

**“I AM LEFT OUT”
- A STUDY OF SELECTED CLERICAL CHARACTERS
IN SHAKESPEARE’S HISTORY PLAYS**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses some of the clerics who feature in Shakespeare's Histories. The introduction suggests that such characters, either individually or as a group, have by and large been ignored when Shakespeare's characters are considered for serious and sustained discussion in academic or theatrical circles and argues that this should now be readdressed. The following four chapters each consider a particular cleric or clerics. The characters under scrutiny are the Bishop of Winchester in *The First Part of King Henry VI* and *The Second Part of King Henry VI*, the Bishop of Carlisle in *Richard II*, Cardinal Pandulph in *King John*, concluding with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely in *Henry V*. Each chapter commences with an account of the original historical personage as consideration is being given to figures who originated as actual human beings, and there is an exploration in each of the process of creation of the characters right back to their ultimate beginnings (and via Shakespeare's immediate sources, the Tudor historians). The chapters will subsequently show how such source material was adapted, and examine the scenes in which the clerics appear.

The varying and irregular comments of critics throughout the centuries are also discussed in order to illustrate how the dramatic strengths of these characters and their speeches have been appreciated by some. Each chapter concludes with a detailed examination and evaluation of each cleric in performance, and uses three interpretations to underline their dramatic potential and authority.

This thesis contains approximately 40,409 words.

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I must initially acknowledge the contribution of Professor Stanley Wells who suggested to me that I might consider an in depth study of some of the clerics in the History Plays of William Shakespeare. Professor Peter Holland was similarly encouraging, suggesting in the summer of 1998 that I commence such studies at the Shakespeare Institute that autumn. Such studies have also been made possible by the generous financial sponsorship from the Diocese of Lichfield who saw such research as being a considerable contribution to my continuing ministerial development. During the entire period of research, I have been most grateful for the interest shown in respect of same and the encouragement given by friends and colleagues at the Shakespeare Institute too numerous to mention individually. My supervisor, Dr. Martin Wiggins, has given me unstinting wise guidance throughout, and my debt to him is incalculable. I must also express gratitude to Professor Russell Jackson for similar counsel during the term when he acted as supervisor owing to Dr Wiggins being on sabbatical. Invaluable help has also been give by Jim Shaw and Kate Welch of the Shakespeare Institute Library, and Dr Susan Brock and team at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Library. On the various occasions that I have visited the Main Library at the Edgbaston campus, the library staff have shown similar courtesy. In conclusion, I must thank my wife, Glenda, for her constant support and encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of 1.1 in *Henry VI Part 1*, the Bishop of Winchester is alone on stage. Although he has played a significant part at the funeral of his deceased nephew, Henry V, the state occasion has been broken up by news of fresh hostilities in France. The nobility hasten to take up arms and attend to the affairs of state, but the representative of the Church seems to be irrelevant. Taking the audience into his confidence, the prelate bitterly complains that

Each hath his place and function to attend:
I am left out; (1.1.173-174)¹

For too long, Shakespeare's clerics have been left out of academic and theatrical debate. On the other hand, there has been - and continues to be - much speculation as to what his personal religion may have been. Although one may have access to contemporary accounts of the religion of Shakespeare's times, we shall probably never know whether he was a recusant, a closet Catholic or even a writer whose work comments on Protestant politics.² This has not prevented scholars/writers from treating it as a mystery to be unravelled, and books/articles on the subject continue to appear. Whilst it is indeed conjecture to suppose (as suggested by Beryl Hughes) that Fr. Robert Southwell inspired the writing of the Sonnets and that the latter reflect the "old faith"³, a more sober appraisal is made by Velma Bourgeois Richmond:

¹ Except where indicated, quotations arising from discussions of the character of Winchester are from *The First Part of King Henry VI*, and *The Second Part of King Henry VI*. ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge, 1990 and 1991).

² This argument is fully developed by Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Kentucky, 1992).

³ Beryl Hughes, *Shakespeare's Friend of the Sonnets - A Mystery Solved* (London, 2000).

The exact nature of Shakespeare's religious faith, its quality and practice, can never be "proved".⁴

What is beyond dispute, however, is that in his plays (including *Henry VIII*, now accepted as a collaboration with John Fletcher) there are over thirty clerical characters and, of these, some twenty-three are listed in the Histories. It is therefore puzzling that although debate continues as to what Shakespeare's personal faith may have been, very little has been written about these clerics. In 1945, John Palmer declared that "...the Elizabethan expected to find upon the stage kings, princes and generals. The dramatist must therefore fill his scene with political figures."⁵ The cardinals Beaufort and Pandulph are certainly involved in political intrigue, but Palmer chose only to comment on monarchs and Roman generals. Once again, the clerics were "left out".

They fared little better when in 1988, Ralph Berry saw the publication of his book on social classes in the plays. At the beginning of his Introduction, we are told that:

Shakespeare's characters come from the full range of social classes. His plays contain kings and beggars, laborers and nobles, gentlemen and yeomen.⁶

Once again, no reference to the clerics. Were they considered so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good? When Berry subsequently turns to the Histories, there is no mention of Pandulph in *King John*, even though the play is discussed over four pages, and in the case of the other Histories, Winchester alone is given a brief mention and without any reference to his

⁴ Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *Shakespeare, Catholicism and Romance* (London, 2000), p. 18.

⁵ John Palmer, *Political Characters of Shakespeare* (London, 1945), p. vi.

⁶ Ralph Berry, *Shakespeare and Social Class* (New Jersey, 1988), p. ix.

ecclesiastical status. It seems that as characters the clerics were banished to the tiring house or dressing room.

Even performance commentaries are less than kind. The past forty years have seen major stagings of the Histories either as individual productions or as major cycles. They have also been recorded for television and the cinema. Apart from individual publications dealing with performances of a particular play, detailed discussions such as *The BBC Shakespeare Plays* (Susan Willis, 1991), *Representing Shakespeare, England Shakespeare and the RSC* (Robert Shaughnessy, 1994) and *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* (Nicholas Grene, 2002) mention the clerics either briefly or not at all. The situation clearly needs to be readdressed because such characters are as important in their dramatic context as the kings, queens, nobility or commoners.

In *Henry VI, Part II*, the rioting of Jack Cade and his “rebellious hinds, the filth and scum of Kent” is often seen as a vital episode dealing with anarchy in society. E. Pearlman goes as far to declare that Cade is “...the most memorable...” in the play.⁷ Whilst the breakdown of civil order makes for good theatre, no less important is the breakdown of relationships between the king, his guardians and the nobility due partly to the machinations of Winchester, culminating in the latter’s celebrated scene of crazed terror and death as a result of his part in the plot to murder his fellow guardian, Gloucester.

⁷ E. Pearlman, *William Shakespeare: The History Plays* (New York, 1992), p. 30.

This scene is only one example of a significant moment in one of the Histories when a cleric holds the attention of the reader or audience. Equally important are Carlisle's impassioned plea to the assembly in Westminster Hall, Pandulph's Machiavellian ploy to break the treaty between England and France, not forgetting Canterbury's argument (supported by the presence of Ely) as to why Henry V may lay claim to France.

Shakespeare was aware that in his time the clergy - notwithstanding the aftermath of the Reformation and the Elizabethan Settlement- had a special status in the structure of society. Whilst it may be fact that in his Histories he portrays more nobility than clergy, it does not follow that he saw the latter as having less dramatic or historical weight as suggested by Robert Stevenson:

Does he intend his audiences to infer that lords temporal had a dozen times as much to do in shaping the course of English political history during the Middle Ages as did lords spiritual?⁸

The periods of English History which feature in both of Shakespeare's Tetralogies saw government by three estates; the clergy, barons and knights and the commoners. These estates all played their part in the government of the realm and the power politics involved, regardless of the numbers of each estate in Parliament.

The Histories discuss such power politics, and the plot of each play (the number of lines allocated being immaterial) shows clerical participation in the way power is used. Similarities exist in the way a particular cleric is used

⁸ Robert Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier* (The Hague, 1958), p. 1.

by Shakespeare, Winchester and Carlisle are involved in conspiracies, even though the latter is not motivated by personal gain but seeks to thwart a greater evil. Pandulph and Canterbury/Ely use the relationship between Church and State for their own ends and at the cost of human life. Such moments in the plays provide rich dramatic fare for the actors chosen to perform them.

This thesis will consider in turn each of the aforementioned clerics and in the order that the plays in which they appear were written. The process involved will illustrate how a historical personage becomes a character in a play and how the latter becomes a Shakespearian character eminently suitable for detailed performance discussion. In the twenty first century, we have the benefit of the research of historians which Shakespeare did not have. Unlike the attempts to show the religious beliefs of Shakespeare or how religious intrigue may have influenced his work, it seems generally accepted by historians that Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester was not involved in a plot to murder the Duke of Gloucester, or that Henry Chichele and John Fordham, Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of Ely respectively, connived to encourage a French invasion in order to safeguard interests of the Church.

This study will show how the Tudor historians dealt with the clerics concerned. Whilst it is accepted that these were the main sources relied on by Shakespeare, it has been fascinating to see - thanks to the immense scholarship of Geoffrey Bullough and Allardyce Nicoll - how the dramatist

chose to follow or adapt or even alter such material in order to give his clerics dramatic flesh and blood, not forgetting stirring language.

It may be old-fashioned to consider the kind of English Literature question popular with examination boards in the 1960's - "In Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, show how the character of the Bishop of Winchester is developed", but in examining the way Shakespeare has drawn his clerics, each and every appearance in the particular play needs to be considered in order that we may see not only how the characters have developed, but also their special relevance to the way the plot is constructed. An example would be the lenient sentence passed on Carlisle by Bolingbroke. The former's courage may be recognized by the latter, but such munificence also prepares the audience for Bolingbroke's grief on hearing of Richard's assassination, and his intention to seek a spiritual healing for any alleged complicity in the deed.

The reaction of literary critics will also be scrutinized. Whilst there may not exist any detailed analysis of any of these clerics, research has shown that many critics in discussing the Histories have passed comment - favourably or otherwise - upon them. The thesis will show how some have dismissed certain characters as being wearisome to endure on stage and almost caricatures, whilst others have readily appreciated not only their dramatic relevance but the splendour of a certain speech. Some have also drawn comparisons with other Shakespearian characters, and this is also considered when looking at the way the writer has drawn a particular cleric,

for example the villainous asides of Winchester reminding us of Richard III or Edmund in *King Lear*.

The concluding section of each chapter will observe how the clerics under consideration have been portrayed in performance. The theatregoer or cinema buff will readily call to mind an interpretation of say Hamlet or Henry V not only because of memories of Laurence Olivier or Kenneth Branagh in performance but on account of the availability of critical comment and observations. The identities of the various actors referred to in respect of interpretations of these clerics may not be household names, but their respective performances are described in detail to show how they may equally be recalled with pleasure and-above all- how such interpretations firmly restore the clerics to the ranks of Shakespearian characters who should be taken seriously.

Each chapter will conclude with an appraisal of three performances of the cleric. With one exception, they are all taken from twentieth century productions which are available for posterity on videotape and in one case on audio cassette. The remaining production is from the present century and is the RSC production of *King John* (staged during the Summer Festival 2001). The latter is also the only performance experienced first hand, as opposed to being seen on video.

Apart from the radio production (also available on audio cassette), the other performances were researched by watching videotape recordings of a film or BBC TV production or live recordings of English Shakespeare or RSC

productions. The quality of the latter varies but enough is available to give due consideration to a particular interpretation.

In his preface to *St Joan*, George Bernard Shaw scornfully comments, “Now there is not a breath of medieval atmosphere in Shakespeare’s histories.... his cardinals have no religion...”.⁹ The interpretation of performances is also important in that they show that whilst the clerics may not be seen to promote their religion, the Church they portray (save possibly for Winchester) is an important pawn in the dramatic chessboard of diplomacy and intrigue. Just as all the chess pieces are necessary for a game, these clerics are vital pawns in the plots of the plays in which they feature and cannot be “left out” any longer.

⁹ George Bernard Shaw, *St Joan* (London, 1924), p. 61.

CHAPTER 1 - WINCHESTER

Henry Beaufort (1374-1447) was the second illegitimate son of John of Gaunt and the latter's third wife, Catherine Swynford. Whilst his half brother subsequently ruled as Henry IV, Beaufort served him first as chancellor and then as Bishop of Winchester, one of the most influential sees to be gained by a cleric. Ambition on his part was disclosed when Winchester resigned as chancellor in order to side with Henry, Prince of Wales, who as leader of the Royal Council had clashed with his father over foreign policy in France during 1410-1411. In supporting the heir apparent, Winchester was opposing Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, who supported the king. In 1411 Winchester endeavoured to persuade Henry to abdicate in favour of his eldest son - but without success.

When Henry became king in 1413, Winchester was again appointed chancellor but a further resignation followed in 1417, enabling him to attend as delegate the important council of Bishops at Constance, Germany. The newly elected Pope, Martin V, had realized that Winchester was an influential cleric, and offered to nominate him as cardinal. The pontiff's offer had been overruled, however, by Henry V, who seemed to sense the ambitious nature of his former ally. Upon the death of the King in 1422, Winchester became joint guardian of the infant Henry VI and shared with the Dukes of Bedford, Exeter and Gloucester the duties of regent. By now, the Bishop had amassed great wealth as a result of his see and through sheep trading activities in the Low Countries. He was considered to be more

experienced in foreign affairs than Gloucester who, nonetheless, enjoyed greater popularity at home.

Divisions between these two regents - especially over foreign policy in France - resulted in accusations being made by the Duke in 1425 that the prelate was not only plotting to become sole regent but had denied him access to the Tower of London. This led to outbreaks of public order between their respective followers, and necessitated the return of Bedford from France to effect a reconciliation.

In 1426, the Pope again nominated Winchester for a cardinalate. Not only did Winchester accept this offer but also the appointment as Papal Legate in Germany. His departure from England resulted in an attempt by Gloucester to have him removed from his see. The attempt failed and on Winchester's return, he successfully challenged Gloucester in Parliament. Upon the death of Bedford, Winchester became senior representative of the House of Lancaster, and showed patriotic leanings by lending money to the crown, enabling further military expeditions to be sent to France. He now formed an alliance with the Earl of Suffolk, resulting in two years' cessation of hostilities with France in 1444. This was followed in 1445 by the marriage of Margaret of Anjou to Henry V. Although this was arranged by Suffolk, Winchester gave it his support as he felt it would mean peace with France. Following the death of Gloucester in mysterious circumstances (1447), Winchester died at the age of seventy and was buried in Winchester Cathedral. There is no historical evidence to suggest that he was in any way

involved with his rival's death.¹⁰

This then was the man who inspired Shakespeare when he created his clerical character in *Henry VI Part I* and *Henry VI Part II*, but what did his historical sources make of Beaufort/Winchester?

Edward Hall in his historical narrative, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548) appears to have scant sympathy for the prelate. A Protestant by upbringing, Hall clearly writes to pay honour to the Tudors, and this may explain why he makes a cardinal - in the pay of Rome - a villain of the piece. At first, however, he seems content to repeat accepted facts:

And the custody of this young prince was appointed to Thomas duke of Exeter, and to Henry Beaufford bishop of Wynchester: the duke of Bedford was deputed to be regent of France, and the duke of Gloucester was assigned Protector of Englande.¹¹

Hall also describes how in 1425 the rivalry between Winchester and Gloucester led to the outbreak of civil disorder:

for whether the bishop of Winchester...envied the autoritee of Humfrey duke of Gloucester Protector of the realme, or whether the duke had taken disdain at the riches and pompous estate of the bishop, sure it is that the whole realme was troubled with them and their partakers.¹²

Hall goes on to suggest that Winchester wrote to Bedford in France, asking the latter to return as mediator. The enmity between Winchester and

¹⁰ I am indebted to: W. H. Thomson, *Shakespeare's Characters: A Historical Dictionary* (New York, 1966), Peter Sacchio, *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle and Drama* (Oxford, 1977), and J.R.H. Moorman, *A History Of The Church In England* (London, 1980), for background material to discuss the above biography.

¹¹ Geoffrey Bullough (ed), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London, 1960), Vol III, p. 45.

¹² Bullough (ed), III, 48.

Gloucester is sharply criticized at a subsequent sitting of Parliament at Leicester:

The Duke of Bedford openly rebuked the Lordes in generall, because that they in the tyme of warre, through their privie malice and inward grudge, had almost moved the people to warre and commocion,¹³

The attempt by Gloucester to discredit his enemy involved, according to Hall, multiple allegations of duplicity and political chicanery the most serious suggesting a plan to kidnap the infant Henry,

my saide lorde of Winchester, without the advise and assent of my said lorde of Gloucester, or of the kynges counsail, purposed and disposed hym to set hande on the kynges persone, and to have removed hym from Eltham, the place that he was in to Windsore, to the entent to put him in suche governaunce as him list.¹⁴

Gloucester's actions seem to come to naught, for after the bishop made a somewhat flowery speech in his own defence, reconciliation is recorded. However, the pride and ambition of Winchester is clearly commented on when Hall discusses the cleric's elevation to the cardinalate –

For by a Bull legatyve, whiche he purchased at Rome, he gathered so much treasure , that no man in maner had money but he, and so was he surnamed the riche Cardinall of Winchester, and nether called learned bishop, nor verteous priest.¹⁵

These are hardly flattering descriptions of a holy man and if Hall felt he should underline the sheer arrogance and hypocrisy of this cleric, he surely fulfilled his intentions when relating how the celebrations following the coronation of Henry VI were marred on account of Winchester's seemingly public directive to Bedford that the latter should no longer call himself by the title of Regent:

¹³ Bullough (ed), III, 49.

¹⁴ Bullough (ed), III, 49.

¹⁵ Bullough (ed), III, 52.

And so because the Cardinall would have no temporal Lorde, either to hym syperior, or with hym egall, he set furth this proude and arrogant conclusion, throwe whiche unhappie deuison, the glory of thenglishemen within the realme of Fraunce, began first to decaye, and fade awaie in Fraunce¹⁶

So much for the real Winchester's patriotism and attempts to secure an honourable peace with France. When it came to describing his death, Hall is similarly caustic in an epitaph, "His covetous insaciabie, and hope of long lyfe, made hym to forget God, hys Prince and hym selfe, in his latter daies."¹⁷ It is interesting to note that Hall is gracious enough to suggest that the dying cleric shows remorse and seeks spiritual aid - "But I se now the worlde faileth me, and so I am deceyved: praying you all to pray for me."¹⁸

From Hall's portrayal of Winchester Shakespeare drew the materials for his first characterization of a cleric. At the commencement of *King Henry VI Part I*, the Bishop joins with the secular power at the funeral of Henry V in solemnly paying tribute to the dead monarch. In keeping with his calling, Winchester seeks inspiration from scripture :

The battles of the Lord of Hosts he fought:
The church's prayers made him so prosperous. (1.1.30-31)¹⁹

Hattaway seems to agree with other editors of the text when observing that the above quotation refers to Isaiah 13.4. Winchester is suggesting that God inspired the victories of Henry V and that such military exploits were made possible because of prayer.

We are then plunged into the beginning of the dramatic conflict

¹⁶ Bullough (ed), III, 62.

¹⁷ Bullough (ed), III, 109

¹⁸ Bullough (ed), III, 109.

¹⁹ Except where indicated quotations are from *The First Part of King Henry VI* and *The Second Part of King Henry VI*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge, 1990 and 1991).

between Winchester and Gloucester, when the latter vehemently accuses the cleric of hypocrisy and actually praying for Henry's death. Winchester's mask of seeming charity and holiness then slips as he retorts with tart comments in respect of Gloucester's wife

Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe
More than God or religious churchmen may. (1. 1. 39-40)

A solemn funeral procession for a heroic and much loved monarch is thus rudely and bitterly disrupted. To quote Gareth Lloyd Evans, "...the disintegrative forces have begun to work..."²⁰ a more accurate description than Robert Ornstein's suggestion that "The English Court is repeatedly disturbed by Gloucester and Winchester's, their feud to have no special significance."²¹ The dispute between the infant king's guardians is of immense dramatic significance and the skill of the dramatist for scene setting and characterization is underlined by Moody E. Prior in his summary of the first scene of the play:

What does command attention is the political danger in the new situation and the passion of the leading figures who will try to take advantage of it, for the grave opening speeches lead at once to the envious bickering which, in the absence of a forceful king, will tear the country apart.²²

It is an understatement to say that Winchester plays a full part in such squabbling. Indeed, his above barb in respect of Gloucester's wife is not the usual remark one would expect to hear from a holy man. However, it may well be that Shakespeare gives this speech to Winchester at this point

²⁰ Gareth Lloyd Evans, *The Upstart Crow: An Introduction to Shakespeare's Plays* (London, 1982), p. 10

²¹ Robert Ornstein, *A Kingdom For A Stage: The Achievement of Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, (1972), p. 36.

²² Moody E. Prior, *The Drama of Power* (Evanston, 1973), p. 38.

because of future plans to use a character who does not appear in this play as a means by which the cleric may deviously and maliciously plot the downfall of his arch enemy. Whilst scholars continue to debate whether or not this play was written after *The Second Part of King Henry VI*, some thoughts of F. W. Brownlow are worth considering: ¹

Since this is the only mention of the duchess in the play it looks like an irrelevant detail; but since the duchess's attempts attempt to domineer over her husband and the kingdom are an important theme of *II Henry VI*, the two lines might be an example of authorial foresight. Once one is aware of the theme of female domination one sees that, like the quarrelling kinsmen and nobles, the mention of Eleanor starts a theme;²³

The audience already is aware that Winchester is prone to outbursts of anger and the stage wickedness of his character reaches its zenith when he cruelly uses one woman in a plot against her husband and then joins in a further intrigue against the latter by siding with another woman, Queen Margaret.

When the assembly is disturbed by the entrance of messengers bearing dismal tidings in respect of the war in France, the scene breaks up in haste. The various nobles attend to their respective affairs of state, whilst the sole representative of the Church reveals his ambitious plans to the audience in a malevolent soliloquy. As if to prepare the audience for coming events in the drama, Shakespeare allows him a dramatic exit with a speech which, "casts im in the role of a stage villain".²⁴ The bastardy of Winchester is relevant here because as M. C. Bradbrook observes:

Most of the villains are given some kind of defect which embitters them and cuts them off from humanity. This is no justification for their behaviour,

²³ F. W. Brownlow, *Two Shakespearean Sequences: "Henry VI" to "Richard II" and "Pericles" to "Timon of Athens"* (London, 1977), p. 20.

²⁴ *The First Part of King Henry VI*, ed. Hattaway, p. 74.

for the Elizabethan mind was not accustomed to distinguish between crimes which were the result of choice and those which were the result of heredity. Barabas is a Jew...Richard III is a cripple and Edmund a bastard.²⁵

Although Winchester does not comment on his bastardy as Edmund does in his first soliloquy, the sole representative of the Church reveals his ambitious plans in a somewhat sinister way:

Each hath his place and function to attend;
I am left out; for me, nothing remains;
But long I will not be Jack-out-of-office.
The king from Eltham I intend to steal.
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal. (1. 1. 173-177)

Norman Sanders reminds us that the term "Jack-out-of-office" is proverbial for someone dismissed from his post.²⁶ Shakespeare suggests that Winchester is bitter and somewhat piqued because he seems to be left out of plans involving the English retaliation against France and more importantly - the infant prince.

Such a threat and secret agenda is not pursued in the play, although in Act 3.1, Gloucester - in attempting to arraign Winchester - accuses him of treason:

Beside, I fear me, if thy thoughts were sifted,
The king, thy sovereign, is not quite exempt
From envious malice of thy swelling heart. (3.1. 25)

Prior to this, these advisers of the young king have been seen (Act 1.3) in undignified quarrelling outside the Tower of London. Neither emerges with credit, especially as they not only allow their respective

²⁵ M.C. Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 57.

²⁶ *The First Part of King Henry VI*, ed Norman Sanders (London, 1981), p. 163.

followers to brawl and disturb public order, but threaten each other with physical violence or death. Donald Watson observes that Shakespeare, “reintroduces the bitter feud between Gloucester and Winchester in a way which can only look like farce on the stage.”²⁷ This might very well be so - depending on the performance (and the BBC production to be considered later in this chapter did handle this scene in a knockabout manner) - but what cannot be underestimated is the prophecy of murder which ends the angry exchanges.

By the time we next meet these protagonists, their bickering is taking place before the king - now a young man - and his parliament. Observations of Kristian Smidt are relevant here for he reminds us how “Winchester’s hypocritical defence of his humility in the Parliament scene reveals to what extent his rank is matter of importance to himself and his part in the plot:”

Gloucester, I do defy thee. Lords, vouchsafe
To give me hearing what I shall reply.
If I were covetous, ambitious, or perverse,
As he will have me, how am I so poor?
Or how haps it I seek not to advance
Or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling? (3.1.
27-32)²⁸

The dissimulation of this speech is soon revealed.

Physical violence erupts further onto the stage as their followers invade the Council. Winchester declines to overcome his scorn and pride and insists that Gloucester must call off his followers first. The Bishop, however, is forced to yield upon the king appealing to his guardian’s calling and

²⁷ Donald G. Watson, *Shakespeare’s Early History Plays: Politics at Play on the Elizabethan Stage* (London, 1990), p. 45.

²⁸ Kristian Smidt, *Unconformities in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Macmillan, 1982), p. 49.

vocation. An apparently sincere oath is then followed by an open admission to the audience of hypocrisy with the aside, “... as I intend it not.” (3. 1.141)

Not for nothing does M. M. Reese describe this as “...a hot-blooded scene....some sort of truce is then patched up, although it is obviously impermanent and insincere.”²⁹

By a stroke of irony on the part of Shakespeare, we next see Gloucester giving Winchester a moment of sole power: at the beginning of 4.1, he instructs him to crown Henry. Winchester now appears to be climbing both the ecclesiastical and political ladder for when he next appears, it is as a cardinal. Although sent as an emissary to effect a peace treaty with the French (a duty which he successfully performs in 5.4), he discloses that his promotion has been as a result of a bribe to the Pope, and is again given the sort of soliloquy given to Machiavellian villains and subsequently used by the character of Richard of Gloucester:

Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,
Or be inferior to the proudest peer.
Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive
That neither in birth, or for authority,
The bishop will be overborne by thee:
I'll either make thee stoop and bend thy knee,
Or sack this country with a mutiny. (5.1.56-60)

Ironically, although the latter threat is not actually carried out by Winchester, his blunder in giving power to York in *The Second Part of King Henry VI* to lead troops to Ireland subsequently brings about an open and violent challenge to the throne of England.

During the earlier acts of this second play, Winchester is a leading member of the plot to discredit Gloucester and his wife, Eleanor. Not only

²⁹ M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1961), p. 177.

does the cardinal pay the treacherous priest John Hume to arrange for the duchess to be apprehended in the act of dabbling in witchcraft (whilst declining to intervene when his hapless agent is subsequently sentenced to death in 3.1.), he also schemes with Queen Margaret and the Dukes of York and Suffolk for Gloucester to be arrested for treason and murdered..

That he should die is worthy policy:
 But yet we want a colour for his death;
 'Tis meet he be condemned by course of law.(3.1.235-237)

and

But I would have him dead, my Lord of Suffolk,
 ... Say you consent and censure well the deed
 And I'll provide his executioner. (3.1.273-275)

The arrogance of Winchester and Suffolk proves to be a further tactical error, following that of trying to rid themselves of York. Both lack the common touch and consequently cannot appreciate the violent reaction of the commoners to the news of Gloucester's death. Indeed, a previous scene in this play (1.3) illustrates that the commoners turn to the politician rather than the prelate when they are in need, even though they mistake Suffolk for their man. As E. Pearlman observes:

The other faction, of which Winchester, Suffolk and Queen Margaret are prominent members, is largely contemptuous of the poor and indifferent to their welfare. Winchester and Gloucester are distinguished not by differences of national policy but by their capacity for human empathy.³⁰

The actor and director Richard Courtney reminds us that in Shakespearian drama, "when an important person falls from a high place, he

³⁰ E. Pearlman, *William Shakespeare: The History Plays* (New York, 1992), pp. 31-32.

or she falls out of a role".³¹ So it is with Winchester. In 3.2 news is brought to the king that:

Cardinal Beaufort is at point of death:
For suddenly a grievous sickness took him. (3.2.369-370)

The treacherous and villainous cleric - how far Shakespeare departed from history to give us such a character - is given a deathbed scene which will be discussed in more detail when consideration is given to critical views on Winchester, plus some performances of the role. Suffice it to say at this stage, that Shakespeare has completely disregarded history and given the audience a powerful scene of haunted ravings and guilt as a once powerful prelate faces damnation.

He dies and makes no sign. O God, forgive him.(3.3.29)

Winchester may be an early characterization by Shakespeare, but he is not a caricature as suggested by Victor Kiernan who suggests the dramatist "wants him to look grotesque as well as villainous",³² nor is he simply a target for the anti-popish note often struck in the Histories.³³ Indeed, if the latter were so then the record would undoubtedly have been corrected in the sixteenth century by Father William Sankey, the English Jesuit who between 1641 and 1651 censored the plays in the second Folio at the request of the Inquisition. With a clear mandate, it is significant that, "Sankey shows no interest in rehabilitating Winchester's character",³⁴ and this fact also rejects another twentieth-century critic's reading of these plays: "the Bishop illustrates the clerical exploitation of political advantage, of which the

³¹ Richard Courtney, *Shakespeare's World of War: The Early Histories* (Toronto, 1994), p. 27.

³² Victor Kiernan, *Shakespeare: Poet and Citizen* (London, 1993), p. 110.

³³ Kiernan, p. 110

³⁴ Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (New Jersey, 1963), p. 281.

Elizabethans no doubt saw the conspicuous English illustration in a Cardinal of their own century - Wolsey".³⁵

What might have seemed familiar to an Elizabethan audience, however, is discussed by some twentieth-century critics who are of the opinion that the character of Winchester (especially his role in *The Second Part of King Henry VI*) is a reminder of the kind of character seen in earlier plays, and with which Shakespeare would have been aware of. For example S. C. Sen Gupta takes the view that :

The first half of *2 Henry VI* looks, indeed, like a morality play on honest statesmanship set off against unscrupulous ambition. Although Good is sacrificed, Evil does not thrive. The punishment of Winchester and Suffolk is swift.³⁶

Thirteen years after the above was written, Emrys Jones argued that Shakespeare may have been influenced by knowledge of certain mystery cycles to the extent that the passion of Gloucester mirrors the passion of Jesus Christ. If the falsely accused Duke is a Christ like figure, Jones continues the comparison with the Mystery Cycles, when discussing the characters of Winchester/Beaufort and Queen Margaret:

Among the court faction it is Margaret and Cardinal Beaufort, the most implacable of Humphrey's enemies, who most pointedly recall Caiaphas and Annas... The note is always one of pure hate unsatisfied until it destroys its object. Beaufort of course has a further likeness to Caiaphas and Annas: he too wears clerical vestments and is as little troubled by reminders of his holy office as they are.³⁷

The comparison with Caiaphas was also considered in an earlier

³⁵ H. M. Richmond, *Shakespeare's Political Plays* (New York, 1977), p. 29.

³⁶ S. C. Sen Gupta, *Shakespeare's Historical Plays* (Oxford, 1964), p. 73.

³⁷ Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1977), p. 52.

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criticism by John P. Cutts who in fact went further than Jones, in that he likened the conspiracy to the council of the high priest of the Temple: And the parallel with Christ is further reinforced by the Cardinal, Caiaphas-like, seeking for some quick “colour for his death” (3. 1. 236)... and by the Sanhedrin-like conspirators’ decision that they have no need of witnesses since Gloucester’s life is a living blasphemy against them all - “by nature prov’d an enemy to the flock” (3. 1.258).³⁸

Such readings suggest that in Winchester we have a further example of a conventional stage villain but one whose initial mask of clerical respectability makes the subsequent evil even worse to behold. Maybe it is the sheer hypocrisy and arrogance of this character which caused E. M. W. Tillyard to be quite sweeping in his denouncement of the seemingly man of God “He is unmitigatedly bad”.³⁹

However, even the above positive reflections on the depth of the character are by themselves insufficient to really appreciate the dramatic possibilities afforded by the role. Consideration must be given to a pre-eminent scene already referred to but which has been the subject of critical tribute from the eighteenth century onwards.

Nicholas Rowe wrote: “there is a short scene (3.3) in *the Second Part of Henry VI* which I cannot but think admirable of its Kind. Cardinal Beaufort, who had murdered the Duke of Gloucester, is shown in the last Agonies on his Death-Bed with the good king praying over him. There is so

³⁸ John P. Cutts, *The Shattered Glass: A Dramatic Pattern in Shakespeare’s Early Plays* (Detroit, 1968), p. 116.

³⁹ E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London, 1944), p. 177.

much Terror in one, so much Tenderness and moving Piety in the other as must touch any one who is capable either of Fear or Pity".⁴⁰

The most enthusiastic comments must surely be shared between the nineteenth century critics, William Hazlitt and August Wilhelm von Schlegel. The former could be most trenchant when the mood took him, but he lavished praise when he observed:

The second part relates chiefly to the contests between the nobles during the minority of Henry, and the death of Gloucester... The character of Cardinal Beaufort is the most prominent in the group; the account of his death is one of our author's masterpieces.⁴¹

Schlegel is equally moved:

The short scene is sublime beyond all praise. Can any other poet be named who has drawn aside the curtain of eternity at the close of this life with such overpowering and awful effect?⁴²

Modern critics have also commented favourably on Winchester's final and dramatic scene. In 1933, Logan Pearsall Smith declared that "in the death of Cardinal Beaufort ... the note of Shakespearian tragedy is first sounded in that scene of despair and dreadful death",⁴³ whilst G. Wilson Knight in 1958 saw parallels with the scene of Lady Macbeth's madness:

Perhaps the most remarkable of all is the death in delirium of Cardinal Beaufort (3. 3)... exposing the workings of guilt in the mind. The conception and phraseology are similar to the sleep-walking scene.⁴⁴

In 1971, John C Bromley acknowledged his debt to Wilson Knight, when he wrote, "Beaufort dies mumbling in his bed, a distant forebearer of

⁴⁰ Brian Vickers (ed), *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage, Vol 2 1693-1793* (London, 1974), p. 199.

⁴¹ William Hazlitt, *Characters in Shakespeare's Plays* (1817: Everyman's Library edition, London, 1906), p. 166.

⁴² Jonathan Bate (ed), *The Romantics on Shakespeare* (London, 1992), p. 367.

⁴³ F. E. Halliday (ed), *Shakespeare and his Critics* (London, 1949), p. 344.

Lady Macbeth's mad agony⁴⁵, whilst in between, Cutts saw further parallels:

Winchester's deathbed confession and hallucinations over Gloucester's ghost (inviting parallel with Macbeth and Banquo; Brutus and Caesar) quickly and very dramatically put an end to any show of the King's ecclesiastical power.⁴⁶

When Frank Benson staged the play at Stratford-on-Avon in 1899 it was in a season when his leading roles included Hamlet, Henry V, Macbeth, Shylock and Richard III. In *Henry VI Part II*, he chose to play Winchester as opposed to say Suffolk or Gloucester, and maybe this great Shakespearian (although needing a rest from major parts) recognized the dramatic rewards afforded by this scene alone. J. C. Trewin reports that, "He acted in full the brief and terrible scene of the cardinal's death and the cry from a conscience tortured by the thought of Gloucester's murder".⁴⁷

Actors in the twentieth century have made similar vivid impressions when interpreting this scene and this is certainly the case with the three performances to be discussed. The first is that of Clyde Pollitt who played Winchester for the English Shakespeare Company (1987) directed by Michael Bogdanov.⁴⁸ The production was staged as part of a mammoth tour of both historical tetralogies, and the text was severely cut.

Clyde Pollitt was the oldest of the three actors to be considered. His Winchester wore a lean and hungry look indeed, first appearing in a plain black cassock, purple cincture and purple skull cap. For the opening scene of

⁴⁴ G. Wilson Knight, *The Sovereign Flower* (London, 1958), p. 284.

⁴⁵ John C. Bromley, *The Shakespearian Kings* (Colorado, 1971), p. 17.

⁴⁶ Cutts, p. 117.

⁴⁷ J. C. Trewin, *Going to Shakespeare* (London, 1978), p.23.

⁴⁸ *Henry VI, House of Lancaster*. Dir. Michael Bogdanov. The English Shakespeare Company, ITEL. 1989.

the play, he was the last to enter for what seemed to be a private gathering before a state funeral, and his opening eulogy in memory of the late king was almost a private meditation. When rebuked by Gloucester (“The Church! Where is it?” 1.1.33), he turned away as if nursing bruised feelings, but as the quarrel developed, Pollitt showed his authority with more than a touch of sarcasm. He was certainly well able to put Gloucester firmly in his place (“Thy wife is proud”, 1.1.39), although the latter sought to get his own back by pulling rank as protector and looking the bishop firmly in the eye upon “And then I will proclaim young Henry king” (1.1.169). As the scene hurriedly broke up, Winchester addressed the audience in somewhat mournful tones as if desperately seeking sympathy. The references to kidnapping the infant king were cut, and the speech ended with “But long I will not be Jack out of office” (1.1.175), delivered with the mask of pathos ripped off, and in a virulent and most sinister snarl. Clyde Pollitt’s Winchester was an elderly cleric, clearly determined to make his mark in the power struggle before it was too late, and his interpretation was the most bitter of the three.

The skirmish outside the Tower was cut as was the invasion of the Parliament and the ensuing brawl. However, enough of 3. 1 remained to show the continuation of the feud between Winchester and Gloucester. As the scene began, the king was surrounded by those present. A noisy argument seemed to be taking place, with many trying to put their case to the monarch. It was Winchester who was about to force a document upon Henry, and clearly his rival considered it incriminated him for Gloucester snatched it away - to the visible annoyance of the king. In seeking to defend himself

against the subsequent allegations, Winchester adopted a very hurt tone - almost that of a martyr - but again the mask fell, as his eyes blazed on “It is because no one should sway but he” (3.1.37), with the rest of his speech being defiant and furious. This defiance, with a touch of menace, was maintained in “And am not I a prelate of the church?”(3.1.46), and undoubted hypocrisy followed in the enforced reconciliation. With hands clasped together as if in prayer, Pollitt turned swiftly away with a harsh and threatening aside - “As I intend it not “ (3.1.141). Although this provoked some laughter from the audience during this particular recording, it was laughter which left a uneasy feeling. This man was still determined to thwart his bitter rival . At the end of the scene, Winchester made sure he left with the king as if to ensure that Gloucester should not have the ear of the latter.

The coronation scene saw a very reverend bishop, splendidly vested and with mitre and crozier. Exchanging the latter for the crown, he proceeded without any instruction from Gloucester and having crowned Henry, kissed him upon the cheek. One could not help wondering whether this was meant to parallel the kiss of Judas, bearing in mind the subsequent betrayal of peace and loyalty. Pollitt’s Winchester then showed a cowardly streak, for during the disturbance between Vernon and Basset, he backed away. This suggested he might bluster and threaten, but would not wish to come to any harm himself. He again made sure that he departed in the company of the king, thus maintaining his personal power. By this stage of the production, this Winchester was certainly no “Jack out of office”.

When we next saw Winchester, he silently and haughtily appeared out of darkness attired as a cardinal. There was no papal legate and no

dialogue regarding a bribe. Pollitt simply followed the king, and very pointedly ignored everyone else on stage. The subsequent peace negotiations with the French were conducted in a most dignified manner, and from now on Winchester had both increased confidence and arrogance.

The production was renamed *Henry VI: Lancaster*, and thereafter dealt with the plot against Gloucester, his murder and the ensuing deaths of Winchester and Suffolk.

This Winchester entered into the plot with alacrity and was shown great respect by June Watson's tough Margaret and Michael Pennington's horribly smiling Suffolk. When York was sent to Ireland, Pollitt showed fresh authority, almost a man of action - possibly trying to emulate the example of Bedford in the first scene of the production.

Pride did indeed come before a fall and literally in the case of this Winchester. Seeming at first unmoved upon the suggestion that he was involved in Gloucester's murder, Pollitt suddenly fell to the ground as if suffering a seizure. His death scene was abridged, but still effective and justifying the plaudits showered on this moment in the play as considered earlier. In a night gown but still wearing his Cardinal's red skull cap (as if determined in a deranged way to cling onto power), Winchester stood wide eyed with terror and extremely agitated. The scene began with his words, "Comb down his hair" (3.3.15). This was accompanied by violent hand movements as if to try to drive away the phantom of Gloucester. Pollitt pounded the air on "look, look!" (3.3.15), the latter being screamed at the king as if no one else cared for the wretched cleric's plight. The words "it stands upright, like lime twigs set to catch my winged soul!" (3.3. 15-16)

were shrieked in abject horror, and at this point, the raving man was gently helped to sink back into a chair from his terrified standing position (although supported). Calling for poison, Pollitt remained wide eyed and staring, with his mouth open - “so bad a death” indeed. It was significant that Henry was the only one present to make the sign of the cross as the cardinal died. Was it meant to be a reminder of “I am left out”?

By contrast, Antony Brown in the 1988 RSC production⁴⁹ (staged under the title of *The Plantagenets* - again a cut text) was a younger actor whose interpretation was not only more forceful but at times downright vicious. Not for this Winchester a simple black cassock and purple skull cap for his first appearance, but rich vestments and mitre such as a medieval prelate would have worn. He was also accompanied by an acolyte, and dominated the stage from the moment he appeared, let alone spoke. Brown's voice was rich and his first speech sounded like a eulogy. The sneering interruption from David Waller's bluff Gloucester received a firm rebuke - although the reference to the Duchess was cut - and Brown somewhat majestically continued to dominate as he performed a function that a cleric alone could fulfil - the sprinkling with holy water on Henry V's coffin before it was lowered into the ground. It was interesting to note that whereas the nobility crossed themselves on several occasions Winchester did not. As the other characters were stirred into swift action following the news of the defeats in France, he stood aloof as if plotting his next move but turned with a look of fury upon him as he heard the words “And then I will proclaim young Henry king” (1.1.169), Gloucester chose to deliberately ignore

⁴⁹ *Henry VI (The Plantagenets)*. Dir. Adrian Noble. RSC archives recording, 1988.

Winchester when declaring this important plan of campaign. The “Amen” following this statement resulted in all crossing themselves - save once again God’s representative. Any apparent piety was now abandoned as Brown - very much like a stage villain - took the audience into his confidence in determined and ambitious tones as he revealed his plans to abduct the heir apparent.

As he hurried off on his treacherous mission, the bishop completely disregarded (or contemptuously chose to ignore) the messenger left onstage by the director. This suggested that Winchester had no time for such a person who presented no threat at all to his schemes. Antony Brown made one feel he was really an ecclesiastical thug, and there was nothing ludicrous or grotesque about this ambitious cleric.

In this production, the quarrel outside the Tower of London was also cut, but a suggestion of the “greate division” as recorded by Hall was shown at the conclusion of the Temple Garden scene. As if to reflect the verbal quarrel which had just taken place on stage, there were shouts off of “Stones! Stones!” and servants of Gloucester rushed across the stage pursued by a mob. One of the Duke’s servants was bleeding from a wound to the head, causing Plantagenet to observe (the lines being altered) that the quarrel between Gloucester and Winchester, “...will drink blood another day”.

The violence erupted into the parliament but not before the representatives of Church and State had indulged in angry verbal skirmishing. Because of his height, Brown easily held his own and his “except I be provoked” (3.1.34) implied he might quite easily inflict physical damage upon his adversary. On the other hand, a suggestion that this could

have been bluff was made when the riot began outside and there was the sound of windows being broken. Brown looked somewhat alarmed at this point, but when the rioters burst onto the stage, he was actually prepared to get involved in the fracas by manhandling one of Gloucester's retainers. Indeed, he was about to strike him but was prevented by the intervention of Ralph Fiennes' Henry:

O, how this discord doth afflict my soul. (3.1. 106)

The "mock truce" saw Winchester offering his hand first to Gloucester as if to play up to the king. It seemed that Winchester may have encouraged his followers to invade the Parliament, for as the mob dispersed he openly patted one of them on the shoulder as if to indicate he was content with the way things had gone. The scheming politician was further revealed when it seemed that York might be receiving more power than was good for the country - or Winchester! When the king declared "But all the inheritance I give" (3.1.163), Brown was seen to despair at what was being said and appeared to hold York in contempt. Like Clyde Pollitt, this Winchester made certain he accompanied the king when the latter left the stage.

When it came to the crowning of Henry, Brown glared at Gloucester on being told what he must do and again, his agenda for ambition seemed disturbed by the king's decision to wear a red rose. Red, however, was the colour signifying the cleric's rise to power because we next saw him resplendent in Cardinal's robes and clearly enjoying York's frustration at having to agree to a peace. Brown took centre stage- again, like Pollitt no "Jack out of office" - and unashamedly in the presence of Exeter, handed the Papal Legate the bribe due to the Holy Father. Winchester then took his

leave, snubbing Exeter as he did so. The latter justly commented on the cleric's arrogance:

Then I perceive that will be verified
Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy;
'If once he come to be a cardinal,
He'll make his cap co-equal with the crown'. (5.1.30-33)

As with Michael Bogdanov's, Adrian Noble's 1988 production compressed two plays into one and the second half of this production dealt with the unholy alliance of Winchester, Margaret and Suffolk to bring about the downfall and death of the Protector. This Winchester definitely resembled a Caiaphas-like character as his hatred for Gloucester knew no bounds. He - rather than Suffolk - took the lead in the plotting, and sat at the centre of the council table, next to the queen, as the treachery was planned. Brown certainly savoured the phrase, "But I would have him dead" (3.1.273), and an original touch was added by Adrian Noble in the following scene as if to stress the sheer ruthlessness and duplicity of the Cardinal. Instead of Henry, Winchester sentenced the Duchess and her hapless confederates. He showed no feelings as he brutally sentenced his own spy to death, and disregarded the latter's horrified pleas for mercy by turning away. Still showing no emotion, Winchester calmly watched the executions and made no attempt to cross himself or pray for the souls of the condemned. At this stage of the production, Tillyard's observation - "He is unmitigatedly bad" - did seem justified.

The punishment for Brown's Cardinal was certainly swift if a guilty conscience is the beginning of personal torment. He appeared much alarmed at the off stage anger of the commons following the discovery of

Gloucester's murder. Gone now was the threatening bully who had sought his rival's discomfort in the arraignment scene and who had joined in the death pact with relish. When Margaret suggested to Warwick,

Then you, belike, suspect these noblemen
As guilty of Duke Humphrey's timeless death? (3.2.186-
187)

Brown seemed as if he was about to vomit, then bent double and made a swift exit. His death scene was also cut - no raving request for poison or reference to "the busy meddling fiend that lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul" (3.3.21-22) - but there was no mistaking the death agony of this villainous cleric. He appeared to be naked under the bedclothes as if to suggest he had been stripped of all power, possessions and health. As the scene began, a brother cleric was administering the last rites amidst groans and sobs. On seeing the king, Winchester started up and addressed him in confidential tones. "So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain" (3.3.4) was almost shrieked as if a desperate bargain was being made with Death, and the remainder of his lines were punctuated with further sobbing and much restlessness. The promise to confess was uttered in a terrified way and the apparent sighting of Gloucester's ghost caused the dying man to gasp in horror. A convulsion seized him and he died choking. The king and the other cleric crossed themselves, the others on stage being as unmoved as Brown had been at the burning of the witch and the hanging of the others.

So bad a death argues a monstrous life. (3 .3.30).

Warwick's judgmental epitaph seemed totally justified in respect of this interpretation.

Frank Middlemass in the BBC TV production⁵⁰ had a distinct advantage over Clyde Pollitt and Antony Brown in that he was permitted all Winchester's scenes with very few cuts. Admittedly, these Henries were screened by the BBC over successive Sunday evenings and dedicated camera work enabled us to see every snarl, grimace or sneering smile of this interpretation. This is not to suggest that the performance was bordering on caricature or the grotesque. In many ways, this interpretation was the most rounded of those under discussion - because more text was available to the actor-and also the most hypocritical and as a result, most dangerous.

The very appearance of Frank Middlemass was deceptive, an actor usually cast as genial clerics or benevolent headmasters/uncles. In the first scene he was an important member of an elaborate funeral procession, appearing in full vestments with mitre and crozier. Curly hair with a neat beard and moustache certainly suggested an avuncular and reverent disposition. Following eulogies to assembled soldiers by Gloucester and Exeter, this Winchester (as perhaps would be expected of a senior prelate on this solemn occasion) began to deliver to the troops the beginnings of a sermon:

He was a king blest of the king of Kings:
Unto the French, the dreadful judgement-day
So dreadful will not be as was his sight.
The battles of the Lord of Hosts he fought:
The church's prayers made him so prosperous. (1.1. 127-31)

The mask of piety slipped somewhat upon the rather sarcastic interruption by Gloucester. Middlemass spun on him in silent anger but took care to admonish in firm but confidential tones. Such tones continued when

⁵⁰ *Henry VI, Parts I and II*. Dir. Jane Howell. BBC Classic Drama, 1983.

at the end of the scene Winchester stood alone, totally overlooked by the other characters, suggesting that the business of the moment was for the secular power alone. Even so, the bishop took the camera into his confidence as his treachery was revealed. With a sly smile on his face, he then made a proud exit. Of the three interpretations, Frank Middlemass was the proudest, and the most haughty .

These BBC productions gave full rein to the feud between Gloucester and Winchester. It seemed that Jane Howell had certainly studied Hall because of the way she staged the riot outside the Tower of London.. The violence and noise was such that it certainly moved each side's followers to "... warre and commocion...". Although a hint of pantomime was introduced-both protagonists rode a hobbyhorse - Howell deliberately gave the first play a touch of knockabout and the school playground as far as fights, battles and riots were concerned. The Protector and the Bishop fought with swords and even though the riot act was read, Winchester was desperate enough to attack Gloucester once more on, "Thy heart-blood I will have for this day's work"(1.3.82).

Throughout the productions, the scenes between these two were vital and strongly directed and performed. David Burke's Gloucester was certainly no scheming, sanctimonious villain but he was as ambitious as Winchester and you felt - again recalling Hall - that the feud was a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other. Their hatred for each other definitely reflected . "a grete division in the realm of England which of a sparkle was like to growe to a greate flame". Whenever the opportunity arose, each sought to put down his enemy by churlishly sniggering whilst the other

spoke, or by openly laughing in the other's face. They were also allowed their quarrel in the St Albans scene in Part II.

Prior to this we had seen a smirking and quite arrogant Winchester as he proudly paraded in his Cardinal's robes, suggesting that there was to be no stopping his rise to power. Middlemass presented a suave diplomat to both the French, and to the English Court when reading out the terms of the marriage treaty.

As with Antony Brown, Middlemass took the lead in respect of the plot against Gloucester. In their total villainy, he and Julia Foster's queen suggested the Macbeths, let alone Caiaphas and Annas. "For I will deal with him"(3.3.323) was uttered with deliberate hatred and malice. Throughout this scene, Middlemass almost swaggered in triumph at the prospect of further power, and seemingly enjoyed calling York's bluff by sending him to Ireland.

The downfall of this Cardinal was as swift as in the other performances. During Warwick's suggestions as to his complicity in the murder, Middlemass showed increasing unease, eventually shaking as if in a convulsion and being helped from the scene. The fear on his face heralded the horrors to come in a death scene which was uncut and by far the most dramatic and successful of the three versions considered here. This performance of a dying man tortured by remorse, certainly made one see why the scene had so greatly led critics to praise it as they have done.

Once again, camera work enabled us to see every spasm of terror and agony As the scene began, Winchester was clearly in immense physical and spiritual pain. Propped up on pillows-and allowed a nightshirt he was

weeping and very much gasping and staring. He clearly did not recognize the king, but sought to hold onto him during his first speech and almost pleading to be allowed to live. Sobbing continued to punctuate his agony. Middlemass began to rave on “Where should he die?” (3.3.9) and screamed the line, “O, torture me no more! I will confess” (3.3.11). His speech then became slurred and when he clearly saw his victim’s ghost on “He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them” (3.3.14), his screams rent the very air. Insane terror seized him on “look, look!” (3.3.15) and then his speech once more became slurred.

Upon his dying words, Winchester shook then gasped and held his throat in a vain effort to allow the breath of life to remain within him. He breathed his last by gurgling quite obscenely and it was all too evident that this was not a peaceful death. Middlemass lay back on the pillows, mouth open in gargoyle-like grin and with staring eyes. The making of the sign of the cross - which had been hypocritically performed by the Cardinal when he heard the news of Gloucester’s death - was no longer either meaningful or possible for this once influential prelate. The scene ended with a high angled shot above the bed of Winchester’s corpse. One almost felt regret for someone whose ambition had cast aside clerical and spiritual tasks, leading him to the very depths of depravity. It was significant that as this Winchester had been quite abandoned at the end of the first scene, so he was in death.

The consideration of these interpretations shows that the character of Shakespeare’s Winchester provides rich material which may successfully be mined to portray one of his early villains. This “haughty cardinal” is a far cry from the historical figure, even allowing for the actual rivalry between

him and the Gloucester of history, or any factual ambitious schemes. Shakespeare has used his source material and enabled us to see the character of Winchester as an elderly embittered man, an ecclesiastical bully or a proud and snooty prelate. The common strategy in the performances of Pollitt, Brown and Middlemass was skilful domination of the action when required so to do and the respective ways in which anger, villainy and at the end, guilty terror was portrayed. As regards the latter, Pollitt and Middlemass proved that one could have some sympathy for such a pathetic, spiritual and moral wreck, and that maybe Tillyard's condemnation is too sweeping - it should not be overlooked that in any case, he may not have had the opportunity to see many interpretations, productions of these plays being infrequent in his lifetime.

We can certainly argue that Kiernan is being unfair in his conclusions as to the character of this cleric. If Winchester was simply a caricature, he would not prove to be so menacing, dominant or a character whose absence from the stage is quite noticeable when the action continues. Kenneth McLeish is probably accurate when he concludes that:

Beaufort's characterisation is strong: a devious, arrogant, superficially courteous and utterly untrustworthy gentleman, whose bastardy is a moral taint and whose life is a search for the legitimacy of power his birth has denied him.⁵¹

Such a description might equally apply to later villainous "bastards" such as Don John or Edmund. What is important to note here is that although Shakespeare went on to use other clerics in his Histories who are ambitious and devious, none - save possibly Cardinal Pandulph (to be discussed in

⁵¹ Kenneth McLeish, *Longman Guide to Shakespeare's Characters: A Who's Who of Shakespeare* (Harlow, 1985), p.259.

Chapter 3) - are so memorable in performance.

CHAPTER 2 - CARLISLE

Thomas Merke was a monk of the Benedictine order. He gave loyal and reliable service to the State and probably came to the attention of Richard II as a result of his assignment as a commissioner in 1389 for the dowry of Queen Isabelle. Further faithful service by Merke led to a request to the Pope by Richard in 1397 that this holy man be appointed to the see of Carlisle. The request was granted, although it is thought that the new bishop might not have even visited his diocese. This might be because he continued to be near to his king, and in 1399 he was part of the ill-fated expedition to Ireland.

Carlisle remained loyal following Henry Bolingbroke's rebellion, and was with Richard when he surrendered to the rebels in Wales. He was placed under the care of the Abbot of St. Albans, but was permitted to be present when Richard's abdication speech was read out in Westminster Hall. The king's request to be present had been refused and despite the presence of a senior cleric (the Archbishop of York), Carlisle was prepared to be the sole voice to defend Richard. He claimed that the proceedings were an abuse of Parliament as judgment could not be given against the king when the latter was denied an appearance.

The bishop was once more taken into custody. This time, his guardian was William of Colchester, Abbot of Westminster. When the latter convened a conspiracy to overthrow Henry IV, it is suggested that Carlisle was amongst the company. Following the failure of the plot, Merke was sent to the Tower of London and dispossessed of his diocese. Henry, however,

subsequently pardoned him on the grounds of his previous worthy character. Merke's clerical career then recommenced, and he became a deputy to William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester. The country living of Sturminster Marshall in Dorset was granted to him by Henry in 1408 and he died one year later.⁵²

The Tudor historians were much kinder to Thomas Merke than to Henry Beaufort. There is no criticism in respect of the suggestion that Carlisle may have been an absentee bishop, and his loyalty to Richard is faithfully recorded. Holinshed informs us that Carlisle was not the only prelate who returned with the king from Ireland:

At length, the king he tooke the sea, together with the dukes of Aumarle, Exeter, Surrie, and diverse others of the nobilitie, with the bishops of London, Lincolne, and Carleill. They landed neere the castell of Barcloowlie in Wales...⁵³

When it comes to the breaking of the news to Richard that some of his friends are dead, Holinshed records the King's grief but makes no mention of any clerical comfort being offered:

and further, hearing how his trustie councellors had lost their heads at Bristow, he became so greatlie discomforted, that sorosfullie lamenting his miserable state"⁵⁴.

Holinshed goes on to declare that Carlisle was the only cleric to accompany Richard to Conway Castle, and his description of the king's surrender suggests it gave Shakespeare the inspiration for this particular

⁵² As with Chapter 1, I am further indebted to: W. H. Thomson, *Shakespeare's Characters: A Historical Dictionary* (New York, 1966), Peter Sacchio, *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle and Drama* (Oxford, 1977), and J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of The Church In England* (London, 1980) for background material, but must also record a debt to *Richard II* ed. Stanley Wells (London, 1969) and John Julius Norwich, *Shakespeare's Kings* (London, 1999).

⁵³ Geoffrey Bullough (ed), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London, 1960), Vol III, p. 5

⁵⁴ Bullough (ed), III, 401.

scene:

The king accompanied with the bishop of Carleill, the earls of Salisburie, and Sir Stephan Scroope knight, who bare the sword before him, and a few others, came foorth into the utter ward.⁵⁵

All the time, we have this faithful and loyal presence of the bishop. Whilst Hall records the death of Norfolk in Venice, there is no suggestion that Carlisle ever advised Bolingbroke of this. However, Holinshed describes in detail the bishop's outburst following the suggestion that Richard had resigned and was thus deposed;

Whereupon the bishop of Carleill, a man both learned, wise and stout of stomach, boldlie shewed foorth his opinion concerning that demand:... And I assure you (said he) there is not so ranke a traitor, nor so errant a theef, ...but he shall be brought before the justice to heare his judgement;...I say, that the duke of Lancaster whom ye call king, hath more trespassed to K. Richard & his realme, than king Richard hath done to him , or us:....⁵⁶

In this historian's account, Carlisle is arrested by the earl marshal and placed under the custody of the abbot of St. Albans. The latter does not appear to have been one of the conspirators against Henry, unlike his brother abbot of Westminster. Holinshed makes it quite clear that Carlisle and Aumerle were very much involved:

The abbat, after he had felt the minds of sundie of them, called to his house...all such lords & other persons which he knew or thought to be as affectioned to king Richard, so enuious to the prosperite of king Henrie; whose names were:...Edward earle of Rutland, late duke of Aumarle... Thomas the bishop of Carleill:....⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Bullough (ed), III, 404.

⁵⁶ Bullough (ed), III, 411.

⁵⁷ Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicle: As Used in Shakespeare's Plays*, ed. Allardyce and Josephine Nicoll (London, 1927), p. 46.

The discussions of the plotters is described in some detail by Holinshed, but there is no further specific reference to Carlisle or his part in the machinations. It is, however, significant that we are told:

Hervpon was an indenture sextipartite made, sealed with their seales, and signed with their hands, in the which each stood bound to other, to do their whole induour for the accomplishing of their purposed exploit. Moreouer, they sware on the holie evangelists to be true and secret each to other, euen to the houre and point of death.⁵⁸

A death pact indeed, but - again - no criticism by our historian of the fact that a man of God was prepared to become involved in an attempt to murder a king. Could Holinshed have had sympathy for the plot, bearing in mind Henry was not crowned by Divine right? In any event, Carlisle appears to be the one conspirator who survived the bloody aftermath of the failed assassination:

The bishop of Carleill was impeached, and condemned of the same conspiracie; but the king of his mercifull clemencie, pardoned him of that offense; although he died shortlie after, more than feare than force of sicknesse, as some haue written.⁵⁹

No mention of further clerical responsibility or of that country parish made available by royal gift. The pardoning of Carlisle as recorded by Holinshed affords Shakespeare the opportunity to bring his character onto the stage for the last scene and to show that Henry has possibly taken some note of the bishop's former warning. How this might be done will be discussed when considering the play in performance and, more immediately, when examining the character of Carlisle as drawn by Shakespeare.

⁵⁸ Holinshed, p. 47.

⁵⁹ Holinshed, p. 50.

The bishop of Carlisle does not appear on the stage until act 3.2. He is the first cleric to feature in the plot and this scene shows his undoubted loyalty to his king. Richard, faced with Bolingbroke's rebellion, emotionally expresses his feelings at being back in his realm. He calls upon the earth itself and all kinds of crawling animals to fight for his cause. Such behaviour may seem childish, but Carlisle, to quote Harold Goddard: "... punctures this egoistic fatalism at a stroke".⁶⁰ He does this by showing sympathy and, at the same time, urges him to put his trust in God and to rouse himself to activity:

Fear not, my lord. That power that made you king
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.
The means that heavens yield must be embraced
And not neglected. Else heaven would
And we will not. Heavens offer, we refuse
The proffered means of succour and redress. (3.2.27-32)⁶¹

Carlisle's words are perhaps as delicate as they would be from the mouth of a cleric. Aumerle is somewhat blunter. As H. A. Kelly observes:

But he (Carlisle) cautions him to make use of the means that
God provides and not refuse his assistance. Aumerle translates
this counsel - the bishop is saying that they should be
preparing to defend themselves.⁶²

Although other loyal supporters of Richard appear in this scene and the subsequent one at Flint Castle, Carlisle and Aumerle form a kind of double act as between them they endeavour to encourage their monarch in the hope that they may lift his spirits. John P. Cutts suggests that they,

⁶⁰ Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning Of Shakespeare (Volume 1)* (Chicago, 1951), p. 153.

⁶¹ Except where indicated, all textual quotations are taken from, *Richard II* ed. Andrew Gurr (Cambridge, 1990).

⁶² Henry Ansgrove Kelly, *Divine Providence In The England Of Shakespeare's Histories* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970), p. 206.

“represent respectively his divine and his lineal right to the throne”.⁶³

Certainly, they are the two who have the task of comforting Richard further once ill tidings have been brought by Salisbury and Scoop, and it would seem to be the appropriate place for Shakespeare to introduce the character of the bishop. Even if the observation of Cutts is valid, Shakespeare is following the source material of Holinshed when Carlisle lands in Wales with the others - even if he has reduced three bishops to one.

As well as representing a historical personage and - in this scene - a loyal cleric, the character of Carlisle bears resemblances to other benevolent characters by Shakespeare who have the dramatic function of being comforter to another who is going through some crisis or other. One thinks of Marcus Andronicus trying to bring solace to his half crazed brother, Antonio warning brother Leonato that grief may prove fatal if not controlled in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Gonzalo seeking to comfort the seemingly bereaved Alonso in *The Tempest*. The second speech of Carlisle in this scene performs a similar function:

My lord, wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail.
To fear the foe, since fear oppreseth strength,
Gives, in your weakness, strength unto your foe,
And so your follies fight against your self.
Fear and be slain. No worse can come to fight,
And fight and die is death destroying death
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.
(3.2.178-180)

As well as offering solace, Carlisle goes one further than the other characters discussed above, and urges Richard to take up arms in his defence. This militant departure from a hitherto kindly character may be

⁶³ John P. Cutts, *The Shattered Glass: A Dramatic Pattern in Shakespeare's Early Plays* (Detroit, 1968), p. 146.

Shakespeare's skilful way of preparing the audience for Carlisle's tirade in 4.1. In 3.3, Carlisle has no lines - he is simply a silent and consistently faithful presence. This might be why Robert Rentoul Reed, Jr. refers to the bishop's "accustomed reserve",⁶⁴ although such a personality is certainly not the Carlisle we see when we reach the dramatic events in Parliament.

Although Carlisle is on stage from the beginning of 4.1 he takes no part in the action for ninety lines. It is interesting to speculate why he does nothing to support his former stage companion, Aumerle, when the latter seems outnumbered by Bolingbroke's followers during an altercation which reminds one of the previously discussed vicious exchanges between Winchester and Gloucester. It may be that Carlisle is well aware that the death of a member of the Royal family has arisen from circumstances far from natural and that his discretion is indeed the better part of valour. On the other hand, Shakespeare has also introduced another cleric into this scene in the person of the Abbot of Westminster and the latter is to have his dramatic day at the very end of the scene when he, together with Carlisle, supplies Aumerle with much needed dramatic comfort and bring this major scene to a swift and dramatic conclusion.

Whilst this will be given due consideration in the dramatic sequence of events, it is important to reflect that Carlisle's speech from line 91 is all the more effective because the bishop has remained silent up to now. The last thing Bolingbroke wants at this moment is a eulogy in respect of his former rival, but that is exactly what Carlisle delivers:

Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,

⁶⁴ Robert Rentoul Reed Jr., *Crime And God's Judgment In Shakespeare* (Kentucky, 1984), p. 25.

Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
 Against black pagans, Turks and Saracens,
 And, toiled with works of war, retired himself
 To Italy, and there at Venice gave
 His body to that pleasant country's earth. (4.1.92-98)

As has been previously discussed, Hall records the death of Norfolk in Venice, but the Crusades were of a former age and no Christian forces were employed in the Holy Land during the reign of Richard. Shakespeare, through this speech of Carlisle- suggests that Norfolk was possibly a soldier for God, something which very shortly Carlisle will allege that Bolingbroke is not.

Within a few lines, the clerical gage is well and truly thrown down. Whereas the beginning of the scene witnesses the oral aggression directed by Bagot and others against Aumerle, the dramatic spotlight is well and truly turned on Carlisle as he verbally attacks those who would depose Richard in favour of "My lord of Herford here, whom you call king," (4.1.134) - so contemptuous is the bishop of Bolingbroke that he addresses him by what Stanley Wells calls "the least of his titles".⁶⁵

Carlisle is arguing that, as Parliament cannot legally sit without Richard being present, the attempt to legally depose him is impossible when Richard as king is himself the only source of justice. By seeking to pass judgment upon their king in his absence, Richard is being denied the legal rights that any common malefactor is entitled to. Graham Holderness sums up the dramatic situation admirably:

the Bishop of Carlisle...overwhelms the verbal presence of the new 'silent king' with some thirty five lines of powerful and prophetic argument against his successor and the deposition of Richard.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ *Richard II*, ed. Wells, p. 241.

⁶⁶ Graham Holderness, *Richard II: Penguin Critical Studies* (London, 1989), p. 89.

J.P.Brockbank also reminds us that

Carlisle's impressive protest ...is against the exercise of power without the ritual authority to endorse it.
 What subject can give sentence on his king,
 And who sits here that is not Richard's subject? (4.1.121-122)

The rest is a familiar re-statement of what are sometimes, mistakenly, supposed to be the unchallenged dominant Elizabethan assumptions about the nature of monarchy:

And shall the figure of God's majesty'
 His captain, steward, deputy, elect,
 Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
 Be judged by subject and inferior breath
 And he himself not present? (4.1.125-129) ⁶⁷

The above is taken from Holinshed, but Shakespeare then allows Carlisle to prophesy that the realm of England will see immense strife if the crown is seized illegally:

And if you crown him, let me prophesy
 The blood of English shall manure the ground,
 And future ages groan for this foul act. (4.1.136-138)

Those of Shakespeare's audience who had seen the earlier history plays would see this speech as a prophecy of "hindsight", although the writing is more than that. Gurr draws attention to the fact that:

Carlisle's speech against the abdication of Richard is set in the form of a *sermo humilis*, a classical oration in the lowly Christian style appropriate to a protest against high presumption. ⁶⁸

Wells makes the important observations that:

The Bishop's prophecy recalls John of Gaunt's (II.1,33-68), though this is spoken in favour of Richard, whereas that criticized him. The two thus reflect a central problem of the play: that England, which has suffered under Richard's

⁶⁷ J. P. Brockbank, *On Shakespeare: Jesus, Shakespeare and Karl Marx, and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1989), p. 113.

⁶⁸ *Richard II*, ed. Gurr, p. 142.

irresponsible reign, will suffer too if his right to the crown is usurped. Carlisle looks forward to the state of affairs to be portrayed in *I and 2 Henry IV*. His sentiments reflect those of the 'Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion', which was familiar through being regularly read aloud in church.⁶⁹

For an Elizabethan audience for whom church attendance was compulsory, words from the above Homily would indeed have been familiar as would have been the dire consequences of not heeding them:

Whereas after both doctrine and examples of due obedience to their princes, I declared lastly unto you what an abominable sin against God and man rebellion is, and what horrible plagues, punishments, and deaths, with death everlasting finally, doth hang over the heads of all rebels.⁷⁰

Unlike the somewhat hapless Bishop of Coventry in Marlowe's *Edward II*, Carlisle does not suffer the humiliation of public assault and battery. He is simply arrested on a charge of high treason and given into the custody of his brother cleric, the Abbot of Westminster - a move which Northumberland will eventually realize was most unwise.

Shakespeare continues to compress weighty events of history into one major scene. In the play, Carlisle's diatribe proceeds the deposing of Richard whereas from a historical point of view, his attack on such an act was made after parliament had dealt with the deposition and resignation. Likewise, the conspiracy of the Abbot of Westminster and others is introduced at this stage rather than developing the action in a further scene such as Westminster's house. By doing this, Shakespeare shrewdly restores the sweep of historical narrative and uses Carlisle as part of the process. Gareth Lloyd-Evans sums it up quite succinctly:

⁶⁹ *Richard II*, ed. Wells, p. 241.

⁷⁰ *Certain Sermons or Homilies appointed to be read in Churches* (London, 1623), p. 307.

It is left to the Bishop of Carlisle to utter the stark meaning of the events that have led to this scene:

‘The woe’s to come; the children yet unborn
Shall feel this day as sharp to them as thorn,’(IV.1.322-3)

These lines restore the play to its larger historical meaning. Richard has taken us, for a time, out of the historical process and bent our minds towards his individual grief and deprivation.⁷¹

Carlisle makes one further appearance, and in the final scene of the play. There are no lines for him but speech is not necessary. His very appearance after news of the rebellion which has broken out is enough to remind the audience of his prophecy. The burning of Cirencester and the beheading of six of the nobility make it abundantly clear that so far, Bolingbroke’s reign has been anything but peaceful. When it comes to dealing with his clerical enemy, Bolingbroke shows magnanimity in pardoning him. Gurr reminds us that Shakespeare has embellished Holinshed’s account by showing that Carlisle has the choice of a hermit’s cell or monastery when selecting his “reverend room”.⁷²

Before Carlisle is able to express either gratitude or amazement, public proof is given that disorder and horror are indeed rife in England as a result of the assassination of Richard. As the play ends, is the audience right in thinking that Carlisle’s former gracious eulogy of Norfolk has persuaded his enemy at the start of the play to also take hold of a pilgrim’s staff?

Carlisle attracted little critical attention before the twentieth century. In 1918, J. A. R. Marriott declared that the bishop is “...the most honest and

⁷¹ Gareth Lloyd Evans, *The Upstart Crow: An Introduction to Shakespeare’s Plays* (London, 1982), p. 84.

⁷² *Richard II*, ed. Gurr, p. 172.

faithful of all Richard's adherents...";⁷³ a sentiment echoed in 1964 by Sen Gupta who described the cleric as "...the best of his supporters..."⁷⁴ and as far as Bolingbroke is concerned, his "...most unsparing critic..."⁷⁵

In 1958, Robert Stevenson made a somewhat sweeping statement in support of the loyalty of Carlisle as shown by Shakespeare:

Insofar as prelates are concerned, Shakespeare ignores or belittles all those encountered in his sources except the bishop of Carlisle.⁷⁶

This is somewhat unfair as will be discussed later when considering the characters of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely in *Henry V*. For the time being, however, Stevenson's award of merit is justified because he also reminds us that Carlisle is the only cleric in the canon to praise someone for not only fighting for, but dying for Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

In 1964, Roland Frye, on discussing theological references to Kingship, took the view that leading theologians of the Reformation and Elizabethan era would (had they the opportunity) have concurred with sentiments expressed in Carlisle's main speech in 4.1:

To the Bishop of Carlisle's question in Richard II "What subject can give sentence on his king?"- Luther would certainly have answered "none", and Hooker would probably have agreed...though Calvin would have disagreed in principle with Carlisle's view that none could judge the king, his practical view of such actions as those of Bolingbroke would probably have been in accord with Carlisle's.⁷⁸

⁷³ J.A.R. Marriott, *English History in Shakespeare* (London, 1918), p. 82.

⁷⁴ S.C. Sen Gupta, *Shakespeare's Historical Plays* (Oxford, 1964), p. 120.

⁷⁵ Sen Gupta, p.124.

⁷⁶ Robert Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier* (The Hague, 1958) p. 19.

⁷⁷ Stevenson, p. 14.

⁷⁸ Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (New Jersey, 1963), p. 197.

Luther did not accept that there was ever justification for rebellion against a ruler because such action caused innocent blood to be shed. Hooker would have followed the official Church of England doctrine which accepted Luther's argument, whilst Calvin (in favour of challenges being made to those who held minor office and abused their power) certainly forbade treason against monarchs.

The theological theme present in Carlisle's stand against treason was later discussed in 1984, when Robert Rentoul Reed Jr. wrote:

Through Carlisle's voice, God has issued His ultimatum to Bolingbroke who disobeys it. God's plan, which will "override" all human effort to thwart its fulfilment, takes immediate effect (although its full impact will be withheld) and comes to a period midway in the fourth generation at Bosworth Field, where Henry Tudor kills the tyrant Richard III. In short, Carlisle is the agent through whom God warns the Lancastrian faction of His plan;⁷⁹

The above may not be widely accepted, but those who recently had the good fortune to witness all eight history plays (staged by the RSC in the 2000/2001 season as a millennium project, *This England, The Histories*) would certainly, on hearing Sam Troughton's Richmond declare that "England hath long been mad and scarred herself", have harkened back to Paul Greenwood's Carlisle giving his dire warning that this would happen.

Whichever way it is considered, 4.1 of *Richard II* provides Carlisle with a scene which raises him from the ranks of small roles in the play. Having suggested that Exton was a minor part with the opportunity to make an impression, J. C. Trewin went on to observe:

Another, and firmer, is the Bishop of Carlisle, who has his moment in Westminster Hall.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Rentoul Reed Jr., p. 32.

⁸⁰ J.C.Trewin, *Going to Shakespeare* (London,1978), p. 89.

In fairness to Shakespeare, he gives the actor playing Carlisle more than just a “moment” in this vital scene. The eulogy in memory of Norfolk has already been considered, but writers/academics have seen fit to single it out for special mention. John Julius Norwich considers that these nine lines “are among the most beautiful in all Shakespeare”⁸¹, and by this he may be referring to the almost prayerful/meditative quality of the speech which will be further discussed when considering interpretations of the role. Herbert R Coursen, Jr. sees a further and bleaker interpretation:

Mowbray has exported the English virtues described by Gaunt, has, it would seem, taken with him the country’s chivalric quality, leaving England devoid of medieval glory and ready for the myriad skulls Carlisle envisions as the island’s future.⁸²

Coursen, Jr. also comments on the theological aspects of the next and major speech of the cleric:

The placement of Carlisle’s speech as a dramatic interruption of Bolingbroke’s seemingly effortless ascent to the throne, and the power of the speech, tell us that this is the voice of a prophet uttering truths reaching further than do the predictions of Bolingbroke....⁸³

E. Pearlman is also enthusiastic about the tribute to Norfolk, suggesting that in delivering it, Carlisle has a hidden agenda:

Carlisle rehabilitates Bolingbroke’s old enemy and cunningly transforms him from a dissident into a paragon of knightly and religious virtue. It is obvious that Carlisle aims his shafts at Bolingbroke. While Mowbray accepted his punishment and sacrificed himself for civilization and Christianity,

⁸¹ Norwich, p. 124.

⁸² Herbert R. Coursen, Jr., *Christian Ritual and the World of Shakespeare’s Tragedies* (London, 1976), p. 50.

⁸³ Coursen Jr., p. 69.

Bolingbroke returned to England only to private and selfish interests.⁸⁴

It is perhaps rather harsh for Pearlman to describe the bishop as “tactless and hyperbolic”⁸⁵ in the way he then verbally attacks his opponent and those who would support his claim to the throne. Having spoken graciously of Norfolk - albeit with a sting in the tail, the niceties are now over and the ecclesiastical gloves well and truly off - this time it is Carlisle who is throwing down the gage and to all comers. He surely does not intend to show tact, and his grisly vision of the future England is unhappily realized - these are foretellings on the line of those to be found in the Revelation to John. However, Pearlman then appears to relent when accepts what is the result of this cleric’s outburst:

For his bold remarks, Carlisle is placed under arrest, but his words establish one of the moral points by which Richard’s abdication under pressure and Bolingbroke’s usurpation must be judged.⁸⁶

Kenneth McLeish is perhaps a little unkind when he makes the sweeping declaration that

The actor who plays Carlisle is like an opera-singer brought in as a guest to sing one superb, show-stopping aria - and perhaps that is the part’s appeal.⁸⁷

This is definitely not so with the three performances to be examined.

Hugh Sullivan appeared in the English Shakespeare Company’s production (directed by Michael Bogdanov) of *Richard II*.⁸⁸ It formed part of

⁸⁴ E. Pearlman, *William Shakespeare: The History Plays* (New York, 1962), p. 83.

⁸⁵ Pearlman, p. 83.

⁸⁶ Pearlman, p. 84.

⁸⁷ Kenneth McLeish, *Longman Guide to Shakespeare’s Characters: A Who’s Who of Shakespeare* (Harlow, 1985), p. 48.

⁸⁸ *Richard II*. Dir. Michael Bogdanov. The English Shakespeare Company, Itel. 1989.

a cycle of history plays under the title of *The Wars of the Roses*, and Sullivan also played the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V* (a performance which will be considered in a later chapter). The video recordings of all plays in the cycle were made during the final week of the tour at the Grand Theatre, Swansea. Research has not provided the answer, but maybe Carlisle's part was pruned either because of a directorial touch or in order to ensure the production ran within the time permitted on the videotape.

For his first scene, Sullivan appeared on the coast of Wales with his king and Aumerle, all dressed for travelling. This Carlisle was bearded and wore a purple skull cap. He was enveloped in a black cloak which he kept firmly wrapped around him ward off the weather. We were given the suggestion of an elderly cleric who was taking every precaution for his health.

His first speech, however, was spoken in a very brisk and robust way. Although he was only given the first two lines, Sullivan was immediately a loyal, kindly pastor, giving a beam of encouragement to his anxious king. He himself then showed anxiety upon his face upon hearing the ill tidings from Salisbury. Whilst the tale of woe continued, Sullivan moved upstage as if he was praying silently about what he was hearing upon the arrival of Scroop and further bad news, this Carlisle moved back downstage, listening gravely to the further calamities in respect of the royal cause. He was the only one to cross himself on the news of the execution of Bushy and the others, suggesting that at least one other would be praying for their souls.

On hearing Richard's plea that even a king could "need friends", Sullivan's face showed great compassion and one could almost hear him thinking how best he should continue to offer comfort. He chose to come down to the level of Michael Pennington's woefully abject king and, taking him gently by the shoulder, he continued to address him in tones both soothing (especially on "My lord,") and optimistic. Again, his speech was cut to the first two and final two lines.

When Richard regained his composure, Sullivan beamed with immense pleasure but his countenance showed both horror and disbelief at the news of York's apparent treachery. As Richard sternly warned his seeming Job's comforters to speak no more and strode off to his fate, Carlisle was the first to hasten after him, determined as it were to be a loyal, if silent, companion.

Sullivan's silence continued throughout 3.3. Along with the other followers, he maintained at the back of the raised stage bridge (suggesting the battlements of Flint Castle) a dignified yet meaningful presence - at least one arm of the spiritual power was with the anointed king. Earlier in the scene, the seeming irrelevance of the presence of a prelate had evoked the scornful and somewhat churlish uttering of "Oh, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle." (3.3.30) from Roger Booth's florid and bluff country squire of a Northumberland.

Such contempt was maintained by Booth in 4.1 when he declared Carlisle under arrest for high treason. Contempt or no, Sullivan's bishop had certainly made up for his silence in 3.3 when he seized with relish the opportunities available to this cleric in the earlier part of the scene in

Westminster Hall. As the scene began, we saw two rows of chairs at either side of an official desk and chair. Michael Cronin's morning suited Bolingbroke occupied the latter, whilst each row was taken up with similarly clad nobility, and Sullivan, now formally dressed in black cassock and shoulder cape, with purple skull cap and cincture. It was a shrewd touch on the behalf of Bogdanov to seat him immediately to Cronin's stage right, for although impassive during the altercation between Aumerle and the others, this Carlisle chose well his moment to endeavour to thwart Bolingbroke's apparent triumph. His delivery of the eulogy for Norfolk was delivered almost exactly as suggested by Pearlman. Rising very confidently, Sullivan spoke "That honourable day shall never be seen" (4.1.91) with great authority. He paused for effect, looking directly at Cronin's somewhat bemused usurper, and then with increasing confidence addressed the entire assembly. On reaching "And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ" (4.1.99), Sullivan turned back to Cronin and almost savoured informing him that he considered Norfolk's soul (unlike Bolingbroke's) was pure.

This caused Cronin to look extremely troubled and uneasy. As Sullivan confirmed that Norfolk was dead, his "As surely as I live, my lord" (4.1.101) was spoken to sound like "he may be dead, but remember that I am very much alive and can make trouble for you". Cronin's somewhat hypocritical "Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom of good old Abraham!" (4.1.102-103), saw Sullivan cross himself - again, the only one on stage to do so. This proved significant for what was to follow.

After dropping what was clearly a bombshell into the lap of complaisancy, this Carlisle turned and resumed his place. Upon Colin

Farrell's vacillating York declaring that Bolingbroke should now become Henry IV, Cronin looks around as if expecting opposition, Faced with none, he rose and the others followed suit. Sullivan began to look most concerned at what was happening, and upon hearing, "In God's name, I'll ascend the regal throne" (4.1.113), he exploded with passion and his "Marry, God forbid!" was an attempt to diminish the blasphemous usage of the Almighty's name in support of treason.

Gone was the benevolence and bonhomie of the Carlisle we had first met. Rounding on the assembly, Sullivan indeed lashed them with his tongue. "So foul a wrong" was uttered with complete contempt and upon "and who sits here that is not Richard's subject?" (4.1.122), he turned back to face Bolingbroke, hurling words into his face. Without waiting for any answer, he turned again on the others and continued his verbal scolding. With the skill of an experienced preacher, stressing "planted many years", he built up to a temporary peroration, pausing only for a moment to almost pray "O, forfend it, God," before driving home his thrust with "so heinous, black, obscene a deed!" (4.1.131).

Here, Sullivan paused. He seemed shocked that his words were having no apparent effect. Undaunted, he tried again, stressing that all were "subjects". He again verbally attacked Cronin, with utter defiance on "so foul a traitor" and maintained contempt all this while, by keeping his back to the usurper. On hearing this seeming insult, there was a movement on behalf of some as if to stop or silence Carlisle, but Bolingbroke waved them away and almost gazed in wonder at what was happening (was he marvelling at the "high sparks of honour"?).

Sullivan continued to warn the others by way of a sermon, but there was still no persuading them, despite his turning from one side to the other. He valiantly tried once again to win support by changing his tone and almost begging them to heed his warning. The last two lines of his speech

Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,
Lest child, child's children, cry against you woe. (4.1.148-149)

were almost an appeal to Heaven, as he gazed upwards, speaking the words as if once more in prayer.

The diatribe over, Sullivan paused and almost seemed shocked that he had spoken as he had done, Colin Farrell's York did look shocked - clearly he did not expect this from a cleric, especially Carlisle. Michael Cronin's Bolingbroke continued to seem impassive, but Roger Booth's blunt Northumberland swiftly took charge of the situation and clapping a hand somewhat unceremoniously on the bishop's shoulder, declared him under arrest and (in this production), handed him over to Willoughby before rudely turning his back on Carlisle with "may it please you, lords, to grant the commons' suit?" (4.1.154) spoken as if the interruption from the prelate had never taken place.

On hearing of his arrest, Sullivan looked nonplussed and meekly allowed himself to be led away by Willoughby.

In this production, this was the last we saw of Carlisle - no plotting with the Abbot of Westminster and Aumerle, with no consequent pardoning by the new regime. Whether Michael Bogdanov had read the following observations of Wilbur Sanders we may never know, but his direction of the scene was remarkably in line with the latter who is rather dismissive of "the old guard" in the play:

When one looks closely at the men who give voice to the traditional sanctities of government, and do so with weight and gravity, they turn out to be old men - Gaunt, York, Carlisle...Carlisle's spirited defence of Richard in the Parliament scene for all its generosity of feeling and passionate sincerity, is in some sad way out of place...all Carlisle achieves is to delay the deposition for the space of forty-odd lines, before he is hustled off the stage like the lamentable old anachronism he is.⁸⁹

Hugh Sullivan's Carlisle did seem to be surrounded by the ungodly who declined either to cross themselves or, save for his praise of Norfolk, to listen to his passionate argument or do anything about it. In this production, we were not even certain if, at the end of the day, Carlisle was anything to Bolingbroke other than an irrelevance. This, however, was certainly not the case with the other performances to be considered.

Clifford Rose's Carlisle⁹⁰ was introduced in 1. 3. He was a silent spectator in the Royal box at the Coventry lists and was clearly part of the "inner cabinet", retiring with the king and others for the consultation which eventually led to the banishment of Mowbray and the exile of Bolingbroke. Rose was a middle aged cleric, grave of countenance, dressed in simple clerical attire and holding his crozier. As the production continued, it was clear that the latter was a significant prop for this Carlisle and for the character's status in the eyes of others. For the moment, Rose represented a significant ecclesiastical presence, the pastoral staff symbolizing the loyal support for the maintenance of order in the realm and the upholding of the

⁸⁹ Wilbur Sanders, *The Dramatist And The Received Idea: Studies In The Plays Of Marlowe & Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 191.

⁹⁰ *Richard II*. Dir. David Giles. BBC Classic Drama, 1978.

king's justice.

Such loyal support was maintained when Rose next appeared at the beginning of 3.2. The crozier and plain clerical garb (white cassock, black skull cap and cloak) were now augmented by gauntlets and gorget. This Carlisle was clearly prepared to extend loyalty to preparations for war, and he purposely and resolutely followed Derek Jacobi's Richard and Charles Keating's Aumerle into the apparent safety of the castle. His first speech was confidently delivered in the manner of a prelate well used to being involved in affairs of state, whilst at the same time remembering his pastoral office. The tone was urgent, yet "The means that heaven yields must be embrac'd" (3.2.29) was accompanied by a smile of encouragement, clearly meant to raise the royal spirits. As if to seek divine inspiration, this Carlisle looked heavenwards when he then spoke of celestial guidance. He clearly shared Richard's pain on hearing the ill tidings brought by Salisbury and Scroop, the clear distress showing on an increasingly troubled countenance. Upon hearing of the executions of Richard's followers, Rose bowed his head and crossed himself - the only one to do so, showing that whilst he was prepared to arm himself for his king he was a man of God before all else.

His loyalty to Richard remained undiminished, for when the king broke down in tears on "How can you say to me I am a king?" (3.2.177), this Carlisle was quick to offer both pastoral and practical advice. Rose came down to the level of Derek Jacobi's almost grovelling king, paused thoughtfully and placed a reassuring hand on the royal shoulder. To ease the sobbing monarch, Carlisle spoke gently and yet with patriotic vision and

spirit. He was desirous both of comforting him and stirring him to further action. When he spoke of fighting, one felt the mettle of his argument and when he uttered the words, "... servile breath", it was with a scornful contempt for those who sought to rebel.

The "double act" with Aumerle was underlined with Carlisle nodding in support of the former's "And learn to make a body of a limb" (3.2.186), but such coalition was almost instantly dashed with the realization that York and others had joined Bolingbroke's revolt. Aumerle appeared too stunned by these latest developments to say anything, whilst further possible attempts on the part of the bishop to sooth the king were prevented by the latter's almost bitter rebuff of

By heaven I'll hate him everlastingly
That bids me be of comfort any more. (3.2.207-208)

Rose showed that this Carlisle - for the present - could keep a still tongue in his head. As his king hurried off to lick his wounds of betrayal and loss, the bishop was the first to follow- now looking even graver at the prospects of what might follow. Even so, Carlisle's swift decision to follow the king showed he would remain with him come what may.

When Richard appeared with his supporters on the walls of Flint Castle, Carlisle maintained a silent and faithful presence. It was, however, a presence which spoke volumes. When Richard defiantly addressed Northumberland, Rose's expression clearly indicated he was impressed with the courage being shown by his king. During Northumberland's somewhat sarcastic reply, Jacobi held a somewhat hurried and whispered conference with Carlisle and Aumerle, during which the former looked anxious, hoping that Richard would fight on. When it seemed clear that this was not to be, the

bishop reacted with alarm and seemed lost for words on “Must he submit?”, “Must he be depos’d?” (3.3.143-144), questions which were addressed to him as if Richard was seeking spiritual advice from his confessor. Rose, however, remained silent, looking both puzzled and troubled. Once again, it was the bishop who was first to follow his king on “Down, down, I come ...” (3.2.178).

Carlisle’s silence was broken and most eloquently in 4.1. Regrettably, this production denied him his speech in praise of Mowbray’s Christian valour but it certainly did not suggest that this bishop was irrelevant or without effect. The scene began with the entry of York. He entered alone into a packed Westminster Hall and addressed Bolingbroke who stood at the far end, almost impatient to sit on the royal throne behind him. So far, the camera did not show Carlisle. Upon being acclaimed as king, Jon Finch’s Bolingbroke prayed silently and then solemnly declared

In God’s name, I’ll ascend the regal throne. (4.1.113)

At this moment, Carlisle’s voice rang out as if he could not allow the Almighty to be party to what was about to happen. Rose then strode purposely from the throng, now wearing a rich cope. This suggested that God’s anointed king may not be present, but his representative certainly was. Bareheaded this time, yet still holding his crozier, Carlisle paused and, looking around him, continued his speech in a somewhat apologetic vein. With the skill of an orator who now has the attention of his audience, Rose then firmly gazed on all present and let forth his verbal shafts. With eyes blazing, he almost spat out the words, “so foul a wrong.” (4.1.120) and on

“What subject can give sentence on his king?” (4.1.122), his stressing of the words challenged his hearers to think carefully about what was about to take place. He built up to a peroration on “obscene a deed!” (4.1.131), to be scornfully abused with shouts of “traitor!” Unperturbed, Carlisle firmly reminded them that everyone present (himself included) was a subject of God’s anointed monarch. “Whom you call king,” (4.1.134) was uttered with a contemptuous sneer and upon “let me prophesy” (4.1.136), Rose fixed his gaze on Charles Gray’s York, who was beginning to look somewhat uncomfortable. Like an experienced preacher, the bishop spoke his prophecy in hushed tones, skilfully drawing images of the horrors of civil war. At “dead men’s skulls” (4.1.144), the camera moved to Bolingbroke who was looking very thoughtful indeed.

Carlisle then decided to try further preaching skills. He again took in all present as his voice was raised on “O, if you raise this house against this house (4.1.145) and “this cursed earth” (4.1.147) was delivered in tones reminding all of the sins of mankind since the disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Upon this, David Swift’s oafish Northumberland was seen to sneer at Carlisle and the look on the latter’s face showed realization that his pearls of warning were indeed falling amongst swine. Rose spoke almost desperately on “Prevent it, resist it, ...” (4.1.148), and almost bewildered at the thought that all should be so blind to his warnings, he again looked from one face to another, finally gazing once more on York. “...Cry against you woe.” (4.1.149) was almost shrieked at the king’s uncle, and during the almost stunned silence which followed, York’s face showed by its deep gravity that the bishop had convinced him.

The silence was maintained as Rose looked around in vain for further support. He may have convinced York but certainly not Northumberland, who smiled a smile most disdainful and shook his head as if the bishop had quite lost his reason. It was with a vindictive pleasure that he arrested Carlisle and snatched the crozier from his grasp as if to suggest that without it, the bishop had no symbol of office. The crozier was handed to the Abbot of Westminster, summoned from an anonymous place in the crowd, who then gently led his brother cleric away. Before departing, Carlisle gazed once more upon York in a vain attempt to persuade the latter to speak.

At the very end of the scene, the camera moved up to show Carlisle, Westminster and Aumerle who had been watching the deposition from cloisters above. The bishop spoke more in sorrow than in anger and his words of wisdom were rewarded by the returning of his crozier by the abbot. The end of the scene was cut, but concluded with the plot against Bolingbroke clearly planned, for as Aumerle queried as to the existence of a conspiracy, the clerics looked at each other as if the time was ripe to bring him into the faction. The scene then faded out.

In this production, Carlisle was permitted his final appearance. Clifford Rose (once more in plain clerical attire and skull cap) was somewhat unceremoniously pushed to the ground by Henry Percy, who had clearly been schooled by his father when it came to anti-clerical manners. When his life was spared, Carlisle looked at Bolingbroke in disbelief before being again churlishly escorted by Percy to the side of the room.

On hearing of the murder of Richard, Carlisle crossed himself and knelt in silent prayer before the coffin of his late king. He remained thus until

Bolingbroke declared his intention of making an atoning pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Rose immediately looked up in wonder and amazement. He seemed relieved that the usurper had feelings after all, and possibly the outburst in Westminster Hall was proving prophetic to the man whose reign was fast becoming stained with blood.

The interpretation of Philip Voss differed from the other two in that he was given Carlisle's scenes in their entirety and his performance was in a radio production.⁹¹ He thus created a performance with words alone. Voss is an actor with an undeniable stage presence and a magnificent speaking voice. He is also often cast in major Shakespearian roles, especially with the RSC. That he was able to create a quite memorable Carlisle in words alone and play a supporting role quite unselfishly is a tribute to his art.

As 3.2 began, sound effects of surf on the beach, feet on pebbles and the cry of seagulls suggested that the royal party had just landed on the Welsh coast. When Voss first spoke, it sounded as if he had just caught up with the king and Aumerle having arrived just in time to give the kind of wise and gentle spiritual counsel that an experienced chaplain or confessor would give in such circumstances. This Carlisle sounded the most venerable of the three interpretations considered, but was capable of giving sound advice (stressing the word "embrac'd") to deal with the rebellion in a practical manner.

The further sound of footsteps on pebbles gave the impression the group were making their way towards the castle. In another sense, the king could be continuing a spiritual journey accompanied by a senior mentor from

⁹¹ *Richard II*, Samuel West, 2000 BBC Radio Collection.

the Church. When Richard - upon hearing the dismal tidings from Salisbury and Scroop suggested that they sit, the sound efforts suggested that all in fact did so, giving the suggestion that the king was leading a meditation on grave and weighty matters. Carlisle's next speech was also uttered to a weeping Richard. Voss again stressed the wise and elder prelate whilst at the same time making it clear that firm action was called for. In endeavouring to provide solace, the bishop was stern when he spoke the words, "...presently prevent the ways to wail" (3.2.179). The last two lines of his speech suggested that to fight against rebellion was indeed a just war for this Carlisle.

The just war theme continued in 4.1 when Voss spoke movingly of Mowbray's exploits as a crusader. This speech was delivered almost as a meditation - at the same time it was not merely a warm and generous tribute but an almost wistful longing for all that true chivalry stood for. So great an impact did Voss make, that the praise of John Julius Norwich for this passage was readily understandable. When the bishop confirmed to Bolingbroke that Mowbray was dead, it was with a gentle sarcasm on "...my lord", and the revelation drew gasps and murmurs from the gathering.

Such reactions were shortly repeated when Carlisle's major speech was delivered and both this and the passage discussed above made it clear that this Carlisle might be venerable but his words demanded attention.

Events leading up to the speech were most effective. To York's line

And long live Henry, of that name the fourth! (4.1.112)

was added "God save the king!" This acclamation was repeated with zest by Bolingbroke's supporters, and when the usurper declared that he would

ascend to the throne in the name of God, his declaration was greeted by an enthusiastic “Aye!” from his entourage. This was clearly the last straw for this Carlisle. His “Marry” was clearly an appeal to the Blessed Virgin. A pause was followed by a “God forbid!”(4.1.114) which suggested that such treason was the very last thing desired by the Almighty. Voss then spoke quickly but with the confidence of a senior cleric. He seemed to be apologizing for his interruption, but it was to the effect that if no one else would speak for Richard then he must.

As the speech progressed, Carlisle was aghast and challenging in equal measure., especially on

And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?

(4.1.122)

Lines 125-131 were delivered as if a prayer, and “I speak to subjects” in a firm and rebuking tone. Angry gasps and reactions greeted the description of Bolingbroke as traitor, but the bishop would not be silenced. “And if you crown him...” (4.1.136) was a salutary reminder that it was not too late to prevent this from happening. The remainder of the speech was in tones both urgent and full of horror at what the future might hold. This was clearly a last attempt from an old man to try and preserve the existing order of God's world.

James Laurensen's somewhat uncouth and arrogant Northumberland clearly was of the new age. Carlisle had hardly finished, before his arrest was declared, but not without a buzz of excitement from the company. At the end of the scene, an even older sounding Abbot (actor unaccredited) spoke in melancholy tones about what had taken place. Carlisle's “The woe's to

come” was spoken in rueful manner, suggesting that the horrors he had prophesied would indeed come to pass. The concluding speech of Westminster was whispered and conspiratorial. The sound of hurrying footsteps suggested that the plotters were not going to brook any delay.

In the final scene, we heard Carlisle groaning as he was brought before Henry, a suggestion that he had been tortured for his part in the conspiracy. Damian Lewis’s rather youthful Henry was indeed gentle in speech and action - his pardoning of Carlisle was accompanied by an audible sigh of relief from Voss. The announcement of Richard’s slaying gave this bishop an additional “ Lord protect us! Amen!” and in a hushed sense that the “woe” had indeed begun. As the production ended, solemn footsteps heralded the funeral procession and one could not help feeling that the young man who had just pardoned the elderly prelate would be relying on him for spiritual comfort.

Certainly, the three interpretations considered show that the part provides much potential. They illustrate the loyalty to Richard, generosity to Mowbray and sheer danger to Bolingbroke as well as the impact made upon the latter to the extent that Carlisle is pardoned. Bogdanov chose to dispense with Carlisle after his arrest it is true, but one cannot forget the action of Michael Cronin’s Bolingbroke in that production of allowing the bishop to complete his speech. We might not have been told of the “ high sparks of honour” in the production, but this Bolingbroke clearly recognized them when he saw them.

E. F. C. Ludowyk may be writing for the general reader, but his observations in respect of Carlisle's major speech confirms that it is more than McLeish would make of it:

The moral of the play - and of all the histories - is plain for all to see. It is enunciated in the speech of the Bishop of Carlisle in 4.1.114ff. The king is God's deputy, as Gaunt says quite plainly in 1.2.37-8. However weak, corrupt and inefficient he may be, no subject, not even his cousin of the blood royal, has the right to proceed against him. If this happens, then the intricate system of order, or hierarchy, on which the whole kingdom and the whole universe is founded collapses, and the result can only be confusion, and the chaos of civil strife and foreign intervention.⁹²

Again, each of the three performances stressed the fear Carlisle has of what is to come. It is interesting that only the BBC Radio production includes the complete ending of 4.1 Reese describes this as

...one of those telling anti-climaxes which Shakespeare manages so well but which scare producers into making ill-considered cuts, this tiny pendant is essential to the scene, to show that Richard's apprehension of his kingship is not mere vanity.⁹³

The appearance of Carlisle in the final scene was also significant even though we only have the performances of Clifford Rose and Philip Voss to consider. In a study of some productions, Margaret Shewring discusses the importance of the cleric at this point in the play. She makes the point that the deposition and subsequent murder of Richard certainly do not augur a smooth reign for Bolingbroke, and that this is underlined in the following scene:

each bulletin for the new king confirms Henry's power while also underlining the fact that this power depends upon the use of physical force. Understanding that the force is all too likely

⁹² E.F.C.Ludowyk, *Understanding Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 92.

⁹³ M. M.Reese, *The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1961), p. 241.

to lead to violence on a country-wide scale, Henry tries to intervene, at least on a personal level. His punishment for the Bishop of Carlisle is not to be death. Rather, Carlisle is distanced from the sphere of national influence. The presence of Carlisle on stage to hear his sentence is important in terms of the play's structure.⁹⁴

The churlish manhandling of Clifford Rose and the groans of Philip Voss made it clear in the respective productions that physical force was the order of the day for Henry's thugs. However, both Jon Finch and Damian Lewis addressed Carlisle in tones both gentle and respectful as they pronounced pardon rather than execution. The look of near-disbelief on the part of Clifford Rose, and Philip Voss's audible gasp of hope, made it clear that the Bishop's final appearance is dramatically significant.

To conclude, all three performances confirmed that "The Bishop of Carlisle ...one of Shakespeare's few high churchmen of high character..."⁹⁵ is very much a character to be reckoned with and one whose honesty reminds one (as perhaps no other cleric in the histories does) of the early Christian martyrs.

⁹⁴ Margaret Shewring, *Shakespeare in Performance "King Richard II"* (Manchester, 1996), p. 19.

⁹⁵ Goddard, p. 153.

CHAPTER 3 PANDULPH

Pandulph was born in Pisa and became a politician within the Church of Rome in 1182 under Pope Lucius III. Little else is known of him until 1211 when, as a subdeacon, he was sent on a mission to England as legate or nuncio by the then Pope, Innocent III.

The task was to attempt to break the deadlock over the refusal of King John to accept the Pope's appointment of Cardinal Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury. Pandulph, accompanied by a Templar named Durand, was given strict instructions to demand the surrender of John in public either by oath or letters patent. Despite a meeting with the king at Northampton, negotiations came to naught on account of the king's continued stubbornness. Pandulph publicly excommunicated John, and the legates then returned to Rome.

By May 1213, John was prepared to submit to the Pope. Pandulph was once again sent as legate to England where, a few miles from Folkestone, he received the crown from John, together with the latter's homage to Innocent as well as the promise that England would be subject to papal rule. In 1215, the name of Master Pandulf, subdeacon and member of the household of the lord Pope, was listed in the first clause of Magna Carta (it being the custom with charters to deal with the Church in the first clause) and on 7th of July of this year, Innocent issued further instructions to Pandulph who continued as legate in England. On this occasion, the Pope decreed that Pandulph, together with the bishop of Winchester and the abbot of Reading should instruct Archbishop Langton to excommunicate the barons

who had forced John to sign Magna Carta, with the ultimatum that should he refuse to do so, Langton and any supporting bishops would be suspended from office. The Archbishop defied papal authority, claiming that Innocent had acted upon facts which were now out of date. Pandulph and his colleagues accordingly excommunicated the traitor barons on 5th September, and on the same date suspended Langton, who returned to Rome.

John now recognized such support by ensuring that Pandulph became bishop of Norwich. After the death of the king, the Pope resisted the plans of the Dauphin to invade England. It was, however, another legate (Cardinal Guala) and not Pandulph who was given this assignment. Even so, Pandulph still relied on papal authority in that he sought to control the advisers of Henry III, including Hubert de Burgh. In 1221, the latter formed an alliance with Langton, as they felt that Pandulph was becoming too arrogant. The alliance succeeded in that Pandulph was recalled to Rome, but he remained as bishop of Norwich and upon his death in 1226, his body was returned to that see for burial.⁹⁶

Historians initially show Pandulph as a loyal ambassador to Innocent

III. Holinshed records that:

In that same year (1211), the pope sent two legats into England, the one name Pandulph a lawyer, and the other Durant a templer, who comming unto king John, exhorted him with manie terrible words to leave his stubborne disobedience to the church, and to reforme his misdoings.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Once again, I am indebted to : W. H. Thomson, *Shakespeare's Characters: A Historical Dictionary* (New York, 1966), and Peter Sacchio, *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle and Drama* (Oxford, 1977) for background material but this time must record similar indebtedness to J. A. P. Jones, *King John and Magna Carta* (London, 1971), and Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1993).

⁹⁷ Geoffrey Bullough (ed), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London, 1962), Vol IV, p. 37.

The above may well have given Shakespeare the inspiration for Pandulph's first speech in the play and almost certainly for his second with the "manie terrible words" threatening excommunication and incitement to assassination. It is interesting that Holinshed is silent on the latter, and that he informs us that John was certainly not outraged or heretical in the presence of papal authority:

The king for his part, quietlie heard them, and bringing them to Northampton,...had much conference with them;...⁹⁸

Meekly or otherwise, John's stubbornness certainly resulted in excommunication. This seemed to conclude the first mission of the historical Pandulph, for unlike Shakespeare's legate

...when they perceived that they could not have their purpose,...the legats departed, leaving him accursed, and the land interdicted, as they found it at their coming.⁹⁹

Holinshed describes how Pandulph received a further assignment. This time, he was to lead a delegation to the French court with the aim of cajoling Philip of France to declare war on England. It is significant that Pandulph appears to have merely been carrying out papal orders and not seeking to stir up conflict out of malice. This legate certainly seems to have enjoyed considerable responsibility because the delegation included

...a great number of English exiles...together with Stephan the archbishop of Canturburie, and the other English bishops...¹⁰⁰

Despite such illustrious company, Pandulph was given special responsibility to try and negotiate a settlement with John and to once again travel to

⁹⁸ Bullough (ed), IV, 38.

⁹⁹ Bullough (ed), IV, 38.

¹⁰⁰ Bullough (ed), IV, 38.

England. Stephen Langton may have been the chosen Archbishop, but subdeacon Pandulph was undoubtedly the Pope's man when it came to diplomacy and a seat at the negotiating table:

Moreover this Pandulph was commanded by the pope, if he saw cause, to go over to England, and to deliver unto king John such letters as the pope had written for his better instruction, and to seeke by all means possible to draw him from his naughtie opinion.¹⁰¹

If the Pandulph described by Holinshed enjoyed such responsibility, did it entitle him to behave as it is suggested he did? It seems that the legate addressed John on no uncertain terms and may have indulged in a piece of bluff for the historian refers to a "sawcie speech" which includes a warning about

...a charter made by the cheefest lords of England touching their fealtie and obedience assured to him.¹⁰²

Such a speech appears to have ensured a successful mission for Pandulph. John capitulated and the legate showed his further authority by confiscating the crown.

...king John...tooke the crowne from his own head, and delivered the same to Pandulph the legat...Then Pandulph keeping the crowne with him for the space of five daies in token of possession thereof, at length (as the popes vicar) gave it him againe.¹⁰³

Holinshed thereafter suggests that Pandulph quit the political scene, albeit with some unfinished business as far as France was concerned. This certainly provided Shakespeare with the opportunity to show that France was

¹⁰¹ Bullough (ed), IV, 39.

¹⁰² Bullough (ed), IV, 39.

¹⁰³ Bullough (ed), IV, 40.

also prepared to defy papal diplomacy, even if in the play *King John*, it is the Dauphin who utters such defiance:

Pandulph sailed back into France, & came to Roan, where he declared to king Philip the effect of his travel, and what he had done in England. But king Philip...determined not to breake off his enterprise...¹⁰⁴

Reference was made above to “historians”. It is significant that in his *Actes and Monuments of Martyrs*, John Foxe also shows Pandulph as one who had great authority. Discussing John’s eventual submission to Rome, Foxe informs us that

Then sent againe into England his Legate Pandulph with other Embassadeurs:... Then tooke the King the crowne from hys heade, kneeling upon his knees in the presence of all his Lordes & Barons of England to Pandulphe the popes chief legate... Then tooke Pandophe the crowne of King John, and kept it 5 daies as a possession & season taking of these two realms of England and Ireland.¹⁰⁵

Another reference to the crown being confiscated for five days. This legate proved a formidable pawn in the negotiations between Rome and John, and provided Shakespeare with an equally dramatic player in the machinations which abound in his play.

J. C. Trewin is clearly impressed with the manner in which Shakespeare introduces Pandulph into the drama:

The play’s most theatrical entrance...- preceded often by the shadow of a great cross - of Cardinal Pandulph - arrogant casuist moulded from icy silver, who brings with him a threatened curse from Rome.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Bullough (ed), IV, 40.

¹⁰⁵ Bullough (ed), IV, 52.

¹⁰⁶ J.C. Trewin, *Going to Shakespeare* (London, 1978), p. 78.

This doyen of theatre critics is certainly kinder to the characterisation of the cleric than Kenneth McLeish who is somewhat cynical and patronizing, describing Shakespeare's Pandulph as:

Emissary of the Pope who excommunicates John (for failing to accept the Pope's nominee as Archbishop of Canterbury) and stirs up the French to attack England, then, when John recants, tries unavailingly to order the French back home and end the war. He is a silky diplomat with a touch of steel..., but he has only one card (papal authority) in his hand, overplays it at enormous length - his speeches seem interminable - and is treated by everyone else with a mixture of politeness and contempt.¹⁰⁷

This is also somewhat less than generous and rather dismissive. The authority of the Pope is a grave and weighty dramatic weapon to hand to any character in a play written in an age recalling the real life drama of the Reformation and the religious tensions which continued to exist.

It is important to use the phrase, "Shakespeare's Pandulph" because any discussion of this cleric must deal with a similar character in the anonymous play, *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*. One could write an entire thesis on the continuing debate as to which play came first. Recent scholarship shows that the field is as wide as Christendom:

Although opinion is divided, most who have written about the subject favour *TR* as Shakespeare's main source, especially Dover Wilson, Kenneth Muir, Alice Walker, and R.L. Smallwood. However, Peter Alexander, E. A. J. Honigmann, William H. Matchett, and a few others have suggested that Shakespeare's play is the original and *TR* is somehow indebted to it. (Years ago it was thought that *TR* was Shakespeare's first draft). Amidst the often conflicting evidence, unshakeable proof one way or the other is not possible.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth McLeish, *Longman Guide to Shakespeare's Characters: A Who's Who of Shakespeare* (Harlow, 1985), p. 189.

¹⁰⁸ *King John*, ed. L. A. Beaurline (Cambridge, 1990), p. 194.

It is worthwhile considering how the character of Pandulph differs in each play, and I must record gratitude to Robert Stevenson who shows this most succinctly.¹⁰⁹

Before so doing, it seems profitable to follow the progress of this cleric through *King John*. To Trewin's observations above, one might add another of Stevenson's:

In King John a prelate does at last garner political power: but he is a meddling Italian.¹¹⁰
 I Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal,
 And from Pope Innocent the legate here,
 Do in his name religiously demand
 So wilfully dost spurn, and force perforce
 Keep Stephen Langton, chosen Archbishop
 Of Canterbury, from that holy see.¹¹¹ (3. 1. 136-144)

A significant entrance indeed. Whichever play came first, this Italian diplomat represents in both the historical personages of the subdeacon Pandulf and Cardinal Guala- as Robert Smallwood observes, "Shakespeare follows the sensible dramatic economy of ... combining two papal legates prominent in Holinshed's account... it is not precise historical identity that is significant, but the character's symbolic function - Pandulph is the man from Rome, representing the cunning diplomacy and the unscrupulous pursuit of power which typified the Pope in Elizabethan eyes".¹¹²

His entry comes at the moment when the audience might be wondering whether the hearty patriotism and gratuitous insults which were a notable feature of 2.1 might be about to recommence. The negotiated truce

¹⁰⁹ Robert Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier* (The Hague, 1958), pp. 12-14.

¹¹⁰ Stevenson, p. 12

¹¹¹ Except where indicated, quotations are from *King John*, ed. Robert Smallwood (London, 1986).

¹¹² *King John*, ed. Smallwood, p. 233.

resulting from the arranged marriage of the Dauphin to Blanche of Spain has been subject to the grief and fury of Constance. The negotiated betrayal of her son, Arthur, causes her to pour scorn upon Philip of France and the Duke of Austria. Constance also calls upon God to intervene. Her passion brings results. Tensions between the on stage opponents begin to surface and God's representative appears. Pandulph is not, however, an answer to prayer and the wretched widow's hopes are soon dashed. Beaurline sums up the situation most admirably:

The arch-politician of them all enters in Act 3, Scene 1 as if in answer to a widow's cry for help, but Pandulph is not heaven's avenger for he soon shows that he has no interest whatsoever in Constance's need. He represents the power of the church militant and uses its curses of interdiction and excommunication to discipline rebellious kings.¹¹³

Despite the legate's publicly chastising John for his refusal to accept Rome's chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, the king will not be put in his place. In a sneering reply (3.1.146-160) which shocks his French counterpart, John pours scorn and defiance upon the Pope and his representative. Not content with this, he also mocks Philip and anyone else who submits to the Pope.

R. L. Smallwood suggests how this tirade of John's would have been considered by Shakespeare's audience:

In the sudden violence of John's uncompromising reply to Pandulph, the play comes closest to the language of sixteenth century propaganda.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *King John*, ed. Beaurline, p. 38.

¹¹⁴ *King John*, ed. Smallwood, p. 235.

Pandulph will not rise to the bait and indulge in verbal fencing with such an apparent enemy to Rome. He coolly excommunicates John and publicly invokes an assassination attempt on England's king:

Then, by the lawful power that I have,
Thou shalt stand curst and excommunicate:
And blessed shall he be that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretic;
And meritorious shall that hand be called,
Canonized and worshipped as a saint,
That takes away by any secret course
Thy hateful life. (3.1. 172-179)

With due respect to McLeish, this utterance is hardly likely to be received with politeness or contempt - even by John. This is very much a checkmate on the chessboard of intrigue and power. To quote Kiernan, it "...includes incitement to murder as well as rebellion, with an evident topical reference to plots against Elizabeth."¹¹⁵ The queen had also been excommunicated by a Pope who had approved attempts on her life, and in 1583, Shakespeare's distant cousin, Edward Arden, was executed for his part in a conspiracy to assassinate Elizabeth.

Philip of France desperately seeks to escape his dilemma. He is mindful of his newly forged friendship with John, but realizes that he is also in péril of immediate excommunication if he fails publicly to declare loyalty to Innocent III. Pandulph is now clearly the character on stage holding the reins of power. Donald Watson makes the interesting observation that this moment

...prompts another stage emblem which owes something to the morality play tradition. John and Philip stand in the center of the stage, holding hands for a very long time-at least from

¹¹⁵ Victor Kiernan, *Shakespeare: Poet and Citizen* (London, 1993), p. 52.

line 118 to 188- an image of peace and courtesy – while Eleanor urges Philip not to “let go thy hand”(121), and Pandulph, Constance, Austria and Lewis counsel vehemently the letting go and breaking of the peace in favor of avoiding Rome’s curse and furthering another war.¹¹⁶

Who then represents good and who evil? Maybe Watson has in mind the slapstick elements of those earlier religious dramas, because he goes on to observe (in respect of Pandulph’s major speech from lines 263-297):

Pandulph’s speech approaches broad comedy: who cannot be amused by the ceremonious formality of the two hand-holding kings to listen to this?¹¹⁷

Certainly in the theatre such comedy is possible and will be discussed when considering interpretations of Pandulph. For the moment, however, it is important to dwell upon this major speech which Shakespeare gives the legate. Brownlow describes it as “.. a piece of virtuosity on Shakespeare’s part...an example of an argument that, once its premise is granted, is unanswerable...”¹¹⁸, while M M Reese takes the view that “ Pandulph is allowed a full and dignified presentation of his case and damns himself with his own falsity”.¹¹⁹

The substance of the speech is as follows. Pandulph reminds Philip of his Christian duty which is at odds with his pact with John. It is important to keep for the French king to keep religious obligations and as the pledge to John was made in error, it is perfectly in order to break it. Such a pledge is

¹¹⁶ Donald G. Watson, *Shakespeare’s Early History Plays: Politics at Play on the Elizabethan Stage* (London, 1990), p. 138.

¹¹⁷ Watson, p. 140.

¹¹⁸ F. W. Brownlow, *Two Shakespearean Sequences: “Henry VI” to “Richard II” and “Pericles” to “Timon of Athens”* (London, 1977), p. 92.

¹¹⁹ M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London, 1961), p. 272.

against the true faith and it is only the latter which is important. By making this erroneous promise, duty to God has been forgotten and the breaking of such false promise will avoid self betrayal. Failure to do so, will result in a legate's curse (excommunication).

Robert Smallwood skilfully sums up the speech and its implications:

This is a deliberately complex and tortuous speech: Pandulph attempts to prove, by ratiocination, that the breaking of a promise is religiously justifiable. The sixteenth-century Catholic doctrine that promises made to heretics need not be kept, that 'equivocation' was justifiable (an idea particularly hated in England as 'jesuitical' in the later part of Elizabeth's reign) clearly lies behind this portrait of the Catholic prelate... After the extraordinary complications of Pandulph's tortuous argument, his final threats have a heightened directness of brutality.¹²⁰

The implications of such observations will be considered in more detail when discussing critics' comments on Pandulph, but some further thoughts from Reese are apt as they deal with Shakespeare's use of the speech:

He knew exactly where Pandulph's arguments would lead, and he felt too deeply about them to be able to make his answer in a spirit of cheap comedy and vulgar abuse... Here, in all its specious subtlety, men could recognize the Jesuit 'double talk' that played 'fast and loose with faith' and brought confusion to their daily pieties.¹²¹

Pandulph next appears in 3.4 following the resumption of the battle brought about as a result of his intervention and successful appeal to Philip of France's conscience. The day appears to have gone disastrously for the French in that Angiers has been lost to them, many of their side have been slain and Arthur is John's prisoner. The Cardinal seems quite unmoved by these events and continues in this vein by offering scant pastoral support to

¹²⁰ *King John*, ed. Smallwood, pp. 241-243.

¹²¹ Reese, pp. 271-272.

the distracted Constance on the loss of her son. His words to her amount to “...self-damning sophistries...”¹²² and, along with Philip, attempts (vainly) to silence her outbursts. Upon her grieving exit, she is followed by Philip who fears she may attempt suicide, and the young Dauphin is left alone with the legate. Pandulph proceeds cunningly to weave a web around Lewis which will result in a French invasion of England and the downfall of John.

Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.
 Now haer me speak with a prophetic spirit
 For even the breath of what I mean to speak
 Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub
 Out of the path which shall directly lead
 Thy foot to England’s throne. (3.4.127-130)

With this and the following speech, Pandulph “...takes Arthur’s claim for granted, but wastes no sympathy on the child’s fate. He is a chilling figure.”¹²³

The argument put to Lewis is thus. Anyone who becomes a king by unlawful means will use force to stay in power. John is bound to see that Arthur is put to death and such an act will outrage John’s subjects who will follow anyone who has an alternative claim to the throne even if it results from marriage as Lewis’s claim would. The very acts of nature such as foul weather will be seen as Heaven’s wrath upon John following the death of the child.

Lewis is urged therefore to invade England where he will be hailed as a saviour not just because of the murder of Arthur, but because of acts of sacrilege carried out by Faulconbridge. Emrys Jones shows the way the legate’s mind is working:

¹²² Watson, p. 142.

¹²³ Brownlow, p. 92.

Pandulph himself has no illusions about the motives of others: he has seen everything before and understands that politics is a form of mechanics, a power-struggle whose nature a practised observer can easily analyse. He coolly, and correctly, predicts that John must try to dispose of Arthur by violence, and he urges Lewis to take his chance by invading England. He never for a moment suggests that it might be worth trying to save Arthur's life. What matters is the way the situation can be turned to the French advantage.¹²⁴

If, however, anyone is to gain the advantage it is Pandulph for whilst the remainder of the cardinal's appearances are brief, they are telling.

In 5.1 John is reconciled to Rome and Pandulph has a further moment of on stage power as he first of all receives the crown from John and then proceeds to crown the king once more. Reminding John he would now do well to maintain this newly offered loyalty to the pope, Pandulph then departs to advise Lewis he must cancel his plans for invasion. In the following scene, however, the Dauphin scorns the prelate's tidings of reconciliation with John and determines to proceed to battle. Upon the arrival of Falconbridge, Pandulph attempts further diplomacy - but in vain. Does this mean that his power is at an end? Far from it because in the final scene in the orchard of Swinstead Abbey, John dies after being poisoned by a monk. Lewis, lacking reinforcements as a result of a shipwreck, is forced to sue for peace and once again, it is Pandulph who acts as diplomat, even though these further negotiations take place off stage:

The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,
 Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,
 And brings from him offers of our peace
 As we with honour and respect may take,
 With purpose presently to leave this war. (5.7. 82-86)

¹²⁴ Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1977), p.236.

Could these negotiations which follow the deaths of Arthur and John be why Harold Bloom declares:

Shakespeare sees to it that Pandolph alienates his audience every time he speaks, but it is Pandolph, high priest of Commodity and of Policy, who alone triumphs in this play.¹²⁵

Why was John poisoned by a monk? Was the latter mindful of Pandulph's call for John's murder? Speculation certainly, but Bloom's observations are significant. The papal legate's mission appears to have been accomplished, but would it have served Shakespeare's dramatic purpose if Pandulph had appeared in the last scene? This may be answered when comparing the scenes which feature him in *The Troublesome Reign*.

The most comprehensive comparison of the two texts - as far as this study is concerned - would seem to be the one made by Robert Stevenson.¹²⁶ He makes the initial point that whilst *The Troublesome Reign* is a longer play than *King John*, the character of Pandulph is given more lines in the latter - 144 - as compared with 103. Stevenson also observes that whilst in each play the cardinal excommunicates John, there is no attempt in *The Troublesome Reign* publicly to call for assassination attempts on his life. Neither is there any suggestion in this play that Arthur is bound to be murdered on John's orders with resulting political gain both for Rome and France. Stevenson also discusses in some detail the appearance of Pandulph in the final scenes of *The Troublesome Reign*, when he gives spiritual comfort to the dying king and informs the Dauphin that Prince Henry is now heir apparent. It is suggested by this critic that such moments (which do not

¹²⁵ Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (London, 1998), p. 61.

¹²⁶ Stevenson, pp. 12-14

feature in *King John*), "... leave the audience with a far kindlier memory of Pandulph than Shakespeare consented to leave."¹²⁷

It might also be the case that the author of the anonymous text sought to show the cardinal in a reasonably holy light and with some dignity at the end of the play in contrast to the treachery of the monk who poisons John and the slapstick involving the friars and the nun, when the Bastard seeks the abbey's treasure. Bullough reminds us that "The searching of the monastery and nunnery has been condemned by critics as vulgar. It is a commonplace but amusing piece of satiric buffoonery".¹²⁸ He goes on to suggest that Shakespeare had more important plans, dramatically speaking, for his Pandulph and would not use ecclesiastical comedy which might ultimately thwart the dramatic intentions desired. Referring again to the above mentioned scene, Bullough declares, "Shakespeare omits it because he rarely satirizes the Church directly, and the scene distracts from the seriousness of the political conflict between John and the Pope".¹²⁹

In Shakespeare's play, Pandulph (as the Pope's representative) introduces such conflict on his first appearance by his public scolding of John and the challenge to the latter to explain disobedience to Rome. Gareth Lloyd Evans wisely reminds us that the entry of a new character in the form of Pandulph does more than activate political struggle:

One must not, however, while appreciating the political implications of the play, ignore the examples of dramatic skill that are displayed. Pandulph is a powerfully drawn character, arrogant, meticulously certain of his argument, assured in his status, and in what he represents... Pandulph's intervention

¹²⁷ Stevenson, p. 14.

¹²⁸ Bullough (ed), IV, 21.

¹²⁹ Bullough (ed), IV, 21.

reinforces...the weak expediency of these people. And at a point in the play when we are becoming bored with the parade of ineffectualness, Shakespeare introduces this character who has sufficient dramatic power to restore the balance and interest of the play.¹³⁰

This first scene of the cardinal was powerful enough to warrant the attentions of Father Sankey. Unlike his consideration of the character of Winchester, the ecclesiastical censor's quill was certainly sharpened and used when it came to the excommunication speech:

Here Sankey stops the speech half-way through, so as to expunge all of the Cardinal's references to the merit accrued from the subject's murder of an excommunicated king as well as the promise of elevating the murderer to sainthood... though he allowed Pandulph's blessing upon rebels to stand, he eliminated the promise of canonization for murder.¹³¹

Father Sankey read the play as a Jesuit agent of the Inquisition and was naturally concerned that the Church of Rome should not be depicted in a controversial way. A twentieth century critic, Virginia M. Vaughan, appraises the Church versus State struggle in a more sober way. She takes the view that the cardinal's ambitions are strictly political and that the clash between Pandulph and John is exactly that—a dispute between Church and State for power and, "...thus not a conflict between Catholic and Protestant....By lessening the anti-papal discourse of his predecessors, Shakespeare stresses the venality of the established church, whether Catholic or Protestant."¹³²

¹³⁰ Gareth Lloyd Evans, *The Upstart Crow: An Introduction to Shakespeare's Plays* (London, 1982), p. 92-93.

¹³¹ Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (New Jersey, 1963), p. 285.

¹³² Virginia M. Vaughan, "King John: A Study in Subversion and Containment" from "King John": *New Perspectives*, ed. Deborah T. Curren-Aqino (London, 1989), pp. 62-75 (p. 70).

A more recent collection of essays contains excerpts from the writings of the nineteenth century critic, Hermann Ulrici. He had taken a similar view that, "The relation between Church and State is the pulse of the whole historical action;"¹³³ but went on to suggest that "Cardinal Pandulph is the truest picture ever painted by (any) poet of an arrogant hierarchy, wholly absorbed in love of dominion and selfishness. This is why, in the end, neither the church nor the royal power conquer in the struggle;"¹³⁴

Such thoughts were made well over a century before Harold Bloom's declaration that Pandulph is the only victor in the play. Either Bloom was unaware of the thoughts of the earlier critic, or his views may be more satisfactory after further examination of the character as drawn by Shakespeare. In 1951, Harold Goddard (followed in 1994 by Richard Courtney) took the view that in Pandulph, we have the forerunner of not only Polonius but Iago:

Iago and Polonius! Could there be a more dreadful mixture?
Pandulph's profession is turning not every weakness and slip,
but every virtue of other men to his advantage.¹³⁵

Goddard suggests that Pandulph can be as long-winded in his arguments as the hapless politician of Elsinore, but he draws parallels with Iago

¹³³ Hermann Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art. History and Character of Shakespeare's Plays*, trans. By L Dora Smitz (2 vols, London, 1876), extract repr. *The Critical Tradition: "King John"*, ed. Joseph Candido (London, Highlands, 1996), pp. 128-135, (p. 132).

¹³⁴ Ulrici, p. 132

¹³⁵ Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare (Volume 1)* (Chicago, 1951) pp.144-145.

(describing the latter as supreme villain”) and his gulling of Roderigo, when he considers the way the cardinal similarly dupes the Dauphin. In each case, seemingly soothing tones conceal treachery and cause eventual conflict and death. Shades of Iago are also recalled when Courtney declares that the vocation of Pandulph “...consists of turning to his advantage each weakness and virtue of others”.¹³⁶

To these later characterisations, Dorothea Kehler (in her essay, ‘*So Jest with Heaven’: Deity in King John*) adds that of another duplicitous villain, Gloucester’s bastard son in *King Lear*:

Keeping to the old way, using religious language for his own ends, is Pandulph, who plots with Lewis to exploit John’s fear and Arthur’s vulnerability. Like Edmund, he cynically mocks supernatural interpretations of natural occurrences, explaining that once John kills Arthur, the disaffected English will inevitably construe natural events to John’s disadvantage as “tongues of heaven”.¹³⁷

If one is in agreement with the above critics, then this agent of the Vatican is neither colourless nor boring, and undoubtedly deserves the epithet of “a fascinating character”.¹³⁸ Unlike Iago and Edmund, he does survive and perhaps Bloom’s comment is therefore justified.

When David Giles directed the play in 1984 as part of the BBC TV Shakespeare¹³⁹, it was only the second time it had been shown by the Corporation, the previous production being transmitted in 1952. For his interpretation, Giles cast the veteran actor Richard Wordsworth (player of many leading roles during the Old Vic’s staging of the plays in the First

¹³⁶ Richard Courtney, *Shakespeare’s World of War: The Early Histories* (Toronto, 1994), p. 150.

¹³⁷ Dorothea Kehler, “‘So Jest with Heaven’: Deity in *King John*” from “*King John*”: *New Perspectives*, ed. Curren-Aquino, pp. 99-113 (p. 108).

¹³⁸ Brownlow, p. 92.

¹³⁹ *King John*. Dir. David Giles. BBC Classic Drama, 1984.

Folio over five years) who had not been seen on television for some time. It was a welcome return, and Wordsworth clearly showed he had lost none of his dramatic touch.

Indeed, his first entry in 3.1 was in the manner suggested by J.C. Trewin. As the dramatic tension increased with the outbursts of Claire Bloom's Constance against the wedding of Blanche to Lewis the Dauphin, and the trading of insults between the Bastard and Austria, the chanting of monks was heard. This brought all squabbling to a sudden halt and, upon gazing towards the implied direction of the plainsong, Charles Kay's Philip of France looked amazed that such a distinguished clerical visitor was about to descend on the gathering. This Pandulph was carried on a litter by monks. He seemed frail and aged but such appearance was deceptive. The litter having been lowered, Wordsworth paused for effect and rose with great dignity. A tall actor, he seemed immediately to dominate the action not merely because of height, but his splendid appearance. Grey bearded, he wore rich white and gold vestments with an elaborate biretta. To his right (and throughout the scene) stood an attendant monk with a processional cross upon which was adorned a figure of the crucified Christ.

The next camera shot showed John, Philip of France, Constance and Arthur all kneeling in homage. Pandulph acknowledged such tribute with a blessing. As he began to speak, his voice was both ethereal and sepulchral. Leonard Rossiter's John made a curt acknowledgment of the head and made to disappear amongst the other characters, but was stopped in his tracks by a very firm "To thee King John, my holy errand is" (3.1.137). This caused John to turn back somewhat sheepishly like a schoolboy who has

misbehaved. After “So wilfully dost spurn” (3.1.142) (this latter word being emphasised), the cardinal paused as if to suggest that in itself spurning was a great crime against Rome, and when he continued his speech, he referred to Stephen Langton in tones which made John look most uncomfortable. This was not a name he wished to be reminded of. “I do demand of thee” (3.1.146) was delivered in tones quiet but menacing.

Rossiter’s king immediately took up the challenge. In sneering tones, he hurled defiance at the legate and he took a pause before uttering the reference to the pope with utter contempt. The tirade of abuse continued with the next reference to the pope being spoken in terms both scornful and defiant. The Philip of Charles Kay looked quite shocked, but a camera shot of Pandulph showed a face, calm and impassive. Well into his stride, John continued his defiance of Rome and sought to find support by placing the palm of his right hand firmly in the palm of Philip’s left on “...and count his friends my foes” (3.1.171).

Philip looked most alarmed that he was being forced into literally an unholy alliance, but Pandulph (continuing to look unmoved) quietly played his trump card. When he openly supported assassination of John, the legate permitted himself a slightly sinister snarl on “Thy hateful life”. (3.1.178) The threat of excommunication had caused both kings - especially John - to look startled, but the death threat brought horror to their faces. Constance, on the other hand, was jubilant that this “heavenly messenger” had arrived Claire Bloom’s countenance was radiance itself - horribly ironical when she was next to be seen with Pandulph in 3.4.

As Philip seemed incapable of making any decision, Wordsworth's tone became threatening upon "Let go the hand of that arch heretic" (3.1.192), and his reference to Rome suggested that fire from heaven might descend upon the hapless France, if he did not do as he was told. The implications of what the legate was suggesting caused mild panic amongst the other characters. The bluster had quite gone from John, whilst Philip looked stunned and looked perplexed indeed as advice poured in on every front. Pandulph seemed to be quietly enjoying the discomfort of France, as he smiled in an eerie fashion upon:

What canst thou say but will perplex thee more
If thou stand excommunicate and cursed?" (3.1.223)

It was as if the legate was daring Philip to defy him with the result that he would take immense pleasure in excommunicating two kings. Charles Kay's almost desperate plea to Pandulph was useless. Before his next speech, Wordsworth slowly shook his head and quite disregarded the silent sneer on John's face. If the latter thought that France had talked himself out of his dilemma, he was in for a rude awakening. In tones of sorrow more than displeasure, Pandulph sought to persuade Philip to break the treaty. His major speech was a masterful homily of hell fire preaching masquerading as gentle spiritual comfort. Wordsworth's handling of the lines from 263- 297 were an object lesson in underplaying. "So mak'st thou faith an enemy to faith" (3.1.263) was followed by a pause to enable his opponent to realize what commitment true faith required. "O, let thy vow first made to heaven, first be to heaven performed"(3.1.265-266) was accompanied by a gaze upwards and "...The better act of purposes mistook is to mistake again"

(3.1.274-275) delivered in almost hushed tones, suggesting that France was indeed making a mistake if he did not break his promise to England. To stress the point that such a promise was against true religion, Wordsworth permitted himself a movement towards Philip, his hands raised as if gently to sooth the troubled monarch. He once again sadly shook his head on “But if not, then know the perils of our curse light on thee” (3.1.294-295) and concluded his homily in a most sinister way with the last two lines being spoken in almost terrified tones at the thought that damnation could follow if Philip did not change his mind.

With smiles of pity throughout this appeal, Wordsworth was certainly like sugar coated cyanide. As he finished speaking, there was a stunned silence broken by Austria’s outburst. The mask of icy politeness appeared to slip for a moment because “I will denounce a curse upon his head” (3.1.319) was almost fanatical in delivery and one gloved hand was actually raised as if excommunication was imminent, so impatient was Pandulph now becoming with Philip’s dithering. This was the final trick in the pack, and as Philip capitulated and literally broke away from John, the camera showed a definite smirk of triumph upon Pandulph’s face. We saw him no more on camera in this scene as his wrapped up bullying had ensured that battle was once more to be joined.

As 3.4 commenced, Pandulph was discovered at a table with Philip outside the latter’s tent. Lewis the Dauphin stood by almost helplessly, and although there were goblets and a jug upon the table, this was no victory celebration. Even so, Pandulph (now having exchanged his biretta for a white skull cap) seemed quite unmoved that his recent convert had lost the battle.

He sought to calm Philip in gentle pastoral tones and seemed callously indifferent to the plight of the grieving Constance, who entered Ophelia like, hair hanging down her back, no longer a coronet upon her head and a faraway look in her eyes. Claire Bloom's performance was also masterly underplaying for television, and she did not suggest possible insanity till she tore at her hair and broke down with sheer grief at the end of her scene. Her Constance paid no heed to Pandulph, until he rebuked her in a cold and clinical manner. Claire Bloom then turned on Wordsworth in scorn and contempt. Her "heavenly messenger" had become an angel of doom and, having lost her beloved son, she had no more to lose except her reason. "Preach some philosophy to make me mad" (3.4.50) was sarcastic in tone and such sarcasm continued well into her next speech, when this Constance sat opposite Pandulph and sought to catch him out in theological debate about the afterlife. The legate remained seated and unmoved. His "You hold too heinous a respect of grief"(3.4.90) was impatient, accompanied by a shaking of the head and a pitiful smile. To this, Constance witheringly reminded him that he had never known the joys of parenthood but without effect as the legate remained unmoved by her chiding or grief. When she slowly moved away from the scene, Philip looked alarmed at the thought that she might inflict harm on herself and confided in his son, totally ignoring his former ally.

After Philip hurried after Constance, Lewis moved to the table to pour himself a much needed drink. Wordsworth continued to smile and began to work his machinations upon the young man. "Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost" (3.4.121) was reflective and almost

mysterious, almost willing Lewis to guess his thoughts. Having gained attention, Pandulph proceeded with all the cunning of a spider enticing a fly to its lair. Resting his elbows on the table and slightly gesturing with his palms, the legate scored a direct hit on “Thy foot to England’s throne” (3.4.130). On hearing these words, the Dauphin looked startled and quickly took the place vacated by Constance. What followed was ensnarement par excellence. After “Arthur needs must fall”, Pandulph gave a shrug as if the death of a child mattered not and continued to hold his listener spellbound. A mischievous chuckle preceded “How green you are and fresh in this old world!”, and in almost conspiratorial undertones, the advantages of Arthur’s death were explored. There was a significant and chilling pause between “If that Arthur be not” and “gone already” to suggest that the child could already have been murdered, and Pandulph’s smile was by now becoming extremely unpleasant. “Methinks I see this hurly all on foot” was almost an aside and uttered with relish at the prospects of royal slaughter, civil war and the ultimate triumph of Rome. The chanting of monks was heard as Pandulph urged Lewis to hasten to action on “O noble Dauphin, go with me to the king” and continued to the end of the scene. The cardinal almost exuded glee at the way Lewis seemed to be taking the bait and upon the latter’s agreement to the invasion of England, the camera showed Pandulph smiling with satisfaction that once again his sophistry had succeeded. To complete the hypocrisy of this holy man, an “Amen” was heard from the chanting monks as the picture faded and the first half of the transmission came to an end.

In this production the chanting of monks was a motif for Pandulph because it heralded the beginning of 5.1 John was discovered kneeling before the cardinal who towered above him on a dais upon which the throne was situate. This Pandulph was thus the power which gave John his right to sit upon the throne for he solemnly placed the crown on Rossiter's head, and as he did so, his "Take again from this my hand" was couched in tones which warned that John should not defy the pope again. Wordsworth then held out his ring which John kissed, and prepared to leave. Leonard Rossiter looked somewhat concerned. "Now keep your holy word" (5.1.5) was spoken anxiously and was rewarded by a smile from the prelate which suggested he was enjoying the other's discomfort. As he prepared to leave on his next round of diplomacy, he blessed John who hurriedly crossed himself in return. Pandulph then made a slow and dignified exit passing by a line of courtiers, many of whom bowed at a cleric whose presence at the English court was certainly no longer unwelcome.

Such reverence did not, however, continue in 5.2. Accompanied once more by the chanting of monks, Pandulph (looking pleased with himself) appeared before Lewis and the traitor barons who bowed to him, receiving a blessing in return. There, however, the cordiality ended. The barons look of exasperation on hearing John was reconciled to Rome, was rewarded by angry looks from Wordsworth who, nevertheless, continued to impress upon Lewis that he should return home and in tones confident that the dauphin would once more accept his advice. When Lewis flatly defied Pandulph, the cleric remained impassive and endeavoured to use eye contact so as to warn the young man that he was making a grave error. "You look but on the

outside of this work” (5.2.109) was an oily attempt to get his own way, but was rewarded with Lewis and the barons turning their backs on him and churlishly helping themselves to wine,

Upon the entry of George Costigan’s Bastard, it was clear that there was a mutual detestation between him and Pandulph. Each eyed the other with contempt and whilst the Bastard bowed slightly to take hold of the ring on Pandulph’s proffered hand, he declined to kiss it. When the defiance between the Bastard and Lewis seemed fierce, Pandulph again tried to pour oil on the situation, only to be rudely snubbed by Costigan who argued in terms to suggest that it was now his turn to wield the power. “...this halting legate here ...” (5.2.174) was a contemptuous aside but Pandulph’s continuing passivity (no trace on his face of a reaction to this insult) showed why diplomacy was his speciality.

The scene concluded with further battle imminent. There were no more camera shots of Pandulph and following the text, he made no further appearances in this production. This is not to suggest, however, that his presence was not felt.

The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,
Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,
And brings with him such offers of our peace
As we with honour and respect may take,
With purpose presently to leave this war. (5.7.82-86)

Whatever disregard John Castle’s Salisbury may have had for the legate in 5.2, his delivery of this speech made it clear that he now had the utmost respect for him. Indeed, such earnest enthusiasm in this and his next speech was enough to persuade the Bastard to smile resignedly and agree that Pandulph be their ambassador to conclude a treaty with France. The scene

ended as it had begun with the motif of chanting monks. The only difference this time was that the chanting was a requiem for the dead John. As his body was carried away to the sound of the plainsong, one could not help but recall that the first occasion chanting had been heard in this production was to announce the entry of Pandulph whose mission had been successfully concluded at whatever cost of life. This possibly also suggested that - unlike *The Troublesome Reigne* - one did not need to see the character of Pandulph again. So powerfully was he acted and so effectively were his lines spoken by Wordsworth, that a form of motif was sufficient to remind us of his presence.

In 1989, Julian Curry took over the role of Pandulph when Deborah Warner's production of *King John* transferred from the Other Place at Stratford to The Pit, Barbican, London. It is the "in house" video recording at the latter¹⁴⁰ which will now be discussed, but it should be noted that the recording was as a result of a single camera having been placed in front of the acting area. The lighting was quite dark and without any close ups, detailed expressions and reactions on the actors' faces could not be appreciated. Even so, the recording provides a suitable archive as to the performances and interpretations.

In 1968, a much younger Curry had played a somewhat nervous yet effective Friar Francis in a Stratford main house production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. He had employed a parsonical voice for certain comic moments, and his initial appearance as Pandulph twenty one years' later reminded me of the previous performance because at times he again used the

¹⁴⁰ *King John*. Dir. Deborah Warner. RSC archive recording, 1989.

voice of a “stage parson” coupled this time with that of an extremely strict schoolmaster. Warner’s production, as a whole, veered towards caricature (and at times the grotesque) when characters were introduced. For example, Nicholas Woodeson’s John appeared in battle as a short monarch wearing a helmet too big for him and carrying a sword fashioned for a giant, whilst Robert Demeger’s Hubert initially appeared as a comical Frenchman with beret, drooping moustache and exaggerated accent.

There was no chanting of monks to mark the entry of this legate. He simply appeared swiftly from the central entrance upstage to witness a most undignified scuffle involving their majesties of England and France not to mention the Dauphin, Austria and the Bastard. When David Lyon’s France realized who had just come on the scene, his embarrassed “Here comes the holy legate of the Pope” (3.1.135) was greeted by audience laughter as was Pandulph’s “Hail, you anointed deputies of God!” (3.1.136) The latter was delivered in tones sarcastic as if this was natural behaviour for kings and Curry also gave the impression he was administering a stern rebuke to either mischievous choirboys or unruly schoolboys. He was bespectacled and wore a red cassock , cape and cincture plus red skull cap. After his initial greeting, he strode purposely forward to centre stage, his back to John. This gave Woodeson the moment to try and steal away, but this legate had eyes at the back of his head for without turning round , he proceeded to admonish John in continuing stern and ecclesiastical tones. All the while, the other characters knelt in meek submission to Rome.

At the conclusion of Pandulph’s second speech, John got to his feet and - addressing the other’s back - continued the comedy of the scene by

taunting him like a spoilt child. When he spoke rudely of the Pope, the other characters - save Pandulph - gasped in horror at such sacrilege and quickly crossed themselves. They were even more aghast (further gasps and crossing of themselves) when John crossed himself on referring to his right under God to be head of the Church in England. At the finish of such defiance, he scuttled over to Philip and seized one of his hands. Curry remained quite still and when John's tirade was over, proceeded to administer his verbal coup de grace. The very mention of the word "excommunicate" and the call for regicide caused even further gasps and much crossing of themselves by the others. Not so John. He held Philip's hand tighter and even held it up in mock triumph. Pandulph did not allow such irreverence to go unchecked. His earlier, somewhat comic tones, were now modulated to a very firm command to France to release his hand with eternal damnation to follow if he did not do so. This caused further consternation amongst those supporting France with much toing and froing across the stage and in front of the cardinal, who watched them like a spectator at a game of tennis.

The comic elements were now fading into the background. Even the fact that Curry towered above Woodeson's king, and the latter continued to hold high his ally's hand, could not diminish David Lyons' desperate plea for the legate to allow the treaty with England to stand. Pandulph's mask of courtesy was removed when in harsh and warlike voice, he gave the call to arms. He proceeded to lay down the law and lines 263-297 were firm and menacing. The noise of the proverbial pin dropping could have been heard, so still were the others on stage. This major address was from someone well

used to commanding attention and successfully untying diplomatic knots. “Giddy loose suggestions” (3.1.292) indicated utter contempt and scorn for John, (Curry looked him straight in the face at this moment) and the subsequent “I will denounce a curse upon his head” (3.1.319) indicated that the sands of diplomatic time were running¹ out for Philip. As if to trump the defiance of John. Pandulph here raised his right hand threateningly and above the two hands of the kings.

When he saw that his argument had succeeded and that the treaty was in tatters, Curry turned on his heel following “Cousin, go draw our puissance together” (3.1.339). For the time being, his purpose was accomplished.

The beginning of 3.4 discovered Pandulph pacing up and down whilst Philip and Lewis bemoaned their defeat. The “comfort” offered by the cardinal seemed cold indeed, so casually was it given. Curry seemed deep in thought as to how the situation could be turned to his advantage. He also appeared entirely unconcerned with the pain and anguish of Susan Engel’s Constance, turning upstage at the sound of her off stage grief. The subsequent moving outbursts from the distressed mother prompted only clinical rebukes with no hint whatever of pastoral comfort from a cleric. This Constance became quite agitated towards the end of her scene. She had mocked the cardinal’s right to advise her with an equally scolding “He talks to me who never had a son” (3.4.91). Following such reproof, Curry had moved downstage. As Blanche concluded her lament in a peroration of pain, she rushed off. Pandulph sought to try to prevent her by moving forward quickly but was too late to stop her.

Subsequently left on stage with Ralph Fiennes' Dauphin, Curry (had he been planning this moment in his recent abstracted mood?) began to use seeming pastoral guidance to win the young man over. He showed politeness even when Lewis expressed exasperation on "The fit is strongest" (3.4.114), and seemed gently to chide the other with "Your mind is all as youthful as your blood" (3.4.125). The remainder of this speech was a short homily on the villainy of John and the fate of Arthur, and how he (Lewis) could benefit from this. A sardonic laugh accompanied "How green you are and fresh in this old world!", (3.4.145) and the homily continued. From the moment his father had gone in search of Blanche, Lewis had sat on the floor, his rich coat hurled to the ground in a moment of pique and now a spiritual father was seeking filial obedience.

To make it absolutely clear that he had no doubts that Arthur would be murdered, Pandulph knelt down by the Dauphin on "O sir, when he shall hear of your approach...he dies" (3.4.162-164). As he continued to work on the ambitions of his listener, the legate rose upon "And O, what better matter breeds for you than I have named" (3.4.170-171) to suggest it was now time to take action. "Go with me to the king" (3.4.177) saw Pandulph skilfully escorting Lewis the way he wished him to go, by picking up his coat and helping him on with it. Such seeming pastoral care certainly worked for Lewis seemed newly inspired as he and Pandulph hurried off together, thus bringing the first half to an urgent close. Again, Pandulph left the action of the stage with his plans fulfilled.

By 5.1 Pandulph knew he had the upper hand and it was on the upper part of the permanent set that he gave John his crown back, but conditionally.

This was underlined by a pause between “From this my hand” and “as holding of the Pope” (5.1.3) - the crown could quite easily be confiscated again if John showed further defiance to Rome. In a pompous manner, the legate left to inform Lewis to call off his army.

The pomposity continued when Curry made his final entrance in 5.2. He rubbed his hands gleefully on advising that John had submitted to the Pope, and there was no reaction from the other characters (or in the performance recorded, the audience) as the cleric briskly and in a business like manner, outlined what must now be done. When he subsequently found he must work harder to win over Lewis and the Bastard, he tried both bluster and entreaty. Neither approach succeeded and the scene ended with England and France preparing to do further battle. Pandulph remained alone on stage for a moment and then left by another way. To plan his next round of duplicity? Presumably, for the last scene included the references to his further and successful negotiations. This time, one could not help feeling a little pity for the dying John, a wretched childlike figure who had been out of his depth when intrigue and diplomacy had won the day.

When David Collings made his entrance as Cardinal Pandulph on 21 March 2001,¹⁴¹ it was the next time the play had been presented by the RSC since 1988, and the first time that it had been performed in the Swan. The later venue enabled director Gregory Doran to give this papal legate an entrance from the auditorium, and one whereby the actor could take his time as the bemused forces of England and France pondered on the arrival of the Pope’s ambassador. A solitary trumpet had stopped the quarrelling

¹⁴¹ *King John* Dir. Gregory Doran, RSC. Swan Theatre, 2001

protagonists in their tracks and a previously red- faced and aggressive Philip of France (Geoffrey Freshwater) was now meekness itself to the extent that his delivery of “Here comes the holy legate of the Pope” (3.1.135) evoked laughter from the audience at the performance attended. David Collings is a short person and - like Julian Curry - he had previously played a cleric for the RSC (Archbishop Cranmer in *Henry VIII* - also directed by Gregory Doran). For his first entrance as the legate, Collings was almost avuncular. He beamed all over his ruddy face and his rich and jovial tones reminded one of a benevolent abbot. Such bonhomie was shortlived, for as soon as he faced Guy Henry’s John, the smile became chilling and a grave, challenging voice of authority sounded. This was to be a public rebuke and in the presence of a parent, for on “Do in his name religiously demand” (3.1.140), Pandulph looked directly at Alison Fiske’s Eleanor as if to suggest that she had failed to control her wayward son.

The subsequent demanding of an explanation from John was in almost honeyed tones and with the smile becoming one of ploy. Maybe Pandulph thought that the earlier “mailed fist” approach could now be relaxed to suggest that this flagrant disobedience to Rome could be amicably resolved if only John would do as he were told. Despite his height, Collings looked impressive in his red cassock/skullcap, black gloves and richly textured travelling cloak.

Height now turned the dramatic situation into pure comedy. Guy Henry towered above Collings and proceeded to try to use such seeming advantage to bully and ridicule the legate. His pronunciation of “the Pope” was shrill and coarse, resulting in shocked reactions from the French and

Austria, jeering smiles from the English and a look of thunder from Pandulph. The latter continued to glower in silent rage as John continued with his churlish tirade, each reference to “the Pope” being derisive and insulting.

When John had finished, the legate, very coolly and with deliberate authority, threatened him with excommunication. This resulted in looks of utmost horror from the other characters who also exchanged thoughtful glances when Pandulph moved among them appealing for a volunteer to come forward and assassinate John. A grim smile of papal power then greeted John (now looking most uneasy, despite the strong grip he had of one of Philip’s hands.), and “There’s law and warrant, lady for my curse” (3.1.184) was not only a polite agreeing with Constance, but a firm underlining that here stood God’s representative. Equally firm was the warning to France to break the treaty. “ Unless he do submit himself to Rome”(3.1.194) was accompanied with a wintry smile to suggest that if Philip did not do what he (Pandulph) commanded, excommunication was a matter of seconds away. When Geoffrey Freshwater’s France attempted a vain plea for alternative remedy, this Pandulph appeared to lose patience. “Therefore to arms!”(3.1.255) was indeed fighting talk from a cleric, and “So mak’st thou faith an enemy to faith” (3.1.263) was exasperated anger indeed.

Donald Watson’s comments concerning the comic possibilities of this scene were then realized with the spectacle of Philip going down on his knees to Pandulph and dragging John down with him. The cardinal did his best to ignore John’s attempts to pull Philip’s hand nearer to his. Almost the whole of his argument was made to the hapless Frenchman (doing his best to

drag his hand from John's), at times almost wheedling and at times bullying. "But thou hast sworn against religion" (3.1.280) suggested that Philip had sold his very soul to the Devil.

With "Else what a mockery should it be to swear!" (3.1.285) Pandulph sought to appeal to everyone else on stage to support his argument. Certain uneasy glances were exchanged between some of them and these increased as the legate concluded his argument with looks and tone, both quite sinister. The following desperate exchanges were capped by Pandulph making it abundantly clear that Philip had been given his last chance. As he raised a gloved hand, one could almost hear the dreaded words of excommunication, but the wheedling and threatening had succeeded as with a mighty effort, Philip forced his hand from John's. At the prospect of battle, Pandulph and Austria gleefully conferred, and the cardinal sneered at John's rage that the "diplomacy" had succeeded. As the scene concluded, Pandulph hurried away - from the scene of battle.

3.4 saw Philip and Lewis - both bitter in defeat - tearing down the English flags which had been flown down during the intervening battle sequence. Pandulph quietly watched them and once more, adopted an attitude of benevolence. On the entrance of Constance, he turned away to suggest that this was a pastoral situation he could well do without. Kelly Hunter was splendid in her grief and rage, not caring if she offended Pandulph with her mocking "And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal." (3.4.52) At this, Collings turned away in silent rage and sought to get even with a scolding "You hold too heinous a respect of grief" (3.4.90). He then looked disgusted at the

sympathy shown to Constance by Philip, and seemed only too glad when both of them had departed. .

Upon hearing the despair of John Hopkin's dauphin, the cardinal's eyes began to gleam and one sensed that some form of plot was afoot. Slowly and pointedly spelling out the chances of Arthur's survival being non-existent and the political capital to be made from the situation at the expense of John, Pandulph relished every vicious detail as he obsequiously sought to persuade this callow youth to take action. "Tis wonderful what may be wrought out of their discontent (3.4.179) was a gleeful anticipation of the slaughter to come, and the English flag nearest to his feet was thrown contemptuously into the air. When Lewis declared his approval of the plot to invade England, he hurried off through the audience, leaving Pandulph looking extremely pleased with himself. The "Iago" tactics had worked - left on his own, the cardinal kissed his ring of papal authority and began to chuckle in a sinister way

Taking the audience into his confidence, Pandulph mockingly pointed to the direction taken by Lewis, and burst into peals of sardonic laughter, accompanied by a roll on off stage drums. His triumph (the defeat of John and England - what matter an innocent boy?) brought the first half of the production to its conclusion.

5.1 began with the chanting of the Miserere, and the lights came up to reveal a number of cowled monks amidst clouds of incense. John entered from the auditorium, clad only in a kind of loincloth, and prostrated himself before the monks. After a few moments, further lighting came up behind the monks to show Pandulph holding the crown amidst even more swirling

incense. At this moment, the cardinal held sway and power, for the monks divided in either direction thus enabling him to place the crown upon John's head. The source of Pandulph's power was deliberately stressed by Collings on "...as holding of the Pope...", (5.1.3) and at the end of his short speech, there was an emphatic "amen" from the monks.

As the monks departed, Pandulph descended from the small rostrum and divested himself of the white stole whilst attendants assisted John to clothe himself again. The atmosphere now changed swiftly and became clinical with Henry's nonchalant "Now keep your holy word" (5.1.5) being delivered as if he had just signed a routine document, and not publicly humiliated himself before the Pope's representative. Whilst he might - in private - have agreed to submit, was the public showing an elaborate political charade arranged between the representatives of Church and State?

In private, Pandulph (with oily politeness) reminded John that his defiance of Rome had caused the legate to act as he had done, including inciting a French invasion:

It was my breath that blew this tempest up,
Upon your stubborn usage of the Pope; (5.1.17-18)

With a sickening smile of mock politeness as he thus spoke, Pandulph held out his hand for John to kiss the ring of authority. Obeisance done, the legate smiled knowingly once more and made his exit. The reeking corruption of this exchange between the former adversaries was well summed up in this production by the Bastard's later comment in the scene

O inglorious league! (5.1.65)

After the trumpet announced Pandulph's arrival at the Dauphin's camp in the following scene, the legate entered slowly through the audience with his hypocritical beam all over his face. Having obsequiously greeted Lewis, Collings joyfully broke the news of the reconciliation between John and Rome only to be greeted by groans of sheer exasperation from the English barons and a look of complete unbelief from Lewis. Pandulph's countenance glowered in indignation at this churlish reaction to his tidings, but he recovered his composure and smile. The remainder of his speech became a flowery testimony to the merits of John, the Pope and reconciliation all round. Having patiently listened to this hypocrisy, John Hopkins' Lewis stirring and scornfully made it quite clear to the assembly that Pandulph alone was responsible for the idea of invasion and that he (Lewis) was not remotely interested in the papal ambassador's news.

If Pandulph was embarrassed at this public scolding, he did not show it but attempted with oiliness (smile included) gently to rebuke Lewis. His look of concern at Lewis's intransigence, resulted in his scornfully blaming the Frenchman upon the arrival of the Bastard:

The Dauphin is too wilful - opposite
 And will not temporise with my entreaties.
 He flatly says, he'll not lay down his arms. (5.2.124-126)

The efforts of Pandulph to obtain a further hearing after the Bastard's speech of patriotism and defiance, were rudely spurned and as the opposing forces hurried off to the battle, the cardinal tried to address Lewis and the Bastard, but was ignored by both. The scene ended with Pandulph looking up to Heaven as if for guidance and he then swiftly left the stage.

The respective commanders may have had little time for Pandulph by this time, but the final scene of the production showed that they could also be fickle for the news of the cardinal's negotiated peace was respectfully announced by Colin McCormack's Salisbury and accepted by Jo Stone-Fewings' Bastard, with somewhat rueful resignation.

Shakespeare's Pandulph in *King John* needs no final entrance, for the words of Salisbury say it all - the Pope's man has again been busy with negotiations and has achieved his mission. John did submit to Rome, someone has murdered John and England and France are now at peace because of Rome's intervention. One can understand why Harold Bloom feels that Pandulph is the sole victor in this play. It may end with the patriotic prophecy of the Bastard but as Larry S. Champion observes in his essay, *The "Un-end" of King John*, "...what remains is an all-the-more insidious pattern of religion pandering to power politics. It is thematically appropriate that an arm of the Church is surreptitiously present in the events leading to John's unnatural death".¹⁴²

Each of the three interpretations of Pandulph certainly made it possible to agree that early hints of Iago and Edmund appear in the writing. The three actors all showed sympathetic co-operation par excellence in their scene with Lewis, whilst secretly planning political advantage. Each of them handled the main speech of persuasion (263-297) with great aplomb. It would have been easy for any to come across as a figure of bathos at this point as some actors do when Polonius is played as a bumbling bore. After

¹⁴² Larry S. Champion, "The 'Un-end' of *King John*: Shakespeare's Demystification of Closure" from *"King John": New Perspectives*, ed. Curren-Aqino. pp. 173-183 (p. 178).

all, the initial appearances were dramatically deceptive - Wordsworth elderly and frail, Curry bespectacled and donnish, whilst Collings was almost avuncular and mild. By the time the end of 3.1 had been reached in each of the productions, it was clear that Gareth Lloyd Evans was correct when he declared that the character of Pandulph is 'given the necessary dramatic impetus to heighten the plot and develop same.

Despite the introduction of comedy in the 2001 production when Pandulph embarks on his argument to persuade Philip of France to break his treaty, each of the three actors not only held the attention of their onstage audience but made the speech one that seemed entirely memorable and certainly not long-winded or boring as suggested by Kenneth McLeish. Indeed, such was the skill of each individual actor, that it was easy to recognize the plaudits of F. W. Brownlow in respect of the effectiveness of this moment in the play.

Winchester plays the power politician but underestimates the popularity of his rival, Gloucester, and unwisely becomes involved in a murder plot. Pandulph seeks to use his power as a diplomat for political ends, but allows others to soil their hands in the death of others, including John's. He is canny also (and experienced?) in his ability to influence others: for example, John does submit to Rome and Lewis agrees to a peaceful end to the invasion.

CHAPTER 4 - CANTERBURY/ELY

Henry Chichele was born in 1362 of yeoman stock. He subsequently secured the patronage of William of Wykeham, with the result that education followed at Winchester and New College, Oxford. Chichele then entered the religious life and became a Carthusian monk. Showing notable skill in Canon Law and diplomacy, he was sent as ambassador to Rome in 1405 and 1407. In 1408, he became bishop of St. David's, although diocesan affairs had to wait because in 1409 his diplomatic gifts were in demand at the council of Pisa.

Chichele was free in 1411 to visit St. David's for the first time. By now he had also been appointed by Henry IV to serve on the council led by the Prince of Wales. Upon the accession of the latter in 1413, the bishop became joint ambassador with Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, to Burgundy and France. Their diplomacy resulted in the truce of Leulinghem in 1413, such truce being renewed (albeit on a temporary basis) in 1414 and 1415.

On the death of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1414, Henry sought a successor with whom he could form a working relationship and duly nominated Chichele. By now, the king was considering an invasion of France and found a supportive ally in his new Archbishop. Although it is now accepted that Chichele was not present at the meeting of Parliament at Leicester in 1414, he was the royal spokesman at a meeting in Winchester in 1415 which involved Henry, his brothers, and an embassy from France led by Archbishop Boisratier of Bourges. Chichele demanded certain French

territories and an agreed settlement for a marriage between Henry and Katherine, Princess of France.

Upon the breakdown of negotiations, Canterbury supported his royal master in plans for the subsequent invasion of France. There is no evidence, however, that he and the clergy had an ulterior motive for so doing. Whilst Henry IV had sought to introduce a bill in Parliament to reduce the wealth of the Church, such a bill received no royal attention during the reign of his son. It is true that ecclesiastical financial support was given to the French war, but it was not an extraordinary offering.

Following the English victory at Agincourt, Chichele greeted the king at Canterbury following the return of the triumphant forces and organized victory thanksgivings. He continued to be involved in diplomacy with France but his influence in foreign affairs waned upon the death of Henry. Before his death in 1443 and burial in Canterbury Cathedral, Chichele founded All Soul's College, Oxford, and supported Humphrey of Gloucester in the latter's disputes with Beaufort, bishop of Winchester. There is no evidence of any ecclesiastical union between Chichele and John Fordham, Bishop of Ely.

Fordham had been canon of York and a favourite of Richard II. The latter appointed him as secretary and further preferment followed as Dean of Wells and bishop of Durham in 1382. Fordham was banished from the court in 1388 following opposition to the king. Pope Urban VI subsequently intervened and arranged for the bishop to be translated to the smaller diocese of Ely. Fordham remained there for almost 35 years and died in 1425. He had found favour with Henry V and was amongst the English ambassadors sent

to France in 1419 to negotiate peace and the subsequent marriage with Katherine.¹⁴³

Whilst early historians may be respectful of Chichele, there are suggestions that he had motives for wishing that Henry V was occupied with other matters. Holinshed declares;

In the second year of his reigne, king Henrie called his high court of parlement, the last daie of aprill in the towne of leicester, in which parlement manie...petitions mooved...amongst which, one was, that a bill exhibited in the ...eleventh yeare of king henrie the fourth(which by reason the king was then troubled with civill discord, came to none effect) might now with good deliberation be pondered, and brought to some good conclusion. the effect of which supplication was that the temporall lands devoutlie given, and disorinatlie spent by religious, and other spirituall persons, should be seized into the kings hands,...¹⁴⁴

Although Chichele and Fordham are not directly referred to, Holinshed comments on the consternation amongst the clergy at the prospect of such a bill becoming law:

This bill was much noted, and more feared among the religious sort, whom surelie it touched verie neere, and therefore to find remedie against it, they determined to assaie all waies to put by and overthrow this bill: wherein they thought best to trie if they might moove the kings mood with some sharpe invention, that he should not regard the importunate petitions of the commons.¹⁴⁵

Holinshed makes it clear that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury who sought to endeavour to persuade the king of his right to invade France, and without being asked by Henry whether such right existed:

¹⁴³ I must record continued indebtedness to: W. H. Thomson, *Shakespeare's Characters: A Historical Dictionary* (New York, 1966), and Peter Sacchio, *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle and Drama* (Oxford, 1977), as well as to Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (Yale, 1997).

¹⁴⁴ Geoffrey Bullough (ed), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London, 1962), Vol IV, p. 377.

¹⁴⁵ Bullough (ed), IV, 377-378.

Whereupon, on a daie in the parlement, Henrie Chichelie archbishop of Canterburie made a pithie oration, wherein he declared, how not only the duchies of Normandie and Aquitaine, with the counties of Anjou and Maine...were by undoubted title appertaining to the king, as to the lawfull and onelie heire of the same; but also the whole realme of France, as heire to his great grandfather king edward the third. herein did he much inveie against the surmised and false law salike, which the Frenchmen alledge ever against the kings of England in barre of their just title of the crown of France.¹⁴⁶

Having given Chichele a definite place in his history of the times (based on Hall), Holinshed shows how the Archbishop sought scriptural authority and then followed this with a call to take part in a war which could not be described as just by any stretch of the imagination:

The archbishop futher alledged out of the booke of Numbers this saie: when a man dieth without a sonne, let the inheritance descend to his daughter. at length, having said sufficiente for the proof of the kings just and lawfull title to the crowne of france, he exhorted him to advance foorth his banner to fight for his right,...to spare neither bloud, sword, nor fire, sith his warre was just, his cause good, and his claime true.¹⁴⁷

Money to finance this invasion appears to be no problem for the Church for :

the archbishop declared that in their spiritual convocation, they had granted to his highnesse such a summe of monie , as never by no spirituall persons was to any prince before those daies given or advanced.¹⁴⁸

Even if the early historians were inaccurate in giving the Archbishop speeches at a time and place where he was not in fact present, the record seems to have been corrected when describing the meeting of ambassadors for England and France in the presence of Henry at Winchester:

And after a daie assigned ... the archbishop of Canterburie to their oration made a notable answer...that if the french king would notgive with his daughter in marriage the duches of Aquiteine, anjou...he would in no wise retire his armie...but

¹⁴⁶ Bullough (ed), IV, 378.

¹⁴⁷ Bullough (ed), IV, 379.

¹⁴⁸ Bullough (ed), IV, 379.

would with all diligence enter into France, and destroie the people, waste the countrie, and subvert the townes with blood, sword and fire, and never cease till he had recovered his ancient right and lawfull patrimonie. the king avowed the archbishops saeing and in the word of a prince promised to perform it to the uttermost.¹⁴⁹

Even if the Chichele of history was noted for his tact and diplomacy, such qualities seem to have been abandoned by the cleric as discussed in the writings of those who provided Shakespeare with his source material. John Fordham is given one brief mention in despatches, but it is not suggested that he ever supported the stances taken by his senior:

The king of England, being in good hope that all his affaires should take good successe as he could wish or desire, sent to the duke of burgognie, his uncle the duke of excester, the earle of salisburie, the bishop of elie. . . which in the companie of the duke of burgognie came to the cite of trois the eleventh of March.¹⁵⁰

Whatever the historical Metropolitan's motives for supporting the invasion of France, the historians make it clear that the "pithie oration" and large financial support combined to give the clerics breathing space regarding any proposals to interfere with their power:

Hereby the bill for dissolving of religious houses was cleerlie set aside, and nothing thought on but onelie the recovering of france, according as the archbishop had mooved.¹⁵¹

After the first speech of the Chorus in Shakespeare's Henry V, the action of the play begins with a discussion between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely. The urgency or otherwise of their exchanges will be considered when examining various performances, but it is not such a superficial beginning as suggested by Peter Levi:

¹⁴⁹ Bullough (ed), IV, 383.

¹⁵⁰ Bullough (ed), IV, 405.

¹⁵¹ Bullough (ed), IV, 380.

the play then begins slowly, with a mildly farcical pair of bishops discussing the state of the realm and the King's new character, which they heavily underline.¹⁵²

Borrowing from Holinshed, Shakespeare raises the question of the re-emergence of the bill to seize church property, and at once domestic conflict is a possibility. The two clerics are naturally uneasy at the prospect of such legislation becoming law, but the king's attitude to the church and his dramatic conversion of personality on becoming the monarch would seem to rule out royal support for this bill.

Canterbury The king is full of grace, and fair regard.

Ely And a true lover of the holy Church.

Canterbury

The courses of his youth promised it not.
The breath no sooner left his father 's body
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seemed to die too. Yea, at that very moment
Consideration like an angel came,
And whipped th' offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a paradise (1. 2. 22-30)¹⁵³

In a double act of increasing praise and theological reflection, the clerics inform the audience of the character of Henry. As M. M. Reese observes, " It is the reputation that matters, . . . and it would be odd if the Church did not find in it the occasion for a certain amount of professional congratulation."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Peter Levi, *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare* (London, 1998), p.195.

¹⁵³ Except where indicated quotations are from *King Henry V*, ed. T.W.Craik (London, 1995).

¹⁵⁴ M.M.Reese, *The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1961), p.322.

Not to be outdone by his senior, Ely is eager to suggest a return to Eden:

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality. (1. 2. 60-62)

Thus far in the scene, it is important to consider the dramatic structure. Ludowyck would seem to sum it up accurately when he declares that this is "... a scene of exposition which should be taken as the specific prologue to Act 1... their real function is to lend dramatic contrast and illustration to the main character."¹⁵⁵ To lead into the following scene, Canterbury advises his colleague that diplomacy is afoot which will assure Henry that ideas of military success across the channel will have the church's blessing:

For I have made an offer to his majesty,
Upon our spiritual convocation,
And in regard of causes now in hand
Which I have opened to his grace at large,
As touching France, to give a greater sum
Than ever at one time the clergy yet
Did to his predecessors part withal. (1.1. 75-81)

Canterbury has also sought to advise the king why any claim to France is legal but a French embassy has intervened in such explanation. This scene ends with the coalition of clerics preparing to meet with the king and the ambassadors. As drawn by Shakespeare, they hardly warrant any suggestion that they are farcical. They may have an ulterior motive, but a patriotic mood also prevails as the following scene shows.

No Elizabethan doubted that churchmen were skilled political figures, nor should we automatically assume that they would have received opprobrium for looking after their own interests. In face of a threat to their property they have decided

¹⁵⁵ E.F.C. Ludowyck, *Understanding Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 152.

on a course which serves their own ends but which, they may also be convinced, serves those of their country.¹⁵⁶

At the commencement of the next scene, the court is assembled and wants only the presence of the Archbishop for its business to commence. Henry makes it clear that before there is any word with the French embassy, there are vital matters to be considered with the senior cleric of the realm. The latter is politely referred to as “ my gracious lord of Canterbury “ (1.2.1) and a few moments later as “...my learned lord”, (1.2.9) suggesting that he is held in high esteem or that the king is playing strict court etiquette with a personage whose legal training is desperately needed to clarify matters of state. It is interesting that Henry makes no reference to Ely, but the action of the scene is fast developing and another cleric to attend upon Canterbury might be expected and possibly needs no further comment from the king.

Upon the entry of the clerics, Henry wastes no time in bringing affairs of state to the point:

We pray you to proceed
And justly and religiously unfold
Why the law Salic that they have in France
Or should not bar us in our claim (1.2.9-12)

A clear invitation to proceed, but there is a caveat.

And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,
Or nicely charge your understanding soul
With opening titles miscreate, whose right
Suits not in native colours with the truth.
For God doth know how many now in health
Shall drop their blood in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to. (1.2.13-20)

¹⁵⁶ Anthony Brennan, *Twayne's New Critical Introduction to Shakespeare: Henry V* (New York, 1992), p. 21.

As well as referring to Holinshed, Shakespeare also consulted the earlier and anonymous play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. The Archbishop of Canterbury appears only once in this piece and speaks only once. The speech follows the king's request for Canterbury's observations on the proposed negotiations with France, and lasts for seventeen lines. Brevity is certainly the soul of this clerical character's wit for after declaring that Henry has a right to the throne through ancestry and that invasion of France should follow should such right be denied by the French king, the Archbishop warns of Scotland's coalition with France, and concludes:

I think it therefore best to conquer Scotland,
And then I thinke that you may go more easily into France:
And this is all that I can say, My Good Lord.¹⁵⁷

By contrast, Shakespeare's Archbishop takes centre stage and delivers several major speeches the first of which lasts for sixty three lines. It has become something of a cause celebre in the way it is presented in performance and its effectiveness for an audience.¹⁵⁸ Suffice it to say at this stage, Canterbury shows he has certainly done his homework - "The modern reader cannot but marvel at the craftsmanship of Canterbury's legal arguments."¹⁵⁹ - and unhesitatingly declares that the French are using the claim of Salic law as a feeble defence. With the skill of an ecclesiastical lawyer, the Archbishop exposes the vulnerability of such argument.

Shakespeare may have followed Holinshed as the literal source for

¹⁵⁷ Bullough (ed), IV, 321.

¹⁵⁸ James N. Loehlin, *Shakespeare in Performance: "Henry V"* (Manchester, 1966), p. 31. Loehlin discusses Olivier's then original directorial interpretation to play this speech for comedy in the 1944 film version, and also considers more conventional readings in later productions.

¹⁵⁹ Theodor Meron, *Henry's Wars And Shakespeare's Laws: Perspectives on the Law of War in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993), 28'

this lengthy justification for Henry's proposed action, but we need not suppose that the first hearers of the play were, in the main, bored or confused by what was being spoken. A. R. Humphreys reminds us that

This address ... conveyed to Elizabethan hearers all the facts needed to prove that Henry was right in his claim, and absolute faith in the rightness of his claim is the play's very basis.¹⁶⁰

It is also false to suppose that Canterbury's "as clear as is the summer's sun," (1.2.86) is intentionally comic. Discussion of performances will consider this further, but T. W. Craik wisely guides us in the right direction of interpretation:

It is common for actors, fearing an uninvited laugh, to invite one by pausing-wrongly, since there is nothing obscure in Canterbury's evidence or in his presentation of it.¹⁶¹

The king has listened patiently and yet seeks more than a legal argument to reassure him. When he asks his spiritual adviser if the claim to France might be pursued "...with right and conscience...", (1.2.96) the Archbishop seems to be " ... holding back his ace."¹⁶² because he triumphantly points to Biblical authority in the Book of Numbers. The exact reference is Numbers 27:8 "If a man die and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter."¹⁶³ and the daughter referred to here is Isabella, daughter of Philip IV of France, who married Edward II of England, their issue being Edward III who had previously laid claim to the French throne.

¹⁶⁰ *Henry V*, ed. A.R.Humphreys (London, 1968), 175.

¹⁶¹ *Henry V*, ed. Craik, p.135.

¹⁶² Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare (Volume 1)* (Chicago, 1951), p. 222.

¹⁶³ *The Holy Bible: Authorised King James Version*. (London, 1956), p. 138.

Henry's illustrious ancestry being recalled, Canterbury now beats the patriotic drum as he urges his monarch to "...unwind your bloody flag", and "Look back into your mighty ancestors" (1.2.100-101). Ely, as part of this now martial double act, makes his stirring (and only) contribution to this scene.

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead,
And with your puissant arm renew their feats.
You are their heir, you sit upon their throne (1.2.115-117).

Such patriotic sentiment from the clergy stirs Exeter and Westmorland into similar encouragement for their royal relation. The Archbishop, seeing that he has at least persuaded the nobility, continues in hawkish vein and assures Henry that finance for the invasion will not be a problem:

In aid whereof we of the spirituality
Will raise your highness such a mighty sum
As never did the clergy at one time
Bring in to any of your ancestors. (1.2.132-135)

The king still makes no decision. We cannot be certain whether he seeks to appear undecided or whether he is shrewdly trying to ascertain his advisers' thoughts on the possibility of a Scottish invasion once it is known that an English expedition is in France. Once again, Church and State unite to relax any such fears. Canterbury politely scoffs at any danger from the Scots, calling them "...pilfering bordererers" (1.2.142). In another major speech, he compares the civil government of the state to a hive of bees. The state functions perfectly if each person's duties are carried out obediently. By comparing the similarity of the bees, Canterbury shows that in the spontaneous way their commonwealth goes about its business, these insects show human beings how to conduct themselves. Ludowyk suggests that the cleric's legal training enables him to present his case effectively:

The Archbishop's eloquence knits up a carefully worked out argument. The disposition of human beings in various gradations is the will of heaven, the advantage being the continual stimulus to effort. But all of this has to turn on obedience or the beautiful co-ordination of the whole being would be destroyed.¹⁶⁴

Following such a powerful argument, Henry appears to have made up his mind. The French ambassadors are summoned to the royal presence, and within minutes (following an ill advised insult from the Dauphin of France in the shape of a gift of tennis balls) war has been declared and preparations for the invasion are in hand. Neither Canterbury nor Ely speak further in this scene or for the remainder of the play. They have no need to - the king and council are occupied with the coming hostilities, and the bill to seize lands of the Church has been conveniently forgotten.

The earliest critical comment in respect of these two clerics appears to come from William Hazlitt in 1817. He was clearly impressed by their first scene:

The conversation between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely, relating to the sudden change in the manners of Henry V, is among the well known Beauties of Shakespear.¹⁶⁵

This certainly contrasts with Levi's somewhat ungenerous comment that these clerics are farcical and that the scene is tedious. Apart from their hymn of praise in support of the reformed character of Henry, the dialogue between Canterbury and Ely prepares the audience for dramatic conflict of interest. Discussion of performance will show that this scene is very much "cloak and dagger" in construction. The threat to the power of the Church through seizure of lands is clearly worrying and is it a surprise to Ely that his

¹⁶⁴ Ludowyk, p. 156.

¹⁶⁵ William Hazlitt, *Characters in Shakespeare's Plays* (1817; Everyman's Library edition, London, 1906), p. 159.

senior colleague is making international mischief by suggesting a claim be made in respect of French territory? John Wilders may have a point when he suggests that, “Nor are the motives of the churchmen, Canterbury and Ely, for approving the expedition as disinterested as they appear”.¹⁶⁶, and is supported by Victor Kiernan - “Shakespeare seems to relish the opportunity afforded him by the chronicles to begin his play by showing a pair of supple prelates scheming to avert a sweeping confiscation of church wealth ... by egging Henry on to war...”¹⁶⁷ - and Paola Pugliatti who declares:

That the opening scene of Henry V casts a shadow on the transparency of Canterbury’s favourable response to Henry’s project to conquer the French crown needs no arguing.¹⁶⁸

Ulterior the dramatic motives may be, but Hazlitt’s observation cannot be disregarded and one might certainly agree with his subsequent remark that this scene “...is indeed admirable both for strength and grace.”¹⁶⁹

This critic is, however, forthright in his condemnation of the character of Canterbury (with Ely being overlooked or simply disregarded):

Falstaff was a puny prompter of violence and outrage, compared with the pious and politic Archbishop of Canterbury, who gave the king carte blanche, in a genealogical tree of his family, to rob and murder in circles of latitude and longitude abroad - to save the possessions of the Church at home.¹⁷⁰

If one were to agree with such a damning condemnation of the prelate, then small wonder that almost two hundred years later, Theodor Meron was to

¹⁶⁶ John Wilders, *New Prefaces to Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1988), p. 132.

¹⁶⁷ Victor Kiernan, *Shakespeare: Poet and Citizen* (London, 1993), p. 70.

¹⁶⁸ Paola Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian* (London, 1996), p. 63.

¹⁶⁹ Hazlitt, p. 159

¹⁷⁰ Hazlitt, p. 156

observe that "...Shakespeare-following Holinshed - actually presents the Archbishop's arguments as self-serving, cynical and opportunistic."¹⁷¹

"Following Holinshed" is the key to the characterization. It suits the dramatic tension to show conspiratorial clerics who, whilst they might come to praise their new king, will not (it would seem) hesitate to take steps to bury any attempt to deprive them of wealth and prestige. Wilders has second thoughts and does not condemn in the manner of Hazlitt or, Meron:

"...whether or not the Archbishop's motives are essentially personal it is difficult to be sure. At no point does he admit to self-interest...Moreover, although the King ostensibly defers his declaration of war until it has been given the blessing of the scholars, his actual words to them suggest that he has already made his decision:

For God doth know how many, now in health,
Shall drop their blood in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to."¹⁷²

It is hardly surprising that John Bromley describes Canterbury as "...that remarkable priest..."¹⁷³ for not only (supported by Ely) does he dominate the first two scenes of the play but his first major speech in 1. 2. has given rise to much critical consideration as to how this might be interpreted in performance and the dramatic effect intended by Shakespeare. It is all too easy to be brusque like Harold Goddard, "The sixty-odd lines...make one of the most complicated passages of pure exposition in Shakespeare ..." ¹⁷⁴ or John Sutherland and Cedric Watts, "The archbishop is so prone to needless digression that Polonius, in comparison, seems a model

¹⁷¹ Theodor Meron, *Bloody Constraint: War And Chivalry in Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1998), p. 22.

¹⁷² Wilders, pp. 132-133.

¹⁷³ John C. Bromley, *The Shakespearian Kings* (Colorado, 1971), p. 86.

¹⁷⁴ Goddard, p. 220.

of succinctness.”¹⁷⁵ To the more sober appraisal of A. R. Humphreys that the Elizabethan audience would in fact have listened intently, should be added a similar comment by Anthony Brennan, “Given the extended arguments throughout Shakespeare’s whole cycle of history plays as successive figures try to legitimise their claims to the crown and to dispute that of others, is seems inherently unlikely that the Elizabethan audience regarded such a huge speech as laughter-fodder”.¹⁷⁶ Such a way of extracting the utmost dramatic value from this speech is underlined by E. Pearlman:

perhaps Canterbury’s monologue should be taken at face value
In a world of feudal dynasties, pedigree possess real value and
the king’s breeding can be no incitement to laughter.¹⁷⁷

Following his exegesis, Canterbury’s patriotic verve has attracted contrasting opinions. Again, Goddard appears to be the most negative - after Hazlitt - for he suggests a most unholy alliance between the clerics and the nobility: “Their verbal violence suggests both a suppressed thirst for blood on their own parts and a fear that Henry is hesitating to give the final word”.¹⁷⁸ Now this may well come across in performance, but the sheer magnificence of the oratory is overlooked if vendetta is all that these speeches suggest. Indeed, Goddard goes even further and, referring to the Archbishop’s reference to the Church’s funding of the proposed slaughter and destruction in France, declares:

Fire, blood, lucre, and spirituality! The witches’ brew in
Macbeth scarcely exceeds that.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ John Sutherland and Cedric Watts, *Henry V, War Criminal!?: and Other Shakespeare Puzzles* (Oxford, 2000), p.119.

¹⁷⁶ Brennan, p. 27.

¹⁷⁷ E. Pearlman, *William Shakespeare: The History Plays* (New York, 1992), p. 146.

¹⁷⁸ Goddard, p. 223.

¹⁷⁹ Goddard, p. 223.

On a more positive note, Tillyard is clearly impressed with the rich rhetoric which Shakespeare affords his clerics to speak at this moment in the scene, and suggests what these speeches are meant to achieve.

The prelates and nobles who incite Henry to great deeds in France speak splendidly...these lines not only dazzle us with their brilliance but they place Henry in the grand context of English history and make us forget the subtle personal touches of his previous character.¹⁸⁰

This critic is also generous when he refers to "...Canterbury's splendid comparison of the state to the beehive".¹⁸¹ He clearly relishes the richness of the language, something which Pearlman and Goddard do not.

The former feels that "Canterbury pushes his metaphor to the limit or beyond when he invents bee judges and bee prisoners-at-the-bar",¹⁸² whilst his compatriot is nothing if not derisive:

As if bees hovering above flowers, or the fruitful communion of the two, could be compared to the clash of enemies on the battlefield, or honey to the spoils of war! The Archbishop is as deficient in his science as in his symbolism.¹⁸³

Such a reading of this second important speech by Canterbury is not only to fail to appreciate its language, but to overlook the significance for the Elizabethans. This is admirably summarized by Reese:

Its biological accuracy has been challenged but it is a classic statement of the Tudor theory of status.¹⁸⁴

The dramatic importance of the speech is also aptly described by C. W. R. D. Moseley when he reminds us that "Canterbury's memorable speech about the mutual interdependence of the commonwealth of the bees finally

¹⁸⁰ E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1944), p. 307.

¹⁸¹ Tillyard, p. 308.

¹⁸² Pearlman, p. 147.

¹⁸³ Goddard, p. 224.

¹⁸⁴ Reese, p. 324.

convinces Henry of what he should do”,¹⁸⁵ and bearing this in mind it is unfortunate that the speech is either shortened or cut altogether in performance. Moseley also makes the valid point that here we have a dramatic representation of an alliance (holy or otherwise) between King and clergy, which had not been the case in the earlier plays in this second tetralogy:

the support of two senior bishops is pretty powerful and we ought to remember that Bolingbroke’s actions to seek the throne were strongly opposed by Carlisle, and that his continuance on it by the Archbishop of York. Both appealed to divine sanctions for their opposition; but Canterbury and Ely represent such a sanction supporting Henry. The contrast with his predecessors could hardly be more powerful.¹⁸⁶

This contrast can be most effective in performance and is certainly so in respect of the three productions to be discussed. The first is the BBC TV Shakespeare (1980), directed by David Giles¹⁸⁷, with Trevor Baxter as Canterbury and John Abineri as Ely. Both were played as elderly (but certainly not doddering) and were perhaps the most senior in years of all the interpretations to be considered. They were also the clearest example of a clerical “double act” which began from the moment they first appeared on camera.

As the studio lights came up for the commencement of their first scene, Baxter and Abineri were observed proceeding together past Alec McCowen’s Chorus (who was graciously acknowledged by Baxter) and heading for an altar rail with two lit candles on either side. They were

¹⁸⁵ C. W. R. D. Moseley, *Shakespeare’s History Plays: “Richard II” to “Henry V”*. *The Making of a King* (London, 1988), p. 151.

¹⁸⁶ Moseley, pp. 151-152.

¹⁸⁷ *Henry V*. Dir. David Giles. BBC Classic Drama 1980.

dressed alike in rich red cassocks, white rochets, black chimeres, and wore black Canterbury caps. In silence, they knelt as one at the altar rail and crossed themselves. They then closed their eyes and with hands clasped, appeared to be busy with their respective devotions. Hardly a second had elapsed, before this Canterbury opened his eyes and spoke in confidential tones to his brother cleric. Both had ethereal and rich voices but whilst Baxter calmly related the news abroad, Abineri's Ely was the one who seemed most alarmed at the thought that this anti-clerical bill might become law. His "But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?" (1.1.6) suggested a troubled cleric indeed and his countenance grew even more troubled as Canterbury outlined the contents of such weighty legislation.

By contrast, Baxter's Archbishop spoke in indignant and scornful tones, especially on

And to the coffers of the King, beside
A thousand pounds by th' year: thus runs the bill.
(1.1.18-19)

It was an optimistic junior bishop who, with a slight smile, reminded his senior that the new Henry was "...a true lover of the holy Church" (1.1.23) and crossed himself as if to reinforce this fact. Canterbury followed suit and reminded them both in tones reminiscent of a meditation that the King's misspent youth had indeed vanished swiftly on his succeeding his father. Ely's "We are blessed in this change" (1.1.37) was an almost blissful reverie, and he smiled again as the Archbishop continued to extol Henry's virtues. The reference to, "The Gordian Knot of it he will unloose" drew a chuckle of appreciation from Abineri who came across as one who was a loyal colleague and who was ready happily to acknowledge gifts of quality in

others. Indeed, it was regrettable that he was not allowed his speech dealing with true fruit emerging from base weeds.

Ely was not, however, naïve, for his countenance became grave again as Canterbury went on to recall - in sorrow more than contempt - just how extravagant the prince's past conduct had been. At one stage, the Archbishop seemed to recall that walls have ears and turned cautiously around to ensure no one was listening to them. He then once more returned to a prayerful appearance, with Ely following suit. Was it this time a façade or were they reflecting on the character of this Christian king?

In any event, the short silence was broken by Ely (still facing the altar) cautiously wondering if the clergy could rely on Henry's assistance in disposing of the bill which seemed to be returning to haunt them. Again looking over his shoulder, Baxter now spoke like one hearing a confession and actually blessed his colleague (for show if in fact they were observed?). He then whispered in the ear of the other that he had spoken to the king of "causes now in handAs touching France," (1.1.77-79) whereupon Ely looked up in near alarm as if he felt his senior colleague was taking a big political risk. He seemed reassured at the now brisk confidence of Canterbury and kissing the ring of the latter, he rose with him ready to attend the meeting between the King and the French embassy.

The playing was continuous, as the lights came up behind them to reveal the court assembled and David Gwillim's very young looking Henry seated on his throne. Whilst Ely moved to the side of the assembled court, Canterbury took centre stage, as it were. Baxter dominated the camera shot

and as a performance, his Archbishop dominated the scene for as long as he had lines to speak. This Henry genuinely seemed to be seeking advice from the most senior cleric in the realm, and Gwillim addressed his spiritual adviser in reverent manner, following the blessing bestowed upon him with “God and his angels guard your sacred throne,...” (1.2.7) with just a hint of caution in the voice on, “We charge you, in the name of God, take heed”.(1.2.23)

Baxter bowed dutifully to the king and sought to take the court along with his argument, gently involving them (with a nod in their direction) upon “...and you peers” (1.2.33). Turning again to face Henry, he boldly and emphatically declared “There is no bar to make against your Highness’ claim to France...” (1.2.35-36) which drew looks of undoubted approval from the court. When the Archbishop went on to explain the argument suggested by Pharimond, his Latin quotation drew signs of recognition from his audience and he thereupon proceeded to destroy such argument. A clear legal mind was revealed and this ecclesiastical lawyer had no need of notes or documents to state his case. As suggested by Meron, Canterbury in this production had skilfully marshalled the legal case for a just war in France. True, the speech was cut (lines 56-90) but even so, Baxter spoke with such enthusiasm, panache and conviction that the nobles were held almost spellbound, and a camera shot of Henry showed that he was listening most intently. The Archbishop did not have the line “So that, as clear as is he summer’s sun”, (1.2.86) but he did pause between “the German women” and “For some dishonest manners of their life” (1.2.48-49) permitting a little

levity which was appreciated by hearty chuckles from Westmorland in particular.

“Howbeit they would hold up this Salique law”(1.2.91) was uttered with contempt and by the end of the speech, Henry looked almost convinced. Again, he was cautious on “May I with right and conscience make this claim?” (1.2.96), only to be surely convinced by the way his Archbishop , with further erudition, drew upon scripture to reinforce the argument already presented. So assured was this Canterbury that “The sin upon my head”(1.2.97), was accompanied by a slight bow and his arms held out in the manner of Christ on the cross. If he was misleading the king, then divine retribution was expected.

Despite the wish to divert the king’s attention from the bill discussed in 1.1, this Archbishop was not lacking in patriotic feeling. We were reminded that there had been previous wars in France and that Henry now had the opportunity to carry on where his ancestors had left off. “Stand for you own, unwind your bloody flag.”(1.2.101) was stirring stuff indeed and on “Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire’s tomb...”(1.2.103) the Archbishop almost shouted these words and raised his left hand as if to bless the invasion there and then. In this production, the immediate continuation from 1.1 to 1.2 meant there was no time to rehearse any platitudes, and therefore Ely’s like patriotic fervour on

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead,
And with your puissant arm renew their feats.
You are their heir. (1.2.115-117)

was spontaneous and sincere. Receiving such support from his colleague, Canterbury’s offer of financial help was firm and urgent. Witnessing such

commitment from the clergy, the nobles were equally enthusiastic in encouraging their king to take up arms. Upon hearing of the fears of an attack from Scotland following an invasion of France, Baxter's Archbishop sought to gently reassure Exeter and Westmorland as "Therefore doth heaven divide..." (1.2.183) was addressed to them. Canterbury continued to influence them but upon the word "obedience", he turned once more to the king and spoke to him like an experienced spiritual guide. As Baxter delivered this speech, one could see how easy a critic like Tillyard could describe it as splendid. The brilliance of the oratory was also realized. "Therefore to France..." (1.2.213) and the remainder of the speech was delivered in the manner of an experienced preacher who knew how to reach his peroration.

If we, with thrice such powers left at home,
 Cannot defend our own doors from the dog,
 Let us be worried, ... (1.2.217-219)

suggested a confident primate who could quite easily form part of a regency in the absence of the monarch. This seemed to make up the mind of this Henry and as he ordered the French ambassadors to be admitted, his reference to "...God's help..." (1.2.222) resulted (at the end of his speech) in a short camera shot of Canterbury, eyes closed and hands together as if in prayer. This suggested that even though there may have been a pretence at devotion in 1.1, the Archbishop was now seriously in communication with God for guidance as to whether he had given correct advice. Seemingly reassured, Canterbury moved out of camera shot, his part (like Ely's) played. There had been no suggestion in direction or performance that these clerics were ridiculous or tedious.

If a suggestion of sanctity had been present in this interpretation, it was most definitely absent from Michael Bogdanov's touring production.¹⁸⁸ The performance to be discussed was one of those recorded in Wales during the concluding week of the tour. Hugh Sullivan again donned clerical attire to play Canterbury, whilst Roger Booth changed from the boorish Northumberland to a portly Ely who - in this interpretation - was as forthright in manner as his senior. He also seemed to be the intellectual equal and an excellent foil, especially in 1.2.

As 1.1 commenced, the clerics entered as if continuing a conversation began off stage. Not for them the rich vestments of the BBC production, but plain episcopal attire of black cassocks, purple cinctures and purple skull caps. The chiming of a clock, reminiscent of Big Ben, and the swift and crisp exchanges between Sullivan and Booth transported us immediately into the corridors of power. Leaving aside the clerical costumes, this might have been a policy discussion between the prime minister and his cabinet secretary.

Sullivan's Canterbury carried two documents. One was the infamous anti-cleric bill (or a leaked copy thereof) to which he was referring to, almost line by line. Booth's Ely made it clear from the word go that he was a loyal colleague, his "But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?"(1.1.6) making it clear that opposition to this wretched document was not a possibility but a certainty. "It must be thought on", (1.1.7) was an urgent observation from Canterbury, with "We lose the better half of our possession" (1.1.8) suggesting an outcome too alarming to even contemplate.

¹⁸⁸ *Henry V*. Dir. Michael Bogdanov. English Shakespeare Company, Itel 1989

The offending document being carefully scrutinized, “As much as would maintain to the king’s honour” (1.1.12) was spoken sarcastically, whilst “’Twould drink the cup and all” (1.1.2) suggested a master politician well seasoned in witty repartee. Even so, this Canterbury did see a way out of their dilemma with his fresh chain of thought on “The king is full of grace....” (1.1.22), giving Ely the opportunity to smile and confidently declare that Henry V was also “...a true lover of the holy Church”. (1.1.23)

The Archbishop clearly had a long memory for “the courses of his youth promised it not.”, (1.1.24) suggested that the clerics may forgive former wild behaviour but not forget it. He then, somewhat grudgingly, had to concede that Henry had indeed redeemed himself, and Ely’s speech about the growth of good fruit was delivered as one making a sage theological point. Such erudition was quickly brought down to earth with Canterbury’s cynical look and tone on “It must be so, for miracles are ceased...” (1.1.67).

Not to be outdone (and like a professional cabinet secretary) Ely reminded the Archbishop that the king could prove an essential ally if he chose to override the bill, whereupon Canterbury, as if on cue, revealed that the other document in his possession contained details as to exactly how much wealth the Church would part with to ensure there was a war with France. The conspiratorial attitude of the clerics made it clear that a plot to divert the king - should he need diverting - was now being laid. When Sullivan spoke of Henry’s .. “good acceptance...”(1.1.83), it was with a quiet confidence and the cleric had clearly resented the interruption of his dialogue with the king, being somewhat tetchy on:

The French ambassador upon that instant

Craved audience... (1.1.92)

As the clock chimed forth the hour of four, Ely somewhat pompously consulted his wristwatch before confirming that the time for the renewed meeting with the king had arrived. Such stage business again suggested a precise civil servant and was possibly introduced for a moment of light relief as it drew laughter from a section of the audience at this performance. There was, however, nothing remotely comic in the demeanour of the clerics as they purposely made their exit, determined to win the day. It was as if Wolsey was conspiring with Richelieu.

The following scene suggested that a very public show was being staged. Resplendent in scarlet and blue guard's uniform (complete with riding boots), Michael Pennington's Henry could have been ready to lead an invasion and as the scene progressed, his playing made it quite clear that he had made up his mind to go to war and that he was relying on the public support of the clergy to persuade the House of Lords, the latter - dressed like Victorian politicians - being seated on either side of the stage in serried ranks.

Upon the entry of the clerics, Canterbury's benediction was somewhat flowery and obsequious. Henry's "Sure, we thank you" (1.2.9) was accompanied with a polite smile but in tones to suggest that they were not to waste time, but immediately get down to business. The remainder of this speech was brisk and businesslike but - possibly for the benefit of the nobility and to make certain they fully understood - Pennington paused on his pronunciation of the word "Salic", enabling Canterbury to nod - again

politely - as if confirming that the word had been correctly spoken and that the Salic law was indeed going to be publicly discussed.

And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest or bow your reading,
(1.2.13-14)

caused Canterbury to give a bland smile as if to deny that he was capable of such a thing.

Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
How you awake our sleeping sword of war. (1.2.21-22)

was addressed to the Archbishop in knowing terms. The primate's look in response was equally knowing. Was this what the king wanted to hear? Was he ready to invade France, subject to clergy approval? Ely, meanwhile, stood impassively behind Canterbury, a silent and supportive presence. One sensed that the three understood the critical outcome of this gathering and that there was an implied trust between them.

While Ely then moved stage right to stand at the end of a row of now attentive nobles, Canterbury seized his moment with relish. He spoke not just to his king but to the whole assembly. Like Trevor Baxter in the BBC production, Hugh Sullivan used the phrase, "...and you peers..."(1.2.34) to indicate that it was imperative that they followed the argument. The "Salic law" speech was shortened, but nevertheless this Canterbury showed he was not merely a skilled clerical lawyer, but a confident public speaker. Placing the document upon the table, behind which Henry now sat, the Archbishop declared firmly that there was no legal bar to the king's claim and poured scorn upon any claim from the French to the contrary. As the cleric's argument developed, Pennington looked a little confused (or pretended to be)

but seemed reassured upon "...as clear as is the summer's sun..." (1.2.86). Upon this line, Sullivan looked around the company as if to defy any suggestion to the contrary, True, there was slight laughter from a section of the audience but this moment was not played for comedy. Reaching "...To bar your highness claiming from the female" (1.2.92), the Archbishop seemed gleefully triumphant and smote the table as if finally to demolish any spurious dissent.

Henry thought carefully for a moment. His "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (1.2.94) suggested he now wished for a straight and direct answer, and he received one. Canterbury's reference to the Old Testament suggested that scripture could not be challenged, whereupon he seemed to chide Henry for delay in embarking for France, especially on "...unwind your bloody flag..." (1.2.101). Well into his stride, the Archbishop moved from one row of nobles to another, his "O noble English..." (1.2.111) being a call to arms for them as well.

As if this next speech had been carefully rehearsed whilst the clerics had been making their way to the royal presence, Ely stepped forward and, with a somewhat oily smile, encouraged Henry to recall he was indeed the descendant of valiant warriors. This seemed to do the trick, for Exeter and Westmorland rose from their seats and followed the patriotic vein of the clergy. Their brief interventions over, Canterbury resumed his rousing call to arms on "Oh, let their bodies follow, my dear liege..." (1.2.130) and then produced his public trump card. The offer by the clergy to finance the war was accompanied by Ely (again with oily smile) presenting a document for

the king to see exactly how much money was involved. Pennington looked somewhat taken aback at the seeming generosity. When he raised the question of a possible Scottish invasion, Ely (in this production) was given Westmorland's lines of warning, but spoke them in such a way as to provide the opportunity for Canterbury to step forward once more and give what amounted to a homily. Although all reference to the analogy of the bees was cut, Sullivan stressed the word, ...“Obedience...”, and reached his peroration on “Therefore to France...” (1.2.214).

No further argument was needed. Pennington now seemed to relish his words on “Now are we well resolved....” (1.2.223) and he publicly acknowledged his indebtedness to the clerics (for their support or for also for co-operating in the public show of same for the benefit of the peers?) on “And yours”, by a smile of gratitude.

France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,
Or break it all to pieces. (1.2.224-225)

caused Canterbury to almost gasp with delight . A huge grin of triumph spread over his face as he hurried to Ely to share this victory. The camera did not show them again in this recording and presumably there was no need to. The conspiracy had worked, and the king was clearly on their side.

If the clerics of Michael Pennington's Henry plotted in some Westminster committee room and in a world of military uniform, frockcoats and pin striped trousers, those of the medieval court of Kenneth Branagh's Henry V did so in secret and in collaboration with not the king this time but his own uncle, Exeter.

This third production to be considered is the film version of the play, directed by and starring Kenneth Branagh.¹⁸⁹ In his autobiography, Branagh makes it clear how important this scene is, especially in his interpretation.

...a scene which is vitally important for establishing through the clerics - Ely and Canterbury - the tone of the whole first section of the film, A conspiratorial political mood; an unfriendly palace and a dark world beyond.¹⁹⁰

Before the scene began, a door slowly opened into a darkish chamber. There was a little light outside, and Charles Kay's Canterbury had clearly been keeping watch for fear of being overheard. On "My lord, I'll tell you ...", (1.1.1) he closed the door and joined Alec McCowen's Ely. The clerics were costumed as monks, with hooded cowls around their heads. With just the light of a single candle, they seemed sinister. In his screenplay, Branagh sums up the characters he wanted:

They are seasoned, worried politicians on their mettle. Born survivors, now time is against them. The course of action is clear. They will be ruthless in urging the king to France, where matters spiritual will be forgotten.¹⁹¹

The two scenes involving the clerics were severely cut, but that is perhaps to be expected, having regard to the exigency of film making. Even so, both actors provided interpretations markedly different from those discussed above. Charles Kay was essentially a nervous prelate who initially needed the backing of others before making a move. This will be further considered as the scenes progress, but in this first appearance, he desperately needed the almost eminence grise provided by McCowen's Ely, a cleric of few words, but who drove the action forward during this first exchange by

¹⁸⁹ *Henry V*. Dir. Kenneth Branagh. Renaissance Films, 1989.

¹⁹⁰ Kenneth Branagh, *Beginning* (London, 1989), p. 223.

¹⁹¹ *Henry V: A screen adaptation* Kenneth Branagh, (London, 1989), p. 17.

asking deliberate and searching questions in a manner which suggested that by considering same, Canterbury's awful dilemma might be resolved. The vital questions were "But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?" (1.1.6), "But what prevention?" (1.1.21) and "Doth his majesty incline to it, or no?" (1.1.71). This Ely also suggested Henry was now "...a true lover of the holy Church", (1.1.23) thus suggesting a way forward. Although the Archbishop was quite scornful in recalling the king's former days, this Bishop of Ely firmly brought him back to business on

But, my good lord. How now for mitigation of this bill
Urged by the commons? (1.1.69-70)

In considering how Henry might react, Kay permitted himself one brief moment of quiet reflection. It did not last long, however, for as soon as he uttered the word "France", there was a sound of heavy steps outside. Hurrying to the door, they opened it to see that the king, surrounded by guards, had just passed by.

Within seconds, the action moved to a torch-lit council chamber. Branagh's king made his entrance, sat down upon his throne, let his cloak slip from his back and calmly gazed around the assembled company as if he sensed that their number was incomplete. His "Where is my gracious lord of Canterbury?" (1.2.1) caused Brian Blessed's bluff looking Exeter to scowl and look with impatience towards the door of the chamber. One sensed that it was vital for him that the clerics were present, and any concern for possible failure of plotted policy or cunning was relieved by the sight of their shadowy figures as they hurriedly appeared from the darkness, conscious no doubt that they were keeping important business from proceeding.

As Canterbury and Ely bowed before the king, Kay's

God and his angels guard your sacred throne
And make you long become it! (1.2.7-8)

was uttered like one who was really apologizing for being late. Branagh's

Henry was polite in reply, but his courtesy contained a veiled threat.

And pray take heed how you impawn our person,
How you awake our sleeping sword of war:
We charge you in the name of God take heed (1.2.21-23)

was clearly a challenge to the Archbishop, and put the latter firmly on the spot. Exeter and Westmorland (Paul Gregory) exchanged concerned glances.

Had their plotting with the clerics been discovered, and was Canterbury able to call Henry's bluff and persuade him to invade France?

If the clergy were taken aback, they did not show it although as they stood up, Canterbury looked extremely grave as if he was quickly thinking on his feet as to the best form of verbal skirmish. He decided to play the part of a pedant before a group of students. "There is no bar" (1.2.34) was mocking in tone, and taking the relevant document from the silent yet protective Ely, the Archbishop strode up and down amongst the nobles with a good deal of eye contact as he thrust home his argument. This seemed a cunning strategy for in seeking to persuade the king, Canterbury gave the impression that whilst the latter might agree, the court also needed to be convinced. The speech was very much abridged, but Kay was most positive as someone who was making the most of his moment and gained in confidence as his persuasion gained momentum.

He was most scornful as he advised that:
Nor did the French possess the Salic land
Until four hundred one and twenty years
After defunction of King Pharamond,

Idly supposed the founder of this law. (1.2.56-59)

and, for effect, struck the document upon the palm of his hand. By now, his audience appeared spell bound but he needed to exchange a quick glance with Exeter to make certain that his confederate was satisfied with the way things were going. A glance from the latter was sufficient for Canterbury swiftly to conclude his argument, but before so doing, he sought to make a scholarly jest on “So that, as clear as is the summer’s sun”(1.2.86). Playing along with him, Exeter and others dutifully chortled.

His argument completed by blaming the French for relying on this absurd Salic Law to bar England’s claim, Canterbury knelt once more before his king. He now had found new confidence indeed for he called the bluff of Henry who looked him straight in the face as he coolly (yet in deadly earnest) asked

May I with right and conscience make this claim? (1.2.96)

To this, Kay returned Branagh’s penetrating glance and equally coolly (and earnestly) accepted full spiritual and moral responsibility .He then sprang to his feet and in ringing tones, called on the king to “ ...unwind your bloody flag...” (1.2.101). Almost amazed at the cleric’s initiative, Exeter and Westmorland joined in the warlike chorus.

As if not to be outdone by two laymen, Canterbury and Ely then closed in on either side of Henry. Ely continued to remain silent in this version, but it sufficed to show that a diocesan bishop was in full agreement with the Primate of All England. The offer of financial help was almost whispered by Canterbury as if it were a bribe and Ely’s nod was significant on “...such a mighty sum...”(1.2.133).

The Archbishop's other major speech was cut but although the clerics spoke no more in this film version, they remained on either side of the king during the brief audience of the French Herald, to show alliance between Church and State. Once war had been declared, Canterbury and Ely helped Henry on with his cloak (possibly underlining - as Moseley suggests - the support of the clergy for the venture about to start). As the court broke up, the final camera shot of the scene showed Canterbury and Ely exchanging knowing smiles of success - that infamous anti-cleric bill now seemed well and truly forgotten.

In discussing the performance of Trevor Baxter, James N. Loehlin is of the view that "His is the best performance in the production, which never recovers from his departure".¹⁹² This is not the forum to discuss whether such a comment is fair to the BBC production as a whole but it does underline the importance of the character of Canterbury. It would also have been fairer to comment favourably on John Abineri's splendid foil as Ely, but that performance was also reflected in the similar excellent support given by Roger Booth and Alec McCowen.

Baxter had more of the Archbishop's lines than were allowed to Hugh Sullivan and Charles Kay, but all three interpretations (as with the Ely in each case) made it clear that Peter Levi was being unjust to suggest that these characters are there for mere light relief. Loehlin is not averse to commenting on the comic possibilities. He must have seen an earlier staging of the Bogdanov production, for he found that "The clerics were obvious, almost

¹⁹² Loehlin, p. 77.

moustache-twirling villains - an example of Bogdanov's nearly cartoonish emphasis on clarity".¹⁹³ As has been discussed earlier, this is not the case with the performance on video.

Loehlin is perhaps less than just when he comments on the first scene of the clerics in the Branagh film, suggesting that " ...the bishops' exchanges, framed in alternating close-ups are so cloak and dagger that they become slightly, perhaps unintentionally, comic"...¹⁹⁴ All interpretations discussed certainly echoed Tillyard's praise of the magnificence of the language of these characters as well as Hazlitt's in respect of the first scene of the play. Even the shortened version in the 1989 film made the point that a production is ill served if this initial exchange is removed altogether as was the case in, for example, a production by Frank Benson (date unknown) and Ron Daniels' production for the RSC in 1997.

It is significant that unlike the Olivier film version, the clerics in these three productions were not played farcically, or involved in slapstick. Whilst the performances of Felix Aylmer (Canterbury) and Robert Helpmann (Ely) are splendidly droll and show loyal and unswerving commitment to Olivier's direction and interpretation, we must surely agree with Loehlin that, "...the effect is to obscure Canterbury's specious justification for Henry's war ...".¹⁹⁵ Admittedly, the cinema (or television audience) is supposed to be watching the audience at the Globe finding a good deal of mirth and

¹⁹³ Loehlin, p. 112.

¹⁹⁴ Loehlin, p. 133.

¹⁹⁵ Loehlin, p. 33.

merriment at the expense of the hapless actors, but as Anthony Davies has observed, the reasons for so presenting this scene “...are rightly questionable...”,¹⁹⁶ because if we recall the comments of A. R. Humphreys and Anthony Brennan, an Elizabethan audience would have taken these two scenes (especially 1.2.) seriously, and if Shakespeare intended the major speech of the Archbishop to be heard and followed, he would not have let loose the clowns.

The one common factor with all three interpretations were that if taken seriously, Canterbury and Ely provide a clerical duo to equal any pairing in Shakespeare such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern or the tribunes of Sicinius Velutus and Junius Brutus.

¹⁹⁶ Anthony Davies, *Filming Shakespeare's Plays: The Adaptations of Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, Peter Brook and Akira Kurosawa* (Cambridge, 1988), p.30.

CONCLUSION

The Introduction began with reference to the complaint of Winchester that he had been “left out” from the political action which concludes *Henry VI Part 1*. To this *crie de coeur* he adds:

For me nothing remains. (1.1. 174)

This thesis has shown that this is most certainly not the case as far as Winchester and the other discussed clerics are concerned. The beginning of each chapter reveals that the actual personages of history played significant parts in Church/State government or diplomacy, tasks which the Tudor historians were ready to recognize. The fact that these clerics are described in such detail (even if in somewhat critical tones at times) by Hall and Holinshed has enabled Shakespeare to portray them as important characters with much (and definitely not “nothing”) to contribute both to the development of plot and the language of the plays.

The latter has been recognized as shown by the comments of various critics. The enthusiasm shown by Schlegel¹⁹⁷ and Logan Pearsall Smith¹⁹⁸ for the death bed frenzies of Winchester is matched only by John Julius Norwich’s generous comments for Carlisle’s eulogy in respect of the exiled Mowbray, and Hazlitt’s¹⁹⁹ similar observations on the reformation in the behaviour of Henry V as discussed by Canterbury and Ely.

Three of the clerics also have major speeches which have attracted

¹⁹⁷ Jonathan Bate (ed), *The Romantics on Shakespeare* (London, 1992) p. 367.

¹⁹⁸ F.E. Halliday (ed), *Shakespeare and His Critics* (London, 1949), p. 344.

¹⁹⁹ William Hazlitt, *Characters in Shakespeare’s Plays* (London, 1906) p. 159.

critical acclaim. Graham Holderness,²⁰⁰ E. F. C. Ludowyk²⁰¹ and J.P. Brockbank²⁰² have recognized the power and dramatic effect of Carlisle's outburst in Westminster Hall, whilst F. W. Brownlow²⁰³ and Robert Smallwood²⁰⁴ are amongst those who have discussed the implications and strengths of Pandulph's address to Philip of France in an effort to persuade him to break his pact with England. Canterbury is given two vital speeches and critics such as T. W. Craik²⁰⁵, Anthony Brennan²⁰⁶ and E. Pearlman²⁰⁷ have shown their appreciation of lines 34-95 in 1.2, with Tillyard,²⁰⁸ Reese²⁰⁹ and Moseley²¹⁰ expressing like commendation for the prelate's rich metaphor in respect of government and bees.

It is hoped that the dissertation has successfully argued that all the above speeches deserve to be given as much consideration as some of the more generally well-known speeches of kingly characters. These Lords Spiritual still have much to say - and should be heeded.

Another common theme which has emerged is that not only does each cleric have a moment in the play when a king recognizes the place of the

²⁰⁰ Graham Holderness, *Richard II: Penguin Critical Studies* (London, 1989) p. 89.

²⁰¹ E.F.C. Ludowyk, *Understanding Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 92.

²⁰² J.P. Brockbank, *On Shakespeare: Jesus, Shakespeare and Karl Marx, and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1989), p. 113.

²⁰³ F.W. Brownlow, *Two Shakespearean Sequences: "Henry VI" to "Richard II" and "Pericles" to "Timon of Athens"* (London, 1977), p. 92.

²⁰⁴ *King John*, ed. Robert Smallwood (London, 1986), p. 241-243.

²⁰⁵ *Henry V*, ed. T.W. Craik (London, 1995), p. 135.

²⁰⁶ Anthony Brennan, *Twayne's New Critical Introduction to Shakespeare: Henry V* (New York, 1992), p. 27.

²⁰⁷ E. Pearlman, *William Shakespeare: The History Plays* (New York, 1992), p. 146.

²⁰⁸ E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1944), p. 308.

²⁰⁹ M.M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1961), p. 324.

²¹⁰ C.W.R.D. Moseley, *Shakespeare's History Plays: "Richard II" to "Henry V": The Making of a King* (London, 1988), pp. 151-152.

particular cleric in the power process, but each has a particular entrance when the action of the play develops significantly because of this. Winchester's entrance as a cardinal in *Henry VI Part I* shows that he is now very much a political force to be reckoned with (no longer left out) and in *Henry VI. Part II*, the young king desperately waits for his querulous uncle to publicly declare a truce with Gloucester. The entrance of another cardinal - Pandulph - in *King John* brings onto the stage a cleric whose very presence with the threat of excommunication for anyone who will not submit to Rome, leads to the tearing up of a truce and the ultimate obedience of both England and France to papal authority. 5.1 shows a most penitent and contrite John relying on Pandulph to give him back his crown and to seek peace with the invading French.

The entrance of Carlisle in 3.2 of *Richard II* shows that the king is accompanied by a loyal spiritual adviser. Although he has few lines in his first three scenes, this loyal presence becomes a significant challenge to Bolingbroke in 4.1 when the bishop not only speaks in reverent tones of a once sworn enemy of the usurper but openly challenges the very act of usurpation, thus providing a very real threat to Bolingbroke's plans.

In the case of *Henry V*, the entrance of Canterbury and Ely in 2.2 means that the business of the Council may proceed, and the major speeches of the senior cleric enable the king to declare that his mind has now been made up. One might argue that this is a further example of the vital contribution of the Lords Spiritual to the affairs of state.

The Introduction also made reference to Shaw's trenchant comment that Shakespeare's cardinals (and presumably his bishops) have no religion. The matter is soberly readdressed by S. C. Sen Gupta who reminds us that:

Shakespeare portrays a number of Cardinals who, of course, belong to the Renaissance rather than to the Middle Ages - and the Archbishop whom Henry V consults is the highest dignitary of the English Church. These princes of the Church, it must be admitted, are politicians rather than pious men. Shakespeare does not portray the mysticism or the humble piety of medieval Christianity, neither does Shaw. But it does not follow that Shakespeare fails to represent other aspects of the religion of the Middle Ages. Although the medieval outlook was other - worldly, the medieval Church made tall claims of suzerainty over all temporal authority... It is this aspect of medieval Catholicism which is portrayed in its successive phases in Shakespeare's plays.²¹¹

I would argue that this thesis has confirmed such thinking, especially when examining the various interpretations. The concluding section of each chapter has discussed three entirely different performances of the cleric under consideration, all of which have confirmed the dramatic riches which Shakespeare has bequeathed to discerning players. All actors seized with relish the theatrical authority and influence afforded by the prelates they have represented, and equal opportunity has been shown to portray the splendour of the language of the various "set pieces", especially Philip Voss who, as Carlisle in a radio production, skilfully created an ecclesiastical presence in words only and reminded us that Shakespeare's audiences went to "hear a play".

Each performance considered has provided a fresh re-examination of the respective clerical character. True, any performance in a play by Shakespeare should do this but the point I am making is because these clerics

²¹¹ S.C.Sen Gupta, *Shakespeare's Historical Plays* (Oxford, 1964), p. 4.

have previously been the poor relations amongst Shakespeare's characters, we have no real cultural tradition (other than one which assimilates them to their generic status) as to what they may look like. For instance, none of them are featured on the Gower memorial, and whereas generations became used to seeing their Hamlets dressed as Renaissance princes in black hose and tights, or their Macbeths resembling Vikings or wearing kilts, no-one really expects Pandulph or Winchester to be young or old. In the same way, does it matter one jot whether stage bishops wear mitres all the time?

The fact that an audience does not have any such expectations has meant that these performances have seemed almost at times revelations when the dramatic strengths and situations have been realized. This is all the more true in the case of plays like *Henry VI - Parts I and II*, or *King John*, which are not so readily encountered in the theatre or on television. That they are now available on video, by way of commercial or archive recordings, means that the "forgotten clerics" may be continually rediscovered. Whatever the "religion" of these clerics (bearing in mind once again the views of Sen Gupta), we may reflect that they are now able to - at last - assume their rightful place in any further debate about the plays in which they appear or their right to be alongside the other social classes of Shakespearian characters so far favoured in academic writings or the world of theatre/cinema.

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