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Abstract

This paper studies the topic of crusades and crusading in Shakespeare's *King John, Richard II, 1&2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V* within the medieval religious, political, and historical contexts seen retrospectively from the perspective of the Elizabethan England of Reformation. It surveys and analyzes Shakespeare's revisionist views of that medieval historical phenomenon, and demonstrates that he addresses the main aspects of that issue with some liberty he gathered from the cultural outlook developed after his country had sailed away from medieval ideologies and politics. Shakespeare looks back and evaluates not only the holy wars directed against the Muslims in the Holy Land but also against European countries that disobeyed the decrees of the papacy of Rome. Shakespeare maintains that both internal and external crusades launched against the Muslims in the Near East were devastating to Europe and the Europeans. To explicate his critical views of these campaigns, Shakespeare highlights three points: first, he demonstrates the devastating effects of the crusade against England during the reign of King John; secondly, he displays the ensuing conflicts among European countries that participated in the famous Third Crusade after their return to Europe; and thirdly, he casts doubts about the genuine motives behind launching these campaigns against the East and against the disobedient European countries, thus anticipating modern skepticism about the real drives of the political and religious leaders behind these missions. The current study will address these three issues as expressed in the histories of Shakespeare in the hope to shed further light on the meaning of the plays within their historical contexts and clarify Shakespeare's view on these popular medieval events.

Keywords*:* The Crusades, Inter-European Crusades, The Pope, Legate of the Pope, King John, The Divine Rights of Kings, Expiation of Sins, Jerusalem, Reformation.

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رؤية شكسبير التاريخية الناقدة للحروب الصليبيّة وفلسفتها

ملخص

يدرس هذا البحث موضوع الحروب الصليبية في مسرحيات الملك جون وريتشارد الثاني وهنري الرابع بجزأيها الأول والثاني وهنري الخامس بسياقاتها الدينية والسياسية والتاريخية في العصور الوسطى من المنظور البريطاني في مرحلة الإصلاح الديني في عهد الملكة إليزبيث الأولى. تستعرض الدراسة وتحلل آراء شكسبير التي تعيد تقييم هذه الظاهرة التاريخية، وتبيّن بأن الكاتب عالج الأوجه الرئيسة المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع بحريّة وفَرها له المنظور الحضاري الذي تطور في بريطانيا بعد ابتعادها عن الآيديولوجيات والسياسات التي سادت العصور الوسطى. لقد أعاد شكسبير النظر في تاريخ العصور الوسطى وقيّم الحملات الصليبية الموجهة ضدّ المسلمين في الأراضي المقدسة وضدّ الدول الأوروبية التي لم تصدع للمراسيم البابوية في روما. يرى شكسبير بأن الحملات الدينية الداخلية ضد الدول الأوروبية والخارجية الموجهة ضدّ المسلمين في الشرق الأدنى كانت ذات آثار مدمرة على أوروبا والأوروبيين. ولتفسير وجهة نظره الناقدة لهذه الحملات، يبرز شكسبير ثلاثة أمور: أولا، وضّح الآثار المدمرة للحملة الصليبية ضدّ بريطانيا في عهد الملك جون. ثانيا، عرض الكاتب حالة النزاع المترتبة عن الصراعات بين قادة الدول الأوروبية التي شاركت في الحملة الثالثة الشهيرة إثر عودتهم إلى أوروبا. ثالثا، أبدى شكسبير شكوكه حول الدوافع الحقيقية لإرسال هذه الحملات للشرق وضدّ الدول الأوروبية المخالفة لأوامر الكنيسة. وبذلك يستبق الكاتب النظرة التاريخية الحديثة المتشككة بالدوافع الحقيقية للقادة السياسيين ورجال الكنيسة ممن هم وراء هذه الحملات. تتناول الدراسة هذه الجوانب الثلاثة كما يعرضها شكسبير في مسرحياته التاريخية، مؤملة تسليط الضوء على معنى هذه المسرحيات ضمن سياقاتها التاريخية، وتبيان نظرة شكسبير الناقدة لهذه الحروب التي اشتهرت في العصور الوسطى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحملات الصليبية، الحملات الصليبية في أوروبا، البابا، مندوب البابا، الملك جون، الحق المقدس للملوك، تكفير الذنوب، القدس، الإصلاح الديني.

Introduction

As a historical phenomenon, the crusades have been incessantly subject to revision and re-evaluation from the eleventh century till today. Jacques Theron and Erna Oliver (2018) in their erudite article, "Changing Perspectives on the Crusades," survey the changing views on these historical events in the last five centuries, they state that the negative perception of the crusades "runs like a thread through the last five centuries".[1] They provide an overview of the changing perspectives on the crusades from the sixteenth century up to now. The authors adopt the principle that "the history of history is increasingly fashionable" in our times.[2] Theron and Oliver further argue that the crusades

were one of the most controversial issues in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Crusade 1 started when Pope Urban II called upon the Christians to liberate the Holy Land from the "Saracens" (one of the names usually used for Muslims in medieval writings) in the Council of Clermont in 1095. [3] Mastnak maintains that Pope Urban II and the Council of Clermont were proponents of peace in Christendom, but saluted the use of arms against the enemies outside Europe. The Pope decreed that to use arms "against the infidel enemies of God … was not only permissible but eminently salutary." [4] Theron and Oliver (2018) maintain that this medieval topic of the crusades is still globally relevant as it is still used in linguistic discourse related to hunger, poverty, and similar issues. Also, it is still used in literature, theatrical shows, and in political oratory.[5] They also remind of President Obama's (2015) reference to the "terrible deeds" committed in the name of Christ during these expeditions, and John Paul II's seeking forgiveness for the atrocities done in the Middle Ages.[6]

Tyerman (2011) argues that the crusades, especially after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 by "holy violence," have attracted a lot of controversial interpretations from contemporary "promoters, historians and theologians, from religious enthusiasts and from their critics," as well as from later observers.[7] He describes them as wars prompted by religious acts and driven by the need to gain temporal space for Christianity, thus their "pragmatic idealism, the tension between rhetoric and experience, transcendent hope with present fear, the promise of eternal rewards with the immediacy of military conflict." [8] Hence, they have been always controversial due to jostling religious morals with material pragmatism. He argues that since the First Crusade (1095-1099), numerous books and writings have been published about them in all centuries, reflecting their "protean" nature. For the five centuries after that event, armies fought wars under the banner of the cross with promises of forgiveness of sins reached all corners of Europe and the shore countries of the Middle East, the frontiers of Islamic and Christian countries in the Mediterranean, eastern Baltic. Their goals included "repression of religious dissent in Christendom and the assertion of papal authority in Europe." [9]

Shakespeare is one of the English revisionists that reviewed the crusades from different angles and expressed his insights comfortably at an age in which Protestant England of the Reformation had been released from the grip of Rome, an age in which writers had the ability to re-evaluate the early medieval historical events without suffering any repercussions from the papacy. He also addresses the conflicts and feuds among European countries in the aftermath of their return to Europe after the Third Crusade. Furthermore, Shakespeare provides a critical view of the 15th-century English political leaders' motives for holy wars and warfare beyond the borders in general, as in the historical events

covered in the second tetralogy of the two parts of *Henry IV,* and *Henry V*. As much, Shakespeare anticipated modern skepticism about the real reasons behind these campaigns.

References to the crusades and crusading in Shakespeare appear in *King John* and the second tetralogy of *Richard II*, the two parts of *Henry IV,* and *Henry V*. *King John* is an independent play that covers the story of England during the reign of the title king from 1198-1226; the second tetralogy covers English history during 1398-1422. Interesting enough is the fact that there are no allusions to crusading in the earlier tetralogy of the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*, which cover later events spanning the period between 1422-1485[10]; neither is there any mention of crusading in *Henry VIII* (1509-1547). The two tetralogies document the English history during the fifteenth century during the period between 1398-1485, which was over a century after the fall of the Latin states in the Holy Land.[11] Among all the histories of Shakespeare, only *King John* is devoted to cover events in English history during the years of the crusades to the Holy Land between 1095-1291.

In *King John,* Shakespeare alludes to two types of crusades: the 'holy' campaign directed against uncompromising England under the rule of King John, and those campaigns that were directed to the Holy Land, specifically the Third Crusade.[12] The play also points out the three elements necessary to define a military campaign as a crusade. These three elements are the papal proclamation of war, taking the cross, and fighting for a just cause.[13] In the second tetralogy, the Elizabethan playwright maintains the Western idea that keeps Jerusalem as the main goal of crusading and highlights the spiritual incentives granted to crusaders, mainly the “privilege of indulgence" as the only way to cleanse human sins.[14] Shakespeare further shows that crusades were at times pragmatic: holy wars were joined as means for the expiation of sins; or prepared for the tactical purpose of directing the energies and violence of belligerent people to wars abroad in order to avoid disorder and disputes at home.[15]

In his canon, Shakespeare addresses three aspects pertinent to the crusades from an Elizabethan Reformation perspective: firstly, he presents a crusade in action against the disobedient King John in the 13th-century; secondly, he demonstrates the devastating and factional results of the Third Crusade to the Holy Land on European countries; and thirdly, he provides a skeptical analysis of the political drives behind crusades beyond the borders in general. Notably, however, Shakespeare does not cover any of the historical European campaigns to Jerusalem or the East.

This paper is a literary article that studies the dialectics of the crusades and crusading in Shakespeare's history plays in which the medieval religious, political, and historical contexts were revised from an Elizabethan perspective. The study propounds the Shakespearean revisionist insights on crusading, which were mainly formed and encouraged by the Renaissance movement of the Reformation. It is important to emphasize here that history plays are not records of historical events, but rather works of art that tackle human interaction and response to historical activities. The study further hopes to demonstrate that Shakespeare anticipated later Renaissance historiographical views and even modern skepticism about the real motives of the medieval religious and political leaders waging wars abroad.

Intellectual background:

This study draws on the erudite book of Christopher Tyerman (2011) *The Debate on the Crusades* in showing the intellectual milieu in which Shakespeare and Renaissance historiographers re-evaluated the medieval historical activity of crusades and holy wars. The author points out that the focus of the debate on the crusades to regain Jerusalem or repulse the encroachment of the Turks upon Christendom in the sixteenth century shifted from external wars to internal wars. He adds that the mainstays of crusading in "papal authority and Roman Catholic penitential system" had been challenged and rebuffed, and the very idea of waging war on religious grounds was lambasted.[16] Furthermore, Tyerman argues that in the seventeenth century, a general trend prevailed among the Protestant and Lutheran thinkers that the only legitimate ground for fighting Muslims was the defense of held lands to replace the previous perception of fighting on religious grounds.[17]

Tyerman reviews John Foxe's book, *The History of the Turks* (1566) as he came to the conclusion that the crusades fail because of "the impure idolatry and profanation of the Roman church." Foxe further concluded that "the papacy was responsible for the failure of the crusades, the loss of Constantinople, and the continuing rise of the Ottomans." [18] The Lutheran scholar Matthew Dresser pointed out that the crusades had a double cause: one by the Papacy and one by the ordinary crusaders. He concluded that "[p]apal avarice and duplicity … negated the honesty of the ordinary crusaders."[19] Dresser's comments on the crusades make a dialog with the medieval past, and the Reformation movement as a cycle in the continuum of evolution rather than a break from that past.

Generally, English scholars after the adoption of state Protestantism under Elizabeth I were less enthusiastic towards the crusades than their European counterparts, intellectually, because of the Reformation perceptions and, geographically, because of the detachment of England from the menace of the

Turks compared to the continent. Tyerman (2011) argues that the crusades were not an appealing topic or memory for English scholars, especially during the first two Stuart rulers. Samuel Daniel's *Collection of the History of England* (1621) is a good example of this attitude. Daniel, for instance, criticized Richard I of weakening England by going for war abroad when his country was trying to avoid troubles with the continent. During his combats with Saladin in the East, England suffered impoverishment at home. This view of Richard, the symbol of English heroism and chivalry, became popular and standard in England in the late sixteenth century.[20] Daniel persisted in his antagonistic view towards the crusades because they were very costly, led to the loss of most of the bravest men of Europe, and encouraged the Ottomans to expand into Europe as they saw that even when untied Europeans could not stop their march into the continent. He contended that by encouraging monarchs and rulers to take the adventure abroad, the popes meant to destroy them and extend their own power.[21]

Richard Knolles' substantial work, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603), was significant and appealing to seventeenth-century readers and thinkers. He advocated a plea for European unity and a counter-attack against the Turks, who were on the decline despite their current power. And although he believed that matters of religion should not be handled by the sword, he contended that Islam spread by the sword, was maintained by the sword, and should one day be dethroned by the Christian sword.[22] Knolles thought that the divisions among Europeans over the crusades led to their failure and gave leverage to the Turks. He also emphasized that the diversion of the Fourth Crusade to loot Constantinople led to segregation and weakness of Christendom.[23] Similar, though more moderate than Knolles, the Calvinist Thomas Fuller in his *Historie of the Holie Warre* (1639) evaluated the crusades in a detached style, expressing his criticism of the theology of the campaigns and the papal exploitation of the laity. He advocated a crusade against the Turks. Like Daniel and Knolles, Fuller called for European unity to stop the advances of the Turks in the continent.[24]

This was the intellectual background that surrounded Shakespeare's works that deal with the crusades. In his dramas, Shakespeare expresses revisionist ideas about the crusades that converge with historiographers of the Renaissance. However, Shakespeare is not a historian but conveys his views through the dramatic interaction of historical and non-historical characters without servility to the accurate historical sequence of events. He rather introduces characters of historical perspective in a different sequence of events. He also creates unhistorical characters to convey ideas and attitudes. Shakespeare reproduces history in an aesthetic formula to re-evaluate historical events in light of Renaissance values and perceptions. Pertinent to the currents study, the

Protestant playwright sheds light on a thirteenth-century continental holy war against England and the effects of a prominent external crusade against the Muslims in the twelfth century. He further addresses the pragmatism of crusading latent in the minds of religious and secular leaders which they resort to as a technique of managing power in their realms.

The Crusade against England during the reign of King John

The major bulk of Shakespeare's presentation of the crusades is provided in *King John*. In that play, Shakespeare presents a sample of the atrocious continental wars [25] and revives the memory of the famous Third Crusade to the Holy Land. King John was the young son of Henry II (1133-1189) and the illegitimate successor of his brother Richard I (1189-1198) to the throne of England. His reign came immediately after the Third Crusade, which was mainly led by Richard I and Philip II of France and ended in 1192 in a truce for three years with Saladin after Richard's failure to recapture Jerusalem. The main spirit that prevailed during that crusade was that of mutual suspicion between the monarchs of England and France, a spirit that revived partisan factionalism that marked the politics of the Latin states prior to the decisive Battle of Hittin (1187).[26]

During the years of John's reign also, Pope Innocent III directed two expeditions to Jerusalem, the Fourth (1202-1205) and the Fifth (1218- 1221) Crusades. The Fourth changes its direction to the city of Zara in Europe, rather than Egypt. Consequently, its leaders were excommunicated by the Pope. [27] The crusade lost its compass again as crusaders invaded and looted Byzantium in 1204. Barber contends that what they did to the city was devastating damage from which it never properly recovered, despite its liberation half a century later. Similarly, the Fifth Crusade was launched against Egypt, but failed to achieve its goals, as it "simply withered away," in James Powell's words, because of lack of resources and manpower.[28] It ended in an eight-year truce with Al-Kamil, the ruler of Egypt in 1221.[29]

Of the expeditions to the Holy Land, only the Third Crusade is referred to in *King John;* Shakespeare indicates that that crusade to the Holy Land was a flat failure as it brought about more hatred among Christians than success in defeating the Muslims. This attitude reiterates Foxe's view and anticipates Daniel's, Knolles' and Fuller's conclusions about the catastrophic consequences of crusades in general. There were more disputes and suspicions among the participating European monarchs than were combats with Saladin.[30] The playwright highlights the resulting feuds among the crusading leaders after returning to Europe, most avid of which is the feud of England's Richard I and the Duke of Austria. Saccio (1974) points out that the character of Austria in

King John is a Shakespearean composite of the two historical figures of Leopold archduke of Austria and Ademar Viscount of Limoges. The former had captured Richard I in Germany and died in 1194, the latter was besieged in his castle by Richard I, who died in 1199 during the siege, and Limoges died later that year.[31]

This conflict is brought to the limelight through the character of Philip Falconbridge, a bastard son of Richard I in Act 1. Bastard is a Shakespearean creation and not a historical figure, but he is given a major role in the play.[32] He is presented as a major character in *King John*. Recent scholarship on the play increasingly looks at him as the major character or rather the protagonist in the play. Van de Water describes him as "a major and ubiquitous figure in the play, and the only character in it who is in the least likable." [33] Furthermore, she considers him a representative figure of the "common, robust, patriotic Englishman who is a faithful follower and a good soldier." [34] However, for the purposes of this study, Bastard is there to revive the glory of Richard I, whose name is a correlative to the Third Crusade. He serves two purposes in this regard: firstly, he carries out a feud against Austria in revenge for his father, and secondly, he represents the English patriotism of his father in defiance of the crusade launched against England by the Pope. Thus, in Bastard's character the two brands of medieval holy campaigns within Europe and to the Holy Land are combined. He posits an imaginary situation in which he gives a new life to the spirit of Anglicism embodied in the character of Richard I, Coeur-de-lion. Bastard revives the readers' memory of Richard I's Third Crusade and the subsequent feuds against his fellow European leaders as he shows a relentless quest for revenge upon Austria, his father's enemy, in Act II. The Elizabethan playwright shows that the European dream of going united for the defeat of the "Pagans" holding the Holy places crumbled to pieces.[35] Furthermore, he serves as a reminder of Richard I's heroism and strong sense of nationalism in reaction to the holy war against England in Act 5.

In *King John*, Richard's crusade recedes to the background, yet it remains lurking behind the events of the play through the character of Bastard. Shakespeare pushes to the fore the destructive crusade launched by the legate of Pope Innocent III against the disobedient King John. Bringing this devastating internal war to the limelight, the Renaissance playwright invites the audience and readers to inspect and analyze the very idea of papal continental crusades. According to Saccio (1974), the reason behind the declaration of this war against England is the dispute between the English monarch and the pope over the intervention of the political leader in the appointment of Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury.[36] The tradition was that clerical positions were usually chosen by the canons or by the abbeys and bishoprics.[37] Political leaders had been prohibited from influencing the monastic choice since the creed of

Pope Gregory VII in 1057 that forbade temporal leaders from interfering in the elections of clerical orders. The Gregorian creed reads as thus:

> No one of the clergy shall receive investiture with a bishopric or abbey or church from the hand of an emperor or king or any lay person, male or female. But if he shall presume to do so he shall clearly know that such investiture is bereft of apostolic authority, and that he himself shall lie under excommunication until fitting satisfaction shall have been rendered.[38]

This proclamation of the sole authority of the church over the appointment of religious positions was challenged by monarchs on the basis that they were the immediate agents of God in their realms, a sacral right that arose to a great extent from the Christian tradition and Scriptural texts (Romans 13: 1-4) that declared kings to be the servants of God. Gregory VII, on the other hand, founded his order on the doctrine of the independence of the church from the control of secular powers.[39]

In their illuminating study on the subject, Nederman and Forhan (1993) contend that the controversy led the thinkers of Europe to speculate about the nature and origin of government and rulership, thus creating an atmosphere with which secular political thought started to emerge. They further argue that the dispute between the religious and secular powers spread all over Europe through the twelfth century, heralding the distinctive and different character of Western modern politics developed through the separation between the state and the church. The dispute between King John and the pope in Shakespeare is in effect a reflection and documentation of the medieval Controversy of Investiture, i.e. the appointment of monastic orders in the countries of Europe, which engaged Europe in the early centuries of the second millennium, according to Nederman and Forhan. [40]

Shakespeare's *King John* can be considered as an attack on the papal see carried through the antipathetic presentation of Cardinal Pandulph, the legate of Pope Innocent III. The play views the dispute between England and Rome from an Elizabethan, not medieval, perspective. Indeed, John's defiance of and response to the papal orders are, as Saccio (1974) notices, couched in Reformation terms.[41] The king declares himself the supreme ruler and deputy of God in his country. He firmly and plainly informs the representative of the Pope that England will be independent of Rome and the priests following the Vatican will not be permitted to collect anything from English domains as usual:

> … we, under [God], are supreme,
> So under Him that great supremacy head,
> Where we do reign, we will alone uphold

Without th' assistance of a mortal hand.
So tell the Pope, all reverence set
To him and his usurp'd authority apart. (*King John;* 3.1.155-60) [42]

King John's reaction to Pandulph is in the same spirit of the much later Henry VIII when he severed the English church from Rome in 1534. John even calls himself the "supreme head" of the national church, which was the very same title the English parliament endowed upon Henry VIII during the English break with the Italian papacy.[43] The medieval monarch also claims the status of the deputy of God in his kingdom, as he refers to himself as "sacred" king.

In this spirit, King John mocks the pope with a cluster of unusual epithets such as "earthly", "mortal", "slight, unworthy, and ridiculous", and describes the papal divine power as "usurp'd authority". This daring attack against the pope was unusual in the thirteenth century. It is rather a Shakespearean retrospective refashioning of an early Tudor monarch after the English reformation of the Renaissance. Saccio (1974) argues that though the English king is not meant to be delineated as a hero, but rather as a usurper of the crown, yet his verbal assault on the papal emissary is shown to be heroic and was much appealing to the Elizabethan Protestants of three centuries later. As Shakespeare makes sure not to credit King John for usurping the crown, he utilizes the situation to direct his assault against the papal representative Pandulph and, thus, against the Pope himself. He delineates the pope's delegate as a destructive discordant force that impairs peace in Christendom, thwarts human happiness of marital union, and instigates a war between two countries newly sworn to peace and alliance.

The timing of the cardinal's introduction to the play is very indicative and significant. He is rushed to the scene immediately after the English and the French have pledged to abject their hostilities and start amity and alliance through the political marriage of Louis, the Dauphin of France, and Blanche, the niece of John, a deal through which concord is expected to replace discord; love to replace hatred; and revels to replace rivalries. The entrance of the legate of Rome at this crucial point upsets the newly developed harmonious atmosphere and rather turns France and England into playfields of war and bloodshed again. He exterminates the only breathing space of hope and happiness in an incessantly turbulent world of war.

The papal legate curses and excommunicates John, imposes an interdict upon England, and succeeds in spurring King Philip of France to fight England on behalf of Rome. In fact, he declares a holy war, a crusade against England, in which France takes the cross and defends faith against 'blasphemous' England. Shakespeare by this repulsive presentation of Pandulph comes down heavily on

this sort of inter-Christian crusades and presents it for total condemnation in the play.

Pandulph's dogmatic rhetoric and insensible declaration of war are juxtaposed to the sensible and honest appeals of King Philip, who very logically presents a case against war, saying that the two countries have been for so long in war; their hands are still smeared with blood, and are happy to come to blissful peace through the bond of marriage between the royal families. Philip emphasizes their unwillingness to go back to the miseries of confrontation. His sincere appeals to the Pope's deputy to revoke his proclamation of war against England and join them in peace and happiness go in vain. To the reasonable and reconciliatory petitions for peace and unity, Pandulph's response comes utterly irrational and absurd:

All form is formless, order orderless,
Save what is opposite to England's love.
Therefore to arms! Be champion of our Church,
Or let the Church, our mother, breathe her curse,
A mother's curse, on her revolting son. (King John; 3.1. 253-57)

This absurd language of absolutism and authoritarianism exposes the legate's heedlessness, recklessness, and futility. Not only that but the papal legate orders France to be the champion of the church under the threat of curse and ex-communication. As King Philip reluctantly chooses faith over peace, the triumphant cardinal gives a lengthy speech that is loaded with deceptive and irrational rhetoric or what Saccio calls "chicanery and chop-logic" in praise of the righteous decision of Philip.[44]

Pandulph's illogical declaration of holy war against England is also played against the pathetic and sentimental set of questions of Blanche to her newly wedded husband as he urges his father to take the cross and crusade for Rome:

Upon thy wedding-day?
Against the blood that thou hast married?
What, shall our feast be kept with slaughter'd men?
Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp?
O husband, hear me! ay, alack, how new
Is husband in my mouth! even for that name,
Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,
Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms
Against mine uncle. (King John; 3. 1. 300-09)

The values of nuptial human unison, the concord and prosperity of nations that come through peace, the harmony that leads to human happiness are all thwarted by the obstinacy of the priest. His decisions and orders create turmoil in the two countries along with the disruption of human interrelationships. Shakespeare, in effect, describes the papal emissary as an agent of evil and destruction.

Pandulph's soothing words to King Philip after the defeat of France in the battles do not stand the bitterness and regret of the French monarch who showers him with a cluster of rhetorical questions:

What can go well, when we have run so ill?
Are we not beaten? Is not Angiers lost?
Arthur ta'en prisoner? Divers dear friends slain?
And bloody England into England gone,
O'er bearing interruption, spite of France? (King John; 3.4. 5-9)

Despite the resentment of Philip, the destructive agent does not give up but rather talks the ambitious Louis into leading a campaign against England, persuading him that John is going to kill Arthur and that act is most likely going to create a suitable situation in which the Dukes of England are expected to revolt against the illegitimate and murderous King and join Louis in revolt against him. He thus whets the ambition of Louis and pushes him to carry on his war into England.

In the last act of the play, Shakespeare revokes the spirit of Reformation he endows upon John in the early acts and casts him back into the historical perspective of the 13th-century. Under the pressure of civil dissentions over the death of Arthur, the demands of the church, and the French invasion of English soil, John finally succumbs to the orders of Rome and yields up his crown to Pandulph, which symbolically means that he turns England into a fief that he rules as a vassal of the pope. At this submission, Pandulph promises him to repeal the crusade declared against his country.

Notably, it is Louis now who gives up his role as the champion of the church, rejects the cardinal's quest to stop the war, and sustains his military expedition as the legitimate inheritor of the crown after the death of Arthur. He defies the papal legate's order to stop the war: "Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars / And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out/ With that same weak wind which enkindled it" (*King John;* 5.2. 85-7). This defiance of Pandulph's papal orders marks the end of the crusade originally called for by him. England yields to the orders of Rome, and Louis changes his motives, namely he shifts from the role of the champion of the church to that of a rival in the contest for

the English throne. Louis claims that "I, by the honor of my marriage-bed, / After young Arthur, claim this land mine" (*King John;* 5.2. 93-4). Abjuring his role as "Rome's slave" (5.2.93-4), the pragmatic Louis is encouraged by several factors. These factors include his military success in the battle-field, his alliance with the noble dissenters, the sickness and withdrawal of the king from London, and the favorable reception Louis gets from the English people. Thus, the inter-Christian crusade ignited by Rome turns into a secular continental rivalry over the legitimacy of authority in England.

Longing for a crusade to the Holy Land:

The turbulent situation of England brought about by papal meddling in the affairs of the continent releases the longing for European unity in which the combating armies can unite and lead a real crusade against the Turks. Salisbury expresses such longing in a spirit that Louis calls "a noble temper." Salisbury wishes: "O nation, that thou couldst remove!/ And [gripple] thee unto a pagan shore,/ Where these two Christian armies might combine*"* *(King John;* 5. 2. 33-4, 37). Salisbury's quest for European forces to stand united against the Turks who were gaining ground in Europe echoes the pleas of contemporary historiographers, such as Foxe, Daniel, Knolles, and Fuller for European solidarity that could stop the progress of the Turks in the continent. Shakespeare in *King John* records the European temper and pulse of his age. Interestingly, the English historiographers had the conviction that the victories of the Turks were some of the repercussions of the failure of the crusades.

The crusade Salisbury pleas for is similar to that in which the legendary Richard I participated, "Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart/ And fought the holy wars in Palestine" (*King John;* 2.1. 3-4). Richard I represents the English chivalry and heroism. The legendary story of his ripping a roaring lion of its heart is referred to in various places in Act I of the play. Bastard takes after his father and revitalizes his heroic spirit. Eleanor quickly identifies the genetic prints of her son Richard in the person of Bastard who has a "Cordelion's face" (*King John;* 1.1. 86), as he and his half-brother Robert Faulconbridge present their dispute over their inheritance of land. Eleanor wonders, not without pride: "Do you not read some tokens of my son/ In the large composition of this man" (*King John;* 1.1. 88-9)? King John, too, finds Bastard's parts "perfect Richard" (*King John;* 1.1.90). During the English campaign against the alliance of France and Austria in support of Arthur, Bastard sets forth to revenge upon Austria, the murderer of Richard I (Barber 1992, 129). Bastard in the play is dressed in a lion's hide, and joins the alliance in support of Arthur's restoration of the usurped crown in order to make amends for killing the lion-hearted (*King John;* 2.1.2-11).

Presented somehow like a clone of Richard I, Bastard revives the English patriotism best represented by his father. He is given an enveloping effect in the play. He appears most emphatically in Acts I and V. In Act II, he revenges his father's death, in Act V he regains the heroic spirit of his father, especially at a time of military defeat before the French and religious submission to Rome. Amidst a declining historical moment in which King John surrenders to the orders of Rome, the English nobles join arms with the French, and the English citizens welcome the army of the Dauphin, Bastard awakens his Plantagenet spirit and takes leadership of the English forces against the invading French army. In fact, he is given the closing lines to end the play on a national, patriotic, and heroic note, a note that appeals very much to Elizabethan writer and his audience:

This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again
Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true. (King John; 5.7. 112-18)

This form of English heroism retrospectively tailored from a Reformation outlook prevails in the play. It is initially associated with Richard I and John's defiance of Papal orders at the outset of the play. But as King John fails to sustain this fortitude till the end, English valor is inspired and provoked by Richard's "cordelian" spirit through Bastard. David Womersley (1989) asserts that "King John's, final unalloyed patriotism is decisively shaped by our awareness of the route taken by the Bastard to reach the position from which he makes his final assertions" (500).

Why the Crusades and why crusading?

In the second tetralogy, Shakespeare introduces the popular religious and political incentives for crusading to the Holy Land. He examines the belief that involvement in such an activity can warrantee the crusader the ultimate divine reward of salvation for the gravest of all sins against God, namely the violation of the Divine Right of Kings.[45] This way Shakespeare registers the late medieval and Renaissance public consciousness which kept Jerusalem as the "focal point of crusading," in Barber's words, [46] as much as he records the political concept that viewed the king as the sacred deputy of God on earth. This way any violation of the monarch's authority meant a sin against God to be punished by God Himself. Only taking the cross and fighting to deliver Jerusalem will warrant salvation and expiation for the sinner who violates this sacred right of a

king. This sort of violation and the means of salvation correlate in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the two parts of *Henry IV,* and *Henry V*.

In these plays, the writer elaborates on the interrelationship of these two issues: the divine rights of kings and crusading to Jerusalem as a method of deliverance from violating the first issue. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare brings the first concept to the fore. A monarch, according to this concept, is considered the "deputy", the "minister", or the "substitute" of God on earth (*Richard II;* 1.2.37-41). A king was thought to be appointed by God and no power had the right to depose him except God Himself. Carlisle consoles King Richard saying: "that Power that made you king/ Hath power to keep you in spite of all" (*Richard II;* 3.2. 27-8). And later, Richard assures himself: "For well me know no hand of blood and bone/ Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,/Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp" (*Richard II;* 3.3. 79-81). Furthermore, the king on earth is viewed as a microcosmic representation of the universal macrocosmic divinity of God in heaven. This is why nature and the universe at large respond with chaotic changes foretelling the demise of a king. This conviction is available in *Richard II*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar*, among others. This is why the death of a king in Shakespeare is preceded and accompanied by disorder and chaos in the universe in both the terrestrial and celestial spheres. The case becomes worse when a subject kills a king or usurps his crown. Thus, Bolingbroke, crowned as Henry IV, at the end of *Richard II,* is aware of the gravity of his sin in violating the divine right of King Richard. Moreover, the execution of Richard at the hands of Exton, the agent of Bolingbroke, makes the sin unbearable. When Henry is told of Exton's execution of Richard, he responds: "Exton, thank thee not; for thou hast wrought/ A deed of slander, with thy fatal hand,/ Upon my head and all this famous land" (*Richard II*; 5.6. 34-6). Henry's is not only a crime against the English court but a sin against heavenly divinity. This sin is of so paramount weight that can be cleansed only by an act of parallel significance. The only way available for Henry IV to alleviate the heavy burden of sin from his soul is to crusade to Jerusalem:"I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,/ To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (*Richard II;* 5.6. 49-50).

Shakespeare here points out one other element of a crusade, namely the element of indulgence as the most important among the spiritual and material privileges granted to those who took the cross and crusaded to Jerusalem. Indulgence meant that those who died on a crusade would have their sins wiped clean and would be guaranteed a place in heaven.[47] Henry's usurpation of Richard's crown and his need for purgation through crusading are central to the massive flux of events in the first and second parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and the three parts *Henry VI*. Heavenly wrath over the violation is reflected by the immediacy of Henry's agony, suffering, and lack of fulfillment during his life on

earth; he is not given a breathing space to enjoy the crown he has usurped. His rule starts with the eruption of mutinies, ailing health that disables him, and the irresponsibility and playfulness of his eldest son, Harry, who spends most of his time in taverns, setting intrigues for drunkards and outcasts, instead of shouldering the responsibility with his devastated father. What multiplies Henry's agony is his inability to crusade to Jerusalem to free his soul from guilt, or so he claims.

We, however, discover towards the end of 2 *Henry IV* that King Henry's initial promise at the end of *Richard II* to crusade to Jerusalem is not genuine, but is merely a tactic to direct the energies of the nation to wars abroad, instead of leaving the ambitious factions at home to plot against his crown and life. He is particularly aware of this concern since he himself has set a precedence in teaching "Bloody instructions, which being taught, return / To plague th' inventor" in Macbeth's phraseology (*Macbeth;* 1.7.9-10). Like Macbeth, King Henry IV wants to avoid the "even-handed justice [which] commends th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice / To our own lips" (*Macbeth;* 1.7.11-12). This much is revealed in King Henry's last deathbed advice to his son and inheritor to the throne:

I... had a purpose... now
To lead out many to the Holy Land,
Lest rest and lying still might make them look
Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
With foreign quarrels, that action, hence borne out,
May waste the memory of the former days. (2 Henry IV. 4.5. 209-15)

Shakespeare expresses his revisionist view of the crusades and the reality of crusading in his exposure of the real motives behind King Henry's intended crusade which can be viewed as a sample of the pragmatic reasons lying behind other political and religious leaders' involvement in the crusades. This view, somehow, anticipates the skeptical conclusions of four centuries of modern historical revision of the atrocities of the crusades in Europe and abroad.

Jacque Theorn and Erna Oliver (2018) in their article, "Changing perspectives on the Crusades," provide a comprehensive survey of the fluctuating views on the crusades expressed by major authors on the subject from the Age of Shakespeare to the 21st century. They argue that the philosophy of revisionism of historical events is pertinent to the fact that history is usually written from the point of view of the dominant party in society. They add that the very idea of reinterpreting "historical events happens because of the

availability of new facts or input and the objectivity about these activities resulting from the distance of time and space.[48]

One such avid example is Charles Mills' The History of the Crusades (1820) which is a very skeptic 19th-century evaluation of the traumatic activities of the crusades. It criticizes the role of the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy for these activities. He says that "it was the policy of the Church of Rome to encourage the spirit of crusading, because they who skillfully administer public prejudices, become in time masters of the people." [49] Mills indicates that there was an economic factor behind the zeal for proclaiming holy wars by the Roman pontiffs, who were enriched by the crusade contributions, a fact that broke the spirit of crusading. More recently, Barber (1992) similarly argues that the origins of the crusades lie in the nature of the Christian community towards the end of the eleventh century rather than through the external provocation of the Muslim Seljuks at the time. He goes on to say that Jerusalem fell to the Muslims in 638 without motivating any similar response to the pontifical proclamation of Urban II at Clermont in 1095.[50]

Another example is that of Tomaz Mastnak (2002) who points out another aspect in this debate that holy war was a stage of development that replaced "holy (peace)" in medieval thinking "with reference to the volatile relationship between Muslims and Christians." [51] This way Christianity moved from peace to war. Likewise, Christopher Tyerman (2006), a leading modern authority on the subject, explains the western changing thought during the time of the Crusades, showing how "Christian pacifism changed into Christian just war." [52] He explains how "holy war became a part of the papal program." [53] He also propounds the deception and propaganda in Urban II's speech that ignited the Crusades.

Shakespeare anticipates such revisionist views. In the two parts of *Henry IV*, he demonstrates that those wars were pragmatic in nature and were meant to enforce the will of the church, and later the monarchs, upon Europe or European countries. In *Henry V*, Shakespeare presents an epic hero as well as an ideal English monarch who benefits from his father's experience and advice by stirring his nation to fight for a just cause rather than crusading to the East. He leads his nation to regain its rights in France. King Henry V, however, remains aware of his father's sin and is also apprehensive lest God's wrath fall upon his head. Before the decisive battle of Agincourt, he appeals to God not to punish him in this battle for the sin of his father: "Not to-day, O Lord, / O, not to-day, think not upon the fault/ My father made in compassing the crown" (*Henry V*; 4.1.291-94). The righteous monarch is exempted of heavenly revenge and wins a victory over the French. His triumph regains him the English territories and wins him the heart of Katherine, the daughter of the French king. Henry's political

marriage to the French princess brings about an ideal harmonious situation between the English and the French. Such an exemplary unity between European nations creates the proper environment for crusading against the "menacing" Turks. Henry V courts Katherine, saying:

> Shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard? (*Henry V*; 5.2. 206-09)

This scene of unity and harmony between England and France affected through the marriage of Henry V and Katherine is best juxtaposed to the scene in *King John* discussed above when the papal representative prevents peace and unity between the same countries through the marriage of the Dauphin and Blanche. The Juxtaposition shows the destructiveness of papal policies in the early situation and the blessedness of nations when there is no such interception or influence. The play abides by the concepts of the divine rights of kings and indulgence as a reward for those who pick the cross. However, the absence of papal influence from *Henry V* enables the English hero to achieve prosperity and cater for the welfare of his people. Shakespeare anticipates the future discussion about separating religion from governance that led to the success and progress of Europe.

The early death of King Henry V leaves a vacancy of power in England, and the accession of his very young son, crowned as King Henry VI, creates a suitable situation for rivalry among the dukes and later a break of civil war between the Yorkists and Lancastrians, usually referred to as Wars of the Roses (1455-1485).[54] The bloody events of these wars that occupy the major space of the first tetralogy can be looked at as a Shakespearean dramatization of Carlisle's prophecy in *Richard II*: "The blood of English shall manure the ground / And future ages groan for this foul act" (*Richard II*; 4. 1. 137-38). The foul act Carlisle refers to is King Henry IV's usurpation of King Richard II's crown. Thus, God's punishment for Henry IV's sin falls upon the English during his grandson's rule. Henry VI's crown is lost to the Yorkist faction, only to be regained by Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, later Henry VII, after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.

Henry VII puts an end to the devastating dynastic struggle through marriage to a daughter of the Yorkist Edward IV, thus, uniting the claims of the two factions. In the first tetralogy, Shakespeare demonstrates how England loses continental domains and shrinks to its insular boundaries to destroy itself with an inner struggle over the crown. It is to avoid such a civil war that Henry IV plans, or at least claims, to crusade to Palestine. It is also because of this indigenous

engagement that there is no reference to Crusades in the tetralogy of the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*.

Conclusion:

Shakespeare's review of the centuries of medieval England and Europe sees the continent as a body divided by the papal policies and debilitated by the contests between the spiritual and the temporal, the *regnum* and the *sacerdotium*. Shakespeare lived in an atmosphere of somehow independent secular politics that enjoyed a great amount of freedom from ecclesiastical intervention, which had been a difficult ambition to realize by early medieval monarchs.

In Shakespeare, as in history, the crusades to the Holy Land were mainly pragmatic wars meant originally to serve ecclesiastical orders and European monarchs. The longing of Shakespeare's Henry V and Salisbury for a united continent that can fight abroad and regain the Holy places, the very sites of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, heralds the late twentieth-century awareness of European identity. The contemporary consciousness, anticipated by Shakespeare, is developed in the modern world to think not of spiritual legacy, but of the temporal well-being of all Europeans. The Elizabethan perception of the crusades can be best be represented by the following words of John Saunders on the same subject:

> Perhaps the greatest and least disputed achievement of the Crusades was to educate the Western nations in a sense of unity by welding them together in a common and persistent endeavor. It was no ordinary series of wars that could plant in the minds of men "the idea of Europe" or the consciousness of being European.[55]

Endnotes

1 Jacques Theron and Ema Oliver,"Changing Perspectives on the Crusades," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 74, 1 (2018), 1.

2 Theron and Oliver, 1.

3 Tomaz Mastnak, C*rusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 63.

4 Mastnak, 63.

5 Theron and Oliver, 1.

6 Theron and Oliver, 1.

7 Christopher Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 14.

8 Tyerman, 14.

9 Tyerman, 14.

10 For more on Shakespeare's history plays and their scope, see E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (New York: Collier, 1962); and Peter Saccio, *Shakespeare's English Kings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 4-5.

11 Malcolm Barber, *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe 1050-1320* (London: Routledge, 1992), 135.

12 Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades*? (London: Macmillan, 1985). Riley-Smith counts various types of crusades: crusades to the Near East, crusades in Spain, crusades in North-Eastern Europe, crusades against Schismatics and Heretics, and crusades against lay-powers in the West, 21-8.

13 For a full discussion of the definition and elements of crusades, see Riley-Smith, 12-13, 18-24.

14 Riley-Smith, 55-62.

15 Barber, 119.

16 Tyerman, 38.

17 Tyerman, 40.

18 Cited in Tyerman, 40.

19 Cited in Tyerman, 42.

20 Tyerman, 58.

21 Tyerman, 59.

22 Tyerman, 60.

23 Tyerman, 60.

24 Tyerman, 62.

25 Riley-Smith, 21-8.

25 Tyerman, 62.

26 Barber, 131.

27 For a full account of the Fourth Crusade, see Barber, 131-32.

28 James Powell, Anatomy *of a Crusade, 1213-1221 (*Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 168.

29 Barber, 133.

30 Barber, 129.

31 for a full discussion of the character of Austria, who is a Shakespearean composite of two historical figures Leopold archduke of Austria, who had captured Richard I in Germany, died in 1194, see Saccio, 204-05.

32 Saccio, 119-22.

33 J. Van de Water, "The Bastard in *King John*," *Shakespeare Quarterly 11, no.* 2 (1960), 137.

34 Van de Water, 137.

35 Saccio, 206.

36. For a more detailed account on the historical story of the historical dispute of Pope Innocent III and King John over the appointment of Stephen Langton, see Saccio, 196.

37 Cary Nederman and Kate Forhan, *Medieval Political Theory - A Reader: The Quest for the Body Politic, 1100-1400* (London: Routledge, 1993), 14.

38 Nederman and Forhan, 15.

39 Nederman and Forhan, 14.

40 Nederman and Forhan, 15.

41 Saccio, 204. See also

42 All quotations from the plays of Shakespeare are taken from G. Blackmore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Mifflin. 1974).

43 Saccio, 204; and Nederman and Forhan, 14-6).

44 Saccio, 204.

45 Tillyard, 91-98.

46 Barber, 128.

47 Barber, 119.

48 Theron and Oliver, 1.

49 Mills, cited in Theron and Oliver, 284.

50.Barber, 119.

51 Mastnak, 16.

52 Tyerman, 33.

53 Tyerman, 47.

54 For a full discussion of that war, See Alison Weir, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Ballantine, 1995).

55 *Americana Encyclopedia, s.v.* "Crusades," by John Saunders, 1981 edition.

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