural historian turning her back on evolution.

It is to be hoped, of course, that studying the relationship between Foxe and Shakespeare leads to more than just a platform from which to rail at the cherished notions of a handful of literary critics, even if they are quite influential ones. Reading the *Acts&Monuments*, one gains a deeper sense of how the Reformation structured and defined that religious “cultural matrix” in which Shakespeare's plays were produced; of how, as John N. King's work in particular has demonstrated, English Protestantism, perhaps more than anything else, defined the “domestic cultural context” of Elizabethan literature (King 1990, 3). Collocating Shakespeare and Foxe helps to show that Shakespeare was a Protestant playwright producing Protestant history plays for a Protestant audience. In place of the “radical” Shakespeare, we can imagine a Protestant dramatist who, in his first chronicle plays, turned to the popular and authoritative *Acts&Monuments* in order to ground his vision of the past in an historiographical idiom which both he and his audience accepted as authentic history. The result was without question innovative, nothing quite like *1-3HenryVI* ever having existed, but it was nevertheless articulated within the idiom of Protestant providential history which the *Acts&Monuments* had so fundamentally worked to define.

To be clear, by arguing that Shakespeare's chronicle plays functioned intertextually in relation to Foxe I don't want to suggest that they were, in some deterministic sort of way, undifferentiated. For Foxe, writing the *Acts&Monuments*

involved a complex mixture of rhetorical roles which was obviously quite different from that of a popular dramatist. In one sense, it meant conforming to the rigorous demands of humanist scholarship. In another, it required a complete commitment to the political life of his country, and in particular involved an unwavering support for the Elizabethan regime. Also, and perhaps most importantly, writing history for Foxe was an intensely pious act of faith, a prophetic role which was in a very real sense identical to that of the biblical prophets. The popular authority of the *Acts&Monuments* which I have alluded to here reveals just how prodigiously successful Foxe was in fulfilling these roles.

Consequently for Foxe's readers, reading the *Acts&Monuments* must have constituted a historiographical experience quite different from attending the theatre. Although it is impossible for us to know what this experience itself was like, we can at least discern how for many Elizabethans witnessing the "acts" of the martyrs and of Antichrist represented in Foxe's book must have entailed an intense intellectual, emotional, and spiritual participation in what was the sacred political history of their nation. Obviously, producing *1-3HenryVI* was not like writing the *Acts&Monuments*, and going to see Shakespeare's play was very different from reading Foxe, memorizing the names and dates of the martyrs, studying the many woodcut illustrations, or hearing the martyrologist's distinctive apocalyptic historiography echoed in a sermon.

Yet, keeping these very real differences firmly in view, it would still seem to be the case that for Shakespeare and his audience, that generation of Elizabethans raised on the *Acts&Monuments*, the possibility of an authentic historical drama must have been predicated on the ability of playwrights to assume, in some form, the complex mantle of roles which Foxe's book defined as Protestant history. This is true not just in an

antiquarian sense, but also would seem to be the basis for an understanding of the “political” Shakespeare as well. That is, beyond the fact that, *qua history*, the chronicle play genre presupposed a Protestant-inflected sense of providence, for Shakespeare's representation of the civil war era in *1-3HenryVI* to have had some instrumental political force, to have done cultural work beyond mere entertainment and spectacle, it would have had to adopt a rhetorical stance towards the past which was recognizably serious and historical. It had, in other words, to do something very much like what I have suggested Shakespeare did do in representing the violence in the play as a manifestation of the Foxeian historical Antichrist. Contrary to so much recent criticism, it seems clear that Shakespeare's play did not become political by rejecting providence, but, quite the opposite, it gained political weight by adopting the authoritative rhetorical voice of the martyrologist. “Radical Shakespeare” notwithstanding, “Political Shakespeare” in *1-3HenryVI* is “Protestant Shakespeare.”

The reality of the “Protestant Shakespeare” tends to suggest that in fact the work of historicizing Shakespeare's history plays remains largely undone. In his excellent study of *Shakespeare's Political Drama*, Alexander Leggatt has argued that:

[W]hat we see in the trilogy [i.e. *1-3HenryVI*] as a whole is a society that has lost the forms and myths of order and is evolving new ones to embody violence. It does this at first unconsciously, though the playwright's formal shaping of his materials makes the audience aware of what is happening. But by the opening of Part 3 the killings have become consciously ritualized, York's being the conspicuous example, and this last play of the trilogy is full of set pieces of conflict and defiance (Leggatt, 23).

Although it is persuasively rendered, Leggatt's analysis nevertheless appears to lack historical focus. The key terms he uses to describe the play—societal breakdown, ritualized violence, conflict and defiance—can be restated in terms of the conceptual and

rhetorical categories of Protestant historiography. That is, what Leggatt sees as the emergence of a culture of violence, Foxe's readers would likely have understood as apostasy and Antichrist. Read from the perspective of the *Acts&Monuments*, Shakespeare's "set pieces of conflict and defiance" arguably emblemize a satanic politics of persecution and martyrdom.

Again, adding a deeper historical component to Leggatt's fine analysis, we can see that it is precisely because Shakespeare's play could be understood in Protestant terms that it could be "political" in Elizabethan England. To introduce just one possible political ramification of Shakespeare's engagement with the *Acts&Monuments*, we know that in the immediate post-Armada era there was a pronounced intensification of the militarism within Elizabethan Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> This more bellicose form of Protestant nationalism was promulgated in response to events such as the Armada, and, through various forms of cultural production, in direct opposition to the fundamentally pacifist conception of Protestant identity which Foxe had developed in the *Acts&Monuments*. Typically, Foxe's rejection of militarism seamlessly combined providential argument and political realism. As a spiritual force, Antichrist could not be defeated by armies, but only by the scriptures, the "sword of the spirit."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, history showed that fighting among Christians had only served to strengthen those two great Antichrists, the Papacy and the Turkish empire. In yet another preface, "The Utility of this Story," Foxe described his work in terms of an exemplary historiography which was directly antithetical to both the Herculean heroism typical of the humanist literary tradition and to the militant Protestantism which began to emerge in the immediate Post-Armada era:

Now if men commonly delight so much in other chronicles which entreat upon matters of policy, and rejoyce to behold therein the variable events of worldly affairs, the stratagems of valiant captains, the roar of foughthen fields, the sacking of cities, the hurlyburles of realms and people...how much more is it meet for Christians to conserve in remembrance the lives, acts, and doings, not of bloody warriors, but of mild and constant martyrs of Christ; which serve not so much to delight the ear, as to garnish the life, to frame it with examples of great profit and encourage men of all kind to Christian godliness!

“To be short,” Foxe argued, the stories of the martyrs “declare to the world what true Christian fortitude is, and what is the right way to conquer”:

For doubtless are these more worthy of honour than an hundred Alexanders, Hectors, Scipios, and warlike Julies. And though the world judgeth preposterously of things, yet with God, the true judge, certes such are most reputed in deed, not that kill one another with a weapon, but they who, being rather killed in god's cause, do retain an invincible constancy against the threats of tyrants, and violence of tormentors (1.xxvi).

Without rejecting Foxe's authority as a whole, later Protestant writers actively tried to reassert a positive role for militarism within the same apocalyptic framework. Thus, according to George Gifford in 1596, the Word of God:

[D]oth not only slay Antichrist with spirituall death, but also manifesteth and discloseth their abominationss, and so weakeneth their multitudes and layeth them open to the material sword of princes. For in this last battaile of Christ against the beast, there shall be not only a spirituall slaughter, but also a killing of their bodies here upon earth with the sworde in warres (in Bauckham, 175).

Without question, the emergence of a more militant Protestantism in the 1590's was a key development in late Elizabethan and Stuart political history. Moreover, if my reading of the play is at all accurate, it seems fairly clear that *1-3HenryVI* positions itself fairly aggressively within this pressing cultural debate. For many Elizabethans in the 1590's, the question of whether militarism could play a role in defining the nature of true Protestantism was of vital importance. Without dissolving his voice into that of Foxe, and keeping in mind that characteristic relish for ambiguity which is quintessential

“Shakespeare,” it seems fairly clear that the playwright takes up a rhetorical position very much on Foxe's side. First and foremost, *the play enters the debate by speaking the language of Protestant controversy*, by adapting for the stage Foxe's conception of war as a reflection of antichristian persecution. As I have tried to illustrate in this essay, Shakespeare supports Foxe by portraying all kinds of violence, military and otherwise, as at least potentially emblematic of antichristian persecution. At the same time, Shakespeare's play evokes an image of non-violent Protestant fortitude, a “right way to conquer,” manifested in various ways by Humphrey, York, King Henry, and even Joan la Pucelle, which perfectly dramatizes Foxe's “invincible constancy against the threats of tyrants, and violence of tormentors.”

The foregoing analysis of the relationship between Foxe and Shakespeare reflects my own interest in pursuing the critical path suggested by Tillyard's provocative image of playgoers and pulpits, stage plays and sermons. By illustrating the intertextual connection between *1-3HenryVI* and the *Acts&Monuments*, I have tried to illuminate a previously unrecognized aspect of Shakespeare's Protestant historiography. In so doing, I hope to have recovered from the “radical” Shakespeare a facet of the “normal” Shakespeare which, at least according to Tillyard, it is the goal of historical criticism to pursue:

There is no danger that very great poets such as Shakespeare or Milton should ever be found dull or undifferentiated. To deplore the discovery that they are more normal than was thought is to wish them to be freaks. Such a wish, it cannot be doubted, common opinion will firmly repudiate, rejoicing that our two foremost poets should show themselves, not more private, but more normal and at the same time more comprehensive than had once been supposed (Tillyard 1944, 322 ).

## Notes

1. D.R. Woolf has forcefully restated this argument in the first chapter of *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England*. For some reason, Shakespeare critics seem to have a problem with the notion that Tudor

intellectuals such as William Shakespeare could be rational and realistic participants in “politics,” and at the same time be committed to the notion of Providence. There seems to be a sense that a putatively “radical” skeptical demystification was and is somehow the single high-road to “political” instrumentality. However, as John Pocock in particular has forcefully argued, in the hands of a Protestant writers like Foxe, providential historiography was the consequence of a total involvement in, not an escape or alienation from, secular institutions and politics. Apocalyptic historiography was, Pocock argues, “a technique likely to be adopted only by minds *so deeply committed to the secular that they are willing to invoke sacred history to explain it*”(Pocock 1975, 98-117; my emphasis). I can think of no better definition of the role of Providence in Shakespeare's Protestant chronicle plays.

2. Richard Mallette, Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England, 143-168, provides an excellent overview of this development in relation to the Faerie Queene. See also Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse, Lamont, Godly Rule, and, especially, Collinson Birthpangs of Protestant England. For an in-depth discussion of the shift in Apocalyptic discourse towards a more militant Protestant ideal as a redefinition of the message of the Acts&Monuments, see Cristianson, 47-92.
3. On the iconography of the “Sword of the Spirit” as a form of Protestant anti-militarism, see King 1989, (54-115).



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