

## The Second Tetralogy's Move from Achievements to Badges

Ceri Sullivan, Cardiff University

In passionate response to the king's insistence that the crown should get any prisoners of war, Hotspur famously reaches for the moon:

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap  
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep...  
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks,  
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear,  
Without corrival, all her dignities.

But out upon this half-faced fellowship! (1 Henry IV 1.3.200-207)<sup>1</sup>

Most comment follows Northumberland and Worcester in thinking Hotspur is spouting 'a world of figures/... But not the form of what he should attend' (1.3.208-9). It gets called empty huffing, suitable for an apprentice's audition piece, as in the Induction to The Knight of the Burning Pestle (c. 1607). The lines do not seem to require much more: 'bright honour' is a conventional collocation in the sixteenth century (here, shining like the disc of the moon) and 'drowned honour' is a hairy personification, perhaps a bit muddy from lying around on the bottom. In either state, the honour (a concrete dignity) should be captured and worn by one man alone. The only historical gloss editors offer is a suggestion that 'half-faced' may refer to the paired profiles of Philip and Mary on the Marian shilling.

Leslie Hotson noted a reference to the Percy badge: the crescent moon.<sup>2</sup> However, he did not point out that the Percy silver crescent moon usually encloses a fetterlock (a double manacle, which locks two fists together). Together, crescent and lock appear to be a full-faced moon with big eyes; looked at another way, this becomes two faces in profile, opposing each other. There is, for instance, a man in each of the five crescents-with-fetterlocks on the margin of the first folio of British Library MS Arundel 130 (dated 1446-1461), an ordinal and annotated breviary owned by Henry Percy, third Earl of Northumberland.<sup>3</sup> Though the crescent moon had been borne by the Percys since 1386, Hotspur

---

<sup>1</sup> W. Shakespeare, King Henry IV Part 1, ed. D.S. Kastan, Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Thomson Learning, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> L. Hotson, Shakespeare by Hilliard (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), pp. 156-8. The battle cry of 'Esperance! Percy!' is accurately reported by Shakespeare (2.3.70, 5.2.96).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=3014>, accessed 6/11/14.

was the first of his family to combine a crescent and lock, initially on his seal. Henry Percy, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, revived the collocation of the two, which appeared on his seals from 1588.<sup>4</sup> So the passage from 1 Henry IV (probably first performed early in 1597) may show a Percy yearning to retrieve a badge of honour - the moon and its locks - from the alternative possibility that the family's moon has embraced a double-faced man like Henry.

This article will argue that the wearers of 'dignities' in the second tetralogy make repeated attempts to separate their heraldic signs from such 'half-faced fellowship'. Accordingly, heritable heraldic achievements (based on descent and marriage) give way to badges (personal signs of loyalty to one man), which are recast as national badges. The argument starts with the revolutionary connotations of the Percy badge in the 1560s to 1590s. It then turns to Henry IV's anxiety over the permanent abatement of his family coat of arms. Neither coat nor badge will do for his son, who - first separating the gage from the badge - looks to an emblem of place of birth (not dynasty), which was worn in the 1590s by that unofficial 'prince of Wales', the second Earl of Essex.

Many critics have weighed the claims of the abstract quality of honour in 1 Henry IV, balancing between what David Scott Kastan calls 'the fat knight's deflating nominalism' and Hotspur's 'committed essentialism' (pp. 70, 77). Here, though, I want to keep to the heraldic honour as a concrete noun. Gerard Cox traces it as a recurrent image in 1 Henry IV. Hal promises to call to account the 'child of honour and renown,/ This gallant Hotspur', wishing that 'every honour sitting on his helm,/... were multitudes' to be plucked off (3.2.139-40, 142-3). Blount, one of 'many marching in [the king's] coats' (5.3.25), in an inglorious tactic to spread any risk offered to the king, is the second such 'coat' to be taken by the Douglas, who jokes that he will kill the king's 'wardrobe, piece by piece' (5.3.27). Falstaff concludes that honour is a 'mere scutcheon' (5.1.139-40), referring to the escutcheon, a shield with armorial bearings (in this period, the use of the word was not confined to funeral hatchments), so the dead Blount seems to him a coat worn by 'grinning honour' (5.3.33, 60). Though Hal threatens Hotspur that 'the budding honours on thy crest/ I'll crop to make a garland for my head' (5.4.71-2), in the event he covers the dead man's face with his own 'favours' (5.4.95). In

---

<sup>4</sup> W.H.D. Longstaffe, 'The Old Heraldry of the Percies', Archaeologia Aeliana new series vol 4 (1860), pp. 157-228, pp. 178-80, 183, 213, 217-8, 223; Northumbrian Monuments, or the Shields of Arms, Effigies, and Inscriptions in the Churches, Castles, and Halls of Northumberland Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Records Committee 4 (1924), pp. 133, 152.

doing so, Cox argues, Hal shows himself to be a truly magnanimous prince, not a counterfeit heir to the throne.<sup>5</sup>

A complete achievement of arms comprises shield, supporters, crest, mantle, helm, and motto (though only the shield is essential). Arms and crests are personal to their bearers (and with due difference, their families). Coats of arms cannot be sold or alienated as long as there are kindred of the family still alive. There is only one way they can be lost: by attainder, which works corruption in the blood, extinguishing all civil rights and capacities, among them the right to bear arms (both weapons and coats of arms). By contrast, badges are heraldic insignia which are not associated with the shield or helm, though they may be displayed in conjunction with a coat of arms. Badges may be worn as marks or cognizances by retainers or adherents.<sup>6</sup> They are thus simple communal signs, more instantly recognizable than the armorial shield, and worn by the common man as well as the leader. Rapid recognition was important in battle (rival badges gave their names to the Wars of the Roses). But in peacetime, too, badges were widely and habitually displayed on pennons, seals, costume, military equipment, horse trappings, household furniture, and plate. Heraldry experts claimed that they were natural signs in civil society (as with the tattoos of the New World inhabitants).<sup>7</sup> Thus a working knowledge of heraldry was not confined to the armigerous ranks, a fact also suggested by the popularity of published guides like Gerard Legh's The Accedens of Armorie (1562, 1568, 1576, 1591, 1597, 1612), abridged by John Bossewell as Workes of Armorie (1572, 1597), John Ferne's The Blazon of Gentry (two editions in 1586), Edmund Bolton's The Elements of Armories (1610), and John Guillim's A Display of Heraldrie (1610, 1611, and onwards into the eighteenth century).

The legend told about the Percy family badge was that the Crusader William de Percy, who died in sight of Jerusalem in 1096, adopted the crescent.<sup>8</sup> A verse chronicle from the early sixteenth century, probably by William Peeris, a clerk to the fifth Earl of Northumberland, traces the genealogy of the Percys from the conquest onwards. Peeris claims that William de Percy, fighting at the 'Ponnte Terrible' was granted a portent, a moon 'i[n]very syng her light' as it shined on his shield, so encouraging his side to victory. 'And therfor the Perses the cressant doth renew', Peeris says the

---

<sup>5</sup> G. Cox, 'Like a Prince Indeed: Hal's Triumph of Honor in 1 Henry IV', in Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theater, ed. D.M. Bergeron (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1985), pp. 130-52.

<sup>6</sup> Boutell's Heraldry, revised J.P. Brooke-Little (London: Frederick Warne, 1973), pp. 163-4. G.C. Rothery lists references to badges across a range of Shakespeare's plays, The Heraldry of Shakespeare: a Commentary with Annotations (London: Morland Press, 1930), ch. 5.

<sup>7</sup> E. Bolton, The Elements of Armories (1610), pp. 20-2.

<sup>8</sup> E. de Fonblanque, Annals of the House of Percy 2 vols (London: R. Clay and Sons, 1887), 1.20.

chronicles conclude.<sup>9</sup> Six copies of Peeris's work exist, including one at the Percy seat of Alnwick Castle and another at the British Library, where it is part of a manuscript which contains an illustration of the Percy moon receiving its light from the Tudor sun of Henry VIII.<sup>10</sup>

During Shakespeare's lifetime the Percy badge was kept in public view by the family's Catholic faith. One of the leaders of the Rising of the North in 1569 was Thomas Percy, seventh Earl of Northumberland. Quixotic and brief as it was, the Rising had the character of a crusade, recovering holy places from Protestant desecration. Wearing red crosses, men at arms marched under the banners of the five wounds of Christ; masses and anthems were sung in Durham Cathedral and surrounding parish churches; altar stones and holy water stones were brought out of hiding and reinstalled, and Protestant books and communion tables were burned.<sup>11</sup> Trying Percy in 1571, after the failure of the Rising, the state flourished a prophecy said to have been found among the Earl's papers. At the rising of the moon one lion would be overthrown and two other lions united (referring to Northumberland, Elizabeth, and a projected marriage between the country's two most eminent Catholics, Mary Stuart and the Duke of Norfolk) – a document Percy dismissed as 'foolish Prophecy'.<sup>12</sup>

Patriotic ballads immediately after the Rising of the North saw the potential of the Percy badge to symbolize changeable loyalties and folly. John Barker's 'The Plagues of Northumberland' (1570) tells how 'the Moon, in Northumberland,/ After the change, in age well conne/ Did rise in force, then to with stande/ The light and bright beams of the Sonne', opposing 'the false beames of the glystringe Moon'. William Elderton's 'A Ballat Intituled Northomerland Newes' (1570) asks 'What meane ye to follow the man in the Moone', and reminds hearers of how an earlier 'Percie provoked King Harry to

---

<sup>9</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, 'A Verse Chronicle of the House of Percy', *Studies in Philology* 105.2 (2008), pp. 226-44, pp. 231-2, dealing with Alnwick Castle MS 79.

<sup>10</sup> A.G. Dickens, 'The Tudor Percy Emblem in Royal MS. 18 Dii', *The Archaeological Journal* 112 (1955), pp. 95-99, plate xiv, p. 97, referring to earlier Galfridian prophecies about an eclipsed Percy moon reviving in conjunction with a kingly Edwardian sun.

<sup>11</sup> D. Newton, *North-East England, 1569-1625: Governance, Culture and Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 118-25. The specifically Catholic impetus behind the Rising in the North of 1569, challenged by revisionist historians, has recently been reasserted, K.J. Kesselring, "'A Cold Pye for the Papistes": Constructing and Containing the Northern Rising of 1569', *Journal of British Studies* 43.4 (2004), 417-43. On the seventh Earl's actions during the Rising, see Fonblanque, *Annals*, 2.22-3, 35-41, 46, 57.

<sup>12</sup> *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason, and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors*, 33 vols (London: T.C. Hansard, 1809-26), 1.997. Hotspur threatens a key military alliance by impatience over Glendower's belief in such prophecies (3.1.12 ff).

frowne'. William Kirkham's 'Joyfull Newes for True Subjects'(1570) rejoices that 'the Man in the Moone' has been brought down.<sup>13</sup>

The execution of Thomas Percy was not the end to questions about the family's loyalty to the crown over the succeeding decades.<sup>14</sup> He was named as a Catholic martyr (with other Northern rebels) by Father Richard Bristow in 1574. In 1584 Cardinal William Allen repeated that Percy was 'a Saint and holie Martir' for refusing the state's offer of mercy if he altered his religion.<sup>15</sup> The attainder of the seventh Earl specifically reserved the rights of his brother Sir Henry Percy - who had stayed loyal to Elizabeth during the rising - to inherit the title. Nonetheless this eighth Earl was also suspected of involvement in Catholic plots against the Queen, and imprisoned. When in 1585 he was found shot through the heart in the Tower of London, all sides doubted the government's claim of suicide.<sup>16</sup>

The death of the eighth Earl marked a brief recrudescence in the way the family was perceived. Able to convince Elizabeth throughout the 1580s and 1590s of his personal loyalty, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy, was installed as a Knight of the Garter in 1593, and was selected to carry the Garter to a newly elected Stranger Knight, Henri IV of France, on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1596.<sup>17</sup> The Percy crescent-and-fetterlock would have been highly visible during the notably opulent ceremonies of installation.<sup>18</sup> George Peele wrote a congratulatory dream poem on the occasion, in which a number

---

<sup>13</sup> Claire Lamont, 'Shakespeare's Henry IV and "the old song of Percy and Douglas"', in Shakespearean Continuities, ed. J. Batchelor, T. Cain, and C. Lamont (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), ch. 4, pp. 65-8.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Percy may have come to mind again when his widow died in October 1596, and was buried at Westminster Abbey, W. Camden, Reges, reginae, nobiles, & alij in ecclesia collegiata B. Petri Westmonasterij sepulti (1600), H1v.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Bristow, A Briefe Treatise of Diuers Plaine and Sure Waies to Finde Out the Truth in this Doubtfull and Dangerous Time of Heresie (1574; 1599), p. 73r; William Allen, A True, Sincere and Modest Defence, of English Catholiques (1584), pp. 48-9; 'Percy, Thomas, seventh earl of Northumberland (1528–1572)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21956?docPos=5>, accessed 6/11/14.

<sup>16</sup> 'Percy, Henry, eighth earl of Northumberland (c. 1532-1585)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21938?docPos=9>, accessed 6/11/14.

<sup>17</sup> Fonblanques, Annals, 2.201. The task eventually went elsewhere, P. Begent and H. Chesshyre, The Most Noble Order of the Garter: 650 Years (London: Spink, 1999), pp. 234-5.

<sup>18</sup> The Garter processions from London to Windsor had become so flamboyant that the knights for installation in 1597 were ordered to limit their trains to fifty attendants, S. Trigg, Shame and Honor: a Vulgar History of the Order of the Garter (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p.

of the most prominent contemporary authors (including Edmund Spenser, Samuel Daniel, and Edmund Campion, but not Shakespeare) are unwilling to follow Philip Sidney and Christopher Marlowe into the grave while there is still a possibility that they can honour the ninth Earl. Peele's Edward III, the founder of the Garter, urges Percy to 'Become thy badge, as it becommeth thee'.<sup>19</sup> Until 1605 this was the standard line: George Chapman, praising the arts and sciences in a commendatory poem on Sejanus (1605) celebrates how 'Northumber... with them, his crescent fills'.<sup>20</sup> In the same year William Camden cites an anonymous anagram about the Percy name, 'with a relation to the Crescent or silver Moone his Cognisance': 'Percius HIC PURE SINCERUS, Percia Luna/ Candida tota micat, pallet at illa polo' ('Percy, he is truly sincere; the Percy crescent shines completely brightly though it is pale in the sky').<sup>21</sup>

But after the ninth Earl supported a limited measure of toleration for Catholics, and his cousin, Thomas Percy, was cited a ringleader in the Gunpowder Plot, Henry Percy fell under royal suspicion, and was imprisoned in the Tower from 1606, for fifteen years.<sup>22</sup> In 1609 John Davies, writing master to the Percy daughters, prudently focuses on the future (tenth) Earl, urging him to learn to read as 'A perfect Pierc-ey that in darknesse cleeres... /So, Percies fame shall pierce the Eie of Daies/ Then, by those Raies my Pen (inflam'd) shall runn,/ Beyond the Moone, to make thy Moone a Sunne!'<sup>23</sup> The rebellious inflections of the crescent continue in a conflated version of the two parts of Henry IV, put together for an amateur performance at some point after 1613. The most substantial change to the original substituted, for three lines by Henry on the Holy Land ('over whose acres walked those blessed feet,/ Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed/ For our advantage on the bitter cross', Henry IV, 1.1.25-7), nine lines on the king's longing to assume the honours of the opposition:

And force proude Mahomett from Palestine.

---

153. On the Garter entertainments that year, see G. Melchiori, Shakespeare's Garter Plays: Edward III to The Merry Wives of Windsor (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), ch. 5.

<sup>19</sup> G. Peele, The Honour of the Garter (1593), C4r, D1r.

<sup>20</sup> G. Chapman, in B. Jonson, Sejanus His Fall (1605), ed. P. J. Ayres (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 60; Hotson, Shakespeare, pp. 156-8.

<sup>21</sup> W. Camden, Remains Concerning Britain (1605), ed. R.D. Dunn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 149, 490. When the ninth Earl died in 1632 the inventory for Petworth showed that many family rooms had green hangings marked with white crescents (even the brew house kept a half-moon branding iron), G.R. Batho, ed., The Household Papers of Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632), Camden Third Series 93 (1962), pp. 114, 117, 118.

<sup>22</sup> 'Percy, Henry, ninth earl of Northumberland (1564-1632)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21939?docPos=10>, accessed 6/11/14.

<sup>23</sup> J. Davies, Humours Heav'n on Earth (1609), A2v.

The high aspiring Cresant of the turke,  
 Wee'll plucke into a lower orbe, and then  
 Humbling her borrowed Pride to th' English lyon,  
 With labour and with honour wee'le fetch there  
 A sweating laurell from the glorius East  
 And plant new jemms on royall Englands crowne.  
 We'll pitch our honores att the sonnes uprise  
 and sell our selves or winn a glorious prize (1 Henry IV, appendix 3, p. 350).

The vocabulary used picks up the fight between the physical badges in the rest of 1 Henry IV: a crescent will be reduced to an orb lower than the sun, its honours plucked off to make a new crest for the crown.

1 Henry IV's planetary references are usually read from the point of view of the victor. The regular use of imagery associated with the heraldic royal badges of Richard II and Henry IV - sunbursts, suns in splendour, and clouded suns - has long been noted.<sup>24</sup> As Hal reflects on himself as a sun which permits clouds to smother it before it breaks forth (1.2.187-93) he pre-empt's his father's memory about how Richard failed to shadow his 'sun-like majesty' (3.2.79), so merely tiring the eyes of onlookers, rather than dazzling them with brief glimpses of royalty. When Falstaff plays the king he teases Hal about whether the prince can be a true 'son of England', for could a 'blessed sun of heaven prove a micher' (2.4.399, 397-8). Vernon's account of Hal and his men before the battle of Shrewsbury carries on the theme: 'Glittering in golden coats like images.../ gorgeous as the sun at midsummer' (4.1.99,101), an enthusiasm hushed by Hotspur as 'worse than the sun in March' (4.1.110). The king's advice to Hal to act 'like a comet', to steal 'all courtesy from heaven', so as to 'pluck allegiance from men's hearts,/... Even in the presence of the crowned King' (3.2.47, 50, 52-4), sees allegiance as a disputed physical favour, to be snatched by the Lancasters. As in the Dering manuscript, the king unwittingly echoes Hotspur's determination to 'pluck' honour from the face of the moon and 'out of this nettle, danger, [to] pluck this flower, safety' (2.3.8-9). The passage is approvingly cited by an anonymous common-placer, picking out bits from 1 Henry IV sometime before 1603 (now BL Additional MS 64078): 'As he may pluck allegiance from mens harts even in the presence of ye Queene' is noted (daringly re-sexing the monarch to fit the circumstances).<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> For instance, James Hoyle, 'Some Emblems in Shakespeare's Henry IV Plays', ELH 38.4 (1971), pp. 512-27; S. Walker, 'Mime and Heraldry in Henry IV Part 1', English 11.63 (1956), pp. 91-6, 95-6.

<sup>25</sup> Hilton Kelliher, 'Contemporary Manuscript Extracts from Shakespeare's Henry IV Part I', English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700 1 (1989), pp. 144-81, pp. 157, 173.

Some commentators find that the prince's emblem of the sun naturally evokes Falstaff's counter-emblem of the moon. Falstaff's self-description (perhaps sketched in the tavern's 'Half-moon' chamber, 2.4.26) is as one who goes 'by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus' (1.2.13-14), one of 'Diana's foresters... minions of the moon' (1.2.24-5), amongst whom Hal ironically places himself in lamenting how 'the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon' (1.2.30-32). But the rebels in the ranks above Falstaff also ebb and flow with the moon, plucking honour from it, seizing crescents of land in its shape, and so, in the king's view, waxing ripe to be forced to 'move in that obedient orb again/ Where you did give a fair and natural light./ And be no more an exhaled meteor' (5.1.17-19). The ninth Earl of Northumberland knew one of these sections of 1 Henry IV well enough to refer to it fleetingly in a letter to the Earl of Salisbury in 1628: they should deal 'in a straight line, without turnings and windings, as Henry Hottspurre would have it when Mortimer and he devided England in a mappe' (referring to the passage in which Hotspur claims that 'A huge half-moon' has been cut from his proposed share of the land, by the curve of the river Trent, 3.1.98).<sup>26</sup> The climax of the battle between the two badges comes when Hal and Hotspur fight, for 'Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere' (5.4.64). With the disappearance of Hotspur go both the references to concrete badges of honour and to the moon. They do not reappear in part two of the play (performed in 1597-8), bar in a 'particular ballad' which Falstaff threatens if his deed of honour is overlooked, where 'I in the clear sky of fame o'ershine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of the element' (4.3.50-52).<sup>27</sup>

In fact, Falstaff's coat of arms would not bear much scrutiny. A standard heraldic topos is to list the dishonourable acts which 'abate' (or 'rebat') an achievement of arms. Guillim, Bossewell, and Legh give nine causes of abatement: boasting of some valiant act which was never performed, killing a prisoner after he asks for quarter, lying to the sovereign or commander-in-chief, cowardice, adultery, drunkenness, revoking a challenge given or accepted, mistreating a woman, and treason.<sup>28</sup> In 1 Henry IV Falstaff energetically and comprehensively works his way down the first eight of the nine reasons for abatement, in the three fields of 'action' which he sees: the Boar's Head, Gad's Hill, and Shrewsbury. Take, for instance, the first cause of abatement ('too much boasting of himself in martiall actes'), which Legh exemplifies in the behaviour of 'Sir William Pounder, much bragging of his

---

<sup>26</sup> H. Sanderson, 'The Ninth Earl of Northumberland Quotes his Ancestor Hotspur', Review of English Studies 12.45 (1936), pp. 71-5, p. 75.

<sup>27</sup> W. Shakespeare, The Second Part of King Henry IV, ed. A.R. Humphreys, Arden Shakespeare Second Series (London: Methuen, 1966).

<sup>28</sup> G. Legh, Accedens of Armorie (1597), 70v-74r; J. Guillim, A Display of Heraldrie (1610), pp. 31-6. John Bossewell terms these vices unfitting gentlemen, rather than abatements, Workes of Armorie (1597), p. 9r.

knighthood, who seemed to be a Lyon, by countenance, but in his heart, was no lesse than a fearefull Hare'.<sup>29</sup> Falstaff boasts to the Prince about Gad's Hill (seven of the eleven assailants taken on by Falstaff himself, but 'the lion will not touch the true prince', 2.4.263). The other reasons follow on: stabbing the already-dead Hotspur, lying to the king about who had killed him (Hal comments that 'if a lie may do thee grace/ I'll gild it', 5.4.157-8), a 'coward on instinct' (2.4.264) at both Gad's Hill and Shrewsbury, pretending to be dead when the Douglas challenges him, whoring, drunk on the battlefield and at the tavern (2.4.515-28, 5.3.56), and filching from the Hostess (3.3.65-74). These 'vices' of sluggishness or half-heartedness in chivalry are punished, in heraldry, by the removal or addition of charges on the coat of arms.

But Falstaff never ventures on the last and greatest cause of abatement of an achievement: treason. The legal consequence of this offence is attainder; the heraldic consequence is that 'the dignitie [of the escutcheon] is not blemished only in some points... but is essentially annihilated in the whole', says Guillim.<sup>30</sup> Ferne describes how 'the Armes of Traytors and Rebels may be defaced and removed from all places wheresoever they were fixt or set: neither be their children or sequell suffered to beare the same againe, except there happen a restauracion, or new repaire of the bloud, to be made up by the free grace of the Sovereigne'. He gets warmer: 'so jealous is a soveraigne prince of the safety of his country, his person & state, that as God threatneth to inflict punishment unto a 3. and 4. generation of those, which by Idolatarie, and false worship, have sought to diminish the glorie of his Godhead: so earthly Princes do with justice punish the offsprings, and generations of Traytors'.<sup>31</sup> As Guillim gravely states, eight of the abatements can be reversed, by true descendants of a false knight - but the issue of those convicted of high treason can never regain the family's achievements. An attack on the sovereign state is 'not so much offensive against the person of the Prince, as it is against the Majestie of the Eternall God, whose Image he beareth. And the welfare of the Subjects depending on the safety of the Sovereigne, the danger intended to the one, hath in it a guilt of endammaging the lives of millions'. It can never be forgotten. Guillim prescribes that the offender's coat armour be razed, his shield reversed, his spear trunked, his spurs hewn from his heels, his sword broken over his helm, his crest divided, his horse's tail and mane docked, any statues of him pulled down, the issue of his blood attainted, his body destroyed, his family name ended, and his possessions given to another, 'so that by such his degradation, he receiveth farre greater shame... then ever hee received honour by his

---

<sup>29</sup> Legh, *Armourie*, p. 71v.

<sup>30</sup> Guillim, *Heraldrie*, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> J. Ferne, *The Blazon of Gentry* (1586), pp. 267, 275-6.

advancement.’<sup>32</sup> Nor is this a bygone punishment, Guillim says, remembering how the family of the man who murdered Henri IV had recently been deprived of their surname.

The ceremony of degradation from the Order of the Garter provided an exciting instance of abatement for the heraldry texts.<sup>33</sup> Henry VIII’s statutes for the order codified three absolute ‘points of reproach’: heresy, flight from battle, and treason. If a Knight was deemed to have committed one of these the Companions were summoned to the Chapel of St George at Windsor Castle. Garter King of Arms read out the Instrument for the Publication of Degredation, which required that the offender’s ‘Arms, and Ensignes, and Achievements’ be ‘expelled’, so that ‘all other Noble men, thereby may take Example’.<sup>34</sup> As he did so, one of the Heralds climbed a ladder to the top of the knight’s stall, and tossed down into the quire the offender’s banner (which displayed his coat of arms), crest, mantling, and sword. Then the Officers of Arms kicked the achievements out of the quire through the Chapel, out of the door, across the Lower Ward, and into the Castle ditch. This final humiliation was sometimes curtailed as a mark of the monarch’s clemency (Lord Cobham’s achievements, for instance, did not get as far as the ditch, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1604). After the achievement had been thrown down the stall plate was removed. Only the Register of the Garter remained to show that the offender was ever a Companion, and this was marked in the margin of his name with ‘*Vah proditur*’ (‘Fie on you traitor’). The ceremony was infrequent, since execution tended to come before the next meeting of the Order. Just three Knights were degraded in Elizabeth’s reign, one of whom was Thomas Percy, the seventh Earl of Northumberland, on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1569, and the other, the second Earl of Essex, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1601.<sup>35</sup>

Stephanie Trigg argues that the legend about the inception of the Order, and the rituals surrounding the election or degradation of the Knights, are less concerned with any feelings of shame in the courtiers than with the social and political power the king which has to induce the effect of shame. ‘In contrast to shaming in a spiritual or religious context, chivalric shaming is primarily the activity of the shamer, not the shamed’, and is an instrument of power.<sup>36</sup> In Richard II (first performed in about

---

<sup>32</sup> Guillim, Heraldrie, pp. 35. 36. See also E. Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977), 5.3.37, 6.7.26-7.

<sup>33</sup> William Segar and John Selden lovingly detail the medieval and current ceremonies, Segar, Honor Military, and Civill (1602), pp. 54-5, 75; Selden, Titles of Honor (1614), pp. 338-9. Ferne refers to the ritual without specifying it as a Garter ceremony, Gentrie, p. 276.

<sup>34</sup> Begent and Chesshyre, Garter, p. 270, and on the absolute points of reproach in the statutes, pp. 63-4, 71-2. Henry also required that Companions be gentlemen of blood, for three generations back.

<sup>35</sup> Fonblanque, Annals, 2.49-51.

<sup>36</sup> Trigg, Shame, p. 133.

1595) Bolingbroke complains that the king has reduced him in this way: ‘From my own windows torn my household coat,/ Rased out my imprese, leaving me no sign / Save men’s opinions and my living blood/ To show the world I am a gentleman’ (3.1.24-7).<sup>37</sup> By contrast to Richard - and despite repeatedly invoking the register of heraldic achievement - the Lancasters are never able to produce this shame effect in their retainers, be they noble (the Percys) or parodic (Falstaff). Indeed, the family are vulnerable to charges that they themselves cannot honourably bear the royal coat of arms. The punishment of abatement for treason is reserved not for Falstaff, not for Hotspur, but for King Henry. By deposing Richard II, Henry has made his issue ‘disabled to succede in bloud’, as Ferne puts it.<sup>38</sup> The dominant imagery in the second part of Henry IV is that of illness specifically caused by corruption of the blood breaking through the skin (rather than the weakness consequent on wounds, bruises, and broken limbs, which are the normal effects of civil war (referred to in the opening lines of 1 Henry IV). 2 Henry IV laments over ‘the body of our kingdom/ How foul it is, what rank diseases grow,/... near the heart of it’ (3.1.38-40), how ‘distemper’d’ (3.1.41), that it ‘breaks into corruption’ (3.1.75-6) and is full of a ‘burning fever,/ And must bleed for it; of which disease/ Our late King Richard being infected died’ (4.1.56-8), how ‘The blood weeps from my heart/ When I do shape.../[The] rotten times’ (4.4.58-60), and how even the crown might ‘infect my blood with joy’ (4.5.169).<sup>39</sup> On his deathbed the king refers simultaneously to his act of usurpation and to the stain on his coat: ‘all the soil of the achievement goes/ With me into the earth. It seem’d in me/ But as an honour snatch’d with boist’rous hand’. Yet he hopes that Hal will have an unblemished coat, since as son he ‘the garland wear’st successively’ (2 Henry IV, 4.5.189-91, 201). Shakespeare transfers the latter phrase from the prince’s terse statement, in Holinshed, that since the father got the crown, the son can keep it without challenge (4.5.201n). Reassigning the comment emphasizes how Henry still looks to a primary technique to create the effect of legitimacy (where chivalric honours are a shorthand of history), even though the Lancaster coat has been permanently abated for treason.

There may be a further contrast between the Percys and the Lancasters, in their frequent references to the crusades. At first Shakespeare follows Holinshed in crediting the truth of Henry’s determination to recover Jerusalem from the infidel (as does the Dering version). Henry starts by hoping warring sides will unite in marching ‘As far as to the sepulchre of Christ/ (Whose solider now, under whose blessed cross/ We are impressed and engaged to fight)’ (1 Henry IV, 1.1.19-21), refers to ‘our business for the

---

<sup>37</sup> W. Shakespeare, King Richard II, ed. C.R. Forker, Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Bloomsbury, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Ferne, Gentrie, p. 267.

<sup>39</sup> Holinshed carefully reports that though the king’s weakness was rumoured to be leprosy it was in fact an apoplexy (Shakespeare, 2 Henry IV, ed. Humphreys, pp. 200-1), to be treated by blood-letting, P. Barrough, The Methode of Phisicke (1583), pp. 25-6.

Holy Land' (1.1.48), and again, 'Our holy purpose to Jerusalem' (1.1.101). The issue returns in Henry IV, where Henry at first still speaks of the English civil war as a distraction from his true and holy purpose 'unto the Holy Land' (3.1.108). Holinshed speaks of the king's 'roiall iournie as he pretended to take into the holie land' (2 Henry IV, appendix 1, p. 200), pretended here meaning intended. But Shakespeare suddenly picks up the other meaning of pretence, departing from Holinshed. When the dying king speaks to his son, he abruptly reframes the crusade, now seen as a way to extinguish the effects of his own treason,

To lead out many to the Holy Land,  
Lest rest and lying still might make them look  
Too near unto my state (4.5.210-12).

But even this pragmatic reason is undercut by a banal mistake over the title of a room:

It hath been prophesied to me, many years,  
I should not die but in Jerusalem,  
Which vainly I suppos'd the Holy Land.  
But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;  
In that Jerusalem shall Harry die (4.5.236-40).

Admittedly, the practical problem of getting a corpse off stage means that the dying often ask to be moved, but the passage goes out of its way to emphasize the anti-climax. It contrasts with the honourable action of the crusader William de Percy, buried near Jerusalem and recalled in his family badge, and perhaps by the actions of a more recent 'Crusader', the seventh Earl, Thomas Percy.

If the coat of arms will not do for the child of a traitor, what of the badge? Although commentary on Henry V (performed in 1599) tends to discuss the play's exchanges of gloves and leeks in the same breath, the gage and the badge have different functions in heraldry. A gage is an improvised synecdoche of a man's honour, a part of his clothing or equipment caught up at a moment, to offer as a visible reminder that action will follow his stated intention.<sup>40</sup> This temporary expedient marks a private exchange of promises, usually that the wearers will fight each other when a suitable time comes (though sometimes, John Kerrigan points out, subsequent circumstances will make it more honourable not to redeem the pledge).<sup>41</sup> By contrast, a badge is an enduring sign of commitment to a public cause, which may be worn by the family and all grades of retainer. Henry's aim (giving up the coat of arms as lost) is to persuade each noble to exchange his gage, not for another man's gage but for Henry's badge (and preferably not the one that the Dauphin offers, the tennis ball).

---

<sup>40</sup> Ferne, Gentrie, pp. 312-7; W. Segar, The Booke of Honor and Armes (1590), pp. 75-85.

<sup>41</sup> Kerrigan, 'Oaths', p. 562.

As prince, Hal had been agile in evading signs thrust upon him. Richard II starts with Bolingbroke and Mowbray ritually casting down their gages before each other, a scene repeated with ironic hyperbole before Henry, when Aumerle's faction hurl gages at Henry's supporters. Holinshed specified these tokens as hoods. Shakespeare generalises this: they are 'gages' (1.1.69, 146, 160, 174, 176, 186; 4.1.26, 35, 47, 84) or 'the manual seal of death', 'my honour's pawn', and 'my bond of faith' (4.1.26 and note, 56, 71, 77). In both scenes the action peters out after the monarch declares that the 'differences shall all rest under gage' (4.1.86, 106). Private signs interrupting public affairs will never be ransomed. The prince treats such signs bathetically. Hotspur tells the King how Hal has refused to attend a noble tournament; he would rather 'unto the stewes,/ And from the common'st creature pluck a glove/ And wear it as a favour' (5.3.16-18).

Gloves provided the income with which John Shakespeare, a glover and whittawer since at least 1556, attempted to acquire a coat of arms, in around 1576. Biographers assume that William (not John) renewed the application in 1596 and extended it in 1599 (the years in which the second tetralogy was performed). Applications were expensive, particularly if the claim was as fragile as that of the Shakespeares. Although the family received a grant of arms on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1596, theirs was one of the instances later used to cite Garter for awarding coats to base and ignoble persons, and in 1599 they were refused permission to incorporate the Arden connection into the coat.<sup>42</sup> C.W. Scott-Giles pointed out that Shakespeare's king makes the unusual offer (4.3.62-3) that the real Henry V did to his soldiers. By a writ of 1417, in the first attempt to forbid the assumption of arms unless acquired by descent or assigned by due authority, the king specifically exempted those who fought with him at Agincourt.<sup>43</sup> Even in the 1590s a herald might make a standard enquiry about such Agincourt service, if other parts of an application for a coat seemed to lack substance.

In Henry V, the king first has to deflate any emblem that could be preferred before the sovereign's. The night before Agincourt the king first engages his glove to Williams, after the battle retrieves it again by command, and then gives it back to Williams, filled with crowns. Williams's glove is engaged to the king before the battle, and after it handed by Henry to Fluellen, with a back story that Henry had 'plucked' the favour from the helm of the Duke of Alençon, in a noble hand-to-hand duel (a detail about the gage altered from Holinshed, 4.7.152-3n). Fluellen pronounces this to be 'great

---

<sup>42</sup> S. Schoenbaum, William Shakespeare: a Documentary Life (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 166-73; K. Duncan-Jones, Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from his Life (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), pp. 85-6.

<sup>43</sup> A.R. Myers, ed., English Historical Documents, 1327-1485 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1969), p. 1117; C.W. Scott-Giles, Shakespeare's Heraldry (London: J.M. Dent, 1950), p. 121; W. Shakespeare, Henry V, ed. T.W. Craik, Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Routledge, 1995).

honours' (4.7.157), and Henry is sure a fight will follow, for Williams 'By his blunt bearing... will keep his word' (4.7.172-3). So far so legitimate, under the rules of heraldry. Ferne explains that using a proxy in challenges across ranks is as honourable as it is necessary, since great men must be open to challenge (or they might become tyrannical) but at the same time, discipline must be maintained.<sup>44</sup> Henry specifically checks this point (and in doing so nearly lets out the secret that 'the answer of his degree' to Williams, made as though he is a soldier in the ranks, is not that which his real rank would require or permit as a 'gentleman of great sort', 4.7.133-4). Then, assembling as many people as possible to view the scene, Henry publicly dishonours the gage by not following through on the fight, instead paying off the challenger handsomely, and tossing the gage itself back to Williams with a casual 'wear it for an honour in thy cap/ Till I do challenge it' (4.8.60-61), which is as good to say never, since he does not allow the challenge when there is plenty of opportunity.

Marilyn Williamson and John Kerrigan argue that Henry, belatedly realising that his status debars him from fighting in person, ransoms his word by shuffling the fight onto Falstaff, and tipping Williams.<sup>45</sup> But this does not account for the very public way that Henry makes sure that everyone gathers together to witness that the gage is a sign of merely personal honour. The king wants it replaced by a national badge, one that he and any other 'common man' (4.8.51) can wear and be accountable for. In John Selden's words, Henry wants to exchange the sign of a relationship between 'Peers' of the 'Greater Nobilitie' for a sign of 'Paritie' between the 'Lesse Nobilitie' of knights, squires, gentlemen and yeomen.<sup>46</sup> So he reaches for the leek with its minimum sign-up qualification: the place where its bearer's 'limbs were made' (3.1.26).

On three occasions in Henry V leeks are worn in caps. Pistol, talking to the Welshman 'Harry Le Roy' the night before Agincourt, threatens to knock Fluellen's 'leek about his pate/ Upon Saint Davy's day', earning the stern warning 'Do not you wear your dagger in your cap that day, lest he knock that about yours' (4.1.55-58). After the battle Fluellen reminds Henry that under his grandfather 'the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps, which your majesty know to this hour is an honourable badge of the service; and I do believe your majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon Saint Tavy's day'. He gets a warm response to this audacious reminder that the king is a brother Welshman, fighting in a common cause: 'I wear it for a memorable honour,/ For I am Welsh' (4.7.97-104). Back in London after victory, when

---

<sup>44</sup> Ferne, Gentrie, pp. 320-1; see also Richard II, 4.1.22-30.

<sup>45</sup> M. Williamson, 'The Episode with Williams in Henry V', Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 9.2 (1969), pp. 275-82; J. Kerrigan, 'Oaths, Threats, and Henry V', Review of English Studies 63.261 (2012), pp. 551-71, pp. 562-4.

<sup>46</sup> Selden, Titles of Honor, p. 344.

Pistol mocks the leek in Fluellen's cap, Fluellen beats him with it, forces him to eat it, and offers a leek-skin plaster. Serves Pistol right for disrespecting 'a memorable trophy of predeceased valour', Gower observes (5.1.71-3).<sup>47</sup> The scenes, Allison Outland notes, are generally dismissed as knock-about, mates teasing each other after a tense mission, but could be read as a patronising game to put the lower ranks back in their place (where Pistol acts as Williams did, and Fluellen as Henry).<sup>48</sup> Megan Lloyd attributes the scene to irritation with Welsh 'shoving' in 1590s London.<sup>49</sup>

When the French are not chatting about their equipment (guidons, banners, horses and armour, and are those suns or stars on it... 3.7.71-2), they are gloating about how a captured Henry will 'for achievement offer us his ransom' (3.5.60), a phrase echoed by Henry with 'achieve me, and then sell my bones' (4.3.91). Ransoms or ransoms (both forms are common) is a species of wild garlic (*allium ursinum*), which with the other members of the onion family was long valued as a good 'poore man's treacle' (healing balm).<sup>50</sup> Fluellen follows conventional medical advice when he claims that raw leek skins mashed with salt will cure Pistol's head wound. As food too, this family was popular (and thought even healthy, if cooked).<sup>51</sup> Biblical commentaries expounded on how, in Numbers 11.5, the 'murmuring Israelites' longed after leeks, onions, and garlic, desired not only 'by people of low degree and base calling, but of noblemen and wealthy personages also' (unusual in a period when one marker of rank was whether meat was eaten as a dietary staple or an occasional flavouring).<sup>52</sup> Everyone could afford garlic, onions, and leeks ('not worth a leek' was a common saying). So Henry reaches for leeks as well-known to heal wounds, and cheap enough for all ranks to eat, to plaster on themselves, and even to wear as a sign (unlike the expensive coat of arms).

---

<sup>47</sup> On the violent assertion of Welsh nationalism in London in the 1590s, see W.P. Griffith, 'Tudor Prelude', in *The Welsh in London, 1500-2000*, ed. E. Jones (Cardiff: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion/University of Wales Press, 2001), p. 26.

<sup>48</sup> A. Outland, "'Eat a Leek": Welsh Corrections, English Conditions, and British Cultural Communion', in *This England, That Shakespeare: New Angles on Englishness and the Bard*, ed. W. Maley and M. Tudeau-Clayton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), ch. 4.

<sup>49</sup> M. Lloyd, *Speak it in Welsh: Wales and the Welsh Language in Shakespeare* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), ch. 4.

<sup>50</sup> R. Dodoens, *A Niewe Herball*, trans. H. Lyte (1578), pp. 636-9, 641-2; Bartholomeus, *Batman Uppon Bartholome*, trans. J. Trevisa (1582), pp. 313v-314r; Barrough, *Phisicke*, p. 33; Hughes, 'Emblem', p. 152.

<sup>51</sup> J. Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare: Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 38-44

<sup>52</sup> L. Lemnius, *An Herbal for the Bible*, trans. T. Newton (1587), p. 162. Hotspur reaches for 'cheese and garlic' as the food of the poor, *1 Henry IV*, 3.1.158.

Where on the clothing the leek is worn is also relevant. Henry is not Welsh by descent but by place of birth, Monmouth. Fluellen's mention of the Monmouth cap brings back the seven mocking references to 'Henry of Monmouth' by his enemies, who cannot bring themselves to call him Prince of Wales (1 Henry IV 5.2.49, 5.4.58; 2 Henry IV Prologue 29, 1.1.19, 1.1.109, 1.3.83, 2.3.45). These seven allusions are countered by seven repetitions of 'Monmouth' by Fluellen, in comparing Henry to Alexander (4.7.11-51). Monmouth was excluded by the 1536 and 1543 Acts of Union from participating in the Welsh Courts of Great Sessions, and included in the Oxford Assize circuit, making it necessary to refer in many subsequent statutes to 'Wales and Monmouthshire'.<sup>53</sup> Monmouth men effectively had dual nationality. In taking a leek for his Monmouth cap, Henry is taking an inclusive, cheap and healing ransom for his achievement.

The Tudor rose (if not the shamrock and the thistle) could make a similar claim, but it is not mentioned by the play. So is the audience being invited to recognise who, in the late 1590s, was conspicuously wearing the green and white Percy colours, in the leek? A.E. Hughes finds little evidence that the leek was seen as a national emblem before the 1590s. He notes that Mary Tudor's privy purse accounts show payment for a leek presented to her by the royal body guard (the yeoman of the King's Guard) on St. David's Day in 1537, 1538, and 1544, that is, over precisely the period in which the Acts of Union were passed. The same amount was paid to the Guard each time, suggesting to Hughes that it was a custom that the leek be worn on that day.<sup>54</sup> However – even after admitting that negative evidence is always incomplete – it is surprising that no later evidence of wearing the leek appears in sources where such an emblem would be noted. There is no record in the ordinary of Welsh arms that a leek was borne as a badge, or on a coat, or as a crest.<sup>55</sup> There is evidence that St. George's Day was kept solemnly at court, where the red cross and the red and white rose were much in evidence, but none that St. David's Day ever was.<sup>56</sup> The same is true outside court, in the Welsh

---

<sup>53</sup> G. Owen, The Dialogue of the Government of Wales (1594), ed. J. Gwynfor Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), pp. 83, 160 n. 115; G. Jenkins, A Concise History of Wales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 146-8.

<sup>54</sup> A.E. Hughes, 'The Welsh National Emblem: Leek or Daffodil?', Y Cymmrodor 26 (1916), pp. 147-90, pp. 156-9.

<sup>55</sup> M.P. Siddons, The Development of Welsh Heraldry 4 vols (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1991-3), 3.xi-xxiii.

<sup>56</sup> J. Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: a New Edition of the Early Modern Sources, ed. E. Goldring et al, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.180, 3.251-5.

volumes of the Records of Early English Drama.<sup>57</sup> Although Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, had extensive holdings in north Wales, his household accounts show no sign of such celebrations.<sup>58</sup> Henry VIII used a red dragon, not a leek, when acknowledging his Welsh ancestry, a practice followed by his daughters.<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth's personal badges were displayed during her travels (for instance, at her reception into Norwich in 1578), and marked on gifts to her (for instance, embroidered on the prayer book Sir William Cecil gave her as a New Year's gift), but there are no representations of leeks, even on gifts from Welshmen (though many other vegetables and fruits appear, from fennel to figs).<sup>60</sup> Major histories, like Holinshed's Chronicles, do not note that the Tudor Welsh wear the leek. Looking at printed fiction, J.O. Bartley cites the Welsh language, pride of birth, musicality, and love of mountains (and the sheep and goats on them, and hence the cheese and wool from them) as the usual signifiers of a Welshman up to the mid-1590s.<sup>61</sup> In 1 Henry IV and The Merry Wives of Windsor (performed at some point between 1597 and 1602), for instance, Glendower and Evans are notable for their Anglo-Welsh locutions, their love of music, and their interest in genealogy, but cheese and garlic, not leeks, are the foodstuffs mentioned.<sup>62</sup> Then suddenly, from 1597, this rather outmoded symbol becomes widely visible as an emblem of Wales (to the English, at least).<sup>63</sup> This is so even when it would be more decorous not to put a smelly vegetable next to dainty flowers, as for instance in Michael Drayton's England's Heroicall Epistles (1597), where Owen Tudor woos

---

<sup>57</sup> Records of Early English Drama: Cheshire, including Chester, ed. E. Baldwin, L.M. Clopper, and D. Mills, 2 vols (London/Toronto: British Library/University of Toronto Press, 2007); Chester, ed. L.M. Clopper (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979); Wales, ed. D.N. Klausner (London/Toronto: British Library/University of Toronto Press, 2005). Even in Wales, celebrations for St. George's Day are recorded, but none for St. David's Day, see Wales, ed. Klausner, pp. 306-7.

<sup>58</sup> S. Adams, ed., Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558-1561, 1584-1586 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>59</sup> Hughes, 'Emblem', p. 163.

<sup>60</sup> Nichols, Progresses, 2.792; J. Lawson, ed., The Elizabethan New Year's Gift Exchanges: 1559-1603 (Oxford: British Academy/Oxford University Press, 2013), 63.100.

<sup>61</sup> J.O. Bartley, Teague, Shenkin, and Sawney: Being an Historical Study of the Earliest Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Characters in English Plays (Cork: Cork University Press, 1954), ch. 3.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Henry IV, 3.1; W. Shakespeare, The Merry Wives of Windsor, ed. G. Melchiori, Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), 1.2.12, 3.1.11-29, 5.5.136-42.

<sup>63</sup> All Bartley's examples are taken from after 1597. Possibly St. David's Day, too, became more noticeable: Rowland White, the steward of Sir Robert Sidney, dates his 1<sup>st</sup> March letter in 1596 as just that, but his letters on that day in 1597 and 1599 are dated 'our St. Davies Day', H. Sydney, ed., Letters and Memorials of State, in the Reigns of Queen Mary.... [to] Oliver's Usurpation 2 vols (London, 1746), 2.23-7, 93, 173.

Katherine, the widow of Henry V, by offering to unite the leek with the lily of France and the rose of England.<sup>64</sup>

What changed in the late 1590s to make the leek such a prominent badge? Editors dismiss Fluellen's anecdote that wearing the leek commemorates previous military service by the Welsh under the English.<sup>65</sup> However, they credit Francis Osborne's claim that the leek was customarily worn on St. David's Day by the second Earl of Essex. The anecdote first appears in the life of Essex given in Francis Osborne's Miscellany of Sundry Essayes (1659). One must be cautious here. Essex had been executed when Osborne was eight (over half a century before), and Osborne was not at court until an adult, so presumably he was going by report.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, that report seems credible. Osborne was in the service of the Pembroke family, becoming Master of Horse to William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke. The family had vast estates in Wales, and the second Earl headed the Council of Wales and the Marches until his death in 1601. Osborne specifies that his information comes from discussing Essex's situation with those present at the time. Essex - who in his first year at Cambridge had studied Legh's Armorie - was a master of using imprese to make political points, and his 'publications' of this sort remained in their viewers' memories for many years afterwards.<sup>67</sup> In an essay dealing with 'Political deductions from Essex's death', Osborne (a commonwealth man himself) considers that Essex was so popular in Wales that many Welshmen would have risen with him in 1601, or at least sent him safely to Ireland, to join other rebels. Osborne then adds to this counter-factual history that the Earl's

security might have been more, and losse lesse, had he gone into Wales, when he passed through London, where he had great love both by Inheritance from his Father (a good Landlord) and his own purchase, always of a liberall Nature. Nor did he fail to wear a Leek on St. David's Day, but besides, would upon all occasions vindicate the Welch Inhabitants,

---

<sup>64</sup> M. Drayton, Englands Heroicall Epistles (1597), p. 40 r.

<sup>65</sup> Though Iolo Morganwg cites an undated legend that wearing a leek commemorates the battle of Crécy, Hughes says dryly that it is 'somewhat remarkable' that no earlier references to the legend can be found, 'Emblem', pp. 164-8.

<sup>66</sup> 'Osborne, Francis (1593-1659)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20875?docPos=1>, accessed 6/1/14.

<sup>67</sup> P. Hammer, The Polarization of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, 1585-1597 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 29, 202-3, 214.

and own them for his Countrymen, as Queen Elizabeth usually was wont, upon the first of March.<sup>68</sup>

As far as the queen goes, the last phrase might allow one to infer that Elizabeth too wore the leek on 1<sup>st</sup> March, or that on that day she acknowledged the Welsh as kin, or, alternatively, that she did both on that day (but only on that day). Osborne's anecdote is not necessarily an uncomplicated statement of royal support for a Welsh folk custom. By contrast, Osborne's interlocutors remember Essex as aggressively pro-Welsh ('vindicate'), and someone who made a point of wearing the leek ('nor did he fail').

Wearing the leek regains some of its political connotations if it is seen as specifically associated with Essex, at a time when the regime was nervous of his military power and his popularity. When Shakespeare's Henry attaches the leek to himself, he brings it under sovereign control, making a personal badge into a national emblem.

Studies of the representations of Essex generally discuss him in terms of Ireland, partly because Shakespeare gives a rare direct reference to contemporary events, in the allusion by the Act V Chorus to Essex's command of the invasion forces in 1599. Essex's father too had led a previous invasion of Ireland. But contemporaries were equally as aware of the family's connections to Wales. The family fortunes had arisen with the appointment of Sir Walter Devereux, the great-grandfather of the second Earl, to the Council of Wales and the Marches in 1513. By 1525 Devereux was Seneschal Chancellor and Chamberlain to the Household of Mary Tudor. The family continued to flourish in west Wales over the century. From boyhood the second Earl of Essex was attentive to the goodwill of his family's Welsh connections.<sup>69</sup> His stepfather, Leicester, took him on a tour of his north Wales estates in 1578. In 1584, at the family home of Lamphey, Pembrokeshire, Essex kept open house for his neighbours over the winter, and also fondly recalled the moments of 'contemplative retirednesse in Wales' (in his Apologie of 1600).<sup>70</sup> At Lamphey he established strong ties to his family's followers and servants, taking some of the household with him as servants when he arrived at court for his first prolonged and independent visit in late 1585. Throughout his political life Essex stood up for his Welsh servants, and put forward Welshmen for promotion. Essex's influence in Wales grew still further over the 1590s when the Lord President of the Council of Wales and the Marches, Sir Henry Herbert, second Earl of

---

<sup>68</sup> F. Osborne, A Miscellany of Sundry Essayes... Together with Politicall Deductions from the History of the Earl of Essex (1659), pp. 216-9. Welsh support for Essex, but not the anecdote about the leek, appears in Osborne's Historical Memoires on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth, and King James (1658), pp. 88-9.

<sup>69</sup> Hammer, Essex, pp. 23, 158, 272-9.

<sup>70</sup> R. Devereux, Earl of Essex, An Apologie of the Earle of Essex (c. 1600), A1v.

Pembroke, fell into prolonged ill-health.<sup>71</sup> In 1594 Essex sealed the Pembroke-shire bond of association for the defence of the queen, and was appointed custos rotulorum for Pembroke-shire.<sup>72</sup> After this, though he did not visit Wales personally again, his colleagues on the Privy Council continued to hear a great deal about his Welsh estates, since Essex cited them as a pretext for withdrawing from court whenever he wanted to mark his displeasure at decisions made against his advice.<sup>73</sup>

Essex's two principal aides in military affairs were Welshmen. Roger Williams, born in Penrhos, Monmouthshire, was Essex's second-in-command of the cavalry at Tilbury in 1588. He allowed Essex to stowaway on the 1589 mission to Lisbon (against the express orders of the Queen), and was the supporter (then successor) to Essex, as commander of the English army in France in 1592. Williams, personally courageous, and delighting in charges, rallies, and single combat, was also an expert in the professional arts of war. His Briefe Discourse of Warre (1590) influentially argued that English forces should be reorganised along continental lines.<sup>74</sup> He died in 1595 with Essex at his side (leaving all his property to the Earl). Essex gave instructions for his funeral (co-organised by Williams's cousin, Sir Gelly Meyrick), paid for it, and attended it in person. Son of the Bishop of Bangor, Meyrick had been brought up on his mother's estate near Lamphey, and attached to Essex

---

<sup>71</sup> 'Devereux of Lamphey, Pembs., Ystrad Ffin, Carms., Vaynor and Nantariba, Mont., Pencoyd, Brecknock', Dictionary of Welsh Biography, <http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s-DEVE-REU-1100.html?query=devereux&field=content>, accessed 6/11/14; 'Devereux, Robert, second earl of Essex (1565–1601)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7565?docPos=9>, accessed 6/11/14; ; Hammer, Essex, pp. 21, 35-66, 122, 297-8, 379-80; A. Gajda, The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch. 5.

<sup>72</sup> His sister Dorothy married the ninth Earl of Northumberland around 1595, though the initial good relations between the brothers-in-law were sour by 1597, Fonblanque, Annals, 2.205; Hammer, Essex, p. 281.

<sup>73</sup> Sydney, Memorials of State, 2.23-7.

<sup>74</sup> 'Williams, Sir Roger (1539/40–1595)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29543?docPos=1>, accessed 6/11/14. The editor of Williams's work disputes the suggestion that Williams is a source-study for Fluellen, given the latter is a conservative in military affairs, and the former a noted innovator in the new model tactics, R. Williams, The Works of Sir Roger Williams, ed. J.X. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. lxxvi, 158, 162.

from university days.<sup>75</sup> For all Essex's military ventures Meyrick organised supplies, sourced troops (mostly from south Wales, Radnorshire, and Carmarthenshire), and administered their pay and the disposal of prizes. In return, Essex made him steward of his household in 1587, knighted him on the Cadiz expedition, and prompted Elizabeth to grant him extensive lands. Although Londoners disregarded Meyrick as Essex's factotum, and insulted him about his birth and upbringing, he was deemed powerful in Wales.<sup>76</sup> He twice sat as a member for Welsh constituencies, became deputy lieutenant for Radnorshire (against strong protest by the Earl of Pembroke), and was custos rotulorum for the county by 1599.<sup>77</sup>

Williams and Meyrick were key to how Essex worked his Welsh connections in raising troops.<sup>78</sup> The usual method was for the Queen and Privy Council to order the county lieutenants to provide a certain number of men, equipped and armed. The temptation for the county lieutenants (and their pressmen) was to put local interests above national, and provide sub-standard troops and equipment (a possibility which Falstaff exploits, 1 Henry IV 4.2.10-47; 2 Henry IV 3.2.236-72). For the 1599 Irish expedition, Essex was permitted to follow continental practice, and raise the troops himself. County lieutenants were asked to provide arms and equipment. Two of the four captains Essex used for this task were ordered to concentrate on Wales and the Marches, to find two-fifths of the total force.<sup>79</sup> Thus, over the four years in which the tetralogy was first performed, the Essex faction stood out as a distinctively Welsh group, expert in war, and able to supply and lead the large-scale military expeditions which the state felt it required to keep its borders intact. It was political sense to sport the Welsh badge.

More speculatively, one of the ways that Essex built up this group might also be discerned as a motif of honour which is discussed in the plays. A major accusation against Essex, Paul Hammer argues, was that he courted from the public the sort of attention and warmth that was generally reserved for

---

<sup>75</sup> Hammer, Essex, pp. 26, 31; 'Meyrick, Sir Gelly (c. 1556-1601)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18639>, accessed 6/11/14.

<sup>76</sup> M. McGarvie, The Meyricks of Bush: the Story of a Pembrokeshire Family (Glastonbury: privately printed, 1988), ch. 2; Mathew, Celtic Peoples, ch. 18.

<sup>77</sup> Neither man's coat bore a leek. The Meyricks of Bodorgan bore 'Gules, two porcupines passant Argent, armed Or'. Williams bore 'Argent, a dragon's head erased Vert, holding in his mouth a dexter human hand couped at the wrist, proper and bloody', Siddons, Welsh Heraldry, 2.381, 2.598-9.

<sup>78</sup> D. Mathew, The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe: a Study of the Celtic and Spanish Influences on Elizabethan History (London: Sheed and Ward, 1933), pp. 336-59, 368-70.

<sup>79</sup> N. Younger, 'The Practice and Politics of Troop-Raising: Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, and the Elizabethan Regime', English Historical Review 526 (2012), pp. 566-91; Hammer, Essex, p. 127.

the monarch.<sup>80</sup> Hammer distinguishes between Essex's power-base (drawing on structural relationships like that of landlord and tenant), which was relatively small for his rank, and Essex's following, which was large, and needed to be nursed along by patronage, courtesy, and explanation about the political positions he was taking.<sup>81</sup> Any play about deposition watched by the Essex group might well, Hammer thinks, echo warnings to Essex about not courting popularity over the head of the queen.<sup>82</sup> Shakespeare's *Richard II* acidly complains about Bolingbroke's manipulative courtesy to all ranks, but when the latter becomes king he recommends it as a tested political technique for amassing a following when one does not have a power base. Back from banishment, he had aimed to 'pluck allegiance from men's hearts/... Even in the presence of the crowned King' (*1 Henry IV*, 3.2.52-4), as the pre-1603 common-placer of the play had noted.<sup>83</sup> Public notice here is a disputed favour or badge, which is to be plucked off the opposition. One wonders how many of the cheering Londoners lining four miles of streets to send Essex on his way to Ireland - three weeks after St. David's Day in 1599 - wore the leek.<sup>84</sup>

To sum up: in *Henry V* the tetralogy's search for a national badge, in preference to a dynastic achievement of arms or a personal gage of honour, concludes when the monarch translates the badge of a powerful faction into a national badge. But perhaps some thought should also have been given to the Percy moon as well as the Welsh leek. Two years later, on the afternoon before the Essex uprising, Sir Charles Percy, younger brother of the ninth Earl of Northumberland, commissioned Shakespeare's company to revive an old play about the deposition of Richard II.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> P.E. Hammer, "'The Smiling Crocodile': the Earl of Essex and late Elizabethan 'Popularity'", in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. P. Lake and S. Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), ch. 4; Hammer, *Essex*, pp. 270 ff, 292 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Shakespeare's *Henry V*, like Essex, justifies why he consorts with soldiers, 'a name that in my thoughts becomes me best', says the king (3.4.6); Essex, *Apologie*, B3r.

<sup>82</sup> P.E. Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Uprising', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59.1 (2008), pp. 1-35.

<sup>83</sup> For instance, the letters that Essex sent to the lieutenants to equip these expeditions differ markedly from those usually sent. The latter stressed the facts and gave the rationale for the war. Essex's letters focused on the personal affection that any help given would show both the queen and him.

<sup>84</sup> Nichols, *Progresses*, ed. Goldring, 4.70-1.

<sup>85</sup> E.A. Barnard, *New Links with Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 65-6. Charles Percy had been knighted by Essex in 1591, and served under him in Ireland in 1599. That Percy family habitually referred to Shakespeare's drama is suggested by the ninth Earl's reference to *1 Henry IV* in writing to Salisbury, and Charles Percy's reference to *2 Henry IV* in a note asking for London news (dated 27<sup>th</sup> December ?1600), C.M. Ingleby, L. Toulmin, and F.J. Furnivall,

---

eds., The Shakspeare Allusion-Book: a Collection of Allusions to Shakspeare from 1591 to 1700 2 vols  
(London: Chatto and Windus, 1909), 1.86-7.