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EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



Perkin Warbeck and Massinger

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In this paper, I want to consider what seem to me some suggestive instances of intertextuality between John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* and two plays wholly or partly by Philip Massinger, *Sir John van Oldenbarnevelt*, which Massinger co-wrote with John Fletcher, and the sole-authored *Believe As You List*, which has a substantial thematic overlap with *Perkin Warbeck*. For Ford, Massinger might simply have represented a successful playwright to emulate, but I want to argue that he meant more than that. In the first place, it is possible to trace some slight interconnections between Massinger and Ford: both had links to the earl of Pembroke, and Ford wrote commendatory verses for *The Roman Actor* and *The Great Duke of Florence*.¹ Secondly, Massinger had a close relationship with the censor, Sir Henry Herbert, and *Perkin Warbeck* is more dangerously topical than has sometimes been supposed, so the ways in which both *Believe As You List* and *Sir John van Oldenbarnevelt* negotiated danger might well have been of considerable interest to Ford.² Finally, Massinger was connected to the west, and specifically to Ludlow, home of the early sixteenth-century court of Arthur Prince of Wales, who is I think a submerged influence on *Perkin Warbeck*, and later of the Sidneys and Herberts, with whom Massinger was closely linked. For Ford, himself a Devon man, the west had a powerful psychological pull, and so too did its mythologies. The supposedly impotent Octavio in *The Fancies Chaste and Noble*, whose court is infiltrated by a quixotic young man, has a touch of the Fisher King about him, and the eponymous heroine of *The Queen*, whose courtiers propose to take to the lists in defence of her chastity, has something in common with Malory's Guinevere. In *Perkin*

¹ On connections between the two playwrights, see for instance Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 14-15.

² Ivo Kamps notes that 'seventy-one markings on the *Barnavelte* manuscript display the close scrutiny to which the censor subjected it' (*Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 146).

Warbeck, the motif of the supposedly lost king who emerges from the west strikes an even more unmistakably Arthurian note, and Arthur Tudor is mentioned, even if only briefly, as the third in a potential trio of doomed heirs of York (the others being Perkin himself, who claims to be Richard of York, and Warwick, who really was the undoubted son of false, fleeting, perjured Clarence). It is in creating the impression of a lost leader that Ford seems to have found a useful precedent in Massinger.

Fletcher and Massinger's 1619 play *Sir John van Olden Barnaveit* tells the story of the conspiracy led by its eponymous hero against Maurice, Prince of Orange, Stadhouder of the Netherlands. Roger Kuin points out that Orange both was and was not a prince:

On 15 March 1581 Philip II had declared Orange an outlaw, and the Netherlands had, astonishingly, deposed Philip as their lawful king on 26 July of that year. No one in the Provinces themselves was legally qualified to take power. Orange came closest, as by historical accident he was a Prince, if only of little Orange in France. Yet even he systematically referred to himself as the "Stadthouder," the Lieutenant or Substitute; he felt that someone more internationally influential was needed, and spent his last years trying to install the Duke of Anjou as a sort of Lord Protector.³

In Ivo Kamps' terms, 'the play enacts Maurits's gradual and extra-legal but inevitable rise to power'.⁴ In this precarious princeliness he is already close to Perkin, and there are other parallels. When the play opens, Barnevelt is offended by the story that is now being told about the Prince of Orange:

That to his Arme, & Sword, the *Prouinces* owe
their flourishing peace? That hee's the Armyes soule
by which it moves to victorie? (p. 1)

However, Leidenberch assures him that not only is this the popular version of events but that the Prince himself has come to believe it: 'and with such zeale / that is deliuerd, that the *Prince* beleeves it' (p. 1), just as King Henry attributes Perkin's persistence to the fact that 'The custom, sure, of being styled a king / Hath fastened in his thought that he is such'.⁵ Moreover, the idea that the stories told about someone might not be the

³ Roger Kuin, 'Sir Philip Sidney and World War Zero: Implications of the Dutch Revolt', *Sidney Journal* 30.1 (2012), 33-9 (p. 38). For details of the conspiracy see Mark Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648* (London: Penguin, 2015), pp. 574-5.

⁴ Kamps, *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama*, p. 150.

⁵ John Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, ed. by Peter Ure (London: Methuen, 1968), V.ii.132-3.

whole truth is of course of potentially much wider applicability, and although this is a story set in the Netherlands, we are several times reminded of Britain. Second Lord compares Barnevelt to Gowrie (p. 92), and Hogerbeets refers to Barnevelt's Apology (p. 50), which would remind early seventeenth-century audiences of the earl of Essex, who had notoriously published an Apology (and who was incidentally a figure of considerable interest to Ford). In addition, the courage of the English soldiers garrisoned at Utrecht is repeatedly and pointedly praised.

Kamps sees a broad parallel between the two plays in that each blurs the apparent opposition between protagonist and antagonist: in *Sir John van Olden Barnaveelt* 'Massinger and Fletcher begin to dissolve the seemingly rigorous distinctions between the heroic Prince and the despicable Advocate', while in *Perkin Warbeck* 'the drama portrays Henry VII and Warbeck side by side and submits that it is virtually impossible for a commoner (and the theater audience?) to distinguish the founder of the Tudor line from the supposed pretender'.⁶ In addition, there are several moments in *Sir John van Oldenbarnevelt* that find echoes in *Perkin Warbeck*. Bredero refers to Barnevelt and his friends as 'theis new Pretenders' (p. 31), which is of course what we must take Perkin to be if we cannot believe his claim to be Richard Duke of York. More specifically, the Prince of Orange lists those whom he believes guilty of conspiracy against him and wishes, or affects to wish, that there was one name that he need not mention: 'I would end here / and leave out Barnauelt'.⁷ He is, however, persuaded by his councillors that mercy cannot be shown by such a young government as his. In *Perkin Warbeck*, the informer Clifford offers Henry VII a similar list of informers and concludes 'One more remains / Unnamed, whom I could willingly forget' (I.iii.81-2). After this last conspirator has been identified as Sir William Stanley, Henry says 'I hope we may reprieve him from the sentence / Of death; I hope we may' and his most trusted adviser the Bishop of Durham replies,

You may, you may;
And so persuade your subjects that the title
Of York is better, nay, more just and lawful
Than that of Lancaster. (II.ii.13-16)

⁶ Kamps, pp. 146 and 170.

⁷ John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, *Sir John van Olden Barnaveelt*, ed. by T. Howard-Hill (Oxford: Malone Society, 1979), p. 41.

In both plays we thus find the hope that the conspirator whose betrayal gives the most pain need not even be named, followed by the recognition that justice must take its course.

In a second moment of similarity, Barnavelt counters the Prince of Orange's accusations by alleging that the Prince himself deserves none of the credit for recent military success since he played no part in the battle:

you with three troopes of horsse were on the hill
and saw the battaile fought, but strook no stroak in't.
I must confes 'tis fitt a Generall
should looke out for his safetie: and you therefore
are to be held ex<cu>sd. (p. 74)

Barnavelt may concede that it is proper for a commander to hang back from the battle, but early modern audiences might well hear echoes of a quip allegedly made by Henri IV of France and repeated, with slight variations, by a number of writers, that there were three things no one could know: whether the queen of England was a virgin or not; whether the Prince of Orange had any personal valour or not; and what religion he himself was of.⁸ Two aspects of this anecdote are particularly suggestive. In the first place, the three examples chosen by the witty king all focus on the relationship between appearance and reality, a topic of interest to a number of dramatists including Ford. In the second, they involve three of the most powerful leaders of early modern Europe, the rulers of France, England and the Netherlands (countries which are also all mentioned in *Barnevelt*: Barnevelt himself boasts that 'the help of England, and the aide of Fraunce / I onely can call mine' [p. 5], and later, gloating over his possessions, says 'This from the *King of Fraunce*, of much importaunce, / and this from *Englands Queene*' [p. 59], both of whom he recalls meeting [p. 71]). They thus effectively embody the two things which the prologue to *Perkin Warbeck* says it is about: Truth and State.

This contempt for the personal courage of a leader also finds an echo in *Perkin Warbeck*. Henry VII too was not notable for prowess in battle, and he too is twitted by Warbeck with owing his success more to luck than to any merit of his own:

There was a shooting in of light when Richmond,

⁸ See for instance Francis Osborne, *Historical memoires on the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James* (London: J. Grismond for T. Robinson, 1658), p. 61, and David Lloyd, *The states-men and favourites of England since the reformation* (London: J. C. for Samuel Speed, 1665), p. 737.

Not aiming at a crown, retired, and gladly,
For comfort to the duke of Bretagne's court. (V.ii.59-61)

When Henry asks 'What followed?' Warbeck replies,

Bosworth field:

Where, at an instant, to the world's amazement,
A morn to Richmond and a night to Richard
Appeared at once. The tale is soon applied:
Fate, which crowned these attempts when least assured,
Might have befriended others like resolved. (V.ii.69-74)

Henry may have won the Battle of Bosworth, but it was 'to the world's amazement' that he did so, and before that he had been pursuing the sadly inglorious goal of 'comfort'.

Finally, when Durham suggests that the implication of reprieving Stanley would be that the claim of Lancaster was doubtful, the earl of Oxford interjects 'By Vere's old honours, / I'll cut his throat dares speak it' (II.ii.24-5). As it happens, this also chimes with *Barnaveit*, for there too Veres are mentioned when Barnaveit says that not only does the credit for the victory *not* belong to the Prince of Orange, it *does* belong to the Veres:

But that great day,
that memorable day in which o[u]r honors,
or lives, and liberties were at the stake,
<we owe to> the dir<e>ct<i>on and the vallor
of those vnparalleld paire of warlike Brothers
the ever-noble Veres: and who takes from them
vsurpe on what is theirs. (p. 74)

This means Francis and Horace Vere, who were great-nephews of the earl of Oxford who appears in *Perkin Warbeck*. It is of course not particularly surprising that the Oxford of *Perkin Warbeck* should invoke his own family name, but the fact that he mentions it rather than his title does provide another point of connection to *Barnevelt*.

The story of Perkin Warbeck already had strong interconnections with the Netherlands in which *Barnevelt* is set; Perkin himself came from Tournai, and was put into the field by Margaret of York, sister of Edward IV and Richard III and dowager duchess of

Burgundy. However, there is also a less obvious link. In the *Apology* for his actions, the real van Oldenbarnevelt wrote of how

The Earle of Leicester at his departure, left behind him two Acts concerning the proceedings of Prouincial affaires. After this Earles death, Stanly and Yorke ... disloyally surrendered Deuenter, the holde of Sutphen to the Spaniard.⁹

The ‘Stanly’ of whom Oldenbarnevelt speaks is Sir William Stanley, who in 1587 betrayed the English-held city of Deventer to the Spanish, though he denied that his actions were treacherous because he said he had had permission from Leicester to use his discretion as to whether it was possible to hold the city. There is an important character in *Perkin Warbeck* who is called Sir William Stanley, a fact which no one is likely to miss because in act one, scene three, he is named (in full) six times in thirty lines, with the name at one point appearing three times in as many lines:

Clifford. Sir William Stanley is your secret enemy,
And if time fit will openly profess it.

Henry. Sir William Stanley! Who? Sir William Stanley. (I.iii.102-4)

The two Sir William Stanleys are not the same. The William Stanley of *Perkin Warbeck* was the younger brother of Thomas, first earl of Derby, who was the stepfather of Henry VII and is a character in *Richard III*; the William Stanley meant by Oldenbarnevelt was the oldest son of Sir Rowland Stanley of Hooton. However, the two men had more in common than the name, for both were considered traitors, and both also concerned themselves with redistributing sovereign power. The purpose of the earlier Sir William’s conspiracy is, like that of the traitors at Southampton in *Henry V*, left rather opaque, but presumably involved an attempt to dethrone Henry VII. The later Sir William Stanley would have been fresh in Ford’s memory because he had not died until 1630, only three years before *Perkin Warbeck* was written, and the story of Perkin Warbeck as Ford tells it bears some remarkable resemblances to his. (It may be worth noting that the later Stanley’s son James was an associate of the earl of Arundel, one of Ford’s early dedicatees.) As well as his notorious betrayal of Deventer, the later Sir William Stanley also had something of an interest in changing the ownership of territories: his *NDNB* entry notes that in England, he ‘joined a syndicate run by Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Thomas Gerrard which aimed to plant America with recusants’, and in Ireland he planned to make Castlemaine ‘a town of English’. The

⁹ Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, *Barneuels apology: or Holland mysterie* (London: Thomas Thorp, 1618), sig. B4v.

entry adds that he was also sheriff of Cork (one of the comic characters in *Perkin Warbeck* is a former mayor of Cork) and ‘may have been in line to become lord deputy of Ireland’. At one stage he plotted to invade England after landing at Milford Haven, as *Perkin Warbeck* reminds us that Henry VII did, and ‘he endeavoured to establish a board in Flanders dealing with English affairs, which could become a court in exile centred around the infanta’ (*DNB*); in *Perkin Warbeck*, Margaret of York similarly attempts to manipulate events from Flanders. Ford’s Sir William Stanley may be a completely different individual, but the play as a whole nevertheless has some remarkable points of intersection with the Sir William to whom Oldenbarnevelt was connected.¹⁰

Ford mentions Barnaveit in *Line of Life* as one of three examples of ‘a publique great man’, the first two being Essex and the Duke of Byron.¹¹ He also shows increasing signs of what might be termed a Massingerian aesthetic in his plays,¹² and in *Perkin Warbeck* in particular. *Perkin Warbeck* clearly echoes Massinger’s *Believe As You List*, which the manuscript notes was ‘Written by Mr Massenger May 6th 1631’,¹³ two years before *Perkin Warbeck* itself.¹⁴ Warren Chernaik notes that ‘one significant difference between Don Sebastian and Antiochus... is that Don Sebastian was a pretender... where Antiochus was a true monarch’,¹⁵ and Joanne Rochester presses this further, arguing that ‘unlike the pretender of Ford’s *Perkin Warbeck*, there is never any doubt that Antiochus really is who he claims to be. His difficulty is not being but seeming, being recognized as a king. The play is not the tragedy of an actor who may be a king, but of a king forced to be an actor, to be literally dependant [sic] on spectator response for

¹⁰ For further exploration of this idea, see Lisa Hopkins, ‘Strange Truths: The Stanleys of Derby on the English Renaissance Stage’, in *Shakespeare’s Histories and Counter-Histories*, ed. by Stuart Hampton-Reeves, Dermot Cavanagh and Steve Longstaffe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 85-100.

¹¹ John Ford, *A Line of Life* (MS), ed. by Gilles Monsarrat, in *The Collected Works of John Ford*, ed. by Gilles Monsarrat, Brian Vickers and R. J. C. Watt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), 3 vols, I, p. 598. (The printed version is substantially the same.)

¹² Antony Telford Moore’s edition of *Love’s Sacrifice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), notes the play’s debt to *The Duke of Milan* (pp. 28-9).

¹³ Philip Edwards notes that ‘The date of Massinger’s play can be fixed quite definitely: the original version ... was completed by 11 January 1631; the revised version was licensed for acting on 6 May 1631’ (‘The Royal Pretenders in Massinger and Ford’, *Essays and Studies* 27 [1974], 18-36 [p. 18]).

¹⁴ *Perkin Warbeck* was published in 1634, but offers strong internal evidence of a date of composition in 1633 in the shape of a clear reference to the Strathearn controversy, which erupted that year. See Peter Ure, ‘A Pointer to the Date of Ford’s *Perkin Warbeck*’, *Notes and Queries* 215 (1970), pp. 215-7.

¹⁵ Warren Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 196-7.

survival'.¹⁶ Philip Edwards, though, thinks that the two plays are more akin than this difference may make them appear: he declares that 'The extremely close relationship of the two plays has been obscured by the rewriting which Massinger was forced to undertake' because 'In the rewritten story, the indispensable element of dubiety is lost. Antiochus is no longer a mysterious pretender; he is the true king returning'; however 'If... we compare the play that Massinger originally wrote with Ford's, we see that both men took the true story of a pretender to a European throne, a pretender whom events and history had discredited, and invested that pretender with dignity and credibility in his conflict with the established ruler'.¹⁷

In particular, Massinger's 'pretender', Antiochus, foreshadows Perkin in numerous respects. Like Perkin, he perceives the horror of violence: Perkin pleads with James IV to 'Spare, spare, my dear, dear England' (III.iv.67) and Antiochus shudders that 'mee thinckes I now looke on my butcherd armie',¹⁸ though in his case this is based on experience rather than imagination. James IV says of Perkin 'He must be more than subject who can utter / The language of a king' (II.i.103-4), and Perkin can indeed do that:

If thou hear'st
A truth of my sad ending by the hand
Of some unnatural subject, thou withal
Shalt hear how I died worthy of my right
By falling like a King. (III.ii.150-5)

Berecinthus similarly says to Antiochus 'let your language high and stately speake you / as you were borne a king' (p. 30), and Antiochus, like Perkin, obliges:

Silence
this fellows sawcie tongue. o maiestie
how soone a short eclipse hath made thy splendor
as it had never shinde on theis forgotten. (p. 32)

However, Antiochus, like Perkin, can also create an impression of ineffectuality, as when he says 'this is not faire' (p. 37). Like Perkin, too, Antiochus is accused of having low origins when Flaminius says variously that he is 'an Apostata Iew' and 'a cheatinge

¹⁶ Joanne Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship in the Plays of Philip Massinger* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 135.

¹⁷ Edwards, 19- 20.

¹⁸ Philip Massinger, *Believe As You List*, edited by C. J. Sisson (Oxford: The Malone Society, 1928), p. 4.

Greeke called Pseudolus' (p. 33), and like Perkin he does not really rebut this, since though he offers to give a written account of where he has been for the past twenty-four years he does not provide a verbal one (p. 34). Prusias, like James IV of Scotland in *Perkin Warbeck*, wishes to welcome Antiochus but is scared of Rome, a fear exacerbated when Flaminius warns him,

imagine
our legions, and th'auxiliarie forces
of such [such] as are our freinds, and tributatirs
drawne vp, Bithinia cover'd with our [troopes] armies
...
the rapes
of virgins, and graue matrons. (pp. 54-5)

This rhetoric is repeated almost exactly in *Perkin Warbeck*, when Perkin says that he

never sought
The truth of mine inheritance with rapes
Of women, or of infants murdered, virgins
Deflowered, old men butchered, dwellings fired,
My land depopulated, and my people
Afflicted with a kingdom's devastation. (III.iv.59-64)

Finally, Flaminius attributes Antiochus' ability to produce correct information about his past to witchcraft (p. 90), and Urswick compares Perkin to 'witches, / Possessed, even to their deaths deluded' (V.iii.104-5).

However, while Perkin's status remains tantalisingly unclear, Antiochus is clearly a rightful king and is even more clearly based on the figure of Dom Sebastian, king of Portugal, who was presumed to have died at the battle of Alcazarquivir (to use the Spanish version of the name) in Morocco. (The battle of Alcazar, as it became known in England, was itself part of a struggle for succession, this time to the throne of Morocco.) Because the king's body was never securely identified a number of fake Sebastians emerged. None of them was either particularly convincing or particularly impressive: José Teixeira's defence of one of them, *The strangest aduenture that euer happened*, gives a list of twenty-two distinguishing features of his candidate of which number fifteen is that he has gonorrhoea; he seems also to have been mixed race, whereas the real Sebastian's Habsburg ancestry was apparent in his height and fairness. The Spanish ambassador to Venice declared with some justification that 'there has

never been a more foolish charlatan'¹⁹ and Thomas Nashe in *Lenten Stuff* said of credulous people that 'with them it is current that Don Sebastian, King of Portugal (slain twenty years since with Stukeley at the Battle of Alcazar), is raised from the dead like Lazarus, and alive to be seen at Venice',²⁰ this being, presumably, the silliest thing he could think of.

Despite the weakness of the various impostures, the story of Sebastian was of compelling interest for many years after his death, and that *Believe As You List* is a manifestation of this interest is apparent when at one point in the heavily revised text we can see what the Malone editor transcribes as '[Dom [King] [Sebastian] [Antiochus]' (p. 22). A speech of Marcellus' bears similar traces: 'were it possible / thow couldst bee [Dom Seb] kinge Antiochus' (p. 88), as does Amilcar's 'it cannot bee but this is / the trew [Seb-s----]' (p. 38). The third merchant speaks of 'His nose! his [German] very lippe!' (p. 19); the real Sebastian did indeed have the Habsburg features to match his hair and his height. In Chapman's *The Conspiracy of Byron*, we are given a specific and detailed account of why Sebastian's death was never securely established:

When the hot scuffles of barbarian arms
Smothered the life of Don Sebastian,
To gild the leaden rumour of his death
Gave for a slaughtered body, held for his,
A hundred thousand crowns, caused all the state
Of superstitious Portugal to mourn
And celebrate his solemn funerals;
The Moors to conquest thankful feasts prefer,
And all made with the carcass of a Switzer.²¹

In *Believe As You List*, Antiochus may glance at this when he asks,

why did they not
suffer the carkase they affirmd was mine
to bee viewd by such men as were interessed

¹⁹ H. Eric R. Olsen, *The Calabrian Charlatan, 1598-1603: Messianic Nationalism in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 29.

²⁰ Thomas Nashe, *Lenten Stuff*, in *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, ed. by J. B. Steane (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 443.

²¹ George Chapman, *The Conspiracy of Charles Duke of Byron*, in *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron*, ed. by John Margeson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), II.ii.156-166.

in the greate cause, that were bred vp with mee
and were familiar with the marks I carried
vpon my bodie, and not relye vpon
poore prisoners taken in the war. (p. 38)

Echoes of Sebastian's story are also heard when Flaminius notes that there have been two previous Antiochus impersonators, and Flaminius claims too that the real king Antiochus was 'rashe' and 'giddie' (p. 34); Sebastian's decision to invade Morocco was so palpably foolish that even his adversary advised him, for his own sake, to desist.

That the story of Sebastian is relevant to *Perkin Warbeck* is implied by a passage in William Drummond of Hawthornden's *The History of Scotland*, which although not published until 1655 appears from its tone and its use of the present tense to date from the time of the 1633 crisis over the legitimacy or otherwise of the earls of Strathearn. This hinged on the question of whether or not the marriage of Robert II of Scotland to his first wife Elizabeth Mure, from which the Stuart kings were descended, was technically valid, since if it was not then the succession should instead have passed to the issue of the second wife, Euphemia Ross. (The story of these marriages may perhaps have formed part of the narrative of Jonson's play *Robert II, King of Scots*, but that is now lost.) The son of Euphemia Ross had been created earl of Strathearn, but James VI and I had divested his grandson Malise of this title and created him earl of Menteith instead. In 1631 Charles I, apparently not understanding what was at stake, reversed this decision and restored the title of Strathearn, upon which his Scottish advisers warned him that it was not a good idea to 'promote the succession of Eupham Ross to such an estate and power in the Country, as may give them occasion to think upon the Kingdome, upon any commotion alleading them, as first lawfully procreat in marriage, to be wronged of their succession therintill'. In 1633, therefore, both titles were removed from Malise and he was given yet a third earldom, that of Airth, which had no unfortunate dynastic connotations attached to it.²²

Perkin Warbeck reminds us of this when it has Dalyell say

I could add more; and in the rightest line
Derive my pedigree from Adam Mure,
A Scottish knight, whose daughter was the mother
To him that first begot the race of Jameses
That sway the sceptre to this very day. (I.ii.29-33)

²² Ure, 216-17.

This is no piece of innocuous genealogical trivia, for Adam Mure's daughter Elizabeth was the first wife of Robert II, and it was the potentially dubious assumption that her marriage was legitimate which lay behind the Strathearn affair. Drummond of Hawthornden goes one further; he compares Strathearn to Perkin Warbeck and for good measure he also throws in Dom Antonio, cousin and putative heir to the missing Sebastian:

It would be considered if the Pope, the Kings of *Spain* or *France* after some revolutions of years, seeking to trouble the Estate and peace of this Isle, should entertain and maintain one of the Heirs of the Earls of *Strathern* (as *Queen Elizabeth* did *Don Antonio* the Prior of *Crato*, who claimed the *Crown* of *Portugal*, to reclaim whose Kingdome She sent the Earl of *Essex* and *Drake*) or should marry one of them to their neerest Kinswomen, and send his arm armed with power to claim his Title to the *Crown* of *Scotland*, as King *James* the *Fourth* of *Scotland* practised upon *Perkin Warbeck* naming himself *Richard* Duke of *York*; to whom he gave in marriage Lady *Katharine Gordoun* Daughter to the Earl of *Huntley*, and thereafter with all his forces, to establie his said Ally in his Title invaded *England*. It would be considered whether they had a fair bridge to come over to this Isle.²³

To Drummond at least, the story of Perkin Warbeck had something in common with that of Dom Antonio, and by implication with that of Sebastian as well.

Massinger's focus on Dom Sebastian is at least partially motivated by anti-Spanish sentiment.²⁴ Ford's play too shows signs of an animus against Spain: the Spanish ambassador Hialas is the direct cause of both the downfall of Perkin and the execution of the earl of Warwick, the last male Plantagenet. There may however have been other motives for Ford to write such a play at such a time. Hans Werner, building on S.R. Gardiner's claim that Antiochus' situation parallels that of the Elector Frederick, argues that Prusias' refusal to help echoes that of Charles I,²⁵ while Ivo Kamps suggests that

²³ William Drummond of Hawthornden, *The history of Scotland, from the year 1423 until the year 1542 containing the lives and reigns of James the I, the II, the III, the IV, the V: with several memorials of state, during the reigns of James VI & Charls I* (London: Henry Hills for Richard Tomlins and himself, 1655), p. 235.

²⁴ See John R. Curran, Jr, "'You are yourself': Calvinist dramaturgy and its discontents in the *Tragedy of Sir John van Olden Barnavelt*", *Exemplaria* 16,1 (2004), 235-265 (p. 240).

²⁵ Hans Werner, 'An Unambiguous Allusion to the Dutch in Massinger's *Believe As You List*', *Notes and Queries* 66.2 (1999), 254-6 (p. 254).

Believe As You List comments on James's refusal to support Frederick's acceptance of the crown of Bohemia,²⁶ and Chernaik notes more baldly that "the late, & sad example" whose situation resembled that of the deposed Antiochus was Frederick of Bohemia, James I's son-in-law'.²⁷ Frederick, like Perkin, married a Scots-born princess, James's daughter Elizabeth, and he also, like Oldenbarnevelt, had connections with the Netherlands since he and Elizabeth found refuge in the Hague, as reflected in the names of two of their children, Maurice (after the Prince of Orange) and Louise Hollandine. Ford dedicated *The Broken Heart*, which was published the year before *Perkin Warbeck* and clearly remembers the moment of the Stuart succession, to Lord Craven, the lover and protector of Frederick's widow Elizabeth. Both Ford's earliest poem *Fame's Memorial* and his *Elegy for Master William Peter* are lamentations for the dead; *Perkin Warbeck*, which couples *Sir John van Olden Barnaveit* with *Believe As You List*, was written the year after Frederick died, and can I think be seen as both mourning him and honouring the still-surviving Elizabeth.

Above all, though, Ford finds Sebastian helpful because he wants to suggest that Perkin might just possibly be a real prince. If Sebastian's body was lost, so too were those of the Princes in the Tower (not until 1674 were two sets of bones discovered and tentatively identified as theirs), and Gilles Monsarrat has recently argued that Ford uses typography to hint that Perkin was the real thing: 'Ford's choice of capitalized words is consistent and therefore seems to convey a veiled message to the reader: "GLORIOVS PERKIN" was no impostor but "RICHARD THE FOURTH", and the word "counterfeit", used seven times to describe him, is never capitalized. John Ford very probably believed that Warbeck was Edward IV's son'.²⁸ Though it acknowledges that its hero is dead and could not have dared to have declared him truly royal, the play does just hint at ways and modes in which it might be possible to read him as such. For Philip Edwards, 'both Perkin Warbeck and Antiochus represent a luminous figure appearing from the mists announcing that he is the dead past, newly come alive in order to bring succour to an ailing nation'.²⁹ In *Perkin Warbeck*, Huntly figures Perkin and Katherine as King Oberon and Queen Mab, implying that they are creatures of myth as much as of reality, and Perkin vows to Katherine that 'love and majesty are reconciled / And vow to crown thee empress of the West' (III.ii.162-3); while this may appear merely a typical example of his grandiose rhetoric, I think it has the potential to be more than that, because the pointer to the west underlines the extent to which *Perkin Warbeck*, for

²⁶ Kamps, p. 160.

²⁷ Chernaik, p. 199.

²⁸ Gilles Monsarrat, 'John Ford's Substantive Accidentals in *Perkin Warbeck*', *The Library* 16.4 (December 2015), 446-457 (p. 455).

²⁹ Edwards, 34.

all its obvious ties with Shakespearean history plays, also chimes with *Cymbeline*. When Katherine enters in a riding-suit (V.i.3s.d.), Ure notes that Imogen calls for one in *Cymbeline*. This may be incidental, but it is impossible not to feel that something more pointed is intended when Perkin mentions Milford Haven (V.ii.66), the goal of Imogen's journey, and when he says

Great king, they spared my life, the butchers spared it;
Returned the tyrant, my unnatural uncle,
A truth of my dispatch. (II.i.65-8)

This recalls Snow White, and it also recalls Imogen, who like Snow White is led into the countryside by a servant armed with a weapon provided by her stepmother, and who vouches for her decease by a 'truth' that is not true. The plot of *Cymbeline* is fundamentally dependent on motifs drawn from romance. In particular, it really does feature royal babies smuggled into hiding and miraculously preserved until it proves possible to reveal their identity and reclaim their inheritance, which is exactly the story that Perkin tells of himself. Guiderius and Arviragus languish in a cave; the disguised princes of Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, a play obviously influenced by *Cymbeline*, become cobblers; the Countess of Crawford says of Perkin's followers, 'They are disguisèd princes, / Brought up, it seems, to honest trades' (II.i.13-14). If *Perkin Warbeck* were a romance rather than a history, that story would be true, and a lost prince, Arthur-like, could indeed emerge from the west to reclaim his throne. It's not going to happen, but the play does briefly offer us a glimpse of a mode in which it might, and it uses echoes of Massinger to do so.