Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625

Jeri Smith-Cronin

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds
School of English

May 2021

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

An earlier version of Chapter 4 was published as 'The Apocalyptic Chivalry of Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* and Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 50.3 (2020), 633–57.

The right of Jeri Smith-Cronin to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

© 2021 The University of Leeds and Jeri Smith-Cronin

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been a long time in the making and along the way it has accumulated a debt of gratitude greater than can be listed here. Thanks are due first and foremost to Professor Martin Butler and Dr Brett Greatley-Hirsch for providing now nearly five years of excellent supervision — for their thoughtful responses to my work, their expertise, and for their unerring patience and encouragement, especially during the pandemic. Thank you also to my examiners, Professor Lucy Munro and Dr Jane Rickard, for their thought-provoking comments on the thesis and for helping me to remain excited about early modern chivalry. I would also like to thank the School of English at the University of Leeds whose John Barnard Scholarship enabled this doctoral project. Thanks also to my PhD colleagues — Matthew Blaiden, Dr Charles Eager, Charley Roe, and Wei Zhou — for the stimulating discussions, academic and otherwise. And to all of those involved in the Playhouse Lab — for the opportunity to bring some of our work off the page, but mostly for the laughs.

I am extremely grateful for the expertise and generosity of several friends and colleagues whose suggestions have helped to improve this thesis in its revision phase. I thank Professor Laurie Johnson and Dr José A. Pérez Díez for their thoughtful suggestions. Thanks also to Dr Michael Cornett at the *Journal for Medieval and Early Modern Studies* for his editorial support with material that forms part of Chapter Four of this thesis. I would like to thank Dr Laurence Publicover and Dr Catherine Evans in particular, both of whom have had to endure far too much of my work over the years but have always done so with characteristic insight and generosity of spirit.

As much as I am indebted to the academic support I found at the University of Leeds, the completion of this thesis owes as much to friends and family. I must thank my colleagues and friends at Open Arms Malawi — Claire Collins, Lindsey Barkham, and Grace O'Donovan — who have been a home away from home the past two years, even in the world of remote working. Thank you to Daniel Viñas-Boreland, Rémi Belliard, Eleanor Hayden, and Beatrice Galloway for your friendship, advice, and for telling me to get on with it.

Finally, thank you to my family — to Mum and Toby, for the years of love, support, and encouragement. To Granny and Grandad, for always being there. And to Anousheh, as befits your name, for somehow keeping me smiling until the end.

Abstract

This thesis explores the intersections between chivalric culture and popular theatre from the mid-Elizabethan to the end of the Jacobean period. It examines how chivalric forms and motifs were deployed by early modern playwrights to give expression to a wide range of often overlapping cultural discourses. Reading plays by William Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood, William Rowley, Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and Francis Beaumont, I argue that the chivalric tradition continued to exert a persistent and pervasive influence on the cultural imagination of Elizabethan and Jacobean England. 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' therefore challenges the critical commonplace that chivalry is a waning and increasingly defunct ideology by the early modern period. Rather than anachronistic displays of nostalgia, chivalric rituals and performances remained inextricably shaped by their contingent contexts, and as such serve as productive sites of cultural discourse.

These plays are placed in conversation with other contemporary expressions of chivalric culture including chivalric romances, other entertainments and performances, heraldic treatises, conduct books, chivalric biographies, and collections of arms and armour. This intersectional analysis offers a multivalent sense of how early modern chivalry is both intimately shaped by and informs its contingent political, social, economic, and theological contexts. As such, representations of chivalry in the early modern theatre help to illuminate contemporary cultural issues such as the relationship between monarch and nobility, aristocratic status and identity, the nature of 'honour', social mobility, and European religious and political relations in the aftermath of the Reformation. The image of early modern chivalric culture which therefore emerges is dynamic, versatile, topical, and socially diverse.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ..... **iii**

Abstract ..... **iv**

Table of Contents ..... **v**

List of Figures ..... **vii**

Abbreviations ..... **viii**

Introduction **Chivalry on the Early Modern Stage** **1**

The Chivalric Propositions of Ben Jonson's and Inigo Jones's *Speeches at Prince's Henry's Barriers* 1

Early Modern Chivalry: Literature Review 7

Chivalric Materiality and Symbolism: *Pericles* 16

Chivalric Revival in *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* 25

Past and Present: 'Anachronic Chivalry' 43

Summary 48

Chapter 1 **Private Passion and Public Service: Elizabethan Courtly Chivalry in *The Four Foster Children of Desire* and *Clyomon and Clamydes*** **52**

Introduction 52

Chivalric Performance at the Elizabethan Court: Sir Philip Sidney and *The Four Foster Children of Desire* 59

Chivalric Performance in the Elizabethan Theatre: *Clyomon and Clamydes* 80

Conclusion 97

Chapter 2 **Humanism, Resistance Theory, and the Duel of Honour: The Ghost of Chivalry in *Hamlet*** **102**

Introduction 102

Humanism and Chivalry in *Hamlet* 105

Early Modern Resistance Theory in *Hamlet* 120

Remembering Chivalry: Memory, Honour, and the Duel 134

Conclusion: *Hamlet* and *Bussy D'Ambois* 148

Chapter 3 **Merchant Chivalry on the Early Modern Stage: Overseas Expansion and Civic Militarism in *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*** **152**

Introduction 152

Merchant Chivalry on the Early Modern Stage 155

The Knight of the Burning Pestle and Citizen Self-Fashioning 161

Overseas Expansion in *The Four Prentices of London* 170

Civic Militarism and Social Cohesion in *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* 185
Conclusion 203
Chapter 4 **Apocalyptic Chivalry and Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy in Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*** **206**
Introduction 206
Comoedia apocalyptica and the Elect Nation 212
Fairyland: *The Whore of Babylon* and *The Faerie Queene* 219
Reviving Elizabethan Militarism 224
Jacobean Apocalyptic-Chivalric Drama 231
Frederick, King of Bohemia, and Protestant Prophecy 239
The Chivalry of Spiritual Diplomacy 243
International Protestantism and the Apocalypse 247
Conclusion 251
Coda **254**
Works Cited **266**
Primary Sources 266
Secondary Sources 271

List of Figures

Figure 1. Claude Paradin, The Heroicall Deuises (London: 1591), V3r.
© University of Illinois Library. **20**

Figure 2. *Codex Manesse* (c. 1305–40), fol. 11v, Herzog Heinrich von Breslau.
© Heidelberg University Library. **23**

Figure 3. Armour of Prince Henry (1607)
© Royal Armouries, Old Tower Collection, II. 88. ..... **37**

Figure 4. 'Heures Taymouth, scène de bas de page représentant Beuve de Hanstone combattant des lions' (c. 1325–35). BL Yates Thompson 13, f. 12r.
© The British Library Board. **169**

Figure 5. Johannes (Joan) Blaeu, 'Map of the siege of Breda in 1637 by Frederick Henry' (1647–49), in *Toonneel der steden van de Vereenighde Nederlanden, met hare beschrijvingen* (Amsterdam: 1652). Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G1851 .B52 1652. ..... **195**

Figure 6. Title-page frontispiece of William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God: or A Christians Spirituall Furniture, to keep him safe from all the assaults of Satan* (London: 1619).
Courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library (STC 12123). **246**

Figure 7. Willem van de Passe, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1625)
P,2.157. AN 115387.
© The Trustees of the British Museum. **259**

Figure 8. Peter Paul Rubens, Sketch for Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Buckingham (1625).
© Kimbell Art Museum, AP 1976.08. ..... **260**

Abbreviations

ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*

Introduction
Chivalry on the Early Modern Stage

The Chivalric Propositions of Ben Jonson's and Inigo Jones's *Speeches at Prince's Henry's Barriers*

Following a court dance on 31 December 1609, Prince Henry Frederick, the fifteen-year-old heir apparent to the English crown, issued a challenge to all English knights from the Presence Chamber of Whitehall Palace. Discovered amongst miscellaneous heraldic papers in the British Library in 2013, the original manuscript of Henry's ceremonial call to arms specifies the conditions for a fight at the barriers which six days later would conclude Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones's court entertainment, *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*. Here participating knights were called upon to defend three chivalric propositions:

> First: That noe garment beseemeth a knight soe well, as that which is soyled with the rust of Armour.
>
> Secondly: That a knight ought to be as readye, to mantayne a Ladyes honour as his owne words.
>
> Thirdly: That it is more glorious to be overcome in the defence of an honourable cause, then to remayne victorious in an ill quarrel.[1]

As performative and anachronistic as these conditions might appear in the early seventeenth century, they signal an enduring cultural interest and investment in the forms and values of chivalry — 'the code of conduct, ethos, and trappings characteristic of the knightly classes that sprung up during the European Middle Ages'.[2] Imagining military conduct as part of the broader moral duties and obligations of knighthood, the challenge of *Barriers* reveals chivalry not only as a code of the battlefield, but as an

---

1 British Library MS Add. 12514, f. 135r. Martin Wiggins, who made the discovery, has edited the manuscript for *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online,* gen. ed. by David Bevington, Ian Donaldson, and Martin Butler, Masque Archive: Prince Henry's Barriers 12 (Online edition, 2014).

2 Alex Davis, *Romance and Chivalry in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), p. 2.

ideology which governs multiple aspects of aristocratic behaviour. Although the early modern knight was increasingly removed from the material reality of the mounted warriors of the Middle Ages who exchanged military service for feudal tenure, the symbolic power and versatility of chivalric representation continued to map onto an extraordinary variety of cultural discourses in early modern England. These political, social, and military discourses, as they are represented in English drama between 1575 and 1625, are the focus of this thesis.

Henry's propositions offer a productive vantage point from which to begin a study of early modern chivalry, not least since they engage with some of its defining features. The opening proposition directly addresses the core of chivalric ideology and identity by emphasising the importance of military experience and service, even if early modern knights were increasingly employed in social, political, and administrative duties. Further developing this idea, the remaining two conditions underscore the centrality of honour in the knight's ultimate purpose 'to uphold justice, protect the weak, and defend the Church'.[3] By seeking to justify aristocratic violence as 'glorious', 'defen[sive]', and 'honourable', the propositions also underscore chivalry's very *raison d'être*. A knight's 'garment' which has been 'soyled by the rust of Armour', for instance, clearly suggests the owner's extensive experience on the battlefield. The primary function of chivalry, however, was to reconceptualise these marks of violence and bloodshed in terms of their potential social, moral, and religious meanings: through skilled feats of arms, the knight demonstrated core chivalric principles and virtues of valour, courage, and even piety.

These broader features of chivalry are ubiquitous on the early modern stage: its forms, motifs, language, and values are part of the cultural fabric of early modern England. Chivalry, however, eludes definition, and the drama of the period carefully maps and questions some of its central complexities and contradictions. Let us briefly consider how this works in *Hamlet* (c. 1600). Here, on the ramparts of Elsinore, Shakespeare begins his tragedy with a powerful chivalric motif: the Ghost who appears in 'the very armour he had on | When he th'ambitious Norway combated'.[4] The

---

3 Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 3. It should be noted, however, that religion is not implied in the propositions which are entirely secular and humanistic.

4 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by John Jowett in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett,

reciprocal relationship between physical prowess and the inner chivalric principles and virtues which it signifies is immediately clear here. Horatio elaborates: as a result of 'slay[ing]' Fortinbras, he recounts, 'this side of our known world esteemed' the old king as 'valiant Hamlet' (1.1.83–5). In other words, military success is presented as synonymous with valour and, by extension, with heroic and effective kingship. Old Hamlet is valiant because he is strong. This, it would seem, is not only how Old Hamlet wants to be remembered, but how he *needs* to be remembered if his call for vengeance is to elicit the desired response.

Old Hamlet is clearly offered to the audience as an older form of chivalry (practising considerably outdated forms of single combat), but ultimately one which continues to shape events in the modern world.[5] In this sense, the 'warlike form' (1.1.45) of the armoured Ghost is a helpful motif for thinking about early modern chivalry more generally as something which might appear anachronistic, untimely, and theatrical in form but which ultimately 'show[s] […] the very age and body of the time his form and pressure' (3.2.18–9); time and time again *Hamlet* asks us what place a chivalric value system has in the modern political world of c. 1600. The answers, however, are frustratingly ambiguous. As his son and as Prince of Denmark, Hamlet has an important chivalric military heritage and political duty in regard to his father's call for vengeance. The Ghost's demand to 'Remember me' (1.5.90), however, is a reminder that Hamlet's 'commandment' (1.5.101) requires an older and more individualistic version of chivalry which seems at odds with the cultural fabric of the Elsinore court and, for so much of the play, with Hamlet's own moral and political mindset. Revenge in *Hamlet* is predicated on an act of chivalric memory: success for the Danish prince depends on his ability to embody the chivalric values which his father is remembered for both verbally and visually from the opening of Shakespeare's play. As *Hamlet* suggests, however, remembering chivalry is a tainted process.

Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.1.59–60. Unless otherwise indicated, all further references to Shakespeare's works are to this edition, hereafter cited as *New Oxford Shakespeare*, and are given parenthetically in the text.

5 In *Shakespeare's Binding Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), John Kerrigan notes that the combat between Old Hamlet and Old Fortinbras 'belongs to the pagan prehistory of *judicium dei*' (p. 221).

Hamlet's agonizing contemplations of a 'commandment', sworn by oath, to redress political and familial wrongs broadly suggest the psychological pressures that attend chivalric expectation. Although military practice could bring the knight honour and renown and justified his place as part of the social elite, he not only risked his life but was expected to govern his behaviour in accordance with an elaborate, highly idealistic, and often contradictory code of principles. These ambiguities frequently pave the way for a morally dubious application of chivalry where its forms and language are manipulated to mask personal ambition. Shakespeare is characteristically alert to these complexities in *Hamlet*; on closer inspection, for instance, the combat with Old Fortinbras is revealed to have been spurred by Old Hamlet's 'emulate pride' (1.1.82). Although his success wins him both personal honour and territorial gains as well as a heroic memory in Elsinore, the original combat is technically the root cause of the current 'post-haste and rummage in the land' (1.1.106). When we consider that Fortinbras and his army, dismissed by Horatio in the opening scene as a 'list of lawless resolutes' (1.1.97), are the ultimate victors of *Hamlet*, suddenly the heroic terms upon which Old Hamlet is repeatedly remembered are compromised by the reckless individualism of his initial motive.

Chivalry, as *Hamlet* suggests, is a two-sided coin. It is fraught with ambiguity; it encourages competitiveness and personal honour while also emphasising fellowship and collective order. By putting forward a generally unachievable set of ideal standards, it consciously operates on a significant gulf between ideology and practice. Practising or 'playing' chivalry can be measured in terms of its values and ideals, but the parameters of these already ambiguous and fluid notions are routinely contested throughout the early modern period and complicated by personal material ambitions. In the hands of different individuals and social groups, they also take on different features and emphases. And as the case of Old Hamlet demonstrates, the victors are the victors regardless of their chivalry. Hamlet's dying obsession that Horatio 'tell [his] story' (5.2.307) is a reminder that the victors are also the storytellers; for the foreseeable future, Fortinbras and his new 'kingdom' (5.2.348) will tell the history of Elsinore with their own agendas in mind. Chivalry in *Hamlet* is a tool for political and personal manipulation. In the propositions of *Barriers* we are presented with the high ideals of chivalry, as conceived and formulated by Prince Henry. In *Hamlet* we are shown how, in the tragic and 'rotten' (1.4.93) world of Elsinore, its practice falls well short of these ideals.

The propositions of *Barriers* also help us to understand what distinguishes chivalry from other forms of mounted warfare. Introducing the concept of 'glorious' defeat (granted that the motive is 'honourable'), the final proposition concerns the knight's moral character. But it also highlights what is essentially *the* foundational distinction of chivalric ideology as a system of combat: the idea of mercy or clemency. Around the turn of the eleventh century, Frankish knights appear to have developed a new ethic of warfare centred on this principle. Following partitions of the Frankish Empire from the end of the ninth century, localised intra-Christian conflicts which emerged gradually established and advanced the idea of a ransom-based clemency. Fuelled by a reluctance for Christian bloodshed or slavery and reinforced by penitential ordnances, this system meant that a knight 'overcome' could 'honourably' surrender for ransom (as opposed to being killed or enslaved).[6] This marks the beginnings of a fraught ideological struggle between clerical and secular interpretations of chivalry. On 27 November 1095, however, Pope Urban II's preaching at the Council of Clermont gave papal precedent to religious warfare, encouraging Christian knights to turn their physical and financial energies from intracultural fighting to assist Byzantine Emperor Alexius I against Turkish invasion and take back the Holy Land.

The enthusiasm with which Christian knights responded to Urban's call underlines the enormous cultural power of crusading ideology — central to the foundations proper of chivalry. In the *Gesta Francorum* ('Deeds of the Franks') (c. 1100), a Latin chronicle of the First Crusade, the anonymous author and crusader's reconstructed memory of Urban's sermon makes clear its enormous appeal.[7] '"Great is

---

6 On the early development of the relationship between chivalry and mercy, see Matthew Strickland, 'Killing or Clemency? Ransom, Chivalry and Changing Attitudes to Defeated Opponents in Britain and Northern France, 7th–12th Centuries", in *Krieg im Mittelalter*, ed. by Hans-Henning Kortüm (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2001), pp. 93–122. As Strickland observes, significant advances in monetary economy made this development increasingly possible in practical terms. See also Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 177–230; John Gillingham, 'Fontenoy and After: Pursuing Enemies to Death in France Between the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries', in *Frankland*, ed. by Paul Fouracre and David Ganz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 242–65.

7 The *Gesta Francorum* is one of five extant early major versions of Pope Urban II's sermon, all of which are significantly different. The scholarship here is especially extensive. See for instance Dana C. Munro, 'The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095', *American Historical Review*, 11 (1906), 231–42; H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Pope Urban II and the Idea of Crusade', *Studi Medievali*, 36 (1995), 721–42; Penny J. Cole,

your reward in heaven"', the author ventriloquizes before offering his interpretation of the response:

> And when this speech had already begun to be noised abroad, little by little, through all the regions and countries of Gaul, the Franks, upon hearing such reports, forthwith caused crosses to be sewed on their right shoulders, saying that they followed with one accord the footsteps of Christ, by which they had been redeemed from the hand of hell.[8]

What is notable here is the complete absence of honour and renown; rather, the key concept is spiritual redemption. Papal vindication here materialised in the promise of remittance of penance for crusaders, offering them the opportunity to be 'redeemed from the hand of hell'. Crusade, then, provided a deeply religious lay aristocracy not only with an ideological framework to moralise its custom of violence, but a material route to salvation. The survival and evolution of the rhetorical and figurative strategies of this crusading ideology across early modern imaginative literature and drama is extraordinary, as is its range of symbolic meanings.[9] In Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* (c. 1600), for instance, the First Crusade provides a narrative for the articulation of the contemporary mercantile community's social, political, and military ambitions. As one would expect, however, early modern literary and theatrical uses of crusading tend to engage directly with the actual prospect of confessional warfare. Chivalric forms were key to the imaginative representations of the religious politics of early modern Europe. As we will see later in this introduction, this was broadly the conceptual political framework in which chivalry in *Barriers* operates.

Barriers seems a far cry from Urban II's sermon in terms of its chivalric 'reality', its propositions clearly ceremonial and symbolic in comparison to the Pope's material military call to support the Byzantine Empire, and later to recapture the Holy Land from Muslim hands. Separated by over half a millennium and performed in different parts of Europe (where chivalry took on its own distinctive features), these chivalric events are ostensibly divided along the lines of war and theatre, of reality and imagination. While

---

The Preaching of Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270 (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1991), pp. 1–36.

8 *Gesta Francorum*, in A.C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), pp. 28–30 (pp. 29–30).

9 See Lee Manion, *Narrating the Crusades: Loss and Recovery in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), esp. pp. 146–211.

both texts use chivalric language and ideas to call for 'honourable' violence, however, the *Gesta Francorum* is clearly more significant in terms of its wide-ranging material ramifications. Although Prince Henry's call to arms would result in a form of military combat, it would not take place on the battlefield nor would it produce a body count. That concluding combat at the barriers was also somewhat dwarfed by the preceding theatrics which brought together Jones's elaborate set design and Jonson's verses. Both broadly rooted in the same chivalric values and principles, one uses chivalry for material ends, the other, symbolic. As we will see, however, these categories cannot be neatly disentangled. Although early modern chivalric performance increasingly bore little to no resemblance to contemporary methods of warfare, it harnessed the symbolic power of chivalric forms, motifs, and language for a diverse range of material purposes.

Early Modern Chivalry: Literature Review

Johan Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1919; first translated into English in 1924) set the precedent for a broad thesis of the evolution of chivalry. Although Huizinga is conscious of a permanent gulf between fictionality and materiality in chivalric culture, later medieval and early modern representations, he argues, tend to be increasingly divorced from any material functionality and ultimately stuck in the past. Sensitive to some chivalric continuities into the early modern period, Huizinga nonetheless understands the ideology as already an anachronism by the fifteenth century. For Huizinga, this boiled down to a growing 'disharmony between life form and reality' — registered, for instance, through the increased theatricality of chivalric performance.[10] 'The knight', he writes, 'is transformed into the French *gentilhomme* of the seventeenth century, who, though still maintaining a number of concepts of state and honour, no longer claims to be a warrior for matters of faith or a defender of the weak and oppressed'.[11] 'If viewed with a sober sense of reality', Huizinga concludes, 'all this highly

---

10 Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. by Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 119.

11 Huizinga, p. 119.

praised chivalry appeared to be as useless and phony as a fabricated, ridiculously anachronistic comedy'.[12]

Just over a century ago, then, Huizinga's seminal study offered a damning condemnation of the continued vitality and functionality of early modern forms of chivalry. Its influence is keenly felt in the first monograph dedicated to early modern English chivalry: Arthur B. Ferguson's *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (1960). Here, Ferguson describes early modern chivalry as no more than a 'memory' which 'remained associated with a society long since transformed' and 'insubstantial'.[13] Ferguson's second work on the subject, *The Chivalric Tradition in Renaissance England* (1986), extends this narrative further to the end of the Elizabethan period. Factors including the growth of humanism, developments in military technology, and the centralizing efforts of the Tudor state, Ferguson claims, 'made the elemental knight-errantry of the medieval tradition itself an anachronism'.[14] For Ferguson, post-medieval representations of chivalry were conscious acts of historical imagination which died in 1603 with Queen Elizabeth; its decline, he argues was an 'important strand in that tissue of changes which brought about the English Renaissance — which was, in a sense the English Renaissance'.[15] Both Huizinga's and Ferguson's studies have been hugely influential, generating a view of early modern chivalry as nostalgic, decadent, unrealistic, and fabricated.[16]

Critics of early modern chivalry typically focus on this tension between the symbolic and material — between the 'life form' and 'reality'. Sydney Anglo, for instance, emphasises the inherent fictionality of early modern chivalric exercises at court. '[T]he speedy popularity achieved by tilting (and by foot combats at the barrier which mimicked them)', argues Anglo, 'marked a new era in the artificialization of the

---

12 Huizinga, p. 120.

13 Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1960), p. ix.

14 Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition in Renaissance England* (London: Associated University Presses, 1986), p. 107.

15 Ferguson, *Chivalric Tradition*, pp. 139–40; Ferguson, *Indian Summer*, p. ix.

16 See also Raymond Kilgour, *The Decline of Chivalry as Shown in the French Literature of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937).

tournament and its divorce from military realities'.[17] '[R]eal wars', he writes, 'were not fought across a safety fence'. 'Gradually', Anglo continues, 'new military techniques, organization, weaponry, and attitudes rendered chivalric combat itself, for which tournaments had once been a training, of less and less military utility'.[18] Articulating a shift in chivalric exercises from the practical and functional to the theatrical and symbolic, Anglo's view is commonplace. There can be little disagreement with these general historical transitions. Increasingly protected by the implementation of numerous safety precautions since the late medieval period, chivalric military exercises such as those staged at *Barriers* were rendered further unrealistic by wider developments in contemporary methods of warfare.

Despite several excellent revisionist studies over the past three decades, this hypothesis still broadly holds sway. In his monograph *Shakespeare on Masculinity* (2000), for instance, Robin Headlam Wells condemns chivalry as an 'antiquated system' already by the time of Malory, one which 'bore increasingly little relationship to contemporary social and military reality'. 'By the second decade of the sixteenth century', Wells continues, 'that system had been superseded by an entirely different code of values'.[19] The same accusation that chivalry is historically out of touch also shapes James C. Bulman's more recent reading of 1 *Henry IV* and 2 *Henry IV*:

> Nostalgia for chivalric ideals led paradoxically to a cult of medievalism in Elizabeth's court, though the chivalry practised there was more political and symbolic than real: tournaments and pageants appropriated only the *forms* of a bygone culture, not its ethos, and courtiers were cast as medieval knights who worshipped their queen as a lady of romance and fought on her behalf. For Elizabethans, Hotspur's zealous adherence to individual will was an attractive anachronism.[20]

Centred on charges of anachronism and theatricality, the view of early modern chivalry offered by scholars like Huizinga, Ferguson, Anglo, Wells, and Bulman continues to

---

17 Sydney Anglo, 'Humanism and the Court Arts', in *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe During the Renaissance*, ed. by Anthony Goodman and Angus Mackay (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 66–99 (p. 94).

18 Anglo, p. 94.

19 Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare on Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 13.

20 James C. Bulman, '*Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 158–76 (p. 159).

significantly misshape the critical narrative. One of its central shortcomings manifests itself in its intransigent articulation of rigid dichotomies between reality and illusion, between the material and the symbolic, and between activity and ritual. Furthermore, these dichotomies are periodized, claiming that 'real' chivalry is a medieval phenomenon, already falling out of fashion in the fifteenth century. Bulman's comment, for instance, assumes that political and symbolic representations are not 'real'. From its inception, however, chivalry was deeply political and symbolic. Knighthood itself was a symbol of not only military, but social and political pre-eminence.

By contrast, 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' argues that even as chivalry became increasingly detached from the realities of the battlefield, it remained central to social, political, and military reality in early modern England. In doing so, it is indebted to much revisionist scholarship. Studies of late medieval chivalry by Malcolm Vale and Maurice Keen, for instance, have emphasised the knight's ability to adapt to technological change as well as the continued importance of chivalry to aristocratic life both on and off the field.[21] Key to these readings is an emphasis on the conceptual versatility of chivalry; Keen, for example, encourages scholars to read chivalry in terms of 'change, rather than decline'.[22] Literary studies of early modern chivalry have demonstrated this theoretical principle. Although earlier scholars such as Frances Yates and Roy Strong read chivalric entertainments at the early modern court as engines of monarchical propaganda (and therefore divorced from aristocratic prerogative), the subsequent work of critics like Louis Montrose, Richard McCoy, and Alan Young has unveiled the ways in which they also facilitated the expression of aristocratic ambitions.[23]

---

21 Malcolm Vale, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (Norwich: Duckworth, 1981); Keen, *Chivalry*. For a more recent study in the same vein, see Kenneth Hodges, *Forging Chivalric Communities in Malory's* Le Morte Darthur (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005).

22 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 239.

23 Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977); Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1975); Richard C. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Alan Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London: George Philip, 1987); Louis A. Montrose, 'Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I', *Representations*, 68 (1999), 108–61.

'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' builds upon these latter critics to extend its insights into early modern courtly chivalry. Although the primary function of medieval tournaments was military training, participants routinely incorporated symbolic and literary elements from romance into their performances.[24] 'The spectacle that tournaments offered', writes Maurice Keen, 'invited their further exploitation as occasions for visual display'; turning to chivalric romance was 'a short and natural step' to 'find glamorous *motifs* for jousting festivals, and to deploying the resources of written eloquence to add *éclat* to the wording of challenges, the detail of articles for the joust, and of proclamations at the list'.[25] In her systematic study of the English tournament, Juliet Barker finds the same natural logic to the interplay between material and fictional forms, arguing that knights 'sought to imitate their literary heroes and thereby associate themselves with some of the glamour and prestige attached to knights of romance'.[26] Barker demonstrates clearly that the literary and theatrical dimensions of English tournament culture were a feature 'since at least the thirteenth century'.[27]

Chivalric performances like those at tournaments were always a blend of the real and the symbolic. Not only do the dichotomies put forward by critics like Anglo and Bulman rely on the ability to neatly disentangle these elements, they also measure chivalric performance exclusively in relation to contemporary military practice. This means of assessment will naturally generate a narrative of decline; early modern knights were always in a losing battle with advances in military technology. Regardless of their battlefield verisimilitude, however, chivalric performances continued to be highly

---

24 See for instance Ruth Huff Cline, 'The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 20 (1945), 204–11; Edouard Sandoz, 'Tourneys in the Arthurian Tradition', *Speculum*, 19 (1944), 389–420; Roger Sherman Loomis, 'Chivalric and Dramatic Imitations of Arthurian Romance', in *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, ed. by Wilhelm R.W. Koehler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), I, pp. 79–97; Roger Sherman Loomis, 'Arthurian Influence on Sport and Spectacle', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History*, ed. by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 553–59.

25 Maurice Keen, 'Introduction', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. by Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 1–16 (p. 12).

26 Juliet Barker, *The Tournament in England, 1100–1400* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1986), p. 85.

27 Barker, p. 84.

functional. Through their theatrical and symbolic chivalric forms, they directly and publicly engaged with the social, political, and military issues of their day in front of the monarch and the court (and sometimes a paying public audience).

Increased theatricality in fact heightened the representational potential of chivalric performance; nowhere is this more apparent than in the professional theatre where chivalric images, rhetoric, and values appear in astonishing number and variety. These chivalric forms and ideas have generally been overlooked by critics and are too often dismissed as anachronism and nostalgia; they, however, offer highly valuable insights into the political, military, and social culture of the period. 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' offers a fresh perspective on the continuing cultural relevance and conceptual versatility of chivalry, as represented by a diverse group of early modern plays. Playwrights used chivalric forms, motifs, and language across the early modern period to engage with a surprisingly extensive range of contemporary cultural discourses — bringing to light a chivalry which is not empty nostalgia and decadence, but which is very much real, functional, socially diverse, and inextricably shaped by the contemporary moment.

The intersections between chivalric culture and early modern theatre have almost entirely escaped scholarly attention. There have, however, been some notable exceptions which, even if not focused on the drama, substantiate a more versatile and sensitive understanding of chivalry's continued relevance. Literary studies of early modern chivalry by Jennifer R. Goodman, Alex Davis, and Marco Nievergelt, for instance, convincingly demonstrate an active and functional chivalric culture throughout the entire early modern period.[28] Nievergelt, for instance, emphasises the 'complexity, fluidity and instability of the very notion of chivalry' — one which stems from its suspension 'between military, amorous, feudal, religious and aristocratic traditions', each of which comes with its own semantic and ideological complications.[29] Neatly parcelling these into something distinctly *medieval* not only puts forward a reductively monolithic understanding of chivalry. It also assumes that the high ideals of

---

28 Jennifer R. Goodman, *Chivalry and Exploration, 1298–1630* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998); Davis, *Romance and Chivalry*; Marco Nievergelt, 'The Chivalric Imagination in Elizabethan England', *Literature Compass*, 8 (2011), 266–79; Marco Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests from Deguileville to Spenser* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012).

29 Nievergelt, 'Chivalric Imagination', p. 266.

chivalry were something actually achieved (and only really *achievable*) in pre-Renaissance Europe. Medieval or early modern, chivalry was never a stable set of values. As we will see throughout this thesis, chivalric representations are adapted not only to their precise historical moment but are shaped variously by the individual or collective voices of their proponents. Since its inception, chivalric culture is always in flux.

In an impressive survey of the enormous range and variety of early modern chivalric literature, Davis demonstrates 'the presence of chivalry, not just as an aspect of literary culture, but also as a vital component of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century social relations'.[30] Davis's monograph (otherwise devoted to court entertainments and prose chivalric literature) articulates this idea most powerfully in a chapter which reads early seventeenth-century dramatic satires of chivalry such as John Day's *Isle of Gulls* (1606) not as critiques of historical but of social appropriation (aimed broadly at the citizen community). Chivalry, in other words, is not in the wrong time in these plays, just in the wrong hands. Early modern chivalric performances did not simply appropriate the '*forms* of a bygone culture', as Bulman suggests. Performing as knights from earlier romances was not for the pure purpose of spectacle and celebration; rather, as Davis argues, these 'roles spoke to the courtiers' conception of themselves of aristocrats and men'.[31]

To understand 'Hotspur's zealous adherence to individual will' as 'an attractive anachronism' is thrown into question by exemplary figures of early modern chivalry such as Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, his nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, and the eventually infamous Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. Not only essential to the cultivation of their identities, chivalric forms also enabled these men to vocalise their own desires (albeit through various layers of symbolism). Especially in the case of Essex, it is difficult to not see a 'zealous adherence to individual will' shaping the actions of several early modern aristocrats. Although it had to be counterbalanced with monarchical loyalty, chivalry continued to promote the pursuit of personal honour. Holding leading military positions from his early twenties (Master of the Horse, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Earl Marshal), Essex was keenly aware of his aristocratic prerogatives which he pursued zealously. As Alexandra Gajda suggests, 'Essex's obsessive protectiveness of his

---

30 Davis, p. 39.

31 Davis, p. 81.

individual pre-eminence […] calcified his belief that rivals in court, council, and camp actively undermined his authority'.[32]

Essex's failed coup in 1601 reflected that tendency as Essex strove to reclaim some of his now diminished prestige and renown (most emphatically cemented through his disastrous campaign in Ireland in 1599). Its failure, to an extent, was rooted in that loss of Essex's political and social prestige; ultimately, however, Essex overstepped his position by prioritising his own sense of personal honour. Far from an 'attractive anachronism', then, 'Hotspur's zealous adherence to individual will' was mirrored by Essex's own political manoeuvres (we will of course remember that Essex's followers organised a revival of Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1595) at the Globe on the eve of the rebellion, implying a sort of political dry run for the events they hoped would unfold the following day). By contrast, Leicester, as we will see, was more cautious of his limits and was therefore more successful. By meticulously manipulating chivalric forms (often at huge personal expense), Leicester cemented his route to becoming the most powerful man in the country (despite a lineage which was constantly thrown into question by his critics). Not to understand Essex's and Leicester's idiosyncratic political, social, and military identities as intransigently chivalric is to misread two of the most influential figures of British history. Far from an 'attractive anachronism', then, a fertile chivalric ethos was inseparable from the way in which courtier-knights like Leicester, Sidney, and Essex conceived of and conducted themselves.

A few attempts have been made to explore the ways in which chivalric culture influenced the early modern theatre. The most sustained account is Peter Hadorn's unpublished doctoral thesis, 'Power, Propaganda and Subversion: Chivalry on the English Renaissance Stage' (1989). The major strength of the study lies in its recognition that 'chivalry was alive and well at this time'.[33] Nonetheless, Hadorn's insights are limited by a monolithic understanding of chivalry and its potential functionality; although taken seriously in terms of its continued relevance and potential for subversion, the ideology is read as a political tool which, in a post-feudal world,

---

32 Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 143.

33 Peter Thomas Hadorn, 'Power, Propaganda and Subversion: Chivalry on the English Renaissance Stage' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Illinois, 1989), p. 12.

continued to demand 'complete fealty of citizen, knight, and noble to their king'.[34] Over time chivalric drama, claims Hadorn, becomes 'increasingly sophisticated and even cynical'. 'With [Prince Henry's] death', he concludes, 'died chivalry'.[35] By contrast, 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' provides a broader understanding of chivalric representation both in terms of its longevity and social diversity. Chivalry, I argue, is not only an ideology which continues to function throughout Jacobean England but one which also provided a representational framework for non-aristocratic members of society.

Michael L. Hays offers a more genre-centric and source study approach in *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance* (2003). As its title suggests, Hays reads Shakespeare's four major tragedies in terms of their engagement with chivalric romance. Although it encourages readers to acknowledge the undeniably chivalric elements of these plays, Hays's thesis goes significantly too far in suggesting that they have been 'misclassified' by critics 'as tragedies rather than romances'.[36] Two recent monographs by Cyrus Mulready and Laurence Publicover have also addressed the much neglected topic of dramatic romance in early modern England.[37] These are excellent studies which take a broader view of the geographic potential and expansiveness of the romance genre to explore discourses of cross-cultural encounter.[38] For Publicover, chivalric romance (in contrast to Hellenistic romance and its derivations) provides an 'alternative form of

---

34 Hadorn, 'Power', p. 1.

35 Hadorn, 'Power', p. 287.

36 Michael L. Hays, *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance: Rethinking* Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello *and* King Lear (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), p. 6.

37 Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Laurence Publicover, *Dramatic Geography: Romance, Intertheatricality, and Cultural Encounter in Early Modern Mediterranean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). In *The Staging of Romance in Late Shakespeare: Text and Theatrical Technique* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), Christopher Cobb provides an extensive chapter on the evolution of dramatic romance from 1570. Cobb, however, argues that dramatic romance experienced a 'sudden decline […] after 1600' (p. 62), and ultimately died out in 1610.

38 See also Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Goran Stanivukovic, *Knights in Arms: Prose Romance, Masculinity, and Eastern Mediterranean Trade in Early Modern England, 1565–1655* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

romance geography' on the early modern stage which, rather than obscuring cultural difference, tends towards conflict.[39] Finally, Valerie Wayne's and Mary Ellen Lamb's edited collection *Staging Early Modern Romance* (2009) explores the intersections between early dramatic romances, early modern prose fiction, and Shakespeare's late plays. Although this is an important attempt to place Shakespeare's engagement with romance within a wider literary and theatrical context, nearly two thirds of the collection is devoted to his plays. 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' builds upon these works by analysing chivalric motifs, language, rituals, and action in predominantly non-Shakespearean drama.

Chivalric Materiality and Symbolism: *Pericles*

Let us turn briefly to Shakespeare's and Wilkins's *Pericles* (c. 1607) to consider some core principles of early modern chivalric performance. Before the 'triumph' (tournament) at the Pentapolis court of King Simonides, competing knights present themselves and their shields to the princess Thaisa, each with their own individual 'device'.[40] It is notable that this symbolic chivalric presentation of the knights is Wilkins's addition to earlier versions of the story. As Kathryn Karen Will explains, it also reflected contemporary practice:

> Heraldic impresas played major roles in royal entertainments; unlike inherited coats of arms, impresas were single-use shields featuring images and mottoes with oblique meanings. Usually created by courtiers and poets, they were presented to the monarch before tournaments or during court masques.[41]

Pericles, then, directly maps the conventions of contemporary courtly chivalric performance into the public theatre. Although royal entertainments like *Barriers* were typically closed to public crowds, early modern playgoers 'could see impresa images

---

39 Publicover, p. 54.

40 William Shakespeare and George Wilkins, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. Rory Loughlane, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare,* 2.2.1, 2.2.15.

41 Kathryn Karen Will, 'Cultivating Heraldic Histories in Early Modern English Literature' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Michigan, 2014), p. 17.

and mottoes recreated on the public stage'.[42] Heraldry, argues Tara Hamling, 'was probably the most ubiquitous form of imagery in early modern England and permeated virtually all spheres of experience'.[43] Not only had Shakespeare's family acquired their own coat of arms in 1596, for instance, but Shakespeare would later design Francis Manners, the Lord of Rutland's impresa for the Accession Day Tilt on 24 March 1613.[44] Even as the abstruse rules of heraldry strove to ostracise social inferiors from chivalry, its symbolic power was clearly a shared part of early modern visual culture.

The scene in *Pericles* makes this clear. It might also remind us that although tournaments were finally superseded by the court masque in the early years of Charles I's reign, they continued throughout Jacobean England.[45] In his seminal study of early modern English tournaments, Alan Young offers the well-established opinion that these chivalric displays functioned primarily as 'prestige propaganda' to celebrate the monarchy.[46] This would appear to be the case in *Pericles* as Simonides tells the audience that the imminent tournament is '[i]n honour of [Thaisa's] birth' (2.2.5; i.e., to celebrate her birthday). *Barriers* too was a vindication of monarchical authority in its anticipation of Henry's investiture the following June. Wilkins's addition of the chivalric triumph, however, should also encourage us to think about the performative symbolic space offered to the knight here. Before the knights present themselves, Simonides is careful to instruct his daughter 'to entertain | The labour of each knight in his device' (2.2.14–

---

42 Will, p. 17.

43 Tara Hamling, 'Visual Culture', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, Abigail Shinn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 75–102 (p. 79).

44 *H.M.C. The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland Preserved at Belvoir Castle* (London: HMSO, 1888–1905), 4 vols, IV (1905), 494. Alan Young has suggested that Shakespeare might have drawn his inspiration for 'at least one (possibly two) of his tournament impresas in Pericles' from the Shield Gallery in Whitehall Palace. Alan Young, 'A Note on the Tournament Impresas in Pericles', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 36.4 (1985), 453–6 (p. 456). As Young notes, this was a source for Henry Peacham's literary emblem book *Minerva Britanna* (1612), dedicated to the young heir apparent.

45 See Alan Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London: George Philip, 1987).

46 Young, p. 43. For a similar view, see Frances Yates, *Astrea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 88–111.

15). Here, as Wills notes, the king 'acknowledges the imaginative labour that goes into creating these performative emblems'.[47]

Simonides' choice of language here helps us to understand some of the political dynamics of early modern chivalric performance; now obsolete contemporary meanings of 'entertain' expand beyond the idea of hosting to suggest a relationship where the knight's material and financial needs are sustained (*OED v* I.1.c) in response for service of some form (OED *v* I.3). Although 'entertain' suggests a relationship which maintains friendly relations between monarch and noble (*OED v* I.4), it is also one which ultimately strives to control the knight and keep him in a particular mindset (*OED v* I.2). This tacit relationship defined courtly relations in early modern England. Philip Sidney, for instance, would appear in 1581 in *The Four Foster Children of Desire* branded with the motto: 'Sic nos non nobis' (Thus we labour not for ourselves). It also appears in his *Old Arcadia* (c. 1580) in slightly different format ('Sic vos non nobis') where Musidorus gives Pamela a device with the motto.[48] Both in performance and in text, Sidney used chivalric insignia to symbolically and publicly voice his frustrations in regards to the state's circumscription of his aristocratic autonomy.[49] In *Pericles*, the knights are offered the same performative space to articulate their own ambitions and chivalric identities.

When the third knight presents himself and his impresa to Thaisa, she interprets: 'The third of Antioch, | And his device a wreath of chivalry, | The word, *Me pompae provexit apex*' (2.2.28–30). Wilkins lifts this image directly from Claude Paradin's *Devises Heroïques* (1562), translated into English in 1591. Here, above an illustration of a wreath of chivalry, '*Me pompae provexit apex*' is rendered as 'the desire of renowne hath

---

47 Will, p. 17. Will also notes that these were 'common props in the "populuxe" dramas of Kyd, Wilson, Middleton, and Shakespeare' (p. 17). For the term 'populuxe', see Paul Yachnin, 'The Populuxe Theater', in *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate*, ed. by Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 38–65.

48 Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (The Old Arcadia), ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 95.

49 In the relevant Revels document for *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, it is recorded that 46 shields and impresas were prepared. *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. by Albert Feuillerat (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908), p. 346. On Sidney's use of impresas, see Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Sidney's Personal Imprese', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33 (1970), 321–24 and Robert W. Parker, 'The Art of Sidney's Heroic Impresas', *English Literary Renaissance*, 20.3 (1990), 408–30.

promoted me, or set me forward' (see Figure 1).[50] Paradin describes the Roman practice of presenting 'militares coronas, martiall crownes, or crownes of chiualrie' as 'the chiefest reward of famous deedes'.[51] These chivalric crowns, Paradin continues, operated as

> signes and tokens of their vertue, noble exploits, and inuincible mindes: the chiefest and famoust had their purtraitures, with their Apothegmes & posies, and that as well for the perpetuall remembrance of their worship, and ancienty as also for the oblectation, pleasure, & esperance to those that should come after, attending & seeking after the honor of vertue, with the reward & praise therof.[52]

Paradin's description underlines the chivalric figure's intransigent quest for honour and desire for renown. In *Pericles,* then, the tournament, with all its symbolic apparatus, offers knights an effective route to 'perpetuall remembrance' and material 'reward'.

Reward in the *Pericles* tournament is significant as it comes in the form of Thaisa's hand in marriage (and its future promise of the kingdom of Pentapolis); 'princes and knights', we are told by one of the Pentapolis fishermen in the previous scene, 'come from all parts of the world to joust and tourney for her love' (2.1.98–99). Knights did not actually tourney for the prize of marriage; the idea places us more firmly in the imaginative world of romance. But it performs an important symbolic function. This is clear in the opening of Book IV Canto v of Edmund Sepnser's *The Faeirie Queene* — in many ways the imaginative keystone of Elizabethan chivalry:

> It hath bene through all ages euer seene,
> That with the praise of armes and cheualrie
> The prize of beautie still hath ioyned beene;
> And that for reasons speciall priuitie:
> For either doth on other much relie.
> For he me seems most fit the faire to serue,
> That can her best defend from villenie;
> And she most fit his seruice doth deserue,
> That fairest is and from her faith will neuer swerue.[53]

---

50 Claude Paradin, *The Heroicall Deuises of M. Claudius Paradin Canon of Beauieu. Whereunto are Added the Lord Gabriel Symeons and Others. Translated Out of Latin into English by P.S.* (London: 1591), V3r.

51 Paradin, V3r–v.

52 Paradin, V3r.

53 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton, rev. by Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 444



Figure 1. Claude Paradin, *The Heroicall Deuises* (London: 1591), V3r.
© University of Illinois Library.

The central conviction here — that chivalry and beauty 'doth on other much relie' — suggests an ideal harmony between physical prowess and love. In romance convention,

(IV.v.1.1–9). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

the knight who fights most valiantly not only 'deserue[s]' the 'prize of beautie' but, by virtue of his strength, is 'most fit the faire to serue' and 'defend from villenie'.

This is the essence of courtly love; it offered a new dimension to the ideals of chivalry by romanticising and ennobling the knight's violence through his pursuit of perfect love. As we will see in the subsequent chapter, *amour courtois* was politically useful, especially in the Elizabethan period where it offered a crucial framework for managing relations between the queen and her nobility which were played out through the fictional courtships of romance. Figuratively, then, Elizabeth operated as Spenser's 'prize of beautie'. '[P]raise of armes' earns the knight the love of the 'fairest' lady and wins her his devoted service in the defence of her honour. She is 'fairest' not simply in aesthetic terms but because she embodies that core chivalric principle of spiritual steadfastness: she 'from her faith will neuer swerue'. In the same sort of reciprocal relationship that demonstrates the knight's principles though physical display, her beauty signifies her inner virtue.

An important aspect of courtly love's functionality was its unattainability, or unsustainability (typically because it is with a married noblewoman and therefore illegitimate, and always because it ends in death): favour could be courted and received, but the ultimate 'prize of beautie' was out of reach. In *Pericles*, Shakespeare subverts the convention by making that prize literal and attainable in the form of Thaisa's hand in marriage as well as the future promise of the kingdom of Pentapolis. But several of its symbolic functions and those of the tournament at large remain intact. Pericles's chances at the tournament, for instance, are laughed at by the attending lords as a result of a symbolic chivalric object: Pericles's 'rusty armour' (2.1.107), conveniently fished from the sea in time for the combat. The mockery is socially charged: 'by his rusty outside', jokes the First Lord, 'he appears | To have practised the whipstock than the lance' (2.2.48–9). 'Strangely furnished' (2.2.51) and in 'dejected state' (2.2.44), then, Pericles is labelled with the pejorative nickname, 'The mean knight' (2.2.57.1).

'The rust' of Pericles's armour, writes Susan Harlan, 'signifies [its] state of disuse or neglect'.[54] This of course is a logical assessment; 'the suit of armour', however, claims Harlan, 'is a leftover from a lost past. The armour's militaristic origins are effaced; it

---

54 Susan Harlan, 'Certain condolements, certain vails': Staging Rusty Armour in Shakespeare's *Pericles*', *Early Theatre,* 11.2 (2008), 129–39 (p. 134)

performs violence only symbolically, as in tournaments. […] *Pericles* pacifies this lost-and-found suit of armour as a stage prop that both stands for and encourages nostalgia'.[55] Its origins are not simply 'effaced', however. In an emotional reunion with his armour, Pericles tells us that it is 'part of [his] heritage | Which [his] dead father did bequeath to [him]' (2.1.111–2). Pericles not only recognises the specific personal chivalric past of the object, but he reactivates and repurposes it for his own needs. Much like the battle-clad Ghost of Hamlet, Pericles's armour is not a 'leftover from a lost past'; rather it is a recovered and remembered past. Like the ghostly and withered form of Old Hamlet, the material return of Pericles's armour demonstrates a chivalry which continues to infiltrate and adapt itself to the present.

By winning the tournament, Pericles fulfils his vow to 'show the virtue I have borne in arms' (2.1.133). In recognition of his victory, Thaisa crowns Pericles with a 'wreath of victory' (2.3.9). As explained in Paradin's *Heroicall Deuises*, this chivalric device recognised the 'vertue, noble exploits, and inuincible mindes' of their beneficiaries. Thaisa's gift is also a ritual expression of courtly love: a symbolic conferment of her favour in return for the service he has just demonstrated in tournament. In the words of Spenser, Pericles is 'most fit the faire to serue'. This ritual chivalric expression can be seen in beautiful visual detail in the miniature of Duke Heinrich (c. 1256–1290) of Breslau (and later Krakow) contained within the *Codex Manesse* (c. 1305–40), an early fourteenth century poetry anthology composed in Zürich (see Figure 2). Here, in one of the earliest visual representations of courtly love, the symbolic and the real occupy the same material space. Heinrich is shown at a tournament receiving what appears to be a wreath from an admiring noblewoman sitting in the gallery above. Both that wreath and the red ribbon which Heinrich wears on his shield are tokens of the mutual devotion of lady and knight. Heinrich's shield, the mantle of his horse, and the banner of one of his attending pages all sport his actual coat of arms, bringing real-life heraldic convention into conversation with the symbolic visual representation of courtly love. Still in the seventeenth century, the conventions of courtly love continue to shape chivalric performance. In *Pericles*, for instance, they provide the framework for Thaisa's courtship via the tournament. In the second proposition of Barriers, the chivalric virtue of performing knights is also measured in

---

55 Harlan, p. 137.



Figure 2. *Codex Manesse* (c. 1305–40), fol. 11v, Herzog Heinrich von Breslau. © Heidelberg University Library.

terms of courtly love.

Even as early modern chivalric performance disassociated itself from the realities of contemporary warfare, it continued to be highly functional through its range of symbolic meanings. Tournaments and other chivalric events were, as Katherine Butler puts it, an important opportunity for 'the performance of aristocratic identity'. This was due to both the 'traditional association of nobility with military valour' and 'because the nobleman himself took the stage'. '[T]he knightly personae adopted by an Elizabethan nobleman', continues Butler, 'signified not only his position in the noble community, but

also his individual political disappointments and aspirations'.[56] The importance attached to that performance becomes clear in Book I of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590) where Redcrosse Knight lies awake in anticipation of a tournament the following day:

> The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
> And is with childe of glorious great intent,
> Can neuer rest, vntil it it forth haue brought
> Th'eternall brood of glorie excellent:
> Such restlesse passion did all night torment
> The flaming courage of that Faery knight,
> Deuizing, how that doughtie tournament
> With greatest honour he atchieuen might;
> Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.
>
> (I.v.1.1–9)

The image is predominantly one of agitation and anticipation: until he has demonstrated his 'glorie' and 'honour' through the exercise of arms, Redcrosse '[c]an never rest'. We are of course firmly in the world of medieval chivalry here; what is notable, however, is the concern with presentation and performance. In other words, Redcrosse is acutely aware that military success against Sansjoy will reciprocally symbolise his 'noble' and 'virtuous' character and earn him renown and honour. The emphasis on restlessness, however, underlines not only the competitiveness inherent in chivalric culture but also the sense of perpetual performance and expectation which comes with knighthood. The tournament, then, is at once an opportunity and a source of psychological pressure: Redcrosse lies awake 'all night' in 'torment' because the knight, medieval or early modern, is always performing.

In *Honor Military, and Ciuill* (1602), Queen Elizabeth's Norroy King of Arms, William Segar, describes tournaments as a 'challenge or Combat […] for honour onely, loue of Ladies, or exercise of Armes'.[57] These are the exact same chivalric conditions listed in the challenge of *Barriers*. Clearly, however, these criteria are increasingly performative and symbolic; anticipating Prince Henry's investiture in June 1610, *Barriers* was ultimately a spectacle. The subsequent combat, however, did offer Henry an opportunity to showcase his 'exercise of Armes' and demonstrate his 'honour'. As I

---

56 Katherine Butler, *Music in Elizabethan Court Politics* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), p. 107.

57 William Segar, *Honor Military, and Ciuill, Contained in Foure books* (London: 1602), L3r.

articulate in further detail, although it could hardly be called training for war, Henry's military performance carried important symbolic military and political implications regarding the contemporary diplomatic climate in northern Europe. These implications were further explored through the wider theatrical design of *Barriers*. Here, then, we are confronted with a complex combination of military, architectural, and literary forms — each with their own oblique symbolic interpretations and each shaped by its author's or participant's own vested aesthetic and ideological values and priorities.[58] Reading *Barriers* effectively depends on carefully negotiating these forms of interplay in relation to their relevant historical contexts. Stage scenery and machinery, language, decorative armour and weaponry, and an actual fight at the barriers interact here to engage with chivalric culture in 1610 in highly theatricalised and often ambiguous terms. Using Martin Wiggins's 2013 manuscript discovery as a starting point, this introduction will offer a new perspective on the significance of Jonson's and Jones's highly politicised chivalric entertainment. In turn, this reading highlights the intellectual case for the thesis as well as its methodology.

Chivalric Revival in *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*

Of all Jacobean court entertainments, *Barriers* engages most explicitly with chivalry. Here, a stellified Arthur presents Meliadus with a shield on the day of his first tournament. Raised from his tomb, Merlin instructs Meliadus on how best to bring chivalry to life again — the loss of which *Barriers* ostensibly laments or strives to rectify. Prince Henry had 'set about to establish himself as the British champion of chivalry', argues Elisabeth Michelsson; the performance of *Barriers* and its concluding combat suggest that Henry was eager not simply to symbolise that status, but to consolidate it by demonstrating his well-practised military skills.[59] The persona chosen for Henry in

---

58 D.J. Gordon details the well-known debate between Jonson and Jones in 'Poet and Architect: The Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12 (1949), 152–78.

59 Elisabeth Michelsson, *Appropriating King Arthur: The Arthurian Legend in English Drama and Entertainments 1485–1625* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1999), p. 161. On Prince Henry's military training, see David R. Lawrence, *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603–1645* (Leiden:

the performance — 'Meliadus' — underlines the fact that *Barriers* is interested in the concept of chivalric revival. Drawn by Jonson from medieval Arthurian chivalric romance, Meliadus was the father of the Arthurian knight Tristan.[60] He featured in a series of early thirteenth century French examples including the prose *Tristan* (c. 1225–30), the Post-Vulgate Cycle (c. 1230–40) and became the principal character in *Palamedes* (c. 1235–40), and Rusticiano da Pisa's reworking of the latter as part of his enormous prose *Compilation* (c. 1270).[61] The story was clearly immensely popular and appeared in print in Paris in two parts as *Gyron le Courtoys* (1501) and *Meliadus de Leonnoys* (1528).[62] Although there was no English version, Rusticiano's *Compilation* was 'much read in France, Spain, and Italy for three centuries'.[63] Jonson most likely took the name from Rusticiano where Meliadus, as Fanni Bogdanov notes, is proclaimed as 'la flour de toute chevalrie'.[64] By reviving this key figure of European romance in the banqueting hall of Whitehall, Henry, in some sense, was seen to bring to life again those increasingly anachronistic chivalric qualities and feats which had defined Arthurian knights like

---

Brill, 2009), pp. 109–20. Here, Lawrence describes Henry's 'fascination with warfare' and his 'love of the martial arts' (p. 119).

60 In *An Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), G.D. West records six different characters by the name of Meliadus. Tristan's father, however, is the key figure. In *Barriers*, however, Meliadus is presented as the son of the Lady of the Lake.

61 The Post-Vulgate Cycle is a condensed reworking of the earlier Vulgate Cycle (1215–1235), a series of Arthurian prose romance volumes which tell the story of the quest for the Holy Grail as well as Lancelot's romance with King Arthur's Queen, Guinevere. The principal distinction of the later Post-Vulgate Cycle is the exclusion of *Lancelot Proper*, resulting in the Grail quest becoming the univocal focus. On the Vulgate and Post-Vulgate Cycles, see Fanni Bogdanov, 'The Vulgate Cycle and the Post-Vulgate *Roman du Graal*', in *A Companion to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, ed. by Carol Dover (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 33–51.

62 The textual history of the Meliadus narratives is nebulous. On the relationship of *Gyron le Courtoys* and *Meliadus de Leonnoys* to the earlier manuscripts, see Roger Lathuillere, *Guiron le Courtois: Etude de la Tradition Manuscrite et Analyse Critique* (Genève: Droz, 1966).

63 Goodman, p. 84. The name appears as late as 1584, in *Histoires des hauts et chevaleureux faicts d'armes de Meliadus* (Paris).

64 Rusticiano da Pisa, *Compilation*, quoted in Fanni Bogdanov, 'Part III of the Turin Version of *Guiron le Courtois*: a hitherto unknown source of M.S. B.N. fr. 112', in *Medieval Miscellany Presented to Eugene Vinaver*, ed. by F. Whitehead, A.H. Diverres, and F.E. Sutcliffe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), pp. 45–64 (pp. 46–47).

Meliadus. For those familiar with Meliadus, and especially Rusticiano's treatment, Henry's self-fashioning as the wellspring of British chivalry and the driving political force behind its restoration might resonate with particular force.

The revival of chivalry is also registered at the architectural level as the task put before Henry/Meliadus to restore the 'house of chivalry' which 'decayed | Or rather ruined seems' is represented visually by Inigo Jones's scenery of a dilapidated city.[65] King Arthur, the key emblem of that old romantic chivalric ideal, appears as a star to summon Meliadus:

> Proceed in thy great work; bring forth thy knight
> Preservèd for his times, that by the might
> And magic of his arm he may restore
> These ruined seats of virtue, and build more.
> Let him be famous, as was Tristram, Tor,
> Lanc'lot, and all our list of knighthood, or
> Who were before, or have been since. His name
> Strike upon heaven, and there stick his fame!
>
> (ll. 83–90)

'Restor[ing]' the 'ruined seats of' chivalric 'virtue' is a process which depends acutely on literary memorialisation; as with the name of Meliadus, the list of 'famous' Arthurian knights — Tristan, Tor, and Lancelot — offer an eminent, even if fictional, 'list of knighthood' against which Henry can measure and encourage his own chivalry. Arthur's lines are a reminder that practising or 'playing' chivalry is intimately tied to the memory and celebration of fictional chivalric heroes.

Although *Barriers* relies heavily on centuries-old Arthurian romance, it does so in order address diplomatic concerns which were very much present in the political consciousness of the Stuart regime in 1610. As we have seen, chivalric entertainments at court routinely employed and manipulated romance forms to engage with contemporary issues. This interplay between fictional forms and material realities is similarly central to a reading of *Barriers*. In his summoning call to Meliadus for instance, Arthur combines elements of both. According to the legendary British king, it is both the 'might and magic' of Henry's 'arm' which heralds the potential return of chivalry to its

---

65 Ben Jonson, *The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*, ed. David Lindley, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), III, pp. 517–39, ll. 31, 33–4. All further references to Jonson's work are to this edition, hereafter *Cambridge Ben Jonson*, and are given parenthetically in the text.

former glories. '[M]ight' underlines the physical strength traditionally required of a knight; Henry's military training and performances came hand in hand with an actual material desire to fight for his country and religion. That desire was emphasised by his participation in the concluding combat at the barriers where opponents fought over a low bar with a variety of weapons including swords and pikes. *Barriers,* then, as Frances Yates puts it, was 'both a real martial exercise in which the Prince gave proof of his training in knightly activities, and a theatrical spectacle'.[66] 'Magic' emphasizes that spectacle, drawing the audience back into the supernatural world of romance.[67] *Barriers*' combination of Arthurian fantasy and martial display underlines the strategy by which chivalry negotiates the past in order to respond to the present social, economic, political, and military moment.

Meliadus, for instance, was not only a fictional knight from medieval French romance but a culturally charged symbol of religious warfare. In an elegy on the prince's untimely death three years after *Barriers* — 'Teares on the Death of Moeliades' (1613) — William Drummond notes that the name 'is that which [Henry] himself, in the challenges of his martial sports and mascarads, was wont to vse' and 'which, in anagramme, maketh MILES A DEO'.[68] 'Miles a Deo', soldier of God, was a derivative of the *miles christianus* Christian allegory which appropriated military language and imagery to symbolise concepts relating to Christian virtue. Although the spiritual metaphor predates chivalry, the Crusades paved the way for reformulations of *miles christianus* which, by reading the armoured figure more literally, engaged with contemporary political and military issues in religious terms. Chivalry of course was secular in origin; the Crusades, however, helped to establish the notion of Christian chivalry and spiritual warfare — a notion which evolved over subsequent centuries in response to

---

66 Frances Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 22.

67 On the intersections between magic and medieval romance, see Corinne Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010).

68 William Drummond, 'Teares on the Death of Moeliades', in *The Poems of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. by T. Maitland (Edinburgh, 1832), pp. 76–82 (p. 76). That this is clearly deliberate on Jonson's part is bolstered by the phrase in *Barriers*, 'Claimes Arthur's seat', 'a celebrated anagram for CHARLES JAMES STEUART', notes Alastair Fowler in *Literary Names: Personal Names in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 135. As Fowler remarks, this anagram is explicitly noted by Jonson in his masque, *For the Honour of Wales* (1618) (p. 139, n. 44).

international political and military events.[69] In various moments of diplomatic tension, the figure of the godly knight armed with Christian virtue against the evils of Satan was reimagined and deployed as a symbol to justify military action against the secular political forces of the Antichrist. In the aftermath of the Reformation, these sorts of symbolic appropriation grew rapidly in number, helping to chart the protracted confessional warfare on the continent. For the audience of *Barriers*, and for virtually any Protestant audience in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, that Antichrist was clearly identifiable in secular terms as both branches of the Habsburg dynasty. By using the name of Meliadus to perform in 'martial sports' and 'mascarads' (masques) at the Jacobean court, then, Prince Henry was symbolically advertising his position as the political figurehead for those who also subscribed to a more belligerent approach to foreign policy.[70]

Militant anti-Habsburg representations which exploited chivalric forms and language proliferated in times of active warfare and especially in moments of international threat *and* opportunity. Events such as local military conflicts and strategic dynastic intermarriages could often upset the confessional constitution in northern Europe and provoke diplomatic and military escalations which might threaten England's national security. At the same time, however, such events were often perceived as moments of opportunity, especially by more militantly minded English Protestants for whom they offered a sort of blueprint of a potential religious and political future for England. In the context of *Barriers*, Henry's performance as Meliadus was much more than a nostalgic gesture towards Arthurian chivalric mythology. By anagrammatically invoking the concept of *miles christianus*, Henry was deliberately and symbolically playing out his well-known 'ideological and militarist agenda' which, writes Hans Werner, 'included active military intervention on the continent, especially in defence of Calvinist interests'.[71] That said, more recent scholarship has convincingly

---

69 See Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. by M.W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) and Tomaz Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

70 See for instance J.W. Williamson, *The Myth of the Conqueror: Prince Henry Stuart, a Study of 17th Century Personation* (New York: AMS Press, 1978); Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales, and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986).

71 Hans Werner, '*The Hector of Germanie, or The Palsgrave, Prime Elector* and Anglo-German relations of early Stuart England: the view from the popular stage', in *The*

reassessed the extent of Prince Henry's agency; only fifteen at the time of performance of Barriers, the prince was surrounded by advisors keen to project their own policies onto him.[72]

Although on the surface *Barriers* was a celebration of Henry's forthcoming investiture as the Prince of Wales, in the early moments of 1610 it responded to the current diplomatic and military crisis in Jülich-Cleves which, for nine months, had been escalating in the direction of large-scale conflict. This was ultimately a succession crisis which erupted initially when Johann Wilhelm, Duke of this significant collection of German states within the Holy Roman Empire, died without an heir. Jülich-Cleves-Berg occupied a strategic position both in territorial and economic terms and when Emperor Rudolf appointed the Catholic and Habsburg Archduke Leopold imperial commissioner on 14 July, the issue quickly became international as 'fighting between rival Catholic and Protestant claimants threatened to draw in foreign powers'.[73] The situation was so volatile that 'to contemporaries', Werner suggests, it was 'analogous to the Cuban missile crisis'.[74] Since the six claimants (only two of which were in fact legitimate) each had their own complex network of dynastic, confessional, military, and economic alliances, the prospect of a devastating all-out war across northern Europe was a very real threat.

In the same month as *Barriers*, Henry IV of France agreed a military pact with the recently formed Protestant Union and 'began a general mobilization'.[75] At the time, the French king was pressuring James for military assistance — one of the several periods of crisis when England was, to the frustrations of the English king's diplomatic roadmap,

---

Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture, ed. by R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 113–32 (p. 124).

72 D.J.B. Trim tones down the perceived ideological disagreement between James and Henry in 'Calvinist Internationalism and the Shaping of Jacobean Foreign Policy', in *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Timothy Wilks (London: Paul Holberton with Southampton Solent University, 2007), pp. 239–58.

73 Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2009), p. 229.

74 Werner, p. 125.

75 Werner, p. 125.

compelled to 'define its relationship to continental Protestantism'.[76] Although only 15 years old, Prince Henry's position on the matter was both serious and well-known. 'Muscular, agile', and 'a horseman of great skill, Henry had read much on the subject of war' and had accumulated a considerable library of military literature.[77] Already in 1606, a popular jingle composed in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot discovery already marked the heir-apparent as the future leader of resistance to Catholicism both home and abroad: 'Henry the Eighth pull'd down Monks and their cells, | Henry the Ninth should pull down Bishops and their Bells'.[78] By the time of the Jülich-Cleves crisis, Henry was firmly at the centre of a cultural and political network of militant Protestants eager to witness that prophecy fulfilled. Godson and 'a hero-worshipper' of Henry IV, the young prince would have felt the calls for military assistance keenly.

The prospect of a large Anglo-French military intervention, however, was brought to a standstill with the timely assassination of the French king on 14 May 1610. English assistance did arrive in July in the form of 4,000 of the garrison troops which had remained in the Low Countries after the Treaty of London in August 1604. Commanded by Sir Edward Cecil, they served alongside a French regiment in Maurice of Nassau's army in the successful siege of Jülich. Although a Habsburg army commanded by general Ambrosio Spinola attempted to recapture the city in 1614, a diplomatic solution was reached on 12 November 1614 with the Treaty of Xanten which divided the disputed territories between the two legitimate claimants.[79] The Twelve Years' Truce between Spain and the Netherlands was only five years old by this stage and it seems, as Wilson

---

76 Kevin Curran, *Marriage, Performance, and Politics at the Jacobean Court* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 91.

77 David Lawrence, *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England 1603–1645* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 74.

78 Quoted in Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, p. 49.

79 Wolfgang Wilhelm, Count Palatine of Neuburg became Duke of both Jülich and Berg. John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, received Cleves, Mark, and Ravensuburg via the treaty. The resumption of hostilities in 1614 stemmed from confessional shifts on the part of both Wilhelm and Sigismund, with the former marrying the sister of the Duke of Bavaria, head of the Catholic League, and the latter converting to Calvinism.

argues, that 'opposition to violence and a genuine desire to negotiate a peaceful solution' prevented a major escalation of events.[80]

In January 1610, Henry was no doubt showcasing his martial competence at the barriers in Whitehall Palace in order to advertise his zeal for the immediate Protestant cause in Jülich-Cleves-Berg, and more generally on the continent. This, however, is as far as James's eldest son would get to the action as he had to 'content himself with receiving dispatches' from Cecil during the siege.[81] Even without military action though, Henry remained the neo-chivalric symbol for those English Protestants eager for a more interventionist foreign policy in response to the perceived imperial ambitions of the Habsburgs. As heir-apparent of course, Henry was more than a chivalric symbol though; his martial proficiency, theoretical and practical, fuelled his belief in a military solution in the name of shared continental Protestantism. By the following year, Henry was, as Lawrence describes, already attempting to establish himself as a 'military patron' by recruiting prominent commanders in 'an effort to create a military court to rival his contemporaries Maurice of Nassau and Henry IV of France'.[82] *Barriers,* then, taps into the real chivalric ambitions of Henry (and his political circle) who had been 'feted by the continent's greatest soldiers and military writers […] as a complete soldier in the making'.[83]

Henry, in promoting himself as one of Europe's leading royal military patrons, sought to model himself on some of the principal patrons and commanders of the Elizabethan war party — namely the earls of Leicester and Essex.[84] These men of course did in fact lead English soldiers to war on the continent in the 1580s and 1590s, and although their campaigns were military and political disasters, chivalric forms played a key polemical role in celebrating them as cultural and national heroes and in glorifying

---

80 Wilson, p. 230. For a detailed account of the Jülich-Cleves crisis, see Wilson, pp. 229–38 and Lawrence, pp. 78–80. See also Olaf Van Nimwegen, *The Dutch Army and the Military Revolutions 1588–1688* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 201–5.

81 Werner, p. 125.

82 Lawrence, p. 74.

83 Lawrence, p. 74.

84 The connection with Essex was articulated powerfully when the eponymous son of the disgraced was appointed Henry's page. Their friendship is celebrated in Robert Peake's famous portrait of the two in the hunting field (c. 1605), now housed in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.

their zeal for continental Protestantism.[85] Commanded by Leicester, English intervention in the Dutch revolt in 1585 also offered the practical benefit of initiating 'the formation of military circles'.[86] As Lawrence points out, these were both military and cultural networks which brought together military writers and scholars as well as soldiers, and offered members 'a forum for discussion of military and political affairs'.[87] At the 'centre of Elizabethan England's most important military circle' and acutely aware of the power of cultural forms and the political uses of chivalry, Leicester may well have used his theatrical patronage to further diversify his influence.[88] Leicester's Men, the leading playing company in the 1570s and early 1580s, provided a vehicle by which their patron's social and political ambitions could be communicated to both courtly and non-courtly audiences.[89] That Leicester used this mechanism for the purposes of politically inflected Protestant propaganda, as Paul Whitfield White suggests, seems likely.[90] At least some of these players must have featured in the elaborate 1575 Kenilworth entertainments, financed at Leicester's great expense and housed at his eponymous estate from 9 to 27 July. The 'dramatic fictions' staged here, as Elizabeth Goldring puts

---

85 The scholarship on Sidney and Essex and their relationship to chivalric culture is vast. See for instance Richard Wood, 'Cleverly playing the stoic': The Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney and Surviving Elizabeth's Court', in *Essex: The Cultural Impact of an Elizabethan Courtier*, ed. by Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 25–46; Andrew Hiscock, '"Achilles alter": The Heroic Lives and Afterlives of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex' , in *Essex: The Cultural Impact of an Elizabethan Courtier,* pp. 101–32; Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also the chapters on Sidney and Essex in Richard McCoy's *The Rites of Knighthood*, pp. 55–78 ('Sir Philip Sidney: "The Shepherd Knight"'); pp. 79–102 ('The Earl of Essex: "A Dangerous Image"').

86 Lawrence, p. 51.

87 Lawrence, p, 51.

88 Lawrence, p. 51.

89 Sally-Beth Maclean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men: The Patronage of a Performance Troupe', in *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 246–71.

90 Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Early Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

it, 'provided an opportunity to broach politically sensitive subjects with the Queen'.[91] As a result, and on account of their sheer grandeur and opulence, the Kenilworth entertainments have been the focus of a great deal of scholarship, much of which centres on their engagement with the question of military involvement in the Netherlands.[92] Neo-Elizabethan in style and religious and political sentiment, Henry's military image used chivalry to the same anti-Habsburg political ends. Hardly an expression of empty nostalgia though, Henry's own version of chivalry harnessed the ethos of the Elizabethan war party into the contemporary diplomatic moment. Genuinely accomplished in his military skills and familiar with contemporary theory from a young age, Prince Henry represented to his followers the real chance of success where chivalric icons like Leicester and Essex had ultimately failed. This of course was hopeful myth-making on the part of the war party and Henry was never given the opportunity to demonstrate whether these expectations could be realised.

The sorts of chivalric expectation which attended the prince are made explicit in the title of Jean de Tourval's tract, dedicated to Henry: *The French herald summoning all true Christian princes to a generall croisade, for a holy warr against the great enemy of Christendome, and all his slaues. Vpon the occasion of the most execrable murther of Henry the great* (London: 1611). By describing the need for a 'croisade for a holy warr', the author uses chivalric rhetoric to draw parallels between the contemporary religious wars and those of the Crusades from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. The fundamental difference, of course, was that the 'great Enemy of Christendome' was no longer Islam but Catholicism and, in particular, Habsburg rule. The implication, however, was much the same: that the spiritual safety of 'true Christians' depended on a united European military solution. In the dedication, Tourval calls upon Henry as the 'chiefest (if not euen the first) […] for the performance of the greatest, most Christian and most royall duty

---

91 Elizabeth Goldring, 'Gascoigne and Kenilworth: The Production, Reception, and Afterlife of 'The Princely Pleasures'', *English Literary Renaissance*, 44.3 (2014), 363–87.

92 See for instance Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 310–73; Elizabeth Goldring, 'Portraiture, Patronage and the Progresses: Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575', in *The Progresses, Pageants and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. by Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 163–88; and Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 93–100.

that euer was yeelded'.[93] If that duty 'be not' upon Henry, Tourval continues, 'then I see no Generall in the world, when our Christian Army must come into the field'.[94] Following the French king's assassination, Tourval joins many in nominating Prince Henry as the logical choice to inherit the mantle of European militant Protestantism on the continent — a position which would be bolstered through the strategic commitment of 'true Christian Princes' to international alliances like the Protestant Union. Notably, Tourval determines Henry's duty and position as a 'performance'.

In both Tourval's tract and *Barriers,* the cultural forms of chivalry are used to engage with European diplomacy. These forms look back (whether to the Crusades or the imaginary world of Arthurian romance) to offer both historical and mythical precedent and legitimacy to the prerogative for 'holy warr'. 'Chivalry', as R. Malcolm Smuts writes, 'had long helped to justify the Crown's wars'.[95] In texts and performances like *Barriers* and *The French Herald,* older chivalric forms are repositioned within and adapted to the current diplomatic context for that very same broader polemical purpose. 'The rhetorical framework of the medieval cult of crusading chivalry', writes Lesley Mickel, 'rested on the notion that offensive foreign policy was, in fact, valiant and religiously zealous defence against pagan assaults'.[96] Employing rhetoric such as 'great enemy of Christendome', 'all his slaues', 'most execrable murther of Henry', and calling explicitly for a 'generall croisade', *The French Herald* operates on this propagandistic premise. By configuring Habsburg Catholicism as the 'great enemy', this sort of rhetorical strategy demonstrates one of chivalry's principal moral functions: to offer social and religious justifications for the expression of violence. In response to Catholic threats such as the 'most execrable murther of Henry', military violence against that enemy became synonymous with the knightly qualities of honour, religious zeal, and national loyalty. As in the Crusades, chivalry here continues to perform the same symbolic function, only in the context of the post-Reformation religious warfare of early

---

93 Jean de Tourval, *The French Herald* (London: 1611), A2r.

94 Tourval, A2v.

95 R. Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), p. 21.

96 Lesley Mickel, *Ben Jonson's Antimasques: A History of Growth and Decline* (Aldershot: Ashagte, 1999), p. 69.

modern Europe. In its prioritisation of the arts of peace over war, *Barriers* would adopt a strikingly different stance.

Art historian Michael Evans has noted that 'depictions of the *miles christianus* in emblematic armour are extremely rare before the Reformation'.[97] As a result of the protracted confessional wars in Europe which followed the Reformation, the spiritual allegory became increasingly prone to secular interpretations and political reformulations which, as Simona Cohen describes, were 'not static' but 'were reflections of changing historical circumstances'.[98] For Marco Nievergelt, these historically specific appropriations of a fundamentally ahistorical spiritual concept resulted from the 'more private, interior forms of religious devotion' encouraged by Protestantism.[99] This meant that the 'new enemies of the Christian soldier', those which Tourval denounces, became 'not so much the traditional deadly sins, vices and temptations, but the powers of illusion and deception that threaten to mislead the individual Christian scrutinizing his faith'.[100] For many English Protestants, those political and religious powers of illusion and deception manifested themselves in the stratagems of the Catholic Habsburg monarchy. The historical transformations of *miles christianus* alert us to the conceptual fluidity and malleability of chivalric forms and motifs. Although they relied on a medieval ideology of 'generall croisade' which united secular warfare and ecclesiastical policy, early modern anti-Habsburg representations were reformulated and repositioned to respond to the contemporary diplomatic moment. By recreating and remembering comparable moments over time, representations of militant Protestant warfare approached the diplomatic situation with an arsenal of both historical and mythical chivalric precedents.

Militant political uses of chivalry surrounding Prince Henry extended into material culture as well. In 1607, for instance, Sir Francis Vere gifted the heir apparent an elaborate suit of armour. Now housed in the Tower of London, the armour is lavishly

---

97 Michael Evans, 'An Illustrated Fragment of Peraldus's Summa of Vice: Harleian MS 3244', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 45 (1982), 14–68 (p. 14).

98 Simona Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 55. On the early modern uses of *miles christianus*, see Andreas Wang, *Der Miles Christianus im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert und seine mittelalterliche Tradition: Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von sprachlicher und graphischer Bildlichkeit* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1975).

99 Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, p. 98.

100 Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, p. 98.

decorated with scenes from the life of Alexander the Great, the ancient Macedonian king and one of the Nine Worthies who was famed as an emblem of militant chivalry (see Figure 3).[101]



Figure 3. Armour of Prince Henry (1607)
© Royal Armouries, Old Tower Collection, II. 88.

Although Alexander reigned in the 4th century BCE, he was incorporated into a particular strain of medieval chivalric romance — 'the matter of Rome' — which treated chivalry as continuous with the foundations of the Roman Empire.[102] Featuring in medieval romances such as *King Alisaunder* (c. 1300) and *Wars of Alexander* (c. 1450), the legendary king continued to shape the chivalric imagination in early modern England,

101 On the medieval and early modern visual representations of Alexander the Great, see Thomas Noll, 'The Visual Image of Alexander the Great: Transformations from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period', in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. by Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 244–63.

102 Medieval French poet, Jean Bodel (c. 1165–1210) was the first to classify medieval romance in terms of the three matters of Rome, Britain, and France in the prologue of his *La Chanson des Saisnes* (c. 1200).

appearing for instance in the early dramatic romance *Clyomon and Clamydes* (c. 1570) as 'chief of chivalry and king of martial mates'.[103] Alexander's cultural prestige as an exemplar of chivalry was no doubt on Vere's mind when he presented the armour to Henry in 1607. Vere began his military career as one of Leicester's 6,000 soldiers in the Netherlands in 1585 where he remained garrisoned almost entirely until his retirement in 1604.[104] Here he quickly distinguished himself, receiving a knighthood on the battlefield in 1588 and earning the military ranks of Major General of English forces in 1589 and High Marshal of Essex's 1596 Cadiz expedition.[105] Vere had established the 'most prominent military circle' during his Low Countries service; the gift to Henry then was explicit in its political and religious insinuations, 'reinforc[ing] Henry's ties to the Protestant cause in the Netherlands', as Su Fang Ng argues.[106] Henry surrounded himself with a circle of like-minded military professionals like Vere for whom he came to represent 'a new cult figure to replace the Faerie Queene'.[107] This symbolic status was politically useful, encouraging the anti-Spanish, Protestant faction at the English court to push for a more offensive foreign policy through Privy Council members like William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.

Chivalry, however, was the antithetical ideology to King James's long-term vision for a peaceful and united Europe won by commitment to diplomacy. Therefore, while a tract like *The French Herald* can call unashamedly for crusade, chivalric

---

103 *Clyomon and Clamydes*, ed. Betty J. Littleton (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), l. 468. Further references are to this edition, silently modernised, and are given parenthetically as Through-Line Numbers. The enduring popularity of *King Alisaunder* is suggested by a fragmentary early sixteenth-century printed edition (c. 1525), bound in the collection, 'The Bagford Ballads' (BL, C.40.m.9–11). For summaries and general textual information about these texts, see *The Database of Middle English Romance*, ed. by N. McDonald (University of York, 2012). The database includes eighty verse romances from 1125 to 1500. Alexander of course famously appears in *Doctor Faustus* as 'Chief spectacle of the world's pre-eminence'.

104 Sander Bos, Marianne Lange-Meijers, and Jeanine Six, 'Sidney's Funeral Portrayed', in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. by Jan van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1986), pp. 38–61 (p. 50).

105 D.J.B. Trim, 'Sir Francis Vere', *ODNB*, accessed 23 November 2020.

106 Lawrence, p. 93; Su Fang Ng, *Alexander the Great from Britain to Southeast Asia: Peripheral Empires in the Global Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 140.

107 Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, p. 67.

expression in *Barriers* is circumscribed and redirected. In his advice to the young prince, for instance, Jonson's Merlin is careful to reformulate *Barriers*' Arthurian symbolism away from its traditional militaristic associations, instead framing it in the service of the king's more pacifist diplomatic strategy. Merlin therefore emphasises to Henry '[t]hat civil arts the martial must precede' (l. 204) and suggests that he, in his chivalric persona of Meliadus, should look beyond 'the deeds | Of antique knights' (ll. 159–60) for models to emulate. Jonson's deliberately archaic descriptions of 'fellows' steeds' (l. 160) and 'ladies palfries' (l. 161) imply that the figures and values of chivalric romance are anachronistic in Jacobean culture and society. Norman Council argues that Merlin's lines 'could be spoken by one of the early humanist detractors of chivalric romance'.[108] Early modern humanists including Erasmus, Thomas More, and Juan Luis Vives were quick to denounce chivalric romance as implausible and amoral. In *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1528), for instance, Vives condemns the 'storytelling' of romance as 'full of lies and stupidity' and by way of example ridicules the way in which a knight with 'six hundred gaping wounds' might instantly be 'restored to health' to defeat 'two giants low in single battle' the following day.[109]

Although less explicitly disdainful and dismissive than Vives, the same rhetoric of implausibility shapes the descriptions of 'antique knights' in *Barriers* who 'ladies' palfries rescue from the force | Of a fell giant, or some score to unhorse' (ll. 161–62). 'These were bold stories of our Arthur's age' (l. 163), Merlin continues; the emphasis here is that the stories, as opposed to their chivalric protagonists, are 'bold'. The line at once suggests that these are tales of courage and fearlessness (*OED adj* 1.a) but that they are also presumptuous (*OED adj* 4.a), stretching the limits of both probability and morality. Furthermore, they are stories of 'Arthur's age' and are therefore by implication inappropriate models for addressing contemporary Jacobean concerns. According to Jonson, then, the heroes of popular medieval chivalric romances such as *Huon of Bordeaux* (c. 1225), *Guy of Warwick* (c. 1300), and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485) were icons of nostalgia and fantasy — 'bold stories' best left in the past. In this sense of course,

---

108 Norman Council, 'Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and the Transformation of Tudor Chivalry', *ELH,* 47.2 (1980), 259–75 (p. 272).

109 Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, ed. and trans. by Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), pp. 75–76.

Barriers moves away from the politics attached to the neo-chivalric myth of Prince Henry.

Jonson's condemnations of course sit in contrast to the continued popularity of these stories; *Huon of Bordeaux*, for instance, a thirteenth-century French romance first printed by Michel le Noir in 1513, went through 23 editions by the end of the seventeenth century.[110] Lord Berners translated the verse romance into English prose in 1534, an adaptation which no doubt provided some of the source material for the eponymous lost play by Sussex's Men in 1593 as well as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1595).[111] Reprintings of popular medieval tales of chivalry were joined by translations of more recent Iberian romances; Margaret Tyler's translation of Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* (c. 1578) offered the first ever English version of a Spanish prose romance and set the trend for subsequent English renderings of Iberian texts including Anthony Munday's Palmerin cycle (1581–1602), *Palladine of England* (1588) and *Amadis of Gaul* (1590).[112] The success and variety of these texts, both old and new, spoke clearly to a wide readership of chivalric romance in the early modern period.[113]

Jonson deliberately detaches himself from these narratives in *Barriers* as Merlin advises Meliadus that 'here are other acts; another stage | And scene appears, it is not

---

110 William W. Kibler, 'Huon de Bordeaux in its Manuscripts', in *"De Sens Rassis": Essays in Honor of Rupert T. Pickens*, ed. by Keith Busby, Bernard Guidot, and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 325–38.

111 *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by R.A. Foakes, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 20. Henslowe reveals that Sussex's Men first staged Huon of Bordeaux on 28 December 1593. Lord Berners' translation is too lengthy to speculate on which parts of the narrative might have been dramatized.

112 On the English reception of *Amadis* from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, see Helen Moore, *Amadis in English: A Study in the Reading of Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020). See also Stacey Triplette, *Chivalry, Reading, and Women's Culture in Early Modern Spain: From* Amadís De Gaula *to* Don Quixote (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018). Nearly twenty years before Munday's *Amadis*, Charles Stuart attempted the translation. It is unknown how far Stuart reached but the first chapter and a half of Book I is preserved in manuscript (BL Lansdowne 766). See Nandini Das, *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570–1620* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 145.

113 On romance readership in early modern England, see Davis. See also Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) and Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2002).

since as then: | No giants, dwarfs, or monsters here, but men' (ll. 164–66). Denouncing fantasy as a representational strategy, Jonson's lines, with their reference to the stage and anti-romance sentiment, echo his own dramaturgical principles. In the prologue incorporated into the 1616 Folio edition of *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), for instance, Jonson promises to represent 'the language such as men do use' in order to 'show an image of the times'.[114] Employing 'language such as men do use' and deliberately resisting or parodying romance forms and motifs, then, Jonsonian city comedy like *Every Man in His Humour* offered an anti-romantic representational framework for urban culture. Jonson, as Helen Moore argues, repeatedly 'uses the reputation and material of romance, particularly Spanish chivalric romance, as an object of derision and satire', typically suggesting a 'lack of sophistication' or creating 'an atmosphere of old-worldliness'.[115] In *Epicoene* (1609), for instance, Truewit advises Dauphine that his knowledge of courtly manners is not a result of 'liv[ing] i' your chamber then a month together upon *Amadis of Gaul* or *Don Quixote*' but of going 'where the matter is frequent: to court, to tiltings, public shows and feasts, to plays, and church sometimes'.[116] Although *Barriers* ultimately relies on Arthurian symbolism, the same aversion to the aesthetic and didactic shortfalls of romance forms is repeatedly articulated. While a romance of chivalry like *Amadis* could be praised by Sidney for its ability to incite courage in men of war, for Jonson, it represented idleness, immorality, anachronism, and ultimately time wasted.

This tension between the potential 'usefulness' of chivalry and what many perceived to be its outmoded, unrealistic, and subversive characteristics is contextualised in *Barriers*. Jonson was not only uncomfortable with romance material but faced the ostensibly impossible task in *Barriers* of honouring Prince Henry's chivalry while maintaining some sort of hard-line on the Anglo-Spanish diplomatic ambitions of King James (who would have to approve the entertainment). Rather than turn to chivalric fiction for moral and political inspiration then, Jonson's Merlin instead offers Meliades/Henry a catalogue of British kings whose chivalric qualities are reframed in

---

114 Ben Jonson, 'Prologue', *Every Man in His Humour*, ed. David Bevington, in *Cambridge Ben Jonson,* I.21, 23.

115 Helen Moore, 'Jonson, Dekker, and the Discourse of Chivalry', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 12 (1999), 121–65 (p. 125).

116 Ben Jonson, *Epicoene,* ed. David Bevington, in *Cambridge Ben Jonson*, III, 4.1.63–65.

terms of civic and antimilitaristic principles. Edward I, for instance, although described by Jonson as 'warlike' (l. 179), bolsters and honours the nation by 'th'increase | Of trades and tillage, under laws and peace, | Begun by him' (ll. 179–81). His grandson, Edward III, is also celebrated, not for his characteristic military vigour but for establishing 'the trade of clothing, by which art were nursed | Whole millions to his service, and relieved | So many poor' (ll. 186–88). Despite its 'elaborate […] chivalric images', Norman Council argues that *Barriers* is 'not essentially chivalric in anything like the Tudor conception of the idea'.[117] In the Jacobean court's most chivalric entertainment, Jonson's emphasis on trade and peace is certainly striking. Council suggests that the parliamentary and economic advice offered by 'central figures from the myth of British chivalry [….] indicates that chivalry had lost its capacity to imitate British political ideals'.[118] Inasmuch as *Barriers* implies that chivalry is outdated and its bellicosity needs to be reined in, however, the militant cult surrounding Prince Henry was a reminder of how easily it could be politicised antagonistically in terms of foreign policy.

Chivalric forms and motifs continued to map a more antagonistic vision of England's duty in the protracted religious wars on the continent. With the Cleves-Jülich crisis quickly escalating, however, Jonson's own civic, moral, and sovereign duty was to urge a diplomatic approach to the situation in line with James's general strategy. Chivalry is not dismissed in *Barriers* but renegotiated and placed alongside civic honours and principles. Jonson, who had seen the horrors of war first-hand in Vere's regiment in the Netherlands in the 1590s, here advocates for a set of British political ideals which not only subdue the interventionist emphases of chivalry but encourage a court of learned and measured governors. Although *Barriers* consciously dissociates itself from conventional uses of Arthurian mythology, the room offered to chivalric forms and motifs gives tacit voice to the ambitions of the court faction eager for a military solution. Six months later, the Earl of Salisbury would ask the Commons to finance English military support in Cleves-Jülich, appealing to them to 'bend [their] cogitations to view how foreign states stand and how their affairs have relation to the state of this kingdom'.[119] As Rosara Joseph notes, this sort of foreign policy debate in the Commons,

---

117 Council, 'Ben Jonson', p. 273.

118 Council, 'Ben Jonson', p. 273.

119 Earl of Salisbury, quoted in *Proceedings in Parliament, 1610*, ed. by Elizabeth Read Foster, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), II, p. 136.

if unsolicited, represented an 'improper constitutional encroachment of the prerogative'.[120] Salisbury's address, then, clearly signals the prominence of and divisions within the foreign policy argument which *Barriers* attempts to reconcile.

Past and Present: 'Anachronic Chivalry'

'Chivalry is Shakespeare's subtlest anachronism', writes Ralph Berry in his *Shakespeare and the Awareness of Audience* (1985):

> It is always against ("back in") time. Merely by naming chivalry, one is drawn to acknowledging that people do not display it, towards investing the word with irony or regret. Chivalry, as a stage fact, is itself a kind of enamel, a glamorized coating of men and events with the colours and trappings of knighthood. It serves to identify a defunct ideology. […] For [Shakespeare], chivalry is less a political exercise than an interesting growth in the human mind. His fascination is with chivalry as a value-system in decay.[121]

It is useful to quote Berry's comment at length since it highlights some of the central principles and conclusions which, as we have seen, continue to shape the modern critical narrative of early modern chivalry. Chivalry, for these scholars, is dysfunctional, anachronistic, and ultimately stuck in the past. In order to deconstruct this general thesis, 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' operates on some central methodological and theoretical principles.

As a theoretical framework, I invoke the model provided by Alexander Wood and Christopher Nagel's *Anachronic Renaissance* (2010). This proposes a means for reading the untimely or out of fashion elements in Renaissance art as 'anachronic', rather than anachronistic (which 'carries with it the historicist assumption that every event and every object has its proper location within objective and linear time').[122] By contrast, 'the

---

120 Rosara Joseph, *The War Prerogative: History, Reform, and Constitutional Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 53.

121 Ralph Berry, *Shakespeare and the Awareness of Audience* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 109–10.

122 Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), p. 13.

anachronic artefact […] moves freely in time' and 'does not depend for its effect on a stable conception of the historicity of form':

> [t]o describe a work of art as an 'anachronism' is to say that the work is best grasped not as art, but rather as a witness to its times, or as an inalienable trace of history; it tries to tell us what the artwork *really is*. To describe the work of art as 'anachronic', by contrast, is to say what the artwork *does*, qua art.[123]

For Nagel and Wood, 'art' is the potential for 'conversation across time, a conversation more meaningful than the present's merely forensic reconstruction of the past'.[124] According to Wood and Nagel's model, reliance upon figures of the past is precisely how Renaissance artists often created a sense of newness and difference from what had come before. Indeed, the very power of art, they argue, is achieved 'precisely by complicating time, by reactivating prestigious forebears, by comparing events across time, by fabricating memories'.[125]

This offers a general model for thinking about chivalry on the early modern stage. Consider the Ghost of Old Hamlet as an example of the way in which chivalric motifs might complicate time. He comes from the past, in armour, demanding that both Hamlet and audience remember him — an act of memory which is vastly complicated and ambiguous. Old Hamlet conjures up with him an older world in order to urge action in the present — action to redress the past, change the present, and shape the future. But he is also a portent of political disorder, a symbol which 'bodes some strange eruption' (1.1.68) to Elsinore. To fix the chivalric symbolism of the battle clad Ghost to a specific moment in time is to miss its enormous theatrical and ideological power. Old Hamlet shows us a chivalry that is past, present, and future all at once. Time in *Hamlet* is utterly 'out of joint' (1.5.186).

Some of the fundamental principles underlying Nagel and Wood's theoretical approach to the temporality of material culture underpin Jonathan Gil Harris's seminal *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (2009). Harris deconstructs what he calls 'the national sovereignty model of temporality' (that obsessive tendency to periodize

---

123 Nagel and Wood, p. 14.

124 Nagel and Wood, p. 18.

125 Nagel and Wood, p. 18.

history) in order to explore what physical objects might tell us about time.[126] What emerges is a perhaps alarmingly unstable conception of the temporality of material culture where historical moments in fact lack a 'determining authority', 'firmly policed borders', and 'a shaping constitution' (Harris is using the metaphor of the 'nation-state').[127] Harris's definition of time as 'an *understanding* of the temporal relations among past, present, and future' is central to 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625'.[128] Much like the stage materials which Harris analyses, chivalric forms and ideas are inherited, repurposed, and redefined. Their past is inextricably also their present.

Although I pay some attention to the material culture of chivalry (armour in particular), this is a study about the symbolic representation of chivalric ideas, values, and rituals and, in particular, the ways in which playwrights deploy these in order to comment upon a number of different cultural discourses. The early modern stage offers a fertile space for anachronic representation as the destabilisation of our sense of past and present can be achieved both visually and linguistically. The latter is the focus of Lucy Munro's *Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590–1674* (2013). Indebted to Harris and Nagel and Wood, Munro offers a detailed account of how early modern authors deliberately use archaic language and literary styles in order to unpack intersections between past, present, and future. This, then, offers another important theoretical point of resistance against materialist historicist assessments of chivalry. '[A]rchaism', writes Munro:

> transforms aesthetic objects into new aesthetic objects; in its reinvigoration of old words and conventions, it turns history into the present, undermining the separation enacted by nostalgia. Furthermore, while archaism can invoke nostalgia, and can mimic its conservative tendencies, it is not reducible to nostalgia because it not only looks back to the past but also insists upon the present's ability to match past

---

126 Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 2.

127 Harris, *Untimely Matter,* p. 2.

128 Harris, *Untimely Matter,* p. 3. In a similar vein, Helen Cooper's *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London: Methuen Drama, 2010) shows 'the pervasiveness of those deep structures of medieval culture in Shakespeare's work and his times' (p. 1). See also *Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents*, ed. by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper, Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

> achievements and even, through the combination of archaism and neologism, to outstrip them.[129]

As an ideology which consciously promotes fierce competitiveness, chivalry is especially subject to this representational phenomenon. In *Barriers*, for instance, the historic catalogue of British kings performs an immediate and obvious comparative function in the present. In advising Henry what sort of prince (and later, king) he should strive to be, Merlin's speeches attempt to construct a symbolic future. Chivalry is inherited, renegotiated, and put to work in an ideal vision of the English state. As that future plays out, chivalric representation continues to map its intricacies.

This thesis demonstrates what an anachronic reading of the intersections between chivalric culture and early modern drama can achieve. As we see in *Barriers*, chivalric representation deliberately uses forms of the past to address the issues of the present. In order to read chivalric motifs and ideas on the early modern stage, I borrow from Helen Cooper's *The English Romance in Time* (2004). Here Cooper describes an individual romance motif as a 'meme', an 'idea that behaves like a gene in its ability to replicate faithfully and abundantly, but also on occasion to adapt, mutate, and therefore survive in different forms and cultures'.[130] We see this, for instance, in the chivalric concept of godly warfare unpacked in Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont. Over 500 years later, we can observe this idea at work in *Barriers* as Meliades attempts to revive chivalry as a soldier of God in the context of an escalating political conflict which was inextricably confessional in nature. Of course, the terms upon which this symbolic performance takes place differ significantly. Perhaps most fundamentally, the enemy of true Christianity is different; in 1095 it is the Turks; in 1610, it is the Habsburgs. This reminds us that chivalry was always a political tool — a way of coating political decisions with the rhetorical flourishes and ideological strategies of a fiercely pervasive and compelling honour culture. In the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace in 1610, the concept of godly warfare 'replicate[s] faithfully' but is adapted to an entirely different set of political and theological circumstances. It is of course a post-Reformation world, one where the idea of fighting for Christ is placed in conversation with the protracted

---

129 Lucy Munro, *Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590–1674* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 21.

130 Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3.

religious wars which plagued northern Europe over the Eighty Years' War. There is no space in Protestant discourse for a material promise of the remittance of penance. Nonetheless, the reward of heaven, for the deeds performed on earth, remains a driving impulse.[131]

In the anonymous account of Urban II's sermon, the same temporal process is at work as in *Barriers*. Paraphrasing the pope, the author records:

> Let the deeds of your ancestors move you and incite your minds to manly achievements; likewise, the glory and greatness of King Charles the Great, and his son Louis, and of your other kings, who have destroyed the kingdoms of the pagans, and have extended in these lands the territory of the Holy Church. […] Oh, most valiant soldiers and descendants of invincible ancestors, be not degenerate, but recall the valour of your forefathers.[132]

Although Jonson's emphases in *Barriers* are of course vastly different, fundamentally more civic than chivalric, the idea that chivalry operates by putting the past in present service remains pivotal. From its inception, chivalry was always looking back; as Nagel and Wood, Harris, and Munro show us, however, to read this simply as nostalgia is reductive. Chivalry reaches to the past in order to bring to life 'prestigious forebears' (Charlemagne and Louis the Pious in the case of Urban's speech; British kings in *Barriers*) and urge action in the present. '[B]y comparing events across time' and 'fabricating memories', chivalry complicates time and powerfully resists any neat conception of historicity.

This is notable since it enables us to dispel some of the false dichotomies which attempt to define chivalry as something distinctly medieval. It is hardly surprising that such an approach tends to read early modern chivalric representation as romantic, decadent, and divorced from its core reality of martial excellence (and therefore its ethos). The early modern knight's gradual disassociation from the military realities of his day, however, is in no way synonymous with the extermination, or even decline, of chivalric culture. To borrow one of Hadorn's favourite phrases, not only is chivalry 'alive and well' across Elizabethan and Jacobean England, it is flourishing. New chivalric orders continued to be established; a hugely pervasive duelling culture took hold;

---

131 See Debora Shuger, 'The Reformation of Penance', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71.4 (2008), 557–71.

132 *Gesta Francorum*, p. 31.

chivalric literature (romances, manuals, biographies, genealogies) and materials (armour, impresas) continued to be produced in astonishing number; and a centuries old tournament culture reached its artistic zenith where chivalry played an increasingly symbolic role in the cultural life of the early modern English court. The variety and breadth of chivalric material available in early modern England, both old and new, does anything but suggest a culture in decline; across the following chapters, the reader will become familiar a variety of ways in which chivalry continued to provide an ideological and linguistic framework for an extraordinary range of contemporary issues. Fundamental to the subsequent readings of early modern plays, then, is a fluid and malleable conception of chivalry — one where its motifs operate on the broad principles of Cooper's romance memes, not only surviving, but adapting to new contingent contexts.[133] What also emerges from this methodology is a more socially diverse understanding of chivalric culture than we are traditionally familiar with. As we will see, a conceptually fluid chivalry offers a language capable of articulating the ambitions, desires, and anxieties of diverse social groups and communities.

Summary

'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625' explores the intersections between chivalric culture and early modern drama by reading chivalry both anachronically and fluidly. Each of the subsequent four chapters addresses a separate cultural discourse; readings of early modern plays demonstrate how chivalric forms and language functioned as vehicles for discourses concerning the politics of courtship, the nature of true honour, mercantile aspiration, and religious difference. Chapter 1, 'Private Passion and Public Service', reads the early dramatic romance, *Clyomon and Clamydes* (c. 1576), and the court entertainment, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* (1581) to explore how chivalric forms and rituals informed the tension between the early modern knight's duty of obedience to his monarch and his own aristocratic prerogatives. Chapter 2, 'Memory, Revenge, and

---

133 Here I am indebted to the work of Malcolm Vale, Maurice Keen, and Marco Nievergelt, described above. The validity of this model for reading chivalry is underlined by the recent edited collection, *Chivalry and the Medieval Past*, ed. by Katie Stevenson and Barbara Gribling (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016) where each of the individual essays examines seriously a form of post-Renaissance chivalry.

the Duel of Honour' extends the comments on *Hamlet* here to provide another political reading of chivalry. Developing the notion of aristocratic chivalric prerogative, it focuses on the play's quasi duel of honour as a circumscribing vehicle of revenge. As a sort of transitional chivalric exercise, the duel underlines the temporal complexity at the heart of *Hamlet* and its protagonist's procrastinations: the incompatibility of the political worlds represented by Old Hamlet and Claudius. Chapter 3 moves away from an aristocratic focus with a dual reading of Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* and William Rowley's (c. 1600) *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* (c. 1618). These plays, I argue, assign chivalric values to the mercantile community in order to foreground serious ambitions concerning overseas expansion and civic militarism. Not an incongruous symbol, the hybrid figure of the merchant knight is a conscious appropriation which suggests significant points of contact between aristocratic and mercantile activity and identity. Finally, Chapter 4 offers another political reading of chivalry in Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* (1606). Focusing instead on a newly discovered revival in 1619, it reads Dekker's virulently anti-Catholic, anti-Spanish play as part of a wider theatrical tradition of post-Reformation apocalyptic drama and, more immediately, as participating in the extended print and performance history of the confessionally charged Jacobean history play. Combining an apocalyptic vision of history and chivalric language and imagery within a cultural framework of Elizabethan nostalgia, *The Whore of Babylon* became even more politically topical and sensitive in its 1619 revival than in its original context.

Although the thesis takes a chronological approach, it is not concerned with the evolution of 'chivalric drama'. Such a term, if it is even helpful, should concern the lost drama of the 1570s and 1580s; titles including *The Irish Knight*, *The Red Knight, and The Knight of the Burning Rock* of course imply a distinct interest in the chivalric.[134] Probably performed in the popular theatre as well as at court, these plays must have formed a natural adjunct to the flourishing tournament culture which was being established at Elizabeth's court (as with Leicester, theatre patrons were of course often also sponsors and participants in courtly entertainments). Rather, 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–

---

[134] Although these titles come from mid-Elizabethan Revels court records, Bristol civic records show that Sussex's Men were paid 20 shillings during the period of 29 July–4 August 1575 for a performance of *The Red Knight* at Bristol Guildhall (BRO: 04026(10)). See *Bristol: Records of Early English Drama*, ed. by Mark Pilkington (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 112.

1625' explores the ways in which chivalric motifs, language, ritual, and action infiltrate genres of all kinds. Unlike the arguments of Hays' *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance*, for instance, there are no attempts at generic redefinition. Instead, this thesis seeks to understand how chivalric representation in the early modern theatre maps a range of cultural discourses. We should therefore be conscious of the ways in which early modern chivalric representation can be circumscribed by genre. It will perhaps not be a surprise to find the view of chivalry offered by *Hamlet* as deceptive, and ultimately destructive. In the hands of a comedy like *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman*, however, chivalry becomes a discourse of social and civic pride for the mercantile community. This of course is not a hard rule but it reminds us of chivalry's ability to take vastly different forms and shapes in different contexts.

The above group of plays might appear an unusual combination for a study of early modern chivalry. Memory might lead us first to Shakespeare's histories, or Chapman's tragedies, with their arsenals of military characters and their persistent engagement with the early modern honour culture. Or we could sensibly turn to Jonsonian comedy where the chivalric pretensions of stock figures like Sir Petronel Flash and Sir Glorious Tiptoe reveal much about contemporary social attitudes towards chivalry. There is already some impressive scholarship addressing the chivalric aspects of several of these major plays, especially, unsurprisingly, those by Shakespeare.[135] Nonetheless, the overwhelming critical consensus of early modern chivalry centres on its apparent decadence, nostalgia, and performativity. 'Chivalry and English Drama, 1575–1625', by examining in detail the early modern theatre's engagement with chivalric culture, will provide the reader with a radically different picture. While it does not ignore the Hotspurs and Byrons of the early modern stage, it synthesises this body of criticism to inform readings of a combination of largely neglected plays. With the obvious and extreme exception of *Hamlet*'s almost unmanageable critical hinterland, the drama studied here has largely escaped scholarly attention. Reading chivalry in this

---

135 See for instance Moore; Mark Rose, 'Othello's Occupation: Shakespeare and the Romance of Chivalry', *English Literary Renaissance*, 25.3 (1985), 293–311; James N. Ortego II, 'Seeking the Medieval in Shakespeare: The Order of the Garter and the Topos of Derisive Chivalry', *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 35 (2010), 80–104; Lewis Walker, 'Unhorsing the Lustiest Challenger: Reflections on Chivalry in *Richard II* and *Henry IV, Part 1*', *Renaissance Papers* (2017) 155–78; and Jordi Coral, '"Maiden Walls That War Hath Never Entered": Rape and Post-Chivalric Military Culture in Shakespeare's *Henry V*', *College Literature*, 44.3 (2017), 404–35.

corpus of popular theatre not only affords productive comparisons with and revisions to the existing scholarship but extends these insights in new directions to offer a more holistic view of how chivalric culture operates in the early modern theatre. What emerges is a new understanding of early modern chivalry as dynamic, versatile, functional, and importantly, culturally relevant.

Chapter 1

Private Passion and Public Service: Elizabethan Courtly Chivalry in *The Four Foster Children of Desire* and *Clyomon and Clamydes*

Introduction

Clyomon and Clamydes (c. 1578), most likely the earliest extant dramatic romance of the English commercial theatre, presents us with an ostensibly 'medieval' representation of knighthood.[1] In the opening scene of this lively but little-studied play, Juliana, the princess of Denmark, tells Clamydes of her brother, Clyomon, who aspires to be a knight:

> […] but where he doth remain,
> Unto my parents is unknown, for once he did obtain
> Their goodwills for to go abroad awhile to spend his days
> In purchasing through active deeds both honour, laud, and praise,

---

[1] It is impossible to be conclusive about the play's dates of composition and first performance. The 1599 quarto edition advertises that the play was performed by the Queen's Men who were only formed in 1583. In their seminal book on the company, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth Maclean use this as evidence for a post-1583 date, a position supported most recently by Publicover, *Dramatic Geography* (p. 66). However, a 1570s date seems more probable based on play's stylistic components and the surviving Revels Office records from the period. This is generally the position taken by earlier critics including F.G. Fleay, W.W. Greg, Chambers, and Harbage. In *Clyomon and Clamydes: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Betty J. Littleton (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), Littleton suggests the liminal dates 1570–83. The most convincing evidence is the play's indebtedness to Thomas Vaux's 'No pleasure without some pain', printed in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576). It is of course possible, but less likely, that the playwright had seen a pre-publication copy of Vaux's poem. Based on this, the play's style (in particular, its alliterative fourteeners) and the abundance of 1570s chivalric drama indicated by the Revels records, I follow the date of 1578 suggested by Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 10 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–), II: 1567–1589 (2012), p. 189. It is possible that the Queen's Men revised the play when they would have purchased it at some point after 1583.

Whereby he might deserve to have the order of a knight.[2]

Enacting the conventional questing motif of chivalric romance, Clyomon adventures 'abroad' in search of opportunities to perform 'active deeds' by which he can earn 'honour, laud, and praise' and demonstrate his right to the orders of chivalry. In the following scene Clyomon confirms our expectation that these will be martial 'deeds': in a 30-line monologue on the insatiable glories of military life, the aspiring knight-to-be speaks the language of war, delighting in his imagination of the 'sound of trumpet' and 'drum and fife' which 'unto the fight doth noble hearts procure' (2.65–66). Through the association of war and nobility, Clyomon, prince of Swabia, self-identifies from the outset in conventional conservative chivalric terms. Through and through, it seems, he is a man of the battlefield. Chivalry, he tells us, is earned by 'force of hand' (2.72).

In many respects, this is hardly surprising: *Clyomon and Clamydes* after all takes the fourteenth-century French prose romance *Perceforest* (c. 1330–45) as its direct source. The play's deliberately archaic style (written in alexandrines), its real and fantastical landscapes and characters, and its central focus on the military adventures of its protagonists are of course common features of medieval chivalric romance. For Brian Walsh, the play 'evokes a kind of mythic, chivalric past'.[3] This is undoubtedly the case; however, I suggest *Clyomon and Clamydes* uses this 'mythic, chivalric past' to reflect upon entirely contemporary practices of knighthood. On closer inspection, for instance, Julia's lines suggest a more convoluted temporal process which complicates the play's *pastness* and encourages the audience to engage with its political immediacy. Julia's lack of information is strangely revealing. Clyomon's activity is shrouded in ambiguity: his whereabouts are unknown to his family and, at this point, to the audience. All we ultimately can be sure of is that 'once' he was granted permission to venture abroad to earn his spurs. Clyomon is therefore offered an extraordinary amount of unmonitored licence. His freedom, however, comes at a price. Not only does it depend on the

---

2 *A Modern Spelling Critical Edition of Sir Clyomon and Clamydes*, ed. by Arleane Ralph (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1996), p. 121 (1.71–75). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. On the authorship of *Clyomon and Clamydes*, see Ralph, pp. 25–38. See also Leonard R.N. Ashely, *Authorship and Evidence: A Study of Attribution and the Renaissance Drama Illustrated by the Case of George Peele (1556–1596*) (Geneva: Droz, 1968), pp. 25–29.

3 Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 31.

'goodwills' of king and queen, it generates a host of onerous obligations. The 'honour, laud and praise' which will earn Clyomon his knighthood is something to be 'purchas[ed]'. In other words, it implies a transaction, a process of exchange. The knight, then, is disenfranchised from his traditional autonomies and operates instead like a unit of monetary economy, fuelling a system by which it is ultimately contained. He is integral but ultimately subservient. This tension between the private passion of aristocratic prerogative and a knight's duties of loyalty and public service to his monarch is a defining mark of Elizabethan courtly chivalry.

This chapter explores the fractious, convoluted, but functional relationship between monarch and aristocracy as it is represented in the early Elizabethan theatre. It is indebted to Richard McCoy's concept of 'chivalric compromise' in his *The Rites of Knighthood* (1989) which elucidates the tensions within that 'ceremonial balance of power':

> Through its conventions of feudal loyalty and romantic devotion, Elizabethan chivalry affirmed Tudor sovereignty. At the same time, it glorified aristocratic militarism and traditional notions of honour and autonomy. The chivalric ideology thus combined deference and aggression, accommodating these dangerously incompatible, often contradictory impulses within its codes and customs. When the chivalric rituals worked, they allowed a compromise between the conflicting interests of the Elizabethan ruling class; this capacity to satisfy both crown and nobility explains the enduring popularity of chivalry in the sixteenth century.[4]

Although the 'enduring popularity' of chivalry depends on much more than this phenomenon of political negotiation, McCoy's thesis continues to provide an important model for reading Elizabethan courtly politics. Aristocratic conflicts and ambitions were played out in the Elizabethan court through the symbolic forms of chivalric romance. With varying levels of success, they contained the antagonisms and contradictions at the heart of Elizabethan chivalry: in particular, its fragile balance between personal aristocratic honour and submission to the monarch. 'The new chivalry', as Arthur Ferguson argues, 'could never entirely reconcile the elemental individualism of knight-errantry with the responsibilities of citizenship and an honour system based on public service'.[5] Queen Elizabeth's frequent need to curtail the self-serving chivalric enterprises

---

4 McCoy, *Rites of Knighthood*, p. 3.

5 Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition*, p. 139.

of some of her more belligerent courtiers clearly demonstrates a tension also at the centre of *Clyomon and Clamydes*.

Those interventions also spoke to the hazy and tacit rules of the 'chivalric compromise': there was no chivalric manual or contract which enumerated its systems and principles, resulting in a dangerously fluid space for individualistic chivalric self-advancement. This ambiguity is reflected symbolically in the nebulous space afforded to Clyomon, for instance, both geographical and ideological: 'abroad awhile' to perform 'active deeds'. As Juliana's lines reveal, however, Clyomon's chivalry, although ostensibly unconstrained, is ultimately bound by parental/monarchical conditions which, in the finale of the play, easily overpower his aristocratic prerogatives. The knighthood for which Clyomon strives brings these contradictory principles together: it at once institutionalises and sanctions his chivalry and provides it a platform and tradition for social, political, economic, and military aggrandizement.

Lawrence Stone's *Crisis of the Aristocracy* (1965) suggests that this tension led the Tudor monarchy to adopt a set of policies aimed at centralizing its powers and explicitly suppressing those of the aristocracy.[6] We know now, however, that this is an overly simplistic model which exaggerates the extent of the state's control as well as the hostility between monarch and aristocracy. A considerable body of scholarly work, especially literary, has effectively overturned some of these historical assumptions. In her study of Essex, Janet Dickinson urges scholars to 'rethink our interpretation of the chivalric values that supported the relationship between the Crown and the nobility'.[7] Dickinson emphasises a 'substantial continuity of values between the medieval and early modern periods'; the 'chivalric ethos', she argues, 'should be understood in terms of evolution rather than radical change'.[8] Although it faced social, political, military, and

---

6 Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965). Stone's book strongly influences the work of Mervyn James. See *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), a collection of essays written by James from the mid-60s to mid-80s which, in particular, advance Stone's emphasis on the increasing hostility and conflict between the Tudor monarchy and its nobility. McCoy's *Rites of Knighthood* is also indebted to these ideas.

7 Janet Dickinson, *Court Politics and the Earl of Essex, 1589–1601* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), p. 6.

8 Dickinson, p. 9.

economic challenges, the early modern aristocracy evolved and reinvented itself in response to these pressures, often with huge success, and remained very much at the core of court life.[9] Chivalry remained a pivotal part of its cultural arsenal in its assertion of social and political pre-eminence. This manifested itself, for instance, in the reestablishment of the post of Earl Marshal (vacant since 1590) and the Court of Chivalry (which had not met for over three decades) for Essex in 1597 — a position he would use to claim self-autonomous constitutional prerogatives.[10]

Perhaps the most significant chivalric value continued from the medieval period was a persistent and almost obsessive emphasis on the importance of personal honour.[11] Indebted to Stone's thesis, Ferguson argues that the challenges faced by the early modern knight rendered 'the elemental knight-errantry of the medieval tradition itself an anachronism'.[12] Knight-errantry, however, lacks any historical foundation; a wandering knight like Clyomon was hardly politically useful (or financially sustainable) in either the medieval or early modern periods. Rather, the symbolic chivalric quests found in texts like *Perceforest* and plays like *Clyomon and Clamydes* spoke to the importance of military ambition and individualism inherent in aristocratic culture — that need, as Clyomon and Julia both tell us, to earn one's chivalry through the skilled demonstration of arms. As Marco Nievergelt has shown, the symbolism of the quest functioned broadly across the medieval and early modern periods as authors adapted older forms in response to their contingent contexts to reflect upon 'the shifting sense of identity, self-understanding and self-representation'.[13] In *Clyomon and Clamydes*, the chivalric quests of its eponymous protagonists who pursue honour at all costs justifies

---

9 See G.W. Bernard, *The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility: A Study of the Fourth and Fifth Earls of Shrewsbury* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985); Barry Coward, *The Stanleys, Lords Stanley, and Earls of Derby, 1385–1672: The Origins, Wealth, and Power of a Landowning Family* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), and Susan Doran, 'The Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe, Third Earl of Sussex' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of London, 1979).

10 See McCoy, pp. 79–102. On the history of the Court of Chivalry, see George Drewry Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry: A Study of the Civil Law in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

11 Publicover, p. 113. See also Malcolm Vale, *War and Chivalry*, p. 174.

12 Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition*, p. 107.

13 Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, p. 3.

their political and social power as defenders of the state. They also demonstrate a public interest in the rituals of knighthood in mid-Elizabethan England, the sort which some would have seen played in the chivalric court spectacles opened to public spectators. For several Elizabethan knights, these military performances came hand in hand with a claim to an older set of feudal aristocratic prerogatives which resisted monarchical authority.

Daniel Eisenberg has drawn attention to the 'pseudo-historicity' of chivalric romance, exploring the various strategies by which authors sought to '[resolve] the question of the nature of their works by de-emphasizing their fictional quality'.[14] It may be tempting to ascribe the same sorts of strategy to *Clyomon and Clamydes*: its title page describes the play as a 'history' and its protagonists as princes of real-life geographies (Denmark and Swabia). 'History' in the period, however, is not synonymous with any real claim to 'historical truth', instead broadly signifying any kind of narrative, typically based in the past. *Clyomon and Clamydes* is explicit and purposeful in its fictionality: its protagonists, although princes of actual states, move in both real and imaginary spaces throughout the play without need for any explanation.[15] This is typical of the flexible verisimilitude of romance which, as Gillian Beer writes, consciously creates 'a world which is never fully equivalent to our own although it must remind us of it if we are to understand it at all'.[16] Even as Clyomon and Clamydes move through imaginary spaces like the Isle of Strange Marshes and confront monsters such as the play's Flying Serpent, their fictional quests reflect the chivalric ambitions of some of Elizabeth's more feudally-minded knights.

Northrop Frye describes the 'narrative' of romance as 'essentially an imitation of ritual or symbolic human action'. 'This is clearest in drama', he continues, since 'the presentation of the play is itself ritualistic'.[17] Frye argues that the motifs of chivalric

---

14 Daniel Eisenberg, 'The Pseudo-History of the Romances of Chivalry', *Quaderni Ibero-Americani*, 41 (1972), 81–102 (p. 81).

15 See Lorna Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 24–26.

16 Gillian Beer, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 3.

17 Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 55.

romance 'all form a ritualized action expressing the ascendancy of a horse-riding aristocracy. They also express that aristocracy's dreams of its own social function, and the idealized acts of protection and responsibility that it invokes to justify that action'.[18] In *Clyomon and Clamydes*, the 'rescued damsels and beloved ladies', its protagonists' 'centripetal' martial adventures, and the 'perilous beasts' and enchanters they encounter are not simply expressions of nostalgia and fantasy, but symbolic actions which emphasise the mid-Elizabethan nobility's claims to its traditional military function.[19] This was a claim with multivalent implications; one of the major strengths of McCoy's *Rites of Knighthood*, for instance, is its archival evidence of Essex's antiquarian commissions to establish explicitly aristocratic powers (which sidestepped or impinged upon monarchical authority) for his office of Earl Marshal. By asserting their rights to the military function of the old nobility, several Elizabethan knights were therefore registering a broader ambition to exercise a set of social and political privileges which had typically been enjoyed by a feudal aristocracy. The ostensibly fantastical and nostalgic adventures of knights errant like Clyomon, then, gesture towards this phenomenon, speaking to an innate aristocratic desire to, as the protagonist of George Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois* (c. 1603) would put it twenty-five years later, 'Let me be king myself […] | And do a justice that exceeds the law'.[20]

'Shakespeare's stage', writes McCoy, 'like Spenser's Faery Land, sustains a kind of utopian displacement, its distance from the pressures of immediate controversy allowing a more detached perspective on its social situation'.[21] Compositions like these, McCoy suggests, were 'written at a greater distance from courtly performance and the urgent intensity of its conflicts'.[22] This is a logical conclusion: the early modern theatre was hardly a site for the mediation of aristocratic conflicts. Nonetheless, the dynamics of Elizabethan courtly chivalry filter through almost seamlessly into a play like *Clyomon*

---

18 Frye, p. 57.

19 Frye, p. 57.

20 George Chapman, *Bussy D'Ambois*, ed. by Nicholas Brooke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964), 2.1.198–99. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

21 McCoy, p. 6.

22 McCoy, p. 4.

and Clamydes. Although theatre might operate on the broader utopian plane which McCoy suggests, revivals of plays like Shakespeare's *Richard II* (c. 1595) and Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* (c. 1606) in opportune political moments, as we shall see, speak powerfully to the subversive and contentious potential of early modern drama.

In order to better understand the perspective offered by the 'utopian displacement' of *Clyomon and Clamydes*, this chapter first offers a new reading of *The Four Foster Children of Desire* (1581). Performed at Whitehall Palace on 15 and 16 May 1581 in front of a visiting French embassy, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* offers us valuable insights into the competing interests of its aristocratic participants within a precisely defined diplomatic context. In comparison to the public theatre, the difference here, as with other court entertainments, is that noblemen take the stage themselves in order to enact their own designs. A careful analysis of its symbolic and florid uses of chivalric forms reveals an allegorical entertainment deeply invested in the political intricacies of the diplomatic event it was marking. Here, the military and political ambitions of performing noblemen are given significant space and are in tension with their obligations of service to Queen Elizabeth. *The Four Foster Children of Desire* of course marks an actual major diplomatic event. The utopian imaginative world of *Clyomon and Clamydes* articulates the same ideological competition from an external perspective on the court, albeit at a significant remove. Within a thematic framework of courtship and romantic intrigue typical of medieval chivalric romance, both entertainments play out internal courtly tensions under a veil of submission. The concerns, however, are inextricable from the present moment, demonstrating how real and fictional knights repurposed older romance forms in a manner entirely contingent upon the political, social, and military intricacies and complexities of their day. By unpacking the different ways by which these two texts manage expectations about aristocratic behaviour, this chapter elucidates the interplay between courtly and popular chivalric forms in mid-Elizabethan England.

Chivalric Performance at the Elizabethan Court: Sir Philip Sidney and *The Four Foster Children of Desire*

Despite the explicit fictionality and theatricality of performances such as *Clyomon and Clamydes* and *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, the chivalric ideals which they

championed served as cornerstones for Elizabethan aristocratic behaviour. The value system which the aristocracy found in these sorts of fictional and symbolic representations was further supplemented by more explicitly non-fictional and realistic chivalric literature which ranged from conduct manuals, heraldic biographies, genealogies, and treatises to detailed records of tournaments and other courtly martial exercises. Together, these provided a vast corpus of chivalric material which gave energy to and shaped the aristocracy's continued claims to social and military predominance. By emphasising the primacy of individual glory within a diverse and convoluted compass of chivalric expectation, several of these texts and performances put forward a more radical application of chivalry which was generally unfavourable to the monarch and the exercise of her sovereign authority.

Sir Philip Sidney, most likely the main author of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, was drawn to this more traditional and individualistic vision of chivalry. In his *An Apology for Poetry* (c. 1579), Sidney claimed that 'I have known men, that even with reading *Amadis de Gaule* (which God knoweth wanteth much of perfect poesy) have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage'.[23] In the same manner as *Clyomon and Clamydes* and *Barriers*, Sidney's comments demonstrate how contemporary ideas of aristocratic behaviour in England were frequently shaped by medieval European literary contexts.[24] Sidney's remark, however, is most salient in its demonstration of the direct interplay between life and art. Although critical of its literary merits, Sidney acknowledges in *Amadis* a sort of literary roadmap for the real-life expression of some key chivalric principles. Like Clyomon, hungry to earn his knighthood via the conventional route, Sidney notably prioritises 'courage' as the paramount chivalric virtue.

---

23 Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry, or the Defence of Poesy*, ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd, rev. by R.W. Maslen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 95.

24 Sidney would have presumably been reading Nicolas de Herberay's intermediary French version which translated the first eight books of the twelve-book Amadis cycle (1540–48). Aside from small fragmentary English versions of the romance, Anthony Munday first translated the Amadis cycle into English (via Herberay's text) in five volumes which appeared in print between 1589 and 1618. See Helen Moore, *Amadis in English.*

Sidney's emphasis on bravery in battle echoes the sentiments of several early modern chivalric manuals. In Sir Thomas Hoby's 1561 English translation of Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), for instance, the author advises:

> Where the Courtier is at a skirmish, or assault, or battle upon the land, or in such other places of enterprise, he ought to work the matter wisely in separating himself from the multitude, and undertake his notable and bold feats which he hath to do with as little company as he can, and in the sight of noble men that be of most estimation in the camp, and especially in the presence and (if it were possible) before the very eyes of his king or great personage he is in service withal.[25]

Castiglione's treatise, Ian Frederick Moulton suggests, was 'quite possibly the single most popular secular book in sixteenth century Europe, published in dozens of editions in all major European languages'.[26] By 1612, it had already reached its tenth English edition. In these lines, Castiglione hardly promotes an image of collective military unity, instead encouraging the sorts of reckless and self-serving demonstrations of military prowess which monarchs like Elizabeth were keen to curtail. '[P]laces of enterprise', spaces of military combat offered the opportunity for 'notable' and 'bold' personal displays. Moreover, these are 'feats' which the knight 'hath to do'. Herein, however, lies one of the fundamental complexities of early modern chivalric performance: the knight is at once asked to '[separate] himself' and to perform his 'service'. He is supposed to strive for independence, but at the same time to *demonstrate* that independence 'especially in the presence and […] before the very eyes of his king', thus inadvertently indicating the very network of power he seeks to escape. Successful chivalric performance and the subsequent rewards it can bring depend on military and political calculation, on the knight's ability to 'work the matter wisely'.

Castiglione's emphasis on military action 'in the sight of noble men' generates an image of chivalry as inherently performative, as something to be vaunted. The emphasis on social performativity suggests some of the broader artistic proficiencies which were increasingly expected of the early modern knight. Although Castiglione defends bearing arms as the foremost profession of the early modern aristocrat, for instance, he is careful

---

25 Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by Sir Thomas Hoby, ed. by J.H. Whitfield (London: Dent, 1974), p. 95.

26 Ian Frederick Moulton, *Love in Print in the Sixteenth Century: The Popularization of Romance* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 27.

to emphasise the importance of a humanist education, proficiency in the arts and music, and rhetorical elegance. *The Book of the Courtier*, of course, predates the Elizabethan texts considered here by half a century. Paying detailed attention to a host of other social accomplishments, it therefore already complicates the more traditional image of the knight in the early sixteenth century. Indeed, for Sydney Anglo, these sorts of changes reflect an 'immense shift of meaning' which generally signifies 'the transmutation of knight into courtier or gentlemen'.[27] As much as these social facets might challenge a conventional view of knighthood, however, a more fluid analysis demonstrates how an increasing emphasis on artistic proficiency invested chivalric representation with significant symbolic potential. Amongst their diverse implications, the chivalric fictions staged at Elizabeth's court continued to articulate the ambitions of an aristocracy still in touch with its military responsibilities.

This dual identity as statesman and soldier is reflected in Henry Goldwell's dedication of *The Four Foster Children of Desire* to Roland Bracebridge, alnager for Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire at the time of publication in 1581. Although the relationship between the two is unclear, Goldwell celebrates his patron's 'knowledge in approved martial chivalry' (71). He continues:

> As report hath rung forth your deserved worthiness, and flying Fame hath resounded your service, both in green youth, and these your grave years, employed as well in wars as in peace, in quailing the enemy, as in ruling your country, in adventuring abroad, in advertising at home, then a conductor, now a director, then as valiant as Mars, now made a civil magistrate, then boldly in battle till the last blow, now busied at home in training up soldiers, and to be short, then accounted a Captain, like Achilles for courage, now esteemed a Scipio for singular counsel. (71)

Goldwell constructs his praise through a contrast of military and civic achievements: Bracebridge is at once a 'Mars' and 'a civil magistrate', 'a Captain, like Achilles', and a councillor like 'Scipio'. Encompassing a range of ostensibly antithetical principles, he is a man of 'war' and of 'peace'. The 'Tudor monarchy', claims Ferguson, owed much of its success to its ability to tap the administrative talents of the governing classes'.[28] Local ledger records reveal that Bracebridge had been in his post for three decades, also

---

27 Sydney Anglo, 'Introduction', in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, ed. by Sydney Anglo (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), pp. xi–xvi (p. xi).

28 Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition*, p. 59.

serving as Mayor of High Wycombe in 1575, Alderman in 1578, and Bailiff in 1579.[29] Goldwell's contrast between his military and civic achievements is made along the lines of age: a soldier in his 'green youth' and a stateman in his 'graver years'. Clearly, then, Bracebridge has been incorporated into the bureaucratic and administrative functions of the state. Whether a soldier or a civic authority, however, his various positions are always described in terms of 'service' and 'employ[ment]'. As in *Barriers*, the 'deserved worthiness' and 'Fame' which both can win underline a fluid concept of honour in the early modern period, one which encompasses radically different activities and principles. It suggests no contradiction to Goldwell to present *The Four Foster Children of Desire* as a collection of 'courtly and knightly discourses', especially to a man 'who in times past have been, as gallant a courtier as a valiant soldier' (72). Nonetheless, he needs to make the distinction, perhaps suggesting their inherent incompatibility. Either way, this sort of transition from the battlefield to civic government was common and spoke to the range of qualities which were increasingly expected of the early modern knight. Like Ophelia's conception of Hamlet, he was asked to be 'the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue', and 'sword' all at once (3.1.145).

Sidney's career underlines the capability of the early modern knight to inhabit both these social and military spheres. Sidney was a politician and diplomat from the age of eighteen, serving both at home (as MP for Shrewsbury and later Kent) and abroad through his involvement in various diplomatic visits to the continent. Throughout his personal correspondence, literary works, and performances in courtly entertainments, however, Sidney emerges an enthusiastic proponent of militant Protestantism hungry for military action and political advancement. In a letter dated 2 May 1578, Huguenot friend and mentor, Hubert Languet, reprimands Sidney for complaining of 'becoming too slack from overmuch leisure' and warns against the tendencies of 'most of those […] born in high places'. These men, claims Languet, 'have been attacked by the madness of "trying to make a name for themselves through human slaughter"'. Aware of Sidney's military inclinations and belligerent approach to foreign policy, Languet's plea to turn his 'extraordinary gifts of mind and spirit' to a 'different sensibility' was ultimately in

---

29 *The First Ledger Book of High Wycombe*, ed. by R.W. Greaves (London: Buckinghamshire Record Society, XI, 1956 [for 1947]), pp. 95–97.

vain.[30] Sidney had been with Languet at the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in August 1572, early in his diplomatic education abroad. Having witnessed thousands of French Protestants slaughtered and forced to flee Catholic persecution, Sidney's interventionist politics was always shaped by a sense of the shared plight of his European co-religionists which he had seen first-hand.[31]

Operating on the same ideological framework as the Crusades, Sidney (under the factional authority of Leicester) used chivalry symbolically to advocate for military intervention — in his case, however, in the name of continental Protestantism. Sidney's death by gunshot at the 1586 Battle of Zutphen underscored the seriousness of those confessionally-charged military ambitions and commitments. It was also a reminder, however, that the military world in which the knight performed was radically different, its technologies and methods always evolving. The knight fighting with sword on horseback was of course an actual anachronism. Men like Sidney, however, keenly took advantage of the military responsibilities prescribed to them by birth, adapting to contemporary techniques of warfare in order to at once defend the nation and assert their own noble masculinity, as well as the social and political claims which come with it. Robert E. Stillman characterises Sidney's political thought as a 'tyrannomachist politics in conjunction with an anti-confessional piety'.[32] Sensitive to the potential abuses of divine sovereign authority, Sidney had a neo-feudal attachment to the 'rites of knighthood' which the future king, Henry Bolingbroke, claims in the opening scene of *Richard II*.[33] As McCoy notes, this 'typically pointed Shakespearean pun' underlines the inextricability of the ritual customs of knighthood and its participants' claim to a certain

---

30 Herbert Languet to Philip Sidney, 2 May 1578 (AS 66), in *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by Roger Kuin, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), I, pp. 839–42 (pp. 840–41).

31 A more cynical reading of Sidney's international Protestantism might take account of the fact that Sidney was more likely to receive recognition on the continent. As Jan van Dorsten puts it, 'Without any doubt, Sidney's political prestige was always greater abroad than it was in England', in 'The Final Year', in *Creation of a Legend*, pp. 16–24 (p. 16).

32 Robert E. Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 2.

33 William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. Anna Pruitt, *New Oxford Shakespeare*, 1.1.75.

degree of self-autonomy.[34] Both on the battlefield and in the court entertainment, Sidney's chivalric performances operated on the belief that it was his aristocratic birth-right to challenge the limits of sovereign authority. With their attendant knightly exercises, court spectacles like *The Four Foster Children of Desire* conjoined the military and the theatrical, providing Sidney with a limited symbolic platform which he typically used in the service of his interventionist approach to the contingent confessional complexities of Europe, especially the Netherlands.

Unsurprisingly, Sidney's military and religious commitments were at the centre of *The Four Foster Children of Desire.* Described by H.R. Woudhuysen as the 'most important and exciting' spectacle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* plays a key interpretative role within the extensive festivities staged for the visiting French embassy.[35] Over a six week period, Elizabeth's court hosted and entertained over 500 French commissioners as part of the ongoing Anglo-French marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon (before 1576), and heir to the French throne. Sidney had vested interests in the marriage question; aged only seventeen, he travelled to France in June 1572 as part of the initial embassy for the negotiations, just two months before the massacre. By 1579, Sidney's politics had only hardened, and he was overly explicit in a letter to the queen about the views of the Leicester faction at court. Not only was the proposed interconfessional union offensive to their own religious sensibilities, but it would clearly also encourage a more diplomatic approach to England's political and military role in the religious wars of Europe. By the time of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, the use of chivalry to challenge monarchical authority by animating and articulating the militant confessional alternative was familiar, if not frustrating, symbolic territory for the queen.

Performed in the Whitehall tilting yard, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* dramatizes an attempt by the eponymous protagonists' (played by Sidney, Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Frederick Windsor, and Philip Howard, the Earl of Arundel) to lay siege to 'the Castle or Fortress of perfect beauty' (the royal viewing gallery at the end of the

---

34 McCoy, p. 1.

35 H.R. Woudhuysen, 'Leicester's Literary Patronage: A Study of the English Court, 1578–1582' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis: University of Oxford, 1980), p. 318.

Whitehall tiltyard where Elizabeth was seated).[36] In perhaps its most famous spectacle, the power dynamics of the Elizabethan court were laid bare by the narrative. In conventional chivalric protocol, a challenge was issued a month before on 16 April by a 'Martial messenger of Desires fostered Children' (75). 'Incouraged with the valiaunt counsaile of neuer fainting DESIRE, and by the same assured', the challengers here assert that 'by the right of inheritaunce euen from euer, the FORTRESSE of BEAVTIE doth belong to her Fostered Children' (75). The language is bold and pointed as Sidney, Greville, Windsor, and Arundel bypass the constraints of sovereign rule altogether. Not only 'encouraged' but 'assured' by the 'valiaunt counsaile' of their 'neuer fainting' ambitions, they claim their rights of knighthood.

The military and political sit side by side here as the chivalric assault symbolically signifies a constitutional challenge to the sovereign's authority. Showcased especially by the tilting and the fighting at the barriers, the foster children's ceremonial demonstration of martial prowess comes hand in hand with a claim to political power owed to them 'by the right of inheritaunce euen from euer'. In other words, chivalric ritual and political functionality are intrinsically inseparable as performance and work blend into one. This neo-feudal demand to exercise the political self-autonomy often afforded to earlier aristocracies, something they claim as their birth right 'euen from euer', is used to assert ownership of the Fortress of Perfect Beauty. Seated within, Elizabeth of course serves as the emblem of 'Perfect Beauty' — the body natural of the state — and her 'Fortress' its body politic, the constitutional exercise of its power.[37] For

---

36 The text of the *Four Foster Children of Desire* comes from Henry Goldwell's *Brief Declaration*, recorded in the Staioners' Register on 1 July 1581. It reappeared in the 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* which replaced Goldwell's prefatory material with some contextual information about the embassy and included some additional passages. The text has most recently been edited by Elizabeth Goldring and David Parrott in *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources,* ed. by Elizabeth Goldring, Faith Eales, Elizabeth Clarke, and Jayne Elisabeth Archer, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), III, pp. 66–93 (p. 75). All further references to the text are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. Goldring and Parrott collate Goldwell and Holinshed's texts and also include elements of an eyewitness account in a letter written in London from a Monsieur Nallot, translated by Emma Herdman.

37 In Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the Body Politic*, ed. and trans. by Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), she imagines the knight as the 'hand and arms' of the body politic because 'they have the burden of defending

all their audacity, however, the challengers are ultimately restrained by twenty-two knightly defendants of the crown. After two days of combat, the Fortress proves unassailable and the four foster children of desire surrender and 'afforde their most humble hearted submission' (93) to the queen. What begins as a bold declaration of aristocratic prerogative therefore ends in a demonstration of courtly subservience. It was a reminder that in this 'ceremonial balance of power', as McCoy puts it, Elizabeth, even as she 'conceded a great deal', always had the 'upper hand'.[38]

Anglo's claim that these sorts of Elizabethan spectacle were nothing more than 'anachronistic games' can be easily dismissed.[39] *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, for instance, not only responds directly to the diplomatic moment at hand, but also demonstrates the right of its performing aristocracy to be a political player in its negotiation. At the confessional and factional level, for instance, the entertainment appears to acknowledge its French audience. If anything, it in fact prioritizes it: although Sidney and Greville were firmly Protestant and opposed to the marriage, Windsor and Arundel were Catholics and aristocrats of considerably higher social status. Here, then, we have another dimension to McCoy's 'ceremonial balance of power', the message to the French embassy presumably that domestic Catholics lived in functional harmony with Protestants in England (Anjou would no doubt require some guarantees about the religious liberties of Catholics as part of the negotiations). Ending in surrender to sovereign authority, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* appears to further dilute the scope of contentious aristocratic agency, generating an image of internal confessional accord and intransigent allegiance to the queen. Even if unsuccessful, however, the entertainment nonetheless allegorises an attempt to infiltrate 'the fortress of Perfect Beauty', its body politic. Through both the initial motives of the four foster children and the space given to aristocratic self-display, the image of courtly harmony and accord is therefore symbolically deconstructed.

The entries of the four foster children clearly distinguish their comparative social statuses. As superiors, Arundel and Windsor not only enter first but their displays are

---

the law of the prince and the polity' and because 'they ought push all harmful and useless things aside' (p. 4).

38 McCoy, pp. 3, 8.

39 Anglo, *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, p. xiii.

markedly more extravagant than Sidney's and Greville's. Arundel, for instance, is accompanied by 'Two gentlemen vshers, iiii. Pages riding on foure spare horses, and twentie of his Gentlemen' as well as 'sixe trumpetters' and 'xxxi. yeomen' (78). Sidney, by contrast, although attended by the same number of ushers, pages, and trumpeters, has only 'thirtie gentlemen & yeoman' (79). The distinction might seem trivial (amounting to a difference of twenty-one gentlemen and yeomen) but it functions as a deliberate social marker. Although the main spectacle of *The Four Foster Children of Desire* was financed by the crown, court entertainments were, as Steven May reminds us, 'costly for their participants' and something on which Sidney personally 'undoubtedly spent a good deal of money'.[40] As much as they were honouring the monarch and their French audience, Sidney, Greville, Windsor, and Arundel were also advertising their own predominant social and military identities directly before them.

Courtly chivalric performance was also an opportunity for knights to communicate their own individual frustrations and ambitions directly to the monarch. Unsurprisingly, the symbolism of these idiosyncratic displays is abstruse, further hampered interpretatively by the absence of historical details. Not only were the heraldic devices used deliberately cryptic, but they were in complex interplay with a number of other elements: the participants' political views, both current and historic; the way in which that reflected upon the contingent diplomatic occasion; and the broader interplay with the spectacle's military and theatrical designs. Although a spectacle like *The Four Foster Children of Desire* marks a specific historical event, these individual performances radically complicate the temporal process. Sidney's appearance in 'armor part blewe' (78), for instance, might have been a glance towards his performance as the Blue Knight in the 'Callophisus Challenge' tilt earlier that January (where Windsor and Arundel were also central performers). In the month before *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, Sidney's increasingly desperate hopes for social and political advancement received a brutal blow when Leicester's first son was born, 'thereby cancelling Philip's central status as Robert Dudley's chosen male heir'.[41] Sidney's response in his next Accession

---

40 Steven May, 'Sir Philip Sidney and Queen Elizabeth', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700,* 2 (1990), 257–67 (p. 259). See also Alan Young, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Tournament Impresas', *Sidney Newsletter*, 6.1 (1985), 6–24 (p. 17).

41 Michael G. Brennan, *The Sidneys of Penshurst and the Monarchy, 1500–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 85.

Day tiltyard appearance (17 November 1581), according to William Camden, was to appear with the device 'SPERAVI' (I hope) crossed out, 'to show his hope therein was dashed'.[42] Clearly, these were much more than 'anachronistic games'.

In his chosen device for *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, Sidney regretfully acknowledges the limits of his own power: 'Written vpon' the 'coats' of each of his retinue of yeoman, gentlemen, and trumpeters was a 'scrowle or bande of siluer' with the 'poesie or sentence […] both before and behinde, *Sic nos non nobis*' ('Thus we work not for ourselves') (79). Following the birth of Leicester's son, Sidney was forced to confront the reality of his social status and the external limitations placed on his ambition. 'Sic nos non nobis' was ostensibly an expression of servitude, but one clearly made by constraint rather than by free will. Whether or not the French embassy would have read anything into this symbolic gesture of frustrated submission is difficult to say. Although less playful, the device recalled Sidney's earlier New Year's gift to the queen of a diamond encrusted whip and captured the same power dynamic. For Louis Montrose, the gift of the whip was 'sufficiently ambiguous to allow the symbol of Sidney's contrition and obedience to insinuate its own antithesis, an aesthetic sublimation of the giver's antipathy to the recipient'.[43] Effectively disinherited from the title, lands, and wealth he was due to inherit from his uncle, Sidney's much more visible antipathy in *The Four Foster Children of Desire* must, to some extent, reflect those personal frustrations.

That the 'specific meaning' of the motto, as Katherine Duncan-Jones argues, 'remains tantalizingly obscure' reflects the ambiguous principles and mechanics of Elizabethan political courtship.[44] Indeed, for Catherine Bates, 'ambivalence' is 'the governing principle of courtship' in the Elizabethan period. This, she argues, stems from the semantic evolution of the verb 'to court' which evolved from its spatial implications ('to be at court') to signify a behavioral characteristic — 'wooing'.[45] Even Goldwell

---

42 William Camden, quoted in Brennan, p. 85.

43 Louis Adrian Montrose, 'Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1977), 3–35 (p. 28).

44 Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Sidney's Personal Imprese', p. 323.

45 Catherine Bates, *The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 4–8. Bates records how '[a]n

acknowledges this ambiguity: although he only describes the entries and devices of a handful of participants 'for breuities sake', he notes the 'sundrie inuention, which for that some of them be mistical and not knowen to manie' (81). While *The Four Foster Children of Desire* could offer a disenchanted knight like Sidney a platform to express his grievances, for others it was an opportunity for contrition. Following the entries of Henry Grey, Sir Thomas Perrott, Anthony Cooke, and Thomas Ratcliffe, the four sons (Thomas, Henry, William, and Robert) of Sir Francis Knollys appeared 'all in like armour' (88). As Council has evidenced, the Knollys family were out of favour with Elizabeth at the time as a result of both Leicester's secret marriage to Lettice Knollys (Sir Francis's daughter) and their own association with the Leicester-Sidney faction and its vocal position on the Anglo-French marriage.[46]

'[V]ttred by one of their Pages' (88), the speech of the four brothers clearly expresses regret at their subsequent loss of royal favour. Initially, the brothers acknowledge the queen's intransigent authority in conventional terms: 'No vndermining may preuaile' against Elizabeth who 'will not stirre for either fraude or force' (88). From some further initial gestures of servitude and praise, the Knollys brothers move to reflect upon their current predicament. A 'long time fostered with fauourable countenance, & fedde with sweet fancies', they lament that they are 'now of late (alas) wholy giuen ouer to griefe & disgraced by disdain' (89). As Woudhuysen acknowledges, '[t]he Knollys brothers' bid for royal favour is quite clear'.[47] Their self-presentation as 'seruantes […] deuout to do [Elizabeth's] wil' clearly fits into the allegory's wider framework of submission. This framework, however, is complicated at the end of the speech where the brothers in fact clarify that their service is conditional: 'They dout not the victorie if only they may find some litle shew from their Saint in fauour of their enterprise' (89). Their devotion and duty to the queen is therefore explicitly reciprocal: 'victorie' is undoubted, guaranteed that Elizabeth 'find some litle shew […] in fauour of their enterprise'.

---

identical semantic shift took place in the major European languages […] at more or less the same time' (p. 8).

46 Norman Council, '"O Dea Certe": The Allegory of "The Fortress of Perfect Beauty"', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 39.4 (1976), 329–42 (pp. 338–39).

47 Woudhuysen, p. 338.

Sidney's role as one of the foster children naturally placed him in a more antagonistic position within the allegory. Even before he had word of Leicester's new heir, however, Sidney was characteristically forthright in his approach to the queen and her political decisions. Presumably acting as a sort of spokesman for the Leicester faction, Sidney is strikingly audacious in his 1579 'Letter to Queen Elizabeth Touching Her Marriage with the Monsieur'. Asking Elizabeth to 'excuse […] [his] boldness', he acknowledges his social and political transgression from the outset.[48] This conventional gesture of obedient courtship, however, is quickly side-lined by Sidney's virulent objections to the proposed marriage with Anjou. John Stubbs's pamphlet of the same year, *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf*, made clear that Sidney's objections were a part of the public conversation. It also, however, cost the author his right hand, and Elizabeth's draconian punishment was a stark warning of the potential ramifications to those emboldened enough to challenge her authority. Alongside Sidney's letter and Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), several critics have seen Stubbs's pamphlet as a commission by the Leicester-Walsingham anti-marriage faction.[49] Regardless of any factional crossover, however, Sidney, in his letter, appears to play upon the public consciousness of the marriage question. Dismissing Anjou on religious grounds as a 'Papist' and 'the son of the Jezebel of our age' (Catherine de' Medici, who allegedly kickstarted the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre), Sidney warns the queen that, if she cements the union, the 'truly religious' subjects of England will 'diminish much of the hopeful love they have long held to you'.[50]

'[H]opeful' here is the operative word for Sidney's own factional ambitions. The Anjou proposal represented significant religious and political anxieties for the Leicester-Walsingham camp who had been actively engaged in encouraging military intervention

---

48 Philip Sidney, 'Letter to Elizabeth', in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 33–57 (p. 33).

49 M.M. Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574–81' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Cambridge, 1989), pp. 124–25; Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 164–65. For a counterargument see Natalie Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's "The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf", 1579', *The Historical Journal*, 44.3 (2001), 629–50.

50 Sidney, 'Letter to Elizabeth', p. 48.

in support of Dutch Protestants in the Spanish-controlled Netherlands. Not only would the marriage complicate and even contradict the confessional commitment behind such calls for military intervention, but it might also give dangerously unpredictable scope to domestic Catholicism (especially if Elizabeth were to die). Constrained by its more public and formal diplomatic function, Sidney's performance in and conceptual authority for *The Four Foster Children of Desire* engages with the ongoing question in terms at once more obedient and symbolic. On the visual heraldic level, Sidney, as we have seen, makes his general frustrations explicit. Encompassing a range of participants with diverse viewpoints and material ambitions, however, the broader narrative of *The Four Foster Children of Desire* was open to antithetical interpretation. The protagonists' failed assault and surrender signifies their acceptance of the queen's unquestionable authority and pre-eminence over her aristocracy. At the same time, however, the unassailability of her Fortress of Perfect Beauty suggests a direct message to the French embassy concerning their prospects in the negotiations. The finale, then, turns submission to Elizabeth into aggression against Anjou.

Interpretation of *The Four Foster Children,* then, hinges on these domestic and international implications. Focusing on the latter, several critics have read the entertainment as articulating the anti-marriage stance at court, spearheaded by Leicester. For Norman Council, for instance, the allegory 'displays the Queen's apparent decision against the match'.[51] This position is echoed by Woudhuysen who argues that the pro-marriage faction, disappointed but conscious of their limits, 'are simply recording the fact of her decision'.[52] By contrast, other scholars have focused on the domestic courtly dynamic suggested by *The Four Foster Children of Desire*. The inclusion of challengers and defendants from both sides of the debate, suggests Bates, makes it 'less anti-marriage propaganda than a meditation on courtiers' self-presentation and self-preservation at the court of a female sovereign'.[53] For Bates, then, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* is designed to 'suppress faction, and to present a picture of Anglo-French concord by subsuming real differences under romantic battles.[54] Since Desire in

---

51 Council, '"O Dea Certe"', p. 330.

52 Woudhuysen, p. 343.

53 Bates, p. 71.

54 Bates, p. 72.

the entertainment is feminine (the foster children's wet nurse), Bates argues, it 'represents sexuality which is non-violent, and neither aggressive, appropriative, nor patriarchal'. As a result, 'the foster-children are […] presented as men whose understanding of desire in the court of Elizabeth I is overly crude and aggressive'.[55] For all its qualities, Bates's gendered reading is perhaps overly conservative in overplaying Elizabeth's complete control of her aristocracy. The femininity of Desire does not entirely desexualize the entertainment: even as her foster children 'haue bene brought vp under the wings of honorable DESIRE', they are men with their own sexual identities and energies.

Like other court entertainments hosted for a foreign diplomatic audience, *The Four Foster Children* is remarkable for its ability to navigate and comment upon both internal and international politics simultaneously. As Louis Montrose puts it, '[t]he allegory is transparently political; the politics are internal as well as international, concerned with queen's relationship to her courtiers as well as with her relationship to Alençon'.[56] Rather than suppressing faction, however, as Bates suggests, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* gave considerable space to the expression of individual ambition. Whether that be the humble request of the Knollys brothers to be readmitted to the queen's favour, or the embittered symbolic implications of Sidney's device, participants had a significant amount of creative ideological license. That the factionalism of the English court in 1581 is ultimately subsumed within the spectacle's romantic designs might gesture towards a significant level of internal accord. The harmonious expression of aristocratic obedience, however, is part of the strategy of ceremonial containment. It was after all a balance of power, one where Elizabethan noblemen were offered an arena for the exhibition of their diverse political and social ambitions, even if they had to concede to ultimate rule by the monarch. That these ambitions were often communicated through layers of oblique symbolism simply reflected the ambiguous qualities and principles of Elizabethan courtship. Rather than 'overly crude and aggressive' courtiers, these are, by their own admission, 'hopeful' and 'entituled' (75) knights eager to test the limits of their power.

---

55 Bates, p. 72.

56 Montrose, 'Celebration and Insinuation', p. 26.

Bates is correct to emphasize the internal tensions of *The Four Foster Children of Desire;* however spectacular, the entertainment was hardly a major diplomatic tool, or any sort of substitute for the negotiations proper. It was, however, an important addition which enabled a commentary at once diverse and collaborative (bringing together a range of aristocratic political perspectives), resentful and obedient. It seems highly likely that Leicester was the patron of the entertainment and his nephew, the chief artist.[57] Considering their financial and conceptual authority as well as their vocal disagreement to the proposed union, the failed symbolic assault of the Fortress of Perfect Beauty feels decisively international in its message. Written from London a few days after the event, an eyewitness account by Thomas Milles is explicit in that interpretation:

> The Tilt I sawe from the begininge to the ending and cannot but report great honor to be wonne at all handes. The men [i.e., the French embassy] are already gonne to Windsor and ther it is generally expectid that theire departure will not be longe after. The generall feare of the mariage is well layd downe.[58]

The unassailability of Elizabeth's Fortress, then, came hand in hand with a 'generall feare' on the part of the pro-marriage factions, French and English, that the failure of the negotiations was now set in stone ('well layd downe'). This of course complicates the view of Elizabeth's performing knights as simply humble servants to the crown, or even, as Bates suggests, 'as juveniles who need to be tutored in the art of courtship at court'.[59] Even if the international message was sanctioned by the queen, the Whitehall tilting yard became a space where both challengers and defendants opposed to the marriage could vaunt a political success through military demonstration.

The connection which Milles makes between military performance and diplomatic statement is striking and demonstrates the political functionality of chivalric representation. Goldwell's text, possibly commissioned by Leicester, offers a more explicitly nationalistic account of the martial exercises. Commenting upon the first day of tilting, Goldwell describes how both English challengers and defendants 'perfourmed their partes so valiantly […] that their prowesse hath demeritied perpetuall memory, &

---

57 Goldring, p. 68; Woudhuysen, p. 346.

58 Thomas Milles, 'Letter to William Davison, 19 May 1581', National Archives, Kew, SP 12/149/10a.

59 Bates, pp. 72–73.

worthely woone honoure both to them selues and their natiue countrie' (89). The second day of fighting generates similar rhetorical extravagances as the performers

> wente they to the Tourney, where they did very Nobly, as the shiuering of the swordes might very well testifie, And after that to the barriers, where they lashed it out lustely, and fought couragiously, as if the *Greekes* and *Troians* had dealt their deadly dole. (92)

The other eyewitness account, from a Monsieur Nallot of the French embassy, similarly recognizes the 'great valour' (91) of the English nobles. Although Nallot's account is observational rather than interpretative (perhaps he spoke poor English, as Woudhuysen suggests), it presents a slightly more aggressive account of the military exercises, recounting how the English knights 'held a combat on horse-back with sharp swords and without any barrier' (91).[60]

The increasing safety precautions of Elizabethan courtly combat can be overplayed by critics. For Anglo, their sole 'purpose […] was to make a fine display, tease the mind of onlookers with curious devices, and avoid getting hurt'.[61] These functions were indeed elements of chivalric performance. As we have seen already, however, the 'fine display[s]' and 'curious devices' were a serious part of political business at court. Furthermore, a knight always wanted to 'avoid getting hurt', whether that be in a ceremonial tilt or on the battlefield. Those present would remember (or at least have heard) Henry II of France's (Anjou's father) death from a ceremonial joust in 1559 at a different international diplomatic event, celebrating the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis with the Austrian Habsburgs. In other words, safety cautions mitigated, but did not remove the dangers of ceremonial chivalric combat. Nallot's account of the second day, then, is a reminder that the the 'Elizabethan tournament' remained 'a strenuous and dynamic event' which 'allowed a release of aggressive energies' and functioned as 'a symbolic substitute for war'.[62] More than an opportunity for 'fine display', then, the tournament and other forms of chivalric combat were

> a potent ritual that initiates the participants into the rights and responsibilities of their traditional chivalric code. The contestants are

---

60 Woudhuysen, p. 326.

61 Anglo, *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, p. xiii.

62 McCoy, pp. 23–24.

> encouraged to act the role seriously, exercising its military and political authority completely, even if that means opposing sovereign majesty. [63]

Although the seriousness of those military and political ambitions depended on the varying chivalric enthusiasm of Elizabethan aristocrats (many, as McCoy notes, 'were in fact quite content to "dress up in splendid uniforms" and play the "great hero for a day"'), both the French and English eyewitness accounts underline the seriousness with which the combat was perceived.[64] In Nallot's purely observational account, the 'swords' are 'sharp' and the 'barrier' absent, implying the (admittedly true) idea that these men endure considerable risk in the pursuit of both personal and national honour. For Milles, the connection is explicit as the 'great honour' demonstrated through English military skill is concomitant with the 'generall feare of the mariage'.

The accounts of Goldwell, Milles, and Nallot, although diverse, can appear at times to collapse into one another, avoiding a sense of real perspective in their formulaic expressions of praise: the participants are all courageous, noble, and full of valour. What they ultimately cannot recreate, however, is the actual physical muscle of the military performance which dominated the two-day event and in fact undermined the extent of Elizabeth's authority. In a pointed choice of language, the Virgin Queen remains 'Impregnable' (92) to the stratagems of the four foster children. Elizabeth's impregnability, however, is entirely dependent on the military prowess of her twenty-two defendants in whom the challengers admit 'such excellencie' (90). Like Bates, Katherine Butler offers a gendered reading of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*'s representation of Elizabethan courtship. Butler, however, comes closer to the mark by emphasizing the centrality of aristocratic performance. For her, the entertainment's 'juxtaposition of music and courtly arts with arms and military sport' exposes the 'limitations of Elizabeth's gender in the martial sphere' and subsequently demonstrates 'the value and importance of noblemen to the kingdom'.[65] In recognition of the defendants' 'excellencie', the defeated challengers 'craue […] to giue some token to those knights which may be iudged to haue don best in each kind of weapon, or who by his deuise hath come in best sort in this desirous strife' (93). Notably, the challengers here

---

63 McCoy, p. 26.

64 McCoy, p. 27.

65 Katherine Butler, p. 124.

value military and artistic excellence on the same terms: both deserve reward. Sidney's participation in the combat and his device, 'Sic nos non nobis', should therefore be understood as part of the same ritual chivalric enterprise. 'In its combination of ostentation and martial prowess', writes McCoy, 'the tournament provided an even more theatrically satisfying opportunity for "honorable self-display" before a much larger audience'.[66] Chivalric performance was always a complex blend of the military and the symbolic. While gradually dissociating itself from the realities of contemporary warfare, the increased theatricality of chivalric spectacle across the early modern period was also an expansion of the symbolic potential for social, political, and military commentary and purposeful 'self-display'.

This wide-ranging constitution of courtly chivalric performance is registered in Sidney's 'Sonnet 41' from *Astrophil and Stella,* which reflects upon his success in the tilting of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*:

> Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
> Guided so well that I obtain'd the prize,
> Both by the judgment of the English eyes
> And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;
> Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
> Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
> His praise to sleight which from good use doth rise;
> Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
> Others, because of both sides I do take
> My blood from them who did excel in this,
> Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
> How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
> Stella look'd on, and from her heav'nly face
> Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.[67]

Sidney spends most of the sonnet enumerating the various audience interpretations vis-à-vis the source of his military pre-eminence (having 'obtain'd the prize'). 'Horsemen', presumably including his fellow competitors, locate it in his equestrian abilities, his 'skill in horsemanship'; '[t]own folks', the general public, ascribe it to his physical 'strength'; 'a daintier judge' (i.e. one more inherently perceptive) finds the reason in both Sidney's military dexterity ('sleight') and experience ('good use'); 'lucky wits' unsurprisingly see

---

66 McCoy, p. 24.

67 Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* 41, in *Major Works*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 169.

it as simple 'chance'; and finally, in conventional chivalric fashion, unidentified 'others' assume that it a distinction of noble 'blood' inherited 'of both sides'. Philip's mother, Mary Sidney, was the brother of both Leicester and Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick, and Philip's father, Sir Henry Sidney, was Lord Deputy of Ireland. These men were eminent politicians and military commanders, noted for their frequent and impressive performances in similar tournaments ('who did excel in this').

At its most simple level, the range of interpretations is an expression of audience subjectivity. However, as this thesis demonstrates, they also underline the fact that chivalry takes on different nuances and associations in the hands and minds of different social groups. At first, Sidney appears to combine these later assessments: having his 'horse', 'hand', and 'lance | Guided so well', he self-infers the qualities in 'horsemanship', 'strength', and 'sleight' which his onlookers go on to celebrate in the sonnet. The final three lines, however, entirely subvert these detailed analyses. 'The true cause', Sidney tells us, is of course Stella. This bears a striking similarity to the design of *The Four Foster Children of Desire* where the challengers are nursed and driven by 'never fainting desire' (75). Desire is of course predominantly political in the latter (its object, the Fortress of Perfect Beauty, or political authority) and romantic in the sonnet (its object, Stella). Nonetheless, the pursuit of desire is the governing force of the narrative in both texts and offers an image of an aristocracy whose military performances are inextricably shaped by its material ambitions. The 'daintier judge', in his heightened perception, complicates the perspective. Although chiefly signifying Sidney's skill in handling his weapon (*OED n.1* 3.a), 'sleight' also suggests the performer's political cunning, often to deceptive ends (*OED n.1* 1) (we might remember Castiglione's advice to 'work the matter wisely'). The sonnet is of course partly an exercise in deception; the spectators have after all entirely 'shot awry' in their assessments. More importantly, however, it suggests the careful political craft behind chivalric performances like Sidney's.

That 'France' is described by the oxymoron 'sweet enemy' is at first surprising considering Sidney's public objection to the marriage. In the previous September, however, Anjou had signed an agreement with the States-General to become Spanish

Philip II's sovereign successor.[68] Although that political move was not affected until two months after *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, it seems likely that Sidney saw some political 'sweet[ness]' in Anjou's anti-Spanish military designs to support the Dutch rebels (it was of course the French duke's Catholicism which made him the 'enemy'). The Dutch question was the major point of connection for the Anglo-French negotiations; according to W.R. Streitberger, however, 'Anjou's military involvement in the Netherlands provided Elizabeth with the leverage she needed to withdraw from the marriage agreement'.[69] Perhaps, then, with his characteristic 'sleight', Sidney saw the prospective future which would broadly play out: the marriage was abandoned but 'an agreement for mutual assistance' was reached with Anjou which included English military support (ever a tantalizing prospect to Sidney).[70] Anjou was a 'sweet enemy', pleasant and amenable in both his military plans and audacity, but ultimately a 'Papist' and 'the son of the Jezebel of our age' — not a man who, in Sidney's mind at least, could be trusted in the long run. 'Sonnet 41' of course avoids any sort of factional commentary on the marriage negotiations; the focus instead is on Sidney's gallant chivalry. As Christopher Warley puts it, Sidney's 'representation of himself as a victorious feudal knight becomes the object of his lyric desire for an idealized nobility'.[71] This comes to the fore at the end of the sonnet since it is Stella, the object of his desire, 'which made so fair [his] race'. The pointed pun cements the same chivalric process at the heart of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*: Sidney's 'race', his noble blood 'of both sides', qualifies him for the 'prize' of the military 'race' staged as part of the entertainment. Within the erotic confines of the sonnet, Sidney can easily aggrandize his own ideal chivalry. In *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, however, he is not in complete control; at the court he is one of many players (and a minor one at that), a reminder that its constraints create a dynamic where he must come to the bleak recognition that 'Sic non nos nobis'.

---

68 Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 118.

69 W.R. Streitberger, *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 166.

70 Streitberger, p. 166.

71 Christopher Warley, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 82.

Chivalric Performance in the Elizabethan Theatre:
Clyomon and Clamydes

Sidney's account of the varied audience reaction to his military performance in *The Four Foster Children of Desire* speaks to the diverse social appeal of chivalric representation. In particular, the mention of '[t]own folks' is a reminder that a range of tournaments and spectacles (especially the Accession Day Tilts) drew popular audiences. Kenneth Hodges argues that the phrase has important military connotations for common soldiers for whom Sidney 'serves as a mirror in which' they 'can find evidence of their own worth'. 'Instead of tournaments being a theatre of difference, in which knights are everything commoners are not', writes Hodges, 'they celebrate similarity, in which the knights exemplify audience ideals'.[72] Although this is an important observation, '[t]own folks' clearly signifies a broader popular audience than non-elite soldiers. That this public admires Sidney's 'strength' suggests a desire to see the skilled performances of a highly trained and undeniably impressive elite. Furthermore, considering the sorts of political engagement evident in *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, chivalric spectacles would have offered a fascinating, albeit limited, insight into the complex dynamics of courtly life.

This popular appeal, however, is most explicitly demonstrated in the commercial drama of the period. 'Tournaments', as Alan R. Young rightly claims:

> have a very real claim to a place in the study of the Elizabethan drama, and because they were public events to which fee-paying spectators were admitted and because they were held in a permanent outdoor arena, they must inevitably be of special interest to the student of the Elizabethan public theatres.[73]

The intersections between courtly and popular representations of the tournament of course go beyond this commercial and spatial similarity. As we saw, for instance, *Pericles* (c. 1607) faithfully replicates symbolic heraldic practice in its tournament; later, Shakespeare would even have a creative role in the 1613 Accession Day Tilt. Tournaments either appear or are alluded to in several other early modern plays: *Soliman*

---

72 Kenneth Hodges, 'Prince Arthur's Archers: Innovative Nostalgia in Early Modern Popular Chivalry', *Arthurian Literature,* 27 (2010), 179–97 (p. 184).

73 Alan R. Young, '"In Gallant Course before Ten Thousand Eyes": The Tournament in the 1580s', in *The Elizabethan Theatre XI*, ed. by A.L. Magnusson and C.E. McGee (Port Credit: P.D. Meany, 1990), pp. 33–53 (p. 52).

and Perseda (c. 1587), *Fair Em* (c. 1590) *2 Henry IV* (c. 1597), and *Volpone* (c. 1605) to name but a few. As Jean MacIntrye argues, '[c]asual references in plays show how familiar were the tilts and the array of participants'.[74] Not only tournaments, of course, but other forms of chivalric combat made their way into the popular theatre — we might think of the trials of combat in *Richard II* (c. 1595) and *King Lear* (c. 1606), or the duels of honour in *Hamlet* (c. 1600), *Bussy D'Ambois* (c. 1603), and *A Fair Quarrel* (c. 1615). At the heart of these more explicitly military representations of chivalry is an examination of how chivalric personal honour operates within the plays' idiosyncratic political intrigues. The reading which follows demonstrates how *Clyomon and Clamydes* dramatizes the same ideological and political process behind *The Four Foster Children of Desire*. In both, the pursuit of personal honour is not an anachronistic and nostalgic grasp for a lost past, but a claim for military, political, and social power, recognition, and advancement. The pursuit of those rewards is simultaneously encouraged and curtailed by the monarch.

The similarities between *Clyomon and Clamydes* and *The Four Foster Children of Desire* are less surprising when we consider that chivalric drama likely moved between the court and popular theatre. In the latter, one of the defendants, Thomas Radcliffe, appears as 'the desolate knight' who reveals that he has 'determined to seperate him selfe as farre from societie, as his actions were from successe' (86).[75] As with the Knollys brothers, the symbolism clearly signifies a request to regain the queen's favour. For Woudhuysen, Radcliffe's device is linked to the lost play, *The History of the Solitary Knight*, acted by Lord Howard's Men at Whitehall on 17 February 1577.[76] Similarly, the appearance of two Irish knights might have been a nod to another lost play, *The Irish Knight*, performed by Warwick's Men at Whitehall the following day.[77] Our understanding of the potential intersections between this sort of chivalric court drama

---

74 Jean MacIntyre, *Costumes and Scripts in the Elizabethan Theatres* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1992), p. 191.

75 As Woudhuysen notes, this Thomas Radcliffe is not the third earl of Sussex, patron of the eponymous playing company and Lord Chamberlain from 1572 until his death in 1583. Sussex, a 'Commissioner for the marriage', was by this stage 'in his mid-fifties and unwell' (p. 334).

76 Woudhuysen, p. 334.

77 Nallot's letter records how 'two unsaddled horses which were completely gilded and on each of which there was an Irish boy, whose long hair was also gilded' (p. 90).

and the popular theatre is hampered by several factors — in particular, the paucity of early commercial theatre records and the limited assumptions we might make about the material of these lost plays.[78] As Lee Monroe Ellison put it over a century ago:

> The absence of contemporary records for the popular stage at this time makes it impossible to speak with certainty as to its character, though the frequency with which such plays were presented at court is probably but a reflection of their popularity with the public.[79]

The relationship between court and popular drama was made official through Edward Tilney's office of the Master of the Revels (1579–1610). A patent (belatedly) dated 24 December 1581 hugely extended Tilney's powers as the organizer of the court's Christmas entertainments. Now something of a government censor, Tilney, 'by himselfe or his sufficient deputie or deputies', was commissioned 'to warne commaunde and appointe in all places' in England 'all and every plaier or plaiers with their playmakers […] to appeare before him with all such plaies […] as they shall have in readines or meane to sett forth, and them to present and recite before' Tilney (or the relevant deputy). Tilney, then, was 'ordeyne[d] appointe[d] and aucthorise[d] […] to order and reforme, auctorise and put downe' the plays 'thought meete or unmeete unto himselfe or his said Deputie'.[80]

Although it is difficult to be sure how precisely the patent was followed, and the exact mechanisms of its implementation, Tilney (and his deputies) essentially became the auditor of all court and public drama for three decades. 'The evolution of this

---

78 Championed by a few scholars over the past decade, new interest in the study of lost early modern drama offers important theoretical and methodological foundations for further exploration of plays like these. See the *Lost Plays Database*, ed. by Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (2009–); *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); David McInnis, 'Lost Plays and Source Study', in *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study: Audiences, Authors, and Digital Technologies*, ed. by Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 297–315; *Loss and the Literary Culture of Shakespeare's Time*, ed. by Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); and David McInnis, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays: Reimagining Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

79 Lee Monroe Ellison, 'The Early Romantic Drama at the English Court' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Chicago, 1917), p. 105.

80 Quoted in E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), IV, p. 286.

arrangement between the court and professional companies', write Sophie Chiari and John Mucciolo, 'flowered into a robust, interconnected court and public theatre culture'.[81] Tilney's new authority slightly post-dates lost chivalric plays like *The Solitary Knight* and *The Irish Knight*; nonetheless, Stephen Gosson's damning incitement of popular theatrical tastes in 1582 suggests that plays like these were in the commercial repertoire:

> Sometime you shall see nothing but the adventures of an amorous knight, passing from country to country for the love of his lady, encountering many a terrible monster made of brown paper, and at his return is so wonderfully changed, that he cannot be known but by some posie in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkircher or a piece of cockle shell, what learn you by that?[82]

Gosson is critical of both the representational strategies and the didactic value of plays like *Clyomon and Clamydes* comprised of venturing knights, romantic intrigues, monsters, and chivalric tokens of recognition. He complains later that 'Amadis of Fraunce' and 'the Rounde Table' have been 'thoroughly ransackt, to furnish the Play houses in London'.[83] In 1582, then, according to Gosson, chivalric material was ubiquitous on the early modern stage, so much so that, using Revels Office records, Betty J. Littleton estimates around a third of 1570–1585 drama to be based on romance material.[84] Only three, however, survive: *Clyomon and Clamydes*, *Common Conditions* (c. 1576) and *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (c. 1582). Since *Clyomon and Clamydes* is, as Leo Salingar puts it, 'presented as an example of chivalry', it offers the clearest instance of how that ideology is put on stage in the mid-Elizabethan period.[85]

Clyomon and Clamydes opens on the shores of Denmark where Clamydes, prince of Swabia, meets and falls in love with the Danish princess, Juliana. There Clamydes

---

81 Sophie Chiari and John Mucciolo, 'General Introduction', in *Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. by Sophie Chiari and John Mucciolo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1–15 (p. 4).

82 Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (London: 1582), C6r.

83 Gosson, D5v.

84 Littleton, Introduction to *Clyomon and Clamydes*, p. 53.

85 Leo Salingar, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 33.

vows to kill the Flying Serpent of the Forest of Strange Marvels in exchange for her hand in marriage. In order to prepare for the task, Clamydes first returns home to Swabia to receive his knighthood. Meanwhile, the wandering Danish prince Clyomon hears word of the upcoming ceremony, and swoops in to 'take the blow' (3.43 s.d.) and steal the knighthood. After finally receiving his own knighthood, Clamydes pursues and manages to intercept Clyomon. The knights agree to a trial by combat at Alexander the Great's Macedonian court, set for a fortnight later. Both Clyomon and Clamydes, however, miss the date of the combat after being waylaid by a number of different obstacles. After fulfilling his promise to Juliana by slaying the Flying Serpent, for instance, Clamydes is diverted by the cowardly knight and enchanter, Bryan-sans-Foy (i.e., 'Bryan-without-Faith'). Bryan, also in love with Juliana, puts Clamydes into a ten-day sleep, imprisons him, steals his shield, coat, and the Serpent's head, and then sets off, 'in Clamydes' name' (9.5), to beguile Juliana and marry her. En route to Macedonia, Clyomon is diverted by a tempest and subsequently washes up on the shores of the Isle of Strange Marshes. There, the princess Neronis finds him and restores him to health. After the two fall in love, Clyomon, intent on fulfilling his honourable vow to Clamydes, embarks for Alexander's court once again.

Clyomon's plans, however, are interrupted for a second time by the King of Norway, Thrasellus, who, enamoured of Neronis, captures her. Clyomon detours to Norway to kill him. Meanwhile, however, Neronis has escaped Thrasellus by disguising as a page. In the forest, she first serves the rustic shepherd, Corin, and then Clyomon (the two do not recognise each other as they are both disguised). At this point, the clown character, Subtle-Shift, who serves both knights, thankfully fills in some of the narrative. Following Neronis's abduction, her father, the King of the Isle of Strange Marshes, has died from grief, leaving the crown in contestation between the queen and her brother-in-law, Mustantius. In order to settle the succession crisis, King Alexander has proposed a trial by combat with a challenger for each claimant. Clamydes, rescued by Subtle-Shift by this point, now arrives at the court of the Isle of Strange Marshes to defend Mustantius. By the time Clyomon joins to defend the queen, Alexander has already reached a diplomatic solution, annulling the combat. Clyomon's identity is revealed, and the two knights befriend each other, recognising their mutual ties through Juliana. Together they travel to Denmark where they foil Bryan-sans-Foy's plan, Neronis reveals her disguise, and the play ends with a double marriage.

Needless to say, the play is enormously convoluted and inherently far-fetched. It certainly fits Gosson's commentary: spurred on by their love interests, the two 'amorous knight[s]' travel 'from country to country', defeating monsters, and making use of tokens and disguise. In questioning — 'what learn you by that?' — Gosson joins the scores of early modern humanist detractors of romance who disputed the didactic functions of these sorts of improbable chivalric narratives. Perhaps in defence of these sorts of condemnation, the Prologue of *Clyomon and Clamydes* spells out the play's didactic merits:

> As lately lifting up the leaves of worthy writers' works
> Wherein the noble acts and deeds of many, hidden, lurks,
> Our author hath found the glass of glory shining bright
> Wherein their lives are to be seen, which honour did delight,
> To be a lantern unto those which daily do desire
> Apollo's garland for desert in time for to aspire.
>
> (Prologue, 1–6)

The author celebrates the same didactic worth which Sidney finds in *Amadis* — its potential to inspire readers 'to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage'. In *Perceforest,* the source of *Clyomon and Clamydes,* the author finds a 'glass' (mirror) of 'glory' clear on display, 'shining bright'. Continuing the imagery, these displays of 'glory' are put on stage as a 'lantern' to those who desire renown in perpetuity ('Apollo's garland for desert in time'): a guiding light, transparent to the eye, magnifying its contents and offering instructions for the protection from vice. What follows, we are told, are 'noble acts and deeds' of those 'which honour did delight'. In other words, these are elite men who chase honour for eternal fame. Curiously, however, the author describes these acts as 'hidden' and 'lurk[ing]' in its source. On one level, this might be a claim to artistic ingenuity — the author's ability to discern them and put them effectively into theatrical format. More saliently, however, it quietly suggests the ambiguity which often attends chivalric performance, something which receives further articulation in the play, especially in regard to Clyomon's early theft of Clamydes' knighthood. At first glance, *Clyomon and Clamydes* appears to represent chivalry in the fashion of its fourteenth-century source — that is, in more conventional military terms. From the beginning, Clyomon advertises his thirst for military opportunity:

> Can music more the pensive heart or daunted mind delight
> Can comfort more the careful corps and over-palled sprite
> Rejoice, than sound of trumpet each warlike wight allure,
> And drum and fife unto the fight doth noble hearts procure?
> To see in sunder shivered the lance that leads the way,

> And worthy knights unbeavered in field amidst the fray,
> To hear the rattling cannons roar and hilts on helmets ring,
> To see the soldiers swarm on heaps where valiant hearts doth bring
> The cowardly crew into the case of careful captives' band
> Where ancients brave displayed be and won by force of hand.
>
> (2.63–75)

Clyomon's enthusiastic catalogue of the sights and sounds of war display his ambitions as a military man. Like 'music' to the 'pensive heart' or melancholic 'mind', or sustenance ('comfort') to the wearied body ('careful corps') and weakened spirit ('over-palled sprite'), the battlefield is Clyomon's restorative. More specifically, however, it is the musical instruments of war ('trumpet', 'drum', and 'fife'), its more ceremonial aspects, which cause Clyomon to 'delight' and 'rejoice. It is a description both physical and energetic, with knights fighting 'unbeavered in field' and 'soldiers swarm[ing]'. But it is also one which seems to focus on performativity and spectatorship: Clyomon relishes to 'hear' and 'see' war, not explicitly to be a part of it. The 'shivered […] lance' also might be more commonly found on the tilting yard, rather than on the battlefield. Clyomon's speech, then, quietly gestures towards a more tamed version of chivalry than might fit his apparent bravado and battlefield rhetoric.

Juliana has by now informed the audience that Clyomon is abroad to earn his chivalry: that he is a Danish prince (and presumably heir to the crown) comes with its expectations — his 'noble' blood preconditions him to be 'warlike' in nature. Curiously, however, Clyomon suggests that he has already demonstrated his military proficiency, earning the title of the Knight of the Golden Shield:

> In every land, since that I foiled the worthy knight of fame,
> Sir Samuel, before the king and prince of martial game,
> Alexander called the Great, which when he did behold,
> He gave to me this shield of glittering gold,
> Requesting for to know my name, the which shall not be known
> To any knight unless by force he make it to be known.
>
> (2.77–82)

The play's editor remarks that 'if Sir Samuel is in reference to a real knight, he remains unidentified'.[86] Clyomon's reference could, however, be to a Samuel Bagnall who became a Colonel in the queen's Irish army, was one of the sixty-eight men knighted by

---

[86] Ralph, p, 246, n. (2.78)

Essex in Cadiz in 1596, and who became Marshall of Ireland in 1602.[87] Samuel Bagnall 'was very much distinguished […] as a military man': he 'received eight wounds' in Cadiz and was knighted in Calais in 1596 (no doubt conferred by Essex). By 1580 when he died, Sir Ralph Bagnall, Samuel's father, could already advise his son 'to advance himself by valour, as he had done before'.[88] Bagnall hailed from a staunchly Protestant military family which seems to have had connections with the Leicester-Sidney faction. The dates, however, render this unlikely, unless the text was revised for its 1599 publication. Although Bagnall was no doubt already a military man by the time of composition of *Clyomon and Clamydes*, he had yet to earn those titles for which its author might advertise him as 'the worthy knight of fame'.

Clyomon's description of Alexander as 'the king and prince of martial game' signals the performative and regulated chivalry of the tournament and other similar chivalric exercises. Clyomon is more explicit and sends Subtle-Shift to the Swabian court in search of 'any shows or triumphs' (2.51). Similarly, he tells the audience that 'nothing doth delight me more than to hear of martial play' (2.58) and celebrates the opportunity to 'win the bruit of fame' via 'martial exercises' (2.61). Sir Samuel, it would seem, is a victim of the tiltyard rather than the battlefield. Clyomon's need to demonstrate and maintain his military honour is also registered symbolically in his insistence to withhold his name until 'any knight […] by force […] make it to be known' (2.82). The knight who refuses to reveal his identity is a perennial figure of chivalric romance. Sir Henry Lee, Elizabeth's champion at the time, responsible for the annual Accession Day Tilts and appointed Master of the Armouries in 1580, is the last of the twenty-two defendants in *The Four Foster Children of Desire*. His entry is deliberately separated from the catalogue of other defendants: 'And afterwards in the middest of the running, came in Sir Henry Lea, as vnknowen, and when he had broken his sixe staves, went out in like maner againe' (83). 'Fair Unknown' or *bel inconnu* romances traditionally involve a man of unknown identity who arrives at court and demands recognition, often in the form of a

---

87 Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd, *Burke's Irish Family Records* (London: Burkes Peerage Ltd, 1976), p. 45.

88 *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558–1603*, ed. by P.W. Hasler, 3 vols (1981), I, p. 385.

knighthood.[89] Since he will not reveal his name, he is often 'given a nickname under which he earns his fame'.[90] This too is the case for Clyomon who remains as the Knight of the Golden Shield until the play's finale. In *bel inconnu* narratives, the point is generally to do with questions of status and rightful inheritance. Clyomon's adventures 'abroad', then, should be seen in terms of the larger symbolic 'quest to discover one's inborn chivalry'.[91] That chivalry must be earned: as Helen Cooper puts it, chivalry 'must be a sign visibly and demonstrably beyond everyday experience, such as raises the man who bears the mark of it beyond the common run of humanity'.[92] 'In purchasing through active deeds both honour, laud, and praise', Juliana tells us at the beginning of the play, Clyomon 'might deserve to have the order of a knight' (1.74–75). The revelation of Clyomon's identity in the finale is naturally bound up with the play's other concluding comic resolutions.

Adventuring 'abroad' in *Clyomon and Clamydes* involves an oppositional construction of geography central to chivalric identity. A.C. Spearing describes this romance strategy in terms of 'enclosed' and 'open' spaces:

> It is widely accepted that the landscape of medieval romance is structured by an opposition between the enclosed and the open: on the one hand, the cities, courts and castles from which knights set out to have adventures and to which they usually return when the story ends; on the other hand, the wilderness, often a forest, in which adventures themselves take place. Enclosed settings symbolize the world of human civilization, a realm of safety which is also one of constraint.[93]

In *Clyomon and Clamydes*, open spaces function as loci for chivalric performance: Clamydes slays the Flying Serpent in the Forest of Strange Marvels (wild in both

---

89 See Jane Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 105–33. On the variations of the 'Fair Unknown', see R.H. Wilson, 'The "Fair Unknown" in Malory', *PMLA*, 58 (1943), 1–21.

90 Barbara Nolan, 'The Tale of Sir Gareth and the Tale of Sir Lancelot', in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. by Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), pp. 153–81 (p. 157).

91 Cooper, *The English Romance in Time,* p. 324.

92 Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 324.

93 A.C. Spearing, 'Public and Private Spaces in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Arthuriana,* 4.2 (1994), 138–45 (p. 138).

geography and name) and Clyomon kills Thrasellus in the Norwegian forest. The first thing that we learn of Clyomon is that he has 'set off' from the Danish court to prove his knightly identity. Spurred by the theft of his own knighthood, Clamydes too leaves his Swabian court in pursuit of Clyomon, reminding us that chivalry is something repeatedly tested and in need of constant proof. With the exception of the Norwegian forest, these open spaces are also the imaginary ones — the Isle of Strange Marshes and the Forest of Strange Marvels — and are mutually defined by their 'strangeness'. That spatial/geographic strangeness of course justifies the inclusion of Flying Serpents, and enchanters like Bryan-sans-Foy, supernatural obstacles which enable the chivalric heroes to distinguish themselves, as Cooper describes, 'beyond the common run of humanity'.

In 'thanks for [Juliana's] great courtesy' (1.41) in rescuing him on the shores of Denmark, Clamydes accepts her request:

> The flying Serpent for to slay, which in the forest is
> That of Strange Marvels beareth name, which Serpent doth not miss,
> By daily use, from every coast that is adjacent there,
> To fetch a virgin maid, or wife, or else some lady fair,
> To feed his hungry paunch withal, if case he can them take.
>
> (1.45–49)

The Flying Serpent is a social menace, 'feed[ing]' mercilessly on the innocent — 'virgin maid['s]', 'wi[ves]', and 'lad[ies] fair' — on a 'daily' basis. The task for Clamydes, then, is a conventional chivalric one: to demonstrate his natural position as a defender of society. In the allegory of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, that threat is simultaneously represented by the four foster children (as overreaching knights), and deflected onto the French embassy, and Anjou in particular (as a 'Papist'). In *Clyomon and Clamydes* too, chivalric performance is conceived in terms of the tension between duty and reward. Although Juliana 'permit[s]' Clamydes 'with full consent to land upon her shore', her apparent benevolence is conditional 'Upon true promise that [Clyomon] would here faithful still remain, | And that perform which she had vowed' (1.30–32). The reward is of course more than Clamydes' safe harbour: 'Her princely person to possess' (1.33). 'Adventurously for [Juliana]' (1.34), Clamydes risks his life in pursuit of his personal ambitions.

Before Clamydes receives his knighthood, his father outlines the chivalric duties which come with it — 'what to knighthood doth belong' (3.6) and '[u]nto what end a knight is made' (3.7):

> In first, above all other things, his God for to adore,
> In truth, according to the laws prescribed to him before;
> Secondly, that he be true unto his lord and king;
> Thirdly, that he keep his faith and troth in everything.
> And then, *before all other things* that else we can commend,
> That he always be prest his country to defend.
> The widow poor, and fatherless, or innocent bearing blame,
> To see their cause redressed right a faithful knight must frame.
> (3.11–18, emphasis mine)

Although the Swabian king emphasises the knight's duty to 'God', 'his lord and king', and to 'faith' generally, he priorities his function as a defender of society 'before all other things', as someone 'always […] prest his country to defend'. The image of knighthood which the king presents has already in some sense been confirmed in Clamydes' vow to Juliana to slay the Flying Serpent, to '[redress] right' the 'cause' of the 'innocent' by killing the monster which terrorises them. The image also corroborates Spearing's notion of the romance court as a place of 'constraint': before Clamydes can receive his knighthood, he is compelled to take heed of '[his] father's charge'. The king's language determines the power dynamic: Clamydes 'ask[s]' for 'the order' (3.3) and is 'prest' to 'spend' his 'youthful days in prowess' (3.2). In other words, he is enlisted in service.

There are also, however, significant personal benefits for Clamydes' service: 'bear[ing]' these precepts 'in mind', the king is clear, is the route for both 'honour' to 'flow' and to 'immortal fame' (3.8–9). Once free from the constraining pressures of the court, the two chivalric protagonists of *Clyomon and Clamydes* move between the real and imagined spaces of the play with complete chivalric licence. This licence is conferred by the vague conditions attached to knighthood by both fathers: 'spend[ing]' his 'youthful days in prowess', for instance, ultimately provides Clamydes with a mandate for uncircumscribed military aggression and violence. Clyomon, on the other hand, freed from the monitoring of the Danish court from the beginning of the play, acts with what appears to be distinctly unchivalric audacity in swooping in to steal Clamydes' knighthood. The act makes comic a gross transgression of chivalric principle, but it is difficult to read. Indeed, it invites a confused response from the Swabian king. 'Prepare thyself for to pursue that traitor on his way', he tells his son at first, 'Which hath thine honour wrest from thee' (3.73–74). It is a crime of 'honour' and therefore of the utmost significance — so much so that Clamydes' father threatens to disown him if he does not redress it: if he cannot 'either by force of hand, | Or love' (3.74–5) uncover the 'intent' of Clyomon's 'grudge', the king warns, 'never […] return again to visit me' (3.76–77). This, of course, is a harsh punishment and it might seem categorically unfair that the onus

falls upon Clamydes when the events are out of his control. As well as making Clyomon a 'traitor', however, the theft 'imports him for to be of valiant heart and mind' (3.78), according to the king.

For Peter Hadorn, the apparent contradiction in Clyomon's behaviour (both a 'traitor' and 'valiant') 'suggests the playwright's own uncertainty about how to depict realistically a character who, though initially flawed, soon changes for the better'.[94] Rather, I think, it underlines the ambiguities of the chivalric code: while the theft makes Clyomon a 'traitor' to honour, it also speaks to his inherent courage (both in 'heart and mind'). This is certainly Clyomon's take on his actions when he defends them later:

> No, no, it was no cowardly part to come in presence of a king,
> And in the face of all his court to do so worthy a thing.
> Amidst the mates that martial be and stern knights of his hall
> To take the knighthood from their prince even maugre of them all.
> (5.3–7)

Clyomon's lines risk making the structure of chivalric work in the play seem inherently ridiculous. This is not helped by Clyomon's attempt, once confronted by Clamydes, to get out on a technicality: the argument he makes ultimately hinges on the idea that Clyomon 'had' the knighthood 'before it was given unto' Clamydes (5.35). The logic is clear but of course pretty absurd: it seems little more than an opportunity for the playwright to engage in some slightly comic rhetorical gameplay, especially since Clyomon acknowledges that he 'stole [Clamydes'] right away' (5.2) at the beginning of the scene. What is salient, however, but not properly discernible, is the extent to which Clyomon (and Clamydes) buys into his own chivalric assessment.

We might remember Castiglione's expectations of the early modern knight to 'undertake his notable and bold feats […] with as little company as he can', yet 'in the sight of noble men that be of most estimation […], and especially […] before the very eyes of his king'. Clyomon's perception of the events clearly echoes the chivalric thinking at the heart of Castiglione's image and is reinforced by the rhetorical parallels between the two texts: Clyomon's theft is 'so worthy', not simply by nature of its audacity, but because it is performed 'in presence of a king' and 'the mates that martial be and stern knights of his hall'. Clyomon's theft is, as Castiglione recommends, a solely authored

---

94 Peter Hadorn, '*Clyomon and Clamydes*: A Revaluation', *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Society*, 12 (1991), 85–102 (p. 91).

act. The same paradox, then, is present in *Clyomon and Clamydes*: the Danish prince seeks validation from the very networks of power that his chivalric self-image resists (because it depends on it). The difference with Castiglione, however, is that the Swabian monarch is not Clyomon's king. Although chivalry took on its own distinctive features in different European communities, it fundamentally operates on shared cultural assumptions and practices. The Swabian king and his nobility therefore continue to offer the same broad structure of validation simply by virtue of being part of the same masculine framework of ideas and values.

At the same time, however, Clyomon's lines subtly suggest that his stage-trick is deliberately aggressive and contentious. The triple conjunction of 'no' within the first five words advertises his defiance from the outset. While 'in the face of' might simply indicate his presence before 'all' the Swabian 'court', his assertive tone encourages us to see the act as a deliberate challenge. Clyomon does what he wants: he '*takes* the knighthood from *their* prince even *maugre* of them all' (my emphasis). 'Maugre', in spite of the power (*OED prep* B.1.b) of that nobility, he seizes the opportunity to make his personal 'glory glance' (5.7). Moreover, he is confident that '[w]hen warlike wights shall hear thereof, [his] fame they will advance' (5.9). After all, as Clyomon puts it to Clamydes, '[t]he bolder the attempt is, more fame it doth bring' (5.43). Even Clamydes offers a partial recognition of Clyomon's brazenness when he asks his foe: 'wherefore thou travelled'st here in my father's land | So boldly to attempt in his Court such a thing?' (5.41–42). Rather than authorial uncertainty vis-à-vis Clyomon's character, then, the playwright represents a chivalry curiously subject to diverse interpretation: a full spectrum of potential behaviour analysis from treason to courage.

That Clyomon 'hath [Clamydes'] honour wrest from' him so flagrantly leads the Swabian king to assume some 'intent' and 'grudge' (3.74, 76). There is, however, no 'grudge', and Clyomon's 'intent' appears to be little more than vainglory. This is not surprising. As Castiglione's lines make clear, chivalry generated its own inherent contradictions by encouraging individual glory and monarchical servitude at the same time. In these scenes, then, *Clyomon and Clamydes* gestures toward the ambiguity and malleability of chivalric performance: the ability of an act to be at once traitorous and valiant. A serious 'intent' or 'grudge', however, is less the justification for the severe conditions which the king places on his son; in a chivalric culture where matters of personal honour are paramount and non-negotiable, Clamydes' has been literally stolen from underneath him. The king's 'charge' (3.72) to 'pursue thy foe until thou dost him

find' (3.79), then, comes hand in hand with an intransigent expectation that he honourably performs his traditional function as a redresser of grievances. The instruction to address the crime 'either by force of hand | Or love', however, once again makes the terms upon which chivalry is performed oddly obscure. On a broad level, it makes sense: Clamydes' adventures are inextricably military and romantic (he slays the Flying Serpent to win Juliana's hand). This fusion of the martial and erotic, as we have seen, was at the heart of the Elizabethan cult: *The Four Foster Children of Desire* is a symbolic military assault to conquer beauty. Once again, however, the king's orders justify an extraordinary amount of individual chivalric licence. This, I would argue, is significant since the view of early modern knighthood offered by the play stands in contrast to Elizabethan attempts to reformulate chivalry in terms of public service and to tame the martial inclinations of its aristocracy.[95]

Unsurprisingly, Clyomon and Clamydes opt to find a solution to their quarrel 'by force of hand'. Clyomon proposes to Clamydes:

> The fifteenth day next following to meet, sir prince, with me
> Before King Alexander's grace, in Macedonia soil
> Who all the world subject hath through force of warlike toil.
> For he is chief of chivalry and king of martial mates,
> And to his royal court thou knowest repair all estates.
> . . . . . .
> Resist me not, the day forespoke to meet, sir prince, with thee,
> Before that king to try our strengths. Say if thou dost agree
> For triple honour will it be to him that gets the victory
> Before so worthy a prince as he, and nobles all, so publicly,
> Where otherwise, if in this place we should attempt the same,
> Of the honour that were got thereby but small would be the fame.
> (5.65–69; 72–77)

Once again, the emphasis is on performance and audience: since Alexander the Great is 'chief of chivalry', the proposed trial by combat '[b]efore' him offers the victor 'triple honour'. It is another reminder of Castiglione's lines which, as Katharine Eisman Maus states, are concerned less with 'military discipline' than 'cut[ting] an unmistakable figure

---

95 Stone, for instance, argues that the Elizabethan state's centralizing efforts transformed 'once formidable local potentates […] into fawning courtiers and tame state pensionaries' (p. 385).

in the eyes of others'.[96] Clyomon therefore applies the same logic to the prospective combat as to the act of stealing Clamydes' knighthood. In order to avoid a 'small' amount of 'fame', personal honour should be showcased 'publicly', argues Clyomon; in this case, '[b]efore so worthy a prince as [Alexander], and nobles all'. By the time of trial by combat, however, both the stakes and the location have changed. Rather than battle out their differences in Alexander's Macedonian court, Clyomon and Clamydes serve as respective 'champion[s] for either party' (18.22) in the succession crisis which has emerged in the Isle of Strange Marshes. Since the entire plot moves towards this final confrontation between the protagonists, the audience no doubt feels a frustrating sense of anti-climax when Alexander opts for a diplomatic solution to the political crisis (Mustantius will rule until the queen's child is born) '[f]or swaying of the sword and mace all discord to beat down' (18.80).

Hadorn reads the scene sensibly, but perhaps too conservatively. For him, 'what most readers of the play have overlooked is that the two protagonists […] must undergo trials before they can be considered true knights embodying the version of chivalry favoured by the playwright'.[97] This 'version of chivalry', according to Hadorn, 'in its most perfect form […] requires strict allegiance to the monarch'.[98] Hadorn draws a distinction between Clyomon and Clamydes in this sense, in that the former is 'introduced as a warrior who already possesses the chivalric virtues of a knight' whereas Clyomon must learn them.[99] The finale of the play, whereby 'negotiation […] replaces the ritual of trial by combat' is a final representation of this learnt loyalty, and evidence that the play 'dramatically supports Queen Elizabeth's use of chivalry as an ideology of power and order and criticizes military adventurism'.[100] The distinction between the two protagonists is difficult to maintain, however, especially since we learn early on that Clyomon has won the name of the Knight of the Golden Shield via his military prowess

---

96 Katharine Eisman Maus, 'Transfer of Title in *Love's Labour's Lost*: Language, Individualism, Gender' in *Shakespeare Left and Right*, ed. by Ivo Kamps (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 205–23 (p. 208).

97 Hadorn, '*Clyomon*', p. 88.

98 Hadorn, '*Clyomon*', p. 86.

99 Hadorn, '*Clyomon*', p. 89.

100 Hadorn, '*Clyomon*', p. 85.

(the play rather suggests that chivalric expectation and demonstration is a continual process). Furthermore, for all that the finale articulates about monarchical supremacy, 'military adventurism', as we have seen, is not only explicitly encouraged in the play but presented as inextricably concomitant with chivalric identity. Violence is indeed contained but it is neither absent nor discouraged.

Even as the denouement might suggest a taming of the aristocracy's martial energies and aspirations, we should note that almost the entirety of *Clyomon and Clamydes* is devoted to the protagonists' chivalric adventures. The concluding political constraints of the court are therefore outweighed by the knight's almost obsessive focus on and pursuit of personal honour and justice. Throughout the play, Clyomon and Clamydes demonstrate their paramount and intransigent commitment to honouring the terms of their trial by combat. Focusing on Shakespeare, John Kerrigan has documented the centrality of 'binding language' in early modern England.[101] This was especially pertinent to knighthood; 'A knight's oath', as Theodor Meron puts it, was his word or honour, a pledge of his faith' and 'was binding even in the case of rash and extravagant promises'. The knight who broke such a contract 'was a perjurer and a traitor' and 'subject to the sanction of dishonour'.[102] Antony's famous lines in *Antony and Cleopatra* – 'if I lose my honour, | I lose myself' – powerfully demonstrate this inseparability of chivalric identity and honour. [103] When Clyomon initially proposes the terms of the combat, he demonstrates an avid concern with binding language and actions. He asks Clyomon first to 'give [his] hand [….] | Upon the faith which to a knight doth rightly appertain?' (5.61–62). '[B]y the loyalty of a knight', Clyomon 'swear[s]' to [Clamydes] again' (5.63). Finally, he asks again for Clyomon's 'hand upon [his] faith of promise not to fail', offering his own once again (5.70).

The knights' honourable commitment to each other is ever-present in *Clyomon and Clamydes* and ultimately drives the plot. When shipwrecked upon the Isle of Strange Marshes, for instance, Clyomon's immediate concern is his distance from Macedonia.

---

101 Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language,* p. ix.

102 Theodor Meron, *Bloody Constraint: War and Chivalry in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 142.

103 William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. by Terri Bourus, in *New Oxford* Shakespeare, 3.4.20–21.

Discovering from the Boatswain that he is 'twenty days' sailing' (8.10) to Alexander's court, he laments at length:

> Ah, fatal hap! Herein, alas, what further shall I say,
> Since I am forcèd for to break mine oath and 'pointed day
> Before King Alexander's grace? Clamydes will be there,
> And I, through Fortune's cruel spite, oppressed with sickness here;
> For now within two days it is that we should meet together.
> . . . . . .
> Now will Clamydes me accuse a faithless knight to be,
> And eke report that cowardliness did daunt the heart of me.
> The worthy praise that I have won through fame shall be defaced.
> The name of the Knight of the Golden Shield, alas, shall be disgraced
> Before that noble prince of might […].
>
> (8.41–45; 47–51)

Little does Clyomon know that his predicament and his concern, that his chivalric honour and faith be lost through no fault of his own, is directly mirrored by Clamydes' circumstances. Having been locked in prison by Bryan Sans-Foy, he bemoans: 'Ah, farewell hope of honour eke; now shall I break my day | Before King Alexander's grace, whereon my faith doth stay, | And shall I be found a faithless knight' (10.34–36). Craig Taylor describes how '[i]n chivalric romances, the importance of not breaking an oath was a constant theme'.[104] Dramatizing sections of its medieval French source, *Clyomon and Clamydes* shows this to be a persistent concern in early modern England. Both knights are clearly tormented by the potential accusation of 'faithless[ness]' and the prospect of 'break[ing]' a chivalric 'oath'. If they lose their honour after all, they lose themselves.

Throughout the play, honouring their trial by combat remains the priority of Clyomon and Clamydes. Clamydes even frames his responsibilities to Juliana almost as a matter of convenience: 'Sith I have fifteen days' respite myself to prepare, | My lady's charge for to fulfil, behold, I do intend' (5.85–86). Even once he has slain the Flying Serpent, he interprets the act in terms of his impending private combat: 'The Knight of the Golden Shield his force what need I now to fear, | Since I, by force, subduèd have this Serpent fierce of might' (7.4–5). Clyomon, on the other hand, vows to Neronis, 'O princess, if I ever be to health restored again, | Your faithful servant, day and night, I vow here to remain' (8.91–92). Once restored to health, however, he leaves the Isle of

---

104 Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood,* p. 79.

Strange Marshes immediately — 'But at this time, I may not stay, O lady, here with thee' (11.105) — in order to clear his name: 'So shall I seem for to excuse myself in way of right, | And not be counted of my foe a false perjurèd knight' (10.126–27). When Clyomon receives news from Rumour that Thrasellus, the malevolent King of Norway, has kidnapped Neronis, he immediately rushes to her aid. But he is consistently compelled by a sense of personal justice: 'till that I revengèd be upon that wretched king' (13.49). When he murders Thrasellus, the rhetoric of revenge reappears: 'I'll sure revenge that traitorous fact upon thy flesh this day' (16.34). By this stage, Neronis has already managed to escape, heightening the sense that Clyomon's vengeance is purely self-serving and a chance to put his early warrior fantasies into action. Both knights roam freely across the play's romance landscape, unmonitored and unregulated, performing private justice according to their own definition of chivalry.

Conclusion

Clyomon and Clamydes has not fared well at the hands of critics. Leonard N.R. Ashley writes that the play 'would be no welcome addition to any canon', and Salingar dismisses it as a 'highly unoriginal piece'.[105] More recently, Jane H.M. Taylor argues that '[t]he fact that this play has survived, it must be admitted, seems to have more to do with happenstance than with quality'.[106] Although we are not so much concerned about the quality of the play here, these general critical narratives have occluded *Clyomon and Clamydes* from either serious or extended consideration.[107] As a result, the play has become little more than a dramaturgical forerunner to the 'superior' Elizabethan playwrights like Shakespeare, and is worth only the occasional and typically

---

105 Ashley, p. 2; Salingar, p. 69.

106 Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Mongrel tragi-comedy: *Perceforest* on the Elizabethan stage', in '*Li premerains vers': Essays in Honour of Keith Busby*, ed. by Catherine M. Jones and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 479–93 (p. 480).

107 The notable exception is of course Publicover's discussion of the play's spatial geography. See also Helen Ostovich, 'Knights and Daze: The Place of Romance in the Queen's Men' in *Performing Environments: Site-Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Susan Bennett and Mary Polito (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 100–18, for an interesting gendered reading.

disparaging passing reference. Rather than focus on its contingent historical implications, literary critics have been overly concerned with the way in which *Clyomon and Clamydes* anticipates future theatrical work, mining it for the conceptual and dramaturgical precursors it provides for the later romantic comedies and romances of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.[108]

This is odd for several reasons. The unfavourable reviews of the quality of *Clyomon and Clamydes* are, for one, unjustified, fuelled, it seems, by a general discomfort with its deliberately archaic modes of language and symmetrical romance strategies (the direct mirroring of the protagonists' circumstances, for instance). Fortunately, some recent critical work has begun to address our basic failure to appreciate early Elizabethan commercial drama.[109] Although the play admittedly feels a little crude at times and its alliterative rhyming heptameter makes for uncomfortable reading, it is energetic and entertaining, especially on stage. Most of all, however, as this chapter shows, it is firmly grounded within the courtly politics of its immediate moment. That critics have principally sought to detail the ways in which *Clyomon and Clamydes* anticipates later drama (the appearance of Rumour as a chorus, for instance, is borrowed by Shakespeare in *2 Henry IV* and *Cymbeline*) of course has its value. Such observations, however, should in the same vein encourage us to treat *Clyomon and Clamydes* on its own terms by virtue of the fact that it clearly influenced contemporary and later theatrical production: that it had some inherent quality and value. We know that the play became part of the repertory of the Queen's Men, the leading theatre company of the 1580s, and that Thomas Creede presumably saw commercial opportunity enough to publish it in 1599.

---

108 In *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), for instance, Kent Cartwright writes that the play 'raises the questions about gender and identity explored later by Lyly and Shakespeare' (p. 162). In a similar vein, Maurice Hunt argues that *Clyomon and Clamydes* 'best represents the characteristics of pre-Greenian dramatic romance'; see 'Romance and Tragicomedy', in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 384–98 (p. 386).

109 See in particular, Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank, 'Doing Away with the Drab Age: Research Opportunities in Mid-Tudor Literature (1530–1580)', *Literature Compass*, 7.3 (2010), 160–76, which offers an assessment of both the critical problems and opportunities vis-à-vis mid-Tudor literature. See also Jessica Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Rather than 'happenstance', then, the evidence suggests an extraordinary longevity (and therefore popularity) for a play which scholars are so quick to dismiss.

Perhaps most importantly though, we know from Gosson's comments in 1582 that this sort of chivalric drama was common fare (frustratingly so for him). The absence of early commercial theatre records of course vastly complicates this. It should not, however, discourage serious scholarship of the early Elizabethan commercial theatre; critics like Mike Pincombe, Cathy Shrank, Matthew Steggle, Roslyn L. Knutson, and David McInnis, for instance, have shown the ways in which continually evolving digital technologies help to address and populate this absence. We can say with confidence that the representation of chivalry in *Clyomon and Clamydes* spoke to its Elizabethan audiences, and that it must have in some respects, echoed the romance material documented in the Revels Office records. One aspect of its appeal must have been the presentation of ritual combat, with the 'rites of knighthood' and its attendant ideas of personal honour. Although the use of trial by combat as a recourse to justice had become rare by the sixteenth century, John Kerrigan notes that Queen Elizabeth sanctioned one in Tothill Fields in 1571 over a land dispute, as well as one at Dublin Castle in 1583 between Conor MacCormac O'Connor and Teige MacGillapatrick. Its 'decline', however, 'did not reduce its fascination' since 'judicial combat was seen as the native, historic basis of the duelling code that became fashionable in late Elizabethan England'.[110] In his *The Book of Honour and Arms* (1590), Sir William Segar, officer of arms at Elizabeth's court, continues to defend the use of trial by combat:

> all Nations […] have (among many other trials) permitted that such questions as could not be civilly proved by confession, witness, or other circumstances, should receive judgement by fight and combat, supposing that God (who only knoweth the secret thoughts of all men) would give victory to him that justly adventured his life, for truth, honour and justice.[111]

In a sort of converse of *Clyomon and Clamydes*, an aborted trial by combat between Mowbray and Bolingbroke by the monarch drives the plot of Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1595) nearly two decades later. 'Since we cannot atone you', the king states in the opening scene, 'we shall see | Justice design the victor's chivalry' (1.1.202–03). But the

---

110 Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, p. 212.

111 William Segar, *The Book of Honour and Arms* (London: 1590), A2r–v.

king quickly annuls the combat. Although he offers the same reason as Alexander does in *Clyomon and Clamdyes* ('That our kingdom's earth not be soiled | With that dear blood which it hath fostered' [1.3.124–25]), it is not a strategy of containment but one of concealment. In denying Bolingbroke and Mowbray proper recourse to justice, and banishing them, the king enacts the first of many political mistakes. Most significantly, however, it fails to dispel the king's implication in Gloucester's murder, ultimately leading to his deposition. The fractious aristocratic energies and ambitions which are contained at the end of *Clyomon and Clamydes* take control in *Richard II*. In this case, the monarch's word is far from final.

This, I think, should urge us to consider why the author of *Clyomon and Clamydes* relocates the protagonists' trial by combat, making it a tool of political mediation in the succession crisis of the Isle of Strange Marshes, rather than simply a matter of private honour between the two knights. In a more subversive reading of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, Nandini Das suggests that the entertainment demonstrates 'the enlistment of neo-chivalric motifs to reinscribe aristocratic agency in the making of […] policy'.[112] A similar strategy might be at work in the finale of *Clyomon and Clamydes.* That the knights are drafted in as the respective champions for the Queen and Mustantius suggests a serious recognition of their significant role in courtly politics. Even though the trial is aborted, its reformulation from the private to the public sphere gestures towards a defence of the continuing functionality and vitality of chivalric ritual as something which addresses potential social and political conflict. These are the men who are ultimately best equipped to respond to such crises. As in *Richard II* though, the ritual expression of chivalry in the court sphere was often a façade for threatening private ambitions.

Both at the Elizabethan court and in its public theatre, the forms of chivalric romance play out the political intricacies of the day. The extraordinary intersections between *The Four Foster Children of Desire* and *Clyomon and Clamydes* offer us important insights into a shared chivalric theatrical culture. Stephen Orgel describes how:

> One of the chief attractions of the Elizabethan popular theatre was clearly its pageantry, conceived in the broadest sense: its ability to mime the spectacle of courts and aristocratic enterprises to an urban, predominantly middle-class audience in a society that had grown relatively (contemporary critics said dangerously) mobile. Ironically, the

---

112 Das, *Renaissance Romance*, p. 41.

> attraction was especially powerful when the pageantry was presented in the service of a nostalgic medievalism, expressing the traditional values of an established hierarchy and a chivalric code, since that was precisely the Elizabethan courtly mythology.[113]

As part of an actual diplomatic event involving real-life knights, *The Four Foster Children of Desire* of course responds directly to the political intricacies facing the English crown and its aristocracy in May 1581. A firmer date of composition for *Clyomom and Clamydes* could perhaps provide a framework for a more precisely historicised political reading of its chivalric representation. Nonetheless, both entertainments clearly elucidate the power dynamics of Elizabethan chivalry as a fractious, complex, but generally functional relationship between the queen and her nobility.

When rescued by Juliana at the beginning of *Clyomon and Clamydes*, Clamydes captures that dynamic: 'She hath from bondage set me free, and freèd, yet still bound | To her' (1.23–24). Bringing together the erotic and military through the forms of chivalric romance, the allegory of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, with its ambitious knights chasing romantic desire, operates on the same framework of courtly constraint and submission. Whether in the court or the public theatre, the image of the early modern knight which emerges is the same: he is at once 'free' to perform his noble military masculinity to his own ends but ultimately 'bound' to the divine authority of his monarch — a tension between private passion and public service. The remarkable space given to the former in both performances studied here demonstrates how a continued emphasis on personal honour was an inextricable part of the political process in mid-Elizabethan England. It is central too, in the following political reading of *Hamlet* where the same fragile combination of aggression and deference informs another type of ritual chivalric combat: the duel of honour.

---

[113] Stephen Orgel, 'Making Greatness Familiar', in *Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. by David M. Bergeron (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), pp. 19–25 (p. 19).

Chapter 2

Humanism, Resistance Theory, and the Duel of Honour: The Ghost of Chivalry in *Hamlet*

Introduction

Chivalry in *Hamlet* is a ghostly presence; embodied in the 'warlike form' of the Ghost, it lingers anxiously throughout Shakespeare's play, haunting the Danish prince into 'bloody deeds' of revenge (3.4.25). 'Armed at point' (1.2.199), 'in complete steel' (1.4.52), and commanding his son to 'remember me' (1.5.91), the armoured Ghost operates as a chivalric motif, calling upon the knightly prerogative to private justice. Shakespeare's handling of chivalric motifs in *Hamlet* suggests a compelling synergy between the codes of chivalry and revenge which might help us to locate some of the precursors of revenge drama in the popular chivalric plays of the 1570s and 1580s.[1] But it also underlines a broader cultural shift at work behind the events of the play; Hamlet's medical metaphor, 'the time is out of joint' (1.5.186), imagines a dysfunctional world torn, disjointed, and in awkward transition between two known entities. On its simplest level, those two entities might be thought of as the medieval and the early modern, and especially their varying aristocratic honour cultures. 'Remember me', then, is not only a call for Hamlet to remember his father, but also a call to remember chivalry itself. But the chivalry which Hamlet is called upon to remember and to emulate continually finds itself 'out of joint' with the political and social dynamics of the Elsinore court and its prescribed codes of behaviour. Located within competing honour cultures, this tension pits a neo-chivalric code which sanctified aristocratic violence and emphasised feudal ties against one where honour, shaped by emerging humanist and religious notions of obedience and civility,

---

1 In 'Vengeance, Variously: Revenge Before Kyd in Early Elizabethan Drama', *Early Theatre*, 12.2 (2009), 117–34, Bradley J. Irish explores the theatrical antecedents of pre-Kydian revenge tragedy. He notes that '[a] revenge theme underpins' *Clyomon and Clamydes* (p. 121).

becomes increasingly internalised and less reliant on displays of physical prowess. In a political arena where the expression of violence and justice has been monopolized by the state, avenging his father requires Hamlet to practise an older form of chivalry.

For Hamlet, then, remembering the chivalry of his father is highly problematic, conditioned and restricted by the protocols and expectations now placed on the nature and function of the man of honour and by the different shape of late-Elizabethan chivalry itself. Potential for violence lurks constantly within the competing strains of contemporary honour theory and is brutally manifested in the play's conclusive duel of honour which becomes a vehicle of revenge. It is no coincidence that Shakespeare has Horatio recount Old Hamlet's trial by combat with Old Fortinbras in the opening moments of *Hamlet*. Contrasted with the duel, it asks the audience to consider what has changed in late-Elizabethan chivalric culture. In this light, I argue, the duel functions as a transitional chivalric exercise, bridging aristocratic militarism and aggression with emerging continental notions of civility and courtliness. Enormously popular from its infiltration into English court culture in the 1580s and shaped by complex honour codes, the duel of honour was an essential expression of aristocratic identity and prerogative.

Duelling speaks to the evolution of military culture but retains a neo-feudal emphasis on personal honour above all else. Ostensibly performed within a framework of humanist gentility and courtship, it remembers and revitalises the chivalry of aristocratic authority. Broadly speaking, this is the same ritual connection between the military and political which we saw in *The Four Foster Children of Desire* and *Clyomon and Clamydes*: it involves the same contradictory combinations of obeisance and hostility. The violence of the duel (like other chivalric martial exercises), in other words, encodes a political claim of the knight to pursue personal justice on terms explicitly chivalric, rather than monarchical. Notably, the gentlemanly protocols of duelling should encourage us to appreciate how chivalric and humanist ideologies and practices, routinely described as incompatible, could interact in culturally powerful and politically purposeful ways.[2] With a similar fusion of theatricality and violence (and of verbal and physical performance) as the tournament, the early modern ritual of the duel of honour also continued to propagate a more feudal conception of the knight as a redresser of

---

2 On the inherent incompatibility of humanism and chivalry, see Paul N. Siegel, 'Shakespeare and the Neo-Chivalric Cult of Honour', *The Centennial Review of Arts and Science,* 8 (1964), 39–70; and Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition*, esp. pp. 55–65.

personal grievances. Operating as a tool of blood vengeance in *Hamlet*, it ultimately ruptures the fragile maintenance of non-violent political forms at Elsinore, revealing a culture still deeply in touch with its chivalric heritage.

Revenge for Hamlet, however, is not simply a question of remembering an increasingly outmoded and dangerous form of chivalry, but, as heir-apparent, also a question of political duty and responsibility in the face of royal treachery. 'When a king's authority is no longer unanimously respected', writes François Billacois, 'knights revert to aristocratic values'.[3] As such, *Hamlet* complicates the mechanics of revenge drama through a largely tacit engagement with the complexities of early modern resistance theory. In his 1984 study of *Hamlet*, Roland Mushat Frye 'examine[s] the play afresh in the light of the audiences for which it was initially written' to 'see it in the ambience of Elizabethan attitudes' and to 'recover the Elizabethan understandings to which Shakespeare appealed'.[4] Although it shows its age in terms of old historicist methods (using history purely as context), the central strength of *The Renaissance Hamlet* is indeed its detailed accounts of a variety of historical contexts pertinent to Shakespeare's play, and the critical groundwork which this has set for further enquiry. Of these, Frye's extensive account of contemporary political and religious theories of resistance against tyrannical monarchs offers a particularly fruitful context for reading *Hamlet*.[5] Much like the duel, these were ideas which had been filtered from the Continent: in particular, via the French Huguenots (both Henri III and IV of France were assassinated by Catholics). Hinging upon the revelation of Denmark's elective monarchy in Act 5, Frye provocatively suggests that theories exploring various intellectual and constitutional precedents for tyrannicide were legitimate and current in early modern English political thought especially when pursued by 'a prince of the blood royal'.[6]

This chapter offers another political reading of chivalry, this time in late-Elizabethan culture through the lens of *Hamlet.* It focuses on the ways in which the

---

3 François Billacois, *The Duel: Its Rise and Fall in Early Modern France,* ed. and trans. Trista Selous (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 29.

4 Roland Mushat Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 3.

5 Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet*, pp. 38–70.

6 Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet*, p. 65.

cultural and political discourses summarised above complicate Hamlet's revenge and speak powerfully to a 'time […] out of joint'. *Hamlet*, I argue, is undeniably a play about English court life, only thinly veiled by a retelling as a medieval Danish court. As this chapter demonstrates, the complexities of Hamlet's personal tragedy and his commandment to perform a dangerous and residual chivalry are radically problematized by the transitional political and religious world by which the protagonist is bound. Focusing first on the influence of Protestant humanism, and subsequently on that of early modern resistance theory, the chapter explores why the 'warlike' Ghost and his demands on Hamlet's honour are such a source of both anxiety and delay for the avenger. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates how humanism and resistance theory are in fact helpful tools in Hamlet's pursuit of revenge. Although that anxiety and delay has been read as an interiorized one for Hamlet, the prince's struggles are inseparable from the religious and political contours of the world of Elsinore (and, by extension, of late-Elizabethan England) – a world unstable, capricious, and continually haunted by the political mode of Old Hamlet. The problem of Hamlet and *Hamlet,* then, is the same, a matter of coexistent and contradictory honour cultures which comes to the fore in the climactic duel. The Hamlet and the *Hamlet* which emerge from this reading are therefore naturally disjointed; rather than a man of hopeless inaction, Hamlet 'the Dane' (5.1.247) is a prince of both cautious academic scepticism and chivalric capability: 'The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword' (3.1.149–50).

Humanism and Chivalry in *Hamlet*

In order to 'remember' his father in chivalric terms, Hamlet recognises the need to reformulate his own memory:

> Remember thee?
> Ay, thou, poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat
> In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
> That youth and observation copied there
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain
> Unmixed with baser matter.
> (1.5.95–104)

Hamlet's vow to 'wipe away all trivial fond records, | All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past' to avenge his father points towards what we might know of the Danish prince's life before the play. Aside from a desire to escape the memories of Elsinore, Hamlet's eagerness to return to his studies at Wittenberg in the opening moments of the play suggests his broad commitment to academic pursuit and learning. Prompted by the appearance of the Ghost, the sudden need to 'wipe away all' the 'records', 'books', 'saws', and 'forms' which the 'observation' of his university education has 'copied' in 'the table of [his] memory' implies how deeply grounded and embedded those principles might be. The religious and educational values of Wittenberg, a centre of both humanist pedagogy and a landmark of the Protestant Reformation, however, repeatedly and implicitly return to obscure and impede Hamlet's ability to pursue his father's 'commandment'. Quick to language but not action, Hamlet's immediate commitment to entirely abandon the 'baser matter' of his Protestant, humanist, princely education therefore proves to be a significantly more intractable task than his resoluteness here suggests.

Emphasising human capability and rigorous intellectual examination, early modern humanism propagated a new liberal educational programme based on classical precedents.[7] Throughout the Tudor period, humanist treatises often centred on the reformation of aristocratic education and offered models of early modern statecraft and governance, the political emphases of which were often entirely antithetical to the code of a chivalric revenger. Written originally for Henry VIII and reprinted seven more times by 1580, Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Book of the Governor* (1531) prioritized the notion of an English 'public weal': a 'body living, compact or made of sundry estates and degrees of men, which is disposed by the order of equity and governed by the rule and moderation of reason'.[8] As Elyot's language here suggests, *The Book of the Governor* places emphasis on the role of humanist intellectual imperatives in establishing and maintaining political order and stability. Derived from the *naturalis æquitas* (natural equity) of Roman jurisprudence (*OED n* II.3), 'equity' here suggests a model of impartial governance

---

7 On early modern humanist education, see Rebecca W. Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996).

8 Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book named The Governor*, ed. by S.E. Lehmberg (London: Dent, 1962), p. 1.

resistant to the individualistic impulses of chivalry and its associated claim to more private models of justice. Similarly, 'the rule and moderation of reason' was in many ways antithetical to several core neo-feudal aristocratic principles such as *largesse* and self-governance. In contrast to Castiglione's *The Courtier*, Elyot's vision of educational training for the armigerous classes is notable for its deliberate exclusion of chivalric precepts and he routinely subordinates any focus on military excellence to the social and civic aspects of honourable governance. According to Elyot, the early modern knight or gentleman was expected to conduct himself in terms of practical virtue by putting his classical learning in continual contemplation and service of the 'public weal'. As well as subverting ideas of knightly prerogative, then, the prestige and success of *The Book of the Governor* signalled a broader cultural and political shift in its civic re-conception of honour — the same shift which we saw in Jonson's refashioning of chivalric culture in *Barriers*. Elyot's treatise was crucial, notes Arthur Ferguson, in that it 'established the concept of the scholar-gentleman in terms that set the tone for all subsequent English treatises on the education of the aristocracy'.[9] As such, *The Book of the Governor* served as a cornerstone in putting humanism into the practical service of redefining traditional notions of the aristocracy and offered a state-centric alternative to a more traditional politics of aristocratic violence.

Humanism's focus on individual social and political responsibility to the state has therefore often been invoked as a major ideological force which alienates Hamlet from older notions of honour and blood vengeance. Kenneth Craven, for instance, argues that 'Shakespeare defines his classical humanist position by presenting Hamlet as the epitome of the classical virtues', a characterisation made explicitly in contrast to Old Hamlet who 'functions solely in the punitive sphere'.[10] Although the 'punitive' representation of Old Hamlet is accurate (he clearly comes from a world of feudal vengeance and is doing penance until his 'foul crimes' are 'burnt and purged away' (1.5.12–13), Craven's reading of young Hamlet as 'the epitome of the classical virtues' is difficult to maintain, especially in the face of the prince's frequent recklessness. Nonetheless, the brief allusions to his Wittenberg education are enough for us to confidently assert that Hamlet is well-versed in the variety of humanist texts which were

---

9 Ferguson, *The Chivalric Tradition,* p. 59.

10 Kenneth Craven, *Hamlet of Morningside Heights* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 71.

readily being consumed in Elizabethan England (and on the Continent). Of these, *De officiis* (from which Elyot drew heavily) was especially popular, reaching eleven editions between 1573 and the time of *Hamlet* in 1600.[11] In his modern edition, P.G. Walsh notes that one 'illustrious editor' of Cicero's text 'was the German humanist and Lutheran reformer Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560)'. 'After establishing his work in the curriculum of the humanist schools which he founded', Melanchthon 'moved into university teaching', notably as Professor of Greek at Wittenberg (at Luther's request) 'where he devoted virtually all of his Latin courses to Cicero'.[12]

As much as he vows to 'wipe away' such memories, then, Hamlet no doubt comes at his task armed with the precepts of Ciceronian moral philosophy. In *De officiis,* for instance, Cicero explicitly reflects on the politics of revenge:

> Certain obligations must be met even when they are owed to persons who have wronged us, for revenge and punishment have their due limits. It is perhaps sufficient if the aggressor shows remorse for his wrongdoing, so that he refrains from acting similarly in future, and other people too then become less ready to commit injustice.[13]

Although Claudius shows remorse in the prayer scene (3.3.36–72), his inability to repent, 'since [he is] still possessed | Of those effects for which [he] did the murder' (3.3.53–54), and the impossibility to reverse a 'fault' that is 'past' (3.3.51) render his contrition inutile. The king's lines are for the audience alone, however, and Shakespeare deliberately has Hamlet (who enters immediately after) on the cusp of hearing them so as to further complicate the mechanics and ethical questions of revenge, as the prince's subsequent dialogue makes clear. Cicero does in fact go on to morally justify regicide in the appropriate circumstances and, as Walsh notes, he 'repeatedly describes the

---

11 Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 23. In *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), Rhodri Lewis writes: 'Although not granted the same prestige as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* or *Politics*, Cicero's *De officiis* provided the core of humanist moral philosophy and was a text to which sixteenth-century English schoolboys were introduced at an early stage of their educations' (p. 19).

12 P.G. Walsh, 'Introduction', in Cicero, *On Obligations*, trans. by P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. ix–xlviii (p. xliv).

13 Cicero, p. 13.

assassination of Julius Caesar as the just murder of a vile tyrant'.[14] According to Ciceronian moral logic, then, the extent to which Claudius has 'wronged' Hamlet unequivocally justifies the revenge which the prince so painstakingly deliberates.

This of course is not the question for Hamlet; both the privacy of Claudius's remorse and his position at the fount of a corrupt justice system disqualify any Ciceronian requirement of moderation. Rather than make the 'due limits' of revenge difficult to quantify, the circumstances of the prayer scene, if we are to take Hamlet at his word (a dangerous principle at best), render the prince's potential retribution insufficient since he perceives Claudius's repentance to be effective. To take him in the 'purging of his soul' (with its deliberate purgatorial associations), Hamlet tells the audience, would afford his traitorous uncle 'seasoned […] passage' to heaven, and an opportunity which Old Hamlet, with his 'crimes broad blown, as flush as May' (3.3.81), was denied. Hamlet's sheathing of his sword is therefore presented not as a matter of conscience or Ciceronian moderation, but as a desire to ensure his uncle's soul 'be as damned and black | As hell whereto it goes' (3.3. 94–95). With no careful consideration of Ciceronian moral constraints, Hamlet advocates for a limitless and unforgiving version of vengeance. If the 'state' of Denmark is 'rotten', the scene suggests, then the high ideals of humanist moral philosophy — foregrounding responsibility, tolerance, and equanimity — likewise become 'rotten' and dysfunctional.

Time and time again, Hamlet proves that he can speak the language of revenge: 'my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!' (4.4.65) he tells the audience in the subsequent act. Especially by this stage, the prince's lines are of course a spur to his own inaction and its prefatory, 'O, from this time forth' (4.4.64) is yet another reminder of the gulf between the prince's extraordinary linguistic faculties (a signal of his humanist learning) and the chivalric deeds they expound and promise with such apparent conviction. The exact same question infiltrates the prayer scene; Hamlet's theological rationale is entirely persuasive, but our knowledge of his meditative tendencies impugns that conviction, leaving us to plausibly imagine that this is another moment of rhetorical bargaining for an act with which he has yet to come to terms. Hamlet's inability to reconcile words with action might speak to an uneasy and defective relationship between humanism and chivalry: between the ostensibly deep-rooted ideological

---

[14] Cicero, p. 183, n. 19.

differences between a man of rhetoric and learning and a man of arms. As we saw in the dedication of *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, however, Goldwell apparently sees no tension in celebrating his patron Bracebridge as a 'Scipio' and a 'Mars'. Although the principles and practices associated with each are polarized in many respects, careers like Bracebridge's and Sidney's should cement the fact that there is nothing extraordinary in their coexistence. Hamlet too, as we will see, is a man of both worlds: he accepts his chivalric task but subjects it to his internalised humanist impulses (the 'pressures past | That youth and observation copied there'). Sword drawn and paused over Claudius's repenting body like the 'painted tyrant Pyrrhus […] | […] a neutral to his will and matter' (2.2.418–19), for instance, Hamlet finds himself in a situation 'that would be scanned' (3.3.75). Shakespeare's choice of language is suggestive: 'scanned' completes the line metrically (*OED v* 1.a) and intimates that by the process of intellectual examination according to certain standards (in this case, humanist and theological), proper judgement can be exercised and recourse to the appropriate response discovered (*OED v* 2.a, 3.a). Chivalric action, typically instinctive, is abandoned in the face of Protestant humanist scrutiny.

Nonetheless, it remains difficult to take any firm line on Hamlet's assimilation of humanist values. Clearly, its broader principles shape his critical thinking, but it is a process of intellectual examination which, in the 'unweeded garden' of Elsinore where 'things rank and gross in nature | Possess it merely' (1.2.135–37), lends itself to contemplations on the futility of human nature: 'For who would bear […] | The oppressor's wrong, […] | […] the law's delay' and 'the insolence of office […] | When he himself might his quietus make | With a bare bodkin?' (3.1.70–75) Hamlet asks to the silence. The prince's speech on the noble reason and infinite faculties of man (2.2.269–74), often extrapolated as the ultimate humanist maxim, functions, for Mike Pincombe, as 'a *locus classicus* for the "philosophical" interpretation of Renaissance humanism'.[15] This same speech, however, is taken by Alan Bullock as evidence of Hamlet as a 'disillusioned humanist'.[16] But this is hardly surprising; early modern humanism, while centred on a set of core principles, was a field defined by its scepticism. Hamlet applauds

---

15 Mike Pincombe, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the Later Sixteenth Century* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001), p. 176.

16 Alan Bullock, *The Humanist Tradition in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), p. 44.

the God-like qualities of man, 'like an angel in apprehension' (2.2.272), but his recognition of the 'capability and godlike reason' (4.4.37) of man becomes repeatedly circumscribed, whether by Calvinist notions of predestination and providence (emphasising the depravity of human nature) or by the vile nature of the prince's circumstances.

Recently, the position of humanism within *Hamlet* has been most thoroughly examined in Rhodri Lewis's *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (2017). With a detailed and erudite reconstruction of the classical ideas and principles with which Hamlet's Wittenberg education has equipped him, Lewis reads *Hamlet* as Shakespeare's intellectual exercise in a deconstruction and rejection of early modern humanism itself. '[T]he design of the present work', writes Lewis,

> is to establish *Hamlet* as a play that depicts — with varying degrees of sympathy, impatience and horror — the experience of being confined to the darkened space between two moral and cultural worldviews. One dead, the other powerless to be born. One a ghost, the other as yet confined to fantasy.[17]

According to Lewis, Hamlet's humanist philosophising is ultimately a strategy of evasion from the role of the revenger. The Hamlet which 'emerges' is therefore 'confused, self-indulgent, and frequently heedless'.[18] The failure of humanism, then, is that it enables this behaviour and, fundamentally, makes anything else an impossibility: like all the characters of the play, Hamlet is 'a victim, a symptom, and an agent' of the 'decay' which consumes the world of Elsinore and which essentially characterises the pitfalls of Renaissance humanism.[19] Hamlet's humanism not only fails him in the face of corruption, argues Lewis, but in fact contributes to it.

For all its scholarly insights into humanist philosophy, the central thesis of *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* that the play is a theoretical vehicle for Shakespeare's unforgiving critique of early modern humanism is unconvincing. Such a critique would hardly attract audiences, contemporary or modern, and entirely dismisses so much of the complexity, ambiguity, and appeal of *Hamlet*. Lewis's approach yields an

---

17 Lewis, p. 42.

18 Lewis, p. 12.

19 Lewis, p. 12.

unjustifiably radical reading of the prince as the main agent of corruption in Elsinore, as the principal 'bullshit artist' in a world where the 'bullshit' of humanism is useless fare for the problems of the day.[20] 'For all Claudius's dishonesty — and for all Polonius's self-serving lucubration', Lewis writes, 'the young Prince Hamlet is the inhabitant of Elsinore most thoroughly mired in bullshit, about himself and about the world around him'.[21] No liberal intellectual, Lewis's Hamlet is a 'thinker of unrelenting superficiality, confusion, and pious self-deceit'.[22] Dependent on his unflattering portrait of Hamlet, however, is Lewis's dismissal of a number of the intellectual complexities which Hamlet's revenge involves. The ghost is not an emblem of a 'cultural and moral [worldview]' that is 'dead', but is rather one that remains physically and imaginatively present throughout *Hamlet*. It returns in all its physical terror to hasten Hamlet into a chivalric commandment which deserves the careful humanist examination of its executor: 'this visitation | Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose' (3.4.106–07).

By recognising that 'the de'il hath power | T'assume a pleasing shape' (2.2.534–35) and might be taking advantage of Hamlet's 'weakness and […] melancholy' (2.2.536), the prince exercises the theological caution and ethical pragmatics which one might expect of a Wittenberg academic. The ghost is a 'portentous figure' (1.1.108) in which the residual elements of medieval Catholicism and chivalry in late-Elizabethan England are focused, revitalised, and which Hamlet must subject to further scrutiny before sweeping to his revenge. If Claudius' 'occulted guilt | Do not itself unkennel in one speech', Hamlet tells Horatio before *The Murder of Gonzago*, then, 'It is a damned ghost that we have seen' (3.2.76–78). Putting the ghost's word to the test and seeking second opinion ('after we will both our judgments join | In censure of his seeming' [3.2.81–83]), Hamlet's caution should be applauded. His almost perverse delight in the result — 'O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a | thousand pound' (3.2.278–79) and calling for 'some music!' (3.2.283) — flies in the face of a Hamlet prone to eschewing responsibility, instead approaching the ghost with the scepticism it warrants. With 'grounds | More relative' (2.2.538–39) established, Hamlet is convinced from this point of the 'ghost's word' and the jointly familial and political duty he has to its calls to 'Remember [him]'.

---

20 Lewis, pp. 272, 252.

21 Lewis, pp. 251–52.

22 Lewis, p. 238.

It is little coincidence that subsequent to this Claudius is intent on disposing of Hamlet as quickly and as quietly as possible.

Hamlet's humanism is further complicated on theological grounds through a tension around what Ian Green describes as 'the Erasmian stress on virtue' and 'the Protestant stress on divine grace':[23]

> Where many Greek and Roman authors had described the unpredictable and even reprehensible behaviour of the gods, or equated the good life with virtuous behaviour and moderation, the Bible and other Christian sources spoke of a single, absolutely unchanging God, and of man as incapable through original sin of meritorious actions, though able through divine grace and faith in Christ's sacrifice to hope for perfect happiness in heaven.[24]

Hamlet flits between these conceptions of human capacity: the 'capability and godlike reason' (4.4.37) of mankind and the ability of that same 'imagination' to 'trace the noble dust of Alexander, | till he find it stopping a bung-hole?' (5.1.193–94). Hamlet's theology is, however, notoriously impossible to be firm on: although he 'seems to have absorbed theological ideas that had been enunciated by Martin Luther and John Calvin' and is 'devoutly Christian', writes David Bevington, both 'Roman Catholic theology and Calvinist theology stand side by side' in the play.[25] While Hamlet's religion might lead him to question the confessional identity of the ghost, however, it appears to do little to stand in the way of what is a political duty. The prince, for instance, appears at peace with his murder of Polonius:

> For this same lord
> I do repent, but heaven hath pleased it so
> To punish me with this, and this with me,
> That I must be their scourge and minister.
>
> (3.4.170–73)

Although is difficult to discern a devoutly Christian Hamlet in the character that 'lug[s] the guts' of Polonius 'into the neighbour room' (3.4.210), Hamlet accepts his providence.

---

23 Ian Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 307.

24 Green, p. 267.

25 David Bevington, 'The debate about Shakespeare and religion', in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Religion*, ed. by David Loewenstein and Michael Witmore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 23–39 (pp. 33–34).

His repentance appears unauthentic and improper, but he acknowledges the due punishments; Hamlet did not intend to murder Polonius 'but heaven hath pleased it so | To punish [him] with this'. It is at once an acknowledgement of his own penance and of the preordinance of man, powerless to the 'pleas[ures]' of 'heaven'. Those celestial designs have thrust Hamlet into a revenge drama and he 'must be their scourge and minister'. A disquieting image, the resolute and chivalric Hamlet envisions himself as an instrument of divine justice enacting its calamitous revenge at all costs. What might be seen as yet more wordplay to evade responsibility is instead a Hamlet who has verified the truth of the ghost and accepts the duties placed on him with an ambiguous and threatening sense of inevitability.

It is worth noting that the prince's chosen vehicle for Claudius's discovery hinges on a firmly neoclassical or humanist conception of dramatic art. When the players arrive in Elsinore, it is a speech from 'Aeneas' talk to Dido' (2.2.384) he requests, and a neoclassical belief in drama's purpose 'to hold […] the mirror up to nature' (3.2.21–22; as opposed to the verisimilitude of a play like *Clyomon and Clamydes*) that provides the intellectual and ideological arsenal to 'catch the conscience of the king'.[26] '[L]et me see, let me see' (2.2.386–87), the prince calls on the humanist learning he has vowed to forget to remember the speech he has in mind:

> 'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
> Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
> When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
> Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
> With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
> Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd
> With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
> Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
> That lend a tyrannous and damned light
> To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,
> And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
> With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
> Old grandsire Priam seeks.'
>
> (2.2.388–402)

As he is wont to do, Hamlet here turns to classical example. Requesting a speech that 'was never acted' and which 'pleased not the million' but was 'caviare to the general'

---

26 On humanist early modern theatre, see Kent Cartwright, *Theatre and Humanism*.

(2.2.372–75), the prince reveals his more academic and elitist theatrical tastes — the sorts of fare he would no doubt have enjoyed at Wittenberg.

The distinction between this more 'learned' drama and the popular repertoire is made curiously explicit in the epilogue of Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* (1613) where Homer announces:

> *All we haue done we aime at your content,*
> *Striuing to illustrate things not knowne to all,*
> *In which the learned can onely censure right:*
> *The rest we craue, whom we vnlettered call*
> *Rather to attend then iudge: for more than sight*
> *We seeke to please*.[27]

'[O]nely' the 'learned' can really get it, Homer tells us. The 'vnlettered' non-academic audience, by contrast, are there simply to 'attend' and enjoy the 'sight[s]'. Hamlet makes the exact same judgment, if not more disparagingly, when he refers to the 'groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise' (3.2.10–12). These sorts of social assumptions about audience taste are bound up with a moral didactics of performative art; think, as we saw in the previous chapter, of what Stephen Gosson lamented to be the pedagogical deficiencies of chivalric drama in the early commercial theatre. '[W]ell digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning' and with 'no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation' (2.2.377–81), the play which Hamlet turns to shows him less to be the everyman we may like him to be, and more an elitist theatre buff committed to the 'neoclassical formal principles of decorum, order, and verisimilitude'.[28] Holding the mirror up to Claudius's rotten nature, Hamlet is confident in his own 'learned[ness]' that the plan to stage *The Murder of Gonzago* before the king will enable the prince to 'censure' (the same word used by Hamlet himself before the performance) the ghost's commandment.

None of this is surprising: Hamlet, like everyone, is a product of his environment. What is striking, however, is the nature of the speech which he remembers. The language and sentiment are both decisively chivalric and, with Pyrrhus seeking to avenge his father Achilles, the parallels with Hamlet's situation are of course obvious. The broader political significance to Elsinore is also apparent: as Aeneas describes the Fall of Troy to

---

27 Thomas Heywood, *The Brazen Age* (London: 1613), L3v.

28 Bushnell, p. 146.

Dido, the fragile and disintegrating political order in Denmark resonates. Like Horatio's earlier foreboding line, 'This bodes some strange eruption to our state' (1.1.68), it is a stark reminder that the worst is yet to come and of the inherent connection between chivalric violence and political upheaval. Like 'the ominous horse' which Pyrrhus 'lay couched in', Aeneas's speech presages the terror it incites ('their lord's [i.e., Priam's] murder'), and finds its mirror in Hamlet's later self-conception as God's 'scourge and minister'. The image is both gruesome and terrifying and relies heavily on heraldic imagery and language in order to achieve its ends. Pyrrhus's 'sable arms', dressed in heraldic black (*OED n* A), are at once an explicit statement of his resolute 'purpose' and an implicit recognition of his emotional condition as a mournful avenger. During the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet, it would seem, remembers the phrase when he talks to Ophelia about the amount of time passed since his father's death: 'let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables!' (3.2.122–23). A clear rhetorical nod to the sabled Pyrrhus, Hamlet's sarcastic retort might signal a shared sense of the Greek revenger's emotional intensity, implicitly encouraging the same 'purpose' in himself. Like the Trojan horse, Hamlet too will use his own trick.

The connection is further supported by Horatio's early description of the ghost's 'beard' (1.2.238) as 'sable silvered' (1.2.240). Given the rarity of the word ('sable' and 'sables' surface only once more in Shakespeare's theatrical canon, in *Pericles,* compared to *Hamlet*'s four usages) the parallels must be more than coincidence; as men who respond to personal and political matters of honour with fearless commitment, Old Hamlet and Pyrrhus are reminders of a past chivalric ethos which continues to infiltrate the present, the latter summoned by the prince's own volition. As with *The Murder of Gonzago*, drama is a cue to visible emotional intensity: 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, | That he should weep for her?' (2.2.494–95) Hamlet upbraids himself for the First Player's comparative ability to 'force his soul to his own conceit' (2.2.488). 'What would he do', Hamlet speculates, 'Had he the motive and the cue for passion | That I have?' (2.2.495–97). These theatrical recourses are not strategies of evasion, but culturally familiar prompts which, with 'grounds | More relative' (2.2.538–39), function for Hamlet to incite his chivalric action. Put simply, the prince desires to be like the 'rugged Pyrrhus', both physically and emotionally fierce in his revenge. Continuing the heraldic descriptions, Pyrrhus 'smear[s]' his already 'dread and black complexion' with 'heraldry more dismal': emphasising the inherent violence of chivalry, the blood which the Greek revenger spreads across his face resembles the heraldic distinctions of armour. In the

description as 'total gules', the heraldic red (*OED n* 4A), Pyrrhus (the name also means *red* in ancient Greek) resembles the protagonist of one of Shakespeare's later revenge plays, *Timon of Athens* (1606): 'Follow thy drum. | With man's blood paint the ground gules, gules'.[29] In Aeneas's story, however, the image is more shocking: it is Pyrrhus himself who is 'horridly tricked', heraldically decorated (*OED adj* 2), with the 'blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons' — a blood '[b]aked and impasted' (perhaps Shakespeare was remembering *Titus Andronicus* [1594]) by the heat of the 'parching streets'. Layering the blood with heraldic symbolism is of course a nod to the noble lineage of chivalry — the ability and function of heraldry to detail blood relations — and a reminder that Hamlet's revenge is both familial and political. Although with markedly less lavish grotesqueness, he too racks up a body count in his quest, like the 'hellish Pyrrhus', for the king's blood.

In the graveyard scene, Hamlet also looks to classical example to better understand his position as revenger:

> No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?
> Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
> O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw!
>
> *Enter* KING, QUEEN, LAERTES *and* [*other Lords, with a* Priest *after*] *the corpse*.
>
> But soft, but soft awhile, here comes the King[.]
>
> (5.1.196–206)

In Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, the biographies of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar are deliberately paired together. The connection is made explicit by Plutarch; in his *Life of Julius Caesar*, he records how Caesar 'burst into tears' when 'reading from the history of Alexander'. '"Do you not think", said [Caesar], "it is matter for sorrow that while Alexander, at my age, was already king of so many peoples, I have as yet achieved no

---

29 William Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton, *Timon of Athens*, ed. by Francis X. Connor, *New Oxford Shakespeare,* 5.1.58–59.

brilliant success?"'.[30] As much as the scene is an extension of the *memento mori* formula introduced by Yorick's skull, a reflection on the inevitable mortality of all men regardless of their fame, it also signals a chain of influence for models of military prestige. Later in *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch notes that the Macedonians 'likened' Pyrrhus's 'aspect and his swiftness and all his motions to those of the great Alexander', observing 'shadows […] and intimations' of his 'impetuosity and might in conflicts'. Whereas 'other kings' resembled Alexander solely in 'their purple robes, their body-guards, the inclination of their necks, and their louder tones in conversation, […] Pyrrhus, and Pyrrhus alone' did 'in arms and action'.[31]

Through Plutarch, then, Shakespeare (and Hamlet) brings us full circle, recalling not only the dreadful and inhuman Pyrrhus but also Horatio's classical allusions when he speculates on the potential significance of the ghost:[32]

> A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
> In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
> A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
> The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
> Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets
> (1.1.111–15)

Before *The Murder of Gonzago*, Polonius tells Hamlet that (once 'in the university'): 'I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the | Capitol; Brutus killed me' (3.2.99–100). Polonius, then, unwittingly foretells his own murder to its enactor. Caesar's end was of course well known and Globe audiences at *Hamlet* might well have remembered Shakespeare's treatment in the previous year in *Julius Caesar*. Once 'whet[ted] […] against Caesar', Brutus tormentedly reflects:

> Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
> The Genius and the mortal instruments
> Are then in council; and the state of man,
> Like to a little kingdom, suffers then

---

30 Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, trans. by Bernadotte Perrin, 11 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914–26), VII (1919), p. 469.

31 Plutarch, IX (1920), p. 367.

32 Shakespeare was using Thomas North's 1580 translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. On Shakespeare's engagement with Plutarch, see E.A.J. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Plutarch', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 10.1 (1959), 25–33.

> The nature of an insurrection.[33]

Hamlet's 'first motion' is of course the actual 'phantasma' of his father. But Brutus's 'interim' is much like Hamlet's: the 'council' of '[t]he Genius and the mortal instruments' speaks to the void between the prince's thought and action, between his humanist learning and his chivalric commitment as well as the resulting psychological 'insurrection' of Hamlet's 'state'. The political vocabulary ('council', 'state', 'kingdom', 'insurrection'), however, is a reminder that in both *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*, the emotional torment of Hamlet and Brutus is bound up with not only the promise, but also the duty of political 'insurrection'. That void between humanism and chivalry in *Hamlet* is too often overstated. Hamlet's automatic recoil to classicism is entirely concordant with what we can discern of his education. The examples, however, as we have seen, are driven by chivalric impulses to avenge. When Caesar returns in Hamlet's imagination in the graveyard, the sense of foreboding in Horatio's lines approaches its fruition, echoing Cassius in *Julius Caesar*:

> for now, this fearful night,
> There is no stir or walking in the streets;
> And the complexion of the element
> In favour's like the work we have in hand,
> Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.
> (1.3.125–29)

Although the 'sheeted dead | […] squeak and gibber in the Roman streets' in Horatio's telling, there is a shared portentous terror of the inevitable political insurrection — the 'work […] in hand'. It is 'an enterprise | Of honourable-dangerous consequence' (*JC*, 1.3.123), honourable in its political duty but dangerous in its '[m]ost bloody, fiery, and most terrible' nature. It seems little coincidence that Hamlet concludes his reflection on Alexander the Great and the 'Imperious Caesar' with 'here comes the king'. We might remember that king's advice to Hamlet in the opening court scene to 'not for ever […] | seek for thy noble father in the dust' (1.2.70–71). Through the very process of imaginatively tracing nobility in dust, however, Hamlet articulates his resolution: 'here comes the King'. In the subsequent and final scene of the play, Claudius, like Caesar, will be deposed for his tyranny.

---

[33] William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, ed. by Sarah Neville, *New Oxford* Shakespeare, 2.1.63–69.

Early Modern Resistance Theory in *Hamlet*

The notion that Hamlet is a transitional character, himself 'out of joint' with the impulses of two different worlds is an old one. For Bertolt Brecht, Hamlet was a character 'positioned, or entrapped between two worlds: the modern world of bourgeois humanistic ideals and the feudal world of blood revenge, between the world of Wittenberg and Elsinore'.[34] That tension can often be overstated; as we have seen, Hamlet's humanist learning is often put in direct service of following his chivalric commandment. The strains between both, however, are explicitly registered in the play's courtly politics. It is worth turning again to Cicero to appreciate the distinctions:

> At the level of state policy, rights in warfare must be scrupulously observed. There are two types of military dispute, the one settled by negotiation and the other by force. Since the first is characteristic of human beings and the second of beasts, we must have recourse to the second only if we cannot exploit the first.[35]

By sending his embassies, Cornelius and Voltemand, to the Norwegian court 'to suppress | [Fortinbras's] further gait herein' (1.2.30–31) at the opening of *Hamlet*, Claudius is presented as the statesman-king who practises a politics of diplomacy. This is clearly a deliberate contrast with his 'valiant brother' (1.2.25) who 'in an angry parle | […] smote the sledded Polacks on the ice' (1.1.61–62). From the outset, then, *Hamlet* advertises its interest in transitional political systems: one ghostly, physically aggressive and impulsive, the other tactical and conciliatory. On the surface, then, Old Hamlet and Claudius are shown as varieties of kingship which broadly and respectively reflect the contrasting military and political emphases of Castiglione's and Elyot's aristocratic treatises. In Hamlet's mind, the contrast becomes obsessive: already in this scene before the discovery of the treason, Claudius is 'Hyperion to a satyr' (1.2.140). Hamlet's comparison is of course internalised and shaped entirely by familial emotion at this point. Nonetheless, his dichotomisation of both men is reflected at the level of state

---

34 Lawrence Guntner, 'Rewriting Shakespeare: Bertolt Brecht, Heiner Müller, and the Politics of Performance', in *Shakespeare and European Politics*, ed. by Dirk Delabastita, Jozef De Vos, and Paul Franssen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp. 179–95 (p. 183).

35 Cicero, pp. 13–14.

policy. Often rhetorically driven by those contrasts, Hamlet's revenge requires an older politics in a newer age.

In one of the most compelling political readings of *Hamlet*, R.A. Foakes reads the tension between the political systems respectively represented by Old Hamlet and Claudius as 'Shakespeare's primary design' in *Hamlet*.[36] According to Foakes, '*Hamlet* is most profoundly a political play in setting against one another the two modes of government which have predominated in Western history, and through Hamlet's struggle to reconcile ethical and political imperatives, the limitations of both are revealed'.[37] As such, 'the tragic dilemma' of Hamlet should be understood within the Renaissance paradox of Classical heroic idealism (the image Hamlet has of his father) and the theological realisation of human depravity (embodied in the image he has of Claudius).[38] The simultaneous 'heroic stance' and 'Christian morality' of the Ghost is ultimately a contradiction for Foakes, who argues that Hamlet's struggle is exacerbated by his inability to 'thoroughly disentangle the Christian and the Classical'.[39] The issue for Hamlet, then, is that his father's demands are 'appropriate to an ancient heroic code, and appalling in Christian terms'. 'Hamlet's nostalgia for a simpler, heroic world run by men strong in the arm', Foakes continues, 'cannot be reconciled either with the violence of that world or with the moral and political demands of modern Denmark'.[40]

This fine analysis of *Hamlet*'s clear concern with questions of statecraft, however, requires some modification. Hamlet, as we have seen, is certainly caught between humanist and theological contradictions about human capacity. Foakes, however, slightly misjudges the lines on which the distinction between Claudius and Old Hamlet is made. By 'distancing the idea of his father into a Classical context' (via a tendency to associate him with classical gods like Hyperion), for instance, Foakes suggests that

---

36 R.A. Foakes, *Hamlet Versus Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 159.

37 Foakes, *Hamlet Versus Lear*, p. 178.

38 Foakes, *Hamlet Versus Lear*, p. 169.

39 Foakes, *Hamlet Versus Lear*, pp. 154, 168.

40 Foakes, *Hamlet Versus Lear*, p. 169.

Hamlet 'invokes the ethos of a pre-Christian world' which emphasises action.[41] As we have seen, however, Hamlet's classical points of comparison are hardly surprising given his Wittenberg education. Furthermore, they are extended to Claudius alike (the 'satyr', for instance, comes from classical mythology). Rather than 'an ancient heroic code', the ghost clearly comes from a Christian world of chivalry. Foakes is right that it is a Christian ghost, but its imprecise theological nature is a deliberate reminder of a more recent past which, in its chivalric and suspiciously Catholic form, continues to shape the present. For Foakes, 'Hamlet does not have a 'duty' to revenge' but a 'Christian duty […] to avoid it'.[42] This chapter pursues the converse; as Prince of Denmark and heir-apparent to a stolen throne, Hamlet's political duty to revenge is unquestionable — it is the nature of the ghost which is and must be further qualified. In the face of that constitutional responsibility, Hamlet easily dismisses those Christian duties on multiple occasions and carefully considers the political 'conscience' (5.2.66) of revenge.

There is nothing inherently contradictory between chivalry and Christianity, of course: knights were deeply religious and violence, performed according to the right protocols, was broadly acceptable. Furthermore, as we saw in the introduction of this thesis, it was Pope Urban II's sermon which in many senses gave chivalry formal approval. Foakes's reading of the Ghost as one that contradictorily 'demands revenge, as is appropriate to an heroic code, but preaches a morality that focuses on sexual relations and expressly forbids revenge' is therefore a simplification.[43] As we will see, for instance, the duel of honour enabled aristocrats to pursue matters of personal honour and revenge within a Christian framework. Self-styling himself as heaven's 'scourge and minister', Hamlet certainly understands his revenge as both politically and religiously justifiable. Hamlet's religion causes him to exercise greater caution and to reflect disparagingly on human achievement in the face of inevitable mortality and probable providence, but it never in fact stands explicitly in the way of revenge. Rather than '[invoke] the ethos of a pre-Christian world' and alienate him from his task, Hamlet's heroic classicising of his father is not only natural, but entirely chivalric. From its medieval formulations, chivalry incorporated heroic models found in classical literature

---

41 Foakes, *Hamlet Versus Lear*, p. 153.

42 Foakes, p. 169.

43 Foakes, p. 154.

and cannot be easily disentangled from the sorts of examples which Hamlet cites. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the Nine Worthies which bring together pre-heraldic Christian (King Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon), Jewish (Joshua, David and Judas Maccabeus), and pagan (Hector, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar) princes as ideal models of the chivalric ideology. The Pyrrhus, Alexander, and Caesar which Hamlet conjures from his imagination are figures of physical prowess which lead him to intellectualise but ultimately pursue his revenge.

Even armed with the 'grounds | More relative' provided by *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet's revenge is tacitly complicated by questions surrounding its constitutional legitimacy. For all his imaginative arsenal of classical military heroes, Hamlet, I argue, demonstrates a clear concern with the moral pragmatics of regicide and implicitly engages with contemporary theories of rightful resistance. Revealing the actual circumstances of his death, the Ghost tells Hamlet how 'the whole ear of Denmark | Is by a forged process of my death | Rankly abused' (1.5.36–38). Claudius is a tyrant who operates both before and during the play 'by […] forged process'. Since he '[n]ow wears [the] crown' (1.5.39), it is the state of Denmark which is 'rankly abused' and Hamlet, as heir-apparent, who must avenge his father's 'foul and most unnatural murder!' — unnatural, not only in its inhumanity, but also its political illegitimacy. Although Hamlet makes no explicit mention of his revenge in constitutional terms, he gestures towards some of the central questions of early modern resistance theory. The polemical arguments advocating resistance are typically associated with the Continent and with the German Reformation in particular, but they were clearly familiar in England. As Frye puts it: 'Assertions of the right of officials, nobles, and princes to resist and even depose a tyrant were so widely known on the Continent and in Scotland as to be inescapable in England as well'.[44] Unsurprisingly, these theories of resistance are intimately shaped by their context of production, reflecting not only a variety of specific political and constitutional situations but also a range of sub-strands within the Reformed Protestant religion.[45]

---

44 Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet*, p. 71.

45 For an excellent reading of the different doctrinal approaches to resistance theory in Thomas Preston's *Cambises* and (1560) and Thomas Pickering's *Horestes* (1567) see Allynna Ward, '"Whosoever Resisteth Shall get to Themselfes Dampnacioun":

Calvinist resistance theory, for instance, stemmed from Calvin's own writings which from the 1536 publication of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* earned him enormous prestige and set crucial precedents for later Protestant theories.[46] Addressed to the 'benefit' of 'THE INHABITANTS OF FRANCE', Calvin's *Commentary on Daniel* (1561) argues that:

> For earthly princes lay aside all their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy of being reckoned in the number of mankind. We ought rather utterly to defy than to obey them when they are so restive and wish to spoil God of his rights, and, as it were, to seize upon his throne and draw him down from heaven.[47]

Acknowledging the 'great indignities' suffered by French Protestants, Calvin nonetheless urges his readers to 'use every effort, that no madness of the impious who act thus intemperately, should deprive you of that moderation by which alone they have thus far been conquered and broken down'.[48] Resistance and obedience therefore sit uncomfortably together with a tension similar to that we saw in Hamlet's recognition of the incompatibility of divine providence and human capability. In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, however, Calvin is clear that these edicts relate to 'private individuals'. By contrast, 'magistrates of the people', writes Calvin, are 'appointed to restrain the wilfulness of kings' and have an explicit 'duty' to 'withstand' the 'fierce licentiousness of kings' since magistrates are 'appointed protectors by God's ordinance'.[49] Calvin, then,

---

Tyranny and Resistance in *Cambises* and *Horestes*', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 38.1–2 (2008), 150–67.

46 In turn, Calvinist resistance theory was heavily influenced by Lutheran resistance theory which led to the successful Schmalkadic revolution and resulted in the Religious Peace of Augsburg, securing Lutheran theology a place within the imperial government. See Robert M. Kingdon, 'Calvinism and resistance theory, 1550–1580', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. by J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 193–213 (pp. 200–03). See also David M. Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2001).

47 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. by Thomas Myers (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852), pp. lxiv, 382.

48 Calvin, *Daniel,* p. lxxi.

49 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), p. 1519 (4.2.31).

cleverly articulates a theory of rightful resistance which succeeds in maintaining the primacy of scriptural authority above all else: a man's duty is to God before anything.

Calvin, however, was markedly less radical in his emphasis on resistance than later Protestant political theorists. As Robert M. Kingdon remarks, Calvin's 'role' in 'the development of Calvinist resistance theory' was 'seminal but not major'.[50] It was not until Calvin's final years that his proponents urged military action in France and further afield. It was only after his death and especially following the Protestant outrage at the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 that the need for more concrete resistance theories was established. In response to the volatile politics of the French Wars of Religion and the contingent dissolution of royal power in France, Huguenot theorists produced a more elaborate rationale of resistance. Of these, François Hotman's *Francogallia* (1573) but especially Theodore Beza's *The Right of Magistrates* (1574) and *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1579, but compiled probably four years earlier, possibly by Hubert Languet or Philippe Duplessis Mornay) were especially influential, 'prepared in the same Calvinist circle', and often published together.[51] These texts encouraged the establishment of *assemblées politiques* — formal institutions of aristocrats backed by representatives of cities outside of the control of the French crown which encouraged armed resistance. Broadly speaking, these theories of resistance articulated a form of social contract between God, ruler, and the general population. If the monarch breaks his/her contract with either God or the people, then he/she forgoes the demands on the obedience of his/her subjects and invites lawful resistance. These formal institutions, driven by contingent religious and political circumstances, spoke to the need to circumvent the divine authority of monarchs. Generally espousing notions of mixed government, resistance arguments were naturally attractive to more neo-feudally minded aristocrats like Sidney, Leicester, and Essex. Always keen to assert his chivalric constitutional prerogatives, the latter's rebellion in 1601, although driven by personal material desire, grounded itself in a vision of mixed government found in both chivalric ideology and resistance theory.

---

50 Kingdon, p. 193.

51 Kingdon, p. 212. By 1581, for instance, Beza's *The Right of Magistrates* had already reached its tenth French edition (Kingdon, p. 211).

What then of England? In the 1550s and 1560s, both English and Scottish Calvinist exiles (fleeing the Catholic rule of Mary Stuart and Mary of Guise respectively) living in Reformed European cities such as Geneva and Strasburg produced political treatises which frequently advocated for considerably more radical models of resistance. In his *A Short Treatise of Politic Power* (1556), for instance, John Ponet, former Bishop of Winchester in exile in Strasburg, openly encourages popular rebellion and does not circumscribe the right to resist tyrannical rulers to any particular office.[52] Despite their controversial nature, however, 'these English Calvinist arguments for resistance […] had little general impact, even within the Calvinist community'.[53] Undoubtedly, it was the extent of their radicalism which nullified their influence; the later Huguenot treatises were much more measured in making clear that resistance should be contained to particular offices and agents. Resistance theories were apparently met with little enthusiasm in Elizabethan England, their potential import fundamentally circumscribed by an overwhelming emphasis on political obedience. Compared to the period of Marian exile, for example, Richard L. Greaves argues that the Elizabethan period witnessed 'a striking reversal of political theory with respect to the concept of active resistance'. 'Protestant writers', Greaves states, 'retreated from the radical new theory of tyrannicide and returned to the more quiescent position worked out in the early Tudor period'.[54]

After all, Calvinist theology could equally provide the foundations for anti-resistance discourses as well. As God's divine representative on earth, the monarch could be theoretically configured as a political extension of the unconditional obedience due unto God. In the same year as Hamlet, for instance, Oxford Professor of Divinity (Archbishop of Canterbury from 1611) George Abbot expands upon the idea in *An Exposition upon the Prophet Jonah* (1600), a collection of sermons preached at St. Mary's Church, Oxford:

> Surely we must not rashly censure this state of other men. For God many times doth crosse the actions of such as be deere vnto him, either to trye

---

52 On the relationship between Ponet's treatise and the circumstances of Marian exile, see Barbara Peardon, 'The Politics of Polemic: John Ponet's *Short Treatise of Politic Power* and Contemporary Circumstance 1553–1556', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.1 (1982), 35–49.

53 Kingdon, p. 200.

54 Richard L. Greaves, 'Concepts of Political Obedience in Late Tudor England: Conflicting Perspectives', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.1 (1982), 23–34 (p. 23).

> their patience, or to confirme their faith, or to teach them obedience, or to make them loath the world, or for some other reason best knowne vnto himselfe. So that we may not proudly or peremptorily iudge. Then the conscience of each man, who will not be wilfully blinded, is the best triall in this behalf. [55]

Abbot's providential theology is unmistakably Calvinist; much like the Hamlet powerless to the 'pleas[ures]' of 'heaven', Abbot's exegesis results in a vision where judgement belongs ultimately to God and where the mysterious and ostensibly unjust workings of the world have divine reason 'best knowne vnto himselfe' alone. '[C]onscience' is the operative word here, encouraging inward reflection through the soul and discouraging 'peremptor[y] iudge[ment]'.[56] 'A good conscience which doth walke with sinceritie, in that calling wherein the Lord hath placed him', Abbott assures the reader, 'doth litle feare'.[57] Abbot's hierarchical vision of Elizabethan society has clear anti-resistance judicial connotations; 'the Minister', he warns, 'should […] be carefull in a verie high degree, that he speake not but according to his commission, least he offend a Lord of more dreadfull maiestie, who is more iealous of his glorie, and more able to punish'.[58] 'Minister' carries both judicial (*OED n* 1.c) and ecclesiastical (*OED n* 2) connotations: the early modern subject is unquestionably bound by its position within the Elizabethan chain of being.

Abbott's exposition of the vanity of those who 'striue and vehemently labour, […] euen with all the powers of their mind, and with all the strength of their bodie, to attaine to their desire, […] and contentednesse' is acknowledged by Hamlet.[59] It is indeed 'the dread of something after death' that 'puzzles the will' (3.1.77–79) and which leads men '[t]o grunt and sweat under a weary life' (3.1.76) and 'bear those ills we have' (3.1.80). The prince, however, implicitly registers his resistance to such notions, especially in the context of his duty to revenge: 'conscience does make cowards' (3.1.82), he soliloquises, leading 'enterprises of great pitch and movement' to 'lose the name of

---

55 George Abbott, *An Exposition upon the Prophet Jonah* (London: 1600), L2r.

56 On the importance of conscience in Calvinist theology, see James D. Boulger, *The Calvinist Temper in English Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1980), pp. 35–45.

57 Abbott, J1r.

58 Abbott, C1v.

59 Abbott, L2.

action' (3.1.85–87). Hamlet would undeniably have been familiar with resistance theories, and presumably earlier German ones in particular. 'Early modern political theory in Germany', argues Robert Stillman, 'was pivotal to the development of resistance theory in northern Europe, but it was so in considerable measure because of its Philippist character'.[60] Recently, Mads L. Jensen has demonstrated how Phillip Melanchthon put his immense humanist learning in the service of Protestant political theory.[61] In the context of the Schmalkaldic War, Melanchthon's 1547 *Von der Notwehr Unterricht* ('Instruction Concerning Self-Defence') advanced the Lutheran position by using humanist texts, especially Ciceronian, to develop a theory of resistance based on natural law as opposed to theology.[62]

Quentin Skinner's seminal study of early modern resistance theory therefore requires some modification. According to Skinner:

> With the publication of major Huguenot treatises of the 1570s, Protestant political theory passes across a crucial conceptual divide. Hitherto even the most radical Calvinists had vindicated the lawfulness of resistance in terms of the paramount duty of the powers that be to uphold the true (that is, the Protestant) faith. But with Beza, Mornay and their followers, the idea that the preservation of religious uniformity constitutes the sole possible grounds for legitimate resistance is finally abandoned. The result is a fully political theory of revolution, founded on a recognisably modern, secularised thesis about the natural rights and original sovereignty of the people.[63]

The advantage of a secular, political, and not theological argument was that it shifted from a more polemical to a more universal and applicable plane. Although Skinner acknowledges the conceptual shift to 'a completely secularised theory of the right to resist' happened successfully in late 1550s Scotland, the recent criticism of Jensen and Stillman demonstrates a more extensive historical influence. Hamlet's Wittenberg

---

60 Stillman, p. 185.

61 Mads L. Jensen, *A Humanist in Reformation Politics: Philipp Melanchthon on Political Philosophy and Natural Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

62 As Stillman notes, 'By 1542, in his revised commentary on Cicero's *De officiis* and his newest version of the *Loci*, Melanchthon had already displayed with considerable sophistication the argumentative power available to natural law discourse' (p. 190).

63 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), II, p. 338.

education appears to be Shakespeare's invention; as Mark Matheson notes, 'there is no mention of this in the surviving sources'.[64] This not only opens up a variety of Reformed Protestant interpretations for *Hamlet,* but is a reminder that the prince's education is being conducted in the same intellectual humanist milieu as the early natural law arguments for political resistance against tyrannical rulers. Melanchthon's work was highly familiar in England, and he had even been offered position of Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge in 1553 to replace Martin Bucer.[65]

For the context of political theory in *Hamlet*, the reality of Elizabethan England is that both discourses of obedience and resistance coexisted uncomfortably, speaking once again to a 'time […] out of joint': '[c]ontemporary discussions', argues Allyna Ward, 'alternated between supporting a theory of resistance and totally condemning resistance in favour of complete obedience at all times'.[66] Broadly speaking, then, resistance theory arguments occupy the same nebulous ideological space as the chivalric compromise, enabling and encouraging an intellectual examination of the limits of political obedience. Frye notes the pointed irony in the fact that '[w]hile Queen Elizabeth, as head of both church and state, was maintaining the Anglican insistence upon the obedience of subjects at home, she was giving diplomatic, financial, and even military support to Protestant rebels abroad'.[67] Thomas Bilson attempted to smooth over the explicit ironies of this political stance in *The True Difference between Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion* (1585). Ultimately, Bilson draws a distinction between elective and absolute monarchies, the political framework of the former offering instances where the authority of the head of state could theoretically be contested. Commissioned by Elizabeth herself, Bilson's treatise, however, was little more than political manoeuvring to justify foreign policy initiatives whilst continuing to emphasise domestic obedience to the state. As Alexandra Gajda suggests, 'Elizabeth's support of the Dutch "rebels" was a vulnerable Achilles heel, at odds with the more authoritarian definitions of monarchical power

---

64 Mark Matheson, '*Hamlet* and "A Matter Tender and Dangerous"', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46.4 (1995), 383–97 (p. 391).

65 J.D. Alsop, 'Philip Melanchthon and England in 1553', *Notes and Queries*, 37 (1990), 164–65.

66 Ward, p. 167.

67 Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet*, p. 71.

expressed in the 1590s in England'.[68] Nonetheless, Bilson's distinction between different types of monarchies is, as we shall see, important for a political reading of *Hamlet* considering the revelation of Denmark's elective monarchy in the final act.

For a considerable time, resistance theory was understood to have died out under Elizabeth, losing the currency it had while Mary Stuart remained alive (although remaining relevant for Catholics; as we will see in Chapter 4, Elizabeth was confronted with multiple assassination attempts during her reign).[69] This position has, however, been overturned by a number of scholars.[70] In particular, Patrick Collinson's seminal 1987 article on 'monarchical republicanism' emphasises the continued influence of resistance theory (although he objects to the term, preferring 'the polemical critique of monarchy') which remained an 'anti-monarchical virus which was part of the legacy of early sixteenth-century humanism'.[71] Although 'Elizabeth was not actively resisted by her Protestant subjects', argues Collinson, an 'ideological capacity for resistance' remained an important aspect of the contemporary political culture.[72] The earlier Marian populist theories (such as Ponet's) remained culturally familiar, and were expanded not only by Huguenot Calvinists like Beza but also at home, such as in the enormously popular *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559).[73] Knowledge in England of the French Huguenot

---

68 Gajda, *The Earl of Essex*, p. 91.

69 See for instance, Greaves. On Catholic resistance in Elizabethan England, see Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

70 Gerald Bowler, '"An Axe or an Acte": The Parliament of 1572 and Resistance Theory in Early Elizabethan England', *Canadian Journal of History,* 19.3 (1984), 349–59; Scott Lucas, '"Let none such office take, save he that can for right his prince forsake": *A Mirror for Magistrates*, Resistance Theory and the Elizabethan Republic', in *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson*, ed. by John F. McDiarmid (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 91–108; and Karl Gunther, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 131–57.

71 Patrick Collinson, 'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester,* 69 (1986–87), 394–424 (p. 408).

72 Collinson, p. 409.

73 Later domestic examples include Peter Martyr's *Common Places* (London: 1583); Dudley Fenner's *Sacra Theologica* (London: 1586), and George Buchanan's *De jure regni apud Scotos* (London: 1591).

treatises remains a question of cultural transmission since English editions did not appear until much later in the seventeenth century, and these are generally associated with the English Civil War and its challenge to royal prerogative.[74] Ties between England and France, however, remained close. Philip Sidney, for instance, fled the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre with Mornay and Languet (both potential authors of *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*), and remained in frequent correspondence with the latter, especially regarding political affairs in northern Europe.[75] Not only could aristocrats like Sidney have engaged these texts and ideas physically and verbally firsthand, but many Huguenot refugees also settled in England.

Aside from Frye's *The Renaissance Hamlet*, only one article directly considers the influence of resistance theory in the English commercial theatre.[76] Here, in a reading of *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Antonio's Revenge*, and the *Revenge of Bussy*, John Adrian argues for the early modern theatre as 'one of the most important […] sites for early English encounters with French resistance theories'.[77] Although Hamlet never engages explicitly with these theories, he would no doubt be aware of them and of the fact that his revenge is not only a private, but a public duty. After corroborating the Ghost's word, the prince

---

74 Kingdon, p. 218. On the influence of the French religious wars and English political thought, see J.H.M. Salmon, *The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). Although the major Huguenot treatises were unavailable in English translation until 1648, Salmon notes that the fourth part of *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* was published in England in the 1580s to support English intervention in the Low Countries (p. 17). The section concerns the assistance of neighbouring princes.

75 It is worth noting that Languet was a student of Melanchthon's. See Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale*, p. 60.

76 For a reading of the same in early modern French drama, see Paul Scott, 'Resistance Theories, Orthodoxy and Subversive Drama in Early Modern France', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 21.1 (1999), 57–74. In his chapter on *The Revenger's Tragedy* in *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Adrian Streete notes that 'revenge tragedy re-emerges in England during the latter part of the sixteenth century, a time when many early modern political thinkers were deeply engaged in debating the mimetic and political function of the literal body of authority, the secular ruler' (p. 203).

77 John Adrian, '*Vindicta* and *Vindiciae* on the Early English Stage: Imagining Revenge through Huguenot Resistance Theory', in *Renaissance Papers 2006*, ed. by Christopher Cobb and M. Thomas Hester (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), pp. 43–60 (p. 46).

is focused on establishing the grounds of his public onus to revenge. After relating the details of Claudius's 'royal knavery' (5.2.19), Hamlet asks Horatio:

> Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon?
> He that hath killed my King and whored my mother,
> Popped in between th'election and my hopes,
> Thrown out his angle for my proper life
> And with such cozenage. Is't not perfect conscience?
> (5.2.62–66)

This is the closest Hamlet comes to articulating his public and princely duty to overthrow Claudius, an insinuation which becomes clearer in the First Folio text: 'To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damned | To let this canker of our nature come | In further evil?'[78] It seems little coincidence that in Q1 and Q2 Osric enters at this point to interrupt the open discussion of regicide. Similarly, although the dialogue continues in F1, Horatio's noncommittal response ('It must shortly be known to him from England | What is the issue of the business there' (F1 5.2.71–72)) has the exact same effect.[79]

This is a markedly different Hamlet to what we have seen thus far, and for good reason. 'Does it not […] stand me *now* upon?' (emphasis mine) suggests that the stakes have changed, and by moving from his conventional view of Old Hamlet as 'father' to 'my King', Shakespeare subtly signals a change in the way his protagonist considers his revenge. When Hamlet first speaks to the Ghost, he underlines the different private and public personae which his father at once represents: 'I'll call thee Hamlet, King, father, royal Dane' (1.4.44–45). By Act 5, however, he acknowledges the fatherly identity he must avenge; 'This is I, | Hamlet the Dane' (5.1.246–47) he announces in his confrontation with Laertes at Ophelia's funeral, taking up his public political duty in response to Claudius' tyranny. Reading *Hamlet* in terms of *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos,* Frye argues that Hamlet is 'clearly an officer of the kingdom, rather than of the king, because he is not a domestic established only by the king but in his own right represents

---

78 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 5.2.68–70. Subsequent references to the First Folio text are to this edition and are given in parentheses with the siglum 'F1'.

79 Whether or not *Hamlet* antedates or postdates the Essex Rebellion on 8 February 1601, it is tempting to see the distinctions as a deliberate authorial attempt to avoid censorship (plans for the rebellion had begun the previous year).

independent power and responsibility'.[80] According to *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*, then, Hamlet's position makes him equally responsible as the king for the welfare of the state. Since Claudius circumvents and abuses his contract with God, and therefore the people, Hamlet has a public responsibility to both God and the state of Denmark. To not act, Hamlet tells us, is to contravene 'perfect conscience' and to risk being 'damned'.

Although 'perfect conscience' could have a range of different humanist, theological, and ethical implications, Hamlet's phrase follows his first explicit articulation of his own political ambitions: Claudius, he implies, has stolen the crown from him, and has unsuccessfully 'thrown out his angle for [Hamlet's] life'.[81] Returned from a chivalric encounter with pirates which called upon him to '*put on a compelled valour*' (4.6.17), Hamlet now celebrates 'rashness': 'Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well | When our deep plots do fall' (5.2.8–9). This rejection of deliberation derives from the pirate episode both because it requires Hamlet to act impulsively and because it provides him with material evidence of Claudius's tyranny. After Hamlet relates his discovery of Claudius's 'grand commission' (5.2.18) for Hamlet's 'head' to 'be struck off' (5.2.24) to Horatio, he hands him the actual document (5.2.26). Hamlet's unanswered 'Is't not perfect conscience?' then suggests a concern with the constitutional legitimacy of and prerogative to murdering Claudius. Hamlet's 'dying voice' to 'prophesy th'election lights | On Fortinbras' (5.2.339–40) seems to suggest, more than any other moment in the play, the prince's sense of obligation towards the future political stability of Denmark. As in the previous scene, it also signals the electoral monarchical system of Denmark, one which Bilson's *The True Difference between Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion* argued had grounds for constitutionally justifiable resistance. The older form of chivalry which the Ghost asks Hamlet to perform is complicated by the transitional world in which he is asked to perform it. From the opening court scene, we are shown Elsinore is ostensibly a court of diplomacy and obedience (the easily manipulable Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and the fawning Osric, for instance). Hamlet's tendency to humanist deliberation is too part of that culture but it is not an impediment and coexists with his ability to 'put on a compelled valour' when required. As we have seen, both impulses drive Hamlet to derive proof of Claudius's tyranny: the

---

80 Frye, *The Renaissance Hamlet*, p. 67.

81 At 3.2.302, Hamlet also complains to Guildenstern, 'Sir, I lack advancement'.

first in intellectually verifying the veracity of the Ghost and the second in getting hold of the commission implicating Claudius. Presumably aware of the humanist resistance treatises by Reformers like Melanchthon, Hamlet must come at his chivalry armed with constitutional evidence.

Remembering Chivalry: Memory, Honour, and the Duel

Writing to Hubert Languet on 1 March 1578, Sidney describes how:

> The use of the pen, as you may perceive, has plainly fallen from me; and my mind itself, if it ever was active in any thing, is now beginning, by reason of my indolent ease, imperceptibly to lose its strength, and to relax without any reluctance. For to what purpose should our thoughts be directed to various kinds of knowledge, unless room be afforded for putting it into practice, so that public advantage may be the result, which in a corrupt age we cannot hope for?[82]

This, in many ways, is a recognition of the tragic limits of humanism.[83] As with Sidney, Hamlet's recourse to applied humanism is constricted by the 'corrupt age'. While Sidney's comments reflect an embittered courtier circumscribed by a lack of political advancement, Hamlet's are cast more generally in the face of a world that is both demonstrably more corrupt and in which he, unlike Sidney, has an explicit political duty: 'there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me [Denmark] is a prison' (F1 2.2.249–51). Hamlet's recognition of the importance of 'rashness' and 'indiscretion' therefore stems from the tragic limitations of his humanist thought. Thinking in Elsinore, Hamlet recognises, is a process of imprisonment itself. In the world of Denmark where thinking is 'one part wisdom | And ever three parts coward' (4.4.41–42), Hamlet acknowledges the need for active resistance.

---

82 Philip Sidney, 'Letter to Hubert Languet', in *The Correspondence of Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, ed. by S.A. Pears (London: 1845), pp. 143–46 (p. 143).

83 Thomas M. Greene, 'The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature', in *The Disciples of Criticism*, ed. by Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 241–68.

Unlike Sidney, however, Hamlet is able to '[put] […] into practice' his 'various kinds of knowledge' in pursuit of 'public advantage'. Not only is this seen in the derivation of *The Mousetrap* trick, but it informs his discovery of the commission:

> Being thus benetted round with villains,
> Or I could make a prologue to my brains
> They had begun the play. I sat me down,
> Devised a new commission, wrote it fair —
> I once did hold it as our statists do
> A baseness to write fair and laboured much
> How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
> It did me a yeoman's service[.]
>
> (5.2.29–36)

In a marvellous moment of humanist pedagogy and chivalric action functioning in unison, Hamlet uncharacteristically divorces his predicament from his mind ('Or I could make a prologue to my brains') in order to act instinctively. The lines recall Hamlet's promise in Act 1 to 'wipe away' the learning of his youth; here, however, his humanist education provides Hamlet 'yeoman's service' by enabling him to '[devise] a new' and believable 'commission' (helped no doubt by the convenient fact Hamlet is carrying his 'father's signet in his purse — | Which was the model of that Danish seal' [5.2.49–50]), securing his safety. Although Hamlet parodies the pedantic language of diplomacy, it enables him to secure his revenge against Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: 'Without debatement further more or less, | He should those bearers put to sudden death, | Not shriving time allowed' (5.2.45–47). With the apparent evidence of their complicity in the plot to have Hamlet murdered, the prince shows little hesitation or remorse in sending them to 'sudden death': 'They are not near my conscience. Their defeat | Does by their own insinuation grow' (5.2.57–58). In other words, they deserve it.

Shakespeare deliberately makes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's culpability unclear to complicate Hamlet's ethical character: Claudius, after all, tells them no more than to take Hamlet and the commission to England (3.3.1–7). Nonetheless, the audience know that the duo is at least complicit in acting as part of the king's surveillance mechanisms in a state shaped by the 'cozenage' with which Claudius attempts to remove Hamlet. Indeed, Claudius's request that they 'gather | So much as from occasion you may glean' (2.2.15–16) about Hamlet is greeted by the courtiers with unerring obedience. Guildenstern answers:

> But we both obey
> And here give up ourselves in the full bent
> To lay our service at your feet

> To be commanded.
>
> (2.2.29–32)

Rosencrantz, however, subtly registers his reluctance. Recognising 'the sovereign power you have of us', he makes clear that the king and queen are able to 'command' rather than 'to entreaty' (2.2.27–29) in a gesture of submission which might remind us, for instance, of the diamond encrusted whip Sidney offered to Elizabeth as a New Year's gift in 1581. Hamlet sees straight through them: 'You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour' (2.2.244–46). Based on the information, we can hardly blame Hamlet for assuming his university friends are powerless agents of the king's corruption and have turned on him.

It is the tendency to 'colour' — to disguise and deceive — which Hamlet finds both endemic and odious in the courtly politics of Elsinore, marking a gulf between its affected language of courtship and the true material intentions it so often masks or 'colour[s]'. We see it in the prince's relentless verbal mockery of Polonius and the 'baseness' he attributes to official state discourse. When Guildenstern asks, 'What should we say, my lord?' (2.2.243), Hamlet's sarcastic response — 'Anything but to th' purpose' (2.2.244) — articulates what he sees as the inevitable deception and calculation of courtly communication. For Hamlet, Osric (described as a 'braggart gentleman' in Q1 [5.2.66 s.d.]), is a representative of

> [m]any more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time and, out of an habit of encounter, a kind of yeasty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial — the bubbles are out.
>
> (5.2.168–73)

Pertaining to worthless metals (*OED adj* 1), 'drossy' signals Osric as a prototype of a degenerate and useless 'age'. Little more than a contemporary fashion statement, Osric has learnt his trivial ('yeasty') 'collection' of 'opinions' from his frequent courtly encounters: 'opinions' which enable him to feign his way through a variety of different situations. Osric is a self-fashioned symptom of 'the tune of the time', embodying the social and artistic emphases of late-Elizabethan courtship and aristocratic culture. A man of the court and not the battlefield, he has learnt his obsequiousness and sycophancy from the social conventions and situations which are an inexorable symptom of the Elsinore court.

Particularly since the watershed publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning,*[84] the humanist notion of individualism and selfhood as a deliberate construction based on prevalent contemporary social mores has been accepted as a commonplace by literary scholars. In the courtly arena especially, the concept was largely perceived in terms of the intersection between appearance and reality, between self-presentation and inner virtue. In her seminal study of Elizabethan courtship, Catherine Bates suggests some of the complexities of this relationship:

> A courtier must know how to graduate his behaviour and utterance with a view to attracting favour and winning from the object of his devotion some longed-for token of esteem. Courtship is a delicate, fraught, hazardous procedure which requires constant prudence, tact and subtlety because it depends for its effectiveness on the appearance of sincerity, an appearance which could (and at times had to be) carefully calculated. Courtship is consequently a mode which puts sincerity and deception in a teasing and often inextricable juxtaposition.[85]

As we shall see, the complex juxtaposition of apparent sincerity and actual deception equally characterises the duel of honour and therefore the terms upon which the tragic finale of *Hamlet* takes place. From the beginning of the play, Hamlet recognises the potential gulf between self-presentation and inner self:

> These indeed 'seem',
> For they are actions that a man might play,
> But I have that within which passes show,
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
> (1.2.83–86)

Here the prince is explicit about the deception of appearance; his 'customary suits of solemn black' (1.2.78) and the 'dejected haviour of the visage' (1.2.81) are but 'trappings and […] suits of woe' which cannot capture the specificity of the internal emotion ('that within'), something which surpasses ('passes') appearance ('show'). In a play so concerned with acting a part, and in a court defined by its corruption, Hamlet is acutely aware of how the inner self might be masked.

The dichotomy between the public and private self is fundamental to the duel, the play's ultimate vehicle of revenge. Following Hamlet's disingenuous and evasive

---

84 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

85 Bates, p. 2.

apology, Laertes precedes the combat with a deceptive rhetoric of humanist courtesy, feigning sincerity:

> I am satisfied in nature,
> Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
> To my revenge; but in my terms of honour
> I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,
> Till by some elder masters of known honour
> I have a voice and precedent of peace
> To keep my name ungored. But all that time
> I do receive your offered love like love
> And will not wrong it.
> (5.2.221–29)

Here Laertes is even more deceitful than Hamlet, pretending 'peace' and 'love' and claiming to distance himself ('I stand aloof') from a revenge he is careful to justify (and has of course calculated with Claudius). As Nigel Alexander puts it, Laertes 'is determined to play his part in the poisoned duel and his answer is equivocal'.[86] The speech is striking in its explicitly neo-chivalric nature: referring to his 'terms of honour', Laertes, although 'satisfied in nature', makes clear that the precedent for 'reconcilement' depends on consultation with the experienced authorities on honour. The impulse to verify the situation via 'some elder masters of known honour' suggests a desire to return to and justify a more traditional chivalric politics of violence — one generally at odds with the courtly dynamics prevalent in Elsinore.

There is nothing, however, at odds here in terms of aristocratic norms in late-Elizabethan England. In the preface to *The Book of Honour and Arms* (1590), for instance, William Segar describes the gentleman's prerogative, 'being offended', to 'the order of revenge and repulse, according unto Christian knowledge and due respect of honour'.[87] Although Segar is careful to warn against unnecessary retribution, he clearly conceives of a Christian notion of revenge, performed according to 'order'. The Italian fencing master based in London, Vincentio Saviolo (to whom Segar's book is often misattributed) puts forward a similar view in *Vincentio Saviolo, His Practise* (1595). Here Saviolo 'exhort[s] and aduise[s] men of all sortes and condition […] to shunne as much as they can all occasions of quarrell, and not to fight excepte (as hath bene sayde) vpon

---

86 Nigel Alexander, *Poison, Play, and Duel: A Study in Hamlet* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 193.

87 Segar, *The Book of Honour and Arms*, A3r.

a iust cause and in a point of honor'.[88] Saviolo advises that 'you must neuer be too rash in fight, account of your enemye, yet feare him not, and seeke all meanes to become victor, and so you shall maintaine your reputation'.[89] Polonius echoes these sentiments in the advice he offers to his son before he departs for France: 'Beware, | Of entrance to a quarrel but, being in, | Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee' (1.3.64–66). The advice of Segar, Saviolo, and Polonius is clear: avoid 'quarrel' at all costs unless honour is at the stake.

Saviolo is also clear about the terms upon which revenge via single combat is justifiable: '[I]f the iniurie be such', he writes, 'either murder be committed by trecherie, or rape, or such like villanies, then is it necessarye to proceede in revenging it'.[90] Revenge, then, becomes a matter of honour, necessity, and reputation. Laertes demonstrates this concern with reputation, the need to keep his name 'ungored'. But here again Shakespeare dramatizes the void between sincerity and deception: Laertes is ostensibly performing in accordance with contemporary chivalric honour codes whilst heinously pursuing a revenge from which he claims to distance himself. Although Laertes's revenge is itself justifiable, the means are grossly dishonourable. Emphasising the foremost importance of practising arms for the early modern gentleman, Castiglione notes how 'the reputation of a gentleman who bears arms, if once it be in the least tarnished with cowardice or other disgrace, remains forever infamous before the world and full of ignominy'.[91] What all the characters in *Hamlet* aside from Laertes and Claudius (and perhaps Osric) understand to be a courtly contest, a fencing match, is an engineered duel, with 'sword' both 'unbated' (4.7.136) and 'annoint[ed]' (4.7.138). The unbating of the sword — the removal of its protective button — enacts the transition from fencing to duelling, and the addition of the 'unction of a mountebank' (4.7.139) of course further enhances the deceptive and disgraceful manipulations of the combat.[92]

---

88 Vincentio Saviolo, *Vincentio Saviolo, His Practise* (London: 1595), B3r.

89 Saviolo, F2v.

90 Saviolo, P1v.

91 Castiglione, p. 25.

92 That the combat is a sort of hybrid between the duel of honour and a fencing match is perhaps emphasised by Shakespeare's synonymous use of 'foils' and 'rapier' in these scenes. There does not appear to be any evidence for actual 'buttons' being

Laertes's preamble nonetheless expresses an intimate concern with chivalric ritual, protocol, and form in late-Elizabethan England. 'The duel scenario is poorly understood', writes Donald Weinstein, 'if we consider one part of it as form and the other as substance, the exchange of *cartelli* as play-acting and the exchange of blows as the real thing'.[93] Considering Hamlet's quest throughout the play to unite words and action, the duel of honour seems like a fitting tragic finale. In this sense, however, *Hamlet* offers a social critique of the combat: this is no fair fight and, as was often the case in early modern society, Laertes's rhetorical flourishes are a façade for malicious intent and Machiavellian plotting. As with the aborted trial by combat at the beginning of *Richard II* (1595), representations of chivalric single combat on the early modern stage frequently reveal a wider world of corruption and scheming. Laertes's desire to be 'revenged | Most thoroughly for [his] father' (4.5.134–35) enables Claudius to manipulate him into an instrument to attempt once again to have Hamlet murdered (without getting his own hands dirty). Explicitly encouraging Laertes's revenge, Claudius tells him: 'No place indeed should murder sanctuarize. | Revenge should have no bounds' (4.7.125–26).

As part of his strategy of manipulation, Claudius gestures towards the continental origins of the duel of honour. It is the Norman 'Lamord' (4.7.89) who Claudius claims 'gave [Laertes] such a masterly report | For art and exercise in your defence, | And for your rapier most especial' (4.7.94–96), clearly advertising him as a sort of benchmark of duelling skills. Although the duel of honour arrived in English aristocratic culture in the 1580s primarily from Italy, it was also practiced in France before then. In one of two monograph studies of the early modern duel in England, Markku Peltonen controversially rejects the idea that duelling is an evolutionary practice of chivalric culture:

---

used in fencing and duelling manuals. Nonetheless, Laertes' behaviour is shifty precisely because he uses a sharpened blade, contrary to conventional custom. On early modern swordplay practice, see Craig Turner and Tony Soper, *Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990); Ewart Oakeshott, *European Weapons and Armour* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000); and Matthew Carter, 'Discovering the Kinetic Language of Violence on the Early Modern Stage' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2016).

93 Donald Weinstein, 'Fighting or Flytng? Verbal Duelling in Mid-Sixteenth-century Italy', in C*rime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trevor Dean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 204–20 (p. 217).

> [T]he ideology of duelling (and thus a distinct notion of honour) not only emerged in England as part of the theory of courtesy and civility but through its history retained its central role in that theory. Far from being a remnant from medieval honour culture which a new humanist culture of civility replaced, the duel of honour came to England as part of the Italian Renaissance notion of the gentleman and courtier.[94]

In impressive detail, Peltonen convincingly charts how duelling was clearly a continental import. The notion, however, that it was part of a 'theory of courtesy and civility' which in fact minimised aristocratic violence is more difficult to accept due to its clear place in the neo-chivalric culture of violent politics. That the duel of honour was a foreign import does not lead logically to it being divorced from chivalric ideas of honour.

Duelling was clearly reactive and was a social and political problem for the crown, not least in its circumvention of monarchical prerogative. In *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (2003), Jennifer Low is closer to the mark by understanding the duel as a response to the pressures facing the aristocracy — those of demilitarization, centralization of monarchy and state power, and the threats of social mobility — a challenge she prefers to understand as a 'crisis of noble masculinity'.[95] Low, for instance, sees no contradiction in locating the rise of the duel of honour in England within the Italian fencing schools established in London and 'as an outgrowth […] of the chivalric revival'; its popularity, argues Low, lay in the fact that it 'drew on both Continental and older English traditions'.[96] As we saw in the previous chapter, the continued importance of the tournament — another central aspect of the chivalric revival — came from the opportunity for the early modern knight to pursue personal honour on his own terms. The duel offered a similar outlet for aristocratic pride and self-promotion, enabling participants to combine their humanist education with a persistent emphasis on and practice of chivalric honour. As Low argues, 'the construct

---

94 Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 13.

95 Jennifer Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 3.

96 Low, pp. 16, 3. Rocco Bonetti established London's first Italian fencing school in London in 1576. See Peltonen, pp. 61–62.

of the duel enabled male aristocrats and members of the gentry to figure themselves in ways consistent with both the old military ideal and that of the courtier'.[97]

Low's broader proposition was first most comprehensively explored by Mervyn James (whom Low quotes approvingly) in his extensive and seminal 1978 article, 'English politics and the concept of honour, 1485–1642'. With a particular focus on the northern aristocracy of Tudor England, James attributed a significant decline in the endemic violence of the late medieval aristocracy by the turn of the seventeenth century to a reformulation of the honour code. A 'change of emphasis', largely a result of Protestant and humanist influences which internalised morality and obedience for the subjects of the realm and made violence the monopoly of the state, essentially tamed the bellicosity of the aristocracy, making violent rebellion increasingly insupportable.[98] For James, then, the duel was one of the most 'characteristic expressions' of the chivalric idea of honour: a manifestation of its 'latent violence' which was contained and 'veiled by the routines of good manners and courtesy'.[99] Although James's thesis has been met with much approval, more recent criticism has revised his idea of transformation, instead highlighting the multiplicity of honour codes in early modern England. Courtney Erin Thomas, for instance, argues that

> Because honour connected and encompassed such variable meanings and forms of articulation, it is deceptive to perceive too great an element of cohesion in early modern understandings of it. […] Its meanings were often determined contextually in a purposeful way as individuals used the divergent understandings of honour present in order to realise their aims in a given moment.[100]

---

97 Low, p. 9.

98 Mervyn James, 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485–1642' in *Society, Politics, and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 308–415 (p. 309).

99 James, pp. 322, 313–14.

100 Courtney Erin Thomas, *If I Lose Mine Honour, I Lose Myself: Honour among the Early Modern English Elite* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p. 6. On the multiplicity of honour codes, see also Brendan Kane, *The Politics and Culture of Honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541–1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

With its 'restrictive idea of honour', Thomas argues, duelling 'appeal[ed] to a small segment of the elite population' and was subject to widespread condemnation.[101]

Unsurprisingly, the most common objection was the duel's susceptibility to personal manipulation in addressing private and often trivial disputes between aristocrats. Following shortly on the heels of the 1613 royal proclamation against duelling, Francis Bacon's *The Charge Touching Duels* (1614) condemns the revenge behind duelling as both 'not onely against the law of God […] but also against the oath and duety of euery subiect vnto his Maiesty'.[102] By point of comparison, Bacon argues that the 'very practise of Chiualry in Iusts and Turneys […] appeare by ancient presidents not to be lawfull without the Kings lycence obtained'. Bacon then draws a distinction between 'Combats' which 'receiued rection & authority from the law' and duels as 'spring[ing] only from the vnbrideled humors of priuate men'.[103] In Remigio Nannini's Italian conduct manual *Civil Considerations,* translated into English via a French intermediary translation in 1601, the author argues that 'a man wronged or grieued is not worthie of any honour, if he reuenge it not'.[104] 'Revenge' appears 55 times in the tract, emphasising how the duel easily became a vehicle for 'vnbrideled' and 'priuate' justice. Sidney, for instance, demonstrated this potential for rash and unmonitored violence when he formally challenged the earl of Oxford to a duel over a dispute concerning a tennis court in 1579. Following the failure of the Privy Council to block it, Queen Elizabeth had to personally intervene.[105] As much as Sidney's challenge reflected the 'vnbrideled humors of priuate men', it clearly spoke to the cultural and political power of the duel as a recourse to private justice; in his romanticised account of Sidney's life, Fulke Greville claimed that the event established 'a latitude for subjects to reserve native, & legall freedom, by paying hu[m]ble tribute in manner, though not in matter, to them'.[106] Episodes like this should encourage us to understand early modern duelling as

---

101 Thomas, *If I Lose*, pp. 38, 39.

102 Francis Bacon, *The Charge Touching Duels* (London: 1614), G3v.

103 Bacon, G4r.

104 Remigio Nannini, *Civil Conversations*, trans. by W.T. (London: 1601), I1v.

105 See McCoy, p. 58.

106 Fulke Greville, *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (London: 1651), G1r.

'a reassertion of aristocratic values at a time when the utility of nobility was being questioned and undermined', as Roger Manning argues, and 'a manifestation of the rechivalrization of Europe and the British Isles'.[107]

When Laertes demands revenge from Claudius, he lays claim to a chivalric tradition of aristocratic prerogative and self-governance which the duel facilitates:

> I'll not be juggled with.
> To hell allegiance, vows to the blackest devil,
> Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit.
> I dare damnation. To this point I stand —
> That both the worlds I give to negligence.
> Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
> Most thoroughly for my father.
> (4.5.129–34)

For Nigel Alexander, these lines are 'an expression of a desire to obey the revenge code whatever the cost and whatever the obstacles in the way'.[108] In this sense, Laertes forms a pointed contrast to Hamlet, quickly dismissing to 'hell' his 'allegiance' to his monarch and his '[c]onscience and grace' to God and sweeping to his revenge in a manner Hamlet does not. In other words, Laertes rhetorically bypasses sovereign and divine authority, and asserts a chivalric claim to personal justice regardless of the consequences. Laertes's revenge, however, is significantly less complicated: Hamlet's revenge requires proof, both intellectual and constitutional, especially since it involves regicide. Nonetheless, Laertes's quick move to a politics of chivalric violence speaks to the coexistence of different conceptions of honour in *Hamlet*. It is a striking contrast, for instance, to his father's fawning allegiance: 'I hold my duty as I hold my soul, | Both to my God and to my gracious King' (2.2.44–45). Much like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Polonius is presented as a character in whom obedience to the state and God has been internalised — a representative of Mervyn James's view of a transformed and modern honour culture. *Hamlet*, however, is full of characters demanding recourse to the older chivalric tradition: the battle-clad Ghost demanding vengeance; Hamlet, its executor; Fortinbras, with a historic vendetta exacted in military terms; and Laertes, casting 'vows to the blackest devil' in order to be 'revenged | Most thoroughly for [his] father'. The 'time is

---

107 Roger Manning, *Swordsmen: The Martial Ethos in the Three Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 195.

108 Alexander, p. 198.

out of joint', then, also in the variety of honour cultures available in Elsinore — a tension which, as Hamlet shows us, naturally complicates revenge. The ghostly presence of chivalry throughout *Hamlet* is a reminder of its latent potential for violent conflict, manifested brutally in the final duel.

The irony of Laertes's 'I'll not be juggled with' is apparent, as Claudius uses him to engineer his second attempt on Hamlet's life. The critique of the duel in *Hamlet* is not as a recourse to 'vnbrideled humors of priuate men', as Bacon puts it, however, but in Claudius's and Laertes's dishonourable manipulation and presentation of the contest. 'In their choice of an unbated envenomed sword and a poisoned cup as weapons against Hamlet', writes Alexander, 'Claudius and Laertes break every one of the honourable codes and conventions which governed the practice of fencing and single combat'.[109] Conscious of Laertes's chivalric competitiveness and determination to revenge, Claudius slyly designs the contest to redirect attention away from himself. In *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), George Puttenham describes the courtier via the 'Figure of False Semblant or Dissimulation': to 'speak otherwise than we think, in earnest as well as in sport; in covert and dark terms, and in learned and apparent speeches; in short sentences, and by long ambage and circumstance of words; and finally, as well when we lie as when we tell truth'.[110] The very same, as we have seen, characterises Laertes's rhetoric in entering the duel as he 'speak[s] otherwise than [he] think[s]'. '[T]here could be a considerable discrepancy between surface and reality in conduct or speech', remarks Peltonen, and 'dissimulation was an integral part of civil conversation'. 'Honest dissimulation', he continues, 'was thus justified because social life took precedence over inner life'.[111] Of course it is not Laertes's rhetorical dissimulation which is the problem, but the entire dissimulation of the stakes of the duel — presented as entertainment rather than as a fight to the death.

The duel in *Hamlet* is especially effective since it brings the political symbolism of the play full circle. When Fortinbras takes the stage at the end of the play, he claims 'some rights of memory in this kingdom' (5.2.373). The Folio text reads 'rites' instead,

---

109 Alexander, p. 194.

110 George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy: Critical Edition*, ed. by Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 271.

111 Peltonen, p. 30.

gesturing towards Fortinbras's territorial claim based on lineage, but also reminding us how the custom and practice of remembering ends the play as it began. In Act 1, Old Hamlet returns from the grave asking his son to 'Remember me'; in Act 5, Fortinbras takes Denmark, remembering his father's military history, and reclaiming his losses. The Norwegian military finale brings us back to Horatio's explanation of the Danish preparations for war in the opening scene:

> Our last King,
> Whose image even but now appeared to us,
> Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway —
> Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride —
> Dared to the combat, in which our valiant Hamlet
> (For so this side of our known world esteemed him)
> Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact
> Well ratified by law and heraldry
> Did forfeit with his life all these his lands
> Which he stood seized of to the conqueror.
> (1.1.79–88)

Fortinbras arrives in Act 5 'to recover of [Denmark] by strong hand | And terms compulsatory those foresaid lands | So by his father lost' (1.1.101–03). In doing so, he brings to completion a chain of revenge which, Horatio tells us in the opening moments of the play, is set in motion by Old Hamlet. Aside from filling in his companions on the historic Danish-Norwegian feud, Horatio's lines, clearly intended to celebrate Old Hamlet, in fact complicate his heroic image. Horatio places the blame at Old Fortinbras's feet: it is his 'emulate pride' which encouraged the 'combat'. But Old Hamlet is successfully '[d]ared to' the fight, 'gag[ing]' 'a moiety competent' (1.1.89–90) — an equal portion of land for his wager. Rather than a political dispute requiring the judicial intervention of a trial by combat, the episode is described as a sheer contest of masculine bravado where Shakespeare makes the stakes considerably higher than in the source of Belleforest's *Histories Tragiques* (1572) emphasising the dangerous political consequences of the sorts of personal pride which chivalry is an outlet for.[112] Perhaps Old Hamlet's political recklessness one of the 'foul crimes' (1.5.12) for which he is doing penance.

Hamlet is therefore 'framed by two actual duels', as John Kerrigan notes: 'One belongs to the pagan prehistory of *judicium dei* […] and the second is the exercise with

---

112 In Belleforest, the wager is treasure. See Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, p. 222.

the bated rapiers'.[113] It is worth noting that Claudius' and Laertes' plot fails specifically because Hamlet is the better fencer. After all the explicit praise of Laertes' rapier skills, this may come as a surprise to the audience and as somewhat antithetical to the more intellectualised view we typically have of Hamlet. When Ophelia reads Hamlet's 'antic disposition' (1.5.170) as an actual decline in mental health, she laments: 'O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! | The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword' (3.1.149–50). But they should also make us pause to reflect on what we can say about Hamlet's military aptitude. At the end of Act 1, Hamlet makes Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo 'Swear by [his] sword' (1.5.153–54) not to speak of what they have seen. Not only is Hamlet equipped with a sword, but it serves as the object binding his friends to secrecy, and an emblem of how justice will eventually be served. The pirate episode shows him capable of acting with physical aggression under pressure, and the accidental murder of Polonius, however misguided, shows a man capable of the violence his chivalric commandment demands. Although Horatio warns him against the duel, Hamlet reassures him that '[s]ince [Laertes] went into France I have been in continual practice' (5.2.188–89).

As well as underscoring the broad social and military accomplishments expected of the early modern prince, Ophelia's lines give us an insight into the competing conceptions of honour at Hamlet's disposal when contemplating his revenge. Returned with the evidence of the commission, Hamlet advertises his choice to the audience:

> Rightly to be great
> Is not to stir without great argument
> But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
> When honour's at the stake.
> (4.4.52–55)

As with contemporary discourse surrounding duelling, the idea here is that 'quarrel' should be avoided (one should not 'stir without great argument') unless of course 'honour's at the stake'. When the actual terms of the bout are revealed to Hamlet, with 'the treacherous instrument in [his] hand | Unbated and envenomed' (5.2.301–02) and less than 'half an hour's life' (5.2.300), he acts as he always does under pressure: decisively. With the shouts from Laertes and the Lords of 'the King's to blame' (5.2.305) and 'Treason, treason!' and with Claudius's 'crimes broad blown' (3.3.81) as Old

---

[113] Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language,* p. 221.

Hamlet's were, the prince exacts his revenge with the instrument of his own murder. Designed to kill Hamlet, the duel ultimately facilitates his revenge.

Conclusion: *Hamlet* and *Bussy D'Ambois*

Hamlet distinguishes humans by their ability to '[look] before and after' (4.4.36). The climactic duel asks us to remember the single combat of Old Hamlet, related in the opening scene, and brings the cycle of revenge to a close. At the end of the play, Shakespeare leaves the audience with the uncertainty of Fortinbras' impending rule of Denmark. Like the duel, the more modern Norwegian army with which Fortinbras takes Elsinore (without resistance) is a symbol of an ever-evolving military culture. But the duel also reminds us that the potential for personal chivalric honour violence is ever-present. *Hamlet* is ambiguous at best about the duel of honour: it is not the subject of critique in the final scenes, but the Machiavellian political culture of Elsinore which shapes its manipulative and dishonourable practice. That it ultimately offers the prince recourse to his revenge is coincidental; symbolically, however, it '[looks] before' to Old Hamlet's trial by combat with Old Fortinbras. The story ends as it begun, with a clash of 'mighty opposites' (5.2.63), underlining the transhistorical nature of revenge.

Hamlet's delay is of course a dramatic strategy for the intellectualisation of revenge. It is what fundamentally distinguishes him and *Hamlet* from competing revenge tragedies of the period. Hamlet comes at his revenge grappling with antithetical honour codes: a more traditional politics of chivalric violence, and a more civic vision of obedience to state and God. These are the lines against which his extraordinary deliberations on revenge take place. Hamlet's humanist learning is not an impediment, however; it causes him to scrutinize a set of moral and political questions which continue to resist easy answers. In the design of *The Mousetrap*, in the heroic classical images he conjures to mind for inspiration, and in rewriting Claudius's commission in appropriate language, Hamlet's learning enables him to verify and document his duty and right to resist Claudius. Notably, humanism is a central aspect of the intellectual milieu of Hamlet's education in Wittenberg, and a basis of the early German natural law resistance theories advanced by academics like Melanchthon — theories with which we can presume Hamlet was familiar. Although not explicitly chivalric, resistance theory offered a way of circumventing and challenging the authority of the monarch, much like

the duel. While the former was concerned with honour to the state, the latter of course focused on honour to the individual. As Old Hamlet's son and heir-apparent, Hamlet's revenge bridges both. With poisoned rapier and proof of Claudius's constitutional illegitimacy, Hamlet's recourse to chivalric violence is made both possible and justifiable.

In George Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois* (c. 1604), the duel likewise functions as a vehicle of revenge, one which attempts to cover up a complex web of Machiavellian political manoeuvres. Set amongst the factional political culture of the French Wars of Religion during the reign of Henri III, *Bussy* also shows itself to be interested in ideas of political resistance.[114] Unlike *Hamlet*, Chapman's portrayal of the duel focuses on the social anxieties which shaped the ritual. An impoverished and unemployed soldier with the mantra, 'Who is not poor, is monstrous' (1.1.3), Bussy is quickly elevated by Monsieur's (a portrait of Anjou) patronage of 'a thousand crowns' and gains access to the court. Like Elsinore, however, the French court is a place of 'juggling' where men 'bear […] | Two tongues' and 'do none good, but those that have no need' (1.1.87–97). As Claudius does with Laertes, Monsieur recognises and manipulates Bussy's chivalric inclinations to pursue his own ambitions for the French crown (or to keep it in Claudius's case). One of the consequences is Bussy's participation in a six-man duel, from which he emerges as the only survivor. Although the king is quick to pardon his violence — 'D'Ambois, let your life | (Refin'd by passing through this merited death) | Be purg'd from more such foul pollution' (2.1.181–83) — this is not enough for Bussy who demands his native freedoms:

> since I am free
> (Offending no just law), let no law make
> By any wrong it does, my life her slave:
> When I am wrong'd and that law fails to right me,
> Let me be King myself (as man was made)
> And do a justice that exceeds the law.
> If my wrong pass the power of single valour
> To right and expiate[.]
> (2.1.194–99)

---

[114] In '"We must not be more true to kings / Than Kings are to their subjects": France and the Politics of the Ancient Constitution in Chapman's Byron plays', *Renaissance Studies*, 9.4 (1995), 477–93, Glen Mynott argues for Chapman's knowledge of Huguenot resistance theory and its influence on Chapman's two Byron plays.

This is the same extra-legal claim 'to do a justice that exceeds the law' made by the duel of honour, and a similar sentiment to Laertes's more impassioned 'Hell to allegiance!'. When honour is at the stake, these men continue to revert to chivalric principles in order to bypass their duties of allegiance to the monarch.

Monsieur develops the argument in legal terms:

> It being a spice of justice, where, with life
> Offending past law, equal life is laid
> In equal balance, to scourge that offence
> By law of reputation (which to men
> Exceeds all positive law); and what that leaves
> To true men's valours (not prefixing rights
> Of satisfaction, suited to their wrongs)
> A free man's eminence may supply and take.
>
> (2.1.152–59)

According to Monsieur, personal matters of honour are judged by a private 'law of reputation' which not only falls outside the scope of, but 'exceeds […] positive law'. In other words, the knight's prerogative to 'scourge' affronts to chivalric honour and reputation is grounded in natural law and, as such, falls outside of monarchical authority. Although the king's grace is easily obtained, both Bussy's social pretensions and preferential treatment by Henri III earn him the hostility of the French noblemen who shoot him down from off-stage at the end of the play. Like the Norwegian army that concludes *Hamlet*, Bussy's finale is another reminder of a changed military culture. But as the unpunished six-man duel tells us, like *Hamlet*, the potential for chivalric honour violence always threatens political stability. Contained delicately by the modes and structures of courtship, modes and structures underpinned by a new and emerging notion of civic honour, the latent violence of chivalric ritual is released aggressively and fatally in the face of the inescapable Machiavellianism of human nature and political ambition. In *Hamlet*, that threat for violence comes with the Ghost and is driven by political calculation; in *Bussy*, by contrast, it comes principally from the social anxieties concerning the appropriation of chivalric ritual. Bussy's enemies are at once internal and external: his inflated sense of political and social importance and the rigid hierarchisation of the French nobility. Time and time again, the French aristocrats upbraid Bussy for his pretensions: much like Sir Petronel Flash, the 'thirty pound knight' (4.1.198) of Jonson's, Chapman's, and Marston's *Eastward Ho!* (1605), Bussy is pejoratively labelled a 'Knight of the new edition' (1.2.111) and 'some new denizened

Lord' (1.2.154).[115] The Duke of Guise, another claimant for the French throne, is explicit about it: 'Th'art not nobly born', he reprimands Bussy, 'But bastard to the Cardinal of Ambois' (3.2.78–79). It is not Bussy's social pretensions themselves which are the threat of course, but rather his success in infiltrating the court sphere despite his humble origins. Refusing an honour system based on lineage, Bussy is fiercely assertive of his own nobility: 'I am noble. | And noblesse in his blood hath no gradation, | But in his merit' (3.2.76–78). A man of the battlefield, Bussy's subscription to merit-based honour threatens the political pre-eminence of a lineage-based aristocracy and signals a broader social conception of early modern chivalry explored in the subsequent chapter.

---

[115] Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston, *Eastward Ho!*, ed. by Suzanne Gossett and W. David Kay, in *Cambridge Ben Jonson*, II, 4.1.168.

Chapter 3

Merchant Chivalry on the Early Modern Stage: Overseas Expansion and Civic Militarism in *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*

Introduction

In entirely conventional fashion, the Prologue of Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (c. 1607) enters on stage to introduce the players' intended performance, a city comedy entitled *The London Merchant*. What follows, however, is distinctly unorthodox as an audience member seated in the pit of the Blackfriars theatre interrupts after only three lines. For 'seven years', retorts the grocer citizen George, 'plays at this house […] have still girds at citizens', and *The London Merchant*, he assumes, will be no exception.[1] George in fact has good reason to presume so; in the two previous years, the Children of the Queen's Revels had staged Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston's *Eastward Ho!* (1605) and John Day's *Isle of Gulls* (1606) — social satires which poked fun at the undignified aristocratic, and specifically chivalric, pretensions and aspirations of the middling sort. As a paying customer, George is determined instead to see a play 'notably in honour of the commons of the city' and launches his metatheatrical *coup* to govern the events of the drama with the input of his boisterous wife, Nell (Induction, 26–7). Despite the Prologue's promise that the players 'intend no abuse to the city', the citizens demand that their grocer apprentice Rafe take the stage to 'do rare things' and play 'a huffing part' (Induction, 15–16, 57, 75). The citizen couple's clear mercantile pride fuels their frequent directorial interventions, resulting in a generic gallimaufry where the chivalric fantasies they devise for Rafe interweave with the original city comedy plot with surprising success.

---

1 Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. by Michael Hattaway, 2nd edn (London: A&C Black, 2009), Induction, l. 8. All further references to the play are to this edition and are given parenthetically within the text.

Both the coherence and quality of the hybrid which emerges are striking given that the combination of romance and city comedy in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* flies in the face of contemporary generic and aesthetic conventions. As Lawrence Manley has shown, the humour of city comedy ultimately depends upon an explicit rejection of romance forms and strategies:

> City comedy, especially those versions of it associated with private theatre companies, is in fact actively concerned to discredit magic and romance as viable frameworks for the representation of the city. The incongruity of romantic illusion with urban reality is thus a major source of humour in the form.[2]

The Knight of the Burning Pestle repeatedly takes advantage of that generic incompatibility for its comedy. In one episode, for instance, the quixotic Rafe mistakes Mrs Merrythought (one of the original characters of *The London Merchant* who is fleeing her profligate husband) for a damsel in distress and brings her to an inn for safety. When they arrive, Rafe's companion squire and dwarf, Tim and George, offer competing interpretations of what they see:

> TIM. Why, we are at Waltham town's end, and that's the Bell Inn.
> GEORGE. Take courage, valiant knight, damsel, and squire;
> I have discovered, not a stone's cast off,
> An ancient castle held by the old knight
> Of the most holy order of the Bell,
> Who gives to all knights errant entertain.
> (2.355–61)

Tim functions here as the anti-romantic urban realist, seeing the inn for what it is. George, by comparison, engages zealously with the citizens' chivalric fantasies, transforming the inn into 'an ancient castle', and its Tapster into an 'old knight | Of the most holy order'. Representational incongruity is reinforced at the level of language as Tim's deadpan, unvarnished prose forms a stark contrast to George's animated, fantastical verse. It is no coincidence the latter shares a name with the grocer or that Nell sides with his spectacular inventions. Her reaction that the 'dwarf's a pretty boy, but the squire's a groutnoll' (2.374) announces the social satire of Beaumont's play: as unrefined theatregoers, the citizens only desire to see staged the quixotic fantasies of chivalric

---

2 Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 433.

romance. It is, however, chivalric romance with a twist: a hero firmly from the world of trade.

What becomes clear early in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is Beaumont's engagement with chivalry in social as opposed to ideological terms. The play is social satire, grounded in a well-versed assumption about the literary tastes of the mercantile community in Jacobean England. The representational strategies of chivalric romance are critiqued as inappropriate to city life, but the focus of the satire is on the mercantile appropriation of chivalric cultural forms. In a radically different context to *Bussy D'Ambois*, Beaumont points to the same social phenomenon: a non-aristocratic community borrowing the forms and language of chivalry to understand and to articulate their relationship to the world around them. As much as the citizens are the butt of the joke, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* underlines the aristocratic social anxieties generated by a sustained process of ideological appropriation, one which threatens a more traditional, lineage-based conception of chivalry. Those anxieties take the form of literary and theatrical critique in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and repeated references to the popular theatre in fact bring to the fore a vibrant tradition of merchant chivalry first studied by Laura Caroline Stevenson.[3] From c. 1590, plays populated by heroic apprentices and merchants appropriated chivalric language and values to celebrate the lives and trades of ordinary citizens.

This chapter focuses on that tradition, and on the socioeconomic and military implications of merchant chivalry's stock hybrid figure of the apprentice-knight. Contrary to a general critical consensus based on Stevenson's monograph, it argues for merchant chivalry as invested in a more conscious act of ideological appropriation which reflects the evolving and increasingly pivotal role of the citizen community in late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century England. Firstly, I look briefly at the popular citizen plays mentioned in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and at the broader historical conditions which underline their combinations of chivalry and commerce. New readings of Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* (c. 1599) and William Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* (c. 1618), then, explore the serious ideological claims behind their representations of chivalric apprentices. Rather than mere fantasies of social aspiration,

---

3 Laura Caroline Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and Craftsmen in Elizabethan Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

I argue, these plays are grounded in contemporary realities of social mobility. With the proliferation of urban civic militias, and mercantile investment in an increasingly diversified international trade network, citizens played an increasingly prominent role in the military, economic, and political life of the state. Conversely, many aristocrats (especially younger sons) were apprenticed to the various guilds and made a life from trade. The noble apprentices or mercantile knights of plays like Heywood's and Rowley's speak to this social fluidity and suggest how the activities and identities of the knight and the merchant could overlap and even blur, especially in the spheres of overseas expansion and civic militarism. Although they appropriate chivalric values and discourse for the mercantile community, *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* do so unantagonistically, attempting to obscure the social boundaries which *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* seems so intent to enforce.

Merchant Chivalry on the Early Modern Stage

In *Praise and Paradox*, Stevenson understands the emergence of merchant chivalry in the late-Elizabethan period as a problem of vocabulary and ideology. According to Stevenson, authors and playwrights 'never sought to consolidate the social consciousness' of men of trade 'by appealing to bourgeois values' since 'social fact changes more quickly than vocabulary and ideology'.[4] 'In times of social change', Stevenson claims, 'tradition has greater psychological appeal than innovation' and men therefore 'find themselves describing observations of the present in the rhetoric of the past'.[5] Stevenson's thesis that merchant chivalry is essentially borne out of this social and ideological disconnect has generally met with approval. Richard Helgerson, for instance, argues along the same lines that 'merchants in these years lacked a conceptual vocabulary that would have permitted them to assign special value to their own activities'.[6] Much of this line of enquiry is both appealing and convincing; as trade was

---

4 Stevenson, p. 6.

5 Stevenson, p. 6.

6 Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 168–69.

not considered a 'heroic activity' in the period, the turn to the elitist formulas and assumptions of chivalry was a natural strategy for promoting mercantile activity.[7]

Praise and Paradox, however, has a number of limitations and, as a social historian, Stevenson's treatment of the popular literature (and especially the drama) often suffers from a lack of engagement with the relevant critical hinterlands and their disciplinary principles.[8] Consequently and most importantly, Stevenson understands fictive literature as 'not just a distorted reflection *of* reality, but a structure that permits reflection *upon* it'.[9] As much as that is an inalienable fact of literary production, Stevenson underestimates the extent to which literature and drama actively contribute to and construct that reality. Art, she tells us, 'speculates upon what *could* happen if life could be shaped and controlled by ideas, instead of explaining what *does* happen because such shaping is not possible outside the realm of art'.[10] It is hardly surprising that such a detached view of the vitality and functionality of literature results in an analysis of merchant chivalry as fundamentally grounded in a difference between reality and perception — a conclusion which this chapter critiques. Although the 'shaping' of literature might be seen as the essence of fiction, that imaginative process is inextricably grounded in and responsive to its historical moment. Life is in fact 'shaped and controlled by ideas' and rather than 'an attempt to deny the possible ramifications of what they see', authors of the tradition are much more assertive in their claims for the significance and aspirations of the late-Elizabethan and Jacobean mercantile communities.[11]

Although ultimately conciliatory about the social differences of the merchant and the knight, plays like *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* implicitly work to disturb the social and ideological status quo. In other words, these plays chart

---

7 Michael Murrin, *Trade and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 123.

8 For her comments on theatre history, for instance, Stevenson relies almost exclusively on Alfred Harbage's (then and now) very dated *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941).

9 Stevenson, pp, 4–5.

10 Stevenson, p. 5.

11 Stevenson, p.6.

and participate in social change and ideological struggle rather than reflect a pre-existing social reality. Instead of demonstrating the 'greater psychological appeal' of tradition, the appropriations of merchant chivalry are innovative, aspirational, and disruptive. At the heart of these appropriations lies an implicit but radical ideological assertion about the social and professional similarities between merchants and gentlemen. As Helgerson notes, 'members of both groups participated in many of the same projects'.[12] This was especially the case vis-à-vis overseas expansion where the two social groups contributed to the 'initiation, organization, and financing' of the majority of expeditions to the New World.[13] Both the economic growth and honour which came hand in hand with overseas expansion naturally elevated the status of the early modern merchant — a rise in fortune which the chivalric appropriations of merchant chivalry register and celebrate. The virtues of the mercantile community were also lauded at home in more militaristic formulations through the development and proliferation of urban militias or trained bands like the Honourable Artillery Company. From 1558, a 'national system of recruitment' marked the beginnings of a national professional standing army whilst moving away from a more traditional feudal model of a militarised nobility — one which was coming under frequent scrutiny as a result of its disastrous expeditions to the Continent to support Protestant rebels, such as the 1620 campaign to protect the Palatinate.[14] In both the fields of overseas expansion and civic militarism, then, the early modern mercantile community was therefore proving its worth and establishing its prominence. Foregrounding the centrality of citizens in these key arenas of economic and military life, plays like Heywood's and Rowley's question the conventional social order of early modern England.

In *The Description of England* (1587), the clergyman William Harrison notes the increasing social mobility of Elizabethan England. At first, Harrison offers an ostensibly anti-mercantile definition of gentlemanly identity: he who 'can live without manual

---

12 Helgerson, pp. 171–72.

13 Helgerson, p. 171.

14 Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 182.

labour […] is able and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman'.[15] As well as military captains, Harrison's inclusion of lawyers, academics, and councillors in the category already marks a broader civic constitution of the early modern gentleman. Even more striking is Harrison's explicit recognition that merchants 'often change estate with gentlemen, as gentlemen do with them, by a mutual conversion of the one into the other', suggesting a more symbiotic relationship than we might expect.[16] Turning to classical example, Harrison registers the potential struggle and resistance to such social mobility: 'Certes the making of new gentlemen bred great strife sometimes amongst the Romans, I mean when those which were *novi homines* were more allowed of for their virtues newly seen and showed than the old smell of ancient race'.[17] As much as it puts forward an anti-heroic vision of trade, *The Description of England* gestures towards the fragility of the Elizabethan social order. Articulating a cooperative and interchangeable relationship between aristocrats and merchants — 'a mutual conversion' — Harrison's social history underlines the anxieties of the former and the ambitions of the latter. As the traditional categories and activities by which writers like Harrison attempted to circumscribe social rank collapsed into each other, the combinations of chivalry and commerce in plays like *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* helped to map the changing social world. A conceptually fluid view of chivalry enables us to understand these plays as engaging with a world where mercantile finance, expertise, and military professionalism are key to national prosperity.

In her seminal study, *The Stage and Social Struggle* (1994), Jean E. Howard argues for the theatre's pivotal 'role in social change and contestation'.[18] Without 'underestimat[ing] the role of the public stage in reinforcing hierarchical social relations in Renaissance culture', Howard argues 'that the theatre's role in culture was more complex than simply affirming masculine and aristocratic power', instead 'serv[ing] a

---

15 William Harrison, *The Description of England*, ed. by Georges Edelen (New York: Dover Books, 1994), p. 114.

16 Harrison, *The Description of England*, p. 115.

17 Harrison, *The Description of England*, p. 114.

18 Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 11.

variety of competing class and gender interests'.[19] Howard's thesis offers a helpful foundation to engage with the expansion of merchant-centric theatre in the period and demonstrates how that drama could offer distinctive and more constructive representations of civic life than the satiric city comedies of Jonson and Middleton — plays which, as George complains in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, typically 'have […] girds at citizens'. In a later article, for instance, Howard suggests that London 'celebratory chronicle comedies' like *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) and *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (1606) 'are written in view of, and partly as an alternative to, the national history play'.[20] By 'foreground[ing] the stories of prominent London citizens', Howard continues, these plays '[perform] the cultural act of subordinating the monarchical to the citizen narrative even while overtly confirming the pre-eminence of the monarch'.[21] In this sense, citizen drama could simultaneously reassert and question the social status quo.

Let us consider *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. For Ronda A. Arab, the play's celebration of the late-Elizabethan artisanal profession 'makes [it] an interesting historical artefact and an important register of social, cultural, and economic change in early modern England'.[22] Typically represented 'outside the complex circulations of power, prestige, and national affairs', the 'workshop' and the artisans of *The Shoemaker's Holiday* become the central focus and are represented as the 'energy and strength of England and the source of the major assets of the emerging nation: work, productivity, and patriotism'.[23] Dekker's play, then, gestures towards some of the nascent forms of an emerging capitalist economy, foregrounded in an increasingly diversified international trade

---

19 Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 12.

20 Jean E. Howard, 'Competing Ideologies of Commerce in Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Part II*', in *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 163–82 (p. 165).

21 Howard, 'Competing Ideologies', p. 165.

22 Ronda A. Arab, 'Work, Bodies, and Gender in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), 182–212 (p. 182).

23 Arab, p. 182.

network spearheaded by merchants.[24] *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, however, distinguishes itself from the tradition of merchant chivalry through its representation of the commercial dangers (as opposed to opportunities) which attend warfare. Interestingly, the play shows how the recruitment of soldiers is a responsibility of civic office: 'The Londoners are pressed, paid, and set forth | By the Lord Mayor', Rowland Lacy offers as an explanation for his inability to excuse journeyman Ralph for the wars.[25] Rather than offer him any opportunity for honour and self-advancement, however, the wars leave Ralph crippled and worse off than before. As Elizabeth Rivlin writes, 'Ralph's military service does not elevate him to the status of an apprentice hero but simply excludes him from London's commercial economy'.[26] In essence, Ralph and the aristocratic Rowland (nephew of the Earl of Lincoln) exchange places as the latter is apprenticed as a shoemaker to escape the wars where he has been 'appointed […] | Chief colonel of all those companies | Mustered in London and the shires about' (1.1.46–48). In its celebration of artisanal life and its representation of the interchangeability of mercantile and aristocratic activity, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* registers its interest in social and ideological change and struggle without recourse to chivalry. By contrast, *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* exploit chivalric romance formulae to suggest the ways in which commercial and chivalric activities and identities could blur together.

---

24 On the way in which these broader shifts are registered institutionally in the theatre, see Jonathan Gil Harris, 'Properties of Skill: Product Placement in Early English Artisanal Drama', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 35–66. Harris argues that '[t]he shift from guild to joint-stock company, and from pageant wagon to public playhouse, may be read as part of a larger, incomplete shift from a pre-capitalist conception of property as social membership to the modern conception of property as privately owned asset' (p. 56).

25 Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, ed. by R.L. Smallwood and Stanley Wells (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), p. 90 (1.1.150–51). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

26 Elizabeth Rivlin, *The Aesthetics of Service in Early Modern England* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012), p. 98.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle and Citizen Self-Fashioning

The failure of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and its pointed satire of mercantile aspiration might well reflect this social malleability, especially at the level of audience constitution. Brought on stage to help reengineer *The London Merchant*, the citizen's wife Nell addresses the gallants seated there:

> By your leave, gentlemen all, I'm something troublesome; I'm a stranger here; I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen *Jane Shore* once, and my husband hath promised me any time this twelvemonth to carry me to *The Bold Beauchamps.*
>
> (Induction, 50–54)

Nell's comment that she is a 'stranger' in the Blackfriars theatre might give weight to David Bevington's claim that people of their 'social class did not go to the private theatres'.[27] Although the increased admission price there naturally resulted in audiences of higher social rank such as law students and gentry, those who could afford the entrance fee, including wealthier citizens, were hardly turned away. Although Nell tells us this is her first trip to the theatre ('I was ne'er at one of these plays'), her husband George is clearly well accustomed and their collaborative takeover of *The London Merchant* enacts some of the broader social and ideological claims which underlie the tradition of merchant chivalry. That appropriation is also manifested at the local level of stage space: 'I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease' (Induction, 109–10), Nell acknowledges to the on-stage gallants when she pulls up her seat to join them. Nell's self-positioning is clearly presented as an act of social transgression and, as Russell West-Pavlov remarks, 'a serious indecorum'.[28] It is allowed, however, and the takeover has clear insinuations. Throughout the play, George pays for additional interventions and props and ultimately manages to 'purchase a play custom made to his liking'.[29] 'When economic and social class distinctions clash', argue Lars Engle and Eric Rasmussen,

---

27 David Bevington, 'Introduction', Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. by David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 1067–73 (p. 1067).

28 Russell West-Pavlov, *Bodies and their Spaces: System, Crisis and Transformation in Early Modern Theatre* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), p.6.

29 Lars Engle and Eric Rasmussen, *Studying Shakespeare's Contemporaries* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2014), p. 156.

'Beaumont suggests that economic achievement wins out'.[30] Even as those social distinctions remain at the centre of the hybrid play, it is the new money of the mercantile community which literally steals the show.

This, of course, suggests that the flop of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* boils down to the social diversity of the contemporary Blackfriars audience. An inscription on a British Library copy of the first edition certainly suggests as much: 'Oh how the offended citizens did nestle | To be abused with Knight of Burning Pestle'.[31] As Tracey Hill notes, the inscription 'might point to a theatrical audience composed more of citizenry than the modern reputation of the Blackfriars would suggest'.[32] In her repertory study of the Children of the Queen's Revels, Lucy Munro argues that even with the 'relatively small audiences' of private theatres like the Blackfriars, there were 'enough disparate social identities or allegiances to make a uniform interpretation virtually impossible'.[33] 'It was difficult to maintain a stable social identity in the face of social mobility', writes Munro, 'with many complex and even contradictory elements signalling status'.[34] In an assertion of mercantile status, George is able to buy the play he wants and reveal the fragility of the social structure on which Beaumont's satire depends. George, however, cannot entirely derail *The London Merchant* and the functional coexistence of both city comedy and romance strategies suggests the social complexities which attend portraits of mercantile life.

As Engle and Rasmussen argue, 'George clearly wants the kind of unabashed civic pride and patriotism that he feels the public theatres provide' and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* abounds with intertheatrical references to the sort of citizen drama which

---

30 Engle and Rasmussen, p. 156.

31 The inscription has only ever been noted by William Hunt, 'Civic Chivalry and the English Civil War', in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 204–37 (pp. 212–13) and Tracey Hill, '"The Grocer's Honour": or, Taking the City Seriously in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*', *Early Theatre*, 20. 2 (2017), 159–78 (p. 172).

32 Hill, p. 172.

33 Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 95.

34 Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, p. 95.

he acclaims.[35] Unpacking these various references illuminates the metatheatrical world which the citizens inhabit and offers us a helpful perspective on imagined contemporary audience perceptions of celebratory citizen drama. Nell, for instance, tells the audience that she ought to have seen *Jane Shore* and *The Bold Beauchamps*. *Jane Shore* most likely refers to the eponymous play (now lost) by John Day and Henry Chettle listed in Henslowe's Diary in May 1603. A citizen's wife herself, Jane Shore was the mistress of King Edward IV and had been incorporated widely into popular culture, becoming the focus of a number of ballads and Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV* (1599). Heywood's two-part play was clearly hugely popular, reaching its sixth edition by 1626. Its subtitle makes clear the citizen appeal, advertising the 'valiant defence […] by the Lord Mayor and the Citizens', a reference to their protection of London from Falconbridge's attempted rebellion to reinstate King Henry VI which resulted in the civic officials gaining knighthoods for their military services (demonstrating the sorts of slippages between mercantile and chivalric activities and identities). What is remarkable about *Edward IV*, as Jean E. Howard notes, is its 'displacement […] of the monarchical story by the citizen story' and the 'rooting' of the latter 'in the particulars of London geography and in the city's guild culture'.[36] In the play we are told how 'Whole companies | Of Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, and the rest, | Are drawn together for their best defence'.[37] These emphases on civic militarism work as a reminder of the large number of citizens enlisted in military campaigns and who served in the London trained bands, further blurring the lines between chivalry and commerce. Presumably *The Bold Beauchamps* (c. 1606), possibly also by Heywood and now lost, featured a similar brand of merchant heroism.

Castigating the Prologue in the Induction, George provides another catalogue of appropriate dramatic material:

---

35 Engle and Rasmussen, p. 156.

36 Jean E. Howard, 'London and the Early Modern Theatre', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, ed. by Lawrence Manley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 34–50 (p. 38).

37 Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, ed. by Richard Rowland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 99, ll. 78–80. All further references to the play are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

> If you were not resolved to play the jacks, what need you study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? Why could you not be contented, as well as with others, with *The Legend of Whittington*, or *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham*, *with the Building of the Royal Exchange,* or *the Story of Queen Eleanor, with the Rearing of London Bridge upon Woolsacks*[.]
>
> (Induction, 17–23)

George is convinced that *The London Merchant* is a project in social disrespect: 'play the jacks' is at once a colloquial accusation of underhand dealing (*OED P* 1.a) and of treating the ordinary man — the citizen — in a specific way (*OED n* 2.a). In its stereotypical expression of citizen values, attitudes, and activities, then, the sort of drama with which George identifies Blackfriars, 'play[s] the jacks' with and deliberately 'abuse[s]' the mercantile community. If he is paying for the play, George sees no reason to endure mockery. Rather than look for 'new subjects' to represent merchants, the grocer suggests a list of plays which unequivocally celebrated London citizens.

The Legend of Whittington, a lost play entered into the Stationers' Register on 8 February 1605 and performed by Prince Henry's Men at the Fortune, must have celebrated Richard Whittington's successes as a merchant. Early Jacobean popular accounts of Whittington, however, reveal a huge gap between the myth (the folktale of Whittington as an orphan who rose from poverty by selling his cat to an African king) and the actual historical figure. In his *Epigrams* (1608), for instance, Henry Parrot writes that: 'Tis said that Whittington was rais'd of nought, | And by a Cat, hath many wonders wrought'.[38] In Part 2 of Heywood's *If You Know Not Me* (which George references as '*The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham*, *with the Building of the Royal Exchange*'), however, some of these myths are dispelled:

> This sir Richard Whitington three times Maior,
> Sonne to a Knight, and Prentise to a Mercer,
> Began the Librarie of Gray-Friars in London;
> And his Executors after him did build
> Whittington Colledge, thirteene Almes-houses for poore men,
> Repair'd S. Bartholmewes in Smithfield,
> Glased the Guild-hall, and built Newgate.[39]

---

38 Henry Parrot, *Epigrams* (London: 1608), A3v.

39 Thomas Heywood, *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, Part 2 (London: 1606), C4v.

The son of a Gloucestershire knight, Whittington was in fact an 'austerely noble figure'.[40] Here, the chivalric and commercial sit unproblematically side by side as he is described at once as a member of the gentry and an apprentice. As the third son, the system of primogeniture would have excluded Whittington from inheriting his father's estate and a life in trade offered a productive alternative. Rather than obscure his chivalric ancestry, Heywood advertises the social fluidity represented by Whittington's career.

Whittington was immensely successful as a mercer. Not only did he supply prominent members of the court with fine cloths but he later also 'made nearly sixty loans to the crown', underlining the importance of mercantile finance for the royal treasury. For a citizen like George, Whittington's three terms as Lord Mayor of London gave an important historical antecedent to the political prestige which could stem from commercial success. Whittington's narrative was also a reminder that members of the gentry, especially younger sons, were frequently apprenticed into trade. In Heywood's description, the conventional anti-heroic representation of the merchant as a greedy usurer is turned on its head by focusing on Whittington's extensive philanthropy.[41] Whittington not only contributed to public works such as 'the Librarie of Gray-Friars' during his lifetime but left his entire wealth (estimated at £7,000) to charitable projects.[42] As Nowell outlines in Heywood's play, these included but were not limited to, Whittington College, various alms-houses, 'rebuilding the south gate of St Bartholomew's Hospital' and Newgate Prison. Through its connection of commercial success, political prestige, and charitable work, Heywood's depiction of Whittington lauds the importance of the mercantile community for national prosperity. Although Heywood makes Whittington's ancestry clear, the myth, reiterated by Parrot, spoke clearly to a popular desire for stories of the extraordinary social mobility of aspirational merchants.

Thomas Gresham, also a wealthy merchant and moneylender, is in fact the central character of Part 2 of *If You Know Not Me*, as George's alternative title implies. Heywood's popular sequel dramatizes the 1571 opening of the Royal Exchange which Gresham had financed almost entirely on his own. Bizarrely at first glance, the play

---

40 Anne F. Sutton, 'Richard [Dick] Whittington', *ODNB,* accessed 23 May 2020.

41 On the conventional image of the merchant as usurer, see Stevenson, pp. 92-106.

42 Sutton, 'Whittington, Richard'.

complicates and even seemingly disavows its commercial interests by concluding with an account of the Spanish Armada.[43] During his career as a Royal Agent in the Netherlands from 1551 to 1564, Gresham had overseen an almost total eradication of international royal debt. He held a 'leading place in Anglo-Netherlands commerce' and, like his father, also specialised in the 'importation of armour and weaponry'.[44] Gresham was knighted in 1559 for his financial services to the crown and his Royal Exchange, England's first dedicated commercial institution, became an emblem of his cultural prestige. In addition to trading weaponry, Gresham's financial manipulations, learnt especially from his time in Antwerp (where the first bourse was housed and which served as Gresham's principal inspiration for the Royal Exchange), might be considered a form of mercantile warfare. The union of mercantile and chivalric interests was often explicit in Gresham's career.[45] Bruce R. Smith, for instance, describes how Gresham's 'steelyard', an 'iron device for calculating how much things weigh' and dated to 1572, 'is enriched with bronze icons of chivalry'. In this chivalric design, including two knights engaged in battle, 'merchandising becomes a knightly enterprise'.[46] In a similar vein, 1572 also saw Thomas Paynell's partial translation of the Arthurian chivalric romance, *The Treasury of Amadis of France*, dedicated to Gresham.[47] In this light, the chivalric fantasies of George in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* become much more than wishful thinking.

George's third reference is to George Peele's *Edward I* (1593). Although the play does not forge connections between chivalry and commerce, its subtitle — '*the Rearing of*

---

43 This is more clearly aligned with the subject matter of its prequel; subtitled '*The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth*', Part 1 offers a tumultuous religious history of Mary I's reign which concludes with the accession of Elizabeth.

44 Ian Blanchard, 'Sir Thomas Gresham', *ODNB*, accessed 25 Jan 2020.

45 In 2003, the remains of an armed merchant ship from c. 1574 were discovered in the Princes Channel and included a rare gun with Gresham's motif and initial engraved upon. See Jens Auer and Antony Firth, 'The "Gresham Ship": an interim report on a 16th-century wreck from Princes Channel, Thames Estuary', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 41.2 (2007), 222–41.

46 Bruce R. Smith, 'A Night of Errors and the Dawn of Empire: Male Enterprise in *The Comedy of Errors*', in *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies*, ed. by Michael J. Collins (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 102–25 (p. 121).

47 See Moore, *Amadis in English*, pp. 59–63.

London Bridge upon Woolsacks' — serves as an instant reminder that the rebuilding of London bridge during Edward's reign was funded through a wool duty.[48] Dominated by the Merchant Adventurers (whose name came with chivalric implications), the export of wool was worth at least three-quarters of the country's foreign trade.[49] The wealth which this brought leading members of the trading company such as Gresham, 'rival[ed that of] important nobles' and afforded them considerable social and political advantages. As a result, '[n]o government could afford to offend or ignore them, for their loans, their ships, and their ability to move goods might come in very handy in time of war'.[50] It is under these sorts of economic and political conditions that the identities of the merchant and knight begin to blur. Through his variety of references to the popular theatre, George brings to life an intertheatrical world of mercantile heroism and success.

In one of his many interventions, George suggests that the 'Sophy of Persia come and christen [the boy] a child' (4.29–30). The boy of the original cast responds disdainfully: 'Believe me, sir, that will not do so well. | 'Tis stale; it has been had before at the Red Bull' (4.31–32). The reference is to *The Travels of Three English Brothers* (1607), co-written by William Rowley, John Day, and George Wilkins, where, as George's lines make clear, the Sophy of Persia baptises a child. The implication is clear: the Red Bull, and the type of chivalric-adventure drama which was commonly its fare, is a staple of the citizen community's unrefined dramatic appetite. It also implies that these plays rely generally on 'stale' and overused forms of representation, and that their fantasies often shatter the boundaries of verisimilitude. Such is the attitude presented towards Heywood's *Four Prentices of London* — the main dramatic target of Beaumont's satire, also staged at the Red Bull. When George begins to instruct the Prologue on the 'admirable things' which his apprentice Rafe will perform, Nell interrupts: 'Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband', she exclaims, 'let him kill a lion with a pestle' (Induction, 43–44). The reference is almost certainly to the later moments of Heywood's dramatic

---

48 Sheldon P. Zitner, in Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. by Sheldon P. Zitner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), n. to Induction, 19–22.

49 Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England 1485–1714: A Narrative History*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 201.

50 Bucholz and Key, p. 207.

romance when Charles, one of the play's four nobly born apprentices, confronts the Sophy of Persia and the Sultan of Babylon:

> Since first I bore this shield I quartered it
> With this red lion, whom I singly once
> Slew in the forest. Thus much have I already
> Added unto the Haberdashers' arms.[51]

As in the romance staple *Bevis of Hampton* (c. 1324), slaying a lion is a demonstration of the hero's valour and physical prowess (see Figure 4). '[Q]uartered' refers to the heraldic practice of adding to coats of arms to visually display achievements (*OED v* 3.a.); here, however, the conventional chivalric display of bravery is unabashedly '[a]dded unto the Haberdashers' arms'. These, Charles tells us proudly, he has 'borne in honour of [his] trade' (12.130). A form of social satire in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the fusion of chivalric and mercantile values is presented entirely unproblematically in *The Four Prentices of London.* Charles's ambitions, however, do not end here. 'Unto the lion I'll add your crowns' (12.94) he confidently informs the Sophy, bringing together the hybrid commercial/chivalric implications of his emblazoned shield under the umbrella of conquest and territorial expansion.

---

51 Thomas Heywood, *The Four Prentices of London*, in *Three Romances of Eastern Conquest*, ed. by Ladan Niayesh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 201–89 (p. 268, 12.89–92). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.



Figure 4. 'Heures Taymouth, scène de bas de page représentant Beuve de Hanstone combattant des lions' (c. 1325–35). BL Yates Thompson 13, f. 12r. © The British Library Board.

Overseas Expansion in *The Four Prentices of London*

As their title pages advertise, both Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*[52] and Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* were performed at the Red Bull: the former by the Queen Anne's Men (who relocated to the Cockpit in 1618), and the latter by the Prince Charles's Men (formerly the Duke of York's Men), the playing company which Rowley co-founded and who moved to the Red Bull temporarily in 1617 (from their usual base at the Curtain). Heywood's play is ultimately a crusade narrative. It opens with the Earl of Boulogne who, usurped by the French king, is 'forced to lose' his title and 'live in London like a citizen' (1.28–29). To safeguard their livelihoods, the old earl (who remains unnamed throughout the play) apprentices his four sons to various city trades: Godfrey, the eldest, becomes a mercer; Guy, a goldsmith; Charles, a haberdasher; and the youngest, Eustace, becomes a grocer. In an unusual turn of events, however, the four apprentices are quickly enlisted by a Captain into the First Crusade led by commander Robert, Duke of Normandy (the son of William the Conqueror whom the old earl has previously been serving). In typical romance convention, the four brothers are shipwrecked and land respectively on the coasts of Spain, France, Italy, and Ireland, each assuming the others dead. After achieving military and romantic success individually, the four brothers are unwittingly reunited when they resume the crusade to Jerusalem. There, in a spectacular finale of military prowess, they defeat the Babylonian Sultan and the Sophy of Persia. After they reveal their identities to each other and are reunited with their father and

---

52 *The Four Prentices of London* is remarkably difficult to date. Q1 of the play appeared in 1615; in its dedicatory epistle, Heywood excuses its lack of 'accurateness both in plot and style' and tells the reader that 'some fifteen or sixteen years ago' plays like *The Four Prentices of London* were 'in the fashion' (Epistle, 7–10). The obvious conclusion of an original performance date of c. 1600, however, is complicated by several factors. Heywood's comment, for instance, only tells us for certain that this sort of play was popular around the turn of the century. The play could also be Lord Strange's Men's *Jerusalem* in 1592 or the Lord Admiral's *2 Godfrey of Bouillon* in 1594 (both lost but recorded in Henslowe). Heywood's comment in the Epistle that *Four Prentices of London* is his 'first practice' (Epistle, 3) supports this hypothesis. There is, however, I think, little reason not to take the 'some fifteen or sixteen years ago' at face value; even as the comment is primarily about audience taste, it seems odd that Heywood would be referencing intermediate performances instead of suggesting that he composed it according to prevalent dramatic mores. Considering the c. 1599 date for *Edward IV*, Heywood's earliest other play, I opt for the same date with the assumption that the composition preceded his two-part chronicle history.

sister, Guy, Charles, and Eustace respectively accept the crowns of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Sicily, all professing the honour which they attach to their city trades.[53]

Although *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* routinely locates its humour in the representational extravagances of romance, *The Four Prentices of London* acknowledges and embraces its conscious implausibility and artificiality. In its opening Prologue, three distinct prologues quarrel over the play's subject matter, creating a 'multiplied and fractious olio' to its introduction.[54] The first Prologue, the author himself, tells the others that '[a] gentleman that heard the subject discoursed said it was not possible to be true, and none here are bound to believe it' (Prologue, 19–21). First giving the example of Alexander the Great conquering the world at age thirty by way of counterargument, the second Prologue tells the audience that the 'authority' of *The Four Prentices of London* 'is a manuscript, a book writ in parchment' which has never been made public before (Prologue, 29). 'Had not ye rather', he continues, 'for novelty's sake, see Jerusalem ye never saw, than London that ye see hourly?' (Prologue, 34–35). Stretching imaginative boundaries, especially in geographic terms, therefore becomes a trade-off for theatrical 'novelty'. In a tone at once audacious and apologetic, the Prologue of *The Four Prentices of London* therefore claims to break conventional generic and aesthetic boundaries to offer its audience a novel form of commercial-chivalric drama which provides a vicarious experience of overseas expansion in the late-Elizabethan period. Although Heywood's assertion of novelty is an exaggerated marketing tactic, *The Four Prentices of London* offers perhaps the earliest theatrical example of merchant chivalry.[55]

---

53 Godfrey turns down the crown of Jerusalem, opting instead for a crown of thorns to express his penitential devotion: 'That made the blood run from our Saviour's brow; | No crown but this can Godfrey's heart allow' (17.56–57).

54 Fenella MacFarlane, 'To "Try What London Prentices Can Do": Merchant Chivalry as Representational Strategy in Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London*', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), 136–64 (p. 144).

55 If Lord Strange's Men's 1592 *Jerusalem* is indeed a separate play, for instance, it must have offered a similar vicarious experience to the Holy Land. Similarly, in the extant *Guy of Warwick* travels to Jerusalem to fight the Saracens. On a more precise aesthetic level, the combination of chivalry, commerce, and overseas expansion can be seen in earlier plays such as *Tamburlaine* which shadows emerging trade routes in the East. See for instance 'Visible Bullets: Tamburlaine the Great and Ivan the Terrible', *ELH*, 62.1 (1995), 47–68, where Richard Wilson reads Marlowe's play in line with the dubious ambitions of England's first joint-stock enterprise, the Muscovy Company, to dominate Asian trade routes.

The scant critical attention which *The Four Prentices of London* has generated tends to focus on the play's engagement with contemporary Anglo-Ottoman relations. Reading *Guy of Warwick* (c. 1593) and *The Four Prentices of London* in the theatrical context of other 'Turk plays' such as Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* (1592), both parts of *Tamburlaine* (1587), and Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* (1612), Annaliese Connolly argues that the 'palimpsestic effect created' in these plays by the overlay of 'complex Anglo-Ottoman relations at the end of the sixteenth century' and the medieval crusade histories they adapt emphasises their fictionality and 'encourage their audiences to be aware of the disjunction between the past and the present'.[56] For Ladan Niayesh, that combination of medieval crusade and contemporary apprenticeship 'makes the fantasy of reconquest a homely and popular one'. [57] There is, however, clearly much more to the combinations of chivalry and commerce in plays like *The Four Prentices of London* than 'popularisation'. Although its mercantile heroics no doubt catered to the sorts of audience expected at the Red Bull, they encoded ideologically purposeful claims as to the symbiosis of commerce and conquest in the realm of overseas expansion.[58]

The muddy combinations of military, commercial, and territorial activities brought to life in *The Four Prentices of London*, this chapter argues, are a register of the potential symbioses between merchants and knights who, through their mutually participatory expansion enterprises, engaged in the shared characteristics of financial and military risk, adventure, and honour. Daniel Vitkus has argued that this evolving social and ideological synergy in early modern England is rooted in contemporary maritime developments:

---

56 Annaliese Connolly, 'Guy of Warwick, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Elizabethan Repertory', *Early Theatre*, 12.2 (2009), 207–22 (pp. 129–20).

57 Ladan Niayesh, 'Introduction', in *Three Romances of Eastern Conquest*, ed. by Ladan Niayesh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 1–49 (p. 4).

58 In 'The Curious Case of Two Audiences: Thomas Dekker's *Match Me in London*', in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558–1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 59–70, for instance, Mark Bayer argues that Red Bull audiences were 'composed primarily of tradesmen and apprentices' (p. 59). See also Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574–1642*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 15. For a special issue of excellent counterarguments see Lucy Munro, Anne Lancashire, John H. Astington, and Marta Straznicky (eds), 'Issues in Review: Popular Theatre and the Red Bull', *Early Theatre,* 9.2 (2006), 99–156.

> The older, traditional categories of the aristocratic warrior and the peaceful merchant were changing: the merchants who engaged in overseas commerce sailed in convoys of heavily armed vessels while aristocrats invested or participated in voyages carried out by adventuring freebooters like Francis Drake.[59]

Although both groups were of course motivated by financial profit, aristocrats also 'needed the impulse of glory', as Helgerson notes. As a result, '[g]entlemen chose to support riskier and more glamorous ventures, exploration and colonization rather than settled trade. And they were more strongly influenced by ideas of national enterprise'.[60] It is indeed that claim to national enterprise which, at least on the surface, lends aristocratic involvement in overseas expansionism the attribute of honour (and excludes merchants). That dichotomy is something of a false consciousness, however, driven by a desire to maintain the social distinctions which these joint ventures in fact complicated.

Furthermore, as critics have realised, it was merchants and their fundamentally commercial and pragmatic interests which fuelled English expansion abroad.[61] 'The creation of the first British empire', writes Michael Braddick, 'was not an act of central will' and pre-imperial conquest was typically a by-product of commercial expansion overseas.[62] Rather, as Jane Hwang Degenhardt argues, 'England's participation in a global economy [...] preceded England's colonial expansion and […] in some sense pointedly rejected a colonial model of expansion'.[63] The fact remains, however, that

---

59 Daniel Vitkus, 'Rogue Cosmopolitans on the Early Modern Stage: John Ward, Thomas Stukeley, and the Sherley Brothers', in *Travel and Drama in Early Modern England: The Journeying Play*, ed. by Claire Jowitt and David McInnis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 128–49 (pp. 131–32).

60 Helgerson, p. 172. Broadly speaking, this took merchants to the East and gentlemen to the West. On the differences between gentlemanly and mercantile ventures, see Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 9–22.

61 See Theodore K. Rabb, *Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575–1630* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

62 Braddick, *State Formation,* p. 397.

63 Jane Hwang Degenhardt, 'Purifying the Pursuit of Gold in Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West, Part I*', in *Historical Affects and the Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Michelle Dowd, Ronda Arab, and Adam Zucker (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 152–68 (p. 154).

although 'England's commercial reorientation in the late sixteenth century and nascent involvement in global commerce did not constitute a coherent imperial agenda, these developments importantly informed England's early conceptions of itself as an empire in the making'.[64] Even as Heywood's four noble apprentices travel to the Holy Land in the name of crusade, it is their trades which have sustained their estates and to which they repeatedly profess their devotion and honour. *The Four Prentices of London*, then, manipulates romance strategies to bring together commercial and military enterprise under the umbrella of religiously charged national interest — powerfully visualised by the brothers' shields decorated with mercantile symbols.

Thanks to its geographic and imaginative expansiveness, romance has been understood as a key mode for engaging with early modern discourses of commercial and colonial expansion. In *Romance on the Early Modern Stage* (2013), for instance, Cyrus Mulready unpacks the relationship between romance and travel, suggesting that 'romance, as it developed its roots in medieval narrative to stage genre, offered material and formal resources through which the English envisioned overseas commercial and imperial expansion'. As such, stage romance 'bridged the world of fantasy and imagination with the more concrete realities of overseas trade and empire' and 'gave form to the audience's expanding geographic and cultural imaginings'.[65] In *Chivalry and Exploration: 1298–1630* (1998), Jennifer Goodman explores the intersections between European chivalric romance and exploration narratives. As Goodman argues, '[a] wide variety of chivalric romances contributed heroic motifs and images on which military and mercantile adventurers of the era of European expansion might model their lives'.[66] Although Goodman's focus is European prose romance, many of her insights are pertinent to a study of early modern English drama.

This reading of merchant chivalry expands upon these critical perspectives by focusing on the social dynamics of *The Four Prentices of London*'s engagement with overseas expansion. In his study of the intellectual context of seventeenth century 'voyage drama', David McInnis claims that the vicarious 'type of travel experience it

---

64 Degenhardt, pp. 154–55.

65 Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage*, pp. 2–3. See also Publicover, *Dramatic Geography*.

66 Goodman, *Chivalry and Exploration*, p. 43.

produced was neither spiritual nor mercantile'.[67] This, I would argue, is difficult to maintain. Although travel in *The Four Prentices of London* is performed in the name and costume of chivalry, Heywood's four brothers, as apprentices, offer an audience experience of commercial (and to a lesser extent, colonial) ambition — one which George's arsenal of citizen drama in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* intimates. The fusion of feudal/military and commercial/mercantile values expressed by the noble apprentices functions principally as social commentary, harmoniously celebrating both aristocratic and artisanal communities at the same time. Although Heywood's play promotes a socially collaborative vision of overseas expansion, however, the consistent respect and benefits which the brothers articulate for their respective trades both in terms of material reward (financial sustenance) and inherent qualities (loyalty and fellowship, for instance) serve as a register that merchants are the key players in English expansion. Despite the pejorative implications which came with the accumulation of wealth in early modern England, Heywood's play is a reminder that commercial expansion did require qualities which could legitimately be perceived as heroic: risk, enterprise, and adventure.

Chivalry was in fact an effective ideology to express commercial enterprise and expansion and the tales of chivalry which the citizens yearn for in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* offered models for socioeconomic self-fashioning. '[T]he great majority of travellers', Michael Murrin reminds us, 'were merchants'. 'They were the ones who traversed the vast differences, suffered from cold and heat, and, at times, risked their lives' and chivalric narratives, such as the Iberian romances which were rapidly being translated and consumed in England, therefore supplied them with 'reflections of what they knew and experienced firsthand'.[68] The inherent dangers which overseas trade entailed are captured in the interchangeability of 'travel' and 'travail' in the period. As Lawrence Publicover describes, this interchangeability 'brings together spatial displacement (travel) and chivalric 'work' (travail)'.[69] Performing chivalric 'travail' as they 'travel' to the East to conquer Jerusalem, the venturing apprentices of Heywood's

---

67 David McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 1.

68 Michael Murrin, *Trade and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 4.

69 Publicover, p. 144.

play blur the lines between conquest and commerce. With early modern trade becoming increasingly international, the geographical expansiveness of chivalric romance provided a productive set of conventions with which commercial adventure and ambition and the work it involved could be celebrated.[70]

Francis Drake offers a pertinent case study for these overlaps in commercial and chivalric activity and identity. In the religious allegory, *The Voyage of The Wandering Knight* (1581), for instance, chivalric quest functions as a vehicle for the individual social and political rewards of commercial expansion overseas. Translated by William Goodyear from Jean de Cartigny's French original and dedicated to Drake, *The Voyage of the Wandering Knight* appeared in response to the latter's knighthood, conferred by Queen Elizabeth aboard the Golden Hind a year after his circumnavigation. Goodyear prefaces the actual romance with his own short anagrammatic commendatory poem to Drake:

> F For country's cause who taketh toil,
> R Regarding neither life nor limb,
> A Adventures to receive the foil,
> V Valour had need to rest in him.
> N Neglect he may not seasons fit,
> C Covet he must to do the best,
> E Ever he warreth with his wit,
> S Seldom he sleeps in quiet rest.
>
> D Discharged thou hast thy duty well,
> R Remember God that guided thee:
> A Ambitiously do not excel,
> K Keep thee in compass of degree:
> E Each one will say what he doth see.[71]

The language and images chosen here do not sit comfortably in the mercantile realm. Rather, Goodyear describes the circumnavigation in terms more familiar to chivalric romance. Drake becomes a sort of *miles christianus* figure, 'guided' by 'God' in his 'adventures' abroad in 'country's cause'. These adventures involve 'toil' and require the traditional knightly qualities of 'valour' and courage ('regarding neither life nor limb').

---

70 In *Let Wonder Seem Familiar: Shakespeare and the Romance Ending* (London: Athlone Press, 1985), R.S. White notes that 'chivalric romances use travel over vast distances as a basic motif' (p. 177).

71 Jean de Cartigny, *The Voyage of the Wandering Knight*, trans. by William Goodyear (London: 1581), A4v.

Drake's circumnavigation, recast as the chivalric quest of the original *Voyage du Chevalier Errant*, therefore becomes 'a wider quest for a new social identity and self-definition on the part of the merchant-adventurers he represents'.[72] Practising a sort of hybrid commercial chivalry, Drake signifies something of a prototype of the merchant knights soon to take to the early modern stage. Much like the protagonists of these plays, the formulae and values and chivalric romance function as instruments to glorify Drake's fundamentally commercial achievements.

Goodyear's warning that Drake '[k]eep' himself 'in compass of degree' might be a plea that he remember his humbler mercantile origins. As Marco Nievergelt has demonstrated, the translation by Goodyear, a Southampton merchant,

> reminds us of Drake's predominantly mercantile activities in the years before the circumnavigation, of the importance of commercial interests for the Famous Voyage itself, and the commercial justifications of Drake's acts of piracy, cast as defensive measures to protect England's trading activity.[73]

Blurring the lines between violence, travel, and commerce under the nebulous 'adventure', Goodyear's translation in fact works to underline the ways in which mercantile and chivalric activities and identities often shaded into one another. That destabilisation took place not only at the technological level (armed merchant ships, for instance) but at the financial too. In particular, the development of joint-stock ventures 'helped to establish the most exotic trades of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'. By providing a 'permanent fund of capital […] from individual investments', the commercial risk was shared across the merchants and gentlemen who invested and who could still hope for considerable profits.[74] Overseas expansion then was a commercial venture in terms of both finance and ultimate strategy. Drake's circumnavigation, largely financed by prominent aristocrats like the chivalric minded Robert Dudley, expanded the scope of overseas trade and brought handsome financial rewards for its investors. As Stow records, the single ship to return, The Golden Hind, docked on 26 September 1580 'very richly fraught with gold, silver, pearls and precious stones', a

---

72 Marco Nievergelt, 'Francis Drake: Merchant, Knight, and Pilgrim', *Renaissance Studies,* 23 (2009), 53–70 (p. 59).

73 Nievergelt, 'Francis Drake', p. 59.

74 Braddick, *State Formation,* p. 399.

result of ransacking numerous Spanish ships and settlements on the coasts of modern-day Chile and Peru.[75] The categories of commercial, military, and colonial expedition continually overlapped as heavily armed vessels — a necessary defence against European rivalries — made seaborn exploration and trade an unavoidably military affair. Privateering occupied an uneasy liminal space between the traditional categories associated with the knight and the merchant.

Drake's piracy was of course difficult to defend in moral terms. However, in the religio-political context of Anglo-Spanish tensions, it worked to secure imperial ambitions as well as drive material profit. By transforming Drake's circumnavigation into a chivalric quest, *The Wandering Knight* gave piracy social and religio-political meaning, celebrating Drake as a Protestant hero. In addition to his knighthood, the expedition would also bring Drake considerable success in civic office: he became Mayor of Plymouth and an MP for Camelford the following year. An account of Drake's circumnavigation also appeared in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589), the foremost edition of travel writing in the period. What was remarkable about Hakluyt's collection, as Helgerson has shown, was its combination of chivalric and epic material (such as Chapman's celebratory poem on Raleigh's discovery of Guiana) and commercial letters as well as lists of commodities. As such, a work like *Principal Navigations* 'brings merchants into the nation and brings gentry into trade'.[76] By uniting these materials, Hakluyt 'superimposed the ideological and economic asymmetries of his culture to represent and to enforce a coupling of classes in an enterprise he defined as national'.[77] As Goodyear's *Voyage* underlines, expeditions like Drake's brought together the chivalric and commercial '[f]or country's cause'.

These overlaps help us to understand the chivalric presentation of tradesmen in *The Four Prentices of London*. In the best reading of Heywood's play, Fenella MacFarlane argues that the mercantile and chivalric intersections of *The Four Prentices of London* engage with the ambitions of English expansion in both colonial and commercial terms. Borrowing the 'the outward marks of chivalry', Heywood's play, argues MacFarlane, 'is

---

75 John Stow, *The Annales of England* (London: 1592), p. 807.

76 Helgerson, p. 176.

77 Helgerson, pp. 178–79.

driven not by archaic but rather new and still developing sets of interests'.[78] According to her, *The Four Prentices of London* broadly maps the commercial interests and activities of the Levant Company, chartered in 1592, and redefines or modifies an appropriated chivalry to '[express] middle-class aspirations (and frustrations)'.[79] Although a fine reading, MacFarlane's essay significantly overplays the social antagonism of these chivalric appropriations. Despite their noble origins, claims MacFarlane, 'it is the brothers' commitment to their trades and the values of apprenticedom that the text foregrounds. […] It is very much *as* London apprentices that they undertake their adventures abroad'.[80] Yet the brothers' successes, Heywood demonstrates, are inextricable from their nobility and, by consequence, their military heritages, despite their vocal praise of artisanal life and its values. Their apprenticeship is not a choice furthermore, but a reluctant alternative driven by political and economic circumstance (their disinheritance). Consider, for instance, Charles's preliminary reflections on his new identity as a haberdasher:

> the soft wool feels in my hand like steel;
> And I could wish with each hat comes through my hand
> Were turned into a helmet, and each helmet
> Upon a soldier's head, for me to lead.
> War is the walk which I desire to tread[.]
>
> (1.149–53)

Charles then imaginatively transforms his mercantile instruments into those of war; now a tradesmen, he longs to be a military captain. In a similar vein, Eustace laments that he must forgo his chivalric pastimes of 'hawking' (1.1.103), 'hunting' (1.1.104), horse-riding (1.1.105), 'tilting' (1.1.114), and 'fencing' (1.1.119). He too articulates the same dilemma of ideology and identity as his older brother: 'I am a Grocer: Yet had rather see | A fair guilt sword hung in a velvet sheath, | Then the best Barbary sugar in the world' (1.154–56). Chivalry, they tell us, is their natural impulse and more appealing than trade.

The desire to 'tread' the 'walk' of 'war' quickly manifests itself in the brothers' enrolment in the First Crusade and honour is repeatedly articulated in military terms throughout the play. At several junctures, their military performances, both verbal and

---

78 MacFarlane, p. 136.

79 MacFarlane, p. 138.

80 MacFarlane, p. 147.

physical, put forward a neo-feudal view of chivalry whereby aristocratic lineage determines social, political, and military superiority. When Eustace and Charles first meet after the shipwreck, for instance, they fail to recognise each other (both assuming their brothers to be dead at sea). Charles, leading a band of outlaws which he is attempting to civilize, deems Eustace to be 'the best piece of flesh | That ever in these woods held outlaw play!' (5.89–90) and seeks to make him his 'companion' (5.93). Challenged by Eustace to a 'combat hand to hand' (5.99), Charles replies: 'I were a bastard, not my father's son, | Should I refuse it' (5.100–01). '[K]nightly manhood', writes Amanda McVitty, 'depended on a complex interaction of innate 'noble' qualities carried in the paternal blood and the repeated and convincing performance of chivalric virtues'.[81] Refusal of Eustace's challenge would therefore demonstrate Charles's cowardice and undermine the qualities of valour and courage assumed to be his birth right. Charles is therefore compelled into accepting the single combat because of chivalric expectations placed upon him by his noble ancestry.

The Four Prentices of London technically offers the converse appropriation of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*: these are not merchants borrowing the trappings of chivalry, but knights well practised in their military skills and the chivalric code of conduct. It is this chivalric competence which ultimately enables their successful conquest of the Holy Land. Although respectful of commerce, the brothers must negotiate its anti-heroic implications carefully. For Guy, for instance, membership in the Company of Goldsmiths is 'a good refuge in extremity' (1.84):

> Say I be born a prince, and be cast down,
> By some sinister chance, or fortune's frown;
> Say I be banished; when I have a trade,
> And in myself a means to purchase wealth,
> Though my state waste, and tow'ring honours fall,
> That still stays with me in th'extremest of all.
>
> (1.85–90)

Guy thus characterises his apprenticeship as a last resort and a result of misfortune. The transition from the chivalric to the commercial is explicitly framed as a decline; 'cast down' by 'banish[ment]' from his inheritance, trade becomes 'a means to purchase

---

81 Amanda McVitty, 'False Knights and True Men: Contesting Chivalric Masculinity in English Treason Trials 1388–1415', *Journal of Medieval History*, 40.2 (2014), 458–77 (p. 462).

wealth'. Although a protection against extremity, the move into the world of commerce is synonymous with deteriorating 'state' and the 'fall' of 'tow'ring honours'. Charles too presents apprenticeship in terms of compulsion and sustenance. 'If I should say I would not brook those bonds | Which God and fate and you have tied me in, | You would be preaching disobedience' (1.92–93), he tells his father. Suggesting that 'the city-trades are base | For such a great man's sons' (1.95–96), Guy arrives at the same conclusion: in the face of their political and economic predicament, commerce is a way to 'live another day' (1.99).

Jerusalem, where the play ends in conquest, was 'the heart of the commercial territory' of the Levant Company.[82] By setting his "prentices" loose in the region of Jerusalem', argues MacFarlane, Heywood 'offers an implicit challenge to the large company monopolists'.[83] As membership of major trading companies was generally limited to wealthy merchants and gentry, organisations such as the Levant Company were often a source of hostility and animosity for lower-level tradesmen. Since Heywood's brothers are in fact noble, however, *The Four Prentices of London*, if anything, reinforces that status quo.[84] Rather than present a challenge, their mutual existence in the worlds of chivalry and commerce offers a more socially fluid vision of overseas expansion which reflects the increasing participation of aristocrats in early modern trade. They, as Barbara Baines puts it, 'embody a fusion of aristocratic, chivalric aspiration with middle-class pragmatism'.[85] Although never made entirely explicit, the implication is that apprenticeship teaches the noblemen the mercantile values of fellowship, equanimity, and hard work.

That implication finds expression, for instance, via the brothers' often impulsive and reckless behaviour encouraged by the chivalric code. At one point in Italy, for instance, a frustrated Prince Tancred, the County Palatine, is forced to intervene to end

---

82 MacFarlane, p. 140.

83 MacFarlane, p. 140.

84 In 1605, the Levant Company's charter was renewed but its monopoly revoked. Membership was also opened to any merchant who was either within a year of their apprenticeship or over the age of twenty-six who could afford an entrance fee of £25, marking a moderate amount of greater social mobility. See Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Frank Cass & Co, 1964), p. 40.

85 Barbara Baines, *Thomas Heywood* (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p. 80.

a single combat between Charles and Guy: 'We will reserve their haughty chivalries, | To exercise against God's enemies' (6.200–01). Here, 'haughty' underlines the ambiguity of chivalric behaviour, at once suggesting excessive pride (*OED adj* 1.a) and superior bravery (*OED adj* 2). For the Christians present, however, it is irrevocably the latter. 'Part them on equal odds and equal terms!', asserts Robert, Duke of Normandy, 'Both alike valiant, both have honour won; | More valorous live not underneath the sun' (6.197–99). 'A princely motion to save Christian blood!' and '[t]o staunch the blood which should be broached this day' (6.162), single combat here is a genuine and preventative expression of Christian chivalry, pursued to avoid full scale war. The irony, of course, manifests itself in a foundational aspect of chivalric ideology: internal Christian violence is avoided in a gesture of mercy, but is ultimately redirected against the Saracens — 'God's enemies'.

Later in the play, however, a similar moment underlines chivalry's potential for unbridled arrogance when Eustace and Guy argue over the honour to challenge Turnus, the Sophy of Persia's envoy, in single combat. After professing their individual claims to honour, the brothers turn on each other. Much like the reaction to Clyomon's theft of Clamydes's knighthood which we saw in Chapter 1, their behaviour invites different responses. For Morates, a dependent king of the Sophy of Persia, for instance, the pair are 'so full of envious chivalry' (8.129) and 'strive and fight amongst themselves, | To practise hate against they meet with us' (8.131–32). Admittedly a slightly odd thought process, Morates understands the brothers' violence almost as a state of mind, a preparation tactic for the real battle. For the Christians, however, the internal violence is grossly dishonourable. 'Injustice stains our crests' (8.119), laments Godfrey, whilst Charles condemns their 'hair-brain rage' (8.123). For them, the implications are clear: 'The law is death', states the Duke of Normandy, 'but such is our regard | Of Christian blood, we moderate it thus: | Because we know your worths, your lives are saved' (8.158–60). Nonetheless, since violence should be held in check for the Saracens, it results in their 'everlasting banishment | From out the Christian army' (8.163–64).

As we saw with the duel in the previous chapter, the protocols of chivalric combat lend themselves to personally beneficial manipulation under an apparent claim to individual honour: 'Aye, 'gainst him', Eustace exclaims initially, taking up the challenge, 'and thee, and all the world | That interdicts my honour!' (8.13–14) Eustace's 'all the world' emphasizes chivalry's boundless space for self-aggrandizement. In these moments, chivalry is held up to be aggressive, self-serving, and damaging to military

strategy. It is chivalry, not the brothers' trades, which therefore threatens success. Heywood then offers a balanced view of chivalric behaviour captured in Tancred's phrase 'haughty chivalries': it is at once capable of inspiring heroic and anti-heroic action. When the latter representation is put forward in *The Four Prentices of London*, the battlefield — essentially the permanent space of Heywood's dramatic romance — is implicitly set against the imaginative space of the workshop (never of course realised literally in the play). Through their hybrid identities as noble apprentices, however, the competitive and anti-egalitarian impulses of the chivalric code are counterpoised by the communal emphasis of the artisanal workspace, underlined by the brothers' explicit esteem for trade. That respect for commerce might have also registered intertheatrically in playhouses like the Red Bull (for post-1605 performances) where the sorts of citizen drama which George longs for in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* would have chimed with Heywood's apprentice heroics. By putting forward a two-sided vision of chivalric behaviour alongside a celebration of artisanal professional values, Heywood makes his hybrid protagonists occupy a liminal space between chivalry and commerce in their ventures overseas.

There is, of course, no doubt that the mercantile community — and especially tradespeople — are the target audience of *The Four Prentices of London*. That much is made explicit in Heywood's dedication to 'the honest and high-spirited prentices'.[86] Much like the 'spirits of these haughty Christians' (8.128) which the Saracen Morates recognises, the language of celebration is chivalry. From the opening paratext of the play, apprentices are described in terms of their bravery. The dedication of *The Four Prentices of London* goes on to elaborate that association, extending the intellectual scope

---

86 This could also be a nod to the fact that the apprenticeship system of early modern England extended to theatre. Rafe's amateur dramatics in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* may well gesture towards this; serving his seven years under his grocer master could, in theory, be a route to the professional stage. 'Apprentice players' were, as David Kathman states, frequently bound, and sometimes freed, to masters who were freemen of the London livery companies, 'despite being trained entirely for the stage'. The traditional guild system therefore 'played a crucial role in the economics of the professional theatre, particularly its apprenticeship system'; see 'Grocers, Goldsmiths, and Drapers: Freemen and Apprentices in the Elizabethan Theatre', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55.1 (2004), 1–49 (p. 2). *The Four Prentices of London* therefore might simultaneously play tribute to the community of its artisanal subject matter and to the players who brought plays like Heywood's to life, even as those two groups overlapped.

conventionally understood by the tradition of merchant chivalry. Although apprentices were not the members of the mercantile community who ventured abroad, their claim to the bravery of chivalry is not unfounded. After excusing *The Four Prentices of London* as no longer appropriate to the 'more censorious days' (Epistle, 8) of 1615, Heywood argues that it could not 'have found a more seasonable and fit publication than at this time when, to the glory of our nation, the security of the kingdom and the honour of the City, they have begun again the commendable practice of long forgotten arms' (Epistle, 10–14). This is a reference to the revival in 1610 of the Honourable Artillery Company who 'in the dull and sleepy time of peace first wakened the remembrance of these arms in the Artillery Garden' (Epistle, 17–18). Designed for the defence of the realm, its 'purpose', writes William Hunt, was 'to supply officers for the London trained bands' and offered the only route to 'military glory during the Jacobean peace'.[87] Although citizen militia developed primarily in response to Anglo-Spanish hostilities (members of the Honourable Artillery Company served as commanders in Tilbury for a London faction of soldiers for instance), the 1610 peace-time revival probably 'reflected the upsurge of martial enthusiasm inspired by the investiture' of James's son, Henry, as Prince of Wales.[88] After all, in 1587, 300 of the company, weapons in hand, marched behind the hearse of Sidney from whom many perceived Henry to inherit the mantle of military Protestant nationalism.

In 1615, three years after the Honourable Artillery Company received its royal charter, the subject of Heywood's play was very much 'in the fashion' (Epistle, 10). Not only did the chivalric apprentices of the early modern stage speak to the extensive commercial and political ambitions of the citizen community, but they also reflected that community's desire to participate in the military culture of the age. Conversely, their hybrid identities of Heywood's four brothers also reflect the increasing participation of the aristocracy in the world of commerce. Through its intersections between chivalry and commerce, *The Four Prentices of London* therefore makes multiple suggestions about the social fabric of early modern England. Bringing to light the crossovers between traditional mercantile and chivalric activities and identities, Heywood's play ultimately

---

87 Hunt, 'Civic Chivalry', p. 216.

88 Hunt, 'Civic Chivalry', p. 216. Hunt notes that the reduced activity of the company in the preceding period might also be explained by its members service in Ireland or the Low Countries.

advances the image of the socially inferior artisanal community. The year after the publication of *The Four Prentices of London*, Dekker wrote his commendatory poem, 'The Artillery Garden', the subtitle of which dedicates it to the 'honour of all those gentlemen, who (there) practice military discipline'.[89] By enacting a sort of downward social mobility, with members of nobility proudly becoming apprentice-warriors, *The Four Prentices of London* dramatizes 'a unity of purpose between aristocrats and citizens'.[90] That socially harmonious vision is emphasized by the familiar anti-Saracen thrust of the play (one which of course had a natural affinity with chivalric ideology), displacing the social 'otherness' of merchants and knights onto the religious 'other'.

Civic Militarism and Social Cohesion in *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*

First performed around 1618, William Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman,* like *The Four Prentices of London*, was published much later in 1638, and also advertises its performance at the Red Bull.[91] Despite a nearly two-decade gap in their likely dates of composition, the similarities between the two plays are striking, not least in the almost exact echoes in their dedicatory epistles. Addressed to the 'Gentlemen Cordwainers' (Epistle, 6), the preface of *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* immediately plays with the social fluidity of merchant chivalry, suggesting that the commercial activities of shoemakers merit honourable chivalric title.[92] It is modelled entirely upon the dedicatory epistle of *The Four Prentices of London*, even borrowing exact phrases such as the current 'exquisite and refined times' (Epistle, 4). In an almost exact imitation, the author also excuses the late publication on the basis of the play's now outdated style: 'I know it may come short

---

89 Thomas Dekker, *The Artillery Garden* (London: 1616), title page.

90 Kathleen E. McLuskie, *Dekker & Heywood: Professional Dramatists* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994), p. 80.

91 On the date of the play, see David Nicol, '*A Shoemaker a Gentleman*: Dates, Sources and Influence', *Notes and Queries*, 50.4, (2003), 441–43, and Trudi L. Darby, 'The Date of William Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*', *Notes and Queries*, 53.1, (2006), 83–84. Darby convincingly shows that the c. 1618 dating 'can be trusted' (p. 84).

92 William Rowley, *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, ed. Trudi L. Darby (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

of that accurateness in plot and style, that this witty age doth with greater curiosity acquire: I may thus excuse, that, as plays were then, some twenty years a-gone, it was in the fashion' (Epistle, 15–18). These parallels can be easily explained by examining the interconnected print histories of both plays. A frequent printer of Heywood's work, Nicholas Okes printed both the first and second quartos of *The Four Prentices of London* (1615, 1632).[93] When Okes retired, the business passed onto his son, John, who was apprenticed to his father and freed from the Stationers Company in 1627. When John printed *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* in 1638, he was clearly lifting (and modifying slightly) the prefatory detail from his father's editions of *The Four Prentices of London*. Attended with Heywood's signature, whether that preface is in fact authorial is up for debate. More importantly, the extended performance and print history of both plays speaks to both the enduring appeal and versatility of theatrical representations of merchant chivalry, able to respond to specific military and political moments with renewed topicality.

Despite the similarities between the two plays, the combinations of chivalry and commerce in Rowley's domestic comedy are not concerned with overseas expansion. *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* is more like *The Shoemaker's Holiday* in its cheerful celebration of artisanal life and central focus on the space of the workshop. Rowley takes his plot from the story of Crispin and Crispianus in Thomas Deloney's *The Gentle Craft* (1597), a prose hallmark of the merchant chivalry tradition.[94] Noble brothers and sons of Allured, the fictional King of Britain, Princes Eldred and Offa are forced to flee in disguise (taking on the names Crispianus and Crispinus) in order to escape the unfolding Roman persecution of British Christians. Relocating to Faversham, Kent, the young princes are quickly apprenticed to a local shoemaker. Here, their innate nobility enables them to infiltrate privileged aristocratic romantic and military positions. Leodice, the daughter of co-Emperor of Rome, Maximinus, falls in love with Offa/Crispinus (who is serving as her shoemaker) and eventually the two marry in secret. By contrast, Eldred/Crispianus is enlisted in the Roman army where, unsurprisingly, he becomes

---

93 Other Heywood plays printed by Okes include *The Golden Age* (1611), *The Silver Age* (1613), *The Brazen Age* (1613) and his *The Iron Age, Parts 1 and 2* (1632). Okes also printed Q1 (1613). Q2, and Q3 (both 1635) of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* as well as Anthony Munday's translation of *Amadis de Gaul* (1618–19).

94 These British saints were seemingly lifted from Jacobus de Varagine's *The Golden Legend* (c. 1259–66), a book of hagiographies popular in late medieval Europe.

the star soldier in the wars against the Vandals and Goths in northern Germany. At the end of the play, the brothers' royal identities are revealed; thanks to their respective military and romantic achievements, the political and religious tensions of the play are quickly resolved, and the Roman Emperors agree to them co-ruling Britain, with Eldred in charge of the south, and Offa the north. Much, then, is similar to *Four Prentices of London*: in particular, the plays share the opening narrative impulse where noble brothers are forced into trade as a result of contingent political circumstance (disinheritance in Heywood and persecution in Rowley). As we will see, however, *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* appears to be principally concerned with the social cohesion of the artisanal workspace as well as the military culture of the early modern citizen community. Both in performance and print, the latter in particular gestured towards the central role which urban militias played in England's international Protestant military and political efforts.

A Shoemaker, a Gentleman has received almost no critical attention whatsoever. Focusing on the Wells Cordwainers' Pageant of 1613 (based on Crispin and Crispianus), Gina M. Di Salvo uses both Deloney's *The Gentle Craft* and Rowley's play to demonstrate how authors 'reworked the vitae of SS Crispin and Crispianus into separate romances'.[95] Although Di Salvo offers a helpful account of the generic malleability and intertextuality of the Crispin/Crispianus narrative across different forms (pageant, prose, and play), her categorisation of *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* as a 'Jacobean saint play' is a little reductive, and Rowley's play receives little proper attention.[96] In *Archipelagic English* (2008), John Kerrigan offers a much more carefully informed reading of *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*. Reading the play in a Reformation context and placing it in conversation with three other Jacobean plays about Wales — *Cymbeline* (c. 1610), Fletcher's *Bonduca* (1613), and Robert Armin's *The Valiant Welshman* (c. 1614) — Kerrigan argues that Rowley's play resists an Anglocentric perspective to 'emphasize the Welshness of the British saints' and instead 'celebrates the hybrid and devolved make-up of British religion'.[97] Kerrigan's reading centres on the character of the Welsh saint and noblewoman, Winifred, for

---

95 Gina M. Di Salvo, 'Saints' Lives and Shoemakers' Holidays: *The Gentle Craft* and the Wells Cordwainers' Pageant of 1613', *Early Theatre*, 19.2 (2016), 119–38 (p. 120).

96 Di Salvo, p. 121.

97 John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 125–26.

whom the play is never fully clear on 'a distinction between the ancient fidelity and modern superstitiousness of Wales'.[98] By rewriting his source material, Rowley charts the 'doctrinal diversity and the geopolitical range of British Protestantism' and 'reinforces the Welsh-British idea that the origin of pure religion lay in the Wales that now needed reform'.[99]

For all his insightful combinations of close reading and geopolitical history, Kerrigan is not concerned with the commercial and social dynamics of the *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*. By contrast, Matthew Kendrick's more recent and extensive survey of Rowley's play addresses these aspects. Reading *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* alongside *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, Kendrick seeks to 'recover an artisanal perspective' on Rowley's play (read alongside *The Shoemaker's Holiday*) 'that understands value to be the product of the sensuous, bodily labour that connects the individual to the community at large'.[100] In this Marxist socioeconomic reading, the artisan serves as a 'symbol of community cohesion' in a way which challenges dominant contemporary perceptions of trade as undignified.[101] As such, plays like *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* give voice to the labouring perspective and show trade to be endorsed with not only commercial, but communal value. Kendrick's analysis focuses on the 'central role of the body and labour in the production and reproduction of the social order'.[102] Whereas the elite constructs its identity via an 'exclusion of the labouring body', artisans, argues Kendrick, depend on an acute awareness of it.[103]

This chapter builds particularly on Kendrick's perspective to explore how the overlap of chivalric and commercial characters and values in *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* in fact blurs knightly and mercantile identities and activities. That these two worlds often intertwined is suggested from the opening lines of Rowley's unnamed Shoemaker

---

98 Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, p. 123.

99 Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, p. 123.

100 Matthew Kendrick, *At Work in the Early Modern English Theatre: Valuing Labour* (Lanham: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015), p. 94.

101 Kendrick, p. 94.

102 Kendrick, p. 95.

103 Kendrick, p. 95.

who tells the audience that 'the wars has lamed many of my old customers' (1.2.4). Here, military activity directly affects commercial success, resulting in customers who now 'cannot go a high lone' (1.2.5). Mirroring the opening of *The Four Prentices of London*, however, trade also offers a safe haven for the traditionally military men. 'Ruin'd and made […] desolate' by 'the rough hand of war' (1.2.59–60), Eldred and Offa turn to trade: 'What we may be, lies yet within the grant | Of some kind master, that may instruct us in | Some honest trade to get our living by' (1.2.65–67). Like the four brothers of Heywood's play, trade offers crucial financial sustenance in times of need.

Taking place almost entirely in Roman Kent, *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* is much more geographically restrictive than *The Four Prentices of London*. Rather than give voice to the overseas ambitions of the mercantile community, Rowley's play suggests the ways in which commerce was shaped by the turbulent political situation of northern Europe, especially in the opening moments of the Thirty Years' War. Since English commerce relied increasingly on mass production and foreign trade, political events on the Continent could radically alter its success. War was generally bad for trade: it caused casualties, put trade routes in increased jeopardy, and compromised domestic demand. It was also a risk for the workforce who might be enlisted in military service.[104] As in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, the latter phenomenon filters into *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* when the Roman officer, Rutullus, arrives at the Shoemaker's workshop to enlist soldiers for the current military campaign against the Vandals and Goths in northern Germany. Here, Eldred/Crispianus distinguishes himself from his reluctant colleagues:

> Such brave designs as soldiers undergo
> Should not be forced, but free and voluntary.
> A coward in a camp more spoils an army,
> By faint example of his frozen blood,
> Than a full squadron of the daring'st foes
> Surprising at advantage.
> (3.2.44–49)

---

[104] For some apprentices, however, enlistment could be productive for their careers in trade. Those who enlisted in the parliamentary army during the Civil War, for instance, were often freed from their apprenticeships to do so, enabling them to set up their own shops after. This of course was damaging to the traditional guild system. See John A. Shedd, 'The State versus the Trades Guilds: Parliament's Soldier-Apprentices in the English Civil War Period, 1642–1655', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 65 (2004), 105–16.

Although Eldred is noble, he is enlisted as the shoemaker, Crispianus. More importantly, however, his approach to war entirely prioritises the labouring perspective: 'I'll bring home stories that we'll turn to metre | And sing away our work with 'em' (3.2.79–80). Eldred's prospective transformation of heroic acts into heroic verse becomes a means of alleviating the anticipated troubles of labour — a way to 'sing away […] work'.

In 1618, when Rowley's comedy was most likely composed, King James issued a national declaration, come to be known as the *Book of Sports*.[105] Ultimately a response to Puritan extremism, the declaration formally legalized the practice of 'lawful recreations' including piping, archery, dancing, May games, and vaulting after Sunday service. The intention was made explicit: if not permitted to practise their recreational pastimes, the populace would not only turn from the church to the alehouse, but their bodies would be 'less able for war'. 'Sunday and holy days' were the most appropriate time 'seeing they must apply their labour and win their living in all working days'.[106] Although the impetus for the declaration no doubt emerged from ongoing clerical disputes and provided a means to stem growing Puritan influence, it also acknowledged the need for labourers to keep their bodies fit for war. Perhaps, then, the *Book of Sports* was at least a partial recognition of the military utility of the labouring community. Eldred's advocacy of 'free and voluntary' service might remind us of Heywood's 1615 dedication in *The Four Prentices of London* where he describes how the Honourable Artillery Company funded its military activities at its 'own proper cost and charge' (Epistle, 20–21). Generally loyal to the crown, especially when it was pursuing more militant policies abroad, these private volunteer groups could prove a military asset and their chivalric qualities were often celebrated by those with like-minded political attitudes. In 'The Dignity of Chivalry', for instance, a sermon preached to the Honourable Artillery Company on 13 June 1626, Puritan clergyman William Gouge attributes traditionally knightly qualities to its citizen audience. Exploiting the *miles christianus* formula, Gouge describes their 'profession' as 'Soldiers of Christ's bands' and allegorises the 'Artillery Garden' as 'the Church Militant'. Here, he describes the 'martial discipline in which' the

---

105 This was a national extension of a 1617 proclamation issued by King James in Lancashire in response to a petition from local villagers. Put together by a local bishop upon the king's instructions, the declaration was to be read from every church across the county. See Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 80.

106 Quoted in Birley, p. 80.

Company 'are daily trained up' as not for 'recreation and pastime, but in very good earnest, to conquer'.[107] Appropriating typically aristocratic and heroic conquest into the citizen realm, Gouge applauds the pivotal contribution of urban militias to England (once again at war with Spain) and its international Protestant image and cause.

In the same year, Ben Jonson suggested a similar act of cultural appropriation in his 'A Speech According to Horace'. Similarly composed in praise of the Honourable Artillery Company, Jonson's poem, however, strikes an ambivalent tone. Although the company's drills are publicly visible, Jonson tells us, they are ultimately rehearsals where members 'fight dry, | The battles of thy aldermanity; | Without the hazard of a drop of blood'.[108] Nonetheless, in a sentiment echoed in the preface of *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman*, these acts of '[m]ost civil soldiery' | […] keep the glory of the English name | Up among nations' (ll. 44–51). Avoiding the religiously charged associations of Gouge, Jonson sees the 'Artillery Yard' as the

> […] seed-plot of the war, that hast not spared
> Powder, or paper, to bring up the youth
> Of London, in the military truth,
> These ten years' day.
> (ll. 24–7)

For David Riggs, Jonson's poem 'voices his continuing concern that the urban middle classes would seize the initiative during the current hostilities with Spain'.[109] Even as they 'fight dry' and '[w]ithout […] hazard', Jonson cannot deny the increasing prestige of the company, nor the fact that it was supplanting the traditional function of the nobility as the 'seed-plot of the war' and exposing their failure to offer a moral or martial lead. Herein lies the salient difference with Gouge's sermon; Jonson's principal target is not in fact the Honourable Artillery Company, but the inactive gentry, 'tempestuous grandlings' (l. 64) who, shirking 'troubles' and 'harms' (l 86), love nothing but their 'whore[s]' and 'study' only 'Gait, | Carriage, and dressing' (ll. 87–8). 'In the stead of bold | Beauchamps and Nevills, Cliffords, Audleys old' (ll. 51–2), Jonson substitutes 'those

---

107 William Gouge, *The Dignity of Chivalry* (London: 1626), pp. 29–30.

108 Ben Jonson, *The Underwood*, ed. by Collin Burrow, in *Cambridge Ben Jonson*, VII, pp. 69–295, no. 44, ll. 45–7.

109 David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 299.

newer men, | As Stiles, Dike, Ditchfield, Millar, Crips, and Fen' (ll. 53–4), members of the Artillery Company 'that keep the war' (even if it is a war 'grown more tame' (l. 55)). A ruthless condemnation of a tamed aristocracy who have become 'carcasses of honour' (l. 99) more concerned with courtly pursuits and pleasures, Jonson's poem socially reconfigures the military world, vindicating citizen militias who were now best placed to 'instruct the noble English heirs | In politic and military affairs' (ll. 59–60).

1618 was an opportune moment to voice the civic militarism at the heart of *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* given the escalating confessional political tensions in the German estates of the Holy Roman Empire. In the opening scene, Dioclesian announces the plans to travel to Germany:

> The Goths and Vandals have out-passed the bounds,
> And o'er the Rhine passed into Burgundy.
> Our work must be to reverberate
> And drive them to confined Germany
> (1.1.205–08)

The Goths and Vandals, east Germanic tribes who attacked the Roman empire in the fourth and fifth centuries, are here presented as encroaching forces. At the time of performance, the mention of the 'Rhine' (Frederick V was known as Elector Palatine of the Rhine) and a 'confined Germany' could well have encouraged the audience to think of the escalating constitutional crisis in the German states of the Holy Roman Empire. Here, the language of restriction and force — 'out-passed'; 'bounds'; 'reverberate'; 'confined' — brings to life the fragmented and fragile religious and political situation of these territories. As the initially localised Bohemian Rebellion, kickstarted by the Defenestration of Prague on 23 May 1618, quickly escalated into an international crisis, the prospect of English military involvement grew more likely. For many, the suggestion that Elector Palatine, Frederick V — tied dynastically to the English crown via his marriage to King James's daughter, Elizabeth Stuart — might take the Bohemian crown and constitutionally infiltrate a hitherto Habsburg Catholic dominated political system came hand in hand with the tantalizing ambition of Protestant European domination. When James proved to be reluctant to offer support, the citizen response was significant. As Ian Archer records, when collections for Bohemia took place in 1620, it was reported that 'the rich proceed with caution, but the common sort with a strange heartiness and

zeal'.[110] When a small amount of military support was approved, it came in the force of 2,200 volunteers captained by military leader Sir Horace Vere. Although in practice these financial and military efforts, managed by the Palatine envoy, Count Dohna, did little to stem the Habsburg response, they emphasised the citizen support behind intervention. Eldred, reconfigured as the shoemaker Crispianus, therefore serves as a model of civic militarism; his speech on 'free and voluntary' military service might be a gesture towards the importance of urban civic militias in safeguarding the Protestant cause internationally. That voluntary military service is instrumental in securing the play's concluding social and political order as religious persecution is brought to end and Eldred and Offa are installed to co-govern England.

Although the preface of *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman,* unlike *The Four Prentices of London*, makes no specific mention of the Honourable Artillery Company, it invokes the same combinations of aristocratic and citizen values. At the time of publication in 1638, the image of citizen heroism offered by *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, Okes claims, was pertinent to the international military situation:

> Nor could it have found a fitter or more seasonable publication than at this time, when the glory of our nation is so much admired, and the valour of our English so much esteemed that it is sought for by foreign natives, as you may read in this subject we have in hand.
>
> (Preface, 18–22)

It is, of course, difficult to know if John Okes is referring to a specific military campaign here. Okes and his father do, however, appear to have participated in part of a wider textual culture which emphasises military endeavour and the previous year John printed *The Siege of Breda* (1637), an eyewitness account of the battle by William Lithgow, a Scottish traveller.[111] Situated in the centre of the Low Countries, Breda was an important strategic site in the ongoing military conflicts between the Dutch republic and the Spanish Habsburgs. For siege leader, Henry Frederick, Prince of Orange, the city was also of considerable personal importance; the 'country seat' of his father, William of

---

110 Quoted by Ian W. Archer in 'Popular politics in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries', in *Londinopolis, c.1500–c.1750: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. by Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 26–46 (p. 40).

111 In the same year that he printed *The Four Prentices of London*, Nicholas Okes also printed a bilingual Anglo-Dutch pamphlet, *A vision or dreame containing the whole state of the Netherlands warres* (London: 1615).

Nassau, it signified an 'important part of [Henry's] heritage'.[112] Since the beginning of the Dutch rebellion in 1568, Breda had passed between Spanish and Dutch control five times by 1637. In 1590 for instance, Maurice, then Prince of Orange, had recaptured the city with the help of an English army captained by Sir Francis Vere. In 1625, however, it was retaken by a Spanish siege led by General Ambrogio Spinola. Again in 1637, English volunteers supported the Dutch effort to recapture Breda.

In his account, Lithgow describes his journey to Breda, including details of specific routes and fees. Clearly irritated with the 'ignoran[ce]' of the 'Master of the Barke', Lithgow writes how the passengers had to pay over 200 crowns to land at the Dutch shore at Tassill instead of Rotterdam.[113] 'This I onely particularize', states the author, 'that Merchants may see how too too often they put their goods in hazard' (B2r). Although Lithgow is underlining the geographical and financial challenges of foreign commerce, his warning suggests how the world of international trade is shaped by risk, adventure, and unpredictability. With a strong Anglo-Dutch alliance formed to bolster trade and stem Habsburg domination in Europe, soldiers, merchants, and travellers like Lithgow crossed the border in large number. Military campaigns of course depended on a level of mercantile support: those who transported soldiers, and supplied them with food, military equipment, as well as assisting with manual labour. Once at Breda, Lithgow's account details the achievements of the 'foure *English* Regiments' (C3v) who assisted the effort. Each of these regiments, led by Colonels Henry Herbert, Thomas Colepepper, George Goring, and Sir Charles Morgan 'consisted of eleven companies' (except for Colepepper's which had ten).[114] Johannes (or Joan) Blaeu, official cartographer for the Dutch East India Company, lists the four English captains by surname (numbered 12 to 15) in his map of the siege, executed between 1647 and 1649 (see Figure 5). Volunteers comprised a significant part of the retinue and were predominantly split across Goring's regiment with some in Colepepper's.[115] In

---

112 Florence S. Memegalos, *George Goring (1608–1657): Caroline Courtier and Royalist General* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 53.

113 William Lithgow, *The Siege of Breda* (London: 1637), B1v–B2r. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

114 Memegalos, p. 54.

115 Robert B. Manning, *Swordsmen,* p. 128, n. 64.



Figure 5. Johannes (Joan) Blaeu, 'Map of the siege of Breda in 1637 by Frederick Henry' (1647–49), in *Toonneel der steden van de Vereenighde Nederlanden, met hare beschrijvingen* (Amsterdam: 1652).
Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G1851 .B52 1652.

Lithgow's description of the siege, he unsurprisingly exalts the English effort, describing for instance how the '*Hornewarke*' was ultimately 'regained by the singular valour of the *English*' (D4v).

The English regiment was led by Anglo-German Princes Charles Louis, Rupert, and Maurice, the second, third, and fourth sons of Frederick V and Elizabeth Stuart.[116] Charles Louis and Rupert had been at the English court with King Charles I before the siege, and no doubt helped to stimulate the 1637 public subscription to fund campaigns to recapture electorate lands which ended disastrously in 1638 in Westphalia.[117] On 20 June 1637, Elizabeth had written to Archbishop Laud, informing him that she had asked her brother, King Charles I, to let Rupert join the siege. 'I think that he will spend this summer better in an army than idly in England', writes Elizabeth, 'though it be a great honour to and happiness to him to wait upon his uncle, yet his youth considered he will be better employed to see the wars'.[118] Elizabeth expected the same destiny for her next son, Maurice. In another letter to Laud, nearly a month earlier, she explains her intentions to send Maurice with the Prince of Orange 'to learn that profession which I believe he must live by'.[119] Especially considering the Palatine family's tumultuous political history, the traditional aristocratic career in the military was an important dynastic and religious matter (although Charles Louis inherited his father's possessions when he died in 1632, it was not until the end of the wars in 1648 when he would claim the title of Elector Palatine and its territories), as well as a place to win personal glory. In an earlier piece of travel writing, *Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations* (1632) Lithgow describes the Low Countries, with its protracted warfare, as 'the garden of Mars'.[120] The 1637 siege was, as Robert B. Manning describes, 'the gathering place for all

---

116 Manning, p. 128. Frederick V had died in 1632, and his eldest son, Henry Frederick, died in battle in the Netherlands in 1629.

117 Charles Spencer, *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), p. 35. See also Martin Butler, 'Entertaining the Palatine Prince: Plays on Foreign Affairs 1635–1637', *English Literary Renaissance*, 13.3 (1983), 319–44.

118 Elizabeth Stuart, 'Letter to Archbishop Laud', in *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*, ed. by Nadine Akkerman, 2 vols (to date) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–), II, n. 331, pp. 609–10 (p. 610), TNA, SP 16/361, no. 54.

119 Elizabeth Stuart, 'Letter to Archbishop Laud', in *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart,* II, n. 326, p. 601.

120 William Lithgow, quoted by Clifford Edmund Bosworth in *An Intrepid Scot: William Lithgow of Lanark's Travels in the Ottoman Lands, North Africa and Central Europe, 1609–21* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 105.

English gallants' and several of those who participated would be long remembered in popular accounts of the battle.[121]

Henry Hexham, a military writer who served as George Goring's quartermaster, offered a route to this sort of textual memorialisation in his account of the fight, *The True and Brief Relation of the Famous Siege of Breda* (1637). Here, for instance, he recounts injuries sustained by Captain Philip Skippon who 'slashing off some of the heads of [the enemy's] pikes', received '4 or 5 shott vpon his armour, & head-peece' as well as 'a brush on his face with a stone'.[122] Thanks to 'Gods especiall preuention', writes Hexham, he endured 'no further harme' from these blows (C4v). Skippon, however, then suffered 'a sore shot, through his necke' (C4v). Although 'staggred, & for the present lost the vse of his left arme', once again, by '(God remarkeably strenthning him) he presently recouered himself againe, and betooke himselfe to his former place and worke,' where he 'disputed the businesse a long time afterward with the Ennemie' (C4v). Here, God becomes the sort of *deus ex machina* common in romance, offering a form of Protestant providence (even if only psychologically) to ensure Skippon's survival and ability to continue fighting. Skippon had first volunteered in the 1620 English retinue sent to support Elector Palatine, Frederick V, under Sir Horace Vere. He stayed in the Low Countries, serving in multiple military campaigns, and was wounded in both the 1625 and 1637 sieges of Breda. However exaggerated Hexham's account, Skippon did rise to the ranks of captain as a result of his military service in the Low Countries. According to David R. Lawrence, 'strong bonds […] existed between the Low Countries veterans and the members of the London and Middlesex companies that spanned the 1620s and 1630s'.[123] Once Skippon had returned to England, for instance, his efforts were recognised by Charles I who recommended him to captain the Honourable Artillery Company on 23 October 1639 and made him major general of the London trained bands on 10 January 1642. A week and a half later, he had been given control of the trained bands in

---

121 Manning, p. 128.

122 Henry Hexham, *The True and Brief Relation of the Famous Siege of Breda* (Delft, 1637), C4v. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

123 David R. Lawrence, *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603–1645* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 218.

Westminster, Southwark, and the suburbs.[124] Soon after the Civil War began, the earl of Essex poached Skippon for his own parliamentary army. Begun as a volunteer in the Palatinate, then, Skippon's career shows the success which could arise from military service as well as the connection of urban militias with the international Protestant cause.

When 'the Roman Eagle' is taken 'by force' (3.4.31–32) during the battle in Germany and the Goths seem poised to take the victory, Dioclesian orders: 'Let a trumpet | Call up the Britons to recover it' (3.4.37–38). Eldred, the 'warlike Briton soldier' (3.4.20), not only recovers the eagle but twice saves the emperor's life. 'Twice is my life indebted to thy valour', Dioclesian thanks Eldred, 'Admired soldier, if I win the day, | Never had Briton soldier such a pay | As thou shalt have' (3.4.53–56). Here, Eldred's chivalry is commercialised as great 'valour' becomes synonymous with handsome 'pay'. When Eldred first saves Dioclesian, the Emperor responds, 'Immortal gods! How crept a kingly spirit | Into a breast so low!' (3.4.27–28). Here is the commonplace maintained by the elite that chivalric prowess indicates a noble 'spirit' and lineage. As such, when Dioclesian asks of Eldred's 'birth and fortunes' (3.5.29), he replies:

> You may read them here, writ on my bosom, sir:
> A common soldier.
> Yet were my parents good and generous.
> They dead, and I down-sinking in my state,
> As others do, I swore to cross the fate
> That cross'd me, and when all hopes else did fade,
> I got my living by an honest trade:
> A shoemaker, my lord, where merrily,
> With frolic mates, I spent my days till when,
> Being press'd to wars amongst my countrymen,
> Hither I came, and here my prize is play'd,
> For Britain's honour and my master's trade.
>
> (3.5.30–41)

The King of England's son, Eldred is of course of noble lineage. As with the brothers in *The Four Prentices of London*, entry into trade is a result of extremity, a fallback 'when all hopes else did fade'. Nonetheless, Eldred is careful to praise his shoemaking apprenticeship. As the play brings to life, the shoe shop is a space of cheerful civic communality 'where merrily | With frolic mates', Eldred has been able to learn a trade,

---

124 Ian J. Gentles, 'Philip Skippon', *ODNB*, accessed 30 May 2020.

fund his exile, and befriend his colleagues. Most saliently, however, by participating in the wars 'For Britain's honour and [his] master's trade', he conflates the military and commercial worlds and performs admirably in both. 'Britain's honour' it suggests arises from both chivalric and mercantile excellence.

Trade not only provides financial sustenance to the exiled princes of Rowley's play but offers a social structure of communal living and commercial fellowship. In the interests of its artisanal subject matter, *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* of course offers a remarkably idealistic portrait of guild culture. The same unproblematic representation of the shoemaker's guild in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* has led critics like David Scott Kastan to see Dekker's play as a 'fantasy' of both 'class fulfilment' and of 'social cohesion and respect'.[125] Similarly, Rowley's play avoids any detail of the nascent capitalist strains of mass production, profit, and hierarchy which inevitably damaged the ethos and functionality of guilds. The idea that the guild system declined in a steady manner, however, is a little reductive. More than a place to pass time 'merrily, | With frolic mates', the early modern guild continued to offer a formal institution through which shared cultural and political interests could be united. 'A community of fortune of persons having common economic and social interests', writes Thomas Brady, 'the guild regulated their work, represented and defended their liberties, managed their spiritual lives and social welfare, and, in many cities, shared in the governance of the city'.[126] The importance and benefits of guild fellowship are repeatedly articulated throughout *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman.* When Sir Hugh, a Welsh knight in disguise who replaces Eldred in the shoe shop when he joins the wars, is imprisoned for his Christianity, the shoemakers club together both socially and financially. 'Nay, we'll never leave a brother of our company', declares the journeyman Barnaby, 'As long as flesh and bones will hang together' (4.2.243–44). Guild identity is at once ideological and corporeal as discord and estrangement become akin to bodily dismemberment.

The representation of guild fraternity and identity in *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* transcends social demarcation. Immediately before this pledge of unequivocal support, Barnaby informs his fellow shoemakers that Sir Hugh is 'a knight of fame' (4.2.206), 'a

---

125 David Scott Kastan, 'Workshop and/as Playhouse: Comedy and Commerce in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*', *Studies in Philology*, 84.3 (1987), 324–37 (pp. 325–26).

126 Thomas A. Brady, *Communities, Politics, and Reformation in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 286.

Welsh prince and son of the King of Powys in South Wales' (4.2.209–10). Despite its comic intentions, the Shoemaker's initial response — 'How? A Knight of the Worshipful Company of the Cordwainers?' — combines the chivalric and commercial in a way which in fact aptly summarises Sir Hugh's position and reflects contemporary realities of apprenticeship, albeit in exaggerated fashion. Members of the gentry were increasingly apprenticed to the various trades across the early modern period and this was often the pathway for younger sons of gentleman who did not inherit their fathers' lands as a result of primogeniture laws. In a statistical historical survey of heraldic visitations to four different English counties in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Patrick Wallis and Cliff Webb demonstrate that 'apprenticeships were clearly acceptable options for gentry sons'.[127] While only 4% of first sons were apprenticed (compared to 18% who went to university, and 16% who joined the Inns of Court), 24% of sixth sons were apprenticed (compared to 15% who went to university, and only 3% who joined the Inns of Court).[128] Despite a relatively small sample size, the study shows some clear trends. 'Every step down the birth order', for instance, 'reduced the likelihood of a university education and increased the odds of being consigned to an apprenticeship'.[129] Although 'apprenticeship was somewhat less common among sons from families in the upper reaches of the gentry, […] it nevertheless remained an option taken up by more than one in seven sons'.[130] Although nearly 90% of these gentleman apprentices joined one of the Twelve Great London liveries (which did not include the Cordwainers), *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* offers a vision of social cohesion through its congenial representation of noble apprentices.

A Shoemaker, a Gentleman frequently explores the tensions between conservative and liberal approaches to social mobility. Social distinctions between the aristocracy and citizens are repeatedly introduced in the play only to be questioned and deconstructed. When Leodice realises that she is falling in love with Offa (who is serving as her shoemaker), she says in private: 'I could love him: this tastes well of my tongue. | Oh,

---

127 Patrick Wallis and Cliff Webb, 'The Education and Training of Gentry Sons in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 36.1 (2011), 36–53 (p. 44).

128 Wallis and Webb, p. 49.

129 Wallis and Webb, p. 53

130 Wallis and Webb, p. 52.

but the coarseness of his condition | Offends my stomach' (2.1.44–46). This mimics the social prejudice which her father, Dioclesian, engages in when taken aback by Eldred's heroic military performance. Here, however, Leodice goes on to dismantle her own preconceptions:

> What am I? A woman. What's he? A man.
> Where's the inequality? My blood royal,
> His perhaps ignoble. Whence springs that fount
> That runs all royalty? 'Tis the sea itself:
> The lesser rivulets and running brooks
> Are those of common sense, yet all do mix
> And run in one another. What are titles?
> Honours bestow'd ad regis placitum.
> Should my father make that shoemaker a lord,
> Then he were noble, yet where's his blood refine?
> Tush, tush, greatness is like a glistering stone,
> More precious in the esteem than in the virtue.
>
> (2.1.49–60)

Questioning their differences of gender and blood, Leodice reasons her attraction to Offa to the audience by envisaging nobility as a sea into which 'lesser rivulets' and 'running brooks' meet. The image is of a system where the visibly powerful and ostensibly 'lesser' and more 'common' components are ultimately inextricable. In that vein, she condemns titles as little more than 'Honours bestow'd *ad regis placitum*' (at the King's pleasure). Considering King James's reputation for inflating honours for financial gain, this was perhaps a risky line.[131] As a result, Leodice sees greatness as a 'glistering stone', valued for its brilliant and attractive external appearance rather than the internal qualities it should suggest.

Leodice claims that this rhetorical reasoning is enough to '[call] her out of [her] contemplation' (2.1.61). It is of course in her romantic interests to subscribe to a vision of social order which royalty would have typically avoided. That it is a radical affront to cultural norms is clear in her next scene where it becomes apparent that she has kept her nurse up all night, prying for examples of 'men made great | That were ignoble born' (2.3.9–10). In her search for a 'precedent | That great ladies have yok'd their underlings | In fellowship' (2.1.133–35), Leodice repeatedly reveals how she is plagued by the

---

131 Jonson and Chapman were of course briefly imprisoned for a similar although admittedly more explicit comment on James's practices (Marston was cited but not imprisoned, as he absconded).

possible ramifications of marrying beneath her in social terms. In the wearied nurse's responses, however, the princess does find some precedent to pursue her desires. 'Maximinius' father' (Leodice's grandfather), the nurse reveals, 'was but even a smith, | That with his labour hammer'd out his living' (2.3.22–23), Underlining her family's mercantile origins, the play shows how those of humble social roots can rise to the most powerful political positions available. In these scenes, the play seems poised awkwardly between an encouragement and condemnation of social mobility. For Leodice's simplistic yet sensible reasoning enables her to declare her love to Offa and to promise to 'share all dangers with [him]' (2.3.182). Offa's quick revelation of his noble identity, however, suggests that *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* is unable to properly accommodate the social transgression presented by the marriage of a shoemaker and a princess.

The play's noble characters are quick to praise the work and spirit of the tradesmen they encounter. When the English princes arrive (unseen) at the shoe shop at the beginning of the play, they privately admire the 'secur[ity]', 'harmony', and 'fearless sport' of the artisanal community before them (1.2.41–42). '[M]ethinks', says Offa, as the pair contemplate a life in trade, 'to exchange for the body's labour, | Were a far freer good' (1.2.48–49). Offa's choice of language is a little ironic given that apprenticeship bound you to your master for seven years, but he means to intimate the honourable qualities of trade. This unusual praise of labour from an aristocratic perspective is emphasised when the brothers term the shoemakers 'gentlemen' (1.2.53). 'Gentlemen?', replies the Shoemaker, 'We are good fellows, no gentlemen. Yet, if gentleness make gentility, we are gentlemen'. Playing on the dual meaning of 'gentle' as signifying both noble birth (*OED adj* A.1.a) and courteous manner (*OED adj* A.3.b), the Shoemaker's response suggests how honour and virtue can be earned through behaviour as opposed to inheritance. Later in the play, Sir Hugh offers a similar view of the artisans. Refusing to convert from Christianity and preparing to drink a cup of poison, he states:

> The love which I so found in you,
> Even in my latest hour, I'll not forget,
> But to you all begin my lasting love.
> Never did fair society of men
> More please me. You are a trade
> Of fellowship's best mixture, nobly made.
>
> (4.3.147–52)

Rather than provide him financial sustenance, the shoemakers are a source of such inestimable love and compassion for Sir Hugh that he bequeaths his body to them. Again, being 'nobly made' trumps any idea of inherited virtue.

Conclusion

There is an element of social conservatism in these exchanges since the implication is that Hugh's participation in the business is inherently more valuable than the others. 'Me being amongst you', claims Sir Hugh, 'thus shall you prefer | To say a prince was once a shoemaker; | For which you now shall raise your skill aloft' (4.3.154–56). Although *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* reflects the social fact of gentry being apprenticed, it is notable that the three princes (Eldred, Offa, and Hugh) are the characters able to distinguish themselves in romantic, military, and Christian terms. As with *The Four Prentices of London*, although social mobility occurs, the conservative implication is that inherited nobility exalts human performance, aiding the ability to convincingly operate in typically aristocratic spaces. Ultimately, both plays make room for downward social mobility as knights are forced by circumstance into apprenticeship and learn the honour of trade. In doing so, *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* aim at social cohesion. The Shoemaker's shop, for instance, the physical and ideological centre of Rowley's play, is a place of social fluidity and fellowship. 'T[o] requite his kindness' (4.3.206) and '[i]n memory of his gift' (4.3.215), the shoemakers canonize Sir Hugh and make him their patron saint following his martyrdom. '[A]ll our working tools, from this time for ever', announces Barnaby, 'shall be called Saint Hugh's bones' (4.3.215–16). He continues:

> if any journeyman shall travel without these tools, now called Saint Hugh's Bones, at his back, cannot slash, cut and crack coxcombs with brave sword and buckler, long sword and quarter-staff, […] he shall forfeit a gallon of wine and be counted a colt as long as his shoes are made of running leather[.]
>
> (4.3.231–38)

In a tribute to their princely colleague, Barnaby does not distinguish between the tools of commerce and war. To 'be counted a colt', an inexperienced workman, is made equivalent with military ineptitude as chivalric and commercial 'travel' and 'travail' blend into one.

Despite their ultimate conservatism, both *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* feature noble protagonists who perform under the guise of apprenticeship and who celebrate a set of artisanal values which underpin early modern English commerce. By foregrounding the importance of the mercantile community in

terms of both overseas expansion and civic militarism, they help to map a changing social world where citizens are key players both at home and abroad and where trade is crucial to national prosperity. In *The Four Prentices of London*, the apprenticed brothers' Crusade to Jerusalem suggests the way in which English overseas expansion is at once a chivalric and commercial affair and relied on cooperation between merchants and knights. In *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, the shoe shop operates on the same social principle as the two groups live in harmony and mutual benefit. What is remarkable in both plays, however, is the use of chivalry to make convincing ideological claims on behalf of non-aristocratic communities. Fuelled by an increasingly civic and merit-based conception of honour, these claims foreground the role of the citizen community in realms where commercial and chivalric activities and identities easily shaded into each other.

Addressed to apprentices and invoking the military honour of England at home and abroad, the prefaces of *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* vindicate a genuine citizen claim to chivalry in its traditional military sense. Read alongside texts like Jonson's and Dekker's poems on the Honourable Artillery Company, they reveal an England where urban militias were not only of growing prominence and prestige, but, as Jonson puts it, were supplying the country with 'newer men' to replace the 'tempestuous' and inactive 'grandlings' and 'instruct the noble English heirs | In politic and military affairs'. In its original performance amidst the escalating diplomatic crisis in Germany, the celebration of civic militarism in *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* might have encouraged English involvement in the increasingly international dispute. As Adrian Streete argues, 'the political inflection of the majority of plays written for the public stage in the period between 1618 and 1620 is broadly anti-Spanish and pro-Protestant'.[132] The following year in 1619, a revival of Dekker's virulently anti-Spanish *The Whore of Babylon* (1606) would incite the stand-in Spanish ambassador in London to intervene and ensure its suspension. Dekker's play, for its explicit anti-popery and dramatization of the English coming to the military aid of Dutch Protestants was an insult to the Spanish during important diplomatic negotiations. Rowley's play, with its celebration of voluntary English valour on the continent could well have carried similar

---

132 Adrian Streete, 'Situating Political and Biblical Authority in Massinger and Field's *The Fatal Dowry*' in *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings, 1570–1625*, ed. by Adrian Streete (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 195–222 (p. 198).

implications, albeit less belligerently. By the time of publication in 1638 when England was again at war with Spain, that celebration likely would have reflected upon the English citizen effort in more recent military campaigns on the Continent such as the 1637 siege of Breda. In doing so, it demonstrates the ability of early modern drama to take on new topicalities in later contexts, a principle explored more fully in the subsequent reading of *The Whore of Babylon*. Both appearing in print more than fifteen years after their first performances, *The Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* continued to give voice to an increasingly mobile and influential English mercantile community into the Jacobean and Caroline periods.

Chapter 4

Apocalyptic Chivalry and Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy in Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*

Introduction

On November 1, 1619, the Dominican friar, Diego de la Fuente, wrote home to King Philip III from the Spanish embassy in London to boast of his accomplishments in prohibiting a revival of Thomas Dekker's vehemently anti-Catholic and apocalyptic-chivalric play, *The Whore of Babylon*, first performed in 1606:

> He sido valiente estos días, pues tengo en la cárçel çinco o seys hombres que se han allado culpados en una estanpa que salio aqui estos días contra su Santidad, y he hecho suspender con efecto el representarse aqui una comedia que llaman la Ramera de Babilonia, llena de mil blasfemias contra el Papa y contra España.[1]
>
> [I have been brave these days, because I have sent to jail five or six men found guilty of recently printing a work against His Holiness, and I have successfully caused to suspend the performance here of a play called *The Whore of Babylon*, full of thousands of blasphemies against the pope and Spain.]

De la Fuente's letter reveals two different acts of censorship: imprisonment of the printers of an unspecified antipapal work and the suspension of a stage revival of *The Whore of Babylon*. The precise diplomatic channel between complaint and censorship here is unclear. From 1619, however, King James had taken a much more active role in suppressing works both in print and on stage in the interests of protecting Anglo-

---

[1] Fray Diego de la Fuente, 'Letter to King Philip III', Nov. 1, 1619, in Pablo Andrés Escapa, 'Fray Diego De la Fuente y don Diego Sarmiento, lectores del Quijote', *Avisos: Noticias de la Real Biblioteca*, 18.67 (2012), n. p. The transcribed correspondence is taken from Madrid, Real Biblioteca, MS ii/551, fol. 208v. My thanks to Dr. José A. Pérez Díez for both drawing my attention to and translating the correspondence.

Spanish relations.[2] As such, both the intentions and success of De la Fuente's intervention are hardly abstruse. The Book of Revelation's apocalyptic Whore of Babylon was widely understood in late Jacobean England as an allegory of the Catholic Church, both in biblical exegeses and in the wider cultural imagination, and had even featured in the English king's own commentary, *A Fruitful Meditation* (1588), republished in his *Works* (1616).[3] Dekker's play, then, particularly in its 1619 revival, signals a gulf between a more militant approach to foreign policy reminiscent of Elizabethans like Spenser, Sidney, Leicester, and Essex, and the diplomatic realities which King James, generally averse to the religious and political uses of chivalry, appeared to be pursuing with intransigent conviction.

Dekker's close modelling of *The Whore of Babylon* on *The Faerie Queene* further advertises the play's employment of chivalry's religious and political associations. Both at the artistic and ideological level, Spenser's epic provides the literary framework for Dekker's politicised stance on England's national religious identity, particularly in its use of Revelation to read history — past, present, and future — in Protestant apocalyptic terms. As this chapter argues, that use of chivalry to engage with confessionally charged continental politics was, unsurprisingly, highly fluid and was not only susceptible to shifts in the political landscape both at home and abroad but also to the vast and propagandistically-inflected hermeneutic possibilities of Revelation exegesis.[4] By 1619,

---

2 See Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 161–96.

3 Composed in the wake of the 1588 Armada, James's own commentary on Revelation (which ironically called for militant action in Europe) was clearly intended as an articulation of his commitment to the supremacy of the Protestant faith. The notion of the last Emperor (the temporal ruler who would lead this spiritual revolution), as applied to successive English monarchs, was both in tension with and shaped by the notion of 'universal monarchy' espoused by Spain. See Adrian Streete, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 62.

4 In *The Book of Books: Biblical Interpretation, Literary Culture, and the Political Imagination from Erasmus to Milton* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), Thomas Fulton refers to the 'hermeneutic instability around' Revelation (p. 146). He writes how '[t]he text produced its own modes of interpretation which were associated only with this book – forms of reading that deviated profoundly from Tyndale's professed literalism to embrace a wildly propagandistic allegorical form' (p. 172). See also Kevin Sharpe, 'Reading Revelations: Prophecy, Hermeneutics, and

for instance, when James was firmly engaged in diplomatic negotiations with Spain which centred on the proposed marriage of Prince Charles and the Infanta Maria, the use of the Whore of Babylon 'commonplace' central to Dekker's nostalgic Tudor history was especially controversial and amounted to 'inflammatory attacks on royal policy'.[5] The attempt to revive Dekker's play, most likely by the Elector Palatine's Men (the successor theatre company of Prince Henry's Men after 1612), therefore appears to have been a gibe at the Spanish Match which had been public knowledge since 1617. The censorship of *The Whore of Babylon* and its 'thousands of blasphemies against the pope and Spain' was inextricably shaped by the religious and political contexts within which it occurred and stressed James's commitment to his most coveted foreign policy. De la Fuente, serving as stand-in ambassador during Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar's absence, was simply doing his job of protecting Spanish diplomatic interests. Dekker (and later the Palsgrave's Men), by contrast, was adding his voice to a 'poetic opposition' of Jacobean Spenserians who used chivalric forms in a radical militant context, typically to advance the Protestant cause both domestically and on the continent.[6] Generally out of favour under James, these authors challenged the more pacific emphasis of the king's foreign policy imperatives. This new political stance was, as we saw in *Barriers*, typified by Jonson and his literary pre-eminence as the 'leading court poet', a success which David Norbrook argues emerged from 'his rejection of sixteenth-century traditions of prophetic poetry, which had become tainted with implications of political subversiveness'.[7]

Although Susan Krantz persuasively locates Dekker's play within the immediate political context of the Gunpowder Plot, its reappearance in 1619 should encourage us

---

Politics in Early Modern Britain, 1560–1720', in *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 55–84.

5 Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 30.

6 David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 14.

7 Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics,* p. 14. Spenser of course had famously offended King James in *The Faerie Queene* through references to his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots. For a description of the king's reaction, see Susan E. Krantz, 'Thomas Dekker's Political Commentary in *The Whore of Babylon*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 35.2 (1995), 271–91 (pp. 283–84).

to take a broader historical view.[8] The interconfessional diplomatic tensions afflicting Europe in the opening moments of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) spoke powerfully to a desire to restage *The Whore of Babylon*'s apocalyptic and chivalric allegory of the various assassination attempts against Elizabeth I and its implicit opposition to contemporary Jacobean military policy. This chapter reads Dekker's play within this wider European diplomatic context by placing it in conversation with contemporary political and theological treatises and diplomatic communications. This reading of *The Whore of Babylon* also affords an opportunity to examine the play within its wider literary and theatrical traditions. Stemming principally from the apocalyptic works of John Bale and John Foxe, the literary tradition was most successfully and powerfully realised in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; as the principal artistic and ideological model for *The Whore of Babylon*, a brief survey of Dekker's engagement with the apocalyptic chivalry of Book 1 of *The Faerie Queene* in particular provides an important early Stuart perspective on the religious and political import of Spenser's chivalric allegory. The revival of Dekker's play in 1619 furthermore enables us to reconsider this perspective at another historical and political vantage point, one increasingly difficult to reconcile with Spenser's Protestant prophecies in *The Faerie Queene* and the famed heroic achievements of the Elizabethan war party.

The chapter further takes an intertheatrical perspective by reading *The Whore of Babylon* within a wider dramatic tradition of post-Reformation apocalyptic drama and, more immediately, as participating in the extended print and performance history of the confessionally-charged Jacobean history play. The opening decade of James's reign, and particularly the early years, witnessed a surge of history plays based upon the reigns of the four preceding Tudor monarchs: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. '[C]uriously widespread, particularly in non-courtly circles', plays including Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (c. 1604), Thomas Heywood's two-part *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1605), *The Whore of Babylon*, and Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1613) consolidated Tudor monarchical history to explore concepts of nationhood in religious and political terms.[9] A new monarch, and especially a new

---

8 Krantz, p. 272.

9 Teresa Grant, 'History in the Making: The Case of Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (1604/5)', in *English Historical Drama, 1500–1660: Forms Outside the*

royal line of succession, brought both fears and hopes for a changed approach to the fomenting confessional tensions of early seventeenth-century Europe. Based on John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (first English edition, 1563), these Jacobean 'elect nation' plays interpret temporal historical events in terms of their wider spiritual significance and seek to underline England's central position in leading the international Protestant charge against the Antichrist.[10] The 'kind of Protestant polemic' at the heart of Foxe, argues Grant, 'was as popular on the London stage as it was in its source, and dramatists cherry-picked the most famous and dramatic episodes on which to base their plays'.[11] Departing from the traditional historical trajectory of 1590s history plays and their 'contests for the medieval English kingship', these Foxean dramas focused on the 'more recent past and the pressing question of the origins of the current religious landscape'.[12] Despite their focus on English Tudor history, the reappearance of these plays in moments of political flux in Europe (1613 in particular) enables us to appreciate their religio-political uses of chivalry in more international terms than is commonly thought. Intimately shaped by the shifting religio-political climate in Europe, these plays foreground the role of the Jacobean history play in unpacking the providential Protestant associations which attended these changes.

Although the persistent cultural interest in nostalgic accounts of the Tudor dynasty increasingly subverted the legitimacy of the Stuart regime, we should be cautious not to see these plays as simply anti-Jacobean. In a similar vein, despite their shared anti-Catholicism, any attempt to unify these plays as a monolithic expression of militant Protestant thought is both misleading and reductive. A more nuanced approach to the distinct ways in which these playwrights use chivalric forms to explore the religious and political identity of early Jacobean England underlines the complexity of

---

Canon, ed. by Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 125–57 (p. 125).

10 Judith Doolin Spikes, 'The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1977), 117–49.

11 Grant, p. 126.

12 Brian Walsh, 'Letters to a Young Prince: Confessional Conflict and the Origins of English Protestantism in Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (1605)', in *Forms of Faith: Literary Form and Religious Conflict in Early Modern England*, ed. by Jonathan Baldo and Isabel Karremann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 113–25 (p. 114).

representing a nation continually coming to terms with the Reformation. More so, the manner in which this translates into the sphere of international politics adds an additional layer of intricacy. As such, this chapter places similar moments in Dekker, Rowley, Heywood, and Shakespeare and Fletcher in conversation to give a multifaceted sense of how major early Jacobean playwrights were competing across companies within an emerging theatrical tradition to offer different visions of national identity in both political and religious terms. With varying degrees of chivalric militancy and political orthodoxy, the apocalyptic Jacobean history play speaks to the diversity of ways in which the present and future religio-political climate could be reconfigured in relation to the past and placed on the popular stage in entertaining and commercially viable shape. Firstly, I advance current critical trends concerning the Jacobean history play to argue that chivalric tropes and imagery often supplement the apocalyptic framework of these plays to imagine confessional division in terms of a crusade for the true church.[13] These plays are then read intertheatrically to underline the different ways in which they appear to respond to Jacobean political orthodoxy, particularly in terms of foreign policy. Their reappearance in 1613 is read contextually in terms of the death of Prince Henry and the Anglo-Palatine marriage to demonstrate how the flexibility of this theatrical form enables 'elect nation' plays to respond anew to moments of emerging religious and political crisis. Finally, this contextual and intertheatrical reading provides a conceptual framework to understand the international diplomatic dynamics behind De la Fuente's intervention to suspend the revival of *The Whore of Babylon* in 1619.

The religious and political dimensions of chivalry often serve as rhetorical and thematic vehicles to emphasize confessional division in the 'elect nation' plays where the notion of spiritual warfare takes on very literal military connotations. Of these plays, *The Whore of Babylon* most powerfully demonstrates the potential to read spiritual allegory in radical interventionist terms, a fact accentuated by Dekker's close ideological and linguistic reliance on Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Dekker's dependence on a Revelation conception of apocalyptic history and his use of chivalric language and imagery within a cultural framework of Elizabethan nostalgia combine to create a drama that resonated provocatively with the diplomatic moment of 1619. In the case of the play's late Jacobean

---

13 In both Spikes' essay and Marsha Robinson's *Writing the Reformation:* Actes and Monuments *and the Jacobean History Play* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), chivalry is not connected with the 'elect nation' plays.

revival, diplomatic history and dramatic genre converge in the figure of Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and King James's son-in-law. When Frederick and his wife, Elizabeth Stuart, accepted the crown of Bohemia, they became the locus of militant hopes for an international effort to defeat the Antichrist, principally represented by Protestants as both branches of the Habsburg monarchy. Frederick was not only a pivotal figure in the diplomatic constitutional crisis which erupted in the Holy Roman Empire in 1619, however; he was also royal patron of the company most likely behind the resurrection of Dekker's play. As this chapter will demonstrate, the symbolic association of the Elector Palatine's patronage gives us a compelling vantage point for observing how *The Whore of Babylon* could become even more politically topical and sensitive in its 1619 revival than in its original context.

Comoedia apocalyptica and the Elect Nation

The opening 'Lectori' (preface to the reader) to the 1607 quarto edition of *The Whore of Babylon* makes explicit Dekker's polemical intention to contrast 'the greatness, magnanimity, constancy, clemency, and other incomparable heroic virtues of our late queen' with the 'inveterate malice, treasons, machinations, underminings, and continual bloody stratagems, of that purple whore of Rome', the Catholic Church.[14] This diametric opposition generally underpins apocalyptic literature and is central to the progress of Dekker's play as Titania, the Fairy Queen (Elizabeth I), confronts, and predictably survives, multiple Catholic plots and intrigues led by the Empress of Babylon (the papacy). These evolve from marriage proposals from the monarchs of Spain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire early in the play to a concluding account of the Spanish Armada. Punctuated by individual plots by characters like Campeius (Edmund Campion) and Paridel (Dr. William Parry), these 'continual bloody stratagems' represent repeated attempts by the Whore of Babylon to convert and subsume England in her quest for temporal and spiritual domination. 'Collectively', argues Sarah Scott, 'these many-bodied alien oppositions scheme to poison and destroy notions of English identity

---

14 Thomas Dekker, *The Whore of Babylon: A Critical Edition*, ed. Marianne Gateson Riely (London: Garland Publishing, 1980), 'Lectori', 2–7. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

embodied by Titania and her dutiful Fairy servants'.[15] In accordance with the Foxean conception of apocalyptic history, Titania's ability to survive all of these attempts works to underscore the sense frequently articulated by militant millenarian Protestants that England was the nation chosen by God to liberate the world from the chains of the Antichrist.

In the most sustained critical account of *The Whore of Babylon*, Julia Gasper argues against reading Dekker's 'definitive militant Protestant play' within the immediate political context of the Gunpowder Plot. Gasper defines the play as a 'comoedia apocalyptica', a genre which she differentiates from the history play by its interpretation of 'events in terms of Protestant historiography derived from the Book of Revelation and other biblical texts' and its central thematic focus on 'the struggle of the True Church against the Antichrist'.[16] Taking its perspective from John Foxe's *Christus Triumphans* (1556), self-identified as a 'comoedia apocalyptica' in its prefatory material, the genre uses an apocalyptic framework to explore and comment on the intersections between temporal and spiritual history. Gasper's location of the play within this tradition is convincing and helpfully contextualizes it in intertheatrical terms. By distinguishing it from history plays, however, Gasper alienates *The Whore of Babylon* from its contemporary theatrical tradition and undermines the extent to which history was broadly conceived in apocalyptic terms during the period. As Adrian Streete argues, '[w]hile some may have been sceptical of the possibility altogether, the belief that the end would come is commonplace'.[17] In its apocalyptic historical structure, then, the Jacobean history play capitalised upon customary spiritual beliefs, often for political

---

15 Sarah Scott, 'The Empress of Babylon's "Carbuncles and Rich Stones": The Metaphorizing of the Pox in Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*', *Early Theatre*, 7.1 (2004), 67–95 (p. 75).

16 Julia Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 9; pp. 62–63.

17 Streete, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism,* p. 3. The widespread popularity and prevalence of apocalyptic thought has been well documented by scholars. See for instance Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); and *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussions*, ed. by C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

purposes. The Book of Revelation promised the Second Coming of Christ; following the Reformation, its prophecies offered 'a vivid account of a cosmic struggle for souls' through which Protestant and Catholics 'made counter-claims of spiritual authenticity'.[18] *The Whore of Babylon*'s apocalyptic-chivalric language and imagery were therefore culturally resonant, and Dekker manipulated these familiar forms and motifs to engage with some of the most pressing diplomatic concerns facing early Stuart England.

Judith Doolin Spikes articulates a more convincing framework for reading Dekker's play by placing it in conversation with a series of Jacobean 'elect nation' plays which find a common source in Foxe's hugely influential and frequently reprinted *Acts and Monuments*. Although Gasper recognizes the centrality of *Acts* to 'comoedia apocalyptica' and emphasizes the 'internationalism' of the tradition and of militant Protestantism more broadly, she denies the notion that England was conceived of as an elect nation by writers like Foxe.[19] As a result, Gasper makes a distinction between the national and international dynamics of *The Whore of Babylon* which overlooks a central aspect of its apocalyptic design. 'Comoedia apocalyptica', as Adrian Streete shows in his recent monograph, 'fuses the spiritual and the temporal, national and international concerns, through drama' and 'invites readers to decode the play's political aims'.[20] As Spikes argues, we should understand *The Whore of Babylon* in relation to a series of Jacobean history plays based on 'a philosophy which viewed world history as the temporal manifestation of the cosmic warfare, of God's Elect sanctified from all eternity against the irredeemably damned followers of Antichrist'.[21] Although the symbolic nature of Revelation presented enormous hermeneutic difficulties, the basic concept that its Antichrist represented the Catholic Church united both English and Continental Protestants. As such, Foxe's hugely popular Revelation reading of spiritual history offered playwrights a storehouse of culturally familiar apocalyptic interpretations by which they could position England's religious and political identity in international

---

18 Victoria Brownlee, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England, 1558–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 169–70.

19 Gasper, p. 74.

20 Streete, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism*, p. 43.

21 Spikes, p. 118.

terms. In Dekker's play, the unsuccessful attempts by the Empress of Babylon and her followers to overcome Titania and her Fairy Land accentuate the militant Protestant position that England was God's chosen nation to lead the world away from spiritual deception. This fusion of national and international Protestantism becomes especially central to the play's revival in 1619. Spikes's argument therefore offers a more sensitive historical and intertheatrical approach to the early modern history play, a genre that criticism usually confines to the 1590s. This new apocalyptic framework for the history play, argues Pascale Aebischer, 'enabled Jacobean playwrights to substitute a universal view of history for the dynastic and insular "Tudor myth" that had underpinned the Elizabethan history play'.[22] By placing *The Whore of Babylon* alongside other 'elect nation' plays, Spikes encourages a more sympathetic understanding of Dekker's archetypal characterization and ostensibly unsophisticated and illogical conception of history.

In Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, characters are 'simultaneously abstractions and historical personages'.[23] Dekker's indebtedness to the Foxean tradition of apocalyptic history based on Revelation is made clear via the same strategy. Historical figures such as Titania (Elizabeth I), Cardinal Como, and Paridel (Dr. William Parry) sit alongside abstractions which include Time, Truth, and Plain Dealing. As Streete argues, the combination of history and allegory in 'comoedia apocalyptica' works to 'explore the connections between temporal and spiritual history'.[24] In the context of *The Whore of Babylon*, the Gunpowder Plot gives Dekker an immediate political context within which to frame historical assassination attempts against Elizabeth as part of a wider apocalyptic vision of history. In other words, temporal events were a direct reflection of the wider spiritual battle between the True Church and the Antichrist. As Anne James argues, subjects in early Jacobean England understood the plot 'not as an isolated incident but as the climax in a series of Catholic assaults upon England and her Church dating back at least as far as the Northern Rising and the papal bull against Queen Elizabeth'.[25] Concluding with a nationalistic depiction of Titania leading the Counter-Armada, 'the

---

22 Pascale Aebischer, *Jacobean Drama* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 95.

23 Spikes, p. 120.

24 Streete, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism*, p. 42.

25 Anne James, *Poets, Players, and Preachers: Remembering the Gunpowder Plot in Seventeenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), p. 28.

culminating episode of universal history' in 'Foxe's apocalyptic scheme', Dekker's play offers a prophetic and redemptive vision of England spearheading the international Protestant cause in overcoming the Antichrist.[26]

Spikes's reading of the Jacobean history play has since encouraged a number of critical responses. Although accepting this new Foxean framework for the history play, G.K. Hunter argues that Spikes 'may have narrowed the focus excessively by looking at this change only from the later angle of its later manifestations'. As a result Spikes, argues Hunter, 'fails to talk about the continuity between the earlier and later history plays, which is no less a fact of the relationship than is the change or development'.[27] For Hunter, then, the later history plays incorporate the Foxean framework in a way which focuses on 'the romance of identification with individual experiences that comprise the country' rather than the 'romance of patriotic identification with the country'.[28] Although this reading offers a convincing sense of genre adaptation, the fact that playwrights turned to Foxe in the years immediately before and after James's accession suggests the way in which the notion of universal (as opposed to dynastic) history provided a productive means of consolidating religious national history to respond to the fears and hopes — particularly in terms of religious policy, domestic and foreign — which naturally surrounded a change of monarch. It was also a scheme which was, at least initially, productive for the transitioning Stuart regime, offering it an opportunity to define its 'rule of reunited Britannia as the fulfilment of all past history'.[29]

As Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathwaye and Robert Wilson's collaborative *Sir John Oldcastle* (1599; the Admiral's Men's response to Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*), the anonymous *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (c. 1600) and Dekker and Webster's *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (c. 1602) attest, this development in the historical focus of the history play is not explicitly a Jacobean invention. For Spikes, these late Elizabethan plays 'embody the essential elements of the Elect Nation which were to be fully developed in the

---

26 Spikes, p. 141.

27 G.K. Hunter, 'Religious Nationalism in Later History Plays', in *Literature and Nationalism,* ed. by Vincent Newey and Ann Thompson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991), pp. 88–97 (pp. 88–89).

28 Hunter, pp. 96–97.

29 Grant, p. 125.

Jacobean historical drama'.[30] In *Writing the Reformation:* Actes and Monuments *and the Jacobean History Play* (2002), Marsha Robinson provides a helpful new historicist revision to Spikes by detailing how these apocalyptic history plays responded to moments of religious and political crisis.[31] For Robinson, 'Foxean plays not only restaged the Reformation past' but 'appropriated the Jacobean present as a continuation of a Foxean past'.[32] This is seen most clearly across 1612–1613 with the reprinting of *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *When You See Me*, and the first part of *If You Know Not Me*, as well as the writing and first performance of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII*. Although these plays 'probably commemorated the death of Prince Henry', as Robinson argues, the reappearance of the majority (*Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *When You See Me*, Part 1 of *If You Know Not Me*, and *Henry VIII*) in 1613 also suggests their ability to look forward with an apocalyptically shaded optimism.[33] As such, this chapter reads the extended lifespan of the Jacobean history play as not only commemorative but celebratory as February 1613 marked the Anglo-Palatine marriage of Elizabeth Stuart and Frederick V. This same combination of commemoration and celebration, I think, marks the original performances of the early Jacobean examples which sought to consolidate the beginnings of the Stuart dynasty as a continuation of the Foxean vision of universal history. According to Norbrook:

> Protestant panegyrists hailed one ruler after another as the Emperor of the Last Days who would lead the decisive battle against Antichrist; but there was always a provisional element in such identifications, and if one ruler failed to live up to his promise, the apocalyptic hopes would soon be transferred to another.[34]

When King James showed himself to be averse to the interventionist political energies which attended apocalyptic chivalry, Prince Henry soon became the locus of the more militant Protestant hopes previously pinned on Elizabeth and some of her most senior aristocrats. Although the colossal elegiac response to Henry's death marked bitter

---

30 Spikes, p. 123.

31 Spikes only touches on this notion of revival: 'In the meantime, crises in James's reign periodically revived interest in the history play' (p. 142).

32 Robinson, *Writing the Reformation,* p. xv.

33 Robinson, *Writing the Reformation,* p. 165.

34 Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics,* p. 108.

disappointment for militant Protestants, the provisional nature of apocalyptic history enabled and encouraged them to transfer their ideological priorities onto a new figurehead.

The sudden shift towards Foxe around the turn of the century might also indicate an exhaustion of material taken from the Elizabethan chronicle histories (most notably Holinshed) by Shakespeare and his contemporaries for the earlier Tudor history play. The cultural saturation of Foxe, however, most clearly demonstrates the widespread popularity of *Acts and Monuments*; its 'influence […] in the seventeenth century', claims Teresa Grant, 'is more pervasive and important than scholars have even yet discovered'.[35] Not only was it available in ecclesiastical institutions across the country but it was, as Marsha Robinson notes, also a 'domestic book'. 'Regularly read aloud', continues Robinson, 'it was a staple of devotional worship both in godly households of the middling sort and in Puritan gatherings'.[36] Generational, flexible to various sects within the reformed church, and widely available, it is hardly surprising that *Acts and Monuments* served as a cornerstone for the late-Elizabethan and early Jacobean history play and its attempts to make sense of England's religio-political landscape. '[O]ld and familiar', writes Spikes,

> *Acts* […] offered a marvellously adaptable pattern and a view of history wholly compatible with the new Stuart regime. Whereas the other existing versions of English history were dynastic, insular, and circumscribed in time, Foxe's was universal, beginning with Creation and looking forward to the Last Judgement, designed not only to explain the past and present but also to predict the future, passing beyond the experience, ambitions, and destiny to those of the nation and beyond providential causation to the apocalyptic.[37]

Familiarity and malleability are of course excellent commercial attributes for a playwright; however, the Foxean design proved so productive because new moments of religio-political crisis and opportunity could be (or made to be) seen to respond to the prophetic Protestant visions put forward in these plays. Marking the marriage of Elizabeth Stuart and Frederick, 1613 therefore speaks powerfully to the remarkable

---

35 Grant, p. 125.

36 Robinson, *Writing the Reformation,* xvi.

37 Spikes, p. 126.

flexibility and cultural contingency of the Jacobean history play and its ability to reflect anew on a contingent dynastic shift in European politics.

This chapter is indebted to these critics; in particular, the malleability of Foxe — the way in which new political and religious situations could animate its notion of the universal battle between the forces of religion — is central to my reading of the thwarted 1619 revival of *The Whore of Babylon*. I build upon Spikes, Hunter, and Robinson to unpack the ways in which chivalric language and imagery shape these apocalyptic histories. Although, as Hunter argues, these later history plays 'largely [abandon] the feudal paradigm' of the earlier histories (a tension between absolute monarchy and baronial military organisation seen powerfully, for instance, in *Richard II*), chivalry continues to function in these plays, albeit in different scope. The implicit antagonisms of chivalry are no longer ultimately concerned with internal conceptions of the English state but look internationally to the shared plight of England's co-religionists in their battle against the spiritual and political forces of their perceived Antichrist. As Marco Nievergelt describes

> After the break from Rome the English 'Church militant' progressively embraced these notions of apocalyptic conflict, and the return to Protestantism after the accession of Elizabeth enabled the deployment of such martial–apocalyptic rhetoric in countless polemical writings, the glosses to the Geneva Bible, but also on the plane of international politics.[38]

Since England was tied dynastically to the Palatinate from 1613, the tense international political moment of 1619 resonated with the Foxean apocalyptic framework of a universal spiritual battle. The suspended revival of *The Whore of Babylon*, as the most explicitly chivalric and militant of these plays, I argue is inextricable from the escalating Palatine crisis and, by extension, the broader state of Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations.

Fairyland: *The Whore of Babylon* and *The Faerie Queene*

The Whore of Babylon's status as the most chivalric of the 'elect nation' plays is registered through its linguistic and ideological borrowings from *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's epic

---

38 Nievergelt, 'Chivalric Imagination', p. 274.

not only provided the literary framework out of which Dekker's kind of apocalyptic history comes, but it helped to forge connections between knightly chivalry and its religious and political associations also at the centre of *The Whore of Babylon*. As Cyrus Hoy puts it, 'Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* had given poetic definition to Elizabeth's role in the spiritual and political battle with the forces of Antichrist, and the mythology of *The Whore of Babylon* is freely borrowed from Spenser's epic'.[39] On the linguistic level, Dekker directly lifts names from Spenser (Florimel and Paridel), explicitly identifies Queen Elizabeth with Titania, the Fairy Queen, and also sets his narrative in Fairy Land. 'Dekker has, therefore', writes Helen Moore, 'not only taken the names from Spenser, but exploits the matter of *The Faerie Queene* as well'.[40] On the broader ideological level, *The Whore of Babylon* mirrors *The Faerie Queene*, and Book 1 in particular, in its apocalyptic-chivalric Protestant structure. In Titania (the Fairy Queen) and the Empress of Babylon, Dekker offers clear counterparts to Spenser's allegory of Una and Duessa. The Elizabethan nostalgia of Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* recalls Spenser's text, redeploying its martial and apocalyptic chivalry in order to explore the tensions between the true and false churches in the new context of the Protestant chivalric image surrounding Prince Henry, and the concomitant hopes pinned on his future kingship.

In the ultimately self-contained Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, the protagonist Redcrosse Knight, presented as the embodiment of the virtue of holiness, is compelled to choose between Una and Duessa. The spiritual process is notably more difficult than in Dekker; already by the end of the first Canto, Una's faithfulness is thrown into question for Redcrosse when the disguised enchanter, Archimago, tricks him into '[s]uspect[ing] Una's truth' (I.i.53.5–6) via a combination of seductive visions which lead the knight to wrongly assume his lady unchaste. Soon after abandoning Una in anger, Redcrosse is duped again, this time by Duessa (disguised as Fidessa at this point) who seduces the knight and convinces the giant Orgoglio to capture him. Una meets Arthur who helps her to rescue Redcrosse, defeating Orgoglio, and then assisting Redcrosse in disrobing Duessa, revealing a '[m]ore vgly shape yet neuer liuing creature saw' (I.viii.48.9), a representation of the Catholic Church as the 'face of falshood' (I.viii.49.4).

---

39 Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, Notes and Commentaries to Texts in 'The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker'*, ed. by Fredson Bowers, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), II, p. 302.

40 Helen Moore, 'Jonson', p. 140.

Almost driven to suicide when confronted by Despair in the following Canto (ix), Redcrosse is once again saved by Una who brings him to the House of Holiness where he gradually recovers, and is shown a vision of '[t]he new Hierusalem, that God has built | For those to dwell in, that are chosen his, | His chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt' (I.x.57.2–4). Book I then comes to a close as Redcrosse and Una return to her parent's castle where the knight liberates the city from its imprisoning dragon after three days of difficult battle. A simple wedding ceremony finally unites Una and Redcross but the latter, 'sworne, | […] Vnto his Faery Queene backe to retourne', soon departs for six years of service under Gloriana.

The relationship of Book 1 of *The Faerie Queene* to Revelation has long been noted by critics; over half a century ago, for instance, Frank Kermode concisely summed up a generally accepted consensus:

> The First Book of *The Faerie Queene* is well known to be apocalyptic, in the sense that it presents a version of world history founded rather closely upon the English Protestant interpretation of the Book of Revelation. […] In its more political aspect, Book I is a celebration of the part of Elizabeth Tudor, the Protestant Empress, in the workings of providence.[41]

Revelation was familiar literary territory for Spenser who began his publication career in 1569 with English translations of four sonnets based on Revelation by French poets Joachim Du Bellay and Clément Marot (who was translating Petrarch) in Jean Van der Noot's *A Theatre for Worldlings*, translations which he would later revise for his *Complaints* (1591).[42] '[A] product of London's Flemish community', *A Theatre for Worldlings* had first appeared in Dutch and French the previous year, underlining the

---

41 Frank Kermode, '*The Faerie Queene* I and V', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 47 (1964), 123–50 (p. 130). On the intersections of Book I and Revelation, see also Josephine Waters Bennett, *The Evolution of* The Faerie Queene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 108–23; John E. Hankins, 'Spenser and the Revelation of St. John', *PMLA*, 60 (1945), 364–81; and Florence Sandler, '*The Faerie Queene*: An Elizabethan Apocalypse', in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions*, ed. by C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 148–74. In *Biblical References in* The Faerie Queene (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1976), Naseeb Shaheen notes that Revelation is the most used biblical text in *The Faerie Queene*, with forty-two of its sixty references occurring in Book I (p. 181).

42 See Andrew Hadfield, 'Edmund Spenser's Translations of Du Bellay in Jan van der Noot's *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*', in *Tudor Translation*, ed. by Fred Schurink (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 143–60.

international and multilingual nature of the community for which its Protestant prophecies were aimed and with which Spenser involved himself from adolescence.[43] In Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser therefore returns to the same apocalyptic emphases which pervade *A Theatre of Worldlings* not only with greater poetic maturity, but with more than two decades of additional Tudor history to prophesize the political future of English Protestantism and its wider relationship to its international co-religionists.

In highly politicised and allegorical terms, Book I demonstrates to the reader a choice between the true and false churches of late-Elizabethan England. At the level of the narrative, it is Redcrosse, as the embodiment of holiness, who is faced with the decision, and his knightliness foregrounds the militant approach to Protestantism, suggesting, as in Dekker, that spiritual salvation is a fundamentally chivalric affair. The choice manifests itself for Redcrosse in the archetypal characters of Una and Duessa, respectively representing the Woman Clothed with the Sun and the Whore of Babylon from Revelation (who become Titania and the Empress of Babylon in Dekker). 'Dekker and Spenser, in different ways', writes Victoria Brownlee, 'develop the vivid biblical imagery of Revelation 12 and 17' to focus attention on 'two women who allegorically represent opposing spiritual states'.[44] Duessa, for instance, is described by Spenser in terms immediately recognisable as Revelation's Whore of Babylon: dressed in 'gold and purple pall', she has a 'triple crowne set on her head full hye' (I.vii.16.3–4) and 'crowns and owches' (I.ii.13.5). The description corresponds to 17:3–5 in Revelation where the Whore is 'araied in purple and skarlat, and guilded with golde, and precious stones, and pearles'.[45] In Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*, it is also echoed by the Empress: 'we had made our crown complete | And closed it strongly with a triple arch' (1.1.15–16). Glossed as 'the Papistrie' (17:3–5) in the Geneva Bible, the Whore's three-tiered crown was, for Protestants, an expression of the Catholic Church's temporal powers: the political territories across Europe held by Catholic rulers. Jonson had noted that Duessa

---

43 Stewart Mottram, 'Spenser's Dutch Uncles: The Family of Love and the Four Translations of *A Theatre for Worldlings*', in *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2014), pp. 164–84 (p. 164).

44 Brownlee, *Biblical Readings,* p. 183.

45 *Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, ed. by Lloyd E. Berry (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), fol. 120 (Revelation 17:4). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

represented Mary, Queen of Scots.[46] As we have seen, however, these apocalyptic associations were highly provisional and mired in the political circumstances of their expression. Dekker's Whore, more broadly signifying the Habsburg monarchy and its territorial powers in its first performance in 1606, would come to bear acutely upon the actual conflict unfolding in Bohemia in its 1619 revival. In both Spenser and Dekker, earthly political conflicts are played out on the spiritual level through the two female allegorical protagonists of Revelation 12 and 17.

A seductive enchantress, Duessa's lavish costume, as the Geneva Bible glosses, 'onely standeth in outwarde pompe and impudencie and craft like a strumpet' (Revelation 17:4), one which Redcrosse and Arthur must strip away in a symbolic revelation of the corruption at the core of the papacy. By contrast, Una is presented as '[s]o pure and innocent, as that same lambe' (I.i.5.1) which she holds by a lead, and as a 'roiall Virgin' (I.viii.26.1), clearly alluding to Queen Elizabeth/the Woman clothed with the sun from Revelation 12. The innocent sacrificial lamb suggests Christ; tied to Una, she becomes, by association, a representation of the true Church. In his encounters with Una and Duessa, real and imaginary, Redcrosse's quest is therefore presented as an allegory of England's quest for its national religious identity — a struggle between its latent Catholic past offered by Duessa and its still uncertain Protestant future in Una. Book I's culminating betrothal of Una and Redcrosse of course embraces the latter, signifying to the contemporary reader, it appears, Queen Elizabeth's accession.[47] The union, however, must be preceded by the defeat of the dragon; the Geneva Bible glosses the equivalent episode in Revelation, interpreting the moment where the Woman clothed with the sun is threatened by a dragon as a demonstration of how the 'Church which is compassed about with Iesus Christ the Sonne of righteousnes, is persecuted of Antichrist' (Revelation 12:1). Only once Redcrosse, as the virtue of holiness, has defeated the dragon, can his union with Una as the true Church be achieved.

Whereas the Protestant polemic of Dekker's apocalyptic-chivalry in *The Whore of Babylon* is notably monolithic, the quest for the true Church in *The Faerie Queene* is convoluted and uncertain. Less striking than Redcrosse's eventual triumph is the

---

46 Ben Jonson, *Informations to William Drummond of Hawthornden,* ed. by Ian Donaldson, in *Cambridge Ben Jonson*, V, pp. 133–35.

47 Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics,* p. 108.

implication behind his numerous errors in judgement; the knight's repeated failures to distinguish between the true and false churches, for instance, suggests Sarah Smith, 'underscores the hard, uneven path toward England's Protestant destiny.[48] Furthermore, Book I ends when Redcrosse leaves to serve Gloriana for six years. Binding them symbolically in an expression of Protestant truth, the union of Una and Redcrosse is therefore curiously postponed, suggesting the nation's tumultuous and yet to be cemented spiritual identity. *The Faerie Queene*'s Gloriana, argues Norbrook,

> is a symbol, Spenser's personal reshaping of an image created by the Leicester and Essex circles. The image of Gloriana had never corresponded exactly to the reality and by the 1590s the disparity was striking. She had not done as much as she could have done to secure the political triumphs Spenser prophesied; there would need to be further developments in the future.[49]

In the wake of Anglo-Spanish peace, that disparity is even more prevalent in Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*. What is striking in both, however, is the international scope of English Protestantism (both texts, for instance, rewrite Leicester's 1585 expedition to the Low Countries as a triumph). '[T]his interest in international affairs', writes Kevin Chovanec, 'implies that both early Stuart writers understand that Spenser's Englishness takes shape in part on the Continent'.[50] That implication becomes especially clear in the thwarted 1619 revival of *The Whore of Babylon*, speaking to England's dynastic ties with the revolutionary Frederick V of the Palatinate, royal patron of the playing company who performed it.

Reviving Elizabethan Militarism

Despite James's own intellectual engagement with Revelation, it was increasingly clear both at home and abroad that he would not endorse the militant vision championed by

---

48 Sarah Smith, 'An Unyielding Past: Holy Wells and Historical Narrative in *The Faerie Queene* 1–2', *Studies in Philology*, 118.2 (2021), 284–307 (p. 285).

49 Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics,* p. 139.

50 Kevin Chovanec, 'The Borders of Fairyland: Transnational Readings of Spenser in Stuart England', *Spenser Studies,* 31 (2018), 71–96 (p. 87). In *God's Only Daughter: Spenser's Una as the Invisible Church* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), Kathryn Walls argues that Una represents the international church.

Spenser and imitated by Dekker. The extent to which *The Whore of Babylon* is unequivocally anti-Jacobean, however, has often been overstated by critics. Although suggestive, Dekker's only allusion to James is innocuous:

> […] out of her ashes may
> A second Phoenix rise, of larger wing,
> Of stronger talent, of more dreadful beak,
> Who swooping through the air, may with his beating
> So well command the winds, that all those trees
> Where sit birds of our hatching (now fled thither)
> Will tremble, & (through fear struck dead) to earth,
> Throw those that sit and sing there, or in flocks
> Drive them from thence, yea and perhaps his talent
> May be so bony and so large of gripe,
> That it may shake all Babylon.
> (3.1.251–61)

Dekker's depiction of dynastic reincarnation in the figure of the 'second Phoenix', however, is at once national and universal in its call to 'drive' out Catholicism; these lines draw attention to the wider apocalyptic vision of temporal and spiritual history that shapes Dekker's play, suggesting some of the ideological dynamics and motivations behind its 1619 revival. A conventional emblem of Elizabeth used during her reign, the phoenix metaphor is extended to James by Dekker, with clear political associations and hopes. 'Perhaps because of increasing disenchantment with James as a defender of the Protestant cause and the contemporaneous growth of a nostalgic cult of Elizabeth's supposed superiorities', writes Alan Young, 'Elizabeth's phoenix motif soon ceased to be applied to her successor'.[51] Needless to say, the idea that James might 'swoop' to take up the mantle of Elizabethan foreign policy with a renewed Anglo-Spanish war to 'shake all Babylon' had been rendered wholly unrealistic by the opening diplomatic manoeuvres of the Stuart regime. Those hopeful for a return to the Elizabethan glory days would have to look elsewhere.

Although the playbook quarto prints 'King James' in the marginalia beside these lines, they might have been more realistically directed toward the players' patron and heir-apparent, Prince Henry. Certainly, the militant Elizabethan nostalgia of Dekker's

---

51 Alan Young, 'The Phoenix Reborn: An Appropriation of an Elizabethan Symbol', in *Resurrecting Elizabeth I in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Elizabeth Hageman and Katherine Conway (Madison, NJ.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), pp. 68–81 (pp. 77–78).

play would have resonated with the neo-chivalric identity cultivated by the young heir-apparent and his faction. Fortune playgoers might not have been unfamiliar with the formulation of this allusion to the company's patron; in Rowley's *When You See Me*, performed less than two years prior to *The Whore of Babylon*, Henry VIII addresses his wife, Jane Seymour, before she gives birth to Prince Edward:

> Now Jane God bring me but a chopping boy
> Be but the mother to a Prince of Wales,
> And a ninth Henry to the English crown
> And thou makest full my hopes.[52]

Considering the name of Edward, this is no doubt a reference to James's eldest son and the 'chopping' masculine chivalric identity so fundamental to his self-presentation, and which Dekker would unpack in greater detail in 1606. 'Given the prince's popularity', suggests Kristin M.S. Bezio, 'a positive depiction of his role as dynastic successor is likely, and would serve as a propagandistic means of connecting the Stuarts to the Tudors on the stage'.[53] It is immensely difficult to position Rowley's and Dekker's lines in relation to James, however, and Bezio underplays the fact that the new king is elided in Rowley's monarchical history. Grant argues more convincingly that *When You See Me* 'is much more about the heir to the throne than the incumbent' and 'what the representation of Prince Edward tells us, more than anything else, is that this is how Rowley wanted to see Prince Henry: studious, Protestant, chivalric and as a man of the future'.[54] This vision of chivalric kingship offered Protestant audiences a counterpart to the moderate and irenic approach to James's domestic and foreign policy, underlined by that year's Hampton Court Conference and Treaty of London which had formalized the peace process with Spain.

The king's comparatively pacific approach to Anglo-Spanish relations found artistic expression principally in Jonson; as we saw in Chapter 1, although *Barriers* paid tribute to and encouraged Henry's military aspirations and was explicit in its design

---

52 Samuel Rowley, *When You See Me You Know Me* (London: 1605), B1r. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

53 Kristin M.S. Bezio, *Staging Power in Tudor and Stuart English History Plays: History, Political Thought, and the Redefinition of Sovereignty* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 163.

54 Grant, pp. 134–35.

about the need to restore chivalry, the entertainment is ultimately firm in its prioritisation of civic honour and 'arms defensive'. As J.W. Williamson argues, Prince Henry functioned as a 'visual symbol' whereby he was

> the informing life-force within the designer's scenery which made St George's portico arise out of the "ruins of Chivalry," just as the prince was the fount which fed the springs of his nation. His function as fertility force only worked when he found his proper "frame" and remained within it. To fly out to prosecute foreign wars would mean the collapse of the design.[55]

The architectural narrative of *Barriers,* then, brought to life and reiterated the political message to the prince and heir-apparent that 'civil arts the martial must precede'. King James was naturally wary of chivalry and *Barriers,* even if designed for Prince Henry, needed to reflect those inclinations. On an artistic level, this suited Jonson and his aversion to militant international Protestantism and chivalric romance. Through its emphasis on 'civil arts' and 'arms defensive', Jonson offers a modified view of chivalry radically different to the 'elect nation plays' like *The Whore of Babylon*.

The mistake here would be to read the expression of chivalry in *Barriers* completely at face value. By that, I mean to read this significantly tamed form of chivalry outside of the immediate political and religious context of the Jacobean court. As was routine in the entertainments of the Elizabethan court, chivalry in *Barriers* works as a vehicle of political negotiation by which the stances of different court factions came into contact. Regardless of its fundamental moral, *Barriers,* with its Arthurian mythology and concluding combat, made extensive use of chivalric culture. In that sense, Jonson's and Jones's entertainment has been understood to address the tensions between King James's and Prince Henry's different visions of foreign policy. In the context of the Jülich-Cleves succession crisis, the issue of English involvement in the protracted religious warfare on the Continent was once again at the fore. At the centre of *Barriers* though, was careful political compromise and manipulation. Although potentially dangerous, Prince Henry's chivalry could be an asset to James's political manoeuvrings both at court and in parliament. Seemingly on either side of the foreign policy debate, king and son could operate as political figureheads for the different factions. *Barriers,* then, celebrated and even encouraged Henry's chivalry but repositioned it within the

---

55 J.W. Williamson, *The Myth of the Conqueror,* pp. 90–91.

framework of his father's diplomatic strategy. Contrary to the clear interventionist polemic of Spenser and Dekker, *Barriers* maintained the diplomatic hard-line of the king without alienating the neo-chivalric community surrounding Prince Henry.

Although Henry's untimely death from typhoid fever in November 1612 shattered future hope for a more militant foreign policy, this quickly found a new locus. The void left by Henry's death, marked by an extraordinary number of elegies, was perceived by many to be filled by the Elector Palatine when he married Elizabeth Stuart in February 1613, an association that was further encouraged by the transfer of Henry's theatrical patronage to Frederick. For many, the Anglo-Palatine marriage expanded the scope of the German Protestant Union, formed in 1608. As a result, many perceived the Elector Palatine to be assuming the role of figurehead for an aggressive European Protestant alliance to stem growing Habsburg dominance in Europe. For militant Protestants, the dynastic union of the foremost Protestant powers in Europe brought the tantalizing prospect of a genuine international effort to, once and for all, topple the Whore of Babylon and her 'continual bloody stratagems'. Of course, James's intention had been to counterbalance this union with an Anglo-Catholic marriage for Prince Henry and thus bolster his ecumenical European peace project, a strategy which evolved into the Spanish Match negotiations over the proposed marriage of Prince Charles and the Infanta Maria following Henry's death.

The tensions implicit in these perceptions of Frederick and Elizabeth's marriage (and also present in *Barriers*) are underlined by the wedding festivities. As Kevin Curran has argued, the competing ideological stances of the performances staged at the English court to celebrate the union incorporated the militant stance of Henry (who had been involved in their design and preparation) in 'fragmented' and 'muffled' form.[56] The oft-cited example of this ideological tension is reflected in the supposed replacement of the anonymous and firmly Protestant *Masque of Truth* (1613) in favour of Thomas Campion's more diplomatically conservative *Lord's Masque* (1613).[57] The tentative nature of the *Masque of Truth*, recorded only in a French translation printed in Heidelberg (the location

---

56 Kevin Curran, 'James I and Fictional Authority at the Palatine Wedding Celebrations', *Renaissance Studies*, 20.1 (2006), 51–67 (pp. 51–53).

57 David Norbrook, '*The Masque of Truth*: Court Entertainments and International Protestant Politics in the Early Stuart Period', *The Seventeenth Century*, 1.2 (1986), 81–110.

of the Palatine court), should be noted. Even if the masque was never performed, the French account speaks to the ideological associations with which radical Protestants in Heidelberg might have perceived the wedding. It has been suggested by R.A. Foakes that Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1613) formed part of the wedding festivities.[58] Shakespeare and Fletcher's play, like *The Whore of Babylon*, also describes royal succession through the image of the 'phoenix' whose 'ashes new create another heir', Cranmer prophesizes, 'As great in admiration as herself', and who shall 'make new nations'.[59] As such, *Henry VIII* has been seen as part of the wave of Protestant propaganda and celebration which flooded both England and the Continent in the wake of the marriage. Frances Yates argues that the play 'reflects the Foxean apocalyptic view of English history', an analysis echoed by Spikes and substantiated by the reissuing (possibly with accompanying stage revivals) in the same year of vastly popular 'elect nation' plays like Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (1605; Q2, 1613) and Part 1 of Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (1605; Q5, 1613).[60] The extended print and performance history of such plays speaks to the cultural force of apocalyptic history in moments of both political and religious crisis *and* opportunity. The symbolic valence of the miraculous birth of Elizabeth I, which concludes *Henry VIII*, and the prophetic militant hopes pinned on Elizabeth Stuart and Frederick's Anglo-German union would not have been missed by the play's audiences. Concluding with Elizabeth's succession, the reprint and possible stage revival of *If You Know Not Me* encouraged similar associations.

In *Henry VIII*, Cranmer's emphasis on 'truth' and 'time' in his prophecy of Elizabeth's birth has been noted for invoking the iconography of 'veritas filia temporis' (Truth, the daughter of time).[61] Although applied frequently to Mary Tudor and her role

---

58 R.A. Foakes, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *King Henry VIII*, ed. R.A. Foakes (Methuen: Arden Shakespeare, 1964), p. xxxi.

59 William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *King Henry VIII*, ed. by Will Sharpe, *New Oxford Shakespeare*, 5.4.40–42.

60 Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, p. 70.

61 In his seminal essay, 'Veritas Filia Temporis', in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. by Raymond Klibansky and H.J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 197–222, Fritz Saxl traces the ways in which English monarchs from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I employed the motto for religious and political purposes.

in the Counter-Reformation, 'Elizabeth associated herself with the concept in order to imply that her accession was Time's gift to Europe's chosen nation after the tribulations of her sister's reign'.[62] The association continued into the Jacobean period where, put in the framework of apocalyptic history, Time was depicted as the force that would unleash Truth from Babylonian captivity. The liberation of true religion is dramatized in the opening dumb-show of *The Whore of Babylon*, where Titania is greeted by the allegorical figures of Time and Truth who present

> a book to her, which — kissing it — she receives, and showing it to those about her, they draw out their swords, embracing Truth, vowing to defend her and that book. Truth then and Time are sent in and return presently, driving before them those Cardinals, Friars &c. that came in before with images, crozier staves &c. They gone, certain grave learned men, that had been banished are brought in and presented to Titania, who shows to them the book, which they receive with great signs of gladness.
> (Dumb Show, lines 21–30)

The militant chivalric imagery is unmistakable here as the embracement and protection of Truth (the 'True Church') will be accomplished, if necessary, by the 'sword'. '[V]owing to defend' Truth and the vernacular Bible which serves as its foundation, the subjects of the elect nation bind themselves in a religious and political contract against the Antichrist. But it is also a theological liberation made on intellectual grounds as the iconoclastic banishment of papist worshippers with their 'images, crozier staves &c.' enables the return of 'grave learned' Marian exiles, previously persecuted under the Whore of Babylon's regime.

Dekker takes the dumb-show directly from the pageant presented before Elizabeth at Cheapside as part of her coronation procession on January 14, 1559. To the text of the pageant, recorded in a pamphlet by Richard Mulcaster and later integrated into Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), Dekker adds the further detail of Mary Tudor's funeral. In the dumb-show, 'Truth' is revealed 'uncrowned, her hair dishevelled, and sleeping on a rock' when 'Time, her father', unable to wake her 'using all means […] sits by her and mourns' (Dumb Show, 2–6). Following Mary's funeral procession, 'Truth suddenly awakens' and, before exiting, 'shows with her father arguments of joy' (Dumb Show, 10–11). When they return, Time has been 'shifted into light colours' and Truth is

---

62 Gordon McMullan, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *King Henry VIII*, ed. by Gordon McMullan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2000), p. 67.

now 'crowned' (Dumb Show, 12–14). Thus, the departure of Mary enables a material conversion of the allegorical figures that plays directly into the theological conversion they enact, as Truth unveils the 'Councillors' eyes' (Dumb Show, 16). Previously leading Mary's hearse, the Councillors, blinded by her Babylonian deceptions, are similarly awakened; 'astonished at' Truth's 'brightness', they 'at length embrace' both her and Time 'and depart with them' (Dumb Show, 17–18). Truth, then, appears like the 'Woman Clothed with the Sun', in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation, with whom Elizabeth was repeatedly associated, most notably in Spenser. Typically identified as an allegory of the true persecuted Church, the 'Woman Clothed with the Sun' was diametrically opposed to the 'purple whore of Rome', as with Una and Duessa in Spenser's epic. Heralded by Time, then, Elizabeth's coronation is represented by Dekker as a saving grace from Marian persecution, and an apocalyptic triumph of the true Protestant Church. The combination of Marian persecution and Elizabeth's messianic coming only confirms the notion of England as the elect nation to lead the world to spiritual truth. The scene in Dekker also echoes Book I of *The Faerie Queene* where, in the House of Holiness, Fidelia presents Redcrosse with '[a] booke that was both signd and seald with blood, | Wherein darke things were writt, hard to be vunderstood' (I.x.13.8–9). The book of course is the Bible, and perhaps Revelation more specifically; like Dekker's exiled councillors, Redcrosse too must be guided out of the darkness to uncover the true church, presented to him as a vision of '[t]he new *Hierusalem*' (I.x.57.2).

Jacobean Apocalyptic-Chivalric Drama

Dekker also took inspiration for his dumb-show from a more immediate theatrical precursor, the first part of Thomas Heywood's two-part play *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, most likely performed at the Red Bull by Queen Anne's Men in 1605. Heywood's history of Mary Tudor after all was enormously popular, already having reached its fifth quarto by the time of the Anglo-Palatine marriage eight years later. As such, we gain a very clear sense of the rival 'citizen' theatre companies competing within a lively theatrical tradition to offer their versions of Foxean drama. Early on in Part 1, Elizabeth is committed to the Tower of London for her perceived part in the Wyatt rebellion and in encouraging petitions for religious freedom by Protestant lords (which Mary refuses without hesitation). Seen as a 'favourite of these heretics', Elizabeth is celebrated in Heywood's play due to her unjustified persecution at the hands of her half-

sister's tyrannical and intransigent rule.[63] Before writing a plea of innocence to Mary, an Elizabeth who faces the death warrant calls upon 'Thou euerliuing power' for 'perswasiue stile' to 'moue [her] impacient sister's eares | And vrge her to compassionate my woe' (D4v). As G.K. Hunter observes, Elizabeth is 'defined […] in relation to the necessarily oppressive power of the sovereign standing above' her. But her sympathetic depiction as 'the oppressed innocent is also a means of defining the limit of that power to express the nation'.[64] Elizabeth's passive confidence in divine election to work for her cause is set against her sister's persistent attempts to ignore advice and assert her royal prerogative. That confidence is grounded by the Elizabeth's possession of an English bible which one of the attending lords, Beningfield, discovers and which features in the subsequent dumb-show:

> Enter *Winchester*, *Constable*, *Barwick*, and *Fryars*: at the other dore, 2. *Angels*: the *Fryars* steps to her, offering to kill her: the *Angels* driue them back. *Exeunt.* The *Angel* opens the Bible, & puts it in her hands; *Exeunt Angels*, she wakes.
>
> (D4v)

Elizabeth's plea for divine assistance is, then, in some way, answered; the dream-like pageant nods toward Revelation as the intervention of the Angels to shape the future of religion in symbolic terms recalls John's visions. By placing the bible in her hand, the angels signal the princess as the elect leader of the true church; that she is persecuted is a necessary preface for the Second Coming of Christ: 'heauen I trust, | With his eternall hand, will guide the iust' (E1r), exclaims Elizabeth when she confronts the book. The scene, then, uses the bible to enact the promise that reformed commentators placed on Revelation: that the patient and truly faithful will be guided and liberated by God.

This is not the only moment of the play where Elizabeth is presented with a bible. At the finale of Part 1 of *If You Know Not Me* (staging through dialogue the famous moment of Elizabeth's coronation pageant which Dekker confines to dumb-show), the Lord Mayor greets the new Queen:

> I from this Citty London, do present
> This Purse and Bible to your maiesty,
> A thowsand of your faithfull Cittizens,

---

63 Thomas Heywood, *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (London: 1605), A4r. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

64 Hunter, 'Religious Nationalism', p. 96.

> In veluet Coats and Chaynes well mounted, stay
> To greet their royall Soueraigne on the way.
> (F3v)

Elizbeth thanks the crowds and kisses and salutes the 'English Bible' as 'the way to honor' (F3v). In these scenes, the Bible functions as a 'vehicle of power' and 'a trope that figures authority in a new way'. According to Richard Duerden, the transaction in other words symbolises the 'appropriation of power from Rome, and its bestowal on the king [or queen] in the form of vernacular scripture'.[65] But the sequence of the two transactions in Heywood's play also underlines the intersections between temporal and spiritual history: the earlier dream-like intervention of the angels inextricably shapes Elizabeth's later accession as divinely elected. Through the image of the bible, then, the Foxean vision of history emerges.

Dekker's dumb-show echoes Heywood's depiction of the coronation through a shared language and imagery of revelation and unveiling. In *If You Know Not Me*, Elizabeth, with bible in hand, proclaims:

> This is the Iewell that we still loue best;
> This was our solace when we were distrest.
> This booke that hath so long conceald it selfe,
> So long shut vp, so long hid; now Lords, see,
> We here vnclaspe, for euer is free.
> (F3v)

As with *The Whore of Babylon*, the accession of Elizabeth is a moment which unveils scriptural truth from being 'conceald', 'shut vp', and 'hid' under Mary. 'Our solace when we were distresst' harkens back to the angel's intervention and to Elizabeth's embracement of her faith through recourse to vernacular scripture. As Duerden highlights, however, liberation also absorbs obedience. The use of the bible works as a vehicle which at once liberates Protestant conscience and subsumes it through Elizabeth, as head of both church and state. The bible becomes a contract whereby Protestant conscience, 'for euer […] free', is moulded into a political narrative of duty and obedience. Those who 'this booke adore', Elizabeth recounts, 'is certaine ne're to perish', and their names 'shalbe in an eternall scrowle' (F3v). Obedience to God reinforces

---

65 Richard Duerden, 'Equivalence or Power? Authority and Reformation Bible Translation', in *The Bible as Book: The Reformation*, ed. by Orlaith O'Sullivan (London: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2000), pp. 9–20 (pp. 11, 19).

Elizabeth's own political power: in both *The Whore of Babylon* and *If You Know Not Me*, Elizabeth's appropriation of the vernacular bible becomes a vehicle by which Protestantism is delineated from Catholicism and politicised. Heywood's representation of the coronation, however, is more intent on emphasising a vision of nationhood which embraces the citizen more explicitly. 'This is true foode for rich men and poore', Elizabeth promises the 'thowsand […] faithfull Cittizens' who flock to welcome their new queen (F3v). Presenting her with 'Purse and Bible' (F3v), the Lord Mayor's greeting amongst the throngs of supporters emphasises not only the religious, but also the secular and civic aspects of Elizabeth's authority and responsibility.

Dekker is more overtly political in *The Whore of Babylon*, where the bible becomes the opening symbol of confessional division against which the forces of evil (The Empress of Babylon and her followers) and good (Titania and the Fairies) are diametrically mapped out. That it is the councillors whose eyes are opened to Truth in Dekker's dumb-show underscores the sense that national religious issues are the monopoly of the elite. Conducted in council-chambers and court rooms, the play always gives the sense that religious reform is being viewed through the lens of foreign policy. The only moment of citizen fellowship where the boundary between court and city is collapsed is in the concluding Counter-Armada when subjects muster eagerly to the call for religious war. Part 1 of *If You Know Not Me*, by contrast, seems more interested in exploring the nation's religious and political identity not only in terms of warfare but also from a civic perspective. This prepares the audience for the sequel where the plot is divided between the construction of the Royal Exchange and the Spanish Armada. In this significantly longer second Part, the focus on the commercial life of London grounds the play's international perspective within the more domestic concerns of its citizen audience.

Rowley's *When You See Me* includes an unusual episode which similarly attempts to dissolve the boundaries between monarch and subject and to place local and international political concerns side by side. After attending to some court business, Henry VIII, concerned about the quality of the city's watchmen, decides to visit them with Dudley and Compton that evening in disguise. Based on an episode from Stow's *Annals* and further articulated through a 'strong ballad and chapbook tradition', this comic scene is very much concerned with the king's ability to safeguard local

governance.[66] After passing through the watch with ease, the king recognises that responsible rule cannot be confined to the court-room:

> Fond heedlesse men, what bootes it for a King,
> To toyle himselfe in this high state affaires,
> To summon Parhaments, and call together
> The wisest heads of all his Prouinces:
> Making statutes for his subiects peace,
> That thus neglecting them, their woes increase.
>
> (D3r)

Complete focus upon 'high state affaires', 'Parliaments' and 'statutes' is then synonymous with neglect of the nation's subjects. For Grant, this moment of disguise functions as a microcosm for the play's non-censorship mechanism of disguising political commentary as history.[67] By focusing on 'the contract between government, officers and the populace' in such scenes, 'the play can be read as informing King James of failures in government which need redressing'.[68] Apart from a general sense of people abusing positions of authority both in local and central government, Grant, however, is not specific about the nature of these failures.

With the successive printings and performances of Rowley's play, this scene may well have been perceived as increasingly anti-Jacobean as James's failure to cultivate the special bond between monarch and subject for which Elizabeth was repeatedly celebrated became more pertinent. The finale of the scene, however, appears to contain the most explicit condemnation of Jacobean policy. Here the notorious thief and murderer, Black Will — 'knowne and feared though the seuenteene Prouinces' (D3r) according to his own evaluation — falls into a duel with Henry after the latter questions his valour and manhood. 'King Henry's bellicose example' in defeating Black Will, according to Grant, 'argues for a less pacifist royal military policy for the present and future'.[69] Although the scene might have been aimed more directly at Prince Henry and ideologically superimposed on Frederick from 1613, this reading of King Henry's competent chivalric image is undercut by his general attitude to the reformed faith. This

---

66 Grant, p. 136.

67 Grant, p. 139.

68 Grant, p. 137.

69 Grant, p. 141.

is especially the case in the final scene of the *When You See Me* which shies away from a militant confessional line. Here Emperor Charles is welcomed to court by King Henry. Henry refers to Charles as 'the hope of Christendome' (K1r), a label reciprocated by the Emperor when he describes the English King as 'defender of the antient Christian faith' (K4r). 'Antient' almost implies that the Reformation never happened, or that King Henry is not committed to its ideals. More likely, however, is that Rowley, writing under Prince Henry's patronage, is underlining the sense of the Reformation as a continual process, one which the heir-apparent's chivalric enthusiasm might lead in the right direction.

As critics like Grant and Walsh F. Nostbakken have recognised, however, Edward (and his inevitable comparison with Prince Henry) is the focus of true reform in Rowley's play.[70] Even King Henry himself seems to recognise this when he tells Cranmer 'he is all our hopes, | That what our age shall leaue vnfinished, | In his faire raigne shall be accomplished' (F1v). That he is the voice of reason who intervenes to save Queen Katherine from the Catholic conspiracies of Bonner and Gardiner might suggest, as Brian Walsh argues, that 'the play locates in Edward the real beginnings of English Protestantism'.[71] Again, however, this is complicated at the end of the play when Edward presents Charles with the 'golden garter of the knighthood's order' (K3v). Chivalry, in this moment, rather than fuelling confessional antagonisms, becomes a marker of international diplomatic unity. As Walsh argues, the end of the play 'would seem to advocate a non-confessionally based foreign policy for England, a controversial issue at a time when, peace with Spain notwithstanding, Catholicism was regularly regarded by English Protestants as the church of the Antichrist'.[72] King Henry's concluding lines in the play underline this sense of diplomatic conciliation:

> First in our Court weele banquet merrily,
> Then mount on steedes, and girt in complete steele,
> Weele tugge at Barriers, Tilt and turnament:
> Then shall yee see the Yeomen of my guard
> Wrestle, shoote, throw the sledge, or pitch the barre,
> Or any other active exercise:
> Those triumphs past, weele forthwith haste to Windsor,

---

70 F. Nostbakken, 'Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me*: Political Drama in Transition', *Cahiers Élisabéthains,* 47 (1995), 71–78.

71 Walsh, 'Letters', p. 118.

72 Brian Walsh, *Unsettled Toleration: Religious Difference on the Shakespearean Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 153.

S. Gorges knight shall be the Christian Emperour.
(L2r)

Chivalric 'triumphs' interweave with diplomacy as military performance celebrates international political conciliation through the shared European cultural framework of chivalry.[73] It seems likely that *When You See Me* was performed at court towards the end of 1604, probably less than three months after a Spanish embassy had signed the Treaty of London, a moment marked by an elaborate banquet and entertainment.[74] Diplomacy was inherently theatrical and Rowley, in this finale, may have been consciously nodding towards the Anglo-Spanish treaty as a continuation of Henrician foreign policy. Much like *Barriers*, performed in honour of Prince Henry six years later, *When You See Me* finds space for chivalry within a framework of Jacobean orthodoxy, and suggests some of the tensions concerning Jacobean policy which found a locus in father and son.

Despite this final note of confessional conciliation, Edward's lines to Charles conclude with a caveat which underlines these tensions: 'as my father hath commanded me | I entertaine your royall Maiesty' (K3v). Like Prince Henry, Edward, in his 'tender infancie' (K3v), must ultimately be circumscribed by his father's policies. Like the young Prince of Wales, only ten at the first performance of *When You See Me*, Edward's chivalric image of stern Protestantism can only represent 'hopes' still to be 'accomplished'. Furthermore, the marriage of Elizabeth and Frederick would have invested these lines with new diplomatic significance when the play reappeared in 1613. To mark the occasion, Frederick was elected to the Order of the Garter on 7 December 1612, and the investiture took place at Windsor on 7 February, a week before the wedding. A fireworks show on 11 February, three nights before the wedding, appropriated the motifs and formulae of chivalric romance as Frederick 'appeared […] as St. George'.[75] In the display,

---

73 On the intersections between diplomacy and performance, albeit in a French context, see Ellen R. Welch, *A Theatre of Diplomacy: International Relations and the Performing Arts in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

74 See Grant (p. 132) who suggests 23/24 November for a likely date of court performance.

75 Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 10. For a full account of the fireworks, see John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, his Royal Consort, Family, and Court*, 4 vols (London: 1828), II, pp. 527–41.

St. George is shown to slay a dragon and rescue the imprisoned queen from the captor necromancer's tower. 'Coming between the investiture and wedding', writes Yates, the show 'was clearly intended as an allegory of the Elector Palatine as St George, as patron of the Order of the Garter, clearing the world of evil enchantment'.[76] The hopes for a more militant foreign policy pinned onto Prince Henry, then, seemed to transfer almost seamlessly onto Frederick, as did the patronage of Prince Henry's Men.

Although, as Walsh argues, *When You See Me* 'offers a less clearly militant vision of Protestant triumph', the international diplomatic climate of 1613 opened the play up to a more fluid and aggressively Protestant interpretation.[77] Nonetheless, the fact remains that both Rowley and Heywood's rival dramatizations of Foxean history tread the confessional line much more carefully than Dekker's does. Although Part 2 of *If You Know Not Me* ends, like *The Whore of Babylon,* with an account of the Counter-Armada, the play is dominated by the mercantile exploits of Thomas Gresham in founding the Royal Exchange. The combination of mercantile and martial concerns offers an intriguing valorisation of London's merchant community which is further articulated intertheatrically through more direct mercantile appropriations of chivalric culture as we saw In *Four Prentices of London* and *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*. The militant potential is further underplayed by the unusually sympathetic portrait of Philip II in Part 1 of *If You Know Not Me* where the Spanish *jure uxoris* intervenes to save Elizabeth and to mitigate her rapprochement with Queen Mary. This might seem remarkably odd considering this is the same man who will wage the Armada against Elizabeth; it, however, makes clear what was a widespread analysis of the diplomatic situation. Although undeniably anti-Catholic, Heywood's play underlines the fact that such popular sentiment cannot be simply equated with an explicit military interpretation. As such, the ostensibly unexpected shift to the mercantilism of Part 2 might work to suggest how the economic activity of London merchants could work both to facilitate and counteract the financial ramifications which were inexorably a part of war. Confessionally more moderate and more interested in commercial activity and local governance, then, Heywood and Rowley's apocalyptic plays speak to the adaptability of Foxe and, in the context of Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations, demonstrate that the

---

76 Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment,* p. 4.

77 Walsh, 'Letters', p. 116.

intransigent anti-Catholicism of the Jacobean history play is never simply a matter of militant Protestant propaganda.

Frederick, King of Bohemia, and Protestant Prophecy

As Gordon McMullan argues, 'The *veritas filia temporis* iconography had acquired a new lease of life at the time of the first production of *Henry VIII* in response to James's perceived indifference to the fate of continental Protestants'.[78] Its cultural saturation — reinforced by Middleton's *Triumphs of Truth* and the cancelled anonymous *Masque of Truth* the same year — promulgated the popular myth that Elizabeth Stuart was a Gloriana reincarnated, and that the Anglo-German union promised the resumption of English military action against the Antichrist and the end of Babylonian power in Europe, epitomized by Habsburg dominance. When Frederick accepted the crown of Bohemia toward the end of September 1619, following his election by the Bohemian Estates on August 26, the notion of a revived militant Protestant Elizabeth became more pertinent as Cranmer's prophecy seemed on the verge of being fulfilled. For the first time, this placed the confessional balance of the electoral German states in favour of Protestants and threatened an Imperial and international escalation of the initially localized Bohemian rebellion. With Elizabeth Stuart and Frederick spearheading the international Protestant movement as Queen and King of Bohemia, Dekker's apocalyptic-chivalric allegory would resonate powerfully and prophetically in the imaginations of the Fortune theatre playgoers. Although Frederick's patronage of the English playing company was inactive and little more than a royal convention within the contemporary licensing system, we should be careful not to dismiss the importance of its symbolic associations.

Zealous millenarian Protestants were quick to interpret news of Frederick's election as a providential and apocalyptic victory for the True Church, promised by Revelation. For John Harrison, an English 'commercial and political agent', it was a start at least.[79] '[T]hese good beginnings', he wrote in *A Short Relation* (1619), an account of

---

78 McMullan, 'Introduction', p. 68.

79 Nabil Matar, 'Ian J. Gentles, 'Philip Skippon', *ODNB*, accessed 12 Feb 2020.

Frederick and Elizabeth's departure from the Palatine court in Heidelberg for Prague, paved the road 'to the finall destruction of *that man of sin*, and desolation of *that great City Babylon*: according to that prophecie in the Revelation, which of necessitie must be fulfilled'.[80] Although 'these good beginnings' would be short lived, earning Frederick the pejorative sobriquet of 'The Winter King', for many at the end of 1619 they were a divine call to 'Christian Princes' to unite '*with one consent to fulfill his will*, against that menstruous, and monstrous *whore of Babylon*'.[81] Propelled by a Calvinist belief in his election as a divine appointment, a staunch sense of personal honour, and a constitutional fear that the Austrian House of Habsburg was attempting to turn the Holy Roman Empire into another of its heritable possessions, Frederick was taking up the mantle of the militant international Protestant cause which Dekker's play, in this new context, appears to encourage.

Harrison's tract, emphasizing that Frederick was 'lawfully and freelie Elected' and justifying his controversial decision to accept the crown as made in the 'defence of religion', engages explicitly with these notions of apocalyptic prophecy and revival.[82] 'These good beginnings', heralded by Frederick's impending coronation, are continued into posterity by Harrison through an account of the conduct and expressions of Frederick's family, which depict them as reincarnations of militant English royalty. In 'the face and countenance' of Frederick's son, Henry, Harrison 'observed some diuine thing extrordinarie which ravished my heart, & may giue the world to conceave, he will one day make good all those great hopes which we[re] dead in *Prince Henrie*, but revived againe in him'. Similarly, in the 'sweete demeanour' of Elizabeth Stuart, Harrison, employing the same image as *The Whore of Babylon* and *Henry VIII*, finds another '*Queene Elizabeth* revived also agayne in her, the only *Phoenix* of the world'. Harrison's depiction of Elizabeth combines militant chivalric and religious energy, becoming a reimagined Counter-Armada: 'shewing her self like that *virago* at *Tilburie* in *eightie eight*: an other *Queene Elizabeth*, for so now she is: and what more she may be in time, or her royall

---

80 John Harrison, *A Short Relation of the departure of the high and mightie Prince Frederick* (Dort: 1619), A3r.

81 Harrison, *A Short Relation,* A3r.

82 Harrison, *A Short Relation,* A1r (title page), A2r.

yssue, is in gods hands to dispose to his glorie, and the good of his church'.[83] As in Dekker's dumb-show, time is the cosmic force which promises the fulfilment of God's ultimately Protestant prophecy.

Harrison's career presents a fascinating symbolic parallel to the stage history of *The Whore of Babylon* and its contingent religious political contexts. His zealous commitment to militant apocalyptic thought, evident in his writings, is further echoed by his attempts to gain royal patronage. Harrison had been made a member of Prince Henry's privy chamber upon James's accession. When the heir-apparent died, however, Harrison struggled to find royal favour and eventually made his way to Germany to seek Frederick's patronage. Much like the transfer of patronage from Prince Henry's Men to the Elector Palatine's Men, Harrison's relocation and writing bring to the fore the sense that Frederick and Elizabeth had become the revived figureheads for the international Protestant cause. Frederick's patronage of Harrison's tracts confirms his explicit rejection of his father-in-law's stance on European diplomatic affairs. Jason White argues that this militant Protestant 'propaganda' which 'utilized pre-existing tropes about the militant Protestant hero and the godly prince' was a conscious effort on Frederick's part to 'present himself to an English-speaking audience as a humble Protestant warrior chosen by God to battle the Antichrist and pave the way for Christ's return'.[84] Alongside *A Short Relation* (1619), Harrison's tract *The Messiah Already Come* (1613; revised and reprinted in 1619) again expresses an apocalyptic conception of history whereby these hopes are reincarnated in successive Protestant rulers. First 'published seven yeares agoe, and Printed in the Low-Countries; not long after the death of that noble Prince *Henry* my master', Harrison's dedicatory epistle to Frederick describes how events have led him 'to revise it, and publish it anew, vnder the Protection of [Frederick]'. As in *A Short Relation*, Harrison sees 'the name of *Prince Henry* […] revived again to Gods glory' in Frederick's son and 'likewise the name of *Queene Elizabeth*' in Elizabeth Stuart. These 'two names', writes Harrison, are 'yet precious, and ever will be in the hearts of the English Nation, and other Nations likewise'. Following

---

83 Harrison, *A Short Relation,* A3r.

84 Jason White, *Militant Protestantism and British Identity, 1603–1642* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), p. 41.

in their footsteps, Frederick has been 'raised vp of God' in order to become a 'happy instrument' in the 'finall desolation of that *Mysterie of Iniquitie Babylon*'.[85]

Harrison's revival of the Tilbury image in *A Short Relation* is also a defining feature of Dekker's Armada finale in *The Whore of Babylon*. Titania appears 'in the camp' before her 'warriors' to announce:

> Trust me, I like the martial life so well,
> I could change courts to camps, in fields to dwell.
> 'Tis a brave life; methinks it best becomes
> A Prince to march thus, between guns and drums!
> My fellow soldiers I dare swear you'll fight,
> To the last man, your Captain being in sight.
> (5.3.8–13)

Titania speaks the muscular language of chivalry; 'camps', as opposed to 'courts', are not only markers of the 'brave life', but the place where foreign policy is cemented, and thus where a godly 'Prince' belongs. This dissolution of the court/camp dichotomy invests the scene with an important sense of communality that is pivotal to Dekker's portrayal of the Counter-Armada:

> FLORIMEL. Men faster came to fight than to a feast.
> FIDELI. Nay, women sued to us they might be pressed.
> PARTHENOPHIL. Old grandmas that on crutches bear up age
> Full nimbly buckled armours on their sons,
> And when 'twas on, she clapped him on his back.
> And spake thus, 'Run. My boy, fight till th'art dead.
> Thy blood can never be more bravely shed!'
> (5.2.214–20)

This collective public zeal for the war effort, no doubt, was an appeal to the nationalist sentiments of the firmly anti-Spanish London audiences. Krantz writes that by the time of the play's original performance in 1606,

> the defeat of the Spanish Armada had […] become an historic symbol of Popish treachery, and the English victory served to illustrate God's protection of Protestantism as the True Church, Protestant soldiers as the army of Christ described in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and England as the chosen leader in an international 'war' against Catholicism in which Spain was the chief adversary.[86]

---

85 John Harrison, *The Messiah Already Come* (Amsterdam: 1619), ¶3r.

86 Krantz, pp. 272–73.

The popular appeal of the Armada victory and its mythologizing of the Tilbury image can be seen in the twenty-eight ballads which were registered within five months of the event (of which only four survive).[87] But such apocalyptic Tudor mythologizing of the Armada enjoyed an extensive print history. In *The Jovial Broom Man*, printed in 1640, the defeat was still a matter of national pride: 'At Tilbury Campe with Captain Drake, | Hey, &c. | I made the Spanish fleet to quake'.[88] Thus in 1619, when the Spanish Match increasingly seemed an imminent possibility to the general populace, Dekker's play would be clear in its opposition to Jacobean foreign policy. In the face of the negotiations, the potential appeal of a revival of the English naval triumph against Spain thirty-one years before spoke to the gulf between King James's pursuit for improved Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations and popular anti-Spanish sentiment. Nor would the symbolic associations with the Elector Palatine's Men be missed. Dekker's call for a 'second phoenix' to 'rise' was being answered by James's own son-in-law and daughter.

The Chivalry of Spiritual Diplomacy

The apocalyptic historical framework in *The Whore of Babylon* encourages a mode of interpretation whereby temporal events signify a wider cosmic and spiritual historical process. The intersection of allegorical and historical characters in Dekker's account of the Counter-Armada clarifies this relationship. En route to Beria, Truth and Plain Dealing, joined by Time, lead the soldiers into battle. Asserting the spiritual prerogative of the true Protestant Church as a justification for bloodshed, Time instructs a volunteer: 'You fight | In your great Fairy's quarrel, and Truth's right' (5.3.8–9). Chivalry and religion work hand in hand as the war effort is represented as a crusade for the sanctity of the book which Titania kisses in the play's opening dumb-show. This intersection is expanded upon when Time addresses his daughter, Truth:

> Go, thou most godlike maid, and buckle on
> The breastplates fetched from thine own armoury;

---

87 John J. McAleer, 'Ballads on the Spanish Armada', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 4.4, (1963), 602–12 (p. 602).

88 Richard Crimsal, *The Ioviall Broome man* (London: 1640), p. 167.

> Let every soldier wear one. On each leader
> Bestow a guiding-staff, and a strong shield
> That may as faithful be to his good sword
> As thou art to his heart. Head all the spears
> With gold of angel-proof; sit like a dove
> Upon the horseman's helm, and on his face
> Fan with thy silver wings sweet victory.
>
> (5.3.13–21)

Drawing on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (6:11–17), the scriptural source of the New Testament military allegory, Dekker represents the True Church as a soldier of Christ (*miles christianus*) fortified in armour. The physical and spiritual work in harmony as the 'shield', a 'faithful' protector to the good 'sword', serves as a temporal metaphor for the spiritual protection offered by Protestant Truth. Dekker describes God as '[t]he General of all armies', and the notion of God as a military commander invests Titania's Fairies with the confidence that they are fighting in the name of spiritual justice (5.2.239). Upon hearing the news of the impending Armada, Titania responds with a sense of calm resolve reflecting this spiritual confidence: 'Let it come on: our General leads above them. | Earthquakes may kingdoms move, but not remove them' (5.2.9–10).

In its monastic origins, *miles christianus* was intended as a spiritual metaphor. The Crusades, however, undermined its intended metaphorical implications, and as the division between secular and monastic life became increasingly less demarcated, the allegory was prone to military interpretation. Over three centuries later, expressions of godly warfare fuelled and sought to justify an interventionist position for England in the escalating confessional tensions of 1619 Europe for the 'defence of religion', as Harrison puts it in *A Short Relation*. Originally designed to promote a core of Christian virtues against the influence of Satan, the notion of spiritual warfare again took on very literal connotations, enabling 'Puritans to conceive of their spiritual task in political and military terms'.[89] In his treatise *The Whole Armour of God* (1616, republished in 1619), Puritan clergyman and preacher at St. Ann Blackfriars, William Gouge outlines the grounds upon which the transition from the metaphorical to the literal might take place. 'The *CONSTANT* compleat *Souldier* doth oppose | The *Failing* World, the *Infecting* Flesh, the Diuell, | In *Iesuited* Angel-Shape', announces the opening verse description of its

---

89 Jackie DiSalvo, *War of Titans: Blake's Critique of Milton and the Politics of Religion* (London: Feffer and Simons, 1983), p. 25.

frontispiece.[90] When the devil, however, is in 'Jesuited angel-shape', the allegory is no longer simply a metaphor of spiritual self-protection. Drawing heavily on Revelation, Gouge describes how the existence of 'Antichrists vassals' is geographically proportional to 'where the preaching of the Word is rare'. '[F]or the safety of the Kingdome, and the furtherance of Religion', Gouge urges his readers to 'treate of means whereby the number of Papists may be diminished'.[91] As the example of Gouge demonstrates, the allegorical and apocalyptic Book of Revelation provided particularly fertile territory for polemicists to find contingent religio-political specifics in their exegesis. The post-Reformation editions and commentaries of Revelation printed in vast numbers in England — nearly a thousand between 1522 and 1700 — routinely 'argue that' the scriptural text 'describes the emergence and eventual destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in temporal history'.[92] Protestant readings of Revelation, with varying degrees of militarism, identified the Catholic Church with the Antichrist and expanded its chivalric-apocalyptic associations into the realm of European diplomacy in order to shape public opinion about England's foreign policy.

The confessional diametric opposition between the True Church and the Antichrist at the centre of these apocalyptic readings is rendered in beautiful visual detail on the title-page frontispiece of Gouge's treatise (see Figure 6). The façade of a temple, with the title set in its entrance, is framed by pillars, each guarded by a soldier. On the left, a forward-facing Constantine, celebrated for spreading the Christian faith, stands beneath the section of the temple roof headed 'A Christian Armed', and he bears the traditional *miles christianus* symbols of the 'shield of Faith' and "the sword of the Spirit' described by St. Paul. On the right stands Emperor Julian the Apostate with his back turned and his spear pointing indignantly toward heaven. On account of the myth of Constantine as British-born, the first Christian emperor provided a useful comparison to post-Reformation English monarchs. In *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe makes this association explicit in his dedicatory letter to Queen Elizabeth, in which a portrait of the queen is enclosed within the historiated initial *C* that begins the letter: 'Constantine the

---

90 William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God: or A Christians Spirituall Furniture, to keep him safe from all the assaults of Satan* (London: 1619), 'The Minde of the Front', preceding the title page.

91 Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God,* F8r.

92 Streete, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism,* p. 3.

greate and mightie Emperour, the sonne of Helene and Englyshe woman of this youre Realme and countrie (moste Christian and renowmed Pryncesse Queene Elizabeth)'.[93]

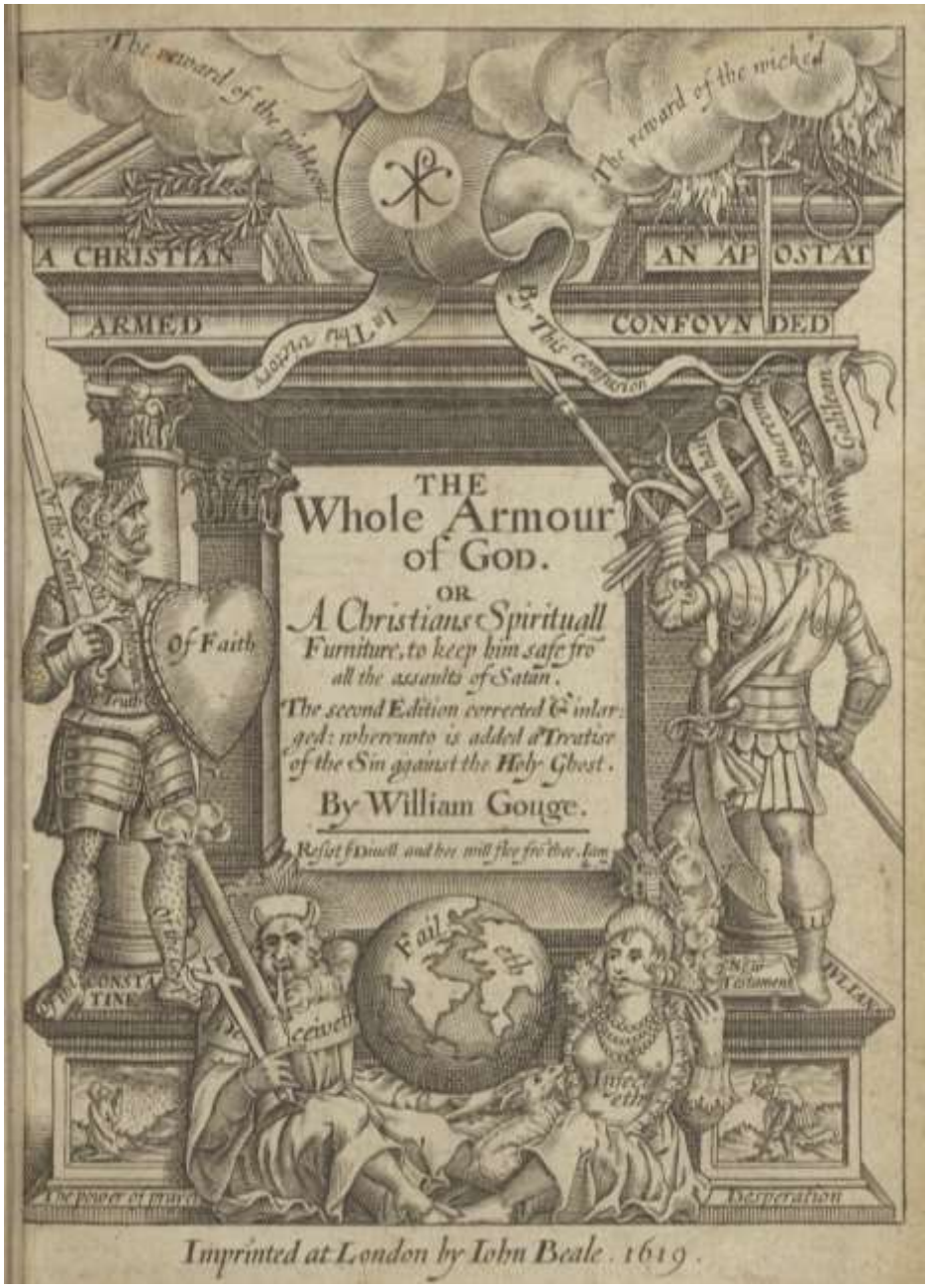


Figure 6. Title-page frontispiece of William Gouge, *The Whole Armour of God: or A Christians Spirituall Furniture, to keep him safe from all the assaults of Satan* (London: 1619).
Courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library (STC 12123).

93 John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London: 1563), B1r.

The implication, of course, was that Elizabeth had returned England away from the corruptions and persecutions of the Whore of Babylon under Queen Mary and back to the true religion. The associations between British monarchs and Constantine continued well into the Jacobean period. James Maxwell's *Admirable and Notable Prophesies* (1615), heavily indebted to Revelation, celebrated the Stuart monarchy in the apocalyptic terminology of the Last Emperor. The preface describes the work as

> A Discourse of God's special providence for […] the monarchy of Great Britain: wherein is showed by diverse probabilities, old predictions and prophecies, that from thence is likely to spring the last imperial monarchy, which would subvert Mahometism and Judaism, convert both Jews and Gentiles […] and restore both Church and Empire to the integrity they once had in the happy days of Constantine.[94]

By claiming the Stuart monarchy as direct descendants of Constantine, Maxwell articulates the notion of England as God's elect nation destined for 'the reformation of the Church of Rome and her daughters'. According to Maxwell's prophecies, the Stuart regime will be 'the last imperial monarchy', bringing an end to the Antichrist once and for all.[95]

International Protestantism and the Apocalypse

Maxwell's apocalyptic conception of history, and of England's specific role within it, is echoed by Archbishop George Abbot, to whom Maxwell's *Admirable and Notable Prophesies* is dedicated. In 1619, Abbot was explicit about his support of Frederick's claim to the Bohemian crown; in a letter to Secretary of State Robert Naunton on September 12, he gave his 'humble advice […] that there is no going back'. 'Satisfied in [his] Conscience, that the Cause is just', Abbot praises the deposition of 'that proud and bloudy man', Ferdinand, soon to be elected Holy Roman Emperor, 'because he hath taken a course to make that Kingdom not elective, but to take it from the donation of

---

94 James Maxwell, quoted in Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 158–59.

95 Maxwell, quoted in Reeves, p. 158.

another man'.[96] Here Abbot points up the constitutional fear, foregrounded in Frederick's official correspondence, that Ferdinand would work to make the electoral German territories part of the heritable Habsburg dominions. Like Harrison, Abbot sees Frederick's election as an apocalyptic and providential moment that promises the desolation of the Catholic Church: 'And when God hath set up the Prince, that is chosen to be a mark of honour through all Christendom, to propagate his Gospel, and to protect the oppressed; I dare not, for my part, give advice, but to follow where God leads'. In the events in the German states, Abbot 'foresee[s] the work of God' and the inevitable fulfilment of the prophecy that 'by piece and piece, the Kings of the earth […] shall now tear the Whore, and make her desolate, as St. *Iohn* in his Revelation hath fore-told'.[97]

Abbot is also optimistic that Frederick's election will 'strengthen the Union, will bring on the States of the Low-Countreys' and 'will stir up the King of *Denmark*', among other international Protestant support.[98] This echoes Harrison who, in *A Short Relation*, is explicit on the title page about his intent to

> encourage all other noble & heroicall spirits (especiallie our owne nation, whom in honour it first and chieffelie concerneth) by prerogative of that high, and soveraigne *Title*, haereditarie to our Kings & Princes: *defendees of the faith* to the lyke Christian resolution, against *Antichrist* and his *Adharents.*

The bottom of the title page draws from St. Paul (Rom. 8:31): 'Si Deus nobiscum quis contra nos' (If God be with us, who shall be against us).[99] An unshakeable conviction that he was acting on God's divine order seems inseparable from Frederick's decision to take the crown. Harrison, who insists that the Elector Palatine was 'not ambitiouslie aspiring', echoes Frederick's own letter of acceptance to the Protestant Estates of Bohemia: 'So from this we must notice along with you the special providence and predestination of God, who gives and confers down from above the kings, princes, and

---

96 George Abbot, 'Letter to Secretary Robert Naunton, 12 September 1619', in Henry Bennet, *Cabala, sive Scrinia Sacra, Mysteries of State and Government* (London: 1663), p. 110.

97 Abbot, p. 110.

98 Harrison, *A Short Relation*, A1r.

99 Abbot, p. 110.

lords, into the hearts of those, who have to elect them'.[100] Although Frederick was resolute in his belief that his election was ordained by God, he recognized his need for international support and, naturally, turned to his father-in-law. Early in 1619, James had renewed England's membership in the Protestant Union for another six years, an act which would give many including Frederick the false hope that he would offer military support to the Bohemian cause.

In the face of Frederick's persistent appeals for foreign aid, Dekker's play resonates powerfully. In *The Whore of Babylon*, Fideli, one of Titania's counsellors, and probably an allegorical portrait of the Earl of Leicester, describes Dutch pleas for English aid in terms that emphasize the ties of religious unity between the two nations:

> Neighbours: 'tis the nation,
> With whom our Fairies interchange commerce,
> And by negotiation grown so like us
> That half of them are Fairies; the other half
> Are hurtful Spirits that with sulphurous breath
> Blast their corn fields, deface their temples, clothe
> Their towns in mourning, poison hallowed founts,
> And make their goodliest cities stand like tombs
> Full of dead bodies, or like palaces,
> From whence the lords are gone, all desolate.
> They have but seventeen daughters young and fair,
> Vowed to live vestals, and to know the touch
> Of any forced or unreverend hand.
> (2.1.277–89)

Often described as virginal 'daughters', the seventeen imperial states of the Habsburg Netherlands, which stretched across parts of modern-day Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, are depicted here as ruthlessly persecuted by Spanish Catholic aggression. Anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish sentiment united the Dutch and English and the 1585 Treaty of Nonsuch (which made England's support official and made the Earl of Leicester governor general of the Netherlands) was perceived by militant Protestants not as a secular military alliance but as a religious union in a fierce apocalyptic war to defend the True Church. Although Leicester's campaign was disastrous, 'puritans' perceived it as a necessary chivalric 'crusade for the Gospel' — a matter of protection

---

[100] Harrison, *A Short Relation*, A1r; Frederick V, quoted in Brennan C. Pursell, *The Winter King: Frederick V of the Palatinate and the Coming of the Thirty Years' War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 78.

against Catholic conspirators, home and abroad, who repeatedly sought to overthrow the Reformed religion.[101]

The Palatinate had also supported the Dutch (as well as the Huguenots during the French civil war) and turned to the Protestant Union for aid in the Bohemian crisis. Although the Dutch sent monthly financial support as well as 1,500 men in late July, they 'were not keen to commit themselves to a military campaign without approval and assistance from England'. As Brennan Pursell argues, Frederick and the Bohemian Estates, conscious of James's diplomatic pragmatism and caution, 'sought to cast their actions' to the English king 'in the light of constitutional legitimacy and religious sympathy'.[102] These arguments, however, would have little effect on James, who explicitly rejected Frederick's candidacy and informed his son-in-law that even if the English treasury could afford it, he could not, as king, support popular rebellion on ideological grounds. Troubled by the unprecedented scenario whereby Frederick might hold two separate electoral states, the situation also raised significant constitutional concerns for James. Firmly committed to a diplomatic resolution, he would only offer to act as a mediator, alongside King Philip III, with the emperor. 'Even when the new monarch, together with James's daughter Elizabeth, had taken up residence in Prague', writes W.B. Patterson, 'James continued to ask for evidence that the monarchy of Bohemia was elective and that the Diet which had deposed Ferdinand and elected Frederick had acted legally and constitutionally'.[103] In *The Whore of Babylon*, Titania does not hesitate to support her fellow Fairies:

> In misery all nations should be kin
> And lend a brother's hand. Usher them in.
> Stood here my foes distressed, thus would I grieve them:
> Not how they ha' been, but how I might relieve them.
>
> (2.1.300–03)

In 1619, Dekker's representation of Elizabeth's benevolence in the face of Protestant persecution on the Continent, then, would implicitly rebuke James and his refusal to

---

101 Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), p. 81. As aforementioned, Leicester's failures are glossed over in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*.

102 Pursell, pp. 81–82, 53–54.

103 W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 303.

come to the rescue of his daughter and son-in-law. This time around, it was not simply Protestant allies, but family who '[s]tood […] distressed'.

Conclusion

In the 1607 'Lectori', Dekker tells the reader that although he did not see the play performed — 'mine ear stood not within reach of their larums' (Lectori, 31–32) — his experience with the theatre has taught him that the players most likely mutilated his play. This, of course, suggests that *The Whore of Babylon* was no roaring success in its original performance in 1606. Its chivalric-apocalyptic framework, however, meant that in moments of significant religious and political crisis, the play's polemical intent could echo again with renewed significance. Although the Gunpowder Plot had been met with popular indignation and intensified anti-Catholic sentiment, it was ultimately a domestic plot that did not seem to threaten any immediate escalation into an international confessional crisis. Furthermore, even the opening months of James's reign seemed to cement his namesake of 'rex pacificus'. The overt militancy of *The Whore of Babylon* stood vastly at odds with a monarch who would clearly only endorse military action once all diplomatic channels had been exhausted. When Frederick took the Bohemian crown in 1619, however, the call for an active international Protestant alliance, foregrounded by the Palatine-Stuart marriage, sounded more powerfully than it had before during James's reign. This was now not only a matter of religion, but one of family. While James showed his commitment to the tantalizing prospect of European peace through his continued pursuit of the Anglo-Spanish marriage, to support Frederick at the same time would involve the impossible and detrimental task of following two entirely contradictory foreign policies.

De la Fuente's letter clearly suggests that the revival of *The Whore of Babylon* was up and running by the end of October 1619 and required intervention. The timing of Frederick's election is hardly a coincidence; the Elector Palatine's Men no doubt saw the popular and symbolic appeal in reviving an apocalyptic allegory of Catholic intrigues against the True Church at a time when their patron was provocatively shifting the confessional balance of Germany. As such, *The Whore of Babylon* offers a fascinating case of a play's revival becoming more topical than its original production, a potential heightened by its archetypal characterization and apocalyptic framework. Dekker's call

for a 'second phoenix' to 'rise' was answered by the players' patron, and the international dynamics of the Protestant cause, foregrounded in the play by Fideli's account of Anglo-Dutch relations, had become even more pertinent. The appearance of a comet on November 18 the previous year only strengthened the apocalyptic sense of history at the heart of Dekker's play in revival, threatening bloodshed and finally an escalation of European confessional tensions which had seemed, time and time again, on the verge of erupting. In *An Astronomical Description* (1618), dedicated to King James, astrologer John Bainbridge sought to extrapolate 'certaine Morall Prognosticks or Applications drawne from the Comets motion and irradiation amongst the celestiall HIEROGLYPHICKS'.[104] Bainbridge describes how

> About the preaching of *Luther* were at least fiue Comets in tenne yeares, after which followed the happy departure of *Germany*, *England*, and many other Northerne parts from the spirituall *Babylon*. This new Comet doth giue vs hope, that the rest of Christendome before long will follow.[105]

Bainbridge interprets the previous comet of 1558 as 'a signe of much happinesse to the persecuted Protestants in *England*, and *Germany*'. Similarly the comet of 1577 indicated 'that howsoeuer the Evangelicall Churches in *France*, and the *Low-countries* might be for a time grieuously afflicted' that 'they should at length flourish, and triumph ouer their cruell aduersaries'.[106] Bainbridge's political interpretations of 'these celestiall signes' therefore unite the temporal and spiritual in a decisively militant and providential Protestant context.[107]

Bainbridge's interpretation is thus intimately in line with post-Reformation conceptions of apocalyptic history. 'Foxe's pattern of history', writes Spikes, 'demonstrated that the Elect of the Lord had always suffered persecution under the agents of Antichrist; it followed that martyrdom was the surest sign of election to God's

---

104 John Bainbridge, *An Astronomicall Description of the late Comet* (London: 1618), A1r (title page).

105 Bainbridge, E4r.

106 Bainbridge, E4r.

107 Bainbridge, E3r.

grace'.[108] In keeping with this vision of apocalyptic history, Bainbridge therefore rationalizes the persecutions suffered by French and Dutch Protestants as a necessary precondition for their eventual 'triumph'. Bainbridge asserts a biblical locus in his celestial interpretations by describing that 'blessed Starre, which conducted the Magi to Christs poore, but sacred nurcery' as a 'heauenly Harbenger'. As such, he understands 'those many new stars and Comets, which haue beene more this last Century' to 'signifie that glorious light of the Gospell'.[109] In *The Messiah Already Come*, Harrison also describes the Nativity in such terms, arguing that 'all the Astronomers & soothsayers of that age took speciall notice, adjudging it to portend universall good to the earth, some gathering thereupon; that some God discended from heauen to the benefite of mankind'.[110] The comet of 1618 had been answered in the constitutional uproar in the Holy Roman Empire, and Protestant millenarians turned their prophetic eyes toward the Continent and their last emperor, Frederick. The 1619 revival of *The Whore of Babylon*, alongside the extended print and performance lifespan of 'elect nation' plays, signals an enormous void between King James's foreign policy imperatives and popular opinion in late Jacobean England, which was heading toward a breaking point. De la Fuente's successful intervention to suspend Dekker's play suggests an English state increasingly willing to censor religio-political polemic in its intransigent pursuit of Anglo-Spanish diplomatic unity.

---

108 Spikes, p. 135.

109 Bainbridge, E3v–4r.

110 Harrison, *The Messiah Already Come*, D3r.

Coda

By 1624, the hopes for Anglo-Spanish dynastic and diplomatic unity had of course been dashed as the Duke of Buckingham and Prince Charles scrambled to urge Parliament to justify a radical revision to previous foreign policy — one which would have to wait for the king's death the following year to be enacted. With each of the broader foreign policy positions (anti-Spanish and pro-Spanish), the language and imagery of chivalry was invoked to communicate the intricacies of Anglo-Spanish diplomatic affairs in a range of contexts, regardless of whether those observations were optimistic, sceptical, or ironic. Charles's and Buckingham's 1623 trip to Madrid, for instance, intended to bring the protracted marriage negotiations to a close, had been coloured in the trappings of chivalric romance by some of those closest to the immediate situation. In a letter to Charles and Buckingham dated 27 February 1623 (nine days after they departed), King James described the pair as 'my sweet boys and dear venturous knights, worthy to be put in a new romance'.[1] Despite the tone of ironic gameplay, James's letter no doubt played upon the future king's own cultural chivalric expectations. As Colin Burrow notes, 'Charles was being fashionable, even slightly ahead of his times, in dashing across Europe in a false beard: his culture made him think he knew that gallant acts of social transgression were the way to a princess's heart and to the liberation of beleaguered states'.[2] As this thesis has shown, the extraordinary amount of chivalric material available in early modern England was an inextricable and defining part of that culture; not only in the commercial plays or courtly entertainments upon which this study has focused, or in the prose and poetry which it has touched upon, chivalric language and imagery shaped an extraordinary range of early modern life whether in heraldic, military, or as we saw in last chapter, religious culture. Despite James's aversion to its aggressive political energies, chivalry filtered into his own personal correspondence and remained a key component of Jacobean court life. Through his own princely education,

---

1 King James, *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. by G.P.V. Akrigg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), no. 190, p. 388.

2 Colin Burrow, 'Time to Mount Spain', *The London Review of Books*, 26.17 (2 September 2004).

military and especially literary, Charles no doubt held a storehouse of examples of chivalric heroics, real and imaginary, which he played out vicariously through his own adventure to Madrid.

Less surprisingly, Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy, famed for his belligerent militarism, also turned to chivalry to describe Charles's and Buckingham's trip as 'a Trick of those ancient Knight Errands who went up and down the World after that manner to undoe Inchantments'.[3] Unlike James's remark, Charles Emmanuel's description is religiously charged; as we saw with *The Faerie Queene* and *The Whore of Babylon*, Savoy uses the fictional framework of chivalric romance to comment upon the contemporary European political situation in anti-Catholic terms. The religious politics appear in the nod to the supernatural elements of romance. Romance plots, as Richard Kieckhefer notes, typically 'involved the disenchantment of [a] place or object', signifying 'the undoing of the original enchantment'.[4] Both in the early modern period, and still in much contemporary scholarship, the Protestant Reformation is intellectually and ideologically bound up with a rejection of spiritual magic and enchantment.[5] 'The medieval Church', writes Keith Thomas, 'appeared as a vast reservoir of magical power'.[6] That general interconfessional approach to magic is clear, for instance, in Book I of *The Faerie Queene* where Redcrosse's quest for the true Protestant Church depends on an (admittedly muddy) ideological disassociation from the enchantments of the deceptively beautiful Duessa, one which is manifested through the actual physical disrobing of the enchantress — a process clearly intended symbolically to uncover her layers of Catholic illusion. In the Duke of Savoy's line, then, 'undo[ing] Inchantments'

---

3 Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy, quoted by John Kerrigan, 'Thomas Carew', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 74 (1988), 311–50 (p. 311).

4 Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 111.

5 The major early study here is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. and intro. by Stephen Kalberg (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001), originally published in 1904–5. In 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', *The Historical Journal*, 51.2 (2008), 497–528, Alexandra Walsham provides a helpful survey of developments and challenges to this historiographical debate.

6 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 45.

performs somewhat similar work, suggesting the potential of the Spanish Match negotiations to appease the imperial ambitions of the Habsburg monarchy and, by extension, to encourage the restoration of the Palatinate. As would be the general propaganda thrust of Middleton's *A Game at Chess* (1624), the duke's line also implies foul play on the part of the Spanish by presenting the trip as a necessary 'Trick' to uncover its deliberately deceptive religious and political stratagems. David Bergeron notes how in James's letter to Charles and Buckingham we can sense the king 'trying to script the event and make it a romance, as if his fiction-making can create a reality'.[7] The same sort of imaginative 'romancing' process underlies Charles Emmanuel I's description of the diplomatic event, a reminder that, as we have seen at many points in this thesis, fictional representation and material reality frequently blur into one another under the auspices of chivalry.

Those connections between chivalric representation and state diplomacy remained central to the visit; '[a] chivalrous spectacle was played out in Madrid', writes John Kerrigan, 'almost a diplomatic masquerade'.[8] In several of the most significant diplomatic events of the early modern period, the forms and language of chivalry were serious and effective components. In the same general way in which Sidney's elaborate *Four Foster Children of Desire* served a dual political function of impressing the visiting French embassy and of navigating and participating in the complex diplomacy of Anglo-French relations in 1581, for instance, the entertainments staged for Charles in Madrid in 1623 were also an inextricable element of the uncertain international political process

---

7 David M. Bergeron, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), p. 120.

8 Kerrigan, 'Thomas Carew', p. 312. On 17 May 1623, Charles climbed a wall at Casa del Campo to gain access to the Infanta. Charles, argues Redworth, was modelling his actions on the opening scene of Fernando de Rojas' hugely popular *La Celestina* (1499) (Redworth, p. 98). In 'Sir Kenelm Digby's Interruptions: Piracy and Lived Romance in the 1620s', *Studies in Philology*, 113.2 (2016), 424–83, Joe Moshenska notes how *La Celestina* 'was very much in vogue among hispaniolated Englishmen: Charles bought a copy in Madrid, and it was translated into English by another member of Bristol's retinue, James Mabbe' (p. 445). The event was another misplaced expression of English chivalric gallantry and a further indication that Charles was playing out the visit at least partially in terms of chivalric culture. Charles also famously read the *Arcadia* in captivity, and even quoted a prayer from it on the scaffold of Whitehall before his execution in 1649. See Elizabeth A. Spiller, 'Speaking for the Dead: King Charles, Anna Weamys, and the Commemorations of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*', *Criticism*, 42.2 (2000), 229–51.

at hand.[9] Charles 'was the chivalric knight come to claim his virtuous lady', as Jerry Brotton puts it. 'But he was also the dynastic dealmaker on a mercenary mission to "mount Spain" (in the words of Olivares) and bring peace to Europe'.[10] Despite the commitments on both sides, however, the trip was a marked failure and Charles and Buckingham returned to England on 5 October 1623 empty-handed (admittedly to the great relief of the majority of the English population) after an ultimate deadlock vis-à-vis the religious concessions tied to the negotiations. Conscious of that religious intransigence on both sides, the newly returned Charles and Buckingham quickly 'placed themselves at the head of the anti-Spanish faction in England'.[11] Although this was a radical shift in foreign policy attitudes, chivalric culture would continue to provide much of the language and imagery for the new position. No longer the venturing knights of romance in quest of their princess, Charles and Buckingham quickly joined that faction in reverting to the more aggressive Protestant chivalric polemic which we saw in the previous chapter.

This transition in terms of the political application of chivalry is emphasised in part by Buckingham's extensive efforts to construct his artistic persona. As Christiane Hill notes, '[t]he ten years of Buckingham's patronage — between c. 1618 and his assassination in 1628 — witnessed the most pioneering commissions of painting in early seventeenth-century England'.[12] In Willem de Passe's 1625 equestrian portrait of the duke, for instance, Buckingham, lavishly costumed, sits confidently on his reared horse, reins in his left hand and military baton in the right (see Figure 7). In the background, underneath the raised horse, a naval fleet can be seen in preparation for expedition. From 1625 until his assassination by army lieutenant John Felton in 1628, Buckingham led the

---

9 David Sánchez Cano, 'Entertainments in Madrid for the Prince of Wales: Political Functions of Festivals', in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623*, ed. by Alexander Samson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 51–74.

10 Jerry Brotton, 'Buying the Renaissance: Prince Charles's Art Purchases in Madrid, 1623', in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623,* ed. by Alexander Samson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 9–26 (p. 18).

11 Cano, p. 51.

12 Christiane Hill, *Visions of the Courtly Body: The Patronage of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, and the Triumph of Painting at the Stuart Court* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2012), p. 125.

military campaigns for England's late intervention into the Thirty Years' War.[13] Specifically, then, De Passe's engraving foregrounds Buckingham's status as Lord Admiral. Although the duke's fashionable civilian dress connotes his courtly sophistication and gentlemanly accoutrements, the picture is, as Alastair Bellany notes, 'primarily an image of military authority'.[14] In Rubens's large canvas of Buckingham the same year, the duke is more militarised, presented in a similar levade equestrian pose but dressed in armour (see Figure 8). 'Like Rubens', writes Bellany, 'de Passe created an image of Buckingham that fused the warrior and the courtier, the soldier's steel with the favourite's silk'.[15] In both images, the courtly and chivalric are brought together in an expression of the gentleman-knight to emphasise Buckingham's social as well as military and political power (further underlined by the extensive list of the duke's titles at the bottom of De Passe's engraving).

At the centre of a radical reversal in English foreign policy in 1624, Buckingham took pains to fashion his image in heroic military terms. In the context of popular anti-Spanish sentiment, this was not an especially arduous task at first, and Buckingham was 'briefly represented as a hero in the aftermath of the failed Spanish negotiations'.[16] This, for instance, was the general thrust of Middleton's *A Game at Chess* which both enjoyed the longest run and attracted the largest audience of all Jacobean theatre. In a sensitive examination of the play's relationship to the internal parliamentary dynamics of the early 1620s, for instance, Thomas Cogswell argues convincingly that Middleton's hugely successful play 'served a critical propaganda function for' Charles and Buckingham by offering 'a plausible justification for the trip' to Madrid and inciting 'popular jingoism'.[17]

---

13 On England's involvement in the Thirty Years' War, see Adam Marks, 'England, the English and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of St. Andrews, 2012). On Scottish involvement, see *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War: 1618–1648*, ed. by Steve Murdoch (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

14 Alastair Bellany, 'Buckingham Engraved: Politics, Print Images and the Royal Favourite in the 1620s', in *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. by Michael Hunter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 215–36 (p. 224).

15 Bellany, p. 229.

16 Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 51.

17 Thomas Cogswell, 'Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 47.4 (1984), 273–88 (p. 284). For a similar



Figure 7. Willem van de Passe, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1625) P,2.157. AN 115387. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

position, see Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 128–29. For the counter-argument which sees the play as a satire on Buckingham, see Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 151–171, and Richard Dutton, 'Receiving Offence: *A Game at Chess* Again', in *Literature and Censorship in Renaissance England*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 50-71.



Figure 8. Peter Paul Rubens, Sketch for Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Buckingham (1625). © Kimbell Art Museum, AP 1976.08.

Discussing the 'political background' of *A Game at Chess*, Revels editor T. H. Howard-Hill describes how:

> England's escape from a Spanish alliance was seen as a patriotic victory comparable to the destruction of the Spanish Armada and the frustration of the Gunpowder Plot, and renewed patriotic fervour was directed towards support of the Protestant cause in Germany, against England's old enemy, Spain.[18]

In its anti-Spanish take on the series of Catholic assaults on England, *A Game at Chess* also embraces the apocalyptic political view at the centre of the Jacobean history play.

---

18 T.H. Howard-Hill, 'Introduction', in Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chess*, ed. by T.H. Howard Hill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 1–60 (p. 16).

Its exclusive focus, however, on the trip to Madrid appears to support Cogswell's thesis; in a climate of 'renewed patriotic fervour', Middleton plays upon popular Hispanophobia with an eye towards the impending reversal of the state approach to Anglo-Spanish relations. The main difference, of course, between a play like *The Whore of Babylon* and *A Game at Chess* was that the latter's anti-Spanish Protestant politics were soon to be in line with state foreign policy.

What is striking about De Passe's engraving of the duke, argues Bellany, is its 'implicit dialogue with a sceptical current of libellous critique' aimed at Buckingham.[19] The same observation applies to Rubens's canvas and *A Game at Chess*; even before the resumption of the Anglo-Spanish War in 1625, defamatory libels attacked Buckingham by focusing on a range of often speculative criticisms including his sexuality, crypto-Catholicism, and what was seen as excessive sympathy towards the Spanish. Much also centred on the duke's considerable political failures; the 1625 naval expedition to Cádiz, for instance, in preparation in the background of De Passe's engraving, 'proved a disgrace to the British navy'.[20] As Lord High Admiral, Buckingham governed the expedition which returned empty handed only two months after departing on 6 October 1625. The public embarrassment is registered in an anonymous manuscript verse libel. 'This service thus ended', writes the author, 'wee homewards intended | To eate no more rotten beefe' — an allusion to the fact that the mission was disastrously compromised by a lack of food provisions.[21] 'Its such a condition', he continues, 'to have a commission | To bringe out so many men | And doe nothing more, but eate up your store, | And then goe whome agen'. The poem reaches a playfully dismissive

---

19 Bellany, p. 228.

20 A.J. Hoenselaars, *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama, 1558–1642* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 216

21 *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603–1689*, ed. by R.H. Fritze and W.B. Robison (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), p. 61. The lines could also plausibly allude to Sir Edward Cecil who led the ground operation.

conclusion; after praising Charles for his warlike spirt, the poet states that 'in his next choyse hee shall have my voyce | For a wiser man to commande'.[22]

There is no doubt that in his own expedition, governed in absentia, Buckingham was looking back to the Elizabethan war party, and more immediately to Drake's successful raid on Cádiz in 1587. It is worth quoting at length Paul E.J. Hammer, who sums up the sense of expectation beautifully:

> Memories and accounts of Elizabethan military exploits assumed a greater prominence after 1618, thanks to the controversy over Ralegh's execution and the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in Germany. The past seemed to offer inspiration and guidance for a new generation of soldiers and sailors, and useful propaganda for those who agitated for war. A welter of publications testified to the interest in Elizabethan exploits. […] Other new works celebrated the exploits of Drake. There were also publications which consciously stirred up nostalgia for Essex. […] Stories of Elizabethan exploits, and especially of Essex and Cadiz, were thus a powerful presence when England returned to war in 1625.This point was never made more clearly than when an English fleet again attacked Cadiz in October of that year. When the fleet sailed into the Bay of Cadiz, the ghosts of 1596 lay heavily upon them.[23]

'The weight of the legend of 1596, which had been so carefully and competitively crafted by Essex, Ralegh and others', concludes Hammer, 'proved too great a burden to bear'.[24] In the face of political failure and the consequent criticism it brought, Buckingham's need to co-opt heroic chivalric imagery served his own personal ambitions, as was frequently the case at the early modern court. Images like De Passe's underlined a strained attempt to recast contemporary military campaigns in the lustre of past exploits, especially those of the Elizabethan war party. As time went on and the military fiascos continued, the comparison with Essex and Ralegh became farcical.

The duke's self-serving manipulations of chivalry are of course only one strand in the cultural space. Chivalry, after all, would become a central component of Caroline culture as a whole, marked for instance by Charles's equestrian portraits and his revival

---

22 Yale Beinecke MS Osborn b.197, p. 226, in 'Early Stuart Libels: an edition of poetry from manuscript sources', ed. by Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, *Early Modern Literary Studies Text Series* I (2005), n. p.

23 Paul E.J. Hammer, 'Myth-Making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596', *The Historical Journal*, 40.3 (1997), 621–42 (pp. 640–41).

24 Hammer, 'Myth-Making', p. 642.

of the Garter cult; although the tournament would finally come to an end under Charles's reign, that discontinuation, as J.S.A. Adamson has so convincingly demonstrated, 'signalled a reappraisal of the inheritance of Elizabethan and Jacobean chivalry, and its redirection into new forms of expression'. Albeit in different form, 'the language and imagery of chivalry […] continued to occupy a central place in the intellectual world of the Caroline court'.[25] As this thesis has demonstrated, the persistence of chivalric forms and imagery in early modern England is inextricable from their malleability — their ability to repeatedly repurpose the past according to contemporary political, social, and military pressures. The disappearance of the tournament in Caroline culture should not reflect the decline of chivalry, for instance, but rather should encourage us to attend to the ways in which various aspects of that ideology were emphasised in order to accommodate and bolster the ideological, intellectual, and artistic priorities of the new king and his court. Facilitated by the court masque, chivalric culture, argues Adamson, underwent a significant transformation in the 1630s Caroline court where performances like Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) and Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* (1634) moved away from anti-Spanish militarism towards a celebration of the Caroline peace. With that came a reformulation of the knight from a warrior to a defender of the peace, practising the sorts of civic values which Jonson had recommended in *Barriers* over two decades earlier.[26]

This shift in emphasis is a reminder of the versatility and political imprecision of chivalry, able, for instance, to promote both war and peace. As we saw at the beginning of this thesis, that ambiguous tension was placed in somewhat awkward balance in *Barriers* in order to appeal to a spectrum of political sensibilities. 'Whether chivalry was deployed to stress loyalty to the crown (the chivalry of the Garter) or loyalty to the commonwealth (the chivalry of the rebellious Hotspur in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*)',

---

25 J.S.A. Adamson, 'Chivalry and Political Culture in Caroline England', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 161-97 (p. 196).

26 That said, the myth of the peaceful 1630s was compromised by Charles's hankering after militarized roles and his tendency to reach for the sword when he thought he could afford to do so: as in 1638, 1639 (with the Scots), and 1642 (with parliament). See Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 205–38.

writes Adamson, 'its political implications remained, in general, unspecific'.[27] 'It is the mynd, that maketh good or ill' (VI.ix.30.1), Spenser tells us in *The Faerie Queene*. That proverbial commonplace might help us to reflect finally upon the application of chivalry, not only in early modern culture, but holistically: as this thesis makes clear, it is the process of thinking — the intentions with which chivalry is manipulated and the ends, whether political, social, or military, to which is it employed — which is often most revealing. Quite simply, think of the vast array of responses which Essex's behaviour could invite. The significance of chivalry, it is clear, lies in the eye of the beholder.

As we saw, that political ambiguity was at the centre of *Clyomon and Clamydes* where knighthood, although bound by monarchical subservience, is given significant space for the expression of private ambitions often antithetical to those of the king or queen. The result was a functional but tenuous system of compromise where the knight, although ultimately constrained by the monarch's rule, could manipulate chivalric forms and language to promote his own political, social, and military authority, as we can see with Buckingham. That space for private aristocratic ambition and honour also found ritual expression in the early modern duel of honour which enabled the knight to pursue personal honour and justice outside of common law. In *Hamlet*, it becomes a vehicle of revenge, deceptively co-constructed by the Machiavellian Claudius and Laertes. Although the handling of chivalry is frustratingly inconclusive here, it is no black mark on the ideology itself; chivalry is an inextricable and haunting aspect of the Danish prince's education and culture which, in combination with his humanist tendencies for sceptical examination, ultimately enables him to fulfil the Ghost's commandment.

Despite the ambiguous and ostensibly contradictory impulses of chivalry seen in *Clyomon and Clamydes*, various groups could be quick to politicise the ideology in pursuit of their own aspirations. This of course is the case with *The Whore of Babylon* and its wider theatrical tradition of the apocalyptic Jacobean history play. These plays reformulated the original ideology of the Crusades as a quest for the true Church through a post-Reformation superimposition of the Habsburg Catholic enemy onto that of the Saracen, or the Seljuk Turks more specifically. That militant Protestant polemic was socially diverse and played upon the popular Hispanophobia of early modern England. Most

---

27 Adamson, p. 164.

importantly, it gestures towards a chivalry more than capable of moving beyond its conventionally aristocratic confines. In this light, both Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* and Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* gave serious expression to citizen culture, underlining the central role that community played in terms of civic militarism and overseas expansion — key achievements for national prosperity. Not only was chivalry alive in early modern England, but through its flexibility, social diversity, and topicality, remained a vital component of its courtly and popular culture, a fact to which the commercial plays of 1575–1625 attest in extraordinary range and detail.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

A vision or dreame containing the whole state of the Netherlands warres (London: 1615)

A Modern Spelling Critical Edition of Sir Clyomon and Clamydes, ed. by Arleane Ralph (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1996)

Abbott, George, *An Exposition upon the Prophet Jonah* (London: 1600)

——— 'Letter to Secretary Robert Naunton, 12 September 1619', in Henry Bennet, *Cabala, sive Scrinia Sacra, Mysteries of State and Government* (London: 1663)

Bacon, Francis, *The Charge Touching Duels* (London: 1614)

Bainbridge, John, *An Astronomicall Description of the late Comet* (London: 1618)

Beaumont, Francis, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. by Michael Hattaway, 2nd edn (London: A&C Black, 2009)

——— *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. by Sheldon P. Zitner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)

Bristol: Records of Early English Drama, ed. by by Mark Pilkington (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997)

Calvin, John, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. by Thomas Myers (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852)

——— *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960)

Castiglione, Baldassare, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by Sir Thomas Hoby, ed. by J.H. Whitfield (London: Dent, 1974)

Chapman, George, *Bussy D'Ambois*, ed. by Nicholas Brooke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964)

Clyomon and Clamydes, ed. by Betty J. Littleton (Paris: Mouton, 1968)

Crimsal, Richard, *The Ioviall Broome man* (London: 1640)

De Cartigny, Jean, *The Voyage of the Wandering Knight*, trans. by William Goodyear (London: 1581)

De la Fuente, Fray Diego, 'Letter to King Philip III', Nov. 1, 1619, in Pablo Andrés Escapa, 'Fray Diego De la Fuente y don Diego Sarmiento, lectores del Quijote', *Avisos: Noticias de la Real Biblioteca*, 18.67 (2012), n. p.

De Pizan, Christine, *The Book of the Body Politic*, ed. and trans. by Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

De Tourval, Jean, *The French Herald* (London: 1611)

Dekker, Thomas, *The Artillery Garden* (London: 1616)

——— *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, ed. by R.L. Smallwood and Stanley Wells (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979)

——— *The Whore of Babylon: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Marianne Gateson Riely (London: Garland Publishing, 1980)

Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth, ed. by Albert Feuillerat (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908)

Drummond, William, 'Teares on the Death of Moeliades', in *The Poems of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. by Thomas Maitland (Edinburgh, 1832), pp. 76–82

Elyot, Sir Thomas, *The Book named The Governor*, ed. by S.E. Lehmberg (London: Dent, 1962)

Foxe, John, *Actes and Monuments* (London: 1563)

Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition, ed. by Lloyd E. Berry (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969)

Gesta Francorum, ed. and trans. by A.C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), pp. 28–30

Gosson, Stephen, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (London: 1582)

Gouge, William, *The Dignity of Chivalry* (London: 1626)

——— *The Whole Armour of God: or A Christians Spirituall Furniture, to keep him safe from all the assaults of Satan* (London: 1619)

Greville, Fulke, *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (London: 1651)

Harrison, John, *The Messiah Already Come* (Amsterdam: 1619)

——— *A Short Relation of the departure of the high and mightie Prince Frederick* (Dort: 1619)

Harrison, William, *The Description of England*, ed. by Georges Edelen (New York: Dover Books, 1994)

Henry, Prince, BL MS Add. 12514, f. 135r, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online,* gen. ed. by David Bevington, Ian Donaldson, and Martin Butler, Masque Archive: Prince Henry's Barriers 12 (Online edition, 2014)

Henslowe's Diary, ed. by R.A. Foakes, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Hexham, Henry, *The True and Brief Relation of the Famous Siege of Breda* (Delft, 1637)

Heywood, Thomas, *The Brazen Age* (London: 1613)

——— *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, ed. by Richard Rowland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005)

——— *The Four Prentices of London*, in *Three Romances of Eastern Conquest*, ed. by Ladan Niayesh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 201–89

——— *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (London: 1605)

——— *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, Part 2 (London: 1606)

Histoires des hauts et chevaleureux faicts d'armes de Meliadus (Paris: 1584)

Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland Preserved at Belvoir Castle* (London: HMSO, 1888–1905), 4 vols, IV (1905)

James, King, *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. by G.P.V. Akrigg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)

Jonson, Ben, *Epicœne,* ed. by David Bevington, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), III, pp. 385–505

——— *Every Man in His Humour*, ed. by David Bevington, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), I, pp. 111–228

——— *Informations to William Drummond of Hawthornden,* ed. by Ian Donaldson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), V, pp. 133–35

——— *Prince Henry's Barriers*, ed. by Martin Wiggins, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Ian Donaldson, and Martin Butler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009–), Masque Archive (2013)

——— 'The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers', ed. by David Lindley, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), III, pp. 517–39

——— *The Underwood*, ed. by Collin Burrow, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), VII, pp. 69–295

Jonson, Ben, George Chapman, and John Marston, *Eastward Ho!*, ed. by Suzanne Gossett and W. David Kay, *The Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), II, pp. 531–640

Lithgow, William, *The Siege of Breda* (London: 1637)

Lost Plays Database, ed. by Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (2009–), https://lostplays.folger.edu/

Milles, Thomas, 'Letter to William Davison, 19 May 1581', National Archives, Kew, SP 12/149/10a

Nannini, Remigio, *Civil Conversations*, trans. by W.T. (London: 1601)

Nichols, John, ed., *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, his Royal Consort, Family, and Court*, 4 vols (London: 1828)

Paradin, Claude, *The Heroicall Deuises*, trans. by P.S. (London: 1591)

Parrot, Henry, *Epigrams* (London: 1608)

Peacham, Henry, *Minerva Britanna* (London: 1612)

Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, trans. by Bernadotte Perrin, 11 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914–26)

Proceedings in Parliament, 1610, ed. by Elizabeth Read Foster, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966)

Puttenham, George, *The Art of English Poesy: Critical Edition*, ed. by Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007)

Rowley, Samuel, *When You See Me You Know Me* (London: 1605)

Rowley, William, *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*, ed. by Trudi L. Darby (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002)

Saviolo, Vincentio, *Vincentio Saviolo, His Practise* (London: 1595)

Segar, William, *The Book of Honour and Arms* (London: 1590)

——— *Honor Military, and Ciuill, Contained in Foure books* (London: 1602)

Shakespeare, William, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. by Terri Bourus in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 2567–658

——— *Hamlet*, ed. by John Jowett in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, ed. Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1993–2100

——— *Julius Caesar*, ed. by Sarah Neville in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1607–77

——— *Richard II*, ed. by Anna Pruitt in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 849–922

Shakespeare, William, and John Fletcher, *King Henry VIII*, ed. by Will Sharpe in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 3179–268

Shakespeare, William, and Thomas Middleton, *Timon of Athens*, ed. by Francis X. Connor in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 2435–2500

Shakespeare, William, and George Wilkins, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. by Rory Loughlane in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 2659–723

Sidney, Philip, *An Apology for Poetry, or the Defence of Poesy*, ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd, rev. by R.W. Maslen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

——— *Astrophil and Stella* 41, in *Major Works*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 169

——— *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (The Old Arcadia), ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

——— *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, ed. by Elizabeth Goldring and David Parrott in *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources,* ed. by Elizabeth Goldring, Faith Eales, Elizabeth Clarke, and Jayne Elisabeth Archer, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), III, pp. 66–93

——— 'Letter from Herbert Languet to Philip Sidney', *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by Roger Kuin, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), I, pp. 839–42

——— 'Letter to Elizabeth', in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 33–57

——— 'Letter to Hubert Languet', in *The Correspondence of Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, ed. by S.A. Pears (London: 1845)

Spenser, Edmund, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton, rev. by Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013)

Stow, John, *The Annales of England* (London: 1592)

Stuart, Elizabeth, *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*, ed. by Nadine Akkerman, 2 vols (to date) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–)

The First Ledger Book of High Wycombe, ed. by R.W. Greaves (London: Buckinghamshire Record Society, XI, 1956 [for 1947])

Vives, Juan Luis, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, ed. and trans. by Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000)

Secondary Sources

Adams, Simon, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

Adamson, J.S.A., 'Chivalry and Political Culture in Caroline England', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 161–97

Adrian, John, '*Vindicta* and *Vindiciae* on the Early English Stage: Imagining Revenge through Huguenot Resistance Theory', in *Renaissance Papers 2006*, ed. by Christopher Cobb and M. Thomas Hester (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), pp. 43–60

Aebischer, Pascale, *Jacobean Drama* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Alexander, Nigel, *Poison, Play, and Duel: A Study in Hamlet* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971)

Alsop, J. D., 'Philip Melanchthon and England in 1553', *Notes and Queries*, 37 (1990), 164–65

Andrews, Kenneth R., *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Anglo, Sydney, 'Humanism and the Court Arts', in *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe During the Renaissance*, ed. by Anthony Goodman and Angus Mackay (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 66–99

——— 'Introduction', in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, ed. by Sydney Anglo (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), pp. xi–xvi

Arab, Ronda A., 'Work, Bodies, and Gender in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), 182–212

Archer, Ian W., 'Popular politics in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries', in *Londinopolis, c.1500–c.1750: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. by Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 26–46

Ashely, Leonard R.N., *Authorship and Evidence: A Study of Attribution and the Renaissance Drama Illustrated by the Case of George Peele (1556–1596*) (Geneva: Droz, 1968)

Auer, Jens, and Antony Firth, 'The "Gresham Ship": an interim report on a 16th-century wreck from Princes Channel, Thames Estuary', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 41.2 (2007), 222–41

Baines, Barbara, *Thomas Heywood* (Boston: Twayne, 1984)

Barker, Juliet, *The Tournament in England, 1100–1400* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986)

Bates, Catherine, *The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Bayer, Mark, 'The Curious Case of Two Audiences: Thomas Dekker's *Match Me in London*', in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558–1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 59–70

Beer, Gillian, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970)

Bellany, Alastair, 'Buckingham Engraved: Politics, Print Images and the Royal Favourite in the 1620s', in *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. by Michael Hunter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 215–36

Belsey, Catherine, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985)

Bennett, Josephine Waters, *The Evolution of* The Faerie Queene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942)

Bergeron, David M., *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999)

Bernard, G.W., *The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility: A Study of the Fourth and Fifth Earls of Shrewsbury* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985)

Berry, Philippa, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Berry, Ralph, *Shakespeare and the Awareness of Audience* (London: Macmillan, 1985)

Bevington, David, 'The debate about Shakespeare and religion', in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Religion*, ed. by David Loewenstein and Michael Witmore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 23–39

——— 'Introduction', Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. by David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmsusen (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), pp. 1067–73

Bezio, Kristin M. S., *Staging Power in Tudor and Stuart English History Plays: History, Political Thought, and the Redefinition of Sovereignty* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015)

Billacois, François, *The Duel: Its Rise and Fall in Early Modern France*, ed. and trans. by Trista Selous (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990)

Birley, Derek, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993)

Blanchard, Ian, 'Sir Thomas Gresham', *ODNB*, accessed 25 Jan 2020

Bliss, Jane, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008)

Bogdanov, Fanni, 'Part III of the Turin Version of *Guiron le Courtois*: A Hitherto Unknown Source of M.S. B.N. fr. 112', in *Medieval Miscellany Presented to Eugene Vinaver*, ed. by F. Whitehead, A.H. Diverres, and F.E. Sutcliffe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), pp. 45–64

– – – 'The Vulgate Cycle and the Post-Vulgate Roman du Graal', in *A Companion to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, ed. by Carol Dover (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 33–51

Bos, Sander, Marianne Lange-Meijers, and Jeanine Six, 'Sidney's Funeral Portrayed', in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. by Jan van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1986), pp. 38–61

Bosworth, Clifford Edmund, *An Intrepid Scot: William Lithgow of Lanark's Travels in the Ottoman Lands, North Africa and Central Europe, 1609–21* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Boulger, James D., *The Calvinist Temper in English Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1980)

Bowler, Gerald, '"An Axe or an Acte": The Parliament of 1572 and Resistance Theory in Early Elizabethan England', *Canadian Journal of History*, 19.3 (1984), 349–59

Braddick, Michael J., *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Brady, Thomas A., *Communities, Politics, and Reformation in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1998)

Brennan, Michael G., *The Sidneys of Penshurst and the Monarchy, 1500–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Brotton, Jerry, 'Buying the Renaissance: Prince Charles's Art Purchases in Madrid, 1623', in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623*, ed. by Alexander Samson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 9–26

Brownlee, Victoria, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England, 1558–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Bucholz, Robert, and Newton Key, *Early Modern England 1485–1714: A Narrative History*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)

Bullock, Alan, *The Humanist Tradition in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985)

Bulman, James C., '*Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 158–76

Burrow, Colin, 'Time to Mount Spain' (Review of *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* by Glyn Redworth), *The London Review of Books*, 26.17 (2 September 2004)

Bushnell, Rebecca W., *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996)

Butler, Katherine, *Music in Elizabethan Court Politics* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015)

Butler, Martin, 'Entertaining the Palatine Prince: Plays on Foreign Affairs 1635–1637', *English Literary Renaissance*, 13.3 (1983), 319–344

———*The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Cano, David Sánchez, 'Entertainments in Madrid for the Prince of Wales: Political Functions of Festivals', in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623*, ed. by Alexander Samson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 51–74.

Carter, Matthew, 'Discovering the Kinetic Language of Violence on the Early Modern Stage' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2016)

Cartwright, Kent, *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Chambers, E.K., *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923)

Chiari, Sophie, and John Mucciolo, 'General Introduction', in *Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. by Sophie Chiari and John Mucciolo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1–15

Chovanec, Kevin, 'The Borders of Fairyland: Transnational Readings of Spenser in Stuart England', *Spenser Studies,* 31 (2018), 71–96

Christianson, Paul, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978)

Clegg, Cyndia Susan, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Cline, Ruth Huff, 'The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 20.2 (1945), 204–11

Cobb, Christopher, *The Staging of Romance in Late Shakespeare: Text and Theatrical Technique* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007)

Cogswell, Thomas, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

———'Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 47.4 (1984), pp. 273–88

Cohen, Simona, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2008)

Cole, Penny J., *The Preaching of Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1991)

Collinson, Patrick, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983)

———'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester,* 69 (1986–87), 394–424

Connolly, Annaliese, 'Guy of Warwick, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Elizabethan Repertory', *Early Theatre*, 12.2 (2009), 207–22

Cooper, Helen, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

——— *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London: Methuen Drama, 2010)

Coral, Jordi, '"Maiden Walls That War Hath Never Entered": Rape and Post-Chivalric Military Culture in Shakespeare's *Henry V*', *College Literature*, 44.3 (2017), 404–35

Council, Norman, 'Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and the Transformation of Tudor Chivalry', *ELH*, 47.2 (1980), 259–75

———'"O Dea Certe": The Allegory of "The Fortress of Perfect Beauty"', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 39.4 (1976), 329–42

Coward, Barry, *The Stanleys, Lords Stanley, and Earls of Derby, 1385–1672: The Origins, Wealth, and Power of a Landowning Family* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983)

Cowdrey, H.E.J., 'Pope Urban II and the Idea of Crusade', *Studi Medievali*, 36 (1995), 721–42

Craven, Kenneth, *Hamlet of Morningside Heights* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011)

Curran, Kevin, 'James I and Fictional Authority at the Palatine Wedding Celebrations', *Renaissance Studies*, 20.1 (2006), 51–67

——— *Marriage, Performance, and Politics at the Jacobean Court* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009)

Darby, Trudi L., 'The Date of William Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman*', *Notes and Queries*, 53.1 (2006), 83–84

Davis, Alex, *Romance and Chivalry in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003)

Das, Nandini, *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570–1620* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011)

Database of Middle English Romance, ed. by Nicola McDonald (York: University of York, 2012–), https://middleenglishromance.org.uk/

Degenhardt, Jane Hwang, 'Purifying the Pursuit of Gold in Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West, Part I*', in *Historical Affects and the Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Michelle Dowd, Ronda Arab, and Adam Zucker (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 152–68

Di Salvo, Gina M., 'Saints' Lives and Shoemakers' Holidays: *The Gentle Craft* and the Wells Cordwainers' Pageant of 1613', *Early Theatre*, 19.2 (2016), 119–38

Dickinson, Janet, *Court Politics and the Earl of Essex, 1589–1601* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012)

Dillon, Viscount, 'Barriers and Foot Combats', *Archaeological Journal,* 61 (1904), 276–308

DiSalvo, Jackie, *War of Titans: Blake's Critique of Milton and the Politics of Religion* (London: Feffer and Simons, 1983)

Doran, Susan, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996)

———'The Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe, Third Earl of Sussex' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of London, 1979)

Duerden, Richard, 'Equivalence or Power? Authority and Reformation Bible Translation', in *The Bible as Book: The Reformation*, ed. by Orlaith O'Sullivan (London: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2000), pp. 9–20

Duncan-Jones, Katherine, 'Sidney's Personal Impresе', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33 (1970), 321–24

Dutton, Richard, 'Receiving Offence: *A Game at Chess* Again', in *Literature and Censorship in Renaissance England*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 50–71

Eisenberg, Daniel, 'The Pseudo-History of the Romances of Chivalry', *Quaderni Ibero-Americani*, 41 (1972), 81–102

Ellison, Lee Monroe, 'The Early Romantic Drama at the English Court' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Chicago, 1917)

Engle, Lars and Eric Rasmussen, *Studying Shakespeare's Contemporaries* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2014)

Erdmann, Carl, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. by M.W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977)

Evans, Michael, 'An Illustrated Fragment of Peraldus's *Summa of Vice*: Harleian MS 3244', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 45 (1982), 14–68

Ferguson, Arthur B., *The Chivalric Tradition in Renaissance England* (London: Associated University Presses, 1986)

– – – *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1960)

Firth, Katharine R., *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)

Foakes, R.A., *Hamlet Versus Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

——— 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher*, King Henry VIII*, ed. R.A. Foakes (Methuen: Arden Shakespeare, 1964)

Fowler, Alastair, *Literary Names: Personal Names in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Fritze, R.H., and W.B. Robison, eds, *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603–1689* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996)

Frye, Northrop, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (London: Harvard University Press, 1976)

Frye, Roland Mushat, *The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Fulton, Thomas, *Book of Books: Biblical Interpretation, Literary Culture, and the Political Imagination from Erasmus to Milton* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)

Gajda, Alexandra, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Gasper, Julia, *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

Gentles, Ian J., 'Philip Skippon', *ODNB*, accessed 30 May 2020

Gillingham, John, 'Fontenoy and After: Pursuing Enemies to Death in France Between the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries', in *Frankland*, ed. by Paul Fouracre and David Ganz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 242–65

Goldring, Elizabeth, 'Gascoigne and Kenilworth: The Production, Reception, and Afterlife of *The Princely Pleasures*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 44.3 (2014), 363–87

——— 'Portraiture, Patronage and the Progresses: Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575', in *The Progresses, Pageants and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. by Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 163–88

Goodman, Jennifer R., *Chivalry and Exploration, 1298–1630* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998)

Gordon, D. J., 'Poet and Architect: the Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12 (1949), 152–78

Grant, Teresa, 'History in the Making: The Case of Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (1604/5)', in *English Historical Drama, 1500–1660: Forms Outside the Canon*, ed. by Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 125–57

Greaves, Richard L., 'Concepts of Political Obedience in Late Tudor England: Conflicting Perspectives', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.1 (1982), 23–34

Green, Ian, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009)

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)

Greene, Thomas M., 'The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature', in *The Disciples of Criticism*, ed. by Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 241–68

Gunther, Karl, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 131–57

Guntner, Lawrence, 'Rewriting Shakespeare: Bertolt Brecht, Heiner Müller, and the Politics of Performance', in *Shakespeare and European Politics*, ed. by Dirk Delabastita, Jozef De Vos, and Paul Franssen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp. 179–95

Gurr, Andrew, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574–1642*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Hadfield, Andrew, 'Edmund Spenser's Translations of Du Bellay in Jan van der Noot's *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*', in *Tudor Translation*, ed. by Fred Schurink (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 143–60

Hadorn, Peter Thomas, '*Clyomon and Clamydes*: A Revaluation', *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Society*, 12 (1991), 85–102

——— 'Power, Propaganda and Subversion: Chivalry on the English Renaissance Stage' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Illinois, 1989)

Hamling, Tara, 'Visual Culture', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, and Abigail Shinn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 75–102

Hammer, Paul E.J., 'Myth-Making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596', *The Historical Journal*, 40.3 (1997), 621–642

——— *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Hankins, John E., 'Spenser and the Revelation of St. John', *PMLA,* 60 (1945), 364–81

Harbage, Alfred, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941)

Harlan, Susan, '"Certain condolements, certain vails": Staging Rusty Armour in Shakespeare's *Pericles*', *Early Theatre*, 11.2 (2008), 129–39

Harris, Jonathan Gil, 'Properties of Skill: Product Placement in Early English Artisanal Drama', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 35–66

——— *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009)

Hasler, P. W., ed, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558–1603,* 3 vols (1981)

Hays, Michael L., *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance: Rethinking* Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello *and* King Lear (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003)

Heinemann, Margot, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

Helgerson, Richard, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

Hill, Christiane, *Visions of the Courtly Body: The Patronage of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, and the Triumph of Painting at the Stuart Court* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2012)

Hill, Tracey, '"The Grocer's Honour": or, Taking the City Seriously in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*', *Early Theatre*, 20.2 (2017), 159–78

Hiscock, Andrew, '"Achilles alter": The Heroic Lives and Afterlives of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex', in *Essex: The Cultural Impact of an Elizabethan Courtier*, ed. by Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 101–32

Hodges, Kenneth, *Forging Chivalric Communities in Malory's* Le Morte Darthur (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005)

——— 'Prince Arthur's Archers: Innovative Nostalgia in Early Modern Popular Chivalry', *Arthurian Literature,* 27 (2010), 179–97

Hoenselaars, A.J., *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama, 1558–1642* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992)

Holmes, Peter, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Holt, Mack P., *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Honigmann, E.A.J., 'Shakespeare's Plutarch', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 10.1 (1959), 25–33

Howard, Jean E., 'Competing Ideologies of Commerce in Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Part II*', in *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 163–82

——— 'London and the Early Modern Theatre', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, ed. by Lawrence Manley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 34–50

——— *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Howard-Hill, T.H., 'Introduction', in Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chess*, ed. by T.H. Howard Hill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993)

Hoy, Cyrus, *Introductions, Notes and Commentaries to Texts in 'The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker'*, ed. by Fredson Bowers, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

Huizinga, Johan, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. by Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)

Hunt, Maurice, 'Romance and Tragicomedy', in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 384–98

Hunt, William, 'Civic Chivalry and the English Civil War', in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 204–37

Hunter, G.K., 'Religious Nationalism in Later History Plays', *Literature and Nationalism,* ed. by Vincent Newey and Ann Thompson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991), pp. 88–97

Hutson, Lorna, *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Irish, Bradley J., 'Vengeance, Variously: Revenge Before Kyd in Early Elizabethan Drama', *Early Theatre*, 12.2 (2009), 117–34

James, Anne, *Poets, Players, and Preachers: Remembering the Gunpowder Plot in Seventeenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016)

James, Mervyn, 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485–1642' in *Society, Politics, and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 308–415

Jensen, Mads L., *A Humanist in Reformation Politics: Philipp Melanchthon on Political Philosophy and Natural Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2020)

Joseph, Rosara, *The War Prerogative: History, Reform, and Constitutional Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Kane, Brendan, *The Politics and Culture of Honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541–1641* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Kastan, David Scott, 'Workshop and/as Playhouse: Comedy and Commerce in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*', *Studies in Philology*, 84.3 (1987), pp. 324–37

Kathman, David, 'Grocers, Goldsmiths, and Drapers: Freemen and Apprentices in the Elizabethan Theatre', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55.1 (2004), 1–49

Keen, Maurice, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984)

———— 'Introduction', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. by Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), pp. 1–16

Kendrick, Matthew, *At Work in the Early Modern English Theatre: Valuing Labour* (Lanham: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015)

Kermode, Frank, '*The Faerie Queene* I and V', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 47 (1964), 123–50

Kerrigan, John, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

———— *Shakespeare's Binding Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Kibler, William W., '*Huon de Bordeaux* in its Manuscripts', in *'De Sens Rassis': Essays in Honor of Rupert T. Pickens*, ed. by Keith Busby, Bernard Guidot, and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 325–38

Kieckhefer, Richard, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Kilgour, Raymond, *The Decline of Chivalry as Shown in the French Literature of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937)

Kingdon, Robert M., 'Calvinism and resistance theory, 1550–1580', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. by J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 193–213

Knutson, Roslyn L., David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle, eds, *Loss and the Literary Culture of Shakespeare's Time* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)

Krantz, Susan E., 'Thomas Dekker's Political Commentary in *The Whore of Babylon*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 35.2 (1995), 271–91

Lathuillere, Roger, *Guiron le Courtois: Etude de la Tradition Manuscrite et Analyse Critique* (Genève: Droz, 1966)

Lawrence, David R., *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603–1645* (Leiden: Brill, 2009)

Leimon, M.M., 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574–81' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Cambridge, 1989)

Lewis, Rhodri, *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)

Limon, Jerzy, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Loomis, Roger Sherman, 'Arthurian Influence on Sport and Spectacle', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History*, ed. by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 553–59

———'Chivalric and Dramatic Imitations of Arthurian Romance', in *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, ed. by Wilhelm R.W. Koehler, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), I, pp. 79–97

Low, Jennifer, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Lucas, Scott '"Let none such office take, save he that can for right his prince forsake": *A Mirror for Magistrates*, Resistance Theory and the Elizabethan Republic', in *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson*, ed. by John F. McDiarmid (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 91–108

MacFarlane, Fenella, 'To "Try What London Prentices Can Do": Merchant Chivalry as Representational Strategy in Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London*', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), 136–64

MacIntyre, Jean, *Costumes and Scripts in the Elizabethan Theatres* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1992)

Mack, Peter, *Elizabethan Rhetoric in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Maclean, Sally-Beth, 'Tracking Leicester's Men: The Patronage of a Performance Troupe', in *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 246–71

Manion, Lee, *Narrating the Crusades: Loss and Recovery in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Manley, Lawrence, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Manning, Roger, *Swordsmen: The Martial Ethos in the Three Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Marks, Adam, 'England, the English and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of St. Andrews, 2012)

Mastnak, Tomaz, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

Matar, Nabil, 'Ian J. Gentles, 'Philip Skippon', *ODNB*, accessed 12 Feb 2020

Matheson, Mark, '*Hamlet* and "A Matter Tender and Dangerous"', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46.4, (1995), 383–97

Maus, Katharine Eisman, 'Transfer of Title in *Love's Labour's Lost*: Language, Individualism, Gender' in *Shakespeare Left and Right*, ed. by Ivo Kamps (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 205–23

May, Steven, 'Sir Philip Sidney and Queen Elizabeth', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700,* 2 (1990), 257–67

McAleer, John J., 'Ballads on the Spanish Armada', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 4.4, (1963), 602–12

McCoy, Richard C., *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

McInnis, David, 'Lost Plays and Source Study', in *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study: Audiences, Authors, and Digital Technologies*, ed. by Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 297–315

———*Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

———*Shakespeare and Lost Plays: Reimagining Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021)

McInnis, David, and Matthew Steggle, eds, *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

McLuskie, Kathleen E., *Dekker & Heywood: Professional Dramatists* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994)

McMillin, Scott, and Sally-Beth Maclean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

McMullan, Gordon, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *King Henry VIII*, ed. by Gordon McMullan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2000)

McRae, Andrew, *Literature, Satire and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

McVitty, Amanda, 'False Knights and True Men: Contesting Chivalric Masculinity in English Treason Trials 1388–1415', *Journal of Medieval History*, 40.2 (2014), 458–77

Mears, Natalie, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's "The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf", 1579', *The Historical Journal*, 44.3 (2001), 629–50

Memegalos, Florence S., *George Goring (1608–1657): Caroline Courtier and Royalist General* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

Mentz, Steve, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Meron, Theodor, *Bloody Constraint: War and Chivalry in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Michelsson, Elisabeth, *Appropriating King Arthur: The Arthurian Legend in English Drama and Entertainments 1485–1625* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1999)

Mickel, Lesley, *Ben Jonson's Antimasques: A History of Growth and Decline* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999)

Montgomery-Massingberd, Hugh, *Burke's Irish Family Records* (London: Burkes Peerage Ltd, 1976)

Montrose, Louis A., 'Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1977), 3–35

——— 'Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I', *Representations*, 68 (1999), 108–61

Moore, Helen, *Amadis in English: A Study in the Reading of Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

——— 'Jonson, Dekker, and the Discourse of Chivalry', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 12 (1999), 121–65

Morse, Ruth, Helen Cooper, and Peter Holland, eds, *Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Moshenska, Joe, 'Sir Kenelm Digby's Interruptions: Piracy and Lived Romance in the 1620s', *Studies in Philology*, 113.2 (2016), 424–83

Mottram, Stewart, 'Spenser's Dutch Uncles: The Family of Love and the Four Translations of *A Theatre for Worldlings*', in *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2014), pp. 164-84

Moulton, Ian Frederick, *Love in Print in the Sixteenth Century: The Popularization of Romance* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

Mulready, Cyrus, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Munro, Dana C., 'The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095', *American Historical Review*, 11 (1906), 231–42

Munro, Lucy, *Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590–1674* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

———, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Munro, Lucy, Anne Lancashire, John H. Astington, and Marta Straznicky, eds, 'Issues in Review: Popular Theatre and the Red Bull', *Early Theatre,* 9.2 (2006), 99–156

Murdoch, Steve, ed, *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War: 1618–1648* (Leiden: Brill, 2001)

Murrin, Michael, *Trade and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014)

Mynott, Glen, '"We must not be more true to kings / Than Kings are to their subjects": France and the Politics of the Ancient Constitution in Chapman's Byron plays', *Renaissance Studies,* 9.4 (1995), 477–93

Nagel, Alexander, and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010)

Newcomb, Lori Humphrey, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2002)

Ng, Su Fang, *Alexander the Great from Britain to Southeast Asia: Peripheral Empires in the Global Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Niayesh, Ladan, 'Introduction', in *Three Romances of Eastern Conquest*, ed. by Ladan Niayesh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 1–49

Nicol, David, '*A Shoemaker a Gentleman*: Dates, Sources and Influence', *Notes and Queries*, 50.4, (2003), 441–43

Nievergelt, Marco, *Allegorical Quests from Deguileville to Spenser* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012)

——— 'The Chivalric Imagination in Elizabethan England', *Literature Compass*, 8 (2011), 266–79

——— 'Francis Drake: Merchant, Knight, and Pilgrim', *Renaissance Studies,* 23 (2009), 53–70

Nolan, Barbara, 'The Tale of Sir Gareth and the Tale of Sir Lancelot', in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. by Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), pp. 153–81

Noll, Thomas, 'The Visual Image of Alexander the Great: Transformations from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period', in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. by Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 244–63

Norbrook, David, '*The Masque of Truth*: Court Entertainments and International Protestant Politics in the Early Stuart Period', *The Seventeenth Century*, 1.2 (1986), 81–110

——— *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Nostbakken, F., 'Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me*: Political Drama in Transition', *Cahiers élisabéthains,* 47 (1995), 71–78

Oakeshott, Ewart, *European Weapons and Armour* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000)

Orgel, Stephen, 'Making Greatness Familiar', in *Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. by David M. Bergeron (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), pp. 19–25

Ortego II, James N., 'Seeking the Medieval in Shakespeare: The Order of the Garter and the Topos of Derisive Chivalry', *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 35, (2010), 80–104

Ostovich, Helen, 'Knights and Daze: The Place of Romance in the Queen's Men', in *Performing Environments: Site-Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Susan Bennett and Mary Polito (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 100–18

Parker, Robert W., 'The Art of Sidney's Heroic Impresas', *English Literary Renaissance*, 20.3 (1990), 408–30

Patrides, C.A., and Joseph Wittreich, eds, *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)

Patterson, W.B., *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Peardon, Barbara, 'The Politics of Polemic: John Ponet's *Short Treatise of Politic Power* and Contemporary Circumstance 1553–1556', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.1 (1982), 35–49

Peltonen, Markku, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Pincombe, Mike, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the Later Sixteenth Century* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001)

Pincombe, Mike, and Cathy Shrank, 'Doing Away with the Drab Age: Research Opportunities in Mid-Tudor Literature (1530–1580)', *Literature Compass*, 7.3 (2010), 160–76

Publicover, Laurence, *Dramatic Geography: Romance, Intertheatricality, and Cultural Encounter in Early Modern Mediterranean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

Pursell, Brennan C., *The Winter King: Frederick V of the Palatinate and the Coming of the Thirty Years' War* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003)

Rabb, Theodore K., *Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575–1630* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967)

Riggs, David, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989)

Rivlin, Elizabeth, *The Aesthetics of Service in Early Modern England* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012)

Robinson, Benedict S., *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Robinson, Marsha, *Writing the Reformation:* Actes and Monuments *and the Jacobean History Play* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002)

Rose, Mark, 'Othello's Occupation: Shakespeare and the Romance of Chivalry', *English Literary Renaissance*, 25.3 (1985), 293–11

Salingar, Leo, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)

Salmon, J.H.M., *The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959)

Sandler, Florence, '*The Faerie Queene*: An Elizabethan Apocalypse', in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions*, ed. by C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 148–74

Sandoz, Edouard, 'Tourneys in the Arthurian Tradition', *Speculum*, 19 (1944), 389–420

Saunders, Corinne, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010)

Saxl, Fritz, 'Veritas Filia Temporis', in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. by Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 197–222

Scott, Paul, 'Resistance Theories, Orthodoxy and Subversive Drama in Early Modern France', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 21.1 (1999), 57–74

Scott, Sarah, 'The Empress of Babylon's "Carbuncles and Rich Stones": The Metaphorizing of the Pox in Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*', *Early Theatre*, 7.1 (2004), 67–95

Shaheen, Naseeb, *Biblical References in* The Faerie Queene (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1976)

Sharpe, Kevin, 'Reading Revelations: Prophecy, Hermeneutics, and Politics in Early Modern Britain, 1560–1720', in *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 55–84

Shedd, John A., 'The State versus the Trades Guilds: Parliament's Soldier-Apprentices in the English Civil War Period, 1642–1655', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 65 (2004), 105–16

Shuger, Debora, 'The Reformation of Penance', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71.4 (2008), 557–71

Siegel, Paul N., 'Shakespeare and the Neo-Chivalric Cult of Honour', *The Centennial Review of Arts and Science,* 8 (1964), 39–70

Skinner, Quentin, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978)

Smith, Bruce R., 'A Night of Errors and the Dawn of Empire: Male Enterprise in *The Comedy of Errors*', in *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies*, ed. by Michael J. Collins (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 102–25

Smith, Sarah, 'An Unyielding Past: Holy Wells and Historical Narrative in *The Faerie Queene* 1–2', *Studies in Philology*, 118.2 (2021), 284–307

Smuts, R. Malcolm, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987)

Spearing, A.C., 'Public and Private Spaces in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', *Arthuriana,* 4.2 (1994), 138–45

Spencer, Charles, *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007)

Spikes, Judith Doolin, 'The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1977), 117–49

Spiller, Elizabeth A., 'Speaking for the Dead: King Charles, Anna Weamys, and the Commemorations of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*', *Criticism*, 42.2 (2000), 229–251

Stanivukovic, Goran, *Knights in Arms: Prose Romance, Masculinity, and Eastern Mediterranean Trade in Early Modern England, 1565–1655* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016)

Stevenson, Katie, and Barbara Gribling, eds, *Chivalry and the Medieval Past* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016)

Stevenson, Laura Caroline, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and Craftsmen in Elizabethan Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Stillman, Robert E., *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)

Stone, Lawrence, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965)

Streete, Adrian, *Apocalypse and Anti-Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

———, *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

———, 'Situating Political and Biblical Authority in Massinger and Field's *The Fatal Dowry*' in *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings, 1570–1625*, ed. by Adrian Streete (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 195–222

Streitberger, W. R., *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Strickland, Matthew, 'Killing or Clemency? Ransom, Chivalry and Changing Attitudes to Defeated Opponents in Britain and Northern France, 7th–12th Centuries', in *Krieg im Mittelalter*, ed. by Hans-Henning Kortüm (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2001), pp. 93–122

Strong, Roy, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977)

———, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986)

Squibb, George Drewry, *The High Court of Chivalry: A Study of the Civil Law in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959)

Sutton, Anne F., 'Richard [Dick] Whittington', *ODNB*, accessed 23 May 2020

Taylor, Craig, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Taylor, Jane H. M., 'Mongrel tragi-comedy: *Perceforest* on the Elizabethan stage', in '*Li premerains vers': Essays in Honour of Keith Busby*, ed. by Catherine M. Jones and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 479–93

Thomas, Courtney Erin, *If I Lose Mine Honour, I Lose Myself: Honour among the Early Modern English Elite* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017)

Thomas, Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971)

Trim, D.J.B., 'Calvinist Internationalism and the Shaping of Jacobean Foreign Policy', in *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England*, ed. Timothy Wilks (London: Paul Holberton with Southampton Solent University, 2007), pp. 239–58

——— 'Sir Francis Vere' *ODNB*, accessed 23 November 2020

Triplette, Stacey, *Chivalry, Reading, and Women's Culture in Early Modern Spain: From* Amadís De Gaula *to* Don Quixote (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018)

Turner, Craig, and Tony Soper, *Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990)

Vale, Malcolm, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (Norwich: Duckworth, 1981)

Van Dorsten, Jan, 'The Final Year', in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. by Jan van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1986), pp. 16–24

Van Nimwegen, Olaf, *The Dutch Army and the Military Revolutions 1588–1688* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010)

Vitkus, Daniel, 'Rogue Cosmopolitans on the Early Modern Stage: John Ward, Thomas Stukeley, and the Sherley Brothers', in *Travel and Drama in Early Modern England: The Journeying Play*, ed. by Claire Jowitt and David McInnis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 128–49

Walker, Lewis, 'Unhorsing the Lustiest Challenger: Reflections on Chivalry in *Richard II* and *Henry IV, Part 1*', *Renaissance Papers* (2017), 155–78

Wallis, Patrick, and Cliff Webb, 'The Education and Training of Gentry Sons in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 36.1 (2011), 36–53

Walls, Kathryn, *God's Only Daughter: Spenser's Una as the Invisible Church* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013)

Walsh, Brian, 'Letters to a Young Prince: Confessional Conflict and the Origins of English Protestantism in Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me You Know Me* (1605)', in *Forms of Faith: Literary Form and Religious Conflict in Early Modern England*, ed. by Jonathan Baldo and Isabel Karremann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 113–25

——— *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

——— *Unsettled Toleration: Religious Difference on the Shakespearean Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Walsh, P.G., 'Introduction', in Cicero, *On Obligations*, trans. by P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. ix–xlviii

Walsham, Alexandra, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', *The Historical Journal*, 51.2 (2008), pp. 497–528

Wang, Andreas, *Der Miles Christianus im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert und seine mittelalterliche Tradition: Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von sprachlicher und graphischer Bildlichkeit* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1975)

Ward, Allynna, '"Whosoever Resisteth Shall get to Themselfes Dampnacioun": Tyranny and Resistance in *Cambises* and *Horestes*', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 38.1–2 (2008), 150–67

Warley, Christopher, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005),

Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. and intro. by Stephen Kalberg (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001)

Weinstein, Donald, 'Fighting or Flytng? Verbal Duelling in Mid-Sixteenth-century Italy', in C*rime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trevor Dean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 204–20

Welch, Ellen R., *A Theatre of Diplomacy: International Relations and the Performing Arts in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017)

Wells, Robin Headlam, *Shakespeare on Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Werner, Hans, '*The Hector of Germanie, or The Palsgrave, Prime Elector* and Anglo-German Relations of Early Stuart England: The View from the Popular Stage', in *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. by R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 113–32

West, G.D., *An Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978)

West-Pavlov, Russell, *Bodies and their Spaces: System, Crisis and Transformation in Early Modern Theatre* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006)

White, Jason, *Militant Protestantism and British Identity, 1603–1642* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012)

White, Paul Whitfield, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Early Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

White, R.S., *Let Wonder Seem Familiar: Shakespeare and the Romance Ending* (London: Athlone Press, 1985)

Whitford, David M., *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2001)

Wiggins, Martin, and Catherine Richardson, eds, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 10 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–)

Will, Kathryn Karen, 'Cultivating Heraldic Histories in Early Modern English Literature' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Michigan, 2014)

Williamson, J.W., *The Myth of the Conqueror: Prince Henry Stuart, a Study of 17th Century Personation* (New York: AMS Press, 1978)

Wilson, Peter H., *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2009)

Wilson, R. H., 'The "Fair Unknown" in Malory', *PMLA*, 58 (1943), 1–21

Wilson, Richard, 'Visible Bullets: Tamburlaine the Great and Ivan the Terrible', *ELH*, 62.1 (1995), 47–68

Winston, Jessica, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Wood, Richard, '"Cleverly playing the stoic": The Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney and Surviving Elizabeth's Court', in *Essex: The Cultural Impact of an Elizabethan Courtier*, ed. by Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 25–46

Woudhuysen, H.R., 'Leicester's Literary Patronage: A Study of the English Court, 1578–1582' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis: University of Oxford, 1980)

Yachnin, Paul, 'The Populuxe Theater', in *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate*, ed. by Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 38–65

Yates, Frances, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1975)

——— *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972)

——— *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975)

Young, Alan, '"In Gallant Course before Ten Thousand Eyes": The Tournament in the 1580s', in *The Elizabethan Theatre XI*, ed. by A.L. Magnusson and C.E. McGee (Port Credit: P.D. Meany, 1990), pp. 33–53

——— 'A Note on the Tournament Impresas in *Pericles*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 36.4 (1985), 453–56

——— 'Sir Philip Sidney's Tournament Impresas', *Sidney Newsletter*, 6.1 (1985), 6–24

——— *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London: George Philip, 1987)

——— 'The Phoenix Reborn: An Appropriation of an Elizabethan Symbol', in *Resurrecting Elizabeth I in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Elizabeth Hageman and Katherine Conway (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), pp. 68–81