During the late 1590s and early 1600s, the plays which form the core of most critical studies of the history play were published in first and reprint single-text editions: Richard II (Q1 1597, Q2 1598, Q3 1598), Richard III (Q1 1597, Q2 1598, Q3 1602), 1 Henry IV (Q1 1598, Q2 1598, Q3 1599), 2 Henry IV (Q 1600), Henry V (Q1 1600, Q2 1602), The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster (Q2 1600), and The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York (Q1 1600).¹ What is often overlooked is the fact that the majority of these editions were published by one stationer – Andrew Wise. Wise’s investment in Richard II, Richard III, and 1 and 2 Henry IV had, I argue, three important effects on the history play at the end of the sixteenth century. First, these editions advertised Shakespeare, through title-page attributions from 1598 onwards, as the period’s most prominent dramatist of English monarchical history. Second, they inspired other stationers to invest in English histories by Shakespeare and other writers. And, most significantly for this study, they privileged medieval English history as a print identity for this dramatic genre – a branding that did not remain static, as the wider range of print histories discussed in Chapters 1 and 3 testifies, but which modern criticism tends to overlook. Directing Wise’s publication of these plays was a complex interplay of different factors, which this chapter will consider one at a time, namely: the currency of medieval English monarchical history within the book trade; Wise’s connection to George Carey, second Baron Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain and patron of Shakespeare’s company; and the growing marketability of Shakespeare’s name, propelled by the success of his narrative poems, Venus and Adonis (1593) and The Rape of Lucrece (1594). Not all of these factors are connected to ideas and readings of ‘history’; and it is crucial to recognize that discourses of genre

¹ The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York was first printed as an octavo edition in 1595 and issued for the first time as a quarto in 1600 (hence Q1).
and, more broadly, our access to early modern drama are contingent upon sometimes disparate influences.

Building on my discussions in Chapter 1 which consider how the performance identity of the Queen’s Men was mediated by publication, the first critical point for me to establish in this chapter is that Wise’s editions were not representative of repertory patterns in the theatre. The final years of the sixteenth century have been described as the heyday of the history play, and Shakespeare’s English histories have been seen as firmly establishing (and largely constituting) the genre. Their apparent dominance is more precisely, however, a print development. Not only does this pattern affect the early print reputation of the Chamberlain’s Men, it also shapes Shakespeare’s reputation and, through the cultural capital that Shakespeare has subsequently accrued, an understanding of history as a dramatic genre. It is essential, as both of my chapters emphasize, to examine this disjunction between stage and page patterns – and, indeed, to expect a discrepancy. As Holger Syme puts it, ‘the most influential narratives of generic developments depend for their very elegance and power on the erasure of vast swathes of literary history’. For the late Elizabethan history play, the success of the Wise editions contributed to this erasure. To recover a full understanding of the position of historical drama, it is essential for critics to acknowledge archival limitations, to work with evidence for ‘lost’ plays and, crucially, to evaluate the genre twice: on the stage and on the page.

Performance and payment records in Henslowe’s Diary indicate that the commercial playhouses staged many histories featuring classical, biblical, ancient British, and recent pasts during the late 1590s – despite the fact that Henslowe only once uses the label ‘history’ to describe a play (for ‘The French History of the Unfortunate General’). Although most of these plays are no longer extant, their titles frequently give an indication of their subject. Many refer to a historical figure or event, which can be cautiously used, as shown by the pioneering work of Roslyn Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle, to consider the material they may have dramatized. In addition to medieval English history, several historical

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3 See also Erne, Book Trade, ch. 1.
5 Little is known about this play, including its subject, which Henslowe purchased for Worcester’s Men at the Rose in January 1603. See ‘French History of the Unfortunate General, The’, Lost Plays Database, Foakes (ed.), Henslowe’s Diary, p. 221 (F.118v–19v).
6 See the Lost Plays Database; McInnis and Stegge (eds.), Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England; and Knutson, McInnis, and Steggle (eds.), Loss and the Literary Culture of Shakespeare’s Time (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).
clusters can be identified: early British history in, for example, the ‘Conquest of Brute’ (1598; F.49r–52v), ‘Mulmutius Dunwallow’ (1598; F.50v), ‘Uther Pendragon’ (1597; F.26v–27r), and ‘Ferrex and Porrex’ (1600; F.68r–69r); classical history in ‘Julian the Apostle’ (1596; F.15v), ‘Phocasse’ (1596; F.15v, 21v, 45v), and ‘Catiline’s Conspiracy’ (1598; F.49v); biblical history in ‘Nebuchadnezzar’ (1596; F.25v–26r), ‘Jephthah’ (1602; F.105v–106v), and ‘Pontius Pilate’ (1602; F.96r); and recent history in the ‘Civil Wars of France’ (1598–99; F.50v–52v) and ‘Sebastian King of Portugal’ (1601; F.86v–87r) – to list only a few examples. Early British history seems to have proved popular with theatregoers. ‘Vortigern’ (F.22v–26r, 95r) – probably based on events from the life of a fifth-century CE British ruler featured in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britanniae – recorded twelve performances between 1596 and 1597; and ‘Chinon of England’ (F.14r–15v, 21v, 25r) – involving characters from the time of King Arthur – received fourteen performances in 1596. At the opposite end of the temporal spectrum, relatively recent history was also staged regularly and sometimes prompted sequels. ‘The Civil Wars of France’ (performed in four parts – including the ‘First Introduction’ – between 1598 and 1599) clearly dramatized the much-discussed religious wars of France. It likely featured the St Bartholomew’s Day massacre of 1572 and the series may have included events as recent as the Edict of Nantes in April 1598. Similarly, Chettle and Dekker’s ‘Sebastian King of Portugal’ (1601) probably capitalized on the frequent reports of Sebastian I’s escape from the Battle of Alcácer Quibir (also known as the Battle of Three Kings), at which he disappeared, and presumably died, in 1578. John Chamberlain’s letters often make reference to these reports of Sebastian’s survival and his reappearance in various European locations, some of which were contemporary with the time of the play’s entry in Henslowe’s records.

7 For all lost plays, the folio numbers refer to their location in Henslowe’s manuscript accounts, which can be cross-referenced in Greg’s and Foakes’s editions of the Diary, as well as through the Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk. While outside the scope of this chapter, further details about the historical subjects of these plays are available through the Lost Plays Database (by title) and Wiggins’s Catalogue.


Although I have divided these lost history plays into different categories on the basis of their broad historical subjects, their inclusion as part of Henslowe’s repertories emphasizes the connections between them. For example, between 1600 and 1602, Henslowe’s records provide details for several plays based on biblical history, including ‘Judas’, ‘Joshua’, ‘Jephthah’, ‘Tobias’, and ‘Samson’ (F.69v, 95r–v, 105v–108r) – all of which, on the basis of their titles, featured a central role for an Old Testament patriarch or warrior. Annaliese Connolly connects these plays to the opening of the Fortune Theatre in 1600 and Edward Alleyn’s return to the stage, and suggests that they would have recalled the parts – especially Tamburlaine – with which Alleyn was associated. John H. Astington agrees: ‘[t]here seems to be little doubt that Alleyn would have played the title role in all these, and they may have been written with him in mind, in that Samson is a kind of Hercules, and Joshua a kind of Tamburlaine’. Staging practices, such as typecasting, pulled together different historical subjects and established interpretative parallels between them. Similarly, early British histories, such as the ‘Conquest of Brute’ (which refers to the legendary Trojan founder of Britain), probably responded to theatrical demand for martial plays featuring a Tamburlainean conqueror, as Misha Teramura proposes. In this case, these character types could encourage playgoers to draw comparisons between different pasts. Another lost play from this period – ‘Hannibal and Scipio’ (1601, F.31v, 71r) – most likely dramatized events from the Second Punic War and featured a Tamburlainean leader in the figure of Hannibal, adding a classical history to this mixture of plays united through casting practices and audience interest in particular kinds of roles and narratives. One of the central arguments of this book is that printed plays featuring different historical pasts were read alongside each other and that maintaining rigid period distinctions is not necessarily productive as patterns in a publisher’s output and the wider book market often reveal how these pasts were in dialogue. Connections between historical pasts were also established in the theatre, although it may be the case that staging practices exerted more influence on these trans-territorial and trans-temporal interpretations than patterns in the book trade.


The histories performed on stage during the final years of the Elizabethan period were largely unrepresented in printed playbooks, which, led by the Wise quartos, favour English monarchical history. None of the plays listed above were published. While Henslowe’s ownership of the playscripts controlled, in the first instance, stationers’ access to them, publishers’ investment strategies were also a factor. For example, between 1596 and 1603, stationers did not, on the basis of extant playbooks, invest in any early British history plays, despite their success on the stage. It could be that playhouses favoured these legendary histories because of the connections that many shareholders, dramatists, and actors had to city livery companies, which celebrated London’s roots in Troyovant (‘new Troy’) in their narratives of origin.¹⁴ These historical pasts may have had less currency – in terms of marketability and topicality – in the book trade during the late 1590s, a pattern that would change on the accession of James I. The Stuart monarch utilized ‘Britain’s’ originary narratives as part of his own mythologizing strategies, which promoted the publication and circulation of ancient British histories (discussed at length in Chapter 3).

In contrast, during the late 1590s, the market for history favours events from the lives of medieval English monarchs. To give a rough indication of numbers, between 1595 and 1599, forty-two editions of plays from the commercial theatres appeared in print. Of these, fifteen prioritize, through their content and printed titles, medieval English monarchical history.¹⁵ The majority of these English history playbooks (eight) are Wise’s and he would go on to publish another two editions between 1600 and 1602, the year of his last publications. Of course, this five-year snapshot of print patterns is an arbitrary window; different year selections would yield different results. Caution is necessary in quantifying history plays, but it is nevertheless revealing to compare with patterns for the previous five years. Between 1590 and 1594, thirty-four editions of commercial playbooks were published, and only five dramatize the medieval English monarchical past.¹⁶ As considered in Chapter 1, history playbooks at this time represent a range of historical pasts. Rather than simply indicating


¹⁶ These five editions are: *1 and 2 Troublesome Reign of King John* (1591), *Edward I* (1593), *The First Part of the Contention* (1594), *The True Tragedy of Richard III* (1594), and *Edward II* (1594).
variation in playscript availability, the peak in medieval English history in the second half of the decade is led by reprints, which are closely connected to market demand. Of the fifteen playbook editions, eight are reprints, while *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1598) is a first edition of a title that Creede had entered in the Register years before, meaning that its publication was not determined by new playscript availability, but by the stationer’s decision to invest in it at that time.17

Irrespective of how the market statistics for English histories are calculated, the fact that modern criticism tends to use Shakespeare’s English histories to define the history play as a genre is problematic. This assumption dangerously conflates stage and print patterns, ignores the evidence for other historical pasts that were a vital part of theatrical repertories, and overlooks the interplay of agents and influences that control the transmission of plays in print. The singularity and success of Wise’s editions allow me to make a more emphatic point than I do in my discussion of Creede’s histories. In Chapter 1, I propose that the evidence of playbooks has directed the critical reputation of the Queen’s Men, when, in fact, the notion of history suggested by these texts might be indicative of Creede’s interests. In this chapter, I also consider how Wise’s strategies of print selection and presentation shaped the reputation of the Chamberlain’s Men (especially at the end of the sixteenth century), but I push this further by showing how publication also affects the reputation of a dramatist and of a theatrical genre. Wise’s investment in Shakespeare’s English histories has been, rather unproductively, a catalyst for thinking of Shakespeare as the dramatist of England’s national past and for defining the history play as a genre about the lives of English monarchs – an assessment that neglects evidence of performance repertories and publication patterns, both before and after the Wise quartos.

Wise is a somewhat unusual candidate for exerting such a strong influence on the history play in print. He was not a major publisher. After completing his apprenticeship under Thomas Bradshaw in Cambridge, he established his bookshop at the Sign of the Angel in Paul’s Cross Churchyard in c.1593, where he published and sold books until 1603, at which point he disappears from historical records.18 His career did not last for very long, nor did he publish a large number of texts – about twenty-four distinct editions in total.19 Beyond Shakespeare’s

17 Creede entered this title in the Register on 14 May 1594.
plays, Wise does not display a sustained interest in history, unlike other stationers considered in this study, including Creede and Butter. While his other publications, such as the sermons of Thomas Playfere and Thomas Nashe’s religious lament *Christ’s Tears over Jerusalem*, incorporate biblical histories and figures, they do not prioritize their historical subjects in the same way. Wise offers an important case study because of the interplay of factors that shaped his investment and which resists a single narrative – a condition that is especially useful for assessing the publication of Shakespeare’s history plays, which, because of their subsequent cultural capital, tend to promote the erasure that Syme discusses in relation to genre. By being alert to these influences and the position of Shakespeare’s plays in the book market, we can recognize that their publication and success with readers was contingent and responsive, rather than predetermined.

This chapter argues that Wise read Shakespeare’s history plays as traversing a boundary between private and public exchange that could be capitalized on in print: they dramatize the medieval English history that was proving so marketable and ‘current’ within the book trade at that time, but they also reveal a connection to George Carey, patron of Shakespeare’s company and Wise’s other published writers – Nashe and Playfere. By featuring the first title-page attributions to the Chamberlain’s Men, Wise’s editions promote an interpretative link to the Carey family, which could ‘authorize’ specific readings of the plays in line with the family’s military and political reputation. These circumstances might seem to indicate a private exchange between Wise and Carey, but, as this chapter argues, it was more likely a public, commercial one shaped by a private exchange between company and stationer. Important work by Lukas Erne, Adam Hooks, Tara L. Lyons, and Sonia Massai has variously emphasized Wise’s connection to Shakespeare and the Chamberlain’s Men (Erne), Wise’s connection to Carey as a patron (Massai), or Wise’s own agency in the publication of Shakespeare (Hooks and Lyons). This chapter draws on, but also departs from, these critical approaches. Rather than emphasizing a single publishing strategy or narrative, this chapter argues that the print

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presentation and prominence of Shakespeare’s English history plays at the end of the sixteenth century was contingent on three main factors, which will be addressed separately: the book trade’s interest in English monarchical history and its application to Elizabethan politics; the connection of Wise to Shakespeare’s company and to Carey’s patronized writers, which can be seen as a flexible model of textual patronage that eschews a direct link between patron and stationer; and the growing marketability of Shakespeare’s name. The result is an assessment of Shakespeare’s histories that reveals the intersection of multiple agendas: it draws attention to the book trade as a collaborative system of exchange that frustrates efforts at singularizing agency. This approach enhances our understanding of history plays not just because it highlights the partial print record that is left of them, but also because it reveals different ways of reading history, which can involve ‘politic’ applications to pressing state issues, as well as locally inflected political interpretations, and those that do not place significant weight on the histories’ political force.

**Wise Histories**

The shape of the reading market at the end of the sixteenth century may have persuaded Wise, in the first instance, to invest in Shakespeare’s monarchical histories and then to issue reprints in quick succession. These plays appeared in bookshops at a time when medieval English history was playing an important role in commentary on Elizabethan political concerns, especially in relation to the succession, the role of royal councillors, and the dangers of civil war. Although manuscripts of Shakespeare’s plays had to become available to Wise in the first place (an issue that is examined in the next section), he still maintained a considerable degree of independent agency in choosing to invest and reinvest in these histories. The latter process is, as Farmer and Lesser outline, a key indicator of consumer demand and a publisher’s recognition of it. This section considers how patterns and geographies in the book trade directed Wise’s strategies of selection and his investment in a series of plays that dramatize civil and successional conflicts from the reigns of medieval English monarchs. It argues that Shakespeare’s histories played an important and dynamic role in textual and politic exchanges between dramatic and non-dramatic publications and between the different editions of these texts. This section suggests that Wise’s strategies of print presentation

enhanced this exchange: his title pages usually draw attention to the plays’ historical events and figures, and the preparation of printer’s copy suggests an interest in historicity and topical political application.

Histories of medieval English monarchs proliferated in a number of relatively short publications during the 1590s and seem to have acquired a new, pressing currency. While Tudor chronicles, such as those by Holinshed, Grafton, and Stow, feature accounts of medieval monarchs (and borrow from earlier historians, including More and Vergil), these histories are contained within expansive texts that cover vast periods of time and do not therefore privilege a particular reign. A few influential texts offer a narrower scope – such as Hall’s Chronicle on the reigns of Henry IV to Henry VIII and The Mirror for Magistrates, which, in its 1559 edition, covers the fall of rulers and other prominent figures from the reigns of Richard II to Edward IV. In both, multiple figures, reigns, and events compete for readers’ attention, a polyphony of voices that, in the Mirror, is furthered by its history of extensive revisions and expansions by different contributors between 1559 and 1610. At the time of their first publication, these histories do not, however, seem to have prompted shorter, narrowly focused texts, such as plays, to use the Wars of the Roses as subject matter. Jessica Winston shows that the Mirror’s interest in the downfall of figures of authority was taken up by dramatists, but that they passed over the English subject matter in favour of classical, early British, and world histories. It was not until later in the Elizabethan period that the reigns of medieval monarchs take centre stage within pamphlets, political treatises, and short histories, which are particularly useful as a barometer for understanding shifting patterns in historical and political thought. At this time, the medieval English past is used to offer politic histories that can be applied – most often as counter-exemplary warnings – to national issues of succession and monarchical authority. As Worden points out, ‘politic history stood back from narrative to reflect upon it’, although a separation (in purpose and form) between historical narrative and the political application of history cannot be clearly drawn.

25 For this shift in the market for histories, see also Jean-Christophe Mayer, ‘The Decline of the Chronicle and Shakespeare’s History Plays’, Shakespeare Survey 63 (2010), 12–23.
Nevertheless, these shorter, focused histories – as distinct from expansive chronicles and antiquarian studies – often promote specific ways of reading that direct their users towards immediate political reflection and the drawing of parallels with the present.

One of the most notorious new histories was Hayward’s *First Part of the Life and Reign of King Henry IV* (1599), which, despite the emphasis suggested by its title, focuses on Richard II’s reign and deposition, ending after just the first year of Henry IV’s rule. It examines the secular causes and consequences of Richard II’s overthrow, considering whether it is justified to remove an unfit monarch and examining the limits of royal authority and the damaging influence of corrupt advisors. Hayward’s *Henry IV* follows very similar material to Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, published by Wise in three single-text editions between 1597 and 1598; and it may be the case, as F. J. Levy suggests, that Hayward was influenced by the play, a possibility that draws attention to the exchange between dramatic and non-dramatic histories that this chapter explores in further detail. Hayward directly instructs readers to apply his history to Elizabethan England. In a paratextual address, ‘A. P. to the Reader’ (modelled on the preface in Savile’s translation of Tacitus), he outlines the purpose of historical writing: to ‘set forth unto us, not onely precepts, but liuely patterns, both for priuate directions and for a ffayres of state’ (A3r).

History, as the address explicitly sets out, should be mined for examples that can be applied to the instruction – especially the political instruction – of the present. The address concentrates on the virtues of classical Roman and Greek exempla, which are then redirected towards the use of English history in the main text. Hayward’s provocative parallels between Richard II and Elizabeth I, and between Henry Bolingbroke and Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, assist in the application of his medieval history. Although comparisons between Richard and Elizabeth had been offered as early as 1580, Hayward makes this resemblance pressingly urgent, by emphasizing concerns over unworthy royal favourites and other issues that

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27 Levy, for example, describes it as ‘the first realization in England of a history in which the causes of events were seen in terms of the interrelationship of politics and character rather than in terms of the working out of God’s providence’. See F. J. Levy, ‘Hayward, Daniel, and the Beginnings of Politic History in England’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 50:1 (1987), 1–14 (pp. 2–3).

28 Ibid., pp. 16–19.

29 John Hayward, *The First Part of the Life and raigne of King Henrie the IIII* (London, 1599; STC 12995), A3r. In Savile’s *Tacitus* (1591; STC 23642), an address, ‘A. B. To the Reader’, outlines the benefits of reading histories: they are ‘so proper for the direction of the life of man’ (F3r) as they teach by example and provide models for political action. Savile’s translation was reprinted in 1598.
dominated both reigns and through the inclusion of a dedication to Essex, which may have been added at the advice of his publisher, John Wolfe. It is a paratext that insists upon a topical reflection, bringing the history into the late Elizabethan present. Indeed, it became invested with even more ‘currency’ in the aftermath of Essex’s disastrous 1599 campaign in Ireland, when the second edition of Hayward’s book was burned and the writer was imprisoned and interrogated by Attorney General Edward Coke and the Lord Chief Justice Sir John Popham about the seditious applications of his history.

In the years leading up to Hayward’s Henry IV, a number of other publications feature medieval English history, although they do not always announce their politic potential as emphatically as Hayward’s later text. During the 1590s, narrative poetry – such as Samuel Daniel’s Civil Wars (first printed as four books in 1595), Michael Drayton’s Mortimeriados: The Lamentable Civil Wars of Edward II and the Barons (1596; later revised and published as The Barons’ Wars in 1603), and the anonymous First Book of the Preservation of King Henry VII (1599) – displays a similar interest in English monarchs and the problems of civil war. And an increasing number of political treatises, incurring varying degrees of censorship, approach the question of Elizabeth’s successor directly and make use of monarchs such as Richard II and Henry IV as part of their discussions, confirming, as Worden summarizes, that political and historical thought often coincide. Prominent examples on opposing sides of a confessional divide include the Jesuit Robert Persons’s Conference About the Next Succession to the Crown of England (written in 1593; published in Antwerp in 1595) and the Puritan Peter Wentworth’s Pithy Exhortation to Her Majesty for Establishing Her Successor to the Crown (written in c.1587,

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30 In a manuscript from 1580, Henry Howard urged Elizabeth I to marry the Duke of Anjou as ‘there will not lack a Henry Bolingbroke presumptuously to undertake the usurpation of the royal dignity’; R. Malcolm Smuts, ‘States, Monarchs, and Dynastic Transitions: The Political Thought of John Hayward’, in Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England, ed. Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 276–94 (p. 278); Levy, ‘Hayward’, p. 16.

31 See, for example, state accounts of Essex’s trial that refer to Hayward’s book: ‘It was remembered there was a book of Henry IV, with many things to make those times like these, and himself [i.e. Essex] like Henry IV, which he countenanced, whilst pretending to disapprove it’ (18 February 1601); Calendar of State Papers, Domestic: Elizabeth: 1598–1601, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman, 1869), p. 584.


33 Worden, ‘Historians’, p. 72.
published in 1598), which feature accounts of Edward II, Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry VI.\(^3\)

Of particular significance is Persons’s Conference, published under the name of ‘Doleman’, which created ‘a minor sensation in England’ as it draws on the reigns of medieval monarchs to conclude that birthright is ‘not sufficient to be admitted to a crowne’ and that the question of Elizabeth’s successor is ‘extreme[ly] doubtful as touching the best right’.\(^3\)

The Conference strongly attacks the absolutist doctrine of Pierre de Belloy, undercuts James VI of Scotland’s claim to the English throne, and recommends the title of Isabella, the Spanish Infanta (although, as Victor Houliston discusses, it ‘stops short of endorsing hers as the strongest claim’).\(^3\)

What is significant for my purposes is the treatise’s provocative use of medieval English exempla, particularly a detailed evaluation of Richard II’s reign. Persons first claims that, ‘by reason’, an unfit king ‘may and hath and ought to be [deposed], when vrgent occasions are offred’ (V\(\text{4r}\)) and then asserts that ‘king Richards gouerment was intolerable and he worthy of deposition’, owing to the ‘eul counsel of his fauorites’, ‘the peruering of al lawes’, and ‘the ioyning with his mynions for opressing the nobility’ (V\(\text{5v–6r}\)). The text features a controversial dedication to Essex, which brought political difficulties to the earl and was likely intended to discredit his standing with James VI, with whom he was in regular contact.\(^3\)

Rooting the treatise within the Elizabethan court, the dedication to Essex claims that ‘no man is in more high and eminent place or dignitie at this day’, and, most controversially, that he has the ‘high liking of the people’, meaning that ‘no man [is] like to haue a greater part or sway in deciding of this great affaire’ (*v\(\text{2v–3r}\)). The text’s significance lies beyond the issue of succession because of its interests in ‘the proper limits to the authority of monarchs’ and competing sources of power.\(^3\)

Both its dedicatory paratext and the use of English exempla emphasize this broader, destabilizing point.

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\(^3\) For a contrastive analysis of these treatises and others, see Paulina Kewes, ‘The Puritan, the Jesuit and the Jacobean Succession’, in Doubtful and Dangerous, ed. Doran and Kewes, pp. 47–70.


\(^3\) Houliston, ‘The Hare and the Drum’, p. 240.

It is important to situate Wise’s editions within this context and consider how Shakespeare’s histories interacted with these non-dramatic texts on the bookstalls and in the collections and Sammelbände of readers. While history-play studies have regularly shown how Shakespeare’s plays display a clear interest in the historiographical and political debates of their time of composition, the fact that this connection is enhanced by the plays’ publication and introduces new and vibrant textual exchanges is often overlooked. It is not only the first edition of a text that is significant, but its history of subsequent editions. Often, the publication of playbooks (and indeed of any text) does not involve just one moment of selection, but multiple moments. The collective market for first and reprint editions during the late 1590s indicates consumer demand for politically reflexive medieval histories and provides a narrative of this demand. Wise’s first editions and reprints were circulated at the same time as Persons’s Conference, Daniel’s Civil Wars, Drayton’s Mortimeriados, and Hayward’s Henry IV, and evidence from the book trade suggests a two-way exchange between some of these texts and Shakespeare’s plays, as well as details about their wider cultural–political use. If Augustine Phillips’s claim in 1601 that the ‘play of Kyng Rychard’ was ‘so old and so long out of vse’ on stage is to be believed (and not merely reflect his strategy under Privy Council examination for the company’s role in the Essex rising), it may have been the prominence of Wise’s printed editions that recommended the play to Essex’s followers who arranged the performance on 7 February 1601, the eve of their uprising. By this time, Wise had issued three editions of Richard II in quick succession, and it was becoming one of the most quoted of Shakespeare’s plays in commonplace books and miscellanies, such as Belvedere (1600). It is not my intention to suggest that all

39 See also Amy Lidster, “With much labour out of scattered papers”: The Caroline Reprints of Thomas Heywood’s 1 and 2 If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Renaissance Drama, 49:2 (2021), 205–28.

40 National Archives: State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth I; SP 12/278, fols. 85r–86v. See ‘Examination of Augustine Phillips’, Shakespeare Documented, convened by Folger Shakespeare Library (created 2016) https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu (accessed 16 April 2021). Worden argues that the play was instead a dramatization of Hayward’s history (‘Which Play Was Performed at the Globe Theatre on 7 February 1601?’, London Review of Books, 23:13 (10 July 2003)). This seems unlikely: as Paul E. J. Hammer has shown, if a play had been based on Hayward’s book, this point would surely have been recorded somewhere in the extensive state documents covering the events. See Hammer, ‘Shakespeare’s Richard II, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising’, Shakespeare Quarterly, 59:1 (2008), 1–35 (pp. 20–23).

41 In Belvedere, Richard II is Shakespeare’s most quoted play (with forty-nine quotations); Richard III and Romeo and Juliet are in joint second place, with fourteen quotations each. See Lukas Erne and Devani Singh (eds.), Bel-vedére or The Garden of the Muses: An Early Modern Printed Commonplace Book (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 348. See also Amy Lidster, ‘At the Sign of
histories about the medieval past were read in the same way; but, as Worden succinctly puts it, texts differing in form, style, agenda, and the use and analysis of sources often have ‘purposes of persuasion cutting across them’.\footnote{Worden, ‘Afterword’, p. 297.} One of the key points I wish to emphasize is that, during the 1590s, the range of publications about the origins and conclusions of the Wars of the Roses reveals a widespread interest in the application of these histories to the Elizabethan present that is not restricted to elite circles, but is part of a commercial book trade that involves an expanding readership invested in politic interpretations.

Wise’s publishing strategies capitalize on the potential of Shakespeare’s plays as printed histories that could be read and used alongside other non-dramatic histories on the bookstalls. His investment in four plays about the Wars of the Roses initiated the print serialization of Shakespeare’s English histories, which enhances the connection between these plays and other publications, such as Daniel’s Civil Wars. Lyons’s work on collections has shown that Wise’s single-text editions resemble a proto-collection of plays.\footnote{Lyons, ‘Serials’, pp. 189–93.} Critics often describe Shakespeare’s Folio Histories as forming two tetralogies – one featuring Richard II, 1 and 2 Henry IV, and Henry V, and the other consisting of 1–3 Henry VI and Richard III – which are bookended by King John and Henry VIII.\footnote{For the two tetralogies and the processes of theatrical serialization, see Nicholas Grene, Shakespeare’s Serial History Plays (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).} Wise’s editions offer what could be described as a compressed tetralogy. Two of the plays are directly linked as part of a sequence: the main, head, and running title of  his 2nd part of Henry the fourth establishes the play’s position next to  the Historie of Henry the fourth.\footnote{Shakespeare, The History of Henrie the Fovrth (London, 1598; STC 22280), A2r; and The Second part of Henrie the fourth (London, 1600; STC 22288), A2r.} As a group, the four plays have a good claim to be the first series of Shakespearean histories that could be purchased from a stationer. Although Millington published The First Part of the Contention in 1594 and The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York in 1595, these editions were not in the same format. They were printed as a quarto and octavo, respectively, making them less suitable for binding together. In contrast, Wise’s editions offered readers the first tetralogy, in quarto format, on the Wars of the Roses that concentrates on some key political turning points, beginning with the Wars’ historical origins – the deposition of Richard II – and concluding with the accession of Henry VII
in *Richard III*. One of the oft-cited features of history plays is their supposed ‘open-endedness’: history, by its very nature, does not have an ending. Written histories nevertheless do provide some kind of artificially imposed narrative of closure. They offer, to repurpose Thomas Browne’s phrase, a ‘Parenthesis in Eternity’, and they differ significantly in the extent to which resolution is achieved and advertised. The *First Part of the Contention*, ending in the midst of conflict, has a much greater sense of open-endedness than Captain Thomas Stukeley or *Macbeth*, which resolve their main action and end with explicit statements underscoring that resolution. However, the ways in which these histories are used and combined – as part of performance repertories and as printed books – can alter the dynamics of their individual endings. Wise’s printed editions create a sequence that emphasizes the continuation of successional conflict and concerns over monarchical authority in common with, for example, the genealogies of Persons’s *Conference*.

One particularly significant example of a serialized medieval history that was involved in a two-way exchange with Shakespeare’s plays is Daniel’s *Civil Wars*. Modelled on Lucan’s *Pharsalia* and offering an English epic poem in *ottava rima*, *The Civil Wars* focuses on the conflicts between the ‘houses of Lancaster and Yorke’, using events from the reigns of Richard II to Edward IV (in its later continuations) to reflect on the Elizabethan present. As critics including Levy, Alzada Tipton, and Gillian Wright have explored, Daniel incorporates different approaches to historiography, sometimes advancing providential claims that celebrate political stability through the Tudor line and sometimes concentrating on ideas of secular causation that are much more sceptical. Above all, Daniel’s verse history highlights the horrors and destruction of civil conflict which ‘wast[e] so much [on] warre without a foe’ (B1v), and its regular references to events and individuals from the 1590s seem to suggest, as Daniel later observed in his 1609 dedication to the Countess of Pembroke, that the final years of Elizabeth’s reign marked a renewed threat of civil conflict, ‘a time which was not so well secur’d of the future’. During this period of political and

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successional anxiety, Simon Waterson published Daniel’s *First Four Books of the Civil Wars* (1595) and its impact was, according to John Pitcher, ‘felt throughout the literary scene at once’.\(^5^1\) It is likely that Shakespeare himself drew on these books for *Richard II* ‘within weeks of the poem going on sale’, which was probably in November 1595.\(^5^2\) In turn, some of Daniel’s revisions to later editions – such as the representation of the Battle of Shrewsbury in his 1609 expansion – were probably influenced by Shakespeare’s English histories, published by Wise.\(^5^3\) Indeed, Daniel’s dedication to the Countess of Pembroke emphasizes the theatrical quality of his history: he gives orations, or speeches, to the characters, and he invokes the *theatrum mundi* metaphor to reinforce his claim about the truthfulness of his account: ‘all these great actions are openly presented on the Stage of the World’ (A3r, 1609). Particularly on paper stages, the Wars of the Roses offered material for politic readings that was part of a non-linear web of exchanges between different texts and between different publishers.

Informing this exchange was the physical geography of the book trade in St Paul’s Churchyard. Thanks to the work of Peter Blayney, this area can be explored and mapped in detail. Waterson’s shop at the Sign of the Crown (act. 1589–1634) was just a few hundred metres away from Wise’s premises at the Sign of the Angel (act. 1593–1602) in Paul’s Cross, the north-east corner of the churchyard (see Figure 2.1).\(^5^4\) At the same time as Wise invested in first and reprint editions of Shakespeare’s histories, Waterson issued multiple editions of Daniel’s *Civil Wars*, meaning that two serialized histories of the Wars of the Roses were published at neighbouring bookshops in Paul’s Cross.\(^5^5\) In fact, the ensuing success of Wise’s histories (with nine editions by 1600) may have motivated the expansions to *The Civil Wars*. After the *First Four Books* in 1595 and the publication of a fifth book in an undated edition (bound as an attachment to the four books and included as part of *The Poetical Essays of Samuel Daniel* in 1599), Waterson asked Daniel in about 1600 to continue the

\(^5^2\) Ibid. \(^5^3\) See Wright, ‘Politics’, p. 467.
\(^5^5\) These appeared in the following order: the *First Four Books* in 1595; Q1 *Richard II* and Q1 *Richard III* in 1597; Q2 and Q3 *Richard II*, Q2 *Richard III*, Q1 and Q2 *Henry IV* in 1598; *The Poetical Essays of Samuel Daniel* (which contains reissues of the first five books of *The Civil Wars*) and Q3 *Henry IV* in 1599; Q1 2 *Henry IV* in 1600; *The Works of Samuel Daniel* (containing six books of *The Civil Wars*) in 1601; and Q3 *Richard III* in 1602.
A sixth book was then added to a new edition of *The Civil Wars* that appeared as part of *The Works of Samuel Daniel* in 1601. Waterson was clearly aware of the reading public’s interest in these monarchs and the country’s civil wars, which was perhaps compacted by the geography of the book trade and the investments of nearby stationers. While Daniel’s *Civil Wars* is often considered a source for Shakespeare, what has not been explored is the possibility that the publication of Daniel’s and Shakespeare’s histories in multiple ‘parts’ was spurred on by the success of the two ventures. It represents a kind of indirect collaboration between stationers as they respond to each other’s practices and relay that exchange to their authors. This serialization may also carry interpretative significance. Some of Shakespeare’s plays and individual books of *The Civil Wars* end on a note of uncertainty or pessimism: *Richard II* concludes with Bolingbroke’s admission of guilty remorse and Book 2 of *The Civil Wars* abruptly shifts from a celebration of worthy Elizabethans to a reminder that ‘we must now returne againe to bloud’ (M4r, 1595). The publication

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56 Pitcher, ‘Daniel’, para. 11.
history of these texts compounds their formal and thematic lack of closure. New instalments and editions of the Wars of the Roses reinscribe these histories with a political and textual scepticism of resolution.

Another key feature of Wise’s Shakespearean editions is a title-page emphasis on their historicity, which furthers their connection to other types of printed history. The title pages contain plot descriptions that draw attention to the plays’ engagement with historical events and expand the titles recorded in Stationers’ Register entries. *Richard III* dramatizes the monarch’s ‘treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephews: his tyrannicall usurpation: with the whole course of his detested life and most deserued death’, which is, in contrast, succinctly and impartially described in the Register as ‘The tragedie of kinge Richard the Third with the death of the duke of Clarence’. The title page offers a clear reading of the play through its emphatic condemnation of Richard III’s actions, which tempers the theatrical vitality of the character on the stage. In *2 Henry IV* (published jointly by Wise and William Aspley), the title page emphasizes historical events and sequences: the play not only dramatizes events from the reign of Henry IV, but also continues ‘to his death, and [the] coronation of Henrie the fift’ (A1r). Neither of these two events are mentioned in the lengthy title recorded in the Stationers’ Register, which even includes an attribution to Shakespeare and is the first appearance of his name in the Register. The reference to Henry V on the playbook title page not only capitalizes on Shakespeare’s new play about this monarch (performed in 1599 and also printed in 1600), it crucially reinforces the seriality of Wise’s venture and the way in which the print presentation and packaging of these histories helps to position them as part of an ongoing politic discourse about the Wars of the Roses. As a group, they offer a continuous historical narrative that provides different points of entry for examining the Elizabethan succession question and the threat of renewed civil war.

The printed presentation of *1 Henry IV* provides another important example. The main title is given as ‘THE HISTORY OF HENRIE THE FOVRTH’, and the largest type is used for the play’s classification as a

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58 I am indebted here to Lyons’s application of the term ‘historicity’ in her work on playbook collections. See ‘Serials’, p. 209.
59 Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Richard the third* (London, 1597; STC 22314), A1r. See SRO3997; Arber, III, p. 93.
60 *2 Henry IV* was entered to Wise and Aspley on 23 August 1600; the full description reads: ‘the second parte of the history of kinge henry the iiiijth with the humours of Sir John Fallstaff: Wrytten by master Shakespere.’ SRO4341; Arber, III, p. 170.
history – indeed, the history of the king (see Figure 2.2). It is one of the first uses of the term 'history' on a playbook originating from the commercial stages to signify, unambiguously, an account of the historical past. As discussed in Chapter 1, earlier uses mostly apply to a fictional narrative, as in *A Pleasant Conceited History Called The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) and *The History of Orlando Furioso* (1594). Wise’s title page also refers to ‘the battell at Shrewsburie, betwenee the King and Lord Henry Percy, sur-
named Henrie Hotspure of the North’ (A1r), which again recalls events and figures that appear in the non-dramatic histories that were being published at the same time, such as Daniel’s *Civil Wars*. Hotspur and the rebellion of ‘The Percies’ feature prominently in the third book of *The Civil Wars* and are also mentioned in the separate argument that prefaces the book (N1r). Moreover, none of the extant title pages for *1 Henry IV* acknowledge the text’s performance origins. I believe, as discussed in the next section, that this omission could be a result of the Oldcastle debacle and a desire to keep the Chamberlain’s Men off the title page. Company attributions feature on all of Wise’s other playbooks, marking this text as unusual. It nevertheless has the effect of closely aligning the playbook with non-dramatic printed histories and, interestingly, it would have borne something of a resemblance to Hayward’s *Henry IV*, once the latter text appeared on the bookstalls in 1599.

A recurrent question in this book is who was responsible for the design and content of title pages, paratexts that had such a key role in advertising playbooks and shaping readers’ experiences of them. With Wise, as with other publishers who invested in commercial plays, it is reasonable to suppose that he must have had the final say. It is possible that some title-page phrasing was, as Stern argues, inherited from playbills, while the design of title pages may have been shaped by the printers Wise hired – including Valentine Simmes, Peter Short, and Thomas Creede. An interesting case is provided by Creede, who printed Wise’s second and third editions of *Richard III* in 1598 and 1602. The second edition of *Richard III* reproduces the title-page description from the first edition printed by Simmes and Short, but Creede’s printing house has changed the *mise en page* (see Figure 2.3). The layout of the lines on the page brings to mind Creede’s own playbooks (especially his edition of *The True Tragedy of Richard III*; see Figure 1.2), as does the inclusion of his familiar device showing the figure of Truth. This new title page for Shakespeare’s

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61 For the account of the Percys’ rebellion, see Q4r–R4r.  
Figure 2.2  Title page from *Henry IV* (Q2 1598; STC 22280).
Figure 2.3 Title pages from Richard III, Q1 1597 (STC 22314) and Q2 1598 (STC 22315).
THE TRAGEDIE

of King Richard

the third.

Containing his treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence, the pitiful murther of his innocent Nephewes: his tyrannical usurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserved death.

As it hath beene lately Acted by the Right honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his servants.

By William Shake-speare.

LONDON

Printed by Thomas Creede, for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Angell. 1598.
Richard III might even engender confusion between the two plays based on the life of the same monarch and covering similar events – were it not for the new title-page attribution to Shakespeare that appears in Wise’s edition. I believe, as discussed later in the chapter, that the introduction of title-page attributions to Shakespeare was partly owing to the success of his narrative poems, but it could also reveal an effort to distinguish between two plays about the life of Richard III. As soon as Creede, the publisher of the earlier play, acted as trade printer for the second edition of the later play, an unprecedented title-page attribution to Shakespeare was included. Creede could have suggested this addition, particularly as he sometimes placed prominent attributions to dramatists in his own publications, such as A Looking Glass for London and England. Although publishers were the main overseers of the production process, it should not be assumed that every decision relating to playbook design was taken by them. The evidence from print paratexts suggests a model of collaborative agency. Indeed, Short and Simmes were both printers for Daniel’s Civil Wars, indicating that Wise’s and Waterson’s bookshops were sites of exchange involving similar networks of print professionals, who may also have exerted some influence on the preparation of playbooks.

This idea of uncertain and collaborative agency leads to my final point about the presentation of Wise’s playbooks: the preparation of printer’s copy seems to indicate an interest in the plays’ historicity and political application. As Massai has shown, publication agents acted as annotators or editors of texts, and Wise may have taken on this role for his playbooks, although other agents, including Shakespeare, cannot be ruled out. In Richard III, for example, the speeches of Richard and Richmond to their armies (5.4 and 5.5 in modern editions) are prefaced with the italicized headings ‘His oration to his souldiers’ and ‘His Oration to his army’, respectively (see Q1 M1v, M2v). The term ‘oration’ is particularly unusual as part of a stage direction and seems to be an explanatory note for readers rather than a direction for stage action. These descriptions could have been added as part of the publication process. They recall the orations of historical characters that featured in works such as More’s Richard III, Holinshed’s Chronicles, The Mirror for Magistrates, Daniel’s Civil Wars

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64 Shakespeare’s name first appeared on playbook title pages in 1598 for Q2 Richard II, Q2 Richard III, and Q1 Love’s Labour’s Lost. It is unclear which was the first.

65 Massai, Editor, pp. 102–105.

and, later, Hayward’s *Henry IV*.67 Passages of direct (and invented) speech from historical figures were a common, although not contentious, feature of printed histories. The headings and typographical separation seen in Shakespeare’s *Richard III* can also be witnessed in earlier works. English translations of Thucydides use this device and, as Grant and Ravelhofer point out, separate the orations from the narratives through page breaks and titles like ‘The Oration of the Corycyrians before the counsayle of the Athenyans’. 68 As part of Wise’s edition, this print feature proposes a connection between the history play and ‘non-dramatic’ histories. It draws attention to the mixed forms of enunciation that appear in histories that are not exclusively plays and include narration and direct speech. These techniques and their typographical presentation encourage readers to make comparisons across a range of printed histories.

The two variant textual states of 2 *Henry IV* (QA and QB) also suggest that publication agents made decisions about the preparation of history plays in ways that affected and responded to the text’s dialectic with its sources and political contexts. Of particular significance is an extra scene in QB that is absent from QA (3.1 in F and modern editions).69 The provenance of the scene is uncertain, but Jowett and Taylor suggest that the scene was contained on a separate manuscript leaf (possibly ‘Shakespeare’s addition to his own foul papers’), which was accidentally omitted in the first printing.70 Whatever its precise origins, it is clearly a later addition to the playbook and one which publication agents made a considerable effort to include. An examination of the texts reveals that QA was set and printed first and that E3 and E4 were reset with two new leaves (E5 and E6, containing the extra scene), which were then stitched in with E1 and E2 from the first issue.71 At the time of 2 *Henry IV*’s entry in the Register (23 August 1600) and publication, the political climate in England was particularly tense. Essex had returned in disgrace from his failed campaign in Ireland, undergone a trial for insubordination, and had only recently been granted his liberty on 26 August, after his confinement in

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67 For Daniel’s defence of this technique and its classical origins, see *Civil Wars* (1609), A2v. The use of this device was one of the criticisms levelled against Hayward’s *Henry IV* when the author was imprisoned and interrogated about the text’s seditious intent. See Levy, ‘Hayward’, pp. 18–19.

68 Grant and Ravelhofer, ‘Introduction’, in *English Historical Drama*, p. 3.

69 The additional scene appears from E3v to E5r in *The Second part of Henrie the fourth* (London, 1600; STC 22288a).

70 John Jowett and Gary Taylor, ‘The Three Texts of 2 *Henry IV*, *Studies in Bibliography*, 40 (1987), 31–50 (pp. 33–34, 38). Their examination of the cancel’s watermarks and Simmès’s type and titles demonstrates that the additional scene was probably printed and added in late 1600.

71 Ibid., pp. 31–34. The numbers of surviving copies of Q1 (ten copies of QA and eleven of QB) reveal that both versions of the play were sold and circulated.
York House and Essex House. The nature of the additional scene in QB is largely political: it shows Henry IV reflecting on his usurpation of the crown, one of the most pressing points of discussion in texts about the origins of the Wars of the Roses, including Hayward’s *Henry IV*. In Shakespeare’s scene, Henry presents himself as reluctant in his accession ‘[b]ut that necessitie so bowed the state, | That I and greatnesse were compelld to kisse’ (E.4v). This argument that the well-being of the state can justify extreme measures was a key feature of Persons’s *Conference*, and Essex himself made a similar remark in a letter to James VI of Scotland, following his trial in 1600: Essex saw himself as ‘summoned of all sides to stop the malice, the wickednes and madnes [and] to relieve my poore cuntry that grones under hir burthen’, claiming that his ‘reason, honour and conscience’ commanded him ‘to be active’.72 The scene’s repeated references to necessity compelling unexpected action and the difficulty of controlling subjects’ loyalties have immediate parallels with Elizabethan political debate, Essex’s own situation, and the accusations levelled against him.73 Its indirectness and the fact that it eschews a clear allusion probably protected it from censorship.74 Because the stationers involved in the play’s publication, Simmes as printer and Wise as publisher, went to some lengths to include the material, it may be that the scene’s very currency – the fact that it engages with matters of intense political interest without being explicit or overtly contentious – motivated their efforts.

The scene’s attractiveness was also perhaps owing to its representation of a sleep-deprived Henry IV that has its origins in a similar portrait in the third book of Daniel’s *Civil Wars* (see R.4r–S.3r).75 Shakespeare’s portrayal draws very little on his sources in Holinshed, Hall, Stow, and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*.76 Daniel, however, presents a lengthy account of the king’s unceasing worries about the stability of his realm, which led to a sleepless, restless condition:

For ô no peace could euer so release
His intricate turmoiles, and sorrowes deepe,
But that his cares kept waking all his life
Continue on till death conclude the strife.

(R.4v)

72 BL Add. MS 31022 (R), fol.107r–108r. For extracts from this letter, see Hammer, ‘Essex Rising’, pp. 10–11.
74 René Weis suggests that the shorter version of 3.1 is the result of self-censorship on the part of the Chamberlain’s Men, who were concerned about the passage’s potential for offence. One of the problems with this theory is that the shorter version was clearly printed first. See *Henry IV, Part 2*, ed. René Weis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 78–99.
Not only, therefore, did Daniel’s *Civil Wars* inform Shakespeare’s addition to the play, it may also have spurred on the stationers’ efforts to include the accidentally omitted scene, which reinforces the textual exchange taking place between the two publishing houses. Indeed, shortly before the publication of *2 Henry IV*, the first five books of *The Civil Wars*, containing this material as well as a direct approbation of Essex, had been reissued as part of *The Poetical Essays of Samuel Daniel* in 1599. Daniel’s representation of Henry and the politic potential of the history may have been fresh in the stationers’ minds. Significantly, in the 1601 edition of *The Works of Samuel Daniel*, these two stanzas praising ‘worthy Essex’ and celebrating his valour as ‘The Mercury of peace, the Mars of warre’ (M3r, stanzas 126–27) were removed as part of Daniel’s ongoing revision of the poem. By this time, it was likely in response to the increasingly hostile political environment which made direct and approving references to the earl unadvisable.77

The influence of politically alert publication agents as compilers and editors of texts offers an explanation for one of the most unresolved textual issues relating to Wise’s editions: the problem of the deposition or ‘Parliament Scene’ in *Richard II*.78 This scene did not appear in any of Wise’s editions and was first published by Matthew Law in 1608 (Q4). It could be a later addition to the play, meaning that censorship was not involved (as Leeds Barroll and David Bergeron have suggested) or, as Janet Clare, Cyndia Clegg, Paul Hammer, Jean-Christophe Mayer and others have argued, it may have been part of the original play and censored either by the Master of the Revels or the company (in the case of self-censorship) prior to performance, or by ecclesiastical agents prior to publication.79 If a form of censorship was involved, the wholesale excision of a scene typically indicates a decision made during the publication process, rather than the work of a theatrical or authorial agent. Although the Stationers’ Register does not actually reveal that the play was authorized prior to publication (not in itself an uncommon practice), Clegg proposes that an ecclesiastical

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77 Even in private correspondence, direct references to Essex were avoided. A letter (dated 20 February 1600) from John Harington to Anthony Standen refers to Essex in strikingly oblique terms: ‘You wonder I write nothing of one: - believe me I hear nothing: but he is where he was, and I think must be, till these great businesses be concluded.’ Norman Egbert McClure (ed.), *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington; Together with The Prayse of Private Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), p. 80.

78 *The Tragedie of King Richard the Second* (London, 1608; STC 22311), A1r.

79 For a summary of these positions, see Cyndia Susan Clegg, “‘By the choise and inuitation of al the realme’: *Richard II* and Elizabethan Press Censorship”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48:4 (1997), 432–48 (pp. 432–34).
representative, such as the Bishop of London, requested the removal of this scene. Clegg offers a compelling account of how the scene encourages a dialectic with Persons’s *Conference*. It presents Parliament as an agent of deposition through the figure of Northumberland, who requests that Richard publicly read out a list of the commons’ complaints:

No more, but that you read  
These accusations, and these grievous crimes,  
Committed by your person, and your followers,  
Against the State and profit of this Land,  
That by confessing them, the soules of men  
May deeme that you are worthily deposde.

(H2v)

The scene stages a power negotiation between Richard and his nobles, acting transparently (as they claim) on behalf of Parliament and the needs of the people, and requiring Richard ‘in common view’ to resign his title, so they can ‘proceed without suspition’ (H1v). In contrast to Holinshed’s account, where, as Clegg identifies, Parliament is presented as ‘consenting to Richard’s abdication’, Shakespeare’s dramatization shows the commons summoning the king to his deposition. The Q4 scene seems to echo Persons’s notorious claim that ‘the king was deposed by act of parliament and himselfe counuinced of his vnworthy gouernment, and brought to confesse that he was worthely depriued’ (*Conference*, V7r). Because Wise’s publication strategies and his indirect ‘exchange’ with Waterson suggest he was attentive to the contemporaneity of the Wars of the Roses and how these histories were used in other texts, an alternative possibility is that he (potentially in collaboration with his printer, Simmes) was responsible for its removal. As the scene recalls the radical claims of Persons’s treatise and Elizabethan resistance theories, the stationers may have decided to censor it as a precautionary measure, whilst, at a similar time, continuing to encourage politic readings through indirect representations, such as the added scene in 2 Henry IV.

Wise’s editions are particularly significant for my purposes because they demonstrate that the publication and presentation of history plays were

80 SRO3977; Arber, III, p. 89.  
82 Clegg, “By the choise”, pp. 443–44.  
responsive to patterns in the book trade – ones which can even be geographically mapped – and to wider political contexts. These key factors also directed the responses of other print professionals and readers. For example, a Sammelband held by Lambeth Palace Library (1600.22) contains one of Wise’s playbooks bound together with a selection of topical, non-dramatic texts in the following order: Thameseidos (published by Waterson), England’s Hope Against Irish Hate (Thomas Heyes), The King’s Declaration (John Flasket), Album, seu nigrum amicorum (Wise), An Italian’s Dead Body, Stuck with English Flowers (Wise), and 2 Henry IV (Wise and Aspley). The texts were compiled, as Jeffrey Todd Knight identifies, by the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth Palace, which bound shorter publications by year – a practice that seems to have been influenced by Matthew Parker’s collecting practices. The arrangement was therefore determined by a shared year of publication: 1600. Nevertheless, the choice of which texts to feature in this yearbook approach to collection still carries interpretative weight. This Sammelband gathers texts that were united through physical spaces and political subjects. All of them were published by stationers based in Paul’s Cross (see Figure 2.1) – and several contain the signatures of their publishers, including Wise’s on the end of the flyleaf of 2 Henry IV. As a group, they seem to underscore the political and newsworthy issues dominating the end of Elizabeth’s reign. Edward Wilkinson’s Thameseidos, published by Waterson, offers a panegyric to Elizabeth I that celebrates her reign and the political stability brought about by this ‘womanish Empire’. England’s Hope Against Irish Hate, published by Heyes at the Green Dragon, is a political poem about the Nine Years War that is intensely anti-Irish and praises Essex for having once brought ‘the snowtes of these rebellious Swine, | Within their Confines’. Next door to Wise’s bookshop, at the Sign of the Black Bear, Flasket published The King’s Declaration and Ordinance Containing the Cause of His Warre, which contains Henri IV of France’s declaration of war against the Duke of Savoy, ‘[a]ccording to the copie printed at Paris’. In addition to 2 Henry IV, the Sammelband is rounded out by Wise’s two collections of funeral elegies – one in English (An Italian’s Dead Body,
Stuck with English Flowers, STC 19154.3) and one in Latin (Album, seu nigrum amicorum, STC 19154). They were prepared by Theophilus Field (brother of the actor and playwright, Nathan Field) on the death of Sir Horatio Palavicino (c.1540–1600), a merchant and diplomat who fought in Elizabeth’s wars and worked as an intelligrencer for the English government. As the episcopal library did not generally prioritize literary texts, some of these publications, including Shakespeare’s 2 Henry IV, are unusual inclusions, potentially prompted by the cross-genre exchange of politically invested texts that drove stationers’ investments, such as Wise’s, in the first place. Indeed, this topical Sammelband – featuring texts that were bound together materially, temporally, and geographically – encourages, as Knight proposes, a reading of 2 Henry IV that is attentive to the play’s interest in succession and territorial control above the theatrical vitality of Falstaff and his Eastcheap companions. While Wise’s publications do not necessarily offer a clear application to the times through their paratexts – they take part in a debate, without making a precise statement about it – the orthodox emphasis of this volume promotes and is perhaps witness to a reading of the play’s political plot that emphatically condemns the rebellious lords and Falstaff’s anarchic potential.

Wise’s successful editions also prompted other stationers to invest (or reinvest) in medieval English history plays. In 1600, Busby and Millington published the first edition of Henry V, while Millington issued his second editions of The First Part of the Contention and The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, therefore making up a three-part series in quarto format that would complement (and expand) the tetralogy published by Wise. Other stationers invested in similar histories: in 1598, Creede finally published the first edition of The Famous Victories of Henry V, a title he had entered in the Register in 1594 but had not printed. In 1599, John Oxonbridge invested in Heywood’s two-part history play, Edward IV, issuing the plays as a collection from his bookshop at the Sign of the Parrot, only a few doors away from Wise’s premises in Paul’s Cross. By the end of the Elizabethan period, the market for history plays was dominated by those featuring the medieval English monarchical past, a print identity that was directed by Wise’s publishing strategies and the editions’ success with readers. These patterns did not, however, reflect the position of the history

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90 Ibid., pp. 322–23.
91 Second editions of Edward I (William White) and Edward III (Cuthbert Burby) were also published in 1599.
play on stage, nor did they remain static. Rather, this print identity characterized the market for only a few years, spurred on by the currency of the Wars of the Roses in a range of ‘non-dramatic’ texts and political treatises that also encouraged comparative, serialized readings, both within and across different editions.

**Wise Networks**

Looking beyond Shakespeare’s plays, Wise’s interest in history is not sustained to the same extent throughout the rest of his output, which suggests that other selection strategies may also be at play. The majority of his published output involves the work of writers – most centrally, Shakespeare, Nashe, and Playfere – who were, as Massai identifies, patronized by George Carey, second Baron Hunsdon. Wise’s publications announce their connection to the Carey family through dedications in Nashe’s and Playfere’s works and through the first ever title-page attributions to the Chamberlain’s Men in Shakespeare’s playbooks. Wise therefore consistently invests in Carey as a textual patron. This striking specialism could indicate that he had a private link to the Careys and was involved in publishing their patronized writers. I do not, however, believe that the extant evidence supports a direct connection between Wise and Carey. Instead, I would like to propose that a flexible patronage model involving different kinds of private and public exchanges drove Wise’s output. I believe that Wise’s connection to Carey was a public, textual one within the commercial book trade that may have been facilitated by personal contact with Carey’s writers. In this section, I build on David Bergeron’s work on the coexistence and interplay of commerce and patronage in printed texts. While Bergeron concentrates on paratextual dedications and addresses, these print features do not appear in Wise’s playbooks, and my evidence derives instead from the publisher’s overall output, discursive paratexts in non-dramatic publications, stationers’ records, and playbook title pages. Erne’s work on these editions devalues Wise’s agency and argues that Shakespeare and the Chamberlain’s Men sought out the publication of their plays. While dramatist and company may have collaborated, I believe that Wise is a key mover in the process and that his history of investment in Nashe and Playfere and his location in Paul’s Cross informed his presentation strategies, which make

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94 Erne, *Literary Dramatist*, ch. 3.
commercial use of a link to Carey and, in later editions, to ‘Shakespeare’ as part of title-page attributions. As printed texts, Shakespeare’s history plays can not only be situated within the dynamic book trade in English monarchical history that encompassed a wide range of publications and political sympathies, but also within a textual patronage network involving a smaller, coterie group of writers. Rather than diminishing the significance of the plays’ historical subjects, this network encourages competing notions and applications of history that are attentive to the authorizing role and political reputation of the Carey family, and offers a narrower interpretative framework for directing readings.

Wise’s focus on Carey’s writers came about through chance, strategy, and book trade connections, which can be clarified by examining the publication contexts of their work. Nashe’s *Christ’s Tears Over Jerusalem* (1593) is the first text to be associated with Wise and he is identified in the imprint as its bookseller. A connection with printer James Roberts determined his involvement in this edition, and it is the only text of Nashe’s with which Wise is linked. That Nashe was under the direct patronage of the Careys is shown by surviving letters and dedications, including the address to Elizabeth Carey (George’s wife) in *Christ’s Tears*, which claims that his ‘choisest studies’ were directed to ‘the eternizing of the heroycall familie of the Careys’. In a letter to his wife, dated 13 November 1593, Carey disburse a financial reward for Nashe’s dedication to Elizabeth and claims that the writer ‘shall not finde my purs shutt to relieue him out of prison there presently in great misserie, malicied for writinge against the londoners’. Indeed, Carey welcomed Nashe as a guest at Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight, following the writer’s release from prison, a mark of support and hospitality that Nashe alludes to in *Have With You to Saffron-Walden* (1596).

It is unlikely that Wise sought a link with Nashe or Carey in the publication of *Christ’s Tears*; instead, his involvement was shaped by, as Erne has identified, events and individuals within the book trade. *Christ’s Tears* was entered in the Stationers’ Register to Alice Charlewood (widow of John Charlewood) on 8 September 1593. When she married James Roberts later that year, all of her publishing rights passed to him. The title

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95 Thomas Nashe, *Christ’s Tears Over Jerusalem* (London, 1593; STC 18366), *2v.
97 Thomas Nashe, *Have with you to Saffron-walden* (London, 1596; STC 18369), Ptv.
99 SRO3509; Arber, II, p. 635.
page of Christ’s Tears (1593) indicates that it was ‘Printed by James Roberts, and are to be solde by Andrewe Wise, at his shop in Paules Churchyard’ (*1r), while the 1594 reissue claims that it was ‘Printed for Andrew Wise’. It is therefore slightly unclear as to whether Roberts or Wise was the main investor in the text and acted as its publisher, but regardless, Wise’s involvement came about through a business relationship with Roberts, who held the rights to Nashe’s text because of his recent marriage.

Wise was the only publisher of Playfere’s sermons until 1603, which seems to suggest that he had a direct connection with the preacher. Playfere exclusively dedicates his sermons (printed between 1596 and 1603) to either George or Elizabeth Carey, and the nature of the dedications reveals measurable support from the Carey family. In The Pathway to Perfection (1596), for example, he credits his university education to the Careys, claiming that by George’s ‘munificence and bountie my studies haue been hitherto continued’. The relationship between Playfere and Wise, however, was – at least at the beginning – notably hostile. In 1595, Wise published two different but closely related editions of the sermon that Playfere preached at St Mary Spital in Easter week 1595 as A Most Excellent and Heavenly Sermon (STC 20014 and STC 20014.3). These editions were not overseen by Playfere and he objected, claiming they were printed from reported texts that had been written down by someone listening to the sermon. This practice was relatively common and was a means of preserving spoken sermons. As Stern shows, ‘preachers did not write entire texts before preaching, but spoke from notes of their own; the published “bad” texts were the most complete records available of what had been preached’. Some individuals, including Playfere, nevertheless disapproved of this process of transmission and the ‘mangled’ texts that resulted.

Although Wise was fined by the Stationers’ Company for publishing this sermon ‘without auctoritie’ (meaning ecclesiastical allowance), he

100 Thomas Nashe, Christs Teares Over Ierusalem (London, 1594; STC 18367), *2r.
101 Thomas Playfere, The Pathway to Perfection (London, 1596; STC 20020), A3r.
102 Arnold Hunt, The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590–1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 145. As Hunt proposes, they were likely prepared from two different shorthand texts. Another edition STC 20014.5 also appeared in 1595.
103 See Thomas Playfere, The Meane in Movrning (London, 1596; STC 20015), A2r–4r.
105 Playfere, Meane, A2r.
held the rights to it, and Playfere was obliged to work with him to produce the authorized version, which was published in 1596 as *The Mean in Mourning*. In a dedicatory address to the 'Lady Elizabeth Carey, wife to the thrise-noble, Sir George Carey, Knight Marshall', Playfere describes how 'this sermon hath been twise printed already without my procure-ment' (A2r) and that he has 'played the surgeon' (A3r) to redress the faults in the text. A contrastive analysis of Wise’s earlier editions and the authorized edition shows that Playfere’s most extensive revisions relate to the style, presentation, and annotation of the text. Playfere adds elaborate printed marginalia in English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and includes references and digressions that were not part of the spoken text, as he acknowledges in his dedication. Playfere’s sermons offer an interesting case study of an author evaluating the merits of publication within a book trade in which stationers held the rights to procure and register texts. The fact that Wise also published Playfere’s *Pathway to Perfection* in 1596 (which was issued together with *The Mean in Mourning*) suggests some degree of cooperation between the preacher and stationer, because Playfere did not need to use Wise as a publisher for another sermon. Hooks proposes that the stationer’s initial investment in Playfere was motivated by Nashe’s approbation of the preacher and his sweet, ‘mellifluous’ style—a term that would also be used to describe Shakespeare. It may be the case that stylistic interests prompted Wise’s first investments, before an interplay of further factors—such as the marketability of English history—propelled later investments. As Hooks observes, ‘Playfere’s case is instructive, since it so clearly demonstrates how the trade connections and cultural awareness of a stationer could alter an author’s career, proving his viability as a published author, and hence showing him the possibilities afforded by print’. It draws attention to the role of print professionals in shaping writers’ outputs, considered earlier in this chapter with Waterson and Daniel, and implies that Wise’s interests, rather than Playfere’s or Carey’s, drove the initial investment.


107 Playfere claims that although the reader ‘haue all heere which he heard then, yet hee heard not all then, which he hath heere’ (A3v). See, for example, F8r–G1r for Playfere’s multilingual marginal annotations. See also Hunt (The Art of Hearing, p. 160) for Playfere’s 1596 addition about the response of his audience.


109 Hooks, Selling, p. 70.
George Carey became patron of Shakespeare’s company in July 1596, following the death of his father, Henry Carey, and it is through this connection that Shakespeare can be seen as one of Carey’s patronized writers. Shortly after this, Wise started to invest in plays by Shakespeare, publishing ten editions between 1597 and 1600, more than any other stationer. He did not publish plays by other dramatists, and most of his editions contain attributions to the Chamberlain’s Men. Even Creede’s specialism in histories from the Queen’s Men is not as exclusive. Cuthbert Burby published a range of texts comparable to that of Wise, including sermons, plays, and news pamphlets; but he did not concentrate on works connected to one patron or plays performed by one company or written by one dramatist. Wise’s specialism suggests that he may have had a direct connection with Carey’s company that motivated his investment in Shakespeare’s English histories and, later, his edition of Much Ado About Nothing (1600) which, despite its wartime setting, departs from the historical emphasis of the other playbooks. Because his involvement in texts by Nashe and Playfere came about by circumstance, book-trade associations, and/or a proactive acquisition of manuscripts, it is unlikely that Wise had a personal connection with Carey himself, in the manner of the stationer/patron networks that existed between, for example, John Wolfe and George Goring, or between Christopher Barker and Francis Walsingham. However, Wise surely would have been aware, while he was investing in Shakespeare’s histories, that all of his publications to date could be linked to Carey. He may have sought out a connection to the Chamberlain’s Men or, when an opportunity came along to publish plays from Carey’s company, he seized it.

This connection between Wise and Carey can be reclarified as one that was public and textual, rather than private and measurable, and that was facilitated through a cooperative and potentially collaborative relationship between Wise and the Chamberlain’s Men that directed the plays’ dissemination in print. While I disagree with Erne’s downplaying of Wise’s networks.

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110 Burby published Love’s Labour’s Lost (1598) and Romeo and Juliet (1599, second edition) from the Chamberlain’s Men, as well as George a Greene (1599) from Sussex’s Men, and Mother Bombie (1594 and 1598) from the Children of Paul’s.

111 For example, Goring, an Elizabethan courtier and diplomat, provided Wolfe with a letter of support on 18 October 1582 following his difficulties with the Stationers’ Company and prosecution for challenging printing privileges. The Register records Thomas Norton’s response to Goring on 23 October 1582, when he requests that ‘you must oppose your self as aduersarie Either to Wolf your man, or to your mistresse the Quene and to all her maiesties seruantes’ (Arber, II, pp. 773–76). In addition to acting as the queen’s printer, Barker was patronized by Walsingham and marked his texts with a tiger’s head from Walsingham’s crest.
agency in their publication, his proposition that James Roberts assisted in acquiring playscripts and initiating a connection with the company is plausible.\textsuperscript{112} The two stationers had previously worked together on the publication of \textit{Christ’s Tears} in 1593 and Roberts held the exclusive rights to publish playbills (which he had also inherited through his marriage to Alice Charlewood). This monopoly over playbill publication meant that Roberts was in regular contact with theatre companies, which could have spurred on the publication of their plays as books.\textsuperscript{113} Indeed, when comparing Wise’s editions with those of other stationers who published Shakespeare’s plays between 1594 and 1603, the relative quality of Wise’s texts becomes apparent. \textit{Romeo and Juliet} (printed in 1597 by John Danter and Edward Allde), \textit{Henry V} (published in 1600 by Thomas Millington and John Busby), and \textit{The Merry Wives of Windsor} (published in 1602 by Arthur Johnson) differ considerably from Wise’s editions in terms of the quality of the texts they preserve, leading to stronger claims for memorial reconstruction, particularly in \textit{The Merry Wives of Windsor}.\textsuperscript{114} Of all the stationers investing in Shakespeare’s plays at this time, Wise produced some of the least textually problematic playbooks – ones which are routinely classified as ‘good’ quartos and used as the copy texts for modern editions.\textsuperscript{115} A professional relationship possibly existed between the Chamberlain’s Men and Wise, who was, propelled by circumstance or by strategy, fashioning himself as the main publisher for writers patronized by George Carey.

A staying entry recorded in the Stationers’ Register on 4 August 1600 might be seen as complicating the claim of a cooperative exchange between Wise and the Chamberlain’s Men. It indicates that the printing of ‘As you like yt’, ‘Henry the fift’, ‘Euery man in his humor’, and ‘The commedie of muche A doo about nothinge’, all plays from the Chamberlain’s Men, are ‘to be staied’ (that is, stopped).\textsuperscript{116} This attempt

\textsuperscript{112} Erne, \textit{Literary Dramatist}, pp. 111–12.

\textsuperscript{113} The rights to playbills were held successively by four printer-publishers between 1587 and 1642: John Charlewood (until 1593), Roberts (until c.1606 to 1615), William and Isaac Jaggard (until 1627), and Thomas and Richard Cotes (until 1642).


\textsuperscript{116} Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers, Liber C, flyleaf; facsimile and transcription available on \textit{Shakespeare Documented} (accessed 7 April 2021). See also Arber, III, p. 37.
at publication control could be an effort to prevent stationers from printing the company’s plays and, at this time, Wise was probably interested in one of them – *Much Ado About Nothing* – which he would later publish with Aspley. However, it is unclear, as Joseph Loewenstein points out, whether the entry was intended to prevent the publication of these plays or to forestall them temporarily until certain conditions were met.\(^{117}\)

Following the staying order, *Henry V*, *Every Man In His Humour*, and *Much Ado* were almost immediately entered in the Register and published between 1600 and 1601.\(^{118}\) The lack of evidence for any negative repercussions suggests that whatever preconditions were required by the staying order were quickly and satisfactorily met.\(^{119}\) Indeed, the order implies a growing interest in the publication of plays from the Chamberlain’s Men, possibly instigated by the success of Wise’s earlier editions of *Richard II*, *Richard III*, and *1 Henry IV*. Rather than restricting Wise’s activities, the order may indicate that the Chamberlain’s Men were trying to allocate the publication rights for their plays to specific stationers approved by the company.

One effect of Wise’s editions is their creation of a print identity for Shakespeare and his company as dramatizers of medieval English monarchical history. In 1597, *Richard II* and *Richard III* became the first playbooks to contain title-page attributions to ‘the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Seruants’, having been entered in the Register shortly after Carey was invested with the chamberlainship on 14 April 1597.\(^{120}\) Clarifying the agency behind this attribution and the extent to which Shakespeare and the Chamberlain’s Men were involved in the publication process remains a matter of speculation, but two points are worth considering. First, none of Shakespeare’s plays display any clear evidence of their dramatist’s direct involvement in publication. Although Erne has argued at length for Shakespeare and the company’s interest in publication, even he acknowledges that Shakespeare’s paratextual silence seems to indicate that the dramatist ‘entrusted [the plays] to the care of his publishers and readers’, a point which underlines Wise’s

\(^{117}\) Loewenstein, *Possessive Authorship*, pp. 42–44.

\(^{118}\) The plays were entered between 14 and 23 August 1600. Only *As You Like It* remained in manuscript until the 1623 Folio.

\(^{119}\) See Loewenstein (*Possessive Authorship*, pp. 35–49) for a clear account of other staying entries and efforts at publication control.

\(^{120}\) See *The Tragedie of King Richard the second* (London, 1597; STC 22307), *A1r*, which was entered in the Register on 29 August 1597. The first edition of *Romeo and Juliet* was also published in 1597 (STC 22322); but its attribution to the ‘L. of Hundson his Seruants’ suggests that it was printed before Carey was invested with the chamberlainship.
agency. Second, through an investment in Shakespeare’s plays, Wise added another writer patronized by George Carey to his published output, a connection that could have prompted him to include company attributions. Before 1600, the only other playbooks to name the Chamberlain’s Men were *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599) – another history play – and the second edition of *Romeo and Juliet* (1599). For the first few years of the company’s print history, they were primarily dramatizers of medieval English history written by Shakespeare.

Although title-page references to playing companies were not unusual, Wise’s attributions are significant because they united all of his publications under the cachet of a single aristocratic patron and because this print emphasis could ‘authorize’ specific readings of the histories – by Carey’s own circle and by the wider public – that were attentive to the political interests and reputation of the Carey family. During Elizabeth’s reign, the Careys were closely involved in governing the area around the Scottish border, known as the Marches, maintaining working but authoritative relations with the Scots, and carefully prioritizing the issue of succession. Henry Carey was appointed governor of Berwick in 1568, worked in the borders at a time of political instability and sensitivity, and played a prominent role in the suppression of the Northern Rebellion in 1569, which was an attempt by Catholic nobles to depose Elizabeth on behalf of Mary, Queen of Scots. Similarly, George Carey served on important committees concerning the fate of Mary, Queen of Scots, the regulation of the Scottish borders, and the aftermath of the Northern Rebellion, and was knighted for his military service at Berwick on 11 May 1570. The range of dedications accrued by the Careys from writers who were not, as far as extant evidence suggests, under their direct patronage reinforces the family’s political and military activities. Dedications appear in, for example, Humfrey Barwick’s *A Brief Discourse Concerning the Force and Effect of All Manual Weapons of Fire* (c.1592, dedicated to Henry Carey), Thomas Churchyard’s *A Pleasant Discourse of Court and Wars* (1596, dedicated to George Carey), Marin Barleti’s *The History of George Castriot, Surnamed Scanderbeg, King of Albania*

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122 When Burby’s edition of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* was published in 1598, it advertised a royal performance (‘As it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas’; STC 22294, A1), rather than a connection to the Chamberlain’s Men.
The Careys seem to have been associated with the books that Sidney singled out for assisting in ‘the trade of our lives’ – that is, those concerning politics and ‘souldiery’ that either ‘profess the arte’ or recount the ‘historyes’ which show ‘what hath bene done’.

Wise’s investment in Shakespeare’s history plays seems alert to the reputation of the company’s patron – especially in light of the issues addressed in these plays, such as the numerous rebellions that took place in the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, and Richard III; the political instabilities arising from powerful court factions; and the debates surrounding succession. In 1 Henry IV, the events of the rebellion, chiefly staged in the north and west of England, had a recent parallel in the Northern Rebellion of 1569, when Henry Carey commanded Elizabeth’s forces and his family worked to restore control of the border area. Shakespeare may have deliberately heightened the parallels in his dramatization: as David Bevington observes, Henry IV’s account of civil uprising recalls the Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion ([1570]), which was incorporated into The Second Tome of Homilies (1571) immediately after the Northern Rebellion and was required to be read regularly in churches. Henry IV describes how insurrectionists ‘face the garment of rebellion | With some fine colour that may please ... fickle changlings and poore discontents’ who ‘gape and rub the elbow at the newes | Of hurly burly innovation’ (Q2 I2v). It echoes the Homily’s concern with the ways in which popular rebellion ‘pretende[s] sundrie causes’, such as ‘the redresse of the common wealth’, and makes ‘a great shewe of holy meaning ... ensigns, and banners, whiche are accept-able vnto the rude ignoraunt common people, great multitudes of whom by suche falsee pretences and shewes they do deceaue’. Wise’s playbooks could encourage readers – including the Careys and their circle, as well as the wider public who were aware of the family’s political interests – to link

124 For dedications to both Careys, see the fourth edition (STC 25082) of 1596/97: A2r–v for Henry; P1v for George. Further editions were issued in the Jacobean and Caroline periods.
127 An Homilie Against Disobedience and Wyffull Rebellion (London, 1570; STC 11680), F4r–v.
these histories with the instances of rebellion and unrest that had taken place earlier in Elizabeth’s reign and which achieved resolution through the efforts of the Carey family. They could offer readings that shore up the political influence and acumen of the Careys, who, through their close connection to the Scottish monarchy (cautiously) supported James VI’s succession to the English throne. On a more limited scale than the broader reading approaches outlined in the first section of this chapter, Wise’s playbooks could prompt some readers to see these histories and their contemporaneity as authorized by Carey as Lord Chamberlain.

The Oldcastle-Falstaff controversy provides a final example of how Wise’s playbooks were attentive to the interests of the Carey family and the impact that contemporary allusions could have on the interpretation of histories (and their historicity). This episode is rendered a permanent part of 1 and 2 Henry IV through Wise’s printed editions and in a way that pacifies but also courts attention. On stage, Shakespeare’s original use of the name ‘Oldcastle’ for Falstaff had attracted opposition from the Cobham family, who traced their lineage to the Lollard leader, Sir John Oldcastle, martyred in 1417 during the reign of Henry V. Shakespeare’s theatrically vivacious knight is, of course, the most conspicuous ‘unhistorical’ addition to the source materials. Even Shakespeare, as Bergeron points out, associates the word ‘counterfeit’ with him. But the fact that Shakespeare assigned him the name of a real individual, together with the opposition it attracted, had the effect of historicizing and contemporizing the fictional character. It becomes difficult to separate Shakespeare’s character from the Cobham family’s ancestor and the real controversy the naming provoked in the Elizabethan period. There is, as James Marino

128 George’s brother, Robert Carey, described their closeness to James VI, claiming that when the king ‘had a matter of great importance to acquaint his sister the Queene of England withall’, he would not trust anyone but ‘my father [Henry], or some of his children’. Robert Carey, Memoirs of the Life of Robert Cary, Baron of Leppington, and Earl of Monmouth; Written by Himself (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), p. 69.

129 The reasons for Shakespeare’s original choice, the timing of the play’s first performance, and the connection of the controversy to the tenure of William Brooke, Baron Cobham, as Lord Chamberlain (between August 1596 and March 1597) are matters of continuing debate. For a careful assessment, see James M. Gibson, ‘Shakespeare and the Cobham Controversy: The Oldcastle/Falstaff and Brooke/Broome Revisions’, Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England, 25 (2012), 94–132. See also the account of the antiquarian Richard James in 1625: British Library, Add. MS 33785, fol. 2r; available in facsimile and transcription through Shakespeare Documented (accessed 7 April 2021).

describes, a ‘durable entanglement’ of Falstaff/Oldcastle within and outside the text, which historicizes the play’s most fictional element.134

Wise’s editions, on the one hand, seem sensitive to the demands of correction and censorship and the political difficulty that could have been experienced by the Carey family. For performance in the playhouse, the name ‘Sir John Falstaff’ was used as a replacement, which is also reflected in Wise’s printed editions. Traces of ‘Oldcastle’ remain in both 1 and 2 Henry IV through speech prefixes and stage directions, in addition to Hal’s reference to Falstaff as ‘my old lad of the castle’ (Q2 1 Henry IV, A4r). Privately, the Carey family seem to have enjoyed the original naming and used it as a shorthand for the play as a whole. A letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney in March 1600 indicates that George Carey entertained an ambassador by having his players act ‘Sir John Old Castell, to his great Contentment’.132 Rather than indicating Drayton, Hathaway, Munday, and Wilson’s 1 Sir John Oldcastle, which was performed by the Admiral’s Men as a response to Shakespeare’s play and was not owned by Carey’s company, this title probably refers to 1 Henry IV and testifies to the ongoing ‘double identification’ of Falstaff and Oldcastle.133 Some sensitivity about the debacle is suggested, however, by the fact that none of Wise’s extant editions of 1 Henry IV contain title-page attributions to the Chamberlain’s Men. Q1 survives in only one sheet, its title page no longer extant, while Q2’s title page (1598) refrains from mentioning those involved in the offence: Shakespeare and George Carey’s company. Q3 (1599) adds a new title-page reference to Shakespeare as a corrector. Unlike Wise’s other editions that, from 1598 onwards, contain the attribution ‘By William Shakespeare’, Q3 claims that the play has been ‘Newly corrected by W. Shakespeare’.134 In contrast to the assertive claims of authorship on the other Wise quartos, Q3’s attribution emphasizes the play’s ‘corrected’ state.135

On the other hand, some features of the printed editions encourage a recollection of the debacle. All extant title pages advertise ‘the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaffe’ (Q2 1 Henry IV, A1r) in their plot descriptions, which draws attention to this extratextual character and associates

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133 Marino, Owning, p. 122.
134 The History of Henrie the Fourth (London, 1599; STC 22281), A1r.
135 See also Lidster, ‘At the Sign of the Angel’, p. 249.
him with firmly ‘historical’ figures, such as Hotspur and Henry IV (see Figure 2.2). Bevington describes the publication of the play as an act of ‘goodwill’ to assist in ‘setting the record straight’ on the Oldcastle-Falstaff controversy, but the editions do not suggest a clear conciliatory effort.¹³⁶ ¹ and 2 Henry IV remind readers of the dispute through references to Falstaff on the title pages of both parts and in the epilogue to part 2, which claims that ‘Olde-castle died Martyre, and this [i.e. Falstaff] is not the man’ (L.Iv). Reintroducing and emphasizing the link between Oldcastle and Falstaff at the end of the play is hardly the most effective or unambiguous placatory gesture. The epilogue’s inclusion also makes it a permanent feature of the printed playbook, which is distinct from its theatrical status as a detachable document.¹³⁷ Wise’s editions seem to display a tension between offering suitably censored texts and eliciting the very parallels elided through censorship—ones that had been enjoyed by the Careys and by the plays’ audiences. By preserving some traces of the Falstaff-Oldcastle controversy, the playbooks inscribe their unhistorical character with continuing contemporaneity and historicity.

In summary, I believe that Wise’s initial investment in Shakespeare’s plays was directed by a complex interplay of agents and influences that reflect private and public exchanges between Wise and the Chamberlain’s Men, Wise and Carey, and Wise and other stationers connected through geographies and investment patterns within the book trade. Wise was influenced not only by the prominence and utility of medieval English history in non-dramatic publications, but, as discussed in this section, by a connection to Carey’s patronized writers. Owing to the limitations of extant evidence, it is not possible to determine the precise nature of this patronage network involving Wise, Shakespeare, the Chamberlain’s Men, and George Carey. It likely featured transactions of a private and measurable kind (such as a direct interaction between Carey and the company, and between Wise and the company), as well as public and commercial interactions (through, for example, the use of title-page attributions to Carey’s company) that could authorize different readings of the plays. For the history play, Wise’s editions demonstrate that strategies of selection and presentation could be informed by multiple, collaborative networks, and they draw attention to the different readerships that could be imagined

¹³⁶ ¹ Henry IV, ed. Bevington, pp. 87, 90.
¹³⁷ The fact that a version of the Epilogue is also included in the 1623 Folio text underscores its position as a fixed point of conclusion for the play that recalls Oldcastle in its final lines. For epilogues as detachable documents, see Tiffany Stern, Documents of Performance in Early Modern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 4.
by a history play’s publisher – ranging from those who concentrated on politic applications, to those who were influenced by the authorizing power of patrons, and those who were invested in the theatrical vitality of specific characters.

Wise Attributions and Conclusions

In 1598, Shakespeare’s name first appeared – unambiguously – on the title pages of playbooks in Wise’s second editions of Richard II and Richard III and Burby’s first (extant) edition of Love’s Labour’s Lost. Burby’s practices, which I have discussed at length elsewhere, do not reveal a sustained interest in Shakespearean attribution: his edition of Romeo and Juliet in 1599 does not include Shakespeare’s name, and the full attribution in Love’s Labour’s Lost reads ‘Newly corrected and augmented | By W. Shakespere’ (A1r), which aligns the dramatist with the processes of correction and expansion, rather than initial authorship. Wise, on the other hand, consistently invested in ‘Shakespeare’ from 1598 onwards. I believe the introduction of Shakespeare’s name on playbook title pages was contingent upon the responsive and collaborative nature of the book trade and that it was instigated by Wise’s editions. It is also a development that has consequences for the history play as a genre. This chapter concludes with three points about these Shakespearean attributions that shed light on Wise’s strategies and how they shaped the print identity of the history play at the end of the sixteenth century.

First, the title-page attributions in Wise’s editions established Shakespeare as the most prominent named dramatist of English monarchical history in print at the end of the Elizabethan period. They differ from the history plays published by other stationers during the late 1590s, most of which were issued anonymously. The Famous Victories of Henry V (published in 1598 by Creede) and Thomas Heywood’s 1 and 2 Edward IV (published in 1599 by Oxonbridge) do not contain any indication of authorship. Of course, the strategies of anonymous editions and the factors

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338 There may have been an earlier edition of Love’s Labour’s Lost in 1597, of which no copies survive. A printed edition is referred to in a manuscript catalogue from the Viscount Conway with a date of 1597. See Andrew Murphy, Shakespeare in Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 461.

339 Burby’s only other playbook to contain an attribution to a dramatist is The Cobbler’s Prophecy (to ‘Robert Wilson, Gent.’). See Lidster, ‘At the Sign of the Angel’, p. 248.

340 Attributions to Shakespeare (including his identification as a corrector) appear in Richard II Q2 (1598) and Q3 (1598), Richard III Q2 (1598) and Q3 (1602), 1 Henry IV Q3 (1599), 2 Henry IV Q1 (1600), and Much Ado About Nothing Q1 (1600).
that direct their presentation cannot be easily generalized – but, for my purposes, what is especially relevant is the consequence of this anonymity in relation to ideas of genre and the history play. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the fifteen playbooks of English monarchical history published between 1595 and 1599 are – with the two exceptions of Marlowe’s *Edward II* and Peele’s *Edward I* – either attributed to Shakespeare or anonymous editions.¹⁴¹ At the end of the sixteenth century, Shakespeare’s name is the one most consistently connected to the dramatization of England’s medieval monarchical past.

Second, the evidence of Wise’s playbooks suggests that publication agents, rather than theatrical ones, were responsible for the introduction of Shakespeare’s name on title pages, a development that underscores their influence in preparing the editions, already explored in this chapter in relation to plot summaries, company attributions, and the preparation of copy. Wise’s first editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III* in 1597 do not contain attributions to Shakespeare, which implies that the marketability of his name was not immediately apparent and that, if the dramatist and/or the Chamberlain’s Men were involved in publication, it was not part of their initial design to create a print identity for ‘Shakespeare’. The 1598 attribution – ‘By William Shakespeare’ – is a striking development (see Figure 2.3). As Erne points out, ‘it is precisely the replacement of an anonymous edition by an authored one that is unusual’.¹⁴² The publication of reprints tended to be more narrowly controlled by stationers than first editions, which depended on the acquisition of a manuscript and involved some kind of exchange with individuals outside of the book trade. It is therefore likely that a publication agent, such as Wise, took the decision to include Shakespeare’s name on later editions. Wise was also involved in the first appearance of Shakespeare’s name in the Stationers’ Register, as part of his and Aspley’s combined entry, on 23 August 1600, for *2 Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.¹⁴³ Together these two developments mark a shift in the status and importance of Shakespeare as a printed dramatist.¹⁴⁴ They also reinforce my argument that Wise’s *initial* design had not been to invest in ‘Shakespeare’, but rather English monarchical history and Carey as patron of the ‘Chamberlain’s Men’.

Third, the decision to include Shakespeare’s name on playbook title pages was contingent upon developments, networks, and geographical

¹⁴¹ Both Marlowe’s and Peele’s plays contain references to their authorship.
¹⁴² Erne, *Literary Dramatist*, p. 82.
¹⁴³ See note 60 above.
proximity in the book trade – sources of influence that also shaped Wise’s interest in medieval English history and the ways in which his editions seem responsive to, for example, Daniel’s *Civil Wars*, published by Waterson. It is unclear whether *Richard II* or *Richard III* appeared first with a Shakespeare attribution in 1598; in the case of the latter, Creede’s role as trade printer for this edition and publisher of *The True Tragedy of Richard III* may have determined the new attribution. The investment of Wise’s neighbouring stationers in Shakespeare’s narrative poems – *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* – also added to the marketability of Shakespeare’s name, a related factor that may have influenced title-page design. I have discussed this connection in detail elsewhere; but, in brief, these poems contain signed dedications by Shakespeare to his patron, Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton, and they were the only printed texts associated with Shakespeare as named author before 1598.¹⁴⁵ Both poems proved exceptionally popular with readers, judging by their numerous subsequent reprints, and most of these were published and offered for wholesale by stationers at the Sign of the White Greyhound, just three doors away from Wise’s shop in Paul’s Cross (see Figure 2.1).¹⁴⁶ The success and strategies of the narrative poems, which would have been especially visible to Wise, perhaps directed the stationer’s exclusive concentration on Shakespeare’s plays and the inclusion of attributions to him from 1598. In turn, the success of Wise’s editions may lie behind the title-page attribution ‘By W. Shakespeare’ that appeared, in 1599, on the second edition of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, an octavo collection of poems published by William Jaggard and sold by William Leake at the White Greyhound.¹⁴⁷ Until this time, Shakespeare’s name had only featured on the title pages of his printed *playbooks*. *The Passionate Pilgrim* became the first non-dramatic text attributed to Shakespeare on its title page, and this sequence of events reveals another textual ‘exchange’ taking place between the bookselling publishers in Paul’s Cross.

Largely owing to the success of Wise’s editions, Shakespeare emerged, at the end of the sixteenth century, as the most attributed commercial dramatist in print – and one of the most quoted.¹⁴⁸ Miscellanies published under the auspices of John Bodenham – *Belvedere, or The Garden of the


¹⁴⁷ *The Passionate Pilgrim* (London, 1599; STC 22342). A2r. No copies of the title page for the first edition (STC 22341.5) are extant. Of the twenty poems in the volume, only five can be attributed to Shakespeare (numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, and 16).

¹⁴⁸ Shakespeare had nine playbook attributions by 1600, whereas Robert Greene, the second most attributed, had five. I am counting the attribution to ‘R. G.’ in *Alphonsus* (1599). See also Lukas Erne, ‘The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print’, *Shakespeare Survey* 62 (2009), 12–29 (pp. 26–27).
Muses (1600) and England’s Parnassus (1600) – tended to favour extracts from Wise’s editions. One reader, William Scott, includes passages from Richard II alongside classical and contemporary English exempla in his manuscript treatise on poetics, The Model of Poesy (c.1599). This elevation of vernacular commercial drama was, as Gavin Alexander notes, unprecedented and testifies to the growing status of Shakespeare in print. The editions’ success, presentation strategies, and interest in history may also have shaped readers’ collecting practices. As discussed, 2 Henry IV ended up in a Sammelband with politically invested pamphlets and poetry. Indicated by a manuscript list of plays (from c.1609–10), the histories first published by Wise also feature prominently in the personal collections of Sir John Harington (bap. 1560, d. 1612). The first volume of his Sammelband collection contains Shakespeare’s ‘Henry the fourth: 1’, ‘Henry the fourth: 2’, and ‘Richard the 3rd’, arranged in the historical order of their monarchs, rather than their order of composition or publication. Indeed, these plays were carefully guarded by their next publisher, Matthew Law, who inherited the rights from Wise in 1603. The 1623 Folio syndicate had some difficulty securing Law’s permission to include these plays in the collection, which, if not obtained, would have significantly altered the balance of the Folio. Wise’s editions are therefore particularly important for understanding the early modern history play in print, but not necessarily for the reasons that are usually suggested. These plays are not simply documents back to stage: they should not be used as evidence for the dominance of medieval English history in the London theatres, which instead staged a diverse range of historical pasts. More accurately, they highlight the ways in which print and stage patterns could differ and they underscore my overarching argument in this book that a critical understanding of repertories, dramatists’ outputs, and genres needs to consider the possibility of a disjunction between the theatre and the book trade. The promotion of medieval English history in Wise’s editions complements patterns in the book trade, which in turn reveals how commercial plays – repositioned as books – were

151 BL Add MS 27632, fol. 43.
152 SRO4718; Arber, III, p. 239.
153 See Chapter 4, pp. 210–11.
part of the market in historical texts, rather than being ‘obsolete’ goods sold in the ‘antique-shop’.

These editions also draw attention to the influence of physical spaces and proximity in the book trade, as Wise’s investment may have been motivated by the practices of neighbouring stationers in Paul’s Cross, an issue that is also explored in the next chapter. Nevertheless, caution is necessary. Wise’s editions demonstrate how multiple factors shape the publication of history plays and ideas of dramatic genre – and it is important not to overstate the significance of one strategy, despite its narrative appeal. Wise likely read Shakespeare’s histories in different ways. They spoke to the contemporaneity of medieval English history at the end of the sixteenth century, but they were also marketable (and perhaps available) because of the authorizing agents associated with them: George Carey, as patron of the Chamberlain’s Men and Wise’s other published writers, and Shakespeare. The ‘aftermarket’ of print publication is a site where multiple agents, transactions, and readings are in play, and this participation is crucial for understanding why certain plays survive, what influenced their presentation in print, and how these histories were – and continue to be – received by readers.

\[354\] Griffin, Playing, pp. 144–45.