

"THE KING'S FRIEND" IN *RICHARD II*:
WITH FRIENDS LIKE THE KING, WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?

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If you live at court or are the follower of a great prince, and you wish to be employed by him in his affairs, you must try to be constantly before his eyes. For matters will arise suddenly, which he will commit to someone in sight or at hand; whereas if he had to look or wait for you, the chance would be lost. And to lose an opportunity, no matter how small, often means losing the introduction and access to great things. —Francesco Guicciardini (128)

The assassinations of Thomas of Woodstock, the Earl of Gloucester, shortly before the beginning of *Richard II*, and of Richard himself, in the play's last act, are the subject of this essay. As similar as the two murders appear in many ways, I shall argue, they differ in more important ways because the familiar world in which the second occurs is no longer the distinctly medieval world of the first. Preliminary to this investigation, however, I wish to establish a context for political assassination, as we have learned to call it, by considering analogous moments in two of Shakespeare's other plays.

In the second book of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* Ludovico Pio asks others in the assembled company to clear up "one doubt that I have in my head . . . namely whether a gentleman be bound or no, while he is in his princes service, to obey him in all things which he shall commaund, though they were dishonest and shameful matters." Federico Fregosa, the leader of the day's discussion, is only too happy to enlighten his friend on a gentleman's obligations under these circumstances. "In dishonest matters we are not bound to obey any bodie," he says, and continues, "You ought . . . to obey your Lord in all things that tend to his profit and honour, not in such matters as tende to his losse and shame. Therefore, if he shoulde command you to conspire treason, ye are not onley not bound to doe it, but yee are bound not to doe it, both for your owne sake, and for being a minister

of the shame of your Lord" (book 2, section 23, pp. 112-13). This reply succinctly defines the limits of a prince's authority and of his subject's obedience.

An extreme example of a dishonest and shameful matter that a prince might command his courtier to perform would be the murder of another man, and an extreme instance of that extreme would be the murder of one of high rank, such as another prince. However, it might be the underling who proposes the murder to his prince, who then might choose to accept or reject what is offered; a single instance of such a proposal will illustrate the machinations of the would-be assassin who knows that he will rise as his leader does. In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* the idea of political assassination originates in the mind of the subordinate, who tries unsuccessfully to sell it to his superior. Reveling aboard Pompey's galley in Misenum, the Roman triumvirs Caesar, Antony, and Lepidus could easily become their host's victims.¹ The pirate Menas tells Pompey, "These three world sharers, these competitors, / Are in thy vessel. Let me cut the cable; / And when we are put off, fall to their throats. / All there is thine" (2.7.69-72).² But the high-minded Pompey will have none of it: "Ah, this thou shouldst have done, / And not have spoken on't. In me 'tis villainy: / In thee't had been good service. Thou must know / 'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honor; / Mine honor, it," he insists, using the very terms, "profit" and "honor," that Sir Federico had used in Hoby's translation of the *Courtier*.³ Pompey continues, "Repent that e'er thy tongue / Hath so betrayed thine act. Being done unknown, / I should have found it afterwards well done, / But must condemn it now" (72-79).⁴ As Lady Macbeth says to her absent husband, about his apparent resistance to another murderous conspiracy, "What thou wouldst highly, / That wouldst thou holily" (*Macbeth* 1.5.19-20); Pompey is cut from the same cloth. Menas has no subsequent use for this principled man, whose profit curtsies to his honor: "For this, I'll never follow thy palled fortunes more," Menas says in an aside. "Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offered, / Shall never find it more" (*Antony* 2.7.80-82). What would have happened if Menas had proceeded alone? If Pompey had indeed "found [the murders] afterwards well done," would Menas have prospered for his commission of them?

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Not, in this little game of speculation and alternative history, if we can believe Camillo, who, in *The Winter's Tale*, is ordered by the jealous Leontes to poison Polixenes, who, Leontes believes, has cuckolded him. Allowing Leontes to believe that he will obey this shameful command, Camillo generalizes on the execution of such actions and the fate of their agents. "To do this deed," he says in a soliloquy, "Promotion follows," or so Leontes promised. However, Camillo does not think so: "If I could find example / Of thousands that had struck anointed kings/ And flourished after, I'd not do't; but since / Nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears not one, / Let villainy itself forswear't. I must / Forsake the court," the only remaining option of the honest but disobedient courtier (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.354-60). Camillo is one of the most decent men in Shakespeare. He would not have murdered an anointed king even if history recorded the flourishing of such assassins, but as a matter of fact, as he asserts, brass, stone, and parchment record not a single man who prospered for the commission of such an act.

Although *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Winter's Tale* are late plays, the subject of political assassination, the motives to it, and its consequences are matters that intrigue Shakespeare from early to late in his career, perhaps especially the subset where the murder is proposed, implicitly or explicitly, to the underling, who then, unlike Camillo, performs it in expectation of gain—or refuses to do so despite promise of advancement. Such situations frame the action of *Richard II*, which begins and ends with remarkably similar moments. The major accusation in Henry Bolingbroke's extensive indictment of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, in the play's first scene is "That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death, / Suggest his soon-believing adversaries, / And consequently, like a traitor coward, / Sluiced out his innocent soul through streams of blood; / Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries, / Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth, / To me for justice and rough chastisement . . ." (1.1.100-06). In response, Mowbray denies the accusation: "For Gloucester's death, / I slew him not, but, to my own disgrace, / Neglected my sworn duty in that case" (132-34). (Historically, Gloucester, or Thomas of Woodstock, was murdered at Calais in 1397, in the middle of his trial for treason and very much on Mowbray's watch, as Peter Saccio shows [24]. Whether

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or not his action followed the command of Richard is disputed; see Champion, "The Function of Mowbray. . .") This "sworn duty" he does not define, but it would appear to be an obligation that implicates King Richard, and so Richard's banishment of Mowbray two scenes later is the forced separation from his court of a man who knows too much:

Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom,
Which I with some unwillingness pronounce:
The sly slow hours shall not determinate
The dateless limit of thy dear exile.
The hopeless word of "never to return"
Breathe I against thee, upon pain of life. (1.3.148-53)

Mowbray can claim that this "heavy sentence" is "all unlooked for from you highness' mouth" (154, 155), but he cannot resist it: "Then thus I turn me from my country's light," he says, about to exit, "To dwell in solemn shades of endless night" (176-77).

Nothing, of course, is more threatening to a ruler than a claimant to his throne, another man (or woman) who possesses, or might appear to possess, a legitimate claim to that throne. A deposed king is necessarily such a person, but as the elimination of Gloucester shows, not a deposed king alone. (Gloucester, one of the Lords Appellant who had essentially ruled England in the late 1380s, during Richard's minority, had become politically mischievous again by 1397.) Chapter 4 of book 3 of Machiavelli's *Discourses on the First Decade of Livy* is entitled "A Prince cannot Live Securely in a Principality while those are Alive who have been despoiled of it." After arguing this thesis with the histories of Tarquinias Priscus, killed by the sons of Ancus for asserting his "juridical right to the kingdom," and Servius Tullius, who mistakenly "thought he could [by] conferring on them fresh benefits win over the sons of Targuin" (394), Machiavelli generalizes on the motives behind these and other cases: "The passion for ruling . . . is so great that it not only enters the breasts of those who have a claim to the kingdom but also into the breasts of those who have not" (395). After his deposition, Richard gives little evidence of retaining his passion for ruling, but were that passion to be revived in him, the result could

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prove fatal to King Henry, who knows well what to do. Before Richard's return from Ireland (act 3, scene 2), "Bolingbroke existed largely as a component in his world," John Wilders writes, but "now he himself is in danger of being reduced to a component in Bolingbroke's world" (83). And Richard is one more component than Henry needs.

In the final scenes of the play, Sir Pierce of Exton murders the former King Richard, claims the authority or authorization of King Henry for this act, and is nevertheless exiled for his pains. The precise circumstances of this murder contrast notably with Mowbray's neglect of his "sworn duty" in the earlier instance; we are never sure, that is, exactly who made Mowbray swear to do exactly what, and why he didn't do it. By contrast, Exton describes to his servant Henry's expression of his desire and Exton's interpretation of that expression. "Didst thou not mark the king, what words he spake?" Exton asks his man, rhetorically. "'Have I no friend will ride me of this living fear?' / Was it not so?" His man agrees, "These were his very words," and Exton emphatically repeats them: "'Have I no friend?' quoth he. He spake it twice / And urged it twice together, did he not?" "He did," the servant obligingly agrees, again, and Exton then recalls Henry's body language and his own reading of it. "And speaking it, he wishtly looked on me, / As who should say, 'I would thou wert the man / That would divorce this terror from my heart!' / Meaning the king at Pomfret," the castle in Yorkshire where Richard is now imprisoned. Henry's "meaning" thus read, Exton's duty is perfectly clear: "Come, let's go. / I am the king's friend, and will rid his foe" (5.4.1-11).

The king's friend! Can there be a more fragile identity, a more precarious ground upon which to base one's action and assume one's security? It is a rare king, certainly in the plays of Shakespeare, whose primary obligation is not to himself, who is free of "[c]ommodity, the bias of the world."⁵ Friendship is always subordinate to self-interest. Exton is perhaps blinded by his apparently dazzling opportunity.⁶ In the next scene, Exton indeed gets rid of Henry's foe, but having done so, he expresses his first misgivings: "O, would the deed were good! For now the devil, that told me I did well, / Says that this deed is chronicled in hell. / This dead king to the living king I'll bear" (5.5.114-17). He can hope that Henry will confirm what the devil first told Exton, that he did well. But there is little chance of that (as *The*

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Winter's Tale's Camillo could have told him). "They love not poison that do poison need," Henry tells Exton a scene later, "Nor do I thee. Though I did wish him dead, / I hate the murderer, love him murdered. / The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labor, / But neither my good word nor princely favor. / With Cain go wander through [the shade] of night, / And never show thy head by day nor light" (5.6.38-44). To this sentence Exton is allowed no reply.⁷

In the play's end, it seems, lies its beginning. Everything has changed; a king has been overthrown and murdered. Another king occupies the throne of England. And yet nothing has changed: the second king consolidates his power as the first had done, by stimulating his underlings to do his dirty work and then vigorously separating himself from them. Even the later language mimics the earlier: "Then thus I turn me from my country's light," Mowbray says, "To dwell in solemn shades of endless night," and Henry instructs Exton: "With Cain go wander through [the shade] of night, / And never show thy head by day nor light." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. One assassination inevitably begets another, as Cassius famously exclaims, after the death of Caesar: "How many ages hence / Shall this our lofty scene be acted over, / In states unborn and accents yet unknown!" (*Julius Caesar*, 3.1.112-14). Some fourteen hundred years after the death of Caesar, we see Cassius's "lofty scene" being "acted over" not once but twice in *Richard II*.

Yet if we look at act 5 through the prism of the new world constructed since Henry's return from France in act 2, as I propose now to do, the instructions of Richard and Henry and the actions and punishments of Mowbray and Exton are very different; indeed, the parallels I have been sketching are, finally, most misleading. The worlds in which Gloucester and Richard are murdered are not the same. The character of the earlier world is embodied in and defined by the king's two uncles, the dukes of Lancaster and York. Even before Mowbray's exile, the Duchess of Gloucester demands of Lancaster, or John of Gaunt, why he has done nothing in response to the murder of her husband, his own brother, given that "his blood was thine! That bed, that womb, / That mettle, that self mold that fashioned thee, / Made him a man; and though thou livest and breathest, / Yet art thou slain in him." Gaunt's inaction shows, therefore, that "Thou dost

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consent / In some large measure to thy father's death / In that thou seest
thy wretched brother die" (1.2.22-27). But there is nothing he can do,
Gaunt says, for

God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute,
His deputy anointed in his sight,
Hath caused his death; the which if wrongfully,
Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift
An angry arm against his minister. (37-41)

Richard is God's deputy, and his action in killing Gloucester is for God
along to judge. If Richard has behaved "wrongfully," then it is for God
to punish him, for "heaven" to "revenge" the act. It is not for Gaunt to
commit the blasphemous deed of harming God's "minister." It is not,
indeed, for Gaunt or for anyone else to act so as to ameliorate the grim
circumstances of this world: "Comfort's in heaven," York says later,
"and we are on the earth," a veil of tears, "Where nothing lives but
crosses, cares, and grief" (2.2.78-79). Richard, by contrast, wishes to
see himself as God's partner, not victim or even agent; when,
confronted with Henry's insurrection, for instance, he declares, "For
every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed / To lift shrewd steel against
our golden crown, / God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay / A
glorious angel" (3.2.58-61). Richard is trying to convince his followers
and also himself, but proclaiming the divine alliance does not make it
so. Gaunt's view of human affairs, and York's—that God has
determined the leaders of human societies, and that God witnesses and
alone should judge and then reward or punish his leader's actions—is
representative of the thinking of that generation of King Richard's
uncles that is now passing from history.

Their replacements, in the generation following, will be Henry
Bolingbroke and the men about him, whose most articulate spokesman
may be Northumberland, the earl who allows Henry to keep his own
hands comparatively clean by performing for him such dirty work as
leading Bushy and Green to their execution (3.1), trying to force
Richard to read publicly the account of his crimes (4.1), and physically
dividing Richard from his queen (5.1).⁸ When Richard predicts, all too
accurately, the coming strife between Henry and Northumberland and

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begins to wax philosophical on how "The love of wicked men converts to fear; / That fear to hate, and hate turns one or both / To worthy danger and deserved death," Northumberland abruptly stops him: "My guilt be on my head, and there an end!" (5.1.66-69). These ten simple words adumbrate a world view utterly at odds with that of York and his brothers. For the older men, a sense of God's purposes prompts or prevents actions; for the younger, one simply does what one does and cavalierly assumes guilt with an "I'll-worry-about-that-when-the-time-comes" attitude; thoughts of the next world, that is, do not affect behavior in this one. The difference is profound. It is accurate, if hardly novel, to label the first view medieval, and the second, early modern.

The difference between human action in relation to conscience in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is, of course, a matter of tendency, not an absolute condition. Human nature being what it is, one supposes that in the Middle Ages plenty of people did what they did with no thought of eternal consequences, just as in the Renaissance and later there were men and women of conscience who, thinking on their immortal souls, would play always by the rules. In *The Civilizing Process*, Norbert Elias writes, "Again and again [in the literature of the Middle Ages] we hear an admonition that does not quite accord with the standard picture of the Middle Ages today: do not let your life be governed by the thought of death. Love the joys of this life" (196-97). What *Richard II* offers is a *literary* representation, and inevitable simplification, of two world views, one following upon the other.

Although Mowbray and Exton both claim the directions of their monarchs as stimuli to the two murders, it is significant not only that Mowbray did not act upon the stimulus, as his self-reproach informs us, but also that we have only this self-reproach and Henry's accusation as evidence of Richard's involvement. Richard himself says nothing. How could he? What could he say? That he commanded the execution at Calais of his uncle? Or that he didn't? That command is the great not-quite-spoken secret of scene 1—the elephant in the parlor that everyone pretends to ignore—and of course it is almost spoken by Henry when he claims that Mowbray "did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death": everyone on stage at this moment must know why Mowbray plotted, or might have plotted, this death, and Henry's words

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thus accuse the King as much as they do Mowbray. The great secret, known to all, is nearly disclosed publicly—nearly but not quite. What is not said is denied public acknowledgment and thus in some sense does not exist. Richard did not order the death of Gloucester, though, of course, everyone knows that he did.

While Richard remains king, though little time remains to him, the killing of the Duke of Gloucester again becomes an urgent issue in the play. At the beginning of the first scene of act 4, the scene in which Richard will later surrender his crown, Bagot accuses Aumerle approximately as Bolingbroke had accused Mowbray at the play's beginning. His less fortunate comrades Bushy and Green having already been executed, Bagot evidently sees a way to save his skin; he says to Aumerle,

In that dead time when Gloucester's death was
plotted,
I heard you say "Is not my arm of length,
That reacheth from the restful English court
As far as Calais to mine uncle's heard? (4.1.10-13)

Rather than letting Aumerle's disloyalty to Henry be simply inferred as an extension of his threat to Gloucester, Bagot adds,

Amongst much other talk that very time
I heard you say that you had rather refuse
The offer of an hundred thousand crowns
Than Bolingbroke's return to England (4.1.14-17),

an allegation that is quite possibly true in light of Aumerle's earlier claim to have been unable even to say "Farewell" to Henry when he departed into exile in France: "Marry, would the word 'farewell' have lengthened hours / And added years to his short banishment, / He should have had a volume of farewells; / But since it would not, he had none of me" (1.4.16-19). In any event, whatever may be true about Aumerle in relation to Gloucester, Bagot has shown other noblemen the way. Fitzwater says to Aumerle, "I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spak'st it, / That thou wert cause of noble Gloucester's death" (36-37),

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and when Aumerle denies having spoken thus, Harry Percy (the Hotspur of *1 Henry IV*) says, "Aumerle, thou liest. [Fitzwater's] honor is as true / In this appeal as thou art all unjust" (44-45). An anonymous lord throws down his gage, as Aumerle and Fitzwater had done, and adds his voice to the accusatory choir: "I task the earth to the like, forsworn Aumerle; / And spur thee on with full as many lies / As may be hollowed in thy treacherous ear / From sun to sun" (52-55). Only the Duke of Surrey, who claims to have heard the conversation between Aumerle and Fitzwater, defends Aumerle: "My lord Fitzwater, I do remember well / The very time Aumerle and you did talk" (60-61), and Fitzwater's report of that time is "As false, by heaven, as heaven itself is true!" (64). Renewing his attack, Fitzwater seeks to prove his case by adding to Aumerle's plot the already disgraced Mowbray: "Besides, I heard the banished Norfolk say, / That thou, Aumerle, didst send two of thy men / To execute the noble duke at Calais" (80-82).

The scene is masterfully duplicitous, but that is the way things have long been in Richard's court. Defending his own interests, Bagot, not so long ago one of the hated "caterpillars of the commonwealth" (2.3.166), informs on Aumerle, who denies "the attainder of [Bagot's] slanderous lips" (4.1.24) and seeks to dissociate himself from the death of Gloucester—though, as a matter of historical fact, Richard had awarded him much of the dead Gloucester's estate (a foreshadowing of Richard's seizure of the estate of the dead Gaunt, which should have gone to Henry Bolingbroke). After listening in silence for some eighty lines to the charges and countercharges of Bagot, Aumerle, Fitzwater, and the others, Henry speaks. "These differences shall all rest under gage," he says, meaning that they shall be merely challenges, not yet actions, "Till Norfolk be repealed. Repealed he shall be / And, though mine enemy, restored again / To all his lands and signories" (86-89). It is a dazzling display of magnanimity, this forgiveness of his old enemy, except that it is virtually inconceivable that Henry does not already know of the death of Mowbray, which Carlisle describes in the next speech. In response to *that* speech, Henry asks, "Why, bishop, is Norfolk dead?" (101), to establish his earlier ignorance, for who after all, would dare tell Henry that he already knew?

That is England, a nest of conspirators at the end of Richards's monarchy, as at the beginning. In the succeeding world of Henry, well

established by play's end, there is no such sleight of hand or need for it, no claims that he knew it, but he didn't know it, that he did it, but he didn't do it at all. However many others may have been witness to the cues that Exton picked up—the identity of “this living fear” and “this terror” in “my heart,” and how it might be got “rid” of, divorced from the new king—the whole court is present to hear Henry's admission of “this blood” that stains “my guilty hand” in his final speech. Private is public, and nothing can be done about it.

It is interesting how Henry's dismissal of Exton simultaneously imitates Mowbray's gloomy exit lines earlier and recapitulates Henry's interest in the story of Cain and Abel. “I turn me from my country's light,” Mowbray had said, “To dwell in solemn shades of endless night,” and as if he had noted at the time Mowbray's impending sense of life-in-death, of being destined for some Cimmerian darkness, Henry now tells Exton, “With Cain go wander through [the shade] of night, / And never show thy head by day nor light,”⁹ But earlier Henry had exclaimed that the murder of Gloucester, “like sacrificing Abel's,” cried out “for justice and rough chastisement.” In the first instance, Mowbray explicitly and Richard implicitly combine in the figures of Cain, Gloucester being their Abel; in the second, Exton all alone is Cain. In both instances, Henry becomes the avenging God. It might be worthwhile pursuing the contrast between Henry's persona of Jahweh and Richard's of Christ; incorrectly believing that Bushy, Green, and Wiltshire have proven disloyal, Richard brands them “[t]hree Judases, each thrice worse than Judas” (3.2.132).

In his and the play's final speech, King Henry famously acknowledges his accumulated guilt and promises its expiation with “a voyage to the Holy Land.” This voyage he will never undertake although the promise retains a kind of ironic truth since, at the end of *2 Henry IV*, this king will breathe his last in the “Jerusalem” chamber of his palace. “It hath been prophesied to me many years / I should not die but in Jerusalem,” Henry says, his last words, “Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land” (4.5.236-38). At the beginning of *1 Henry IV*, Henry will reiterate the pious Christian purpose announced at the conclusion of *Richard II*; in the later play, he speaks of his desire to go “As far as to the sepulcher of Christ . . . / To chase these pagans in those holy fields / Over whose acres walked those blessed feet / Which

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fourteen hundred years ago were nailed / For our advantage on the bitter cross" (1.1.19-27), only a moment later to declare the plan's impossibility because of "tidings of this broil" (1.1.47—the agitations of Hotspur, Mortimer, and company, and fighting against the Welsh and the Scots—that require his attention at home. Did Henry indeed desire to manifest proper Christian devotion in a crusade against the pagans, or was his intention, all along, simply to display the *appearance* of such devotion, since he knew, all along, that circumstances would never allow his leaving England? (A prince, Machiavelli writes, must "appear all piety, all faith, all integrity, all humaneness, all religion. And there is nothing more necessary to seem to have than this last quality" [*The Prince*, ch.18, p. 67].) If Henry knows of the urgent domestic problems that will prevent his voyage to the Holy Land, his pretense to ignorance of them parallels his feigned ignorance of Mowbray's death, in *Richard II*, discussed above.

The sum of his words, his actions, and the words others speak of him, Henry nevertheless (like Shakespeare's other characters) convinces us of his possession of internal motives, interiority, a "hidden interior . . . not immediately accessible to other people" (Maus 5). What, we would like to know, is he *really* thinking as he promises "[t]o chase these pagans in those holy fields"? We can never know, but it will perhaps be instructive to set beside his earnest-sounding declaration the account of what his old antagonist Thomas Mowbray actually did (at least according to Shakespeare) after his banishment. Following Mowbray's exile to the solemn shades of endless night, Carlisle tells us,

Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens. . . .
(4.1.92-95)

Finally, "toiled with works of war," Mowbray

retired himself
To Italy; and there at Venice, gave

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His body to that pleasant country's earth
And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ,
Under whose colors he had fought so long. (96-100)

That Mowbray's final service was to "his captain, Christ, / Under whose colors he had fought so long," emphasizes by contrast the inconstancy of those other captains, Richard and Henry, to whom dedicated service is rewarded, not by voluntary retirement in that "pleasant country" Venice, but by exile.

As a matter of fact, it is likely enough, though by no means certain, that Shakespeare invented Mowbray's gallant, crusading adventures. Holinshed, Shakespeare's principal source for *Richard II*, says merely that Mowbray died in Venice, with no account of earlier battles, and since "there was no crusade between 1396 [before Mowbray's exile] and 1439 [four decades after his death]," one may well wonder in what crusade he could have participated.¹⁰

Nevertheless, fictional or not, the account of great deeds done, "Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross / Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens," allows Mowbray's actions to illuminate by contrast the behavior of a modern leader, Henry, for whom mere words about actions, mere untested hypotheses, are enough. To the extent, further, that the two plays accept Christian duty-fighting in a crusade against the pagans—as a positive value, it is Mowbray, not Henry, whose actions have displayed that value. Perhaps, however, in Henry's modern world fighting in a crusade to demonstrate Christian purpose is as much an anachronism as it was soon to be historically.

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Notes

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¹ Given the play's general contrast between the highly disciplined Romans (Antony always excepted) and the self-indulgent Egyptians, "It is interesting . . . to note," as Karen Britland writes, "that the only scene in the play in which we actually witness excessive drinking occurs among Romans upon Pompey's ship" ("Circe's Cup: Wine and Women in Early Modern Drama" 119).

² Throughout this essay Shakespeare is quoted from *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*.

³ "Honor and profit [*onore e utile*] were complementary polestars of private entrepreneurship and public life" in the Renaissance, and therefore the paired terms were repeatedly invoked in the literature of the period. See Holman 513 and *passim*.

⁴ Compare Pompey's response to "Menas the pirate" in Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, Shakespeare's source: "Thou shouldest have done it, and never have told it me, but now we must content us with that we have. As for my selfe, I was never taught to breake my faith, nor to be counted a traitor" (Bullough 279).

⁵ *King John* 2.1.574.

⁶ The situation seems to have changed little over the centuries. As Ben Barnes, the former lieutenant governor of Texas told Dan Rather, apropos of Barnes's admitted assistance to George W. Bush in joining the Texas National Guard in 1968, "If you have a little bit of power and someone offers you an opportunity to gain more power by doing power a favor, then this is what power does It feeds on itself." *Sixty Minutes*, WCBS, September 8, 2004.

⁷ "With Cain go wander through shades of night," the reading of Q₁, which the *Complete Pelican* edition follows, is metrically defective. "With *Caine* go wander through the shade of night" is the preferable, metrically regular reading of the later quartos and F₁. The dissyllable *thorough*—"thorough shades of night"—first proposed by W. A. Wright in his edition of 1891, is favored by some later editors, for

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instance Peter Ure in the Arden (Second Series) and Charles R. Forker in the Arden (Third Series). It regularizes the line metrically, although it lacks any early authority.

⁸ In some ways, Northumberland is Exton writ very large. Richard accurately calls him "Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal / The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne" (5.1.55-56); like Exton, Northumberland will learn the limits of a king's gratitude though it takes him another play to do so.

⁹ In his description of the land of "those most unblest Cimmerianes," George Chapman conveys the same desolation that Mowbray anticipates. Odysseus recounts how "on the bounds we fell / Of deepe Oceanus, where people dwell / Whom a perpetuall cloud obscures outright, / To whom the cheerfull Sunne lends never light, / Nor when he mounts the star-sustaining heaven, / Nor when he stoopes earth and sets up the Even . . ." (Chapman, *The Odyssey* 11.18, 11-16, pp. 187-88).

¹⁰ See *Richard II*, Arden 3rd Series, "Longer note" to 4.1.92-101, pp. 496-97. On the absence of crusades between 1396 and 1439, Forker is quoting from Henry Newbolt's 1925 edition of *Richard II*, 122.

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