

Working with lost plays: “2 Fortune’s Tennis” and the Admiral’s men

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This chapter has a dual purpose: first, to revisit the most neglected of backstage plots (the plot commonly referred to as “2 Fortune’s Tennis”) and ask new questions about the information it provides; and second, to offer this inquiry as a case study of the methodology, aims and limitations of working with lost plays. “2 Fortune’s Tennis” has been dismissed by W. W. Greg and others as the “the most fragmentary of all the plots,” and for this reason remains the least studied of such documents.¹ The title itself is a best-guess reconstruction: it appears in severely mutilated form (with substantial lacunae) as “The [plot of the sec]ond part of fortun[e’s tenn]is”.² The precise date of the plot is uncertain (ca. 1597-1602), but scholars are confident in attributing it to the Admiral’s men, either at the Rose or the Fortune. On the rare occasion that this plot *is* discussed, scholarship focuses on questions of casting, on biographical information pertaining to the actors it names, and on the date and provenance of the document itself. The desire of some critics to associate the plot with an independently known play title like “Fortunatus” or “The Set at Tennis” has caused further confusion.³ Yet much of the clearest evidence that this plot contains—the names of characters in the play—has been ignored. This chapter focuses on the characters named in the plot, and asks questions concerning company commerce and repertorial strategy. Critics invariably assume from its title that the plot (and the lost play to which it corresponds) served as a piece of superficial self-promotion for what was at the time the Admiral’s new Fortune theatre. Alfred Harbage and S. Schoenbaum thought it was probably a comedy.⁴ I will instead argue that the plot and the play were more likely tragic in nature, and will consider how “2 Fortune’s Tennis” might relate to the company’s repertory in a deeper, more meaningful way in relation to other plays purchased by Henslowe for performance or potential revival in 1598.

Theatre historians agree that the handful of extant backstage “plots” are amongst the most valuable documents for the study of playing in the period. Six of

¹ W. W. Greg, *Henslowe Papers, Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe’s Diary* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907), 150.

² “The ...ond part” is expanded to “The second part” on the basis of a parallel construction in “The platt of The Secound parte of the Seven Deadlie Sinns”, and “fortun ... is” is fleshed out via analogy with Henslowe’s reference to a “boocke called the fortewn tenes”, for which he lent Robert Shaw 20s to pay Dekker on 06 September 1600 (*Henslowe’s Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes, 2nd edition [Cambridge: CUP, 2002], 137 / F.70^v).

³ John Payne Collier identified Dekker’s “boocke called the fortewn tenes” with “Fortunatus” (*The Diary of Philip Henslowe* [London, 1845], 173). E. K. Chambers thought that Anthony Munday’s “Set at Tennis” is the play to which the plot corresponds (*Elizabethan Stage* [Oxford: Clarendon P, 1923], 2.180).

⁴ Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700*, rev. S. Schoenbaum (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1964).

these plots have survived. "The Dead Man's Fortune", "Frederick and Basilea", "Troilus and Cressida", "The Battle of Alcazar", and "2 Fortune's Tennis" are now in the custody of the British Library (Add. MS. 10449); "2 Seven Deadly Sins" is MS. XIX in Dulwich College. Another plot, for the first part of "Tamar Cham", is no longer extant, but was transcribed by George Steevens in the variorum edition of Shakespeare's works published in 1803. Collectively and individually, these documents offer rare insights into staging practices of the early modern theatre. David Kathman succinctly outlines what theatre historians have found valuable about dramatic plots when he notes that "plots are key pieces of evidence for the casting practices of Elizabethan playing companies, since they include the names of specific players alongside the roles they played."⁵ Tiffany Stern has more recently warned that plots do "have some interest in casting," but that they "are not documents that sort it out (where matching name with character would be the specific point of the document)".⁶ Nevertheless, the scholarship on backstage plots has rarely ventured far from its focus on what the casting information can tell us about the date and provenance of the plot in question.

Of these plots, the two that have received the most critical attention are "The Battle of Alcazar" (the only plot for which there is an extant corresponding playtext), and "2 Seven Deadly Sins" (the most detailed of the plots, but also the most keenly disputed in terms of dating and company attribution).⁷ "2 Fortune's Tennis", by contrast, has all but fallen by the wayside. In a book chapter published in 1989, Bernard Beckerman notes that few scholars have felt compelled to revisit the plots in the wake of the early twentieth-century work of W. W. Greg, but Beckerman nevertheless returned to the documents to determine "whether or not the Plots had anything more to tell us about staging."⁸ Even within this context of taking a fresh look at the evidence, Beckerman sees little possibility of learning anything new from "2 Fortune's Tennis," which "exists only in the most fragmentary form," and therefore warrants minimal attention (Beckerman warns: "my remarks upon it will be negligible").⁹ Greg had earlier voiced similar sentiments when he wrote: "Very little can be gleaned from this, the most fragmentary of all the plots. Several readings

⁵ Kathman, "The Seven Deadly Sins and Theatrical Apprenticeship," *Early Theatre* 14.1 (2011): 121.

⁶ Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 212.

⁷ On "The Battle of Alcazar", see W. W. Greg's *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar & Orlando Furioso* (London: Malone Society, 1922). For the various critical debates concerning "2 Seven Deadly Sins", see Scott McMillin, "Building Stories: Greg, Fleay and the plot of 2 *Seven Deadly Sins*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 4 (1989), 53–62; David Kathman, "Reconsidering *The Seven Deadly Sins*," *Early Theatre* 7.1 (2004): 13–44; Andrew Gurr, "The Work of Elizabethan Plotters and 2 *The Seven Deadly Sins*," *Early Theatre* 10.1 (2007): 67–87; Kathman, "The Seven Deadly Sins and Theatrical Apprenticeship"; and the "Second Part of the Seven Deadly Sins" entry by Roslyn L. Knutson in the *Lost Plays Database (LPD)*, ed. Roslyn L. Knutson and David McInnis (Melbourne: U of Melbourne, 2009–present), www.lostplays.org.

⁸ Bernard Beckerman, "Theatrical Plots and Elizabethan Stage Practice," *Shakespeare and Dramatic Tradition*, ed. W. R. Elton and William B. Long (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1989), 109.

⁹ Beckerman 110.

are doubtful and the inferences that can be drawn have not much weight as evidence.”¹⁰ When he speaks of the potential gleanings, Greg is typical in assuming that the inherent value of plots pertains to performance issues rather than subject matter; Tiffany Stern similarly concludes her analysis of the purpose of plots by noting that while plot-scenarios and Arguments “anticipate being read for narrative value, the backstage-plot is a profoundly theatrical document: its creation helps formulate staging, while its use is to shape the play during performance itself.”¹¹

I completely agree with Stern about the primary purpose of backstage plots; however, the information about narrative that can be extrapolated from such plots can still be useful in terms of understanding the potential reasons why a company might choose to perform a certain play within their repertory. The plot of “2 Fortune’s Tennis” includes the names of approximately ten players, but it also specifies eight or nine fictional character names in addition to generic roles like “servingmen” and “wine pressers”. These names barely rate a mention in the scholarship on the plot. Greg articulates the doubts of a generation of critics when he says of “2 Fortune’s Tennis”:

The characters do not help much towards an identification. The direction ‘Enter Orleans melancholike’ occurs in *Old Fortunatus* (ed. Scherer, l.1315), a play which also recalls the title, but the other characters show no correspondence.¹²

It is true that the character names do not help much towards an identification of the play by a known alias, or by date; but since Greg was writing, scholarship on early modern drama has shifted away from privileging the playwrights, or even their plays, to instead promote a greater appreciation of the playhouses and acting companies as the environment within which authors and plays made their valuable contributions.¹³ This growth of repertory studies has helped recuperate lesser known plays and playwrights and decentred canonical texts in the process of enriching the scholarship on early modern theatre. Most recently, the practice of attending to plays as commercial offerings that were strategically performed has led to an increased interest in the role and significance of lost plays in terms of understanding the early modern theatrical marketplace. Critics have occasionally flirted with the topic of lost plays (e.g. Gertrude Marion Sibley, C. J. Sisson) but as the *Lost Plays Database* continues to grow, systematic attention is finally being given to the rich cache of historical evidence pertaining to lost plays, and the result will be a clearer sense of

¹⁰ Greg, *Henslowe Papers* 150.

¹¹ Stern 231.

¹² Greg, *Henslowe Papers* 144.

¹³ e.g. Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609* (NY: Macmillan, 1962); Roslyn Lander Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare’s Company, 1594-1613* (Fayetteville, The University of Arkansas Press, 1991); Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen’s Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998); Roslyn Lander Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Time* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001); Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).

what the early modern theatrical marketplace looked like.¹⁴ Hence although it would be nice if we could ascribe authorship to “2 Fortune’s Tennis”, if the character names in the plot can offer insights into the role of this play in the London commercial theatres, this would still be a valuable addition to the scholarship of the late Elizabethan stage.

Before the character names can be given appropriate consideration however, the first step towards comprehending the role of “2 Fortune’s Tennis” in the Admiral’s offerings should be to acknowledge the assumptions underpinning the associated scholarship and (where necessary) to clear any critical debris that has accumulated around the play, especially the conjecture about its genre and perceived lack of seriousness. The conjectural reconstruction of the plot’s title is contingent on an historical record of another lost play. On 06 September 1600, the manager of the Rose playhouse, Philip Henslowe, lent Robert Shaw 20s to pay Thomas Dekker for “his boocke called the fortewn tenes”.¹⁵ It is this piece of information that has led critics to regard the mutilated title of the plot as “2 Fortune’s Tennis”. If the two lost plays are indeed related, Henslowe’s payment to Dekker is relevant to the present discussion. At the low price of 20s, the play Henslowe purchased is unlikely to have been new: £4 was the minimum payment but £6 was the normal payment for a new play.¹⁶ The fact that Dekker’s play was not specified as either “part 1” or “part 2” encourages the belief that it was the first part, and that the second part had not yet been written (otherwise a distinction would be needed). If this hypothesis is correct, the plot of “2 Fortune’s Tennis” postdates the September 1600 transaction (but this is not certain). Whatever the case, in the summer of 1600 the Admiral’s men may have had a good reason for acquiring an old play (or preparing a new one) with such a title: they were anticipating their move to their new venue, the Fortune theatre, which was ready by September of that year. As numerous critics have noted, Dekker’s play called “Fortune’s Tennis” (or some

¹⁴ i.e. Sibley, *The Lost Plays and Masques, 1500-1642* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1933), and Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare’s Age* (Cambridge: CUP, 1936). See also the *Lost Plays Database*. LPD-derived publications include: Roslyn L. Knutson and David McInnis, “The Lost Plays Database: A Wiki for Lost Plays,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 24 (2011): 46-57; David McInnis, “Marlowe’s Influence and ‘The True History of George Scanderbeg,’” *Marlowe Studies: An Annual* 2 (2012): 71-85; David McInnis, “Lost Plays from Early Modern England: Voyage Drama, A Case Study,” *Literature Compass* 8/8 (2011): 534-42; Matthew Steggle, “A Lost Jacobean Tragedy: *Henry the Una* (c.1619),” *Early Theatre* 13.1 (2010): 65-82; Matthew Steggle, “A Lost Turk Play: *Actors Mufti Nassuf &c* (1614-42),” *Ben Jonson Journal* 19.1 (2012): 45-64; Misha Teramura, “The Admiral’s *Vayvode* of 1598,” *Early Theatre* 17.2 (2014): forthcoming; and shorter pieces in *N&Q* and *Early Theatre*.

¹⁵ Foakes, ed. 137 / F.70v. Greg notes that Henslowe’s use of the definite article (“the fortewn tenes”) is “curious”, and wonders if Henslowe had rather meant “the *Fortune of Tennis*” (*Henslowe Papers* 215). He later revised this supposition, arguing that “If, as is not unlikely, the manuscript was inscribed, ‘The Booke of the Whole of Fortunes Tennis’, it would account for the anomalous use of the article in Henslowe’s entry. When, a few months earlier, Dekker recast the old two-part play of *Fortunatus* into a single piece, this is called by Henslowe, ‘the vvholle history of fortewnatuſ’” (W. W. Greg, “The Evidence of Theatrical Plots for the History of the Elizabethan Stage,” *RES* 1.3 (1925): 271n).

¹⁶ Chambers 1.373.

variation thereof) would, like his *Old Fortunatus*, be a useful addition to the company's repertory inasmuch as the title called attention to the name of the new venue.¹⁷ Chambers thought that "1 Fortune's Tennis" might even have been an occasional piece: "Probably it was a short topical overture designed to celebrate the opening of the Fortune."¹⁸ In making such a suggestion (uncharacteristically wild), Chambers essentially reduces the role of the ostensible sequel, "2 Fortune's Tennis", to a mere topical reference within the Admiral's repertory. Harbage and Schoenbaum were presumably persuaded by such logic when they classified the plot as "Comedy (?)". The plot itself suggests a more serious and strategic role for the play in relation to other Admiral's offerings, as I will argue below.

The plot of "2 Fortune's Tennis" was first transcribed by W. W. Greg in his *Henslowe Papers* (1904), but when Greg returned to the subject of dramatic documents in 1931 he proposed several emendations to the original transcription.¹⁹ Accordingly, to avoid relying on a transcription that Greg himself found in some regards faulty, I am basing the present discussion on an updated version, which takes Greg's original as its starting point but which incorporates Greg's own suggested corrections (Fig.1).²⁰

¹⁷ e.g. see Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 141, and Roslyn L. Knutson "Marlowe Re-runs," *Marlowe's Empery*, ed. Sara M. Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2002): 35).

¹⁸ Chambers 2.178.

¹⁹ W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931, rpt. 1969), 130-38.

²⁰ Greg's own transcription appeared in *Henslowe Papers* 143; his emendation notes appear in *Dramatic Documents* 134-83.

1	<u>The [plott of the sec]ond part of fortun[</u>	
2	<u>[is]</u>	
	ba]re headed Tho[	Enter orleauce musing to him Com[
	] ] somerton [	Mauritius · Boniface · m ^r singer Pau[<u>y</u>
5	] ) A Childe dic[k Iuby	Enter Boniface w th seruimgmen Geo[
	] ladies following mute[	R Tail[o]r — w — Cartwright.
	to] them A s[
	Co]m[	[Enter Edwin w th wine presser[s
		mauritus bleed[ing
		Cart]wright ·
		]lla like a Pilgrim
		t]he wine Pressers
		his sonn at one d[oor
		e
		Cha]mpaine mauritus / · En[ter
	]and	]ad]ies Bertram Edwin [
	]the	
	]an	between Lewes and
	]n	Bert]ram Edwine Mau[ritius
		A Table brought in
		]tts Sam and Ch[ar][es

Fig. 1 Greg's 1904 transcription altered by the author to include Greg's 1931 emendations

The revisions are minor but observing them helps avoid unnecessary mistakes in interpretation. For example, when Greg revisited the plot in 1931, he rejected his original reading of “five headed” at the beginning of line three and instead proposed “bare headed” as the superior reading. A five-headed beast would have activated a number of exotic or mythological contexts for the narrative of the plot, but for a character who appears in the company of mute ladies and a child (lines 5-6), “bare headed” makes eminently more sense as a mark of respect towards whoever commanded such an entourage. Dick Juby's name is also included here following Greg's revisions in *Dramatic Documents*. Having earlier transcribed “dict” in *Henslowe Papers*, Greg subsequently acknowledged the ambiguity of the final letter (“the difference between ‘t’ and ‘k’ is slight”) and noticed the visible tails of two long letters belonging to the next (missing) word, which tallies with that word being “Juby” or “Iuby”.²¹ Line 17 of my updated transcription includes the direction “Enter Edwin”, the most conjectural of the emendations adopted here. Greg proceeded cautiously, as follows:

After the ‘E’, the top of which is fairly clear, the next trace (some way farther on) is of a tall letter, most probably an ‘ε’, while the ‘i’ has been inferred from the dot (though this may of course be accidental). A name is, of course,

²¹ Greg, *Dramatic Documents* 135.

required, and the tall letter is therefore probably a capital. The trace suggests 'Edwin', which would fill the space conveniently.²²

Finally, where the letters "aine" appeared in Greg's original transcription, the manuscript clearly shows extra letters which may have a bearing on identifying the subject matter of the plot: "mpaine". The "p" is unambiguous; the "m" is very probable. Greg suggests "Champaine" as the likely candidate, adding that "[i]f one were to read 'Campaine' it might be possible to connect it with the 'Com' (?)" of lines 8 and 13, though "the identification would be very risky".²³

The plot and actors

Although Greg explicitly stated that "[o]nly seven actors are named," we appear to have the following ten names or partial names of players: Tho[mas], somerton, dic[k Juby], m^r. singer, Pau[y], Geo[rge], R. Tail[o]r, w. Cartwright, Sam, and Ch[ar]l[es].²⁴ It may be worth saying something brief about each in turn before I discuss the character names. Four viable candidates have been proposed as the identity of "Tho[mas]": Thomas Parsons (a boy player; Admiral's 1597-1602), Thomas Towne (played Stukeley in *Alcazar*; Admiral's-Prince's 1594-1610), Thomas Hunt (minor parts in three other plots; Admiral's 1596-1601) and Thomas Downton (Strange's 1593, Pembroke's 1596-97, Admiral's-Prince's-Palsgrave's 1597-1618).²⁵ Greg thought that "'Somerton' can hardly be a character-name", though of course a character with this name does exist, in *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) by Dekker, Ford and Rowley.²⁶ If the name does refer to an actor, the plotter or author may have mistaken "Somerton" for "Somerset", as Greg suggests.²⁷ The actor George Somerset appears to have been with the Admiral's men c.1600-01: for his minor roles in the *Alcazar* plot he is named as "Georg Somersett" and more simply as "George", so it is not impossible that he may appear as both "Somerton" and "Geo[rge]" in "2 Fortune's

²² Greg, *Dramatic Documents* 136.

²³ Greg, *Dramatic Documents* 136-37.

²⁴ Greg, *Henslowe Papers* 144.

²⁵ Gurr is the most recent to propose these four Thomases, in *Shakespeare's Opposites* 263; for the dates of the player's company affiliations, I follow David Kathman's summaries of Nungezer, Chambers, etc. in Kathman's *Biographical Index of English Drama Before 1660* (<http://shakespeareauthorship.com/bd>), unless otherwise stated.

²⁶ Greg, *Dramatic Documents* 135. It may also be worth noting that there are references in the period to "an Englishman called Robert Somerton Cardinall of Rome" (now more usually referred to as Robert Somercotes), who stood on the verge of affecting papal history but was poisoned before the election of Celestine IV in 1241. See John Bale, *The pageant of popes* (1574), book 5, fol.113; see also Cipriano de Valera, *Two treatises* (1600), 86. The common source appears to be Matthew Paris's 13th-century writings.

²⁷ Greg, *Dramatic Documents* 135. Somerton is a small parish in the English county of Somerset, and the plotter may have confused the two. What is the likelihood, though, that an actor named accurately elsewhere in plots ("Somerset") is named inaccurately here ("Somerton")?

Tennis". The "m^r. singer" is John Singer (Queen's 1583-94; Admiral's 1594-1603), a renowned clown. Thomas Heywood, Thomas Dekker and John Taylor each praised Singer for his fool roles, classing him amongst the likes of Kemp and Tarlton.²⁸ William Pavy ("Pau[y]", Admiral's-Prince's 1597-1608) was "apparently only a minor actor" according to Edwin Nungezer in his *Dictionary of Actors* (1929).²⁹ "Geo[rge]" may well be identical to "somerton" above, and appears to be named as a servingman here, which would accord with George Somerset's other roles in *Alcazar* and the first part of "Tamar Cham". If "Geo[rge]" is *not* Somerset/Somerton, his identity remains unknown. Robert Tailor is also named in the *Alcazar* plot, in similarly minor roles, but these two plots are our only evidence for dating his association with the Admiral's.³⁰ William Cartwright borrowed 10s from Henslowe in April 1598 and was probably a hired man with the Admiral's at that time, remaining with its various incarnations until 1624.³¹ There is a general agreement that "Sam" and "Ch[ar]l[es]" are Samuel Rowley (Admiral's-Prince's-Palsgrave's 1597-1613) and Charles Massey (Admiral's-Prince's-Palsgrave's 1597-1635?), both of whom played relatively minor roles at this point in their careers.

In his edition of Henslowe's papers, Greg initially assigned a date of 1600 to the plot.³² In a subsequent article for *RES*, Greg revised his earlier position, now claiming "the Plot cannot possibly be as late as 1600, let alone 1602," on the basis of the lack of the honorific prefix "Mr." being associated with the fragmentary names "Sam [Rowley]" and "Charles [Massey]" at the lower extremity of the plot fragment.³³ Believing that "Mr" was consistently used to indicate the shareholder status of the player to which it was applied, Greg argued that its absence in the "2 Fortune's Tennis" plot is significant because each of these actors was "distinguished" with such a prefix in the "Troilus and Cressida" plot (which Greg dates to May 1599). Unfortunately for Greg, there are two substantial objections. First, as David Kathman has shown, although the use of the "Mr." title does seem to consistently signify the bearer's status as sharer, the reverse does not hold true: the mere absence of the title does not, on its own, guarantee that the person in question

²⁸ Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites* 286. See Thomas Heywood, *An apology for actors* (1612), sig.E2^v, Thomas Dekker, *The guls horne-booke* (1609), p.3 and John Taylor, *Taylor's feast* (1638), pp.66-67.

²⁹ Nungezer 269.

³⁰ Nungezer 347 suggests that Tailor was with the Admiral's c.1597-1601, but these dates rely on the assumption that the "2 Fortune's Tennis" plot is from 1597-98, which is not certain. Gurr prefers 1600-02 (*Shakespeare's Opposites* 287) and Kathman opts for 1601-02 (*BIED*).

³¹ Foakes, *Henslowe's Diary* 44 / fol.19^v; Nungezer 86. Gurr's date of the "2 Fortune's Tennis" plot depends in part on Cartwright not being with the company when Dekker was paid for his book of "Fortune's Tennis" in 1600, but Gurr contradicts himself in his appendix of player biographies, which lists Cartwright as being with the Admiral's from 1598 (*Shakespeare's Opposites* 263, 277). Nungezer's citing of the transaction with Henslowe suggests that the earlier date is to be preferred.

³² Greg, *Henslowe Papers* 144.

³³ W. W. Greg, "The Evidence of Theatrical Plots for the History of the Elizabethan Stage," *RES* 1.3 (1925): 270.

is *not* a sharer.³⁴ Second, “Troilus and Cressida” here is surely a mistake for “Tamar Cham”; the “Troilus” plot only contains such honorific references to “Mr. Hunt” and “Mr. Jones”, whereas “Tamar Cham” includes both “Mr. Sam” and “Mr. Charles” – but it dates to 1602 (which Greg would thus enforce as a *terminus ad quem* for the “2 Fortune’s Tennis” plot, with its lack of honorifics). So when Greg says (of “2 Fortune’s Tennis”), “In this, namely, as in the Plot of *Frederick and Basilea* of June 1597, Sam and Charles (that is Rowley and Massey) appear without the prefix “Mr.”, by which they are already distinguished in that of *Troilus and Cressida* in May 1599,” he *should* say “by which they are distinguished in “Tamar Cham”, 1602” (where 1602 is a best guess, based on Henslowe’s acquisition of the book in 1602, presumably for a planned revival to which the plot may pertain).³⁵ Honorifics, even if they did mean what Greg assumed them to mean, do not help narrow the dating of the plot. Foakes disagrees with Greg’s dating of the plot, in particular Greg’s reliance on the presence/absence of the honorific prefixes, and argues that “[i]t is simpler to accept the probable date of this plot as between September 1602 and the time of Singer’s retirement, early in 1603.”³⁶ The inclusion of the boy actor Dick Juby (Admiral’s 1600-02) in this updated transcription is significant in that it suggests a 1600-02 date for the plot itself: later than Greg’s dating, earlier than Foakes’s, and consistent with Henslowe’s purchase of the “fortewn tenes” playbook on 06 September 1600.

The plot and characters

For all the ambiguity of the plot, some of the character names are especially clear to read. Apart from the bare-headed character (line 3), the “Childe” (line 5) (who might also be the “sonn” of line 22), the mute ladies (line 6 and 25), servingmen (line 15, possibly line 7) and the wine pressers (lines 17 and 21), we have a number of named characters. These include “orleauce”, “Mauritius”, “Boniface”, “Edwin”, “[...]lla”, “[Cha]mpaine”, “Bertram”, and “Lewes”. These names represent an important opportunity to reconsider the “2 Fortune’s Tennis” plot and the role of the corresponding play in the Admiral’s repertory. Some caution is required here though: the plot does not contain any especially distinctive actions that would reveal a specific narrative arc, beyond words like “following”, “musing”, and “bleeding”. It would not, therefore, be prudent to attempt to close down the interpretive possibilities for the play’s subject matter by insisting too strongly on any given reading. However, the distinctive name “Boniface” provides a fruitful avenue of inquiry that I wish to pursue.

³⁴ Kathman, “Reconsidering” 20-21. Foakes disagrees with Greg’s interpretation of the prefix “Mr.”, preferring to expand it as “Master Actor” rather than sharer, and adjusting his dating of plots accordingly (*Henslowe’s Diary*, xlv).

³⁵ Greg, “The Evidence” 270.

³⁶ Foakes, ed. XXX.

A “Boniface” appears as an apprentice in Dekker and Webster’s *Westward Ho* (1607), and as “an ignorant pedant or schoolmaster” in Heywood’s *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (c.1602), where his name is derived from the common name of a doctor in the French commedia dell’ arte tradition.³⁷ In “2 Fortune’s Tennis”, though, Boniface enters “wth seruingmen” (line 15), which suggests a character of higher estate than an apprentice or ignorant schoolmaster: extant drama may not be a useful guide here. Critics have been tempted to link the fictional names in lines 13-14 with the real names those lines contain. Gurr, for example, lists “Boniface” as one of William Pavy’s roles; yet if “Boniface” were as prominent a character as his “seruingmen” and his repeated presence in the plot suggests, Gurr’s attribution of the part to Pavy would run counter to Nungezer’s belief that Pavy was “apparently only a minor actor.”³⁸ In his *Dramatic Documents*, Greg assigns the roles differently. He suggests the word above “Pau[y]” is “Co” followed by three minims, i.e. either “m” (“the most probable interpretation”) or “ro” (“not impossible” according to Greg). He then notes:

There would probably be ample room for one other name after “Pauy”, and we may therefore assume that Singer played “Co...”, Pavy Mauritius, and the third actor Boniface. In that case no actor is assigned for Orleans, no doubt because he had appeared earlier.³⁹

This scenario would equally trivialise what appears to be a second major role, this time by assigning “Mauritius” (named four times in lines 14-26 alone) rather than “Boniface” to Pavy. The presence of the renowned comic actor John Singer in the scene might be evidence that clowning was involved, but which character was the fool’s part? In theory, the “2 Fortune’s Tennis” Boniface might be the comic role, and might have more in common with Heywood’s schoolmaster or Dekker and Webster’s apprentice after all, were it not for his servingmen. I would suggest though, that either Greg’s suggestion of “Co...” is more likely, or that it is intuitively more sensible to identify the “musing” Orleans as a fool-type and assign that role to Singer.

Given the paucity of information about backstage plots, there is no consensus on the relationship between characters’ names and actors’ names when they appear in the same box/scene of a plot. Drawing primarily on conflicting evidence in the “2 Seven Deadly Sins” plot, Tiffany Stern has observed that:

[W]hen there is a ‘massed entry’ in which several characters are to enter at the same time, the plot often becomes confused. It will list, first, fictional characters, then (when it does so) real actors’ names, but the order of the real names will not necessarily match the order of fictional characters.⁴⁰

³⁷ Paul Merchant, ed. Thomas Heywood, *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon in Three Marriage Plays* (Manchester: MUP, 1996), “Dramatis Personae” 15n.

³⁸ Gurr, *Shakespeare’s Opposites*, 284; Nungezer, *Dictionary of Actors*, 269.

³⁹ Greg, *Dramatic Documents*, 136.

⁴⁰ Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 212.

We simply do not know enough about the relationship between real names and fictional names from the small sample of surviving plots to draw conclusions about which part the minor actor Pavy took and which part the comic actor Singer took. All we can say, as noted above, is that the nature of Boniface's appearances in the second, better-preserved half of the plot may indicate that his character is significant to the narrative. The name "Boniface" suggests two plausible storylines for the lost play: a crusading context and a variation of the Phocas narrative. Each is plausible enough to warrant consideration. More importantly, both can be linked directly to plays in the Admiral's repertory in the late 1590s, making the decision to perform "2 Fortune's Tennis" a conscious engagement with repertorial property, and much more than a "short topical overture" punning on the name of the Fortune playhouse.⁴¹ I'll consider these possibilities in turn, beginning with Boniface and the crusades material.

The Fourth Crusade: Boniface, "[Cha]mpaine" and "Lewes"

The names "orleauce" and "[Cha]mpaine" are presumably titles, belonging to French counts or earls; the popular French name "Lewes" — i.e. "Louis" — might fall into a similar category. As such, these titles might refer to any number of historical individuals who once held the relevant office. "Champagne" appears as the governor of Antwerp in the Chamberlain's topical history play, *A Larum for London, or The Siege of Antwerp* (c.1598-1600), but the name is not used in any other play according to the *Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama* compiled by Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford and Sidney L. Sonderegard.⁴² A melancholic Orleans features in *Old Fortunatus* (1599) as Greg has noted, but different French characters bearing the title of "Orleans" appear in some half a dozen plays;⁴³ "Lewes" is likewise represented in a diversity of drama. Searching for historical narratives for such generic character names when they are taken in isolation is not helpful, but if the name "Boniface" is added to the mix, the historical context of the Fourth Crusade (1202-04 AD) emerges as a possible subject for the lost play.⁴⁴

In the late twelfth century, Pope Innocent III began recruiting support for his plan to reclaim the Holy Land. One of his first tasks was to persuade King Philip

⁴¹ Chambers 2.178.

⁴² Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford and Sidney L. Sonderegard, *An Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama Printed Plays, 1500-1660*. Rev. Ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

⁴³ Greg, *Henslowe Papers* 144. An "Orleans" appears in *Henry V* (a duke captured at Agincourt), *The Trial of Chivalry* (Roderick, Duke of Orleans), *1 Henry VI* (the Bastard of Orleans), *The Honest Man's Fortune* (the jealous Duke of Orleans), and in *The Parliament of Love* (another Duke of Orleans) in addition to *Old Fortunatus* (see Berger, Bradford and Sonderegard).

⁴⁴ The following discussion draws freely on Robert Lee Wolff and Harry W. Hazard, "The Fourth Crusade," *A History of the Crusades, Volume 2: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1962), 153-86.

Augustus of France and King Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart) to make peace, lest their continued conflict prevent Innocent from recruiting sufficient crusaders for his cause. A five-year truce was agreed upon in early 1199, but in April of that year Richard was killed whilst besieging the viscount of Limoges' castle at Chalus-Chabrol. With only an iron helmet for protection, no armour, Richard set about inspecting his army's progress. A lone enemy crossbowman (himself protected only by a frying pan for a shield) managed to hit Richard's shoulder; the king retired to his tent to avoid alarming his men, but the barb from the bolt could not be removed successfully, and Richard's wound became gangrenous.⁴⁵ He died shortly thereafter. There is reason to believe that playwrights at the Rose were interested in this subject matter. In June 1598, Henslowe paid £6 5s to Henry Chettle, Michael Drayton, Anthony Munday and Robert Wilson for a play called "The Funeral of Richard Coeur de Lion".⁴⁶ There does not appear to be anything especially distinctive about Richard's funeral, though he did leave detailed instructions about what was to be done with his body, specifying distinct final resting places for his heart (Rouen), his brain and entrails (Charroux), and the remainder of his corpse (with crown and regalia) to be buried at Fontevraud.⁴⁷ It seems probable, then, that Richard's death formed at least part of the action of this lost play. Pope Innocent's plans for the crusade suffered a significant setback with the sudden death of the English king, and it was not until November 1199 that a crusading army was truly established --- at a tournament in Ecry-sur-Aisne where the host, Count Theobald (or Thibaut) of Champagne, and his cousin, Count Louis of Blois laid aside their weapons and committed themselves and their followers to the cause.⁴⁸ By 1200 AD, they had amassed an army of ca. 10,000 men, who were to travel to Jerusalem by sea via Italy, and Venice in particular. While the French army negotiated with the Venetian fleet for transportation and support, Theobald of Champagne died, and the crusaders lost their leader.⁴⁹ It was decided that his replacement should be determined by election, and the successful nominee was marquis Boniface of Montferrat (1192-1207 AD). Boniface's plans for the crusade were affected by a number of factors, including the influence exercised by the doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo, and the plea for assistance from Alexius, the young son of Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelus, who wanted the crusaders to help restore Isaac and Alexius's rights to the throne of Constantinople. The Fourth Crusade was thus ultimately diverted from its original purpose and focussed instead on the conquest of Constantinople.⁵⁰

Boniface of Montferrat might be the Boniface of the plot, whilst Theobald of Champagne and Lois of Blois might be the plot's "[Cha]mpaine" and "Lewes"

⁴⁵ John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999), 324.

⁴⁶ See Foakes, ed. 90-92, and the *Lost Plays Database* entry, "Funeral of Richard Coeur de Lion, The".

⁴⁷ Gillingham 324-25.

⁴⁸ Gillingham 337, Wolff and Hazard 158.

⁴⁹ Wolff and Hazard 163-64.

⁵⁰ Wolff and Hazard 168-69.

respectively. The lost “Funeral of Richard Coeur de Lion” play by Chettle, Drayton, Munday and Wilson (1598) indicates a contemporary interest in events related to the Fourth Crusade. One of the playwrights responsible for that play, Anthony Munday, had also written two Robin Hood plays (set in the same historical period) for the Admiral’s that year, and Knutson has noted that “[f]rom 1597-98 to 1600-01, the company had a Robin Hood play on stage nearly continuously.”⁵¹ Also in 1598, another of the playwrights, Michael Drayton, received 40s from Henslowe in partial payment for a lost play called “William Longsword” which was almost certainly part of this same matrix of crusades-related plays.⁵² John H. Astington has suggested that a later lost play by Philip Massinger, “The History of Will Longsword, Son to Rosamund” (licensed to the Red Bull, 1639), was concerned with “William Longespée, 3rd Earl of Salisbury (1167-1226), soldier and diplomat”, and has assumed that this Longespée must also have been the subject of Drayton’s 1598 play.⁵³ Although Astington does not note it, Longespée was the half-brother of Richard I, and Drayton was receiving payment for his “Longsword” play in precisely the same year as the “Funeral of Richard Coeur de Lion” play to which he had also contributed.⁵⁴ The events surrounding the Fourth Crusade and the people involved in it were clearly fit subject matter for drama at the Rose in the late 1590s. It may simply be coincidence that Boniface of Montferrat had an older brother named “William Longsword” (d.1177 AD).⁵⁵

There is nothing in the plot to undermine a crusades reading, and the scanty details it provides are generally sympathetic to such a context. The display of reverence indicated by the “[ba]re headed” character(s) at the start of the plot would be entirely consonant with the crusades context, as might the disguise of “...lla like a Pilgrim” (though this hypothesis does not supply a viable name for the mysterious “...lla”). EEBO-TCP currently sheds little light on incidents involving “wine pressers”, a term first recorded by the OED in 1632, though evidently in use much earlier (for example, the figure of Excess in the Bower of Bliss of Spenser’s *Faerie*

⁵¹ *The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon and The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* (both 1598, though not printed until 1601. See Knutson on “duplicate plays” in *Repertory* 48-50. Although Knutson does not note it, the Robin Hood subject matter was also parodied in the anonymous Admiral’s play, *Look About You* (printed 1600).

⁵² Foakes, ed. 103 / fol. 52v.

⁵³ See Astington’s entry for “William Longsword (William Longbeard)” in the *Lost Plays Database*; and N. W. Bawcutt, ed. *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623-73* (Oxford: Clarendon P, rpt.2003), 205, item 394 (not listed in Bentley or Harbage).

⁵⁴ Richard Hakluyt (for example) includes an account of this William Longsword/Longespée in *The principal nauigations* (1599-1600), vol.2, p.34.

⁵⁵ 593; Wolff and Hazard 164. Passing references to this Longsword can be found in Jean de Serres, *A general inuentorie of the history of France from the beginning of that monarchie, vnto the treatie of Veruins, in the year 1598*. Trans. Edward Grimeston (1607), p.154; and Pedro Mexía, *The imperiall historie* (1623), p.495.

Queene, of whom it is said “so faire wine-presse made the wine more sweet”).⁵⁶ Like the pilgrim disguise, people pressing wine would be in keeping with a Holy Land context. However, most of the evidence in favour of the crusade context is circumstantial at best. There is no smoking gun to definitively identify the Boniface of the plot as Boniface of Montferrat, and although the plot includes a “[Cha]mpaine” and “Lewes”, these generic titles might apply to other historical personages than the French counts identified above. The situation is also complicated by the uncertainty of how the “2 Fortune’s Tennis” playwright(s) might encounter this subject matter. The identification of a clear and detailed candidate for source text might strengthen the case for the crusades context, but at present I have only managed to locate short references to the events described above. For example, in his *The generall historie of the Turkes* (1603), Richard Knolles simply notes that

great preparations were in making in FRAUNCE and ITALIE, and diuers other places of Christendome, for an expedition to be made against the Turks into the Holy land. The chiefe men wherin, were *Theobald* countie of CHAMPAGNE (a man of great fame, and generall of the Christian armie) *Boniface* marquesse of MONT-FERRAT, *Baldwin* earle of FLANDERS and HENAULT, and *Henrie* his brother earle of S. *Paul*, *Henrie* duke of LOVAINE, *Gualter* earle of BREAME, with diuers other noble gentlemen, which to name were tedious; vnto whom resorted also many valiant and deuout Christians out of diuers parts of Christendome, ready to haue spent their liues in that so religious a war...

He adds: “the noble countie of CHAMPAGNE, generall thereof, there fell sick and died, to the exceeding grieffe & sorrow of the whole armie: in whose stead, the marquesse of MONT-FERRAT [i.e. Boniface], a man of great nobilitie, and well acquainted with the wars of the East, was chosen generall.”⁵⁷

Inasmuch as the fragmentary nature of the plot is not conducive to a straightforward reconstruction of narrative, the crusades subject matter can be regarded as a viable solution to the problem of how to situate “2 Fortune’s Tennis” in its commercial context. There is much circumstantial evidence to support this interpretation, both in terms of the correspondence of a specific cluster of character names in the plot with a set of historical personages, and in terms of what appears to be a vogue for crusades material in the Admiral’s repertory at the end of the

⁵⁶ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1596), Book 2, canto 12, p.378. The term is most frequently associated with figurative readings of the wrath of God, stemming from Isaiah 63:3 or Revelations 14:19-20 and 19:15, as for example when Arthur Dent relates that “Saint Iohn saith flatly, that all papists shall bee cast into the great wine presse of the wrath of God, where they shall bee strained and tread till bloud come out of the wine presse” (Arthur Dent, *The ruine of Rome: or An exposition vpon the whole Reuelation* (1603), 267). The wine-press image was also used in relation to Christ’s sacrifice, as when George Abbot explains that “Christ alone did treade the wine-presse, and Christ doth dye alone, to stay his fathers wrath; to saue all his elect” (George Abbot, *An exposition vpon the prophet Ionah Contained in certaine sermons, preached in S. Maries church in Oxford* (1600), 134).

⁵⁷ Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes* (1603), 77.

sixteenth century. No doubt scholars will differ in the extent to which they find this hypothesis compelling, built as it is on a number of conjectural premises whose cumulative effect might simply be serendipitous. I have no intention of arguing for the definitiveness of this “crusades solution”, no matter how attractive the proposition might be in terms of relating “2 Fortune’s Tennis” to other Admiral’s offerings and thus explaining its existence in some small way. To do so on the basis of the limited evidence would be akin to returning the plot to its early-twentieth century status as a kind of Rorschach test wherein critics saw what they wanted to see: an advertisement for the Fortune theatre, a glimpse of a lost Fortunatus play, a physical trace of Munday’s “Set at Tennis”. Instead of rushing to reduce the plot to a known commodity, I want to defer drawing inferences until I’ve given due consideration to an equally viable alternative.

The Rise and Fall of the Emperor Phocas: Boniface, Mauritius, Edwin and Lilla

“Mauritius” is not recorded as a character name at all in Berger, Bradford and Sondergard’s *Index*, but there is a standout candidate for the role in terms of historical personages, and he frequently appears in conjunction with a “Boniface”. Mauritius (or Maurice), who reigned over the Byzantine Empire from 582-602 AD, was the only emperor of that name.⁵⁸ He appears in a number of printed texts in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. There is a chapter devoted to Mauritius, for example, in *A chronicle of all the noble emperours of the Romaines from Iulius Caesar...* (1571), written by Richard Rainolde.⁵⁹ His achievements as Emperor of Constantinople include establishing peace with the Persians during the time of Cosroe II. Cosroe’s dependence on Constantinople was a significant outcome for Mauritius, but Rainolde explains how “*Mauritius* by pride puffed vp, forgatte God Almightye” and made war against the Lombards and the Hungarians.⁶⁰ The Hungarians, led by Caganus, took many Christian captives, but “*Mauritius* being a cruell Prince” did not pay ransoms, infuriating Caganus and causing him to slaughter the Christian prisoners.⁶¹ At about this time, Mauritius reportedly experienced a number of quasi-supernatural phenomena. In a busy marketplace, a man dressed as a monk supposedly appeared before Mauritius brandishing a small sword, warning that the emperor would die by that weapon, then vanishing suddenly amongst the crowd. As Mauritius’s reign progressed, he met with

⁵⁸ Emil Kaegi, Walter, and Anthony Cutler. “Maurice.” *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Oxford University Press, 1991. Oxford Reference. 2005. Date Accessed 19 Sept. 2013
<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3399>>

⁵⁹ Richard Rainolde, *A chronicle of all the noble emperours of the Romaines from Iulius Caesar...* (1571), fol.160-65.

⁶⁰ Rainolde, fol.160^v.

⁶¹ Rainolde, fol.164.

opposition from Gregory I whose papacy (590-604) grew increasingly independent of the emperor; some writers attribute the report of the monk's ominous prophecy to Pope Gregory.⁶² This event was followed by a prophetic dream, in which Mauritius saw a soldier whose name was Phocas murder Mauritius's wife and children, before murdering Mauritius himself.⁶³ Although Mauritius's son prudently advised his father to win the love of his soldiers in a bid to procure safety, Mauritius did no such thing; rather, he subjected his men to intolerable winter conditions in Slovenia, resulting in their mutiny.⁶⁴ They were led by the centurion Phocas, who was chosen as emperor by the people; and so the prophecy came to pass. Mauritius came to be known for the suffering he endured, as recalled in Robert Albott's miscellany, *Wits theater of the world* (1600):

Mauritius the Emperour, beholding the death of his children vvith great patience, vvhen he savve his vvife put to death, cryed out, O Lord thou art iust, and thy iudgements are right.⁶⁵

After witnessing his entire family's execution, Mauritius himself was beheaded.⁶⁶

Phocas (602-10 AD) was a notoriously cruel emperor, continuing his reign in the bloody way that he began it, as Rainolde observes:

He toke awaye other mens wyues from their husbands: he made much of wicked persons: He wasted the Romaine Empyre of their riches and treasures: he liued at *Rome* in all beastly dronkennes, and suffered the *Romaine* Empyre to be spoyled of the *Persians*, of the *Hunnes*, and of *Caganus* kinge of *Hungarye*...⁶⁷

A notable occurrence during his reign was Phocas's declaration of Pope Boniface III (19 February–12 November 607 AD) as universal bishop. Phocas thus provides a link between the two distinctive names in the plot, Mauritius and Boniface. John Foxe provides a succinct account of all three men in his *Acts and Monuments*:

Thys Emperours name was *Phocas* a man of such wickednes and ambitio[n] most like to his owne Bishop *Boniface*, that to aspire to the Empire, he murdered his owne maister and Emperour *Mauritius*, & his children. Thus *Phocas* coming vp to be Emperour, after this detestable vilanie done: thinking to establish his Empire with friendship and fauour of his people, & especially with the byshop of Rome: quickly condescended to al hys petitions, & so

⁶² Kazhdan, Alexander. "Gregory I the Great." *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Oxford University Press, 1991. Oxford Reference. 2005. Date Accessed 20 Sep. 2013; Pedro Mexía, *The historie of all the Roman emperors beginning with Caius Iulius Caesar... First collected in Spanish by Pedro Mexia, since enlarged in Italian by Lodouico Dulce and Girolamo Bardi, and now englished by W.T.* (London, 1604), 458. On the dream, see also Marcus Junianus Justinus, *The historie of Iustine Containing a narration of kingdomes, from the beginning of the Assyrian monarchy, vnto the raigne of the Emperour Augustus ...* (1606), sig.[Gg4]^v.

⁶³ Rainolde, fol.164.

⁶⁴ Mexía 458-59.

⁶⁵ fol.52.

⁶⁶ Mexía, 459.

⁶⁷ Rainolde, fol.165.

graunted him (as it is sayd) to be that he would, the vniuersall and heade Bishop ouer all Christen Churches.⁶⁸

The account in Foxe may be of interest for present purposes because it is followed immediately by an account of King Edwin (or Eadwine) of Northumberland (c.586–633 AD), including the relation of an attempt on Edwin’s life that was foiled by Edwin’s trusty servant Lilla, who interposed himself between the king and the assassin’s blade.⁶⁹ “Edwin” appears at the end of the “2 Fortune’s Tennis” plot, with Bertram, Lewis and possibly Mauritius (the name is mutilated) in lines 24 and 26. At line 20 there is the direction “Ila like a Pilgrim”, which remains ambiguous. The unidentified “Ila” could theoretically be “Lilla”, if we assumed that there were previous references to Edwin in the missing fragments of the plot. As it happens, Greg has plausibly suggested in *Dramatic Documents* that the traces of missing text at the start of line 17 are likely to be “Enter Edwine”, meaning that Edwin had indeed appeared prior to “Ila” entering “like a Pilgrim”.⁷⁰ The connection between the Boniface narrative and the Edwin narrative is reinforced in another contemporaneous text, *The historie of Great Britannie declaring the successe of times and affaires in that iland...* (1606), where the author notes that “Edwin was by Boniface the Bishop of Rome exhorted to embrace the Christian faith.”⁷¹ It was actually Pope Boniface V (619-25 AD) rather than Boniface III who implored Edwin to consider conversion, but a playwright might easily make a mistake with this historical material.⁷²

There is a dramatic precedent for this subject matter in the Admiral’s own repertory. Henslowe’s diary records seven performances of a play called the “tragedie of ffocasse” from 19 May 1596 (when it was marked “ne”) to 17 July 1596, earning slightly higher than 30s per performance.⁷³ Two years later, Henslowe was evidently still interested in the Phocas story: on 16 May 1598 he lent the company £7 towards the purchase of five playbooks from Martin Slater, one of which was the book of “focas”.⁷⁴ As Chambers suggests, Slater presumably retained ownership of these plays when he left the company.⁷⁵ If “2 Fortune’s Tennis” dramatized parts of the Phocas narrative, it would build on or otherwise engage with the material

⁶⁸ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (repr.1583), Book 2, p.120.

⁶⁹ A more detailed and authoritative account is given in Bede’s *The history of the Church of Englande*, trans. Thomas Stapleton (1565), book 2, p59. See also Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), p.107; and Robert Fabyan, *Fabyans cronycle newly printed...* (1533), Chapter CXXX, fol.LXIV^v-LXV.

⁷⁰ Greg, *Documents* 136.

⁷¹ John Clapham (attrib.), *The historie of Great Britannie declaring the successe of times and affaires in that iland...* (1606), 269.

⁷² Rosemary Cramp, “Eadwine (c.586–633)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (OUP, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8567>, accessed 26 Sept 2013]).

⁷³ The relevant entries are on ff.15v and 21v of the diary; see Foakes, ed. 37, 47-48.

⁷⁴ Henslowe f.45^v; see Foakes, ed. 89.

⁷⁵ Chambers 2.167. The book of “Focasse” also appears in Henslowe’s undated inventory of books bought since 3 March 1598 (which Malone transcribed, but which is no longer extant); see Foakes, ed. 324.

presented in the lost “Phocas” play that had been part of the Admiral’s repertory since 1596 and which the company may have been planning to revive around 1598. It is unlikely to be a comedy, as Harbage and Schoenbaum believed.

A play depicting the rise and fall of emperors and popes would accord well with the proverbial hazards of Fortune’s tennis balls,⁷⁶ and would be wholly in keeping with the repertory of the Admiral’s men in the late 1590s. It could serve as a sequel to any papal/imperial history of an earlier period. But there are problems with the Phocas possibility, just as there were problems with the crusades interpretation: although Mauritius and Boniface are clearly named in the plot, Phocas (the vital link between the emperor and the pope) is conspicuously absent. He may of course have been named in parts of the plot that are now missing, but for now (at least) his absence remains an obstacle to confirming the Phocas narrative as the definitive subject matter. Given that Mauritius died before Phocas installed Boniface as universal pope, the unlikely appearance of Mauritius and Boniface together in the one scene (line 14) is also potentially problematic. Nevertheless, the Phocas narrative is plausible, and deserves consideration for this reason, even if it needs more evidence before it could be reclassified as certain.

Where does this leave us? Conventional wisdom would consider it unlikely that a company that had acquired the book of “Phocas” in 1598 and had developed a number of crusades-related plays that same year would return to either of these subject matters in 1600-02. Scholars have traditionally resisted the notion that a company might have multiple titles treating similar subject matter: E. K. Chambers, for example, decided that the Caesar play described by Swiss tourist Thomas Platter in 1599 couldn’t have been at the Rose because the Admiral’s had new Caesar plays in 1594-5 (“1 & 2 Caesar and Pompey”) and again in 1602 (“Caesar’s Fall”), and would therefore be unlikely to have another Caesar play in 1599.⁷⁷ If F. G. Fleay had canvassed the narrative possibilities for “2 Fortune’s Tennis” he may well have concluded that the play was a revision of older drama; the scholarship of Dekker’s *Old Fortunatus* (1599) has been plagued by a comparable refusal to believe that Dekker’s play is anything more than a revision of lost *Fortunatus* plays from 1596 or earlier.⁷⁸ But there is no evidence that “2 Fortune’s Tennis” is merely a known play

⁷⁶ R. W. Dent, *Proverbial Language in English Drama Exclusive of Shakespeare, 1495-1616: An Index* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984), T90a.13.

⁷⁷ Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1930), 397.

⁷⁸ Henslowe recorded receipts for a play called “the j p of fortewnatus” from 03 February to 24 May 1596; although there is no record of a second part, the designation of this play as “the j p” implies a second part was known. Later, in 1599, Henslowe recorded a series of transactions with Thomas Dekker, paying him £6 for his book called “the hole history of ffortunatus”, before requesting alterations for “for the eande of fortewnatus for the corte” (Foakes, ed. 34-37, 126-28). The £6 fee is on par with the usual payment for a completely new play, and would be excessive for mere revisions. Nevertheless, Fleay, Greg, Fredson Bowers and Martin Wiggins have all assumed that it would be more likely that Dekker revised and combined two old plays than that he wrote a new play from scratch (Fleay, *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642*, 2 vols. [London: Reeves &

masquerading under an unfamiliar title: the evidence suggests only that it drew on subject matter that had already featured in the Admiral's repertory. It would be more prudent for critics to resist the temptation to clump these titles together, and instead recognise the possible existence of discrete plays engaging with variations of the same topic.⁷⁹ In many ways, this repetition of subject matter should be completely expected, and the foregoing analysis of "2 Fortune's Tennis" contributes to our sense of how companies exploited duplication in their repertories. Knutson has drawn attention to such practices, suggesting that "[t]he Elizabethan companies recognized that certain famous personalities and historical periods had extraordinary appeal for playgoers" and that the companies responded by reviving old plays to exploit the popularity of this material, irrespective of the playwright or lead actor initially involved with a play.⁸⁰ Both the use of classical history and the use of crusading material would seem to fit this paradigm of a "commercial cluster or loose serial".⁸¹ The evidence of Henslowe's *Diary* also suggests that companies responded through conscious imitation, "by acquiring one or more additional plays on popular subject matter," so in some sense it might be considered predictable that either of the narratives identified above might be reprised or deliberately duplicated by the Admiral's.⁸² If, as seems likely, "2 Fortune's Tennis" followed "1 Fortune's Tennis" and/or earlier classical or crusading drama as a "serial play", the relationship between these dramas could take one of two forms: the later part(s) might have "narrative dependency" on the first and be played sequentially (e.g. *1 & 2 Tamburlaine*), or it might share "a central character but not a chronological narrative" (as in the case of *Friar Bacon* and *John of Bordeaux*), meaning that the related plays could be performed in alternation (as was the case with "1 & 2 Seven Days of the Week").⁸³ A further consideration is the possibility that "2 Fortune's Tennis" was a spin-off: Knutson cites the example of "The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green" mutating into "The Second Part of the Blind Beggar of Bednal Green with

Turner, 1891], 1.125; Greg, ed. *Henslowe's Diary, Part II. Commentary* [London: A. H. Bullen, 1908], 179; Fredson Bowers, ed. *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 4 vols. [Cambridge: CUP, rpt.1962], 1.107; Martin Wiggins, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, vol.3 [Oxford: OUP, 2013], 843 and 851).

⁷⁹ Such widespread duplication of subject matter was remarkably commonplace. Knutson notes that "[d]uring the 1590s, repertory companies frequently produced plays on the same subjects" ("*Henslowe's Diary* and the Economics of Play Revision for Revival, 1592-1603," *Theatre Research International* 10.1 (1985): 7). She cites examples of Richard III plays by the Queen's, Pembroke's, Sussex's, and later Admiral's companies; Henry V plays by Admiral's, Chamberlain's, and Queen's, with Worcester's picking up the thread with John Oldcastle plays --- and of course plays on the siege of Jerusalem, the battle of Alcazar, and the French civil wars.

⁸⁰ Knutson, *Repertory* 48.

⁸¹ Roslyn L. Knutson, "The History Play, *Richard II*, and Repertorial Commerce," *Richard II: New Critical Essays*, ed. Jeremy Lopez (London: Routledge, 2012), 76. Knutson notes that the existence of the Robin Hood cluster of plays, like the *Richard II* cluster that are the focus of her essay, "illustrates that the market could support a proliferation of plays on related popular subject matter regardless of artistic merit or generic purity" (89).

⁸² Knutson, *Repertory* 48.

⁸³ Knutson, *Repertory* 51.

Tom Strowd" and finally into "The Third Part of Tom Strowd"; other examples might include *Tamburlaine* and "The Tartarian Cripple", or even Shakespeare's *Henriad* and *Merry Wives*. Perhaps the character of Boniface, whether he represented marquis Boniface of Montferrat or Pope Boniface III, grew too large for his original context and became the centre of a new play.

The Admiral's men knew from experience that their customers valued the old repertory. Henslowe's *Diary* points to numerous examples of revived, serial, and spin-off plays. Their repertory at the turn of the century, with Alleyn's emergence from retirement and the imminent relocation to the Fortune playhouse, has also been viewed in terms of a positive, productive nostalgia that valued the past.⁸⁴ The use of the titles "Fortune's Tennis" and "2 Fortune's Tennis" were unlikely to be bids to pass off old material under a new name; if anything, the converse would be the more prudent commercial strategy — to advertise a play as "The Second Part of Phocas" or an equivalent title for the crusading option, to invoke a sense of continuity. It is unlikely that an old play was given a makeshift title to advertise the new theatre. It is unlikely that the new play was a comic interlude or occasional piece. The most likely explanation for the existence of "2 Fortune's Tennis" in the Admiral's repertory around the turn of the century would be that the company recognised the enduring popularity of the subject matter — or possibly that they perceived an opportunity to respond to the presentation of similar subject matter at rival playhouses by offering an entirely new play on a subject whose commercial viability had been previously demonstrated. As such, the topicality of the play's title is only part of the company's promotional strategy: the other, more substantial aspect of the marketing was the provision of a new offering that exploited and reinforced popular material from within the Admiral's own repertory.

⁸⁴ See Paul Menzer, "Shades of Marlowe," *Marlowe Studies: An Annual* 1 (2011): 181-92 on Alleyn's return to the stage and a positive revaluing of "the effects of repertorial nostalgia" (182). Alleyn retired in 1597 and returned to the stage in 1600; although he is likely to have played a role in the 1596 performances of "Phocas", he would not have been part of any possible revival in 1598 and would not have performed in any of the crusades plays. Alleyn's return to the stage is thus unlikely to have occasioned the performance of "2 Fortune's Tennis", but it does appear to have contributed to a more general nostalgia for a recent past for the Admiral's.



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