

# Quidditas

On-line Journal of  
The Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance  
Association



*Peter the Hermit delivers a letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Pope Urban II  
at the Council of Clermont*

*Bibliothèque de Genève: Illumination from William of Tyre, Histoire des Croisades (1277)*

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## *Call for Papers*

**Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association, 2012**

*Classifying the Medieval and Renaissance World*

**Idaho State University  
Pocatello, Idaho  
April 12-14, 2012**



**Keynote Speaker: Antonette diPaolo Healey**

Editor, *The Dictionary of Old English* and Angus Cameron Professor  
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The Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association invites proposals  
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Please submit proposals for papers or sessions (along with a one- to two-page  
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*Quidditas* is the annual, on-line journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. The editor and editorial board invite submissions from scholars whose work falls within the domain of all Medieval and the Renaissance disciplines: literature, history, art, music, philosophy, religion, languages, rhetoric, and interdisciplinary studies.

*Quidditas* also features a “Notes” section for short articles (2 to 12 pages) pertaining to factual, bibliographical and/or archival matters, corrections and suggestions, pedagogy and other issues pertaining to the research and teaching of Medieval and Renaissance disciplines. Our “Reviews” section features “Review Essays” and a “Texts & Teaching” focus: short (3 to 7 pages) reviews describing texts and books instructors have found especially valuable in teaching upper level courses in Medieval and Renaissance disciplines. We also welcome longer literature-review articles. Membership in the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association is not required for submission or publication.

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*New Globe Theatre  
Photo by Dr. Stephen V. Beck*

## ALLEN D. BRECK AWARD WINNER

2011

*Michael Call*

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The Breck Award recognizes the most distinguished paper presented by a junior scholar at the annual conference.

## Money for Nothing: Molière's Miser and the Risky World of Early Modern France

*Michael Call*

*Brigham Young University*

*Molière's 1668 comedy L'Avare, or The Miser, takes place during a significant shift in the way that early modern Europeans thought about chance and risk. Staged at the same historical moment that Pascal, Huygens, and Leibnitz were developing the first foundations of probability mathematics, L'Avare conjures up an atmosphere of uncertainty, setting in opposition risk-takers and the risk-averse. As the characters encounter and debate the concepts of usury, life expectancy, gambling, and the risks of maritime travel, they grapple palpably with the consequences of an uncertain world in which Divine Providence can no longer be assumed—a new world in which assurance (the French term for both certainty and insurance) is sometimes granted by faith, but is also sold as a policy. Situated between the notion of Providence and the emerging science of probability, Harpagon the miser's treasure consequently becomes a re-imagined theatrical touchstone for changing notions of faith and doubt, certainty and risk.*

One of Molière's first biographers recounts that during a 1670 performance of *La Gouvernance de Sanche Pança* Molière (playing the title character) was to enter the scene astride a donkey. The biographer, Jean-Léonor Le Gallois, Sieur de Grimarest, notes that the donkey, “qui ne savait point le rôle par cœur” [“who didn't know his role by heart”], decided to make his stage appearance before his cue and that Molière, pulling on the halter with all his might, was forced to yell out, “à moi ! ce maudit âne veut entrer !” [“Help me! This cursed donkey wants to go on stage!”], while the other actors laughed.<sup>1</sup> Unable to overcome the animal's determination, Molière slipped off the donkey's back and let it wander on stage “pour aller faire telle scène qu'il jugerait à propos” [“to perform whatever scene it deemed appropriate”].<sup>2</sup>

1 Jean-Léonor Le Gallois, Sieur de Grimarest, *Vie de M. de Molière* (1705), in Molière, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Seuil, 1962), 21. All translations from French are my own, with the exception of the selections from Molière's *L'Avare* (for which I use Donald Frame's translation), or unless otherwise indicated.

2 Grimarest, 21.

The donkey incident (true or not) is merely one more reminder that theater is unpredictable, a laboratory of probability in which the relatively stable text encounters the infinite variety of performance. As an actor, author, and director, Molière was keenly aware of this, writing to the potential reader of *L'Amour médecin* (1666): “On sait bien que les Comédies ne sont faites que pour être jouées, et je ne conseille de lire celle-ci qu’aux personnes qui ont des yeux pour découvrir dans la lecture tout le jeu du Théâtre” [“Everyone knows that plays are only made to be played, and I recommend the reading of this one only to those people who have the eyes to discover in the reading all the play of the theater”].<sup>3</sup> Molière’s description of theater underscores the notion of play, understood here both in its theatrical sense (the stage action or “playing”) and as a sort of semi-spontaneous and entertaining supplement to the written text.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the “game” (*le jeu*) of live theater, as we might term it, involves an element of unpredictability, each performance (though carefully rehearsed) always subject to the contingencies of time, place, actors and audience. No amount of rehearsal can ever (or should ever) eliminate the particularities that make each performance a step into Heraclitus’s always-changing river. In that sense, to put on a play or *jouer* is, as the French term’s synonyms suggest, also to gamble.

But gambling, in all forms, was undergoing a significant change in the mid-seventeenth century when Molière was writing and performing his comedies. While evidence of extensive gambling dates back to ancient Egypt and Sumeria, historian Ian

3 Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard [Bibliothèque de la Pléiade], 2010), 1:603.

4 In this sense, Molière’s description of the relationship between text and performance approaches Derrida’s notion of *jeu*, described as “la substitution des contenus, l’échange des présences et des absences, le hasard et le risque absolu” (*De la Grammatologie* [Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967], 433) [“the substitution of contents, the exchange of presences and absences, chance, and absolute risk” (*Of Grammatology*, tr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1976], 307)]. As Derrida writes, the “salle de théâtre” is “arrachée à soi par le jeu et les détours de la représentation, divertie de soi et déchirée par la différance” (*Grammatologie*, 433) [“wrenched away from itself by the games and detours of representation, diverted from itself and torn by difference” (*Grammatology* 307)]. For both playwright and critic, performance becomes a site of chance, variation, and semiotic polyvalence, in a sense staging the nature of language itself.

Hacking has written that no sustained notion of probability existed prior to 1660. Roman dice games, for example, included odds entirely incommensurate with the likelihood of the throws; Hacking concludes, “Someone with only the most modest knowledge of probability mathematics could have won himself the whole of Gaul in a week.”<sup>5</sup> The idea (and measurement) of probability emerged around 1600, independently and rather suddenly in a wide variety of fields, and in the work of a number of different individuals, including Pascal, Leibniz, and John Graunt.<sup>6</sup> Probability necessarily implies a change in the way early modern Europeans viewed causality and determinism. From an earlier world-view in which Providence held sway, deciding the fate of an ocean voyage or the lifespan of a human being, the new universe of probability must allow for accidents, as their etymology implies, simply to happen. Ships must sink, people must die of the planet, lethargy, impostume, and surfeit (to cite from the seventeenth-century London bills of mortality) without such events invariably representing a manifestation of God’s will, and in ways—most importantly—that are patterned and predictable.<sup>7</sup>

Molière’s plays, staged in Paris from 1658 to 1673, consequently unfold in a hybrid historical period when spiritual determinism is giving way to impersonal chance, from a cosmos in which every sparrow’s fall is noted (Matthew 10:29) to one in which the Creator may have left the clockwork universe. At the same time Bossuet, the eloquent Bishop of Meaux, is preaching “what is chance to the eyes of men is design to the eyes of God,”<sup>8</sup> Pascal is calculating the Chevalier de Méré’s odds of rolling double-sixes, given twenty-four throws.

5 Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 3.

6 Hacking, 1, 11.

7 The causes of death mentioned in the London bills of mortality are included in John Graunt’s pioneering study of life expectancy first printed in 1662 (John Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations Mentioned in a following Index and made upon the Bills of Mortality*, 3rd ed. [London: John Martyn and James Allestry, 1665], 14–16).

8 Thomas Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels: A Different History of French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 16.

This incongruity is particularly apparent in Molière's 1668 comedy *L'Avare* [*The Miser*]. Paul Claudel wrote in his journal that Molière's theater is characterized by "une atmosphère de passions déchaînées, d'avarice, de mensonge, de tromperie, etc., *comme si Dieu n'existait pas*" ["an atmosphere of unrestrained passions, greed, lying, deceit, etc., *as if God did not exist*," emphasis added].<sup>9</sup> *L'Avare*'s universe, confirming Claudel's description, is not one in which God certainly does not exist; rather, it is a world in which God might not exist or is potentially absent. While the characters in *L'Avare* do not discuss theology, they grapple palpably with the consequences of an uncertain world in which Divine Providence can no longer be assumed—a new world in which *assurance* (the French term that means both certainty and insurance) is sometimes granted by faith, but is also sold as a policy. Molière's play features several of the central concepts that will spur the seventeenth-century development of a calculus of risk, including usury, gambling, life expectancy, and the dangers of maritime travel. Situated between the notion of Providence and the emerging science of probability, Harpagon the miser's treasure becomes a re-imagined touchstone for changing notions of faith and doubt, or certainty and risk.

The play's prominent inclusion of usury constitutes one of the most important changes that Molière made to his principal literary source, Plautus's *Aulularia*. Plautus's miser, Euclio, is a hoarder—despite the wealth that he has discovered hidden away in his hearth, he chooses to live in an artificial penury and keeps his money out of circulation.<sup>10</sup> While Molière's miser Harpagon also maintains a tight hold on his domestic expenses, his problem is not necessarily one of hoarding. As Jean-Marie Apostolidès has pointed out, "Harpagon is a seventeenth-century miser, that is to say, a usurer."<sup>11</sup> The money that Harpagon is hiding does not come from

9 Barbara Alsip, "L'Avare: History of Scholarship," *Œuvres et critiques* 6.1 (1981), 105.

10 Plautus, *Plautus*, tr. Paul Nixon, 5 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1966), 1:236-39.

11 Jean-Marie Apostolidès, "Molière and the Sociology of Exchange," tr. Alice Musick McLean, *Critical Inquiry* 14.3 (Spring 1988), 480.

an inheritance or from his own savings. It is the repayment (with interest, we are to understand) of a loan. Nor does Harpagon intend to keep it around. When first given the chance to express himself in private, Harpagon states, “Certes, ce n’est pas une petite peine que de garder chez soi une grande somme d’argent ; et bienheureux qui a tout son fait bien placé, et ne conserve seulement que ce qu’il faut pour sa dépense” [“It’s certainly no small trouble to keep a large sum of money in the house; and happy is the man who has all his pile well invested, and keeps around only what he needs for his expenses”].<sup>12</sup> Harpagon is looking actively for ways to place the money elsewhere, where it can earn, as he terms it, “honnête intérêt” [“decent interest”].<sup>13</sup> We see his efforts in this regard in the second act, in which he inadvertently almost becomes the usurer to his own son, a transaction that would have assured that at least twelve thousand *livres* of the thirty thousand that he is hiding would have been placed in a way to earn over twenty-five percent interest.<sup>14</sup>

In their early modern French context, Harpagon’s actions are both commonplace and contrary to state and canon law. Catholic officials and theologians in the Middle Ages, drawing on patristic writings and Aristotelian philosophy, had long prohibited any loan that demanded interest. As Thomas Aquinas argued, it was impossible to sell the use of fungible goods separate from ownership of the goods themselves; in addition, usury also constituted an arrogant human appropriation (and commoditization) of time, a good owned only by God.<sup>15</sup> Changing economic conditions in Italy and Flanders necessitated some accommodations and the institution of new technologies of credit (including specialized provisions for maritime loans), but for private lenders and borrowers the Church’s

12 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:13; *The Miser*, in *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*, tr. Donald Frame (New York: Signet Classics, 1968), 144.

13 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:15; *The Miser*, 146.

14 Harpagon’s loan is offered at a combination of “denier dix-huit” (that is, one *denier* for each eighteen loaned, or a little over five and a half percent) and “denier cinq” (twenty percent) (Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:23).

15 René Taveneaux, *Jansénisme et Prêt à Intérêt* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1977), 20.

prohibition remained in place in Catholic countries until close to the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> When Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's minister of finances, sought to establish state-run loan offices which would permit private individuals to borrow money at interest, the king consulted the theologians of the Sorbonne and, upon their negative reaction, discontinued the project.<sup>17</sup>

Profit-generating private loans in seventeenth-century France could therefore legally assume one of only two forms. The first was an annuity, either constituted for life (a *rente viagère*) or until repayment of the principal (a *rente perpétuelle*). While a *rente* included an annual interest payment (fixed by the government at five percent in Molière's day), it could not include any term limit for full repayment—the lender essentially alienated his or her capital for as long as the borrower chose, since the borrower could repay the principal at any time, or simply continue to make the interest payments.<sup>18</sup> The second form of permissible private loan was the *obligation*, a notarized borrowing of money arranged between two private individuals that could include terms of repayment, but which could not (at least officially) include any interest provisions. However, as Hoffman, Postel-Vinay, and Rosenthal conclude from their study of *ancien régime* French notary records, “[W]hile the contracts could not legally mention any interest due, it is nonetheless

16 Tavenaux, 18. The situation was complicated by the growing distinction between civil law and ecclesiastical policy. Renaissance Humanism brought a revival of Roman law, which had permitted interest-bearing loans while still regulating them. In addition, certain theologians (Gerson, in particular) maintained that the state could enact policies regarding loans that differed from Church positions. This mirrors the stance that Calvin takes, giving stern moral warnings against individuals engaged in loaning money at interest, but acknowledging the right of governments to create laws that depart from scriptural injunctions (Tavenaux, 24-27). The more liberal economic conditions of Protestant (and specifically Calvinist) countries in this period will reflect this change.

17 Tavenaux, 44.

18 Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay, and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, “Private Credit Markets in Paris, 1690-1840,” *Journal of Economic History* 52.2 (June 1992), 296. These provisions meant that *rentes* escaped the Thomist critique that usury attempted to sell use separately from full ownership of the borrowed funds. The borrower essentially became the owner of the loaned amount, as long as she continued to, in essence, pay the rent. As Tavenaux writes regarding *rentes*, “Les docteurs les plus rigoristes, et les jansénistes eux-mêmes, les tenaient pour licites et foncièrement différentes du simple prêt à intérêt” [“The most rigorous doctors of theology, and the Jansenists themselves, maintained that they were approved and fundamentally different from a simple interest-bearing loan”] (35).

clear that interest was charged on the *obligations*—indeed, often at a rate above the limit on *rentes*.<sup>19</sup> These interest-bearing *obligations*, immoral and illegal, constitute the shadowy world of Harpagon and his kind, profiteers taking advantage of the need created by a growing capitalism, the shortage of hard cash, and the government’s own unwillingness to enter into the credit market.<sup>20</sup>

Molière’s play presents a very unique moment for Harpagon, the time in between the repayment of a loan and the opportunity to make new loans—the time in which a substantial portion of the usurer’s wealth is reified and present in his own home. Harpagon’s anxiety, manifest in the constant visits to the garden, does not stem from a habitual love of seeing his gold; rather, it demonstrates the degree to which the present situation is atypical. The repayment of the massive debt creates a moment—the only moment—in which Harpagon and his money are vulnerable. There is no evidence that Harpagon intends to keep this particular sum around any longer than it will take him to find opportunities to lend it back out.

While Harpagon’s obsession with money certainly could be said to commoditize the world around him, the miser’s activities might be more accurately described in terms of liquidation. In a marked difference from Plautus’s hoarder, who simply refuses to spend, Harpagon seeks to transform all the solid assets around him into cash, such as his “ample magasin de hardes” [“big warehouse of used furniture”]<sup>21</sup> that furnishes a significant part of the lending contract. Indeed, the existence of this warehouse stocked with all varieties of physical objects—beds, guns, musical instruments,

19 Hoffman et al., 296.

20 The sense of *obligation* as a private loan contract may well be setting up ironic word games in *L’Avaro*’s loan scene. Maître Simon, discussing the loan arrangements with Harpagon, states that the young man “s’obligera, si vous voulez, que son Père mourra avant qu’il soit huit mois” [“will guarantee, if you want, that his father will die in the next eight months”]. Harpagon responds, “La charité, Maître Simon, nous *oblige* à faire plaisir aux Personnes, lorsque nous le pouvons” [“Charity, Maître Simon, obliges us to do favors to people when we can”] (Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:26; *Miser*, 158, my emphasis).

21 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:27; *Miser*, 160.

stuffed crocodiles—provides clear evidence that Harpagon’s lending practices have led to the bankruptcy of some of his debtors, leading to the seizure of their property.<sup>22</sup>

James Gaines has even claimed that Harpagon is in a sense “short selling,” that is, counting on his debtor defaulting, which would allow him to seize the individual’s property.<sup>23</sup> But Harpagon does not intend to collect or keep these items.<sup>24</sup> In order to be usable (with “use” constituting the benefit that usury sells), the property in turn must be transformed back into money capable of being put to work. Nor are objects the only things that Harpagon seeks to liquidate: he announces at the beginning of the play his intention to marry his two children in ways that reduce his financial liabilities: Cléante is to be married to a rich widow, Elise to Seigneur Anselme, who will take her famously “sans dot,” that is, without a dowry.<sup>25</sup>

22 M.J. McCarthy, for example, states that the warehouse’s goods undoubtedly are “defaulters’ effects which [Harpagon] had confiscated as debt settlement” (“The Black Economy in Molière’s *L’Avare*,” *Australian Journal of French Studies* 28.3 [1991], 238). Some commentator, including Gaines and Taveneaux, have argued that the objects mentioned in the contract turn the loan into a Mohatra contract, a method of avoiding the charge of usury by having the borrower buy goods on credit and then immediately resell them at a lower price to the lender, thus receiving a certain amount of money immediately, with the obligation to pay back an increased amount at a later date (see James Gaines, *Molière and Paradox: Skepticism and Theater in the Early Modern Age* [Tübingen: Narr Francke (Biblio 17), 2010], 118; Taveneaux 34). This cannot be the case, though, since the physical objects are merely a formality in the true Mohatra contract, never really changing hands. Cléante, on the other hand, is legitimately concerned about receiving the ramshackle objects and the necessity to find a buyer for them (Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:25).

23 Gaines, 118.

24 As Forestier and Bourqui point out, the “peau d’un lézard,” or crocodile skin, is a typical decoration for a *cabinet de curiosités* (Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:1339, note 15). Harpagon is consequently dispersing the contents of a collection.

25 Ralph Albanese, in his excellent discussion of the play, notes: “Plus précisément, Harpagon envisage sa famille comme une entreprise dont il faut à tout moment évaluer la rentabilité ; il traite ses enfants en biens négociables soumis aux lois du marché (le bénéfice qu’entraîne le non-paiement d’une dot), car il conçoit leur mariage en termes de profit” [“More precisely, Harpagon sees his family as a business whose profitability must be constantly evaluated; he treats his children as tradable goods subject to the laws of the market (the advantage that comes from the nonpayment of a dowry), since he conceives their marriage in terms of profit”] (Ralph Albanese, “Argent et réification dans *L’Avare*,” *L’Esprit créateur* 21.3 [1981], 36).

Harpagon's efforts at universal liquidation are so thorough that perhaps a better term would be sublimation, in reference both to the process by which a solid is vaporized and to the Freudian sense where psychic energy is rerouted towards other ends. This is particularly true since Harpagon is not only caught in a classic Oedipal triangle—the rival to his own son for Mariane's affections—but even reduces his own pending marriage to one more financial transaction.<sup>26</sup> Interrogating Frosine regarding the possible size of Mariane's dowry, Harpagon insists that Mariane's mother sacrifice in order to provide a financial incentive for the wedding to take place—"Lui as-tu dit qu'il fallait qu'elle s'aidât un peu, qu'elle fît quelque effort, qu'elle se saignât pour une occasion comme celle-ci?" ["Did you tell her that she had to bestir herself, make some effort, and bleed herself, for an occasion like this one?"]<sup>27</sup>—and in the process, flesh linguistically is made cash, a currency of "blood money" that will allow the contractual negotiations to proceed.

Money, Harpagon's transcendental signifier, regulates exchange values, eliminating pleasure and play, and dissolves all other human obligations—when his children resist his marriage plans for them, the miser responds by disinheriting his son and threatening to put his daughter in a convent.<sup>28</sup> In a related process, Harpagon's solid assets are inexorably converted into intangible investments. The physical gives way to the abstract, to the point that his coachmen/chef Maître Jacques can say that Harpagon's poor horses, for lack of food, can no longer properly be called horses, and "ne sont plus rien que des idées ou des fantômes; des façons de Chevaux" ["are nothing more but ideas or phantoms or shadows

26 In this respect, he is strikingly different from another prominent *vieillard amoureux* from Molière's theater, Sganarelle from *Le Mariage forcé* (1664), over fifty years old and engaged to the young coquette Dorimène. For the rich and elderly Sganarelle, marriage is emphatically a corporeal affair, as his *blason* of the various parts of Dorimène's body that will soon belong to him makes quite clear (Molière, *Œuvres*, 1:943).

27 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:30; *Miser*, 163.

28 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:58, 67.

of horses”].<sup>29</sup> Everything around Harpagon is disintegrating into the abstract, from his relationship with his children to his servant’s breeches, which are “tout troué par-derrrière” [have “a big hole in the seat”],<sup>30</sup> such that we might invoke Marx’s famous description of capitalism’s transformative effects: “All that is solid melts into air.”<sup>31</sup>

In his love of the intangible and in his search for security or certainty, Harpagon represents an aberrant form of Cartesianism, privileging the abstract or intellectual over the physical world, or in other words, favoring abstract debt relations over solid substance. Usury eliminates uncertainty, guaranteeing a certain return or, in the event of default, seizure of other assets. Claiming that loans are a form of safety might strike the modern readers as odd, accustomed to viewing interest as the sign of a loan’s nonpayment risk, but seventeenth-century commentators rejected this interpretation. When the Jesuit casuist Mateo de Moya, expressing the modern approach, suggested that it might be permitted to “celuy qui preste d’exiger quelque chose outre le sort principal, à cause du peril du remboursement où il s’expose” [“he who loans to require something beyond the principal, because of the risk of repayment to which he

29 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:39; *Miser*, 172. Interestingly enough, Freud’s own choice of metaphor to describe the dangers of excessive sublimation is a starving horse (Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* [New York: Norton, 1961], 61-62).

30 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:35; *Miser*, 169.

31 Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), 476. In this dystopian portrait of a universe in which all ties become sordid economic ones, we might well suspect a subtle allusion back to Rabelais, Molière’s most well-known comedic predecessor. In the opening chapters to Rabelais’s *Tiers Livre* (an important sixteenth-century meditation on risk, chance, and Providence), Panurge runs up an enormous debt and justifies his actions to Pantagruel by pronouncing an encomium of lending and borrowing, amplifying the ideas metaphorically until he argues that both the macrocosm and microcosm function essentially according to a series of obligations, ending with the “devoir” (a play on “duty” and “debt”) that husbands and wives owe each other. Pantagruel responds that it is love, not debt, that fills this all-pervading function and states, “Mais preschez et patrocinez d’icy à la Pentecoste, en fin vous serez esbahy comment rien ne me auez persuadé” [“But preach on from now until Pentecost, in the end you will be surprised to see that you haven’t persuaded me at all”] (François Rabelais, *Le Tiers Livre* [Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1995], 71). That Molière knew the passage well is evidenced by his direct citation of it in *L’Ecole des femmes* (Molière, *Œuvres*, 1:403).

exposes himself”],<sup>32</sup> the theology faculty of the University of Paris responded tersely in 1665, “La doctrine de ces propositions est fausse, scandaleuse, porte à commettre des usures, enseigne divers artifices pour les pallier & pour violer la justice & la charité ; & elle a déjà esté condamnée par la Faculté” [“The doctrine of these propositions is false, scandalous, leads to committing usury, teaches various artifices for disguising it, robbing justice and charity, and has already been condemned by the Faculty”].<sup>33</sup>

More extensive justification of the stance against usury is provided by the 1697 volume *Les Loix civiles dans leur ordre naturel*, in which the author distinguishes between risks of commerce and usury: if a debtor loses money on a commercial venture, such losses in no way affect the amount owed to the creditor, which continues to grow regardless of market vicissitudes.<sup>34</sup> Usury therefore presents for these pious early modern commentators the condemnable image of “un profit, sans industrie, sans risque, & sans peine” [“profit without industry, without risk, and without effort”].<sup>35</sup> From this perspective, usury represents the idle safety of a guaranteed return. Harpagon would agree: when he discusses lending money at interest, he revealingly says that it is “afin de le trouver un jour” [“so as to get it back some day”].<sup>36</sup>

32 *Censure de la Faculté de Théologie de Paris contre le livre d'Amadeus Guimenius* (Paris: Frédéric Léonard, 1665), 41.

33 *Censure*, 44-45.

34 “Car c’est la regle des profits à venir, que pour y avoir part il faut s’exposer aux événements des pertes, qui peuvent arriver, au lieu des profits que l’on eseroit. Et le parti d’avoir part à un gain futur, renferme celui de ne point profiter, s’il n’y a pas de gain, & de perdre même si la perte arrive. On ne sçauroit donc sans inhumanité, ni même sans crime, se décharger de la perte, & s’asseurer du gain” [“For it is the rule of future profits that in order to have a share one must be exposed to the losses that might occur, instead of the profits that were hoped for. And the wager to have a share in future gains includes that of not profiting, if there is no gain, or to lose if losses occur. One cannot therefore without inhumanity, or even without crime, free oneself from loss and ensure gain”] (Jean Domat, *Les Loix civiles dans leur ordre naturel*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. [Paris: Pierre Aubouin, Pierre Emery, and Charles Clouzier, 1697], 1:251).

35 Domat, 1:252. The *Conférences ecclésiastiques de Paris sur l’usure* published in 1766 will repeat these same arguments, stipulating also that ample legal measures exist that allow a creditor to be compensated upon default of a loan, including provisions that would account for any possible loss created by the delay in receiving the money (*Conférences ecclésiastiques de Paris sur l’usure* [Paris: Estienne, 1766], 173-77).

36 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:15; *Miser*, 146.

Certainly in the wider universe of Molière's comedies, there are good odds that a lender will not be repaid, as Monsieur Jourdain and Monsieur Dimanche discover in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and *Dom Juan*, respectively. But Harpagon is the great exception to this—not only does he receive the spectacular repayment of ten thousand *écus* in gold the day before the play begins, but in Act Three he is interrupted by yet another debtor arriving with payment.<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that Harpagon takes great precaution that no real risk of loss is involved and certainly does not lend to the impecunious aristocracy. As he meets to arrange the loan to the as yet unknown young man in the second act, Harpagon asks, “Mais croyez-vous, Maître Simon, qu’il n’y ait rien à périlcliter?” [“But do you think, Maître Simon, that there’s no risk?”], proceeding then to inquire concerning “le nom, les biens et la Famille” [the name, the means, and the family”] of the would-be debtor.<sup>38</sup> Maître Simon reassures him that the young man comes from a rich family and, with his mother already dead, soon stands to receive a large inheritance.<sup>39</sup> As he carefully places his money, making sure that he profits whether or not the loan can be repaid, Harpagon eliminates uncertainty and reduces the physical world to its abstract cash equivalent. In this sense he anticipates Molière's other exaggerated Cartesians, the *femmes savantes*, who will belittle the needs of the body in favor of a ridiculous version of the life of the mind. Philaminte's high-handed dismissal of the body as “cette guenille” [“this rag”] finds its visual

37 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:48.

38 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:26; *Miser*, 158.

39 The conditions of the loan, including Cléante's assurance that his father will soon die, recall the infamous “Macedonian” edict of the Roman Senate that prevented sons in their minority from contracting debts. A 1677 volume of jurisprudence explains that the law was drafted because of a certain usurer “qui avoit de coutume de prêter de l’argent à des fils de famille, dont il connoissoit les biens, à des interests & des usures si horribles, que les enfans étoient obligez non seulement de s’ennuyer de la vie de leurs peres, mais aussi de procurer la mort à ceux desquels ils avoient receu la vie” [“who had the habit of lending money to sons of families whose wealth he knew at such horrible interest rates and usury that the children were incited not only to impatiently wait out their fathers' lives, but also to procure death to those from whom they had received life”] (Claude de Ferrière, *La Jurisprudence du Digeste, conférée avec les ordonnances royaux, les coutumes de France, et les décisions des cours souveraines*, 2 vs. [Paris: Cochart, 1677], 1:341).

representation in Harpagon himself, old, broken-down, coughing, and dressed ridiculously in dilapidated clothing held together with string.<sup>40</sup>

A foil for Harpagon is provided in his own son, Cléante. Father and son, creditor and debtor, Harpagon and Cléante are locked together in relationships that are mutually constitutive but oppositional. Even more importantly, Cléante's mode of living contrasts fundamentally with Harpagon's. While Harpagon accumulates wealth, Cléante dissipates it. Harpagon transforms the objects (and the people) around him into money; Cléante transforms money into objects and relationships. Explaining clothing expenditures to his father, Cléante states, "[J]e mets sur moi tout l'argent que je gagne" ["I put all my winnings on my back"].<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, he aims to use his family's wealth in order to make Mariane his wife. To his father's grim rationalism, Cléante opposes an ethics of pleasure in which money's sterile abstraction serves only to procure actual enjoyment, the sole true good: "Je dépense, donc je suis." Perhaps the clearest moment of Cléante's willingness to convert cash into relationships (and Harpagon's correspondingly opposite approach) is the final scene in which Cléante offers to trade his father the stolen moneybox in exchange for Mariane's hand, an offer which Harpagon accepts.

In addition, at least rhetorically Cléante presents a method of accruing money that is completely at odds with Harpagon's approach. When questioned by his father regarding where he gets the money to buy clothing, Cléante responds that he gambles.<sup>42</sup> As opposed to his father—who predictably replies that instead of purchasing things, Cléante should loan his winnings out—Cléante claims to be a risk-taker. Rather than accepting his situation passively, Cléante explores dangerous alternatives that will perhaps catapult him to more advantageous opportunities. He takes out loans; he considers eloping with Mariane and starting a new life elsewhere; and of course, he becomes a willing

<sup>40</sup> Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:33, 564.

<sup>41</sup> Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:15; *Miser*, 146.

<sup>42</sup> Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:15; *Miser*, 146.

accomplice in the theft of Harpagon's gold. The concluding bargain with his father gives a sense of how far he is willing to go in risking everything to get Mariane: Plautus's young lover took the gold from his wily servant and returned it to Euclio, thus acquiring the father's good graces. For Cléante, already disinherited and evicted from the household, the bargain that he proposes does not in any way seek to repair his relationship with his father, and Cléante is wagering his last material possessions. He is indeed a gambler.

Cléante is not alone, since the other younger characters—Harpagon's daughter Elise and the love interests of Harpagon's children, Valère and Mariane—are risk-takers as well. Indeed, the play opens with a statement on taking chances in an unknowable world, as Elise wonders if her decision to sign a promise to marry Valère was wise or not: “Non, Valère, je ne puis pas me repentir de tout ce que je fais pour vous....Mais, à vous dire vrai, le succès me donne de l'inquiétude ; et je crains fort de vous aimer un peu plus que je ne devrais” [“No, Valère, I cannot repent of anything I do for you....But to tell you the truth, the outcome gives me some uneasiness; and I am very much afraid that I may love you a little more than I ought”].<sup>43</sup> She openly expresses her doubts regarding the constancy of young men, and acknowledges that her rather audacious decision (by seventeenth-century standards) was made despite an atmosphere of uncertainty. In a similarly risky move, Mariane abandons the admittedly distasteful surety of a marriage to Harpagon by agreeing to Frosine's scheme to dupe the miser out of the proposed wedding. Valère also is characterized by bold decision-making despite unsure outcomes. We are first introduced to him as someone who daringly rescued Elise from drowning, and who subsequently has disguised himself in order to enter Harpagon's household and win the miser's favor. His dramatic revelation of his true identity at the conclusion of the play is likewise characterized by other characters as hazardous: as Seigneur Anselme warns him, “Vous risquez ici plus que vous ne pensez” [“You're taking a bigger risk than you think”].<sup>44</sup>

43 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:5; *Miser*, 136.

44 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:69; *Miser*, 206.

Claudel's comment that Molière's theatrical atmosphere is full of lies and deception is true in the sense that these younger characters bluff, conceal, and calculate like poker players, making decisions despite limited knowledge and divergent possible outcomes, a far cry from Harpagon's world of certain returns and win/win contracts. We could say that theirs is not the Cartesian world of certainty, presided over by a God proven beyond doubt through clear and distinct ideas, but instead the Pascalian universe of a hidden God, whose existence is not so much known as wagered. Accepting the possibility of failure, betrayal, and unhappiness, *L'Avare's* younger characters nevertheless commit themselves because of the potential payoff. Such a decision is not necessarily irrational: as Pascal had argued, bets become rational as the prospective felicity increases.<sup>45</sup> Given that there is no certainty, one would be a fool not to wager in a game where such happiness was a possibility. And such betting is unavoidable—like the gambler Pascal analyzes in his famous wager, the characters in *L'Avare* are already “in the game.”<sup>46</sup> We could say, then, that the play sets in opposition the risk-averse miser and those who are willing to *miser*, that is, to bet or gamble.

And like any decent gambler (at least beginning in the seventeenth century), Molière's characters begin to think about the odds, particularly concerning the play's most important explicit wager: how long Harpagon will live. Harpagon's age is a centrally important theme, developed at length in the conversation between the miser and Frosine in which he states that he is sixty years old.<sup>47</sup> Speculations multiply regarding how much longer he can survive: Cléante estimates that his father will not last eight months; Frosine, flattering Harpagon, pretends to read his palm and predicts that

45 In his *Pensées*, Pascal remarks: “Or quand on travaille pour demain et pour l'incertain, on agit avec raison, car on doit travailler pour l'incertain, par la règle des partis qui est démontrée” [“Now when we work for tomorrow and for what is uncertain, we act rationally, for we must work for what is uncertain, according to the rule of wagers which has been demonstrated”] (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, [Paris: Gallimard, 1977], 345).

46 “Oui, mais il faut parier. Cela n'est pas volontaire, vous êtes embarqué” [“Yes, but you must wager. It is not optional, you are already embarked”] (Pascal, 249).

47 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:29; *Miser*, 162.

he will live another sixty years; speaking later to Mariane, who is facing the prospect of having to marry the decrepit old man, she will reduce this estimate to three months.<sup>48</sup> Harpagon, for his part, reacts with pleasure at the assurance that he will outlive his children and grandchildren.<sup>49</sup>

The projected loans and marriages of the characters in *L'Avare* are all dependent upon the timing of Harpagon's death, and family relations consequently resemble more and more a grim sort of tontine, the novel seventeenth-century French financial scheme in which the lone survivor inherited the capital left by the deceased partners. And, in the 1660s, such financial arrangements were about to be placed on solid factual foundations: John Graunt in 1662 undertook the first study of life expectancies by analyzing London bills of mortality. In 1669, Christian Huygens would also tackle the mathematical calculation of life expectancy, and Sir Edmond Halley of comet fame would make a similar set of calculations for English annuities in 1693.<sup>50</sup> Paris started tracking death statistics in 1667, a year before *L'Avare*'s premiere.<sup>51</sup> Molière's characters are therefore living in the first European generation to have a numerically probable answer to the question, "How long will I live?"

Such calculations represent yet one more extension of rationality into an area hitherto dominated by determinism and the metaphysical. By moving death into the realm of mechanistic contingency—no longer seen as an act of Fate or divine will—life, like the Borgesian lottery of Babylon, became indistinguishable from a game of chance, although with calculable odds and a way to make rational bets against the unknowable. Harpagon's ludicrous reliance on palm reading will be replaced with a system that, while it

48 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:26, 29, 43; *Miser*, 158, 162, 177.

49 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:29; *Miser*, 162.

50 Hacking, 99-100; Peter L. Bernstein, *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1996), 84-88.

51 Hacking, 102.

will not guarantee him sixty more years, will be able to provide him with convincing evidence that, having reached sixty, his chances of reaching seventy are 58.7%, based on Halley's tables.<sup>52</sup>

But it is one final area of risk calculation that illustrates most strongly the ideological fault lines that undergird Molière's play: maritime travel. Shipwrecks, pirates, and other dangers at sea are ubiquitous in seventeenth-century literature, to the point that Georges de Scudéry, in the preface to his sister Madeleine's novel *Ibrahim* (1640), writes that "la Mer est la Scene la plus propre à faire de grands changemens" ["the sea is the most appropriate setting for creating large changes"], adding "quelques-uns l'ont nommée le Theâtre de l'inconstance" ["some have dubbed it the theater of inconstancy"].<sup>53</sup>

Of course, these incidents were prevalent enough in real life to spur efforts at compensation. The burgeoning trade of the Italian city-states in the fourteenth century led to a number of financial innovations, including shipping insurance.<sup>54</sup> Such insurance was the subject of lengthy ecclesiastical debates, particularly concerning its possible relation to usury, but more importantly regarding the way in which insurance claimed to commoditize and sell security,

52 Edmond Halley, "An Estimate of the Degrees of Mortality of Mankind," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 17 (1693), 600.

53 Madeleine Scudéry, *Ibrahim ou L'Illustre Bassa*, 2nd ed. (Paris: La Compagnie des Libraires, 1665), sig. A11r. Scudéry criticizes the overuse of the ocean as the scene for the unexpected, writing about other novelists, "On dirait que ce Dieu [Eole] leur a donné les vents enfermez dans un Antre, comme il les donna à Ulysse, tant ils les déchainent à point nommé. Ils font les tempestes & les naufrages quand il leur plaist ; ils en exciteroient sur la mer pacifique, & trouveroient des escueils & des rochers en des lieux où les Pilotes les plus experts n'en ont jamais remarqué" ["It would seem that this god (Aeolus) gave them the winds in a bag, like he did for Ulysses, seeing how they unleash them at will. They make storms and shipwrecks whenever it pleases them; they stir up the peaceful sea and find reefs and rocks in places where the most expert navigators have never seen them."] (Scudéry, A11r). He will add, though, "Ce n'est pas que ie pretende bannir les naufrages des Romans ; ie les approuve aux Ouvrages des autres, & ie m'en sers dans le mien" ["It's not that I seek to banish shipwrecks from novels; I approve of them in the works of others, and I use them in mine"] (Scudéry, A11r), proceeding to recommend moderation in all things, shipwrecks included.

54 Giovanni Ceccarelli, "Risky Business: Theological and Canonical Thought on Insurance from the Thirteenth to the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31:3 (Fall 2001), 617.

something which did not properly belong to human beings. As historian Lucien Febvre pointed out, before insurance or securities could acquire their modern definitions, a conceptual transition from heaven to earth had to take place.<sup>55</sup> The Spanish ecclesiastical writer Juan Medina, writing in an earlier age, equated chance and God: “Deus qui fortuna est” [“God who is Fortune”];<sup>56</sup> with the advent of a mathematics of probability and a mechanistic physics, conceptual space was opened for the existence of pure chance.

Two ecclesiastical discussions of maritime insurance help illustrate this historical transition. In 1474, the Carmelite author João Sobrinho will argue against the sale of insurance, on the grounds that “the safety of a venture proceeds only from God’s will.”<sup>57</sup> In 1766, ecclesiastical conferences held in Paris will state that maritime insurance for cargo is certainly permitted by civil and canon law.<sup>58</sup> Closer to Molière’s own time, eighteen years after *L’Avare*’s publication, Edward Lloyd will open his famous coffee shop in London, eventually leading to the most famous insurance company in history.<sup>59</sup>

But the play’s lone sea voyage will be the clearest indication of the split between the calculating, mechanistic world of risk aversion that Harpagon inhabits, and the other characters’ providential comic universe. The disastrous shipwreck that had separated Dom Thomas

55 Lucien Febvre, “Pour l’histoire d’un sentiment : Le besoin de sécurité,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 11.2 (avril-juin 1956), 245.

56 Ceccarelli, 626.

57 Ceccarelli, 624.

58 *Conférences ecclésiastiques*, 335-37. However, the text will maintain that life insurance for the sailors is not allowed, adding, “Qui peut répondre de la vie d’autrui, dont Dieu seul est le maître?” [“Who can answer for the life of another, of which God alone is the master?”] (*Conférences ecclésiastiques*, 342). By the mid-eighteenth century, then, the Church acknowledged that certain events — the loss of cargo — could merely happen; death, on the other hand, was still another matter. Perhaps the hybrid nature of the early modern approach is best exemplified in a 1619 Rouen guide for maritime insurance that specifies in the chapter “Ce que doit contenir la Police” [“What the Policy should contain”] that the first provision should be the invocation of the name of God (*Guidon, stile et usance des marchands qui mettent à la mer* [Rouen: Martin Le Mesgissier, 1619], 5).

59 Bernstein, 88-92.

(now going by the name of Seigneur Anselme) and his family nevertheless spared all of their lives, allowing for the surprising and happy reunification of the entire family in Harpagon's house in the play's final act. Dom Thomas apparently has *assurance* of a different, older kind—as he exclaims upon the rediscovery of his children: “Ô Ciel ! quels sont les traits de ta puissance ! et que tu fais bien voir qu’il n’appartient qu’à toi de faire des miracles” [“O Heaven! How great are the works of your power! And how well you show that it is for you alone to work miracles”].<sup>60</sup> Heaven preserves Dom Thomas and all the money that he was transporting, reuniting him with the members of the family that he had feared lost, and restoring the family fortune.

Molière's play clearly reflects the changing financial and epistemological problem of risk in seventeenth-century France. But if with the character of Harpagon, *L'Avare* casts a look forward to the era of probability mathematics, its surprising final assertion of Providence rejects the terrestrial pragmatism of the future to embrace the worldview and the comedic traditions of the past. For Harpagon's children and Dom Thomas's family are *joueurs* in two important senses: they are not only gamblers but actors, and comedy is not the clockwork universe of measurable chance; it is the realm of Providence, underwriter of miracles.

In its rewarding of risk-taking and its invocation of a Divine determinism, the play ends up confirming not only Thomas Kavanagh's statement that “to be alive is to gamble,”<sup>61</sup> but also that if you are betting on adventurous young love and happiness in a comedy, you are bound, improbably, to roll double-sixes. Risk in this comedic world merely represents the testing of divine will, as Furetière's 1690 *Dictionnaire universel* states regarding the etymology of *jeu*: “Du Cange dit que le mot de *jeu de dez* ne vient pas de *jocus*, mais de *juis de Dieu*, vieux mot François qui signifioit *jugement de Dieu*, parce qu'ils mettoient les *jeux* de hasard au nombre des jugemens de

60 Molière, *Œuvres*, 2:71; *Miser*, 208.

61 Kavanagh, 30.

Dieu” [“Du Cange states that the phrase ‘dice game’ does not come from *jocus*, but from *juis de Dieu*, an old French word which meant *judgment of God*, because they placed *games* of chance among the judgments of God”]<sup>62</sup> The illusion of vertiginous chance is ultimately dispelled, replaced by the revelation of a fundamental order. Despite the uncertainties of Cléante, Elise, Valère, and Mariane, the end result of *L’Avare* is never really in doubt.

But the miser could be said to have the last laugh. In the play’s final scene, the reunited family and happy couples set off to see Dom Thomas’s long-lost wife and plan the weddings, while Harpagon announces a different intention: to see his money. Invited to the festivities but not cured of his mania, Harpagon will probably not live to bury his children and his grandchildren as he had hoped, but they will live in a world largely shaped by his obsessions: an era of life expectancies and interest rates, an era in which, as Febvre put it, gains will be gains, not “un don reçu avec l’agrément du Tout-Puissant” [“a gift received with the All-Mighty’s approval”] and losses will simply be “le résultat d’un erreur de calcul” [“the result of a calculating error”].<sup>63</sup> Harpagon may be on the outs with his actual family, but the family of ideas that he represents will triumph in the end. Time, we might say, is always on the side of the usurer.

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62 Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, 3 vols. (La Haye: Arnout et Reinier Leers, 1690), 2: sig. Hh4r.

63 Febvre, 246.

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*Portrait of Molière by Nicolas Mignard*

***Hostis Antiquus* Resurgent:  
A Reconfigured Jerusalem in Twelfth-Century  
Latin Sermons about Islam**

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*This paper investigates how Christian writers from late antiquity through the twelfth century transformed explanations of encounters with Middle Eastern peoples and lands into a complex theological discourse. Examinations of sermons and narrative sources from antiquity through the first century of Crusades (1096-1192) serve as evidentiary bases because of the polemical way in which Pope Urban II's 1095 sermon at Clermont defined Muslims. In that sermon, chroniclers recorded that the pope rallied Frankish support for an armed pilgrimage by disparaging Muslims who had overrun Jerusalem and the Holy Sites – calling them a “race utterly alienated from God” (gens prorsus a Deo aliena) -- and associating late-eleventh century Arabs with the return of what Richard of St. Victor would later identify as an “ancient enemy” (hostis antiquus). The article also shows that western sermon writers of the High Middle Ages explained issues of alterity and periphery by employing a system of classifications, or discourse, that relied upon biblical typologies, heretical fears, and eschatology instead of referring to direct twelfth-century encounters between Christians and Muslims (e.g., the Crusades in the Levant).<sup>1</sup>*

Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont on 27 November 1095 launched the First Crusade by rallying the members of his Frankish audience against the “enemies of Christ” (*hostes Christi*) who had overrun Jerusalem and the Holy Sites.<sup>2</sup> Associations for *hostes Christi* ex-

<sup>1</sup> This article presents an expanded and annotated form of a paper presented at the annual conference of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association (Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff), April 2-4, 2009. My thanks to the audience participants and the two anonymous *Quidditas* readers for their helpful questions and critiques. For an introduction to medieval sermon studies, and methodology followed here for identifying *topoi* within array of sermon evidence and contextualizing historically, see Beverly M. Kienzle and David D'Avray, “Sermons,” in F.A.C. Mantello and A.G. Rigg, eds., *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1996), 659-69; and David D'Avray, “Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons,” in Nicole Beriou and D. D'Avray, eds., *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History, and Sanctity* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994), 1-27.

<sup>2</sup> For Muslims as *hostes Christi*, see Alan V. Murray, “`Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ': the Relic of the True Cross in the Armies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem,” in *The Crusades and their Sources*, J. France and W. G. Zajaz, eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 217-238. For chronicles [Robert of Reims, Baudric of Dol, Guibert of Nogent, Peter of Tudebode, and Anonymous of the *Gesta Francorum*], see D. C. Munro, “The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095,” *AHR* 11 (1905-06), 231-42; also, Marcus Bull, “Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in miracle stories, c.1000 – c. 1200: reflections on the study of first crusaders' motivations,” in *The Experience of Crusading: I. Western Approaches*, M. Bull and N. Housely, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 13-38.

panded in the twelfth century to include a variety of enemies (Jews, heretics, lepers, et al), but this paper gives specific attention to the group understood to be the enemy of the soldiers of Christ (*milites Christi*), the Muslims in the Holy Land.<sup>3</sup> Muslims were presented in chronicle accounts of Pope Urban II's sermon variously as "Arabians" and Persians, and the source of troubles for Christians in the Levant.<sup>4</sup> This paper investigates how twelfth-century western Latin sermon writers adopted traditional notions of a *hostis antiquus* to transform biblical typologies of eastern lands and peoples into a complex theological discourse.<sup>5</sup>

That discourse is revealed first by qualifying how "Arabians" were understood in Christian polemics from antiquity, with particular attention to pre- and post-Muhammadan condemnatory expressions. Second, examination of epistolary and chronicle evidence from the First Crusade provides a historical context for *topoi* (rhetorical commonplaces) employed by twelfth-century sermon authors about peoples sermon authors termed *Arabiae* or *Saracens*. Lastly, I assess selected sermons by Absalon of Springiersbach (d. 1203) and Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) to show how a polemi-

3 For Christian-Muslim dynamics in Levant, see Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008), 1-12. For ostracized *hostes Christi* in period, see: R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Michael Frassetto, ed., *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in Middle Ages: Essays on Work of R.I. Moore* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

4 Robert of Rheims emphasized Muslims' destruction of holy sites in Jerusalem and cruelty to Christians (Robert the Monk, *Historia Hierosolymitana, Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens Occidentaux*, 5 vols. (Paris: 1844-1895), IV: 727-8 [Hereinafter *RHC Occ.*]. Guibert of Nogent wrote that Urban II described the horrors Muslims visited upon the Christians in Jerusalem, including mutilation, rape of women, cutting open of bowels—and he associated Muslims with eschatological western expectations of the Antichrist. (Guibert of Nogent, *Gesta dei per Francos, RHC. Occ.* IV: 139-40.) For Muslims as "enemies," see Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Marjorie Chibnall, ed., 6 vols. (Oxford: UP, 1968-180) V: 18-19.

5 For qualifications to how "discourse" should be understood here in medieval context (using elements of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things*), see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2009), 6-19: "...by a discourse we mean a system of classification that establishes hierarchies, delimits one category from another, and exercises power through that system of classification...." (p. 7)

cal discourse against Muslims contributed to a transformation of western perceptions about Muslims and Jerusalem by end of the twelfth century. In assessing sermons from the high-medieval period, the essay fills lacunae in recent works on discourses of alterity and periphery whose emphases rely primarily on different kinds of narrative evidence (chronicles, religious tracts) from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Transformed Meaning of *Arabiyye* from Antiquity to the Twelfth Century**

*P*reaching at Clermont, Urban II's descriptions of events in the Holy Land were the latest expressions of a centuries-long polemic (doctrinal criticism), against *hostes Christi*. Christian theologians since antiquity had used the Bible as a template for understanding eastern Mediterranean peoples and regions, beginning with the Gospels and epistolary literature of the late-first century when the Principate and *Pax Romana* were the defining principles of the Mediterranean world.<sup>7</sup> Over the centuries, there arose a tradition of Christian thinkers whose biblical exegeses created polemical discourses to offset the variety of intellectual and physical challenges to the developing religion.<sup>8</sup> For Christians, part of that process began shortly af-

6 For an introductory assessment (and extensive bibliography), see David R. Blanks, "Western Views of Islam in the Premodern Period: A Brief History of Past Approaches," in Frassetto and Blanks, *Western Views of Islam*, 11-54. For focus on 12<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 155-199; Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000-1150)*, tr. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002), 338-57; Patrick Geary, "Reflections on Historiography and the Holy: Center and Periphery," in Lars Boje Mortensen, ed., *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom, c. 1000-1300* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), 323-9; Tomaž Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002); and, finally, John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia UP, 2002), xiii-xxiii.

7 For relevant works of milieu and major debates in biblical exegesis during first through fifth centuries, see Andrew Cain, "Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius in Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians*," in *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 55:1 (2009), 23-51; Olivier Munnich, "La Bible dans l'élaboration d'un modèle de sainteté: l'exemple de l'*Eloge de Basile*," in Matthieu Cassin and Hélène Grelier, eds., *Grégoire de Nysse La Bible dans la construction de son discours Actes du Colloque de Paris, 9-10 février 2007* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 2008), 191-212; and, David Thomas, "Christian Theologians and New Questions," in Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson, and David Thomas, eds., *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 257-76.

8 For introduction to discourses and transmission throughout Mediterranean and into

ter the Apostolic Age when the authors known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the Gospels in an environment where most early Christians had to practice their rites underground.<sup>9</sup> For Jews, those defining principles initially took the form of the Diaspora, or “scattering,” that began as physical and political attacks beginning in 70 A.D. under Titus (and completed by the emperor Hadrian in 135), which transformed into “*Adversus Iudaeos*” polemics traceable from Justin Martyr (d. 165).<sup>10</sup>

Just as polemical writings against heresies and Jews rose in the early centuries of Christianity, so, too, did Christian theologians engage the Arabic-speaking peoples (and later, Muslims) of modern-day Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In antiquity, the nomadic peoples of the Arabian Peninsula fell outside both Roman territorial control and as a topic of interest or concern for Christian writers, except when their existence could be used to explain biblical stories.<sup>11</sup> The Arabs were instead generally defined by their trading and caravan networks in an eastern imperial world that stretched from entrepôts such as Palmyra and Petra, to the Red Sea, southward into East Afri-

West, see Stephanie Hayes-Healy, “Saint Patrick’s journey into the desert: *Confessio* 16-28 as ascetic discourse,” in *Archivum Hibernicum: Irish Historical Records* 59 (2005), 237-59; Dirk Krausmüller, “Conflicting anthropologies in Christological discourse at the end of Late Antiquity: the case of Leontius of Jerusalem’s Nestorian adversary,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 56:2 (2005), 415-49; Andrew S. Jacobs, “The Remains of the Jew: Imperial Christian identity in the late ancient Holy Land,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33:1 (2003), 23-45; and Guy G. Stroumsa, “The Scriptural Movement of Late Antiquity and Early Christian Monasticism,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16:1 (2008), 61-77.

9 For recent scholarship on early codification of the Bible, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “The Emergence of the Written Record,” Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young, eds., *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Vol. 1: Origins to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 103-24; for survey of formative personalities and influences (with bibliography), see Mark Edwards, “Christianity, AD 70-192,” in Alan Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Averil Cameron, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History, Second Edition, Vol. XII: The Crisis of Empire AD 193-337* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 573-588 [hereinafter referred to as CAH XII<sup>2</sup>]; and Jean LeClercq, “The Exposition and Exegesis of Scripture: From Gregory the Great to St. Bernard,” in G.W.H. Lampe, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969), 183-97.

10 Best introductions remain Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1999), and Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa, eds., *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), esp. 1-160.

11 For concise history and bibliography in re medieval period, see Carole Hillenbrand, “Muhammad and the rise of Islam,” in Paul Fouracre, *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Vol. 1: c. 500-c.700* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 317-45.

ca, and across the Arabian Peninsula to the Persian Gulf.<sup>12</sup> Associations between Arabs and the Bible (Hagarenes, Ishmaelites) can be traced to the pagan historian, Apollonius Molon, and Jewish historian, Josephus (d. c. 100 AD), but Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD) was the first Christian theologian to characterize the Magi of Matthew 2:1-12 as “Arabs” in his text, *Dialogue with Trypho* (78:12-13).<sup>13</sup> Christian authors from the Patristic Age through the High Middle Ages followed suit, tending to generalize as “of Arabia,” or “*Arabiae*,” anyone who came from places east and south of Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> Ignored in the later Roman Empire by both the Byzantines and Persians until the third century—when the Romans started building frontier forts against the advances of the Sassanians and needed alliances with Arabic peoples—the bedouin tribes were called *skēnitai*, or “tent dwellers,” because they had been so identified in Strabo’s *Geographica* and Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*.<sup>15</sup> By the pre-Muhammad period, in the absence of any political alliances (after the fall of the Nabataeans in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century), late antique authors associated these unaffiliated tribes with either Monophysitism or Nestorianism, and called the bedouin, *arabiyē*.<sup>16</sup>

When we look to homiletic literature before Islam, Christian authors generally engaged the desert peoples by geographical references.<sup>17</sup> St. Ambrose (d. 340), for example, made an aside in one

12 Maurice Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome*, tr. Catherine Porter and Elizabeth Rawlings, with Jeannine Routier-Pucci (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007).

13 Fergus Millar, “Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus, and the Origins of Islam,” Hannah M. Cotton and Guy M. Rogers, eds. *Rome, the Greek World, and the East. Vol. 3: The Greek World, the Jews, and the East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006), 351-377; Joan Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 101-06.

14 Bernard Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy: Western Understanding of Islam at the Time of the Crusades,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd Series, 7 (1997), 373-87.

15 Maurice Sartre, “The Arabs and the Desert Peoples,” in CAH XII<sup>2</sup>, 500; for Isidore of Seville’s contributions casting Arabs as pagans and heretics, see Tolan, *Saracens*, 10-14.

16 Han J. W. Drijvers, “Arab,” in G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar, eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 308.

17 For late antique & early medieval conceptions, see Natalia Lozovsky, “*The Earth is Our Book*”: *Geographical Knowledge in Latin West ca: 400-1000* (Ann Arbor, 2000).

sermon that Paul had wandered into the “land of the Arabs” during one of his many journeys.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Gaudentius of Brescia (d. 410) identified the Arabs as a bordering people to Jerusalem and the Holy Sites.<sup>19</sup> St. Jerome (d. 420) proved an exception to this rule, however, living in Bethlehem as he did in close proximity to the nomads themselves. While writing the Vulgate and other commentaries, Jerome did more than any patristic writer to expand perceptions of Arabians and eastern peoples (Mesopotamians, Amorites),<sup>20</sup> yet even his references remained comfortably within biblical typologies that were appropriated by later writers who did not always feel obligated to keep their identifications within a Levantine context. For instance, Jerome’s description of local tribes as “wolves of Arabia” (*lupi Arabiae*) and geographical placement of the Arabs in Jerusalem’s borderlands were adopted in subsequent centuries by western monks to describe both Saracens of the eastern Mediterranean *and* the Norsemen from Scandinavian lands.<sup>21</sup>

Early medieval terms for Arabians in chronicles and epistolary literature ran a varied gamut, and yield glimpses of a developing Christian polemic about Muslims. Some Christian writers in the West and East described Arabs *biblically*; designating, for example, Arabs as “Saracens” or Hagarenes in reference to the dismissal of the slave, Hagar, by Sarah, Abraham’s barren wife (“*Sarra-kene*”).<sup>22</sup>

18 Ambrose of Milan, *Sermo II: Adversus eos, qui dicunt possessionem non distrahendā, sed fructibus misericordiam faciendam*, in *Patrologia Latinae Cursus Completus. Series Latina*, J.P. Migne, ed., 217 vs, with 4 indexes (Paris: 1844-1864), 18: cols. 1483-1486. [Hereinafter, as follows: author, PL, vol., col. numbers.]

19 Gaudentius of Brescia, *Sermo XIX: De diversis capitulis nonus*, PL 20: 967B-D.

20 For Jerome’s referential use of Mesopotamia (Amorites) and Jordanian lands (Gilead and Og of Bashan), see Pierre Jay, “*Super flumine Babylonis*...Lectures patristiques du Psaume 136,” in *Chartae caritatis: Etudes de patristique et d’antiquité tardive en hommage à Yves-Marie Duval* (Paris: Institut d’Etudes Augustiniennes, 2004), 193-204; and, Régis Courtray, “La réception du *Commentaire sur Daniel* de Jérôme dans l’Occident médiéval chrétien (VII - XII siècle),” *Sacris Erudiri: A Journal on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity* 44 (2005), 117-87.

21 Katherine Scarfe Beckett, *Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 78-9.

22 John C. Lamoureaux, “Early Christian Responses to Islam,” John V. Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam* (New York: Garland, 1996), 10.

When referring to them as “Arabiae” or “Turcoman,” they also seemed to recognize the linguistic ties that bound the religion together.<sup>23</sup> There’s also evidence for pejorative rhetoric intended to inflame the passions of western audiences who feared non-Christian or barbarian outsiders (*pagani, gens prorsus a Deo aliena, barbarae nationes*, etc).<sup>24</sup> Chroniclers incidentally mentioned Saracens, as in the case of Fredegar (c. 650s) whose history of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius described the ruler’s desire for vengeance against the Hagarenes after the Battle of Yarmuk (636).<sup>25</sup> Also, Paul the Deacon (d. 800) wrote briefly of the Muslims in his *History of the Lombards*, describing their “faithlessness” and the fact that they hated Christians and their God.<sup>26</sup>

Apocalyptic associations were also imparted to Arabians-cum-Saracens from Isidore of Seville (d. 636) through 1000, when chroniclers depicted Arabians as hordes of the Antichrist whose sheer numbers and military threats fulfilled Christian prophecies from the Book of Revelation.<sup>27</sup> The Venerable Bede—no stranger to interpreting eschatological phenomena in texts and events—included a daunting description of three thousand Saracen worshippers on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem when relating the story of Adomnan’s visit to the Holy Land (c.683).<sup>28</sup> There are also many

23 Allen J. Fromherz, “North Africa and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Christian Europe and the Almohad Islamic Empire,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 20:1 (2009), 43-59.

24 Jennier Bray, “The Mohammedan and Idolatry,” in John V. Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (New York: Garland, 1996), 89-90.

25 Fredegar, *Fredegarii et aliorum chronica*, in Krusch and W. Levison, eds., *Monumenta Germanicae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*. G.H. Pertz, et al, eds. 7 vs. (Hanover: 1885–1920), 2: 153-4.

26 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, eds., *MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardarum*, 48 (Hanover: 1878), 168.

27 Ariane Lainé, “L’Antichrist dans les homélies eschatologiques de Wulfstan: un mal de siècle,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexiones historiques* 26:2 (2000), 173-87; and essays by Benjamin Arnold and Umberto Eco in Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David C. van Meter, eds., *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003).

28 Bede, *Venerabilis Baedae opera Historica*, Christopher Plummer, ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), I: 316-317. For Bede and eschatological associations with Islam, see Douglas W. Lumsden, “And Then the End Will Come”: *Early Latin Christian Interpretations of the Opening of the Seven Seals* (New York: Garland, 2001), 47-54; and E. Ann Matter, “Exegesis of the Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages,” in Michael Frassetto, ed.,

cases of Islam depicted as the “abomination of desolation” or “little horn” of the Fourth Beast of the Apocalypse that presaged the end of the world.<sup>29</sup> Whether fearing fantastic stories about Muhammad’s iron tomb floating in the air above Mecca, or learning of Islamic expectations that Saracens, too, believed they would survive the Last Day, western Christian writers collectively warned against believing in any miracles experienced by Muhammad or his followers.<sup>30</sup> This caveat (and identification of Muslims with the Apocalypse) persisted through the centuries, as we see fears about Muslims and their connection to the Book of Revelation in Adhemar of Chabannes’s (d. 1034) *Chronicle*, when he described al-Hakim’s destruction of the Holy Sepulcher, surrounding Christian churches, and the Holy Sites as collective signs of the Last Days that would be heralded by armies of the Antichrist.<sup>31</sup> The association of the Saracens with the Antichrist or Satan was one that liturgical authors of the period adopted; in Rupert of Deutz’s (d. 1129) *Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, for example, the Saracens were said to worship idols and venerate Lucifer.<sup>32</sup>

The Arabians themselves helped consolidate western perceptions about them in the way that Islam was initially organized.<sup>33</sup> Muhammad’s early seventh century unification of the *bedouin* tribes

*The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the Millennium* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 34-5; entire article, 29-41.

29 For general consideration of Latin sources and eschatology, see Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings in Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin, 1997), at 219-31, and 532-5.

30 See John V. Tolan, “Un cadaver mutilé: le déchirement polémique de Mahomet,” *Le Moyen Age* 104 (1998), 53-72; also, Peter Brown, “The Decline of the Empire of God: Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages,” in Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman, eds., *Last Things: Death & the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000), 41-59, esp. 56-7.

31 Adhemar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, P. Bourgain, ed., *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis* 129 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 132-4.

32 Rupert of Deutz, *Enarratio in duodecim prophetas minores*, PL 168: 334B.

33 Fred M. Donner, “The Background to Islam,” in Michael Maas, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 510-33.

created a cultural unity whose central hegemonic component was the Arabic language.<sup>34</sup> Muhammad inspired the tribesmen to follow him by declaring that he was the “Last Prophet” of Allah, and by expressing his religion and its holy text—the Koran—in a Semitic dialect very familiar to the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>35</sup> Camel-herding tribesmen of the region designated themselves as ‘*arabs*’ or ‘*arby*’ (“nomads”) from at least the 100 AD,<sup>36</sup> and within a century of the Prophet’s death in 632 linguistic and cultural expansions spread by conquest throughout most of the eastern and southern Mediterranean and into the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>37</sup>

Eastern Christian authors, too, contributed to a Christian polemical tradition that strove to engage the newly rising Islam, primarily via the writings of John Damascene (c. 675-c. 749). John’s “Sermon on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary” reveals how a Jerusalem preacher reacted *in situ* to the city, peoples, and holy places around him. John urged his parishioners at the sanctuary of St. Sabus (nestled on a cliffside near Jerusalem in the West Bank’s Kidron Valley) not to fear the “Muslim occupiers” of the Holy City because—so long as the Holy Sepulcher remained in existence—the Sepulcher and all other holy sites would serve as physical proofs of Christianity against both idolaters and Saracens.<sup>38</sup> Such reassur-

34 Monique Bernards, “Holy Scripture and the Transmission of Knowledge in Early Islam: The Inception of Arabic Linguistic Studies,” in Esther Cohen and Mayke B. de Jong, eds., *Medieval Transformations: Text, Power, and Gifts in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 25-34; Ella Landau-Tasseron, “From tribal society to organized polity: an interpretation of events and anecdotes of the formative period of Islam,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 24 (2000), 180-216; Thomas Sizgorich, “Narrative and Community in Islamic Late Antiquity,” *Past and Present* 185 (2004), 9-42.

35 G. H. Bousquet, “Observations on the Nature and Causes of the Arab Conquest,” in Fred M. Donner, ed., *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2008), 23-36; Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991), 19-21.

36 Khalil Athamina, “Abraham in Islamic Perspective: Reflections on the Development of Monotheism in Pre-Islamic Arabia,” in *Dar Islam* 81:2 (2004), 184-205; and M. Sartre, “The Arabs and the Desert Peoples,” in *CAH XII* 2, 501.

37 Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, AD 150-750* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 186-7; 191-2.

38 John of Damascus, *Homélies sur la nativité et la dormition*, French trans. by Pierre Voulet, S.J., *Sources chrétiennes* 383 (Paris: Les Éditiones du Cerf, 1961), 39-40.

ance flew in the face of a Neo-Platonist trust developing in the West based on Augustine's sermons (and works), which placed primacy in a heavenly Jerusalem and *populus Dei*, a city and people of God whose integrity was eternal, regardless of what might happen to the physical city of Jerusalem in its earthly manifestation.<sup>39</sup> For John Damascene, however, his rhetoric relating iconic imagery directly to biblical revelation contributed to what would become the Iconoclastic Debate of the eighth and ninth centuries in Byzantium.<sup>40</sup>

When we turn westward from John Damascene to other sermon sources, the fragmentary evidence offers some insight into Christian/Muslim encounters and the development of a discourse with religious and political attributes. On the religious side of the register, for instance, by the eighth and ninth century Muslim advances in the western Mediterranean made enough impact on Continental and English communities that the Church responded with comprehensive mandates to sermon-writers; for example, missals and homilies dedicated to Christian war against Saracens (and pagans) were permanently incorporated into the Gelasian, Gregorian, and Fuldan sacramentaries for preachers' use.<sup>41</sup>

On the political side of the register, when we look at expressions about Islam from the perspective of nascent city-states and governments, the early medieval papacy offers an illustration of how polemical language appeared in a context that combined religion and politics.<sup>42</sup> In the ninth-century, for example, popes (and rulers

39 Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography. Second Ed.* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 240-55.

40 Thomas F. X. Noble, "John Damascene and the history of the iconoclastic controversy," in Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni, eds., *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of Richard E. Sullivan.* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Medieval Institute Publications, 1987), 95-116.

41 Amnon Linder, *Raising Arms: Liturgy in the Struggle to Liberate Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 177, 180-181. For general ways in which the Christian/Muslim encounter manifested in the writings of Christian chroniclers and apologists in the eighth and ninth centuries (particularly in Northumbria and the Iberian Peninsula), see Tolan, *Saracens*, 71-104; and Sydney H. Griffith, "Arguing from Scripture: The Bible in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in the Middle Ages," in Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman, eds., *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 29-58.

42 For formation of papacy as proto-government against Carolingian and Byzantine influences, see Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1984); Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993); and Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Govern-*

of growing Italian city-states) often made pragmatic treaties with Muslim emirs and raiders within the Abbasid Caliphate to maintain the maritime commerce that existed between *Arabiae*, Carolingian kings, and Byzantine rulers. Even here amidst the extensive Christian/Muslim trading networks and trunk routes that saw trafficking in everything from material goods to the transport of pilgrims and slaves, we can observe a transformation in nomenclature for Arabians.<sup>43</sup> By the 870s, Muslim raids had disrupted parts of these Italian sea-channels and raised the ire of such figures as Pope John VIII (d. 882), whose epistolary correspondence shifted from acknowledging the necessary evil of Saracen ships in the Tyrrhenian Sea to depicting the *Arabiae* as *latrunculi*, *pyrati*, and *mare latronum* (“thieves, pirates, and marauders”), and associating them with “wicked Christians” of the Byzantine east.<sup>44</sup> Pope John VIII’s shift in language about Muslims needs to be noted here because the papacy increasingly became an arbiter of western Christianity’s polemic against *Arabiae*. Indeed, by the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216), popes wielded a political power comparable to the *potestas* of kings in England and France, and the means by which the popes and their administrations increased Rome’s influence was explicitly propagandistic. Evidence for the dissemination of its spiritual direction is manifested in treatises, letters, and model sermons that all had particular target audiences of monastic houses and the masses.<sup>45</sup>

Nuanced ideas about Muslims were therefore present in Christian thinking prior to Pope Urban II’s sermon at Clermont in 1095, with the term *Arabiae* serving a variety of roles for writers at need, even if those often-polemical aims did not reflect political, *ment in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Methuen, 1962).

43 For processes of interaction between Muslims and Christians along western Italian coast, see Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 502-21.

44 Fred Engreen, “Pope John the Eighth and the Arabs,” *Speculum* 20 (1945), 319, 327.

45 Giles Constable, “Papal, Imperial, and Monastic Propaganda in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in George Makdisi, Dominique Sordel, and Janine Sourdel-Thomine, eds., *Preaching and Propaganda in the Middle Ages: Islam, Byzantium, and the West. Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia III, Session of October 20-25, 1980* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981), 179-99.

religious, or intellectual realities.<sup>46</sup> We need to recall that in 1095 Islam was as fractured politically around the Mediterranean basin as were its adherents' images in the minds of Urban II's Frankish audience. The Abbasid Dynasty based in Baghdad was vying for power and influence with Sunni Turks in Asia Minor, Shi'ite Fatimids in Egypt, and the Almohad Caliphate in Spain, but during the next century vibrant cultural contributions were being made by Muslim scholars from Persia to Iberia in learning—particularly in the fields of medicine, philosophy, mathematics, and architecture. Such contributions were not ignored in the West. Along with Jewish thinkers such as Moses Maimonides (d. 1204), Arabic transmitters and translators of Greco-Roman thought (especially Avicenna and Averroës) were influential to Christian thinkers of the period.<sup>47</sup>

Considered against this background, then, Pope Urban II's preaching at Clermont was exceptional beyond its generally acknowledged inception of the Crusades. That homily's depiction of the Saracen threat to Jerusalem marked a transition in the polemical discourse about Arabians in the sermon tradition of the western Church. The pope's sermon had long-lasting effects in that it marked the return of preaching as a means of mass communication and mobilization that would find a host of imitators in the twelfth century, whether those preachers worked in the service of the Church (St. Bernard of Clairvaux's preaching of the Second Crusade) or against orthodox Christianity (the heresiarchs Peter of Bruis and Henry the Monk).<sup>48</sup> By the middle of the twelfth century, the development of

46 John France, "The First Crusade and Islam," *The Muslim World* 67 (1977), 247-57.

47 See Charles Burnett, ed., *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts: The Syriac, Arabic, and Medieval Latin Traditions* (London: Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 1993); Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in Robert L. Benson, Giles Constable, and Carol D. Lanham, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982), 421-62.

48 See Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989), 305-10; Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Blackwell, 2002), 52-69; and James M. Powell, "Myth, Legend, Propaganda, History: The First Crusade, 1140-ca. 1300," in Michael Balard, ed., *Autour de la Première Croisade: Actes du Colloque de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East (Clermont-Ferrand, 22-25 juin 1995)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), 127-41.

homiletic discourse became so marked that authors and audiences were expecting sermons to reflect the kinds of expansive exegesis made possible by the new knowledge about Islam coming into the schools.<sup>49</sup> *Arabiae* and Muslims had a place in those interpretations, and it is to depictions of them in twelfth-century sermons that we turn next.

### Transformed Interpretations of *Arabiyyē/-ae* & Jerusalem in the Twelfth Century: Historical Context

Before approaching those sermon texts, however, we need to situate our authors within a historical context for twelfth-century western perceptions of Jerusalem and Muslims. Sermons were part of the liturgical tradition of the Church, but their potential for revealing rhetorical and discursive developments among theologians and preachers is best realized when historical context is included as a counterpoint in their study.<sup>50</sup>

With respect to Christian and Muslim perceptions of Jerusalem, Crusades historians have well-established that Pope Urban II's 1095 sermon created the idea of a "revolutionary penitential war-pilgrimage" to Jerusalem, but by the end of the eleventh century the Holy City also had become a religious destination for Muslims.<sup>51</sup> Mecca might have been the traditional pilgrimage site *par*

49 Jacqueline Hamesse, "The Scholastic Model of Reading," in Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., *A History of Reading in the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 104-14.

50 For methodology in assessing sermons, see, D'Avray, "Method in the Study of Medieval Studies," 6-11; Augustine Thompson, "From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event," Carolyn Muessig, ed., *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 13-40; and Jeffrey Burton Russell, "Time and Again: A Response to Leo Carruthers, John Kitchen, and Catherine Brown Tkacz," in Georgiana Donavin, Cary J. Nederman, and Richard Utz, eds., *Speculum Sermonis: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Medieval Sermon* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 81-8.

51 The literature is vast for Jerusalem as an objective of the First Crusade, but for updated introductions and bibliographies see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), and Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006). For the primacy of Jerusalem as a destination for western pilgrims, see: Paul Alphandéry and A. Dupront, *La Chrétienté et l'Idée de Croisade* 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1954) I: 21-2; Jaś Elsner, "Piety and Passion: Contest and Consensus in the Audiences for Early Christian Pilgrimage," in Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford, eds., *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 411-33; and, Steven Runciman, "The Pilgrimages to Palestine before 1095," in Kenneth M. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 6 vs. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1969-1989) I: 68-78.

*excellence*,<sup>52</sup> but Jerusalem (or, *al-Quds*) held a vital prominence in Islam for a variety of reasons that stretched back from the roots of Judaeo-Christian history through Muhammad's "Night Journey" (*isrā*) with the angel Gabriel to his Ascension (*mi 'rāj*).<sup>53</sup> A mosque was built soon after the Islamic conquest of the city in 638, with the Dome of the Rock constructed by the Umayyads in the 690s on the site of the Jewish Temple. However, in respect to a true pilgrimage tradition to Jerusalem itself, the city really entered into popular Islamic consciousness only during the time of the Crusades – specifically, after 1144 when Zengi declared *jihad* against the Latin Kingdom after his conquest of Edessa, and used the objective of retaking Jerusalem from the Christian infidel as a defining criterion for victory.<sup>54</sup>

The Crusaders in the Levant were not the only means of transmitting information to sermon writers about Arabians and Jerusalem. Knowledge about the Islamic world came to the medieval West through a variety of sources, with Peter the Venerable (d. 1143), Abbot of Cluny, the most prominent disseminator of information via his translation of Arabic works (the Koran, treatises) and even by his attempts at evangelizing Muslims in twelfth century Spain.<sup>55</sup> Despite such exposure, geographical bewilderment about the eastern Mediterranean, Jerusalem, and Arabians still abounded on the Continent around the time of the First Crusade.

A couple of epistolary examples from the period will illustrate how this confusion appeared in (and contributed to) a changing

52 For medieval misperceptions about the *hajj* and Islam, see Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993), 220-254.

53 Angelika Neuwirth, "Jerusalem and the Genesis of Islamic Scriptures," Lee Irvine, ed., *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 315-25; Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, "Three Perspectives on Jerusalem: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Pilgrims in the Twelfth Century," *ibid.*, 326-46.

54 Emmanuel Sivan, *Interpretations of Islam, Past and Present* (Princeton: Darwin, 1985), 75-106.

55 See Bernard Hamilton, "Knowing the Enemy: Western Understanding of Islam at the Time of the Crusades," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3rd Ser., 7 (1997), 373-87; also, Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 99-104, and 337-43.

discourse in monastic sermons about *Arabiae* and Jerusalem. Specifically, we will look at how misinterpretations about peoples and places in the Levant occurred even when eyewitnesses were reporting directly from Crusader lands. For example, in a letter dated September, 1099 and addressed “*ad papam et omnes Christi fideles*,” Archbishop Daimbert—a Pisan who had accompanied the armies of the First Crusade—wrote a letter to Pope Paschal II describing the Battle of Nicaea, the conquest of Antioch (and discovery of the Holy Lance), as well as the taking of Jerusalem itself.<sup>56</sup> Toward the end of the letter, Daimbert mentions a battle “at Ascalon against the king of the Babylonians” (...*sexum eorum bellum fuit IV Kalendis Augusti apud Ascalonam contra regem Babyloniorum*),<sup>57</sup> a battle that we know was waged not against “Babylonians,” but rather members of the vizier’s army from Fatimid Egypt.<sup>58</sup> This letter was sent from Jerusalem to the papacy in September 1099, and within a few months Pope Paschal II (1099-1118) reiterated much of Daimbert’s report in a general epistle to Gallic archbishops, bishops, and abbots. Paschal wanted those clergymen to go forth and conduct their sermons and duties among their congregations with the recent victories in the East in mind. Now, with respect to his contribution to a polemical discourse, we note that Paschal II’s letter did not recapitulate the entire, detailed narrative of the eyewitness account, but mentioned only the cities of Antioch and Jerusalem. He focused the reader’s

56 Daimbert of Pisa, “*Epistula Pisani archiepiscopi et Godefridi ducis et Raimundi de S. Aegidii et uniuersi exercitus in terra Israel ad papam et omnes Christi fideles*,” in Heinrich Hagenmeyer, ed., *Epistolae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes – Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973; orig. printed, 1901), Section XVIII, pp. 167-74. A synopsis of the highlighted events appears in the conclusion of the letter on p. 174: *Capta est autem Hierusalem a Christianis anno Domini MXCIX, Idus Iulii, feriae VI, indictione VII, anno III profectionis eorum. primum eorum bellum fuit apud pontem Farfar fluminis, in quo multi Turcorum interfecti sunt IX Kalendis Martii. secundum bellum fuit apud Nicaeam III Nonis Martii, in quo pagani a Christianis uicti sunt. tertium bellum fuit IV Kalendis Iulii Antiochiae, lancea Domini nouiter inuenta eos praecedente. quartum fuit Kalendis Iulii. in Romania uero etiam Turci deuicti sunt. quintum eorum bellum fuit Idibus Iulii, quando post ticesimum nonum obsidionis diem capta est Hierusalem. sextum eorum bellum fuit IV Kalendis Augusti apud Ascalonam contra regem Babyloniorum, in quo C milia equitum et XL milia peditum a paruo Christianorum exercitu uicti et constricti sunt....*

57 Daimbert of Pisa, Section XVIII.19, p. 174.

58 Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades: Vol. I, The First Crusade and the Foundations of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1951), 296-8.

attention on familiar Holy Sites, emphasized the places of the Lord's Passion and the Holy Sepulcher, and praised the fact that both cities were snatched from the hands of the Turks by a Christian army.<sup>59</sup>

Given a monastic educational tradition that cleaved to explaining the world in terms of biblical typologies, Daimbert's emphasis in his letter on two cities associated closely with Jesus and St. Paul should not surprise us.<sup>60</sup> Exemplification by way of familiar biblical places was probably the most sensible means of conveying to Europeans (who had no concrete geographical sense of the Levant) just what the Crusaders had accomplished.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, on this issue of confused geographical and cultural knowledge about *Arabiae*, the Jerusalem patriarch's characterization of the Fatimid vizier's army as "Babylonian" seems yet another example of westerners' confusion about the nature of the Islamic societies that were arrayed against the Crusaders in the Levant.<sup>62</sup> That is, although Daimbert distinguished between the army of the [northern Seljuk] "Turcorum" and the force of "Babylonians" at Ascalon, Paschal II's letter of December that "synopsized the synopsis" simply conflated *all* Islamic enemies as "Turcorum."<sup>63</sup>

When Daimbert appeared again in the Hagenmayer text, he was designated as Patriarch of Jerusalem in the intitular section of a

59 Daimbert of Pisa, *op. cit.*, Section XIX.2, p. 175.

60 See C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideas in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1994), 25-7; and Richard W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995-2002), I: 102-33.

61 For relevant studies on medieval perceptions in monastic culture here, see discussion of Alcuin comparing thoughts to *nuntios* ("messengers") and the imaginary construction of Jerusalem by ninth century Carolingians in his *Liber de animae ratione* [PL 101, cols. 642 A-C] in Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 118-20; for the influence of the Bible on the medieval mind [using twelfth century French literature as the source], and, specifically, in conjurations of Jerusalem, see Jacques LeGoff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988), 169-74; on the medieval lack of "geographical differentiation" between both Europeans themselves and peoples that appeared in the Gospels, see Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002), 38-40 and 52-62.

62 See Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches to the Muslims* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984), 9-14.

63 Kedar., 175.

letter to German bishops in April, 1100.<sup>64</sup> Here, then, after less than a year of life in post-conquest Jerusalem, the former Pisan archbishop gave a clearer perspective for Christendom on the exact Holy Sites that were “relieved” by the efforts of the crusaders (*omnibus succurrentibus*) – instead of broadly mentioning only the places of the Lord’s Passion and the Holy Sepulcher as he did in the letter of September 1099, in this epistle Daimbert specified that the crusaders now defended “*Hierusalem, Bethlehem, Iopem, Tabariam, Samariam, castrum Sancti Abrahae et Ramas, beati martyris Georgii sacratas, et alia insuper munimenta*.”<sup>65</sup>

An inference about medieval mentalities can be made from this example: when westerners such as Daimbert had time to adjust and familiarize themselves in Jerusalem and its environs, narratives became more detailed than previously possible because the Holy Sites were before him and seen on a daily basis.<sup>66</sup> Narrative accounts and letters about the Latin Kingdom that started to filter back to the Continent thereby gained in detail and substance (Daimbert learned the place names), but that information still seemed filtered through a lens of Biblical typologies that informed many Europeans’ knowledge about the East – that is, even when living in Jerusalem, Crusading eyewitnesses could not adequately describe what they were seeing in the Levant without a biblical frame of reference.

After the Frankish conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, chroniclers of the First through Third Crusades began to transform the Christian polemical discourse about *Arabiae* in a variety of ways that became familiar *topoi* for sermon writers. Peter Tudebode saw

64 “Epistula Daimberto patriarchae Hierosolymitani ad omnes Teutonicae regionis catholicos,” in H. Hagenmeyer, ed., *Epistolae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes – Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973; orig. printed, 1901), Section XVI, pp. 176-77. On the process by which Daimbert was made archbishop over the winter of 1099-1100, see S. Runciman, *History of the Crusades: Vol. I*, 299 (with footnote references to Albert of Aix’s chronicle and the *Annales Pisan* for further descriptions of Daimbert’s role in the new Latin Kingdom).

65 Hagenmeyer, Section XXI.3-5, p. 177.

66 On the process by which newly arrived Europeans engaged the Holy Sites after 1099, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Intellectual Activities in a Holy City: Jerusalem’s Sacred Space,” in B. Z. Kedar and R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, eds., *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land* (New York: New York UP, 1998), 127-39.

idolatry in the *Arabiae* who paraded an effigy of Muhammad on a cross to taunt the crusaders besieging Jerusalem, calling the moment as a sign of the defenders' belief that Islam had superseded Christianity in history.<sup>67</sup> Robert the Monk described the Arabs as "accursed and foreign Persians" who had swarmed into the Levant from eastern lands.<sup>68</sup> Orderic Vitalis's (d. 1142) *Ecclesiastical History* demonstrated how authors of the period consciously used biblical stories as a filtered lens through which to look upon events in the present; in the text, Orderic described the food-poisoning of a Brescian abbot as a murderous plot contrived by a Muslim baker who was only acting in accordance with a villainous ancestry that stretched back to Ishmael's attempted poisoning of Isaac.<sup>69</sup> By mid-century, chroniclers such as Otto of Freising were imagining an Arabia bounded by the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem on its western side, with the imagined Christian ruler, Prester John, in the east (who, after his recent victory over the Persians and Medes, Otto thought might be providing a counter-balance to the dominant Muslim presence in Syria and Egypt to help worthy Christian armies seeking to succor Jerusalem).<sup>70</sup> William of Tyre's chronicle recast Pope Urban II's 1095 sermon to explicitly connect the Saracens to the "handmaid of Egypt" when William wrote that the scriptures demanded that the *Arabiae* must be cast out from the Holy Land because of the impurity that the infidels brought to the Holy Places.<sup>71</sup>

67 Peter Tudebodus, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, *RHC. Occ.* III: 31-2.

68 Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolymitana*, *RHC. Occ.* III: 727-8.

69 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica: The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. by Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vs. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969-1980), IV: 23-4.

70 Otto of Freising, *Historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH SS (Hanover: Hahn, 1867), VII: 33, 334-5. For recent assessments of Prester John legend, see Bernard Hamilton, "The lands of Prester John: Western knowledge of Asia and Africa at the time of the crusades," *Haskins Society Journal* 15 (2006), 126-41; and, Peter Jackson, "Christians, Barbarians, and Monsters: The European Discovery of the World beyond Islam," in Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson, eds., *The Medieval World* (London: Routledge, 2001), 93-110.

71 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, R.B.C. Huygens, Hans Eberhard Meyer, and G. Röscher, eds., CCCM 63-63A (Turnout: Brepols, 1986), 132. For nuanced qualification to William's assertion, see Rainer Christoph Schwinges, "William of Tyre, the Muslim Enemy, and the Problem of Tolerance," in Michael Gervers and James W. Powell, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance: Social Conflict in the Age of the Crusades* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2001), 124-32.

*Transformed Interpretations of Arabiae and Jerusalem in  
Twelfth Century: Sermon Evidence*

Now that we have briefly qualified and contextualized how Muslims were understood by educated monastic elites of the twelfth century, we can properly assess sermon evidence from Absalon of Springiersbach (d. 1203) and Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) that reveals how those writers used depictions of *Arabiae* to transform western perceptions both of Muslims themselves and of the most prominent city in medieval Christendom, Jerusalem.

We should acknowledge that twelfth century sermon writers who described the Holy Land remained within the kinds of biblical frames of reference we saw with in the writings of the chroniclers. Generally, where the term *Arabiae* appeared, the tradition of depicting Muslims as Magi continued as a variety of exegeses of the Nativity story. Now, the writers associated “*Arabiae*” with the Magi, even though the historically understood “three wise men” of *Matthew* 2:1-12 probably were either Persian or Babylonian in origin, and came from a non-Arabic speaking Parthian Empire during the Augustan Age.<sup>72</sup> Werner of St. Blaise (d. 1126) did not care about such distinctions when he wrote a church dedicatory sermon from his abbey in the Black Forest; indeed, when he mentioned *Arabiae*, it was simply to laud the Arabian origins of frankincense and other herbs to be burned on a new altar of Christianity, and that his brethren should “make prayers rising like smoke into heaven” in celebration of Christ’s birth.<sup>73</sup> In another sermon for the Christmas season, an unknown author wrote that the “gold of Arabia” was manifestly apparent due to Christ’s arrival there (in Bethlehem) and that – in an exegesis of Psalms 72 – the Lord’s presence and judgment were like

72 For relevant debates and assessments: Lars Bisgaard, “A black mystery. The hagiography of the Three Magi,” Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen and Kurt Villads Jensen, eds., *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2005), 120-38; Michael R. Molnar, *The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi* (Fredericksburg, PA: Rutgers UP, 1999), 5-8; Richard C. Trexler, *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), 3-44.

73 Werner of St. Blaise, *Sermon in dedicatione altaris proprie dicendus*, PL 157: 1205.

those of King Solomon.<sup>74</sup> In one of Absalon of Springiersbach's sermons not fully assessed here (Sermon 30), I found mention of *Arabiae* when he likened the gold presented by the Magi at the manger to the "wealth" of prelates in the Church who were spread "to good spiritual profit" throughout Christendom.<sup>75</sup> Lastly, Richard of St. Victor wrote in one sermon that Christ's glory, wisdom, godhood, and power would earn Him "all the gold of Arabia" in the time of the Antichrist, or, as Richard put it "when Jesus the *puer* becomes Jesus the *homine* on the Day of Judgment and sends the Antichrist into the inferno."<sup>76</sup>

Given these contexts, we can now finally turn to the Victorine sermon writers, Absalon of Springiersbach and Richard of St. Victor, to observe how they participated in and departed from these traditional polemical interpretations. Although Absalon spent his most active years in the monastery of Springiersbach on the Mosel River (diocese of Trier), before he died in 1203 he returned to the monastery of St. Victor in Paris in 1198 to take over as abbot for the Augustinian school that had so deeply influenced him as a youth.<sup>77</sup>

Absalon's sermons assessed here (#20, and 12) are of uncertain date, but the Augustinian nature of Springiersbach make it relatively safe to assume that Absalon's views were consistent whether he was writing in Germany or back at St. Victor in the last years of his life.<sup>78</sup> First, in Sermon 20,<sup>79</sup> Absalon of Springiersbach introduced his topic as the Virgin Mary in the Jerusalem, and how the Lord sent her "to rule in the midst of Christendom's enemies," and asked from what part of the Holy Land his audience members would

74 Auctor incertus, *Sermo XVII: In Epiphania Domini*, PL 177: 1362-4.

75 Absalon of Springiersbach, *Sermo XXX*, PL 211: 177D-182A.

76 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XVII*, PL 177: 931 D-932 A.

77 U. Roulier, "Absalon, abbé de Springkirbach" in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* (Paris: 1912), 198-9.

78 For internal consistencies in Victorine sermons, see Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church – Vol. 3, The Medieval Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 308-18.

79 Absalon of Springiersbach, *Sermo XX*, PL 211: 118C-124B.

guard the Tabernacle of God against the enemies who currently beset it.<sup>80</sup> Absalon answered his own rhetorical questions by attributing virtues and vices to the geographical possibilities: the *east* represented an “unfinished religion” that was like a sunrise whose day was before it, and on whose ground lay Isaac interpreting the recollections of his master; the *south* was understood as an increase or progeny of goodness, upon whose ground lay on watch three of the ancient tribes of Israel (Ruben, Gad, and Simeon); the *north* symbolized a “victim of temptation,” where dwelled the peoples who had succumbed to false hopes and beliefs ; and, finally, the region to the *west* of the Tabernacle was a descent, not from the setting sun, but from the “fallen morals” of all the eastern peoples.<sup>81</sup> Absalon concluded forcefully, demanding to know what would happen to those who were destroying the tabernacle in his own time through schism, scandal, abuses, and slander (*Quid ergo erit de illis, qui tabernaculum Dei destruunt per scismata et scandala, per contumelias et detractationes?*),<sup>82</sup> and that such destruction could only be avoided by those like Absalon’s brothers who hold to the chains of obedience and self-discipline. If these conditions were met, the members of his Augustinian audience could ascend through masses of enemies to protect the Holy Sepulcher.<sup>83</sup>

After noting the three key references in Sermon 20—enemies besetting Jerusalem, moral attributes to compass directions, and Church problems—we find similar *topoi* in one of Absalon’s Christmas sermons (Sermon 12, *In Epiphania Domina*). He began Sermon 12 with a variation on Psalms 68:31 (“Princes shall come from Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God”) wherein Absalon began the quotation by stating, “After the people who had desired wars were dispersed, princes came from Egypt” (*Dissipa*

80 Absalon of Springiersbach, 122D.

81 Absalon of Springiersbach, 123A-C.

82 Absalon de Springiersbach, *Sermo XX*, PL 211: 123D.

83 Absalon de Springiersbach, 24A-124B.

*gentes quae bella volunt, venient legati ex Aegypto...*).<sup>84</sup> In using the word *bella* at the beginning of a sermon on the Epiphany (i.e., a holy day which marks the moment that Christ's nature was revealed to the world in the form of the visiting three "wise men," or Magi), Absalon set the martial tone that would mark much of this sermon as he addressed matters both Levantine and Christological. In typical fashion, there is almost as much attention given here to the traditional Nativity scene in Bethlehem and the arrival (and significance) of the three wise men, or Magi, as there is advice for Absalon's brethren on how to live a penitent, Christian life. After remarking upon the peace that Christ brought to heaven and earth, Absalon immediately portrayed Jesus in a militaristic guise, stating that "... He donned our flesh as a cuirass (breast plate) and stands with us in line against the enemy, having given back peace to the world and triumphed" (*...et lorica nostrae carnis indutus nobiscum stans in acie de inimicis, pace mundo reddita, triumphavit*).<sup>85</sup> Absalon next told his brethren that historical precedent showed a "war-torn world" before Christ, a world that saw continuous changes of regimes, the dispersions of the Jews, the destruction of lands, and death of peoples, before emphasizing the role that Christ had in bringing peace to the "inner" and "outer" Christian (*Usque ad fines terrae bella abstulit Christus, qui hominum intus et exterius pacificavit*).<sup>86</sup>

Most relevant because of the insight it offers on Augustinian criticisms of the Church in the twelfth century—and similar to criticisms we just saw in Sermon 20—there is a point in Sermon 12 where Absalon paused to "reflect on the state of affairs in our own time" (*respiciamus modo ad statum nostri temporis*), and to consider whether or not there are, too, those who discover Christ and proceed with Him loving poverty more than avarice and riches.<sup>87</sup> An exegesis of the Magi visit to the manger follows, whose significance for Absalon seems to be twofold. First, that the Wise Men originated from the Arabian lands of Egypt and the "...darkness of unfaith-

84 Absalon de Springiersbach, *Sermo XII*, PL 211: 76A-81B.

85 Absalon de Springiersbach, 76A-B

86 Absalon de Springiersbach, *Sermo XII*, PL 211: 76C.

87 Absalon de Springiersbach, 77A-B.

fulness to the light of divine knowledge” (“...*de tenebris infidelitatis ad lucem divinae cognitionis*”);<sup>88</sup> and, second, that they were guided to Bethlehem by the Holy Spirit to worship the infant Jesus as witnesses who brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh that Absalon enjoined his audience to view as representing “humility, simplicity, and the faithfulness of true confession.”<sup>89</sup> In concluding his exegesis of Psalms 68:31, Absalon next turned his attention to Ethiopia, stating that its land signified the same thing as Egypt in its “blackness and ignobly hidden ways of life” and “was it any wonder that someone would seek to leave it as quickly as possible?” (*Cum enim per Aethiopiam idem quod per Aegyptum significetur, videlicet nigredo et obscuritas iniquae conversationis, quis inde exire non festinet?*)<sup>90</sup> Absalon goes on to describe the Arabian inhabitants of Ethiopia in a way illustrative for this paper’s focus on perceptions. In this passage, the sermon writer seems to associate a harsh desert environment with malformation of Muslim features and character:

Ethiopia is a completely sandy land, denying one every drop of charity and, therefore, not used to the production of good works; its inhabitants have been made brown by the heat, have frightening faces, with horrible appearances, dissolute ways of life, and have been deformed with blackness by all kinds of sins; and so by neither moderate steps nor slow gait must they flee swiftly from there....<sup>91</sup>

Absalon went on to write that many *Christian* people could be compared to Ethiopians in that—like the African-born Magi who recognized the true God in the infant Jesus—they cloaked themselves in the good form of religion. However, when those people take flight to God (as when the Wise Men sought Bethlehem) through

88 Absalon de Springiersbach, 78D.

89 Absalon de Springiersbach, 80C: *Sic ergo, ut diximus, tribus legatis peccator in Aegypto visitatus transit in Judaeam, tria Christo ibi offerens munera, id est, humilitatem, simplicitatem, fidelitatem verae confessionis.*

90 Absalon de Springiersbach, 80D.

91 Absalon de Springiersbach, *Sermo XII*, PL 211: 80D: *Aethiopia ista terra admodum arenosa est carens omni humore charitatis, et ideo ad fructum bonorum operum non proficit, habitatores ejus calore adusti, deterrimi facie, aspectu horribiles, conversatione dissoluti, et omnino peccatorum nigredine deformati sunt, et propterea non modico passu, non incessu lento, sed celeri cursu inde exeundum est.*

the comforts of the flesh they are distracted by illicit desires and consequently made idle.<sup>92</sup>

Keeping in mind these images about Jerusalem and *Arabiae*, before analyzing how Absalon contributed to a changing discourse, we need to look at the manner in which Richard of St. Victor depicted Muslims and Jerusalem. Richard, at the time of his death in 1173, had served as a prior (second-in-command to the abbot) of St. Victor on the left bank of the Seine River from the early 1160s. Much of Richard's earlier life before that time is unknown and open to speculation, but generally agreed is the belief that he was born in Scotland and arrived at St. Victor in the early 1150s, more than a decade after the death of Hugh (d. 1141).

Richard rose quickly in the hierarchy of St. Victor, spending his time between administrative duties and attending to the theological work that ultimately sought to understand God and the Christian religion in a mystical manner that made him an intellectual successor to Hugh of St. Victor. In this respect, Richard is best known for his *Benjamin minor* (or, "The Twelve Patriarchs"), *Benjamin major* ("The Mystical Ark"), and *De Trinitate* ("On the Trinity").<sup>93</sup> Richard makes specific references to "Arabs" in three sermons: Sermon #17, which includes a reiteration of the prophecy in Isaiah of "a child is born" that later examines the Magis' gifts of "gold, thure, and myrrh" and refers to the "Syrians and Philistines"; Sermon #38, which conflates Babylonians with *omnes perditos cives* in Richard's own time, and that characterizes Arabs as the people of Cain; and, Sermon #52, wherein Richard observes that an *hostis antiquus* ("ancient enemy") has ejected the Christians from Jerusalem.<sup>94</sup>

Sermon #17 begins with a quotation from Psalms 72:15 – "Vivet, et dabitur ei de auro Arabia" ("He shall live and the gold

92 Absalon de Springiersbach, 81A: *...qui [illi fuerunt qui repleti omni iniquitate] post cogitationem bonam formam induerunt religionis, sed per commoda carnis et illicita desideria distracti, desides effecti sunt...*

93 Richard of St. Victor, *Selected Writings on Contemplation*, tr. Clare Kirchberger (New York: Harper, 1957), 15-28.

94 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XVII*, PL 177; 931 D-933 A; *Sermo XXXVIII*, PL 177: 994D-999A; *Sermo LII*, PL: 1046D-1049A.

of Arabia will be given to him”) – and Isaiah 9:6 that establish for Richard’s audience an important Biblical citation for the Hebrew messianic expectation of the Savior’s birth and how certain attributes of this Savior (“glory, wisdom, godhood, and power”) will be needed when Jesus the *puer* becomes Jesus the *homine* on the Day of Judgment and sends the Antichrist into Hell.<sup>95</sup> In Richard’s sermon, the “Arabs” are understood to be the Magi, and that the gold of the Arabs (*de auro Arabiae*) will not be the only gift presented to the newborn Christ of the Nativity story, but also “frankincense and myrrh” (*..non solum de auro, sed et de thure, et de myrrh*).<sup>96</sup>

Forsaking the kinds of attempts that Absalon of Springiersbach made in differentiating among eastern peoples and *Arabiae* (that is calling them Egyptians and Ethiopians), in Sermon 38, Richard of St. Victor fused *all* easterners together, using Babylon as a metaphor for the “Seven Deadly Sins” and conflating ancient Chaldeans with current inhabitants of the Levant.<sup>97</sup> In discussing “Babylon,” Richard stated the city is “[the most] famous city in the kingdom, celebrated in arrogance by the Chaldaeans, who from antiquity in perpetual solitude were driven back on account of the wickedness of its citizenry; in the interpretation of their name, [my emphasis] *the*

95 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XVII*, PL 177: 931 D-932A: *Vivet, et dabitur ei de auro Arabiae (Psal. LXXI). Quis est qui vivet, et cui dabitur de auro Arabiae? Puer qui natus est nobis, et filius qui datus est nobis, cujus nomen Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus. Fortis. Pater futuri saeculi, Princeps pacis. (Isa. IX). Admirabilis gloria, consiliarius sapientia, Deus natura, fortis potentia, pater misericordia, princeps iustitia. Admirabilis gloria, quia et angeli, prae nimia admiratione gloria ejus, in ipsum prospicientes deficiunt, et cantant dicentes: Pleui sunt coeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae. Consiliarius sapientia, quia est Angelus magni consilii, qui hominem in invio infidelitatis et iniquitatis errantem reduxit. Deus natura, quia deitatem habet per naturam, et aliis tribuit esse deos per gratiam. Fortis potentia, quia principem hujus mundi custodientem atrium suum, id est mundum, debellavit, et vasa ejus, id est animas, in quibus iniquitatem posuerat, ad vitam tamen praedestinata diripuit, et ipsum dejecit, et alligavit (Luc. II), ne more antiquo in homine dominetur, [my emphasis] donec in tempore Antichristi ad modicum ipsius permissione solvatur, et postea cum suis in die judicii in infernum redigatur. Pater misericordia, quia paterna pietate ad nos venit, et nos redemit, et justificavit et beatificavit per gloriam...*

96 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XVII*, PL 177: 932 B

97 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XXXVIII*, PL 177: 994D-999 A: The Chaldeans were a Biblical people who lived in southern Babylonia, between the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates River, and who dominated the region during the seventh and sixth centuries with Nebuchadnezzar II (d. 562 BC) as the most renowned ruler of the dynasty.

*present generation shows foremost an exaltation of their cruelty and also a perversely continued sojourn in their dwellings.*"<sup>98</sup>

The remaining focus of Sermon 38 is the spiritual significance that Babylon and Jerusalem should hold for Christians, with Babylon representing evil and Jerusalem good. Richard focused on streets (*plataea*) as the metaphors by which his brethren should perceive both Babylon (sinfulness) and Jerusalem (Christian morality). In his description of the spiritual Babylon's layout and infrastructure, Richard describes seven streets, or, as he enunciated, the seven deadly sins: pride (*superbia*), envy (*invidia*), anger (*ira*), sloth (*acedia*), greed (*avaritia*), gluttony (*gula*), and extravagance (*luxuria*).<sup>99</sup> In following Isaiah's injunction to flee from Babylon and, as Richard states, "we should return to Jerusalem" (*revertamur Jerusalem*), the streets of the Holy City by which his brothers (*charissimi*) should pass are also seven-fold: acknowledgement of sins (*peccati cognitio*), remorsefulness of the heart (*cordis compunctio*), verbal confession (*oris confessio*), satisfaction of penance (*poenitentiae satisfactio*), practice of virtue (*virtutis exercitatio*), demonstration of good works (*boni operis exhibitio*), and, lastly, that it is better to flee some sins that "become sweet" (fornication) rather than to remain in "Babylon" and resisting them.

Sustaining his allegory of "streets" as ways through these two cities, Richard wrote that it is much easier to take the road from Jerusalem to Babylon, than to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem.<sup>100</sup> Noteworthy here is the fact that, in another act of historical conflation (and also a perverse rendering of the Jews' "Babylonian Captivity"), Richard characterized the Jews as incorrigible citizens (*perditos cives*) of that city, whose "...*Scribas et Phariseaos, et princeps sacerdotum, quos sciebat Pilatus per invidiam [envy] tradidisse*

98 Richard of St. Victor, 994 D: *Babylon illa gloriosa in regnis, incluta in superbia Chaldaeorum, quae ab antiquo in solitudinem sempiternam ob civium suorum scelera redacta est, et nominis sui interpretatione, et principum suorum crudeli elatione, et habitatorum suorum perversa conversatione praesens saeculum significat.*

99 Richard of St. Victor, 995 B.

100 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XXXVIII*, PL 177: 998 A-B.

*Christum.*"<sup>101</sup> In this sermon explicitly addressing his "present generation" (*praesens saeculum*),<sup>102</sup> Richard not only grouped *Arabiae* with Babylonians, but also included the Jews in his construct of the enemies of Christendom.

Lastly, in Sermon #52, Richard again addressed the conditions of his own time when he stated that the *hostis antiquus* (in Richard's confused lexicon, the Arabs and Babylonians!) had returned in the "present" to make life difficult for Christians living in the Holy Land, and then began another exegesis that alternated between Jerusalem and Babylon.<sup>103</sup>

### Conclusion

In conclusion, these sermons by Absalon of Springiersbach and Richard of St. Victor seemed to tap different aspects of western Christendom's collective ideas about *Arabiae* and Jerusalem based in sustained biblical exegeses that stretched backward a millennium in Church history. First, these two authors took part in a new discourse that conflated existing western perceptions about Muslims into rising twelfth century ideas about heresy and eschatology. In doing so, rather than using anything intrinsically Arabic or "Islamic" as a referent, these sermon writers placed all *Arabiae* within a well-known (and more easily rendered) definition of Christian apostasy while also placing Muslims into an apocalyptic milieu that relied extensively on a growing medieval European experience (and concern) with heresy.<sup>104</sup> Secondly, Absalon and Richard also reconfig-

101 Richard of St. Victor, 996 A.

102 Richard of St. Victor, 994 D.

103 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo LII*, PL 177: 1046 D: *Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus dum recordaremur tui Sion (Psal. CXXXVI). Hostis antiquus, charissimi, qui sua calliditate de paradiso primos parentes nostros eiecit, et miseriae vitae praesentis obnoxios reddidit; ipse nobis in spirituali Jerusalem, id est in visione supernae pacis constitutis incessanter insidiatur, ut de ejus nos amoenitatis gaudiis extrahat, et in Babylonem, id est confusionem vitiorum abductos, suae servitati sujiciat. Jerusalem enim congrue vitam significat spiritalem, Babylon vitam carnalem...*

104 Richard of St. Victor, Sermon #17, "Vivet et dabitur ei de auro Arabiae," in PL 177, col. 932 A: Sini Kangas, "Militia Christi meets the Prince of Babylon: the crusader conception of encountering the enemy," in O. Merisalo and P. Pahta, eds., *Frontiers in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the Third European Congress of Medieval Studies, Jyväskylä, 10-14 June 2003* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2006), 107-19.

ured western perceptions of Jerusalem, transforming the city from an Augustinian ideal into a sinister, Babylonian landscape inhabited by a Muslim population whose presence spiritually polluted the sanctity of the Holy Sites and required “cleansing” by westerners, images that were in keeping with other monastic preachers of the period (e.g., St. Bernard of Clairvaux) who were trying to explain the failure of the Second Crusade in terms of Christian sin.<sup>105</sup>

When we look at the above sermons with a mind to the treatment of *Arabiae*, Absalon of Springiersbach departed from traditional exegetical norms (the Nativity story, Magi, “gold of the Arabs”) by sermons that attempted a geographical placement of the Arabs (as Magi) in the lands of Egypt and Ethiopia, with an attendant focus on the Muslims’ infidelity and dark skin as potential indicators both of easterners’ associations with fallen peoples and caveats to irreverence in monastic communities. Recent studies on populations of alterity and periphery to western Europe demonstrate such ideas stretched back into antiquity, and were entrenched in the intellectual environments that informed Absalon and Richard’s writings.<sup>106</sup>

Moreover, we can see that Richard’s sermons complemented Absalon’s in his descriptions of a *hostis antiquus* that ejected Christians from Jerusalem in the twelfth century. I would argue here that in consistently referring to the *praesens saeculum*, Absalon and Richard were referring to the conditions of the Latin Kingdom after the Second Crusade’s disastrous defeat outside the walls of Damascus in 1149. Much is made in the sermons about distinctions that Absalon and Richard’s brethren should make between the “heavenly” and “earthly” Jerusalem, whether those distinctions include the new, morally defined geographical directions of Jerusalem in Absalon’s writings, or the comparisons of virtuous and sinful Baby-

105 Penny J. Cole, “‘O God, the heathen have come into your inheritance’ (Ps. 78:1): The Theme of Religious Pollution in Crusade Documents, 1095-1188,” in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. M. Shatzmiller (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 84-111.

106 For ancient and medieval ideas vis-à-vis dark skin, see Steven A. Epstein, *Purity Lost: Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000-1400* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2006), 9-23; and Mark S.M. Scott, “Shades of Grace: Origen and Gregory of Nyssa’s soteriological exegesis of the ‘black and beautiful’ bride in Song of Songs 1:5,” *Harvard Theological Review* 99:1 (2006), 65-83.

lonian streets that appear in Richard's.<sup>107</sup> Such a shift of attention to comfort bewildered and disheartened Christians had historical precedent—think of the impulses that drove St. Augustine to write *The City of God* as the Roman Empire appeared to be “falling” under assaults by Visigoths and Vandals. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (in a contemporaneous letter to Eugenius III) voiced similar concerns about Muslims and Jerusalem to what we see in the sermons.<sup>108</sup>

By urging Christians to take refuge in a “spiritual” Jerusalem when the real city was under siege (as it increasingly became in the 1160s and 1170s under Nur ad-Din and Saladin), I maintain that Absalon and Richard's sermons represent a shift in theological thinking that reflected the same kind of geographical confusion about the Middle East we saw earlier in Archbishop Daimbert's letters to Pope Paschal II. In looking at these sermons from later in the twelfth century, we can observe that – besides continuing in the same kind of confusion about the natures of eastern peoples – sermon authors were starting to assert reasons for Christian defeats in the Levant on “others” who might be responsible for the misfortunes of the age. Particularly in the Parisian schools, such scapegoats were increasingly defined as heretics and Jews.<sup>109</sup> We must remember the context of time here—heresy was becoming a major concern of the Church, not only at the administrative levels in the Vatican, but also

107 For catastrophic impressions of the Second Crusade's failure on Europeans see Andre Seguin, “Bernard et la second croisade,” *Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris: Commission d'histoire de l'ordre de Citeaux, 1953), 379-409; Etienne Delaruelle, “L'idée de croisade chez saint Bernard,” *Mélanges Saint Bernard* (Dijon, 1953), 53-67; E. O. Blake, “The Formation of the Crusade Idea,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970), 11-31.

108 Giles Constable, “A Report of a Lost Sermon of St. Bernard on the Failure of the Second Crusade,” J. O'Sullivan, ed., *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History* 13 (1971), 49-54.

109 Jack Watt, “Parisian Theologians and the Jews: Peter Lombard and Peter Cantor,” in Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson, eds., *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy and the Religious Life; Essays in Honour of Gordon Leff* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1999), 55-76; and Arthur Stephen McGrade, “The Medieval Idea of Heresy: What are we to make of it?” in *ibid.*, 111-40.

for local priests in Languedoc (Cathars and Albigensians) and in the Rhone River valley in southeastern Occitania (the Waldensians).<sup>110</sup>

One might therefore see in Richard of St. Victor's hellish vision of a Babylonian "anti-Jerusalem" populated by Muslims the combination of a new allegorical topography for the Holy City that combined with a tradition in medieval preaching of depicting ostracized groups as heretics or minions of the Antichrist.<sup>111</sup> If so, Richard's writings provide one of the most explicit examples of a transformation that occurred by the end of the twelfth century in perceptions of the *Arabiae* when he placed Jews and Arabs in an allegorical Babylon whose streets comprised the Seven Deadly Sins. It should be recalled that the School of St. Victor had a particular interest in the history of the Bible, and both Absalon and Richard's homilies here align with Victorine attempts to transform exegetical interpretation from Hebrew Scriptures and the Latin Vulgate into sermons.<sup>112</sup> Further, Richard's defining Muslims as *hostes Christi* and grouping them with heretics who were starting to challenge Christianity in his own time provides hitherto unnoticed sermon evidence for a well-documented association of Muslims with Christian heretics who increasingly came under scrutiny (and criticism) from

110 Joseph R. Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades*, with new epilogue by Carol Lansing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1992), 1-54; more recently, see Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy, and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001).

111 Marc de Groote, "An anonymous sermon against the Hagarenes, the Bogomils, and the Jews," *Harvard Theological Review* 97:3 (2004), 329-51; and Michael Frassetto, "The Image of the Saracen as Heretic in the Sermons of Ademar of Chabannes," in Frassetto and Blanks, *Western Views of Islam*, 82-5.

112 Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1964), 77-80; Mary Carruthers, "Moving Images in the mind's eye," in Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, eds., *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005), 287-305; and Ineke van't Spijker, "Model reading: saints' lives and literature of religious formation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries," in Etienne Renard, Michel Trigalet, Xavier Hermand, and Paul Bertrand, eds., *Scribere sanctorum gesta: Recueil d'études d'hagiographie médiévale offert à Guy Phillipart* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 135-156.

the time of Absalon and Richard's own Victorines, through later theologians and chroniclers such as Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240).<sup>113</sup>

Lastly, it will be helpful to express some thoughts that situate these findings on Absalon of Springiersbach and Richard of St. Victor in the field of medieval sermon studies. First, the consistent use of stereotypical presentations (Arabs as "minions of the Antichrist") seem to reflect a persistent monastic reliance on biblical typologies rather than on any contemporary sense experiences readily available by way of European encounters with Muslim communities throughout the Continent, Iberia, and Sicily during the Crusades.<sup>114</sup> Second, the attempts in these sermons to reorient traditional European understandings of the Holy City and Muslims by referring to a *hostis antiquus* to explain Islamic presences in the Levant reflect a preferred mode of exegesis in the twelfth century to find "prefigurements" for phenomena wherever possible.<sup>115</sup> That process yielded a variety of expressions that took the forms of treatises, letters, chronicles, and (as argued here) sermons whose authors alternately contrasted typologies in the Old and New Testaments, struggled with the newly reintroduced Aristotelian corpus, and tried to put rising heresies and apocalyptic notions into some kind orthodox Christian perspective.<sup>116</sup> Third, if anything, the depictions of Muslims in these sermons at least lends evidentiary support to a thesis put forward by Beverly Kienzle about the tendency of high medieval authors to focus on "anti-types" when trying to make a dialectical argument about the problem of unbelievers, Jews, or heretics in the face of

113 Jessalynn Bird, "The Victorines: Peter the Chanter's Circle and the Crusade: two unpublished crusading appeals in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Latin 14470," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 48 (2004), 5-28; Jean Donnadiou, "La représentation de l'Islam dans l'*Historia orientalis*. Jacques de Vitry historien," *Le Moyen Age: Revue d'histoire et de philologie* 114:3-4 (2008), 487-508; and Svetlana Luchitskaya, "The image of Muhammad in Latin chronography of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," *Journal of Medieval History* 26:2 (2000), 115-26.

114 Robert Chazan, "'Let not a remnant or a residue escape': millenarian enthusiasm in the First Crusade," in *Speculum* 84:2 (2009), 289-313; David Blanks, "Islam and the West in the Age of the Pilgrim," in Frassetto, *The Year 1000*, 257-71.

115 Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1965), 280-86.

116 Robert C. Laguex, "Sermons, exegesis and performance: the Laon *Ordo prophetarum* and the meaning of Advent," *Comparative Drama* 43:2 (2009), 197-220; Constant J. Mews, "Peter Abelard on Dialectic, Rhetoric, and the Principles of Argument," in Constant J. Mews, Cary J. Nederman, and Rodney M. Thomson, eds., *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West, 1100-1540: Essays in Honour of John O. Ward* (Leiden: Brepols, 2003), 37-54; Sabina Flanagan, "Twelfth-Century Apocalyptic Imaginations and the Coming of Antichrist," *Journal of Religious History* 24:1 (2000), 57-69.

Christian doctrine.<sup>117</sup> Fourth, and lastly, in their approaches to *Arabiae* and Jerusalem, Absalon and Richard's writings reveal the potential of using sermon evidence for the study of medieval mentalities, particularly with respect to the growing body of literature about medieval geographical reckoning and the perception of 'others' in the High Middle Ages.<sup>118</sup>

When forced to explain the disastrous failures of the Second and Third Crusades, it seems that for writers such as Absalon of Springiersbach and Richard of Victor it was more preferable, dramatic, and theologically "sound" to attribute the losses of westerners in the Holy Land to a resurgence of "ancient Babylonians" newly manifest as Muslims – with all the attendant apocalyptic connotations inherent in Richard of St. Victor's term *hostis antiquus*—than to grapple with the contemporary realities of a strong caliphate (the Damascus of 1149) or a powerful Saracen military leader (Saladin in the early 1190s). If that is the case, perhaps further inquiry into sermon literature of the period might explain why there was such monastic resistance to interpreting *Arabiae* and Jerusalem according to twelfth-century Crusader realities, rather than demonstrating such a complete reliance upon established and accepted biblical exegetical models.

117 Beverly Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: York Medieval Press, 2001). n.b. Recent studies have begun to investigate how these "anti-types" were themselves wrestling with western perceptions. See Niall Christie and Deborah Gerish, "Parallel preachings: Urban II and al-Sulamī," in *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15:2 (2003), 139-48; and Alberto Ferreiro, "Simon Magus, Nicolas of Antioch, and Muhammad," in *Church History* 72:1 (2003), 53-70.

118 For geographical works see Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, "Jerusalem on medieval *mappaemundi*: a site historical and eschatological," in P.D.A. Harvey, ed., *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and their Context* (London: British Library, 2006), 355-79; Ora Limor, "The Place of the end of days: eschatological geography in Jerusalem," in Bianca Kühnel, ed., *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Art: Studies in Honor of Bezalel Narkiss on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Jerusalem: Center for Jewish Art, 1998), 13-22; Joshua Prawer, "The Jerusalem the crusaders captured: a contribution to the medieval topography of the city," Peter W. Edbury, ed., *Crusade and Settlement: Papers Read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades* (Cardiff: University of College Cardiff Press, 1985), 1-16. For recent works on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, as applied to medieval studies, see: Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Orientation and Nation in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," Kathryn L. Lynch, ed., *Chaucer's Cultural Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 102-134; Kathleen Biddick, "Coming out of exile: Dante on the Orient(alism) Express," *American Historical Review* 105:4 (2000), 1234-49; Steve Guthrie, "Medievalism and orientalism," *Medieval Perspectives* 19 (2004), 91-113; Armelle Leclercq, "L'Orient monstrueux dans le premier Cycle de la croisade," *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre: Revue de médiévisque* 26 (2008), 56-67; Wilfried Besnardeau, "Les infidels dans l'Estoire de la guerre sainte d'Ambroise," in *ibid.*, 69-80.

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*Peter the Hermit delivers a letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Pope Urban II  
at the Council of Clermont*

*Bibliothèque de Genève - Guillaume de Tyr, Histoire des Croisades 1277*

**Work as a Manifestation of Faith in the English Nunnery:  
Barking Abbey, Essex**

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*This paper discusses various occupations held by nuns in the late-medieval and early-modern English convent, and argues that while the nuns did have extraordinary opportunities for self-management when compared to secular women, nuns carried out those responsibilities in part as extensions and expressions of their faith. This paper looks at offices held by the nuns at Barking Abbey in Essex, from the late Medieval period up to the Abbey's dissolution in the sixteenth century as a result of the shifting political and religious sands under King Henry VIII. Barking Abbey was a large, wealthy institution that needed capable administration, and for its officer-nuns this meant high levels of responsibility. Though management opportunities may have garnered respect for the women, this paper asserts that any work the nuns did was seen in the light of centuries-old monastic traditions that viewed labor as both a way to ensure their institution's survival and a way to get closer to God.*

Historians have generally regarded the late Medieval and Early Modern periods in England as a time when women of higher social status had two “occupational” options: marriage or the convent. If married, the primary job of an elite woman was to provide heirs, preferably male, in order to continue her husband’s family line. For women of the gentry classes, life choices hinged on their father’s ability to raise a dowry large enough to enable them to marry. If only a small dowry could be raised, a young woman would likely find herself “married” to the church and in a life spent behind cloister walls. But where opportunities to work and achieve were concerned, this option may have been the best of all, for it was inside the nunnery where women gained a level of education, authority, and responsibility that was unmatched by most of their secular sisters.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lina Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism: Chapters on Saint-Lore and Convent Life between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1500* (Cambridge, 1896, reissued, New York: Russell & Russell, 1963); Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries c. 1275-1535* (Cambridge, 1922, reissued, New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1964).

The story of women's work and opportunities for responsibility during this period is one of both continuity and change. In secular English society, the types of work women did changed little; it was simply taken for granted that they tended primarily to the basic functions necessary to keep the household and farm running such as baking, brewing, sewing, and tending to children and domestic animals. In towns women might find other opportunities as domestic servants, cloth makers, innkeepers, or in selling food and drink. Change came during the post-plague period after 1350 when there was an increase in opportunities for women because there were more jobs than hands to do them. For those who did find additional work, it was widely accepted that they were paid less than men, largely (still) limited to the more menial jobs men did not want, and as Marjorie McIntosh notes, all work had to "be accommodated to their biological, economic, and social roles within the domestic context."<sup>2</sup> Any extra work had to fit within a woman's regular duties as mother and wife. But from around 1500 women in England began to be squeezed out of the labor market as increasing populations meant more men competed for the available jobs.<sup>3</sup> Judith Bennett in particular has argued that while there was continuity in the availability of low-wage, menial jobs women could perform in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, changes in economy and society saw an erosion of even those opportunities by the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

But for women who chose a monastic life the story was different. Both Merry Wiesner and Valerie Spear have shown that personal empowerment could be found in the convent, and that abbesses in

2 Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 251.

3 Jacqueline Eales, *Women in early modern England, 1500-1700* (London: University College London Press, 1998), chapter 8.

4 Eales, 74; Maryanne Kowaleski and Judith M. Bennett, "Crafts, Gilds, and Women in the Middle Ages," in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, eds. Judith M. Bennett, Elizabeth A. Clark, Jean F. O'Barr, B. Anne Vilen, and Sarah Westphal-Wihl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 11-25, and Bennett's work on female brewers in England in *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).

particular were some of the most independent and powerful women in late-medieval and early-modern Europe.<sup>5</sup> Roberta Gilchrist and Marilyn Oliva also found the nuns who managed communities in Norfolk and Suffolk enjoyed more independence than secular women.<sup>6</sup> Nuns who held the various offices in the convent wielded broad authority and achieved a level of autonomy in handling their own affairs that put them on a par with women of *femme sole* status.<sup>7</sup> Though many convents had assistance from outside the house, it was the nuns themselves who were primarily responsible for the daily administration of their community. To add to this discussion, here we investigate the offices held at the Benedictine nunnery of Barking Abbey in Essex, England. There we find that the nuns who lived and prayed in that community were, out of practical necessity, masterful at combining the active and contemplative life. Barking in the late Medieval and Early Modern periods was a large, wealthy<sup>8</sup> institution holding more than 1,000 acres and manors in several counties, and housing between thirty and forty nuns and novices, all of which needed capable administration. For the abbey's officer-nuns, this meant high levels of authority and responsibility, as it took considerable effort to see that life inside such a busy closed environment was carried out as smoothly as possible for everyone, and surviving account books attest to their diligence.

However, though there were plenty of options for self-management for the women of Barking Abbey, as will be

5 Valerie G. Spear, *Leadership in Medieval English Nunneries* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005); Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), chapter 6.

6 Roberta Gilchrist and Marilyn Oliva, *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia: History and Archaeology c. 1100-1540* (Norwich: Center for East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, 1993), 17.

7 Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages* (New York: Methuen & Co., 1983), 8; Nancy Bradley Warren, *Spiritual Economies: Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 63.

8 In the sixteenth century valued at £862 net annual income, which had the buying power of more than £265,000 in 2011. It was the third wealthiest nunnery in England at its dissolution in 1539.

demonstrated, this paper argues that many women became nuns there primarily through religious vocation, and that work and responsibility were viewed by them as necessary extensions of their faith. Simply put, for the nuns work was a form of prayer. In order to pursue a life devoted to Christ they had to take responsibility for sustaining their community themselves. As Eileen Power observed, a monastery was primarily a house of prayer, but it was also

From a social point of view, a community of human beings, who require to be fed and clothed; it is often a landowner on a large scale; it maintains a more or less elaborate household of servants and dependents; it runs a home farm; it buys and sells and keeps accounts. The nun must perforce combine the functions of Martha and Mary.<sup>9</sup>

In Benedictine monasteries the idea that work or manual labor is not only required for material existence, but is necessary to serve the soul can be traced back to Saint Benedict himself. Chapter forty-eight of his *Rule*, written in the sixth century, specifically addresses how labor combats idleness, which is “an enemy to the soul.” Work therefore is spiritual, as it must serve the soul.<sup>10</sup> Working could also serve the soul by assisting it toward salvation. According to the abbess Petronilla, “Often putting aside the glory of reading and prayers, we turn to management of temporal goods for the advantage of our successors, which indeed we do for this reason: that when we are sleeping in our tombs, we may be helped by their prayers before God.”<sup>11</sup> As Power stated above, the mixing of work and spiritual matters meant combining Martha and Mary whose story is recounted in the gospel of Luke. When Jesus visits their home, Martha complains that she does all the work while her sister Mary sits listening at the Lord’s feet, thus beginning the tension between

9 Power, 131.

10 Leodegar Hunkeler, O.S.B., *It Began With Benedict. The Benedictines: Their Background, Founder, History, Life, Contributions to Church and World*, trans. Luke Eberle, O.S.B. (Oregon: Mt. Angel Abbey, 1978), 64.

11 Bruce L. Venarde, *Women’s Monasticism and Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England, 890-1215* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1997), 118.

the “active” and “contemplative” life.<sup>12</sup> This was not only felt by those choosing the regular life, but by the lay community as well. R.N. Swanson states the struggle between the spiritual and temporal was constant for all late-medieval Christians.<sup>13</sup> To alleviate that tension a compromise had to be reached which was probably best articulated by Walter Hilton, himself an Augustinian, when he wrote on how a layman could live the mixed life. He suggested in the late-fourteenth century that a Christian could live an ordinary life in the world with all their possessions and responsibilities but that they should approach that life in a contemplative manner. This is daily life *as* prayer where one’s work in the world becomes “part of his spiritual quest.”<sup>14</sup> Being a perfect Christian thus meant living a seamless integration of the active and contemplative regardless of whether one had professed monastic vows.

Claire Walker has shown that nuns indeed subscribed to this concept of the “mixed life,” as they saw no dichotomy in the Martha/Mary story. She has found several examples of early-modern Benedictines who viewed their work as a form of prayer, including one nun who saw cleaning the pigsty as a form of devotion.<sup>15</sup> Walker echoes Power when she claims, “every nun was both Mary and Martha.”<sup>16</sup> This belief in work as an expression of faith was not exclusive to the Benedictine Order, but was part of other monastic traditions as well. In the sixteenth century we find Saint Teresa of Avila, a Carmelite nun, famously instructing a prioress by telling her “if you have to be employed in domestic duties, as for instance in the kitchen, remember that the Lord goes about among the pots and

12 Luke 10:38-42.

13 R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 105.

14 Swanson, 106.

15 Claire Walker, “Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth-Century English Cloisters,” in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30 (1999), 417.

16 Walker, 398, 417.

pans, helping you in all things.”<sup>17</sup> The Carthusians also saw work as a means to glorify God. Two chapters of their Rule specifically speak of work as “a service that unites us to Christ.”<sup>18</sup> Even today, Carthusian nuns are urged to see any menial task, whether washing dishes or tending the garden, as “an expression of their union with the Son of God in his love for the Father and for all men.”<sup>19</sup> Monastic labor had many meanings; it was economical and practical, but importantly, it was also moral and spiritual. God and His will were to be sought everywhere, even in one’s daily chores. Nuns did not dichotomize the Martha/Mary story, but rather their Christian traditions taught them that worldly and spiritual work were one in the same, the former being an extension and expression of the latter.

Nuns also could look to Scripture for evidence of the spiritual importance of work, such as expressed in 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12:

For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. . . For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.<sup>20</sup>

Barking Abbey was a learned community, and in the Early Modern period its nuns possessed at least two Bibles, one written in English which the Crown had given them permission to use in

17 “Saint Teresa of Avila, The History of Her Foundations, Chapter III, translated by Sr. Agnes Mason, C.H.F.,” accessed 21 June 2011, <http://www.umilta.net/teresavila.html>

18 Book 1, Chapter 5.4 in “Statutes of the Carthusian Order,” accessed 22 June 2011, <http://www.chartreux.org>

19 “Nuns in the Charterhouse of Notre Dame,” accessed 22 June 2011, <http://www.chartreux.org>

20 Additional examples are found in 1 Corinthians 15:58, 1 Timothy 5:8, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

the early-fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup> So, in this verse the nuns could read for themselves a clear connection between the word of God and their Benedictine values of self-sustenance and rejection of idleness through their own labor. Additionally, work was (and is) connected to charity which is an important Christian virtue. Christ had implored his followers to love their neighbors as they loved themselves, which created a sacred obligation to provide for others through honest labor:

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35).

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need (Ephesians 4:28).

Chapter four of Benedict's *Rule* required the nuns to provide charity, and through their labors the nuns fulfilled this obligation, making worldly work profoundly sacred. Centuries of Christian and monastic traditions had taught them to view the active and contemplative, or temporal and spiritual, as not mutually exclusive but rather inextricably linked parts of a whole.

Once the call to the religious life had been answered a nun and her sisters had no choice but to see to the survival of their community through faith and hard work. The hierarchy among the women in Barking Abbey that made this possible consisted of two levels: those who oversaw the institution's administration, the abbess and prioress, and those women working under them called obedientiaries with specific functions or "obediences." This system was the same as that used in male Benedictine houses.<sup>22</sup> These "officers" were the women responsible for the efficient management of the household

21 Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible and Other Medieval Biblical Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1920, reprinted 1966), 334-7.

22 Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain 1000-1300* (Cambridge: University Press, 1994), 249-52; Winifrid M. Sturman, "Barking Abbey: A Study in its external and internal administration from the Conquest to the Dissolution," (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1961), 352.

on a day-to-day basis, and recent scholarship has shown when compared to their male counterparts they generally performed just as well even considering the challenges they faced that were beyond their control, such as fire, flood, pestilence, war, increases in taxes, and economic downturns. Additionally, when comparing them to women outside convent walls what we learn is that nuns did not have to accommodate their occupations within a domestic context, as McIntosh has noted about secular women.<sup>23</sup> Nuns did not have spouses and children to consider, and their social status and credit-worthiness were not dependent on their husband's. McIntosh also argues that society might view secular women who did business on their own as "inappropriately independent," because they were not restrained by a husband or father, which could lead to "verbal or sexual excess."<sup>24</sup> But for nuns their veil and exalted status as religious elites protected them from these types of accusations. They were free to do the work required of them to sustain their communities, as indeed they did. In her study of nunneries in the Norwich diocese, Marilyn Oliva found no evidence for "gross mismanagement."<sup>25</sup> Nancy Bradley Warren, in her analysis of English Brigittines and Minoreesses, also found that the nuns were very effective in managing their households and maintaining business relationships with their surrounding communities.<sup>26</sup> Studies of Barking Abbey have reached the same conclusions.

Though many English nunneries were well run, not all nuns were equally skilled managers. And this subject of mismanagement does raise the issue of overall decline inside monastic institutions, especially in the early years of the sixteenth century leading up to the Dissolution. Many such as David Knowles, Eamon Duffy, Robert

23 McIntosh, 251.

24 McIntosh, 251.

25 Marilyn Oliva, *The Convent and the Community in Late Medieval England: Female Monasteries in the Diocese of Norwich, 1350-1540* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 101.

26 Warren, chapter 3.

Dunning, and Joan Greatrex have argued for monastic vitality and viability. But critics like Geoffrey Dickens and Barrie Dobson suggest some houses were in a deplorable state, with lax discipline and religious devotion.<sup>27</sup>

As with most things in life, the truth is more nuanced and cannot be generalized. It depends on studying each institution separately. How then does one gauge if a monastery was in a state of decline? Episcopal and royal visitation records are two sources, but they are fraught with danger. In both, inquisitors were looking for misbehavior and mismanagement instead of what was working well, which often led to the airing of petty grievances not indicative of the house's overall condition. If they did receive the *omnia bene*, it could mean all was well, or it could also mean things were terrible but none of the nuns wanted to speak up.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* which reported the findings of visitations in the mid-1530s has been lost for Essex. Therefore, it is difficult to say how steadfast in their devotions the nuns at Barking were at the very end of the abbey's history.

However, thirty years prior to its dissolution Bishop Fitzjames of London visited Barking, and the record of that visitation makes no mention of negligence where the daily offices and prayers were concerned.<sup>29</sup> Since many of the same nuns were still there at the end, it is possible to assume continued good behavior. And this points to another area where we might find evidence of deterioration; it could be signaled by a drop in the number of nuns and novices over time. But at Barking Abbey we find a steady group hovering between thirty and forty women from roughly 1400 to the dissolution in 1539. Finally, we may look to the relationships with patrons for

27 Joan Greatrex, "After Knowles: Recent Perspectives in Monastic History," in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 36-9.

28 Greatrex, 37-8.

29 Sturman, 472-3.

evidence of problems. Surely families would not continue to send their daughters to become nuns at Barking, or request burial there and prayers for their souls, or bequeath funds for the abbey's buildings if they thought the place unworthy. But surviving wills prove they did all of these things right up to the abbey's end.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, at Barking Abbey we find an institution that was not in decline, but spiritually and economically vital in its last 150 years.

In Benedictine nunneries the chief executive officer was the abbess. Among the household's offices there was no higher authority. The *Rule of Saint Benedict* required that

An abbasse that may be hable & worthy to take vppon hir the Rule & gouernance of a monastery or congregacion / must all wey call to hir remembraunce & consydre the name of the dignite that she is called by / and labour effectually that hir dedes be accordinge to hir name / and in nothings contrary to the dignite that she is called / for she occupieth the place of almighty god: in the monastery.<sup>31</sup>

As the leader and spiritual mother, her position was the most important in the institution, and her job required a high level of skill in organization and administration. Due to Barking's size, the abbess' rights and responsibilities were so extensive that had she been male, she would have been a Lord in Parliament, as her brethren abbots were.<sup>32</sup> As a significant landholder, she was one of only four English abbesses to hold baronial status.<sup>33</sup> Her prominent position meant the election of a new abbess after the death or resignation of her predecessor was a formal and serious affair. To be qualified for the job, one had to be of legitimate birth, good reputation, and at least

30 E.A. Loftus and H.F. Chettle, *A History of Barking Abbey* (Barking: Wilson & Whitworth, Ltd., 1954), 49; Sturman, 412.

31 *Here begynneth the Rule of seynt Benet*: Richard Fox's translation of the Benedictine Rule for women, 1517, printed in *Female Monastic Life in Early Tudor England*, ed. Barry Collett (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), 90; Sturman, 430.

32 Loftus and Chettle, 43-5.

33 The other three were Shaftesbury, Wilton, and Saint Mary's Winchester. Eckenstein, 365; Power, 185; Warren, 61.

twenty-one years of age.<sup>34</sup> Barking Abbey, which did have a long history of elite and royal women as abbesses, also had abbesses and obedientiaries who were not from titled aristocracy, showing that for at least some of its nuns competency, rather than social status, may have been the overriding factor in their election to office.

The majority of the abbess' duties revolved around the legal and financial responsibilities of the estate. A chief financial responsibility was the administration of the general funds of the house. These funds were derived from leases of demesne lands from the abbey's fifteen manors, the lease of Barking mill, rents in the town of Barking, and collection of taxes. As well, the fund received payments in kind of grain, produce, wood, and hay.<sup>35</sup> These goods and cash were used by the abbess' obedientiaries for the daily management of the house. Legally, the abbess was required to provide the king with men at arms in times of war, maintain a prison, and hold manorial courts which happened usually every three weeks.<sup>36</sup> She was also required to handle any litigation in which the abbey found itself, and with multiple tenants, the opportunities (as with most monasteries of this stature) were frequent.<sup>37</sup> In addition to her responsibility for the estate at large, the abbess also saw to the administration of her own private house which was separate from the other nuns. Her household had its own kitchen and cook, as well as several personal servants.<sup>38</sup> Barking's last abbess left in her will money and goods to no fewer than six personal servants.<sup>39</sup>

The house was not a perquisite merely for the abbess' own enjoyment. Winifred Sturman points out that children mentioned in

34 Oliva, *The Convent and the Community*, 77; Power, 45.

35 E 101/458/7; Sturman, 227.

36 Loftus and Chettle, 53.

37 Loftus and Chettle, 53.

38 Sturman, 266.

39 *The Will of Dorothy Barley, the last abbess, 1556*, printed in Sturman, appendix III.

Barking's records as wards of the abbey were probably being raised by the abbess in her household.<sup>40</sup> Money payments were recorded as received by the abbey for the board and education of young children in both the early-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries. Edmund and Jasper Tudor, as small boys aged five and six, were placed in the custody of the abbess of Barking from about 1437 to 1440, and Sir John Stanley directed in his will of 1528 that his son and heir be placed in the abbess's care at Barking until he reached age twelve. Sir John paid handsomely for this service which included £35 annually for bed, board, education, and any expenses incurred by the boy and his servants.<sup>41</sup>

With an eight hundred-year history of patronage and relationships with the elite of Essex and neighboring counties, we must assume those were not the only instances of families trusting the abbess with their children, particularly when Bede, in the abbey's very early history, recounted the story of a boy "who by reason of his infant age, was bred up among the virgins dedicated to God [at Barking Abbey], and there to pursue his studies."<sup>42</sup> Serving as a guardian of children was just another of the many duties with which the abbess was charged. Clearly, her residence served many purposes, not the least of which was as the abbey's administrative center. With such multifaceted responsibilities, the abbess was somewhat akin to a woman running a small company in the twenty-first century.

At Barking, the prioress was hand-picked by the abbess and second to her in executive importance.<sup>43</sup> While the abbess was somewhat removed and busy with the secular, financial, and

40 Sturman, 267.

41 Loftus and Chettle, 47, 50; £35 had the purchasing power equivalent to £11,273 in 2011. See "Currency Converter," The National Archives, accessed 24 April 2011, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency>.

42 The Venerable Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1951), 176-77.

43 Eckenstein, 370; In smaller monasteries dependent on a great abbey, the prioress served as head of the house. See Essex Record Office, hereafter ERO, publication no. 41, *Essex Monasteries* (Chelmsford: Essex City Council and ERO, 1964), 17.

legal matters of the convent, the prioress saw to the day-to-day administration of the house. She held great authority and her primary responsibility was discipline and “to meyntene Religion” (seeing that the daily devotions were properly kept).<sup>44</sup> Also, more generally, she oversaw the obedientiaries who performed functions such as laundry, procurement of supplies, cooking, care of vestments, and nursing of the sick, as well as administering the abbey’s Office of Pensions which distributed funds to the nuns and priests.<sup>45</sup> Though each obedientiary was essentially in charge of her own department and revenues, she still answered to the prioress. Barking Abbey was large enough to have the additional offices of subprioress and third prioress. Thanks to the skills of these three women, the nuns’ daily routine of praying and working maintained a disciplined balance.

Before we turn to the work performed by the various obedientiaries, we must remember the nuns’ primary occupation was the *opus dei*, or God’s work (which itself suggests the connection between the sacred and labor). Their surviving *Ordinale* suggests they lived a very active liturgical life and were devoted to praying for the souls of their founders and benefactors, including their most important patron, the king. The cycle of religious ritual that made up the nuns’ lives, as prescribed by Saint Benedict, was a daily rhythm of reading, work, and prayer, which both serves the soul and pleases God. One aspect was the daily praying of the Offices: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. Barking’s *Ordinale* does not reference clock-time so it is difficult to determine the specific time each day when an Office was prayed and for how long.<sup>46</sup> Chapter eight of the *Rule* states that “mynchyns muste aryse at the viii houre after it be nyght / that is to saye / after the sonue be sette.”<sup>47</sup> Adjustments were made for the changing length of the day from summer to winter, but in Archbishop John

44 *Essex Monasteries* (ERO, 1964), 17; Sturman, 270.

45 Sturman, 300-4.

46 *The Ordinale and Customary of the Benedictine Nuns of Barking Abbey*, ed. J. B. L. Tolhurst (London: Harris and Sons, Ltd., 1928), 111.

47 See Fox’s translation of the Benedictine Rule printed in Collett, 111.

Peckham's thirteenth-century visitation of the abbey, he specifically states midnight is preferred for Matins because it is "most acceptable to God and the angels."<sup>48</sup> The nuns generally arose somewhere between midnight and 2:00 a.m. for Matins, and the remaining Offices were prayed at varying intervals throughout the day with the final prayer said around 7:00 or 8:00 p.m.<sup>49</sup> Mass was also said for them three times per day.<sup>50</sup>

Crucial to the nuns' religious life were the priests whose sole task it was to attend to the women's spiritual needs. Their duties were to celebrate the sacraments, which nuns were not allowed to perform. In the early-sixteenth century Barking had nine priests, and this high number betrays the abbey's overall wealth, for priests were paid employees and dependent on the abbey for their keep.<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, the priests at Barking were not involved in the daily administration of the nunnery as they might have been in a smaller house. Those duties fell solely to the abbess, prioress, and their staff who governed both the priests and themselves for the benefit of their spiritual life.<sup>52</sup>

Below the abbess and prioress were the obedientiaries charged with completing the various tasks necessary to run the house. On some days, primarily great feast days, there was little time for the nuns to see to the daily chores because they were involved in praying the Offices, mass, chant, and procession, taking only one

48 *The injunctions of Archbishop John Peckham for the abbey of Barking, 1279*, in *Manchester Medieval Sources series: Women of the English Nobility and Gentry 1066-1500*, tr. and ed., Jennifer Ward (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995), 210.

49 *The Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, ed. William M. Johnston, 2 vols. (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000) suggests a sample winter schedule as Matins 2:30 a.m., Lauds 5 a.m., Prime 6 a.m., Tierce 9 a.m., Sext noon, Nones 3 p.m., Vespers 4:30 p.m., and Compline 6 p.m. (p. 1433); However, Power points out that after Saint Benedict's time Nones was said at noon, leaving the afternoon between Nones and Vespers for work (p. 286).

50 Roseanne Michalek Desilets, "The Nuns of Tudor England: Feminine Responses to the Dissolution of the Monasteries," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 1995), 67; Loftus and Chettle, 56.

51 SC 6 Hen. VIII/928; Loftus and Chettle, 56; Sturman, 326.

52 Sturman, 332-3.

break for a meal.<sup>53</sup> To get all the necessary work completed the women were divided into “ladies of the household” and “ladies of the choir.” As the titles imply, the household ladies saw to the daily tasks of household upkeep while the choir ladies were singing dirges for patrons.<sup>54</sup> Of course, the household ladies were not exempt from their normal spiritual duties such as mass and praying the Offices, and there should be no doubt the primary daily focus of each of the nuns’ lives was liturgical.

The nun who held the office of sacrist was vital to this liturgical life, for she was endowed with the very important task of keeping up the abbey’s sacred spaces and objects. Because daily devotion was the most important aspect of life in the nunnery, the sacrist had to be a well-organized, responsible person. She saw to the care of vestments, provision and care of candles, bells, and all of the ornament used during the abbey’s various services.<sup>55</sup> She also undoubtedly had great knowledge of liturgical practices, which was important for remembering special needs such as when to prepare the tent for processions, candles for Candlemas Day, ashes for Ash Wednesday, and seeing that the proper ornament was hung for feast days.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, as in all “departments” in the abbey she was also the manager of her own funds.

At Barking, the sacrist was aided by the precentrix and her assistant the succentrix who made sure the ceremonies and chants were carried out correctly in the monastic choir.<sup>57</sup> But even with this additional help, the sacrist was kept so busy that she was the only nun below the abbess exempted from certain religious duties.<sup>58</sup>

After the sacrist, the most important of the obedientiaries was the cellaress. The cellaress was considered by Benedictine monastic communities to be so important that Saint Benedict, in

<sup>53</sup> Sturman, 349.

<sup>54</sup> Sturman, 352.

<sup>55</sup> *Essex Monasteries* (ERO, 1964), 21; Power, 132.

<sup>56</sup> Sturman, 276.

<sup>57</sup> Sturman, 277.

<sup>58</sup> Sturman, 276, 353 n2.

his *Rule*, specifically addressed only one other office – that of the abbess.<sup>59</sup> The *Rule* directs that the cellaress should be chosen from the convent and be wise, in good manners, sober, not proud, not troublesome, not slow, and not prodigal. Benedict understood the gravity of the job and the need for a prudent, conservative manager in this position, for he implores that “she shall suffer nothyng / though it be of lyttell value / to goo to waste / nor vnloked to nornecllygently [negligently] left or loste.” To complete all the cellaress is charged with, he further allows that if the convent is large she be able to hire help.<sup>60</sup> At Barking we find the cellaress was assisted by an under-cellaress, and between them they were responsible for provisioning the abbey with all the food, drink, clothing, and supplies needed by those living in the abbey and visitors alike, as well as payment of servants’ wages.<sup>61</sup>

Though many of Barking Abbey’s records do not survive, we are fortunate to have a few extraordinary documents from the late Medieval and Early Modern periods, including one from the cellaress entitled the *Charthe longynge to the office of the Celeresse of the Monasterye of Barking*.<sup>62</sup> This *Charthe* is undated, though several historians suggest the early fifteenth century.<sup>63</sup> The *Charthe* is the same in both language and layout as Barking’s cellaress accounts dating from the 1520s and 1530s, suggesting, at least for the last century and a half of the abbey’s existence, the record keeping was consistent.<sup>64</sup>

These are not governing documents *per se* (though the first paragraph is a reminder to check for arrearages). These were account books; several types recorded items such as receipts and payments,

59 Fox’s English translation of the Benedictine Rule printed in Collett, 126-7.

60 Fox’s English translation of the Benedictine Rule printed in Collett, 126-7.

61 Power, 133.

62 *The Charthe longynge to the Office of Celeresse of the Monasterye of Barking*, in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, trans. Sir William Dugdale, vol. 1 (London, 1693), 80-83.

63 Eckenstein, 372; Loftus and Chettle, 59.

64 SC 6 Hen. VIII/927 and SC 6 Hen. VIII/929.

as well as repairs and expenses that were all part of monastic tradition, and can be seen at similar institutions in this period. For instance, there are multiple cellaress accounts alone spanning many years which survive for Syon monastery in Middlesex.<sup>65</sup>

There is no indication in Barking's cellaress *Charthes* as to when the first account was created or why. Power suggests a "nameless cellaress drew it up for the guidance of her successors," but provides no evidence for that assertion.<sup>66</sup> It is certainly reasonable from a purely practical and economic (not to mention legal) sense that an institution as large and wealthy as Barking would have been doomed without someone doing the paperwork. Nonetheless, what these documents provide is an amazing sense of not only the scope of responsibility placed on the shoulders of the cellaress and her staff, but also of the day-in and day-out requirements for provisioning a monastery of Barking's size during this later period.

According to the *Charthes* the cellaress monitored and collected rents from various farmers and tenants.<sup>67</sup> She then used that income to manage the farm and purchase additional foodstuffs and supplies as necessary.<sup>68</sup> By the later Middle Ages, she had hefty annual revenues of approximately £98 at her disposal (equivalent to over £30,000 in 2011).<sup>69</sup> Her income was also used to hire assistants; in addition to the under-cellaress, Barking's cellaress employed three cooks, a rent collector, and a clerk who helped her keep her accounts.<sup>70</sup> The *Charthes* also provide detailed instructions

65 An internet search on the National Archives' website for "cellaress" in the period 1350 to 1550 will bring up multiple accounts. See [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

66 Power, 563.

67 The *Charthe* printed in Dugdale, 80.

68 Sturman, 293-4. See also the *Charthe* printed in Dugdale, under the heading "Pittance of the Covent," 81.

69 Sturman, 291; "Currency Converter," The National Archives, accessed 17 April 2011, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency>. In 1540 an annual income of £98 could buy 20 horses or 78 cows, 105 quarters of wheat or 4,284 U.S. pounds of wool, or pay the daily wages for nine men to work a full year (365 days).

70 *Essex Monasteries* (ERO, 1964), 22; SC 6 Hen. VIII/929; Sturman, 297.

on everything from the “offerings ” she is to pay, the anniversaries and pittances to be observed, the amounts and types of food to be provided (and when), to the “Hyreing of Pastur” and “Mowyng and making of heye.”<sup>71</sup> Though their *Rule* did not support it, travel outside the convent walls to purchase supplies for filling in gaps would have been occasionally necessary for the cellaress and her assistants. Papal bulls such as *Periculoso* issued in 1298 required strict, active enclosure of Catholic nuns, but by the late-fourteenth or early-fifteenth centuries times had changed drastically. Nuns no longer possessed the luxury of complete withdrawal from the world. New economic, political, and social realities meant that nuns had to engage with the secular world to survive.<sup>72</sup> For the cellaress and her staff, occasional travel outside convent walls was part of the delicate balancing act required in order to live a life of worship.

While the cellaress was the ultimate purchasing agent, it fell to the kitcheness to prepare the food, and to the fratress to see to the maintenance of the refectory. Barking had two fratresses who kept the dining hall, including tables and chairs, clean and in good repair.<sup>73</sup> They also saw to the purchase and maintenance of dish and tableware.<sup>74</sup> The office of kitcheness seems to have been a permanent post at Barking according to the *Charthes*, which may have been exceptional since their *Rule* required the nuns to take weekly turns at service in the kitchen.<sup>75</sup> The women were able to afford a relatively varied and interesting diet. The nuns ate fresh beef three times per week (Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday) except during Advent and Lent.<sup>76</sup> This is a noteworthy comment on the status of the abbey,

71 The *Charthe* printed in Dugdale, 82.

72 Spear, xvi.

73 *Essex Monasteries* (ERO, 1964), 12.

74 Power, 132.

75 Eckenstein, 375-6. See also Fox’s translation of the Benedictine Rule printed in Collet, “The xxxv chapitre treateth of the weekly kychynners,” 129-30.

76 Power, 564; The *Charthe* printed in Dugdale, 82.

because fresh meat was expensive to procure so it was only eaten by household members with the highest rank, even in secular society.<sup>77</sup> The nuns ate pork, and to a lesser degree mutton, and a large quantity of fish and eels during Lent. There was also oatmeal, dried beans, butter, milk, eggs, crisps (fritters), crumbcakes, chickens, geese, spiced pies, and red wine – all consumed through the year on various feast days. Because of the overall blandness of the Lenten diet, for variety and spice the kitcheness added rice, almonds, figs, raisins, and mustard to her preparations.

The English monasteries had differing numbers of offices depending on the house's size and wealth. Most had the basic positions already discussed. Barking's *Ordinale* lists the additional offices found there as: librarian, circuitrices, searchers, mistress of novices, and almoness.<sup>78</sup> The librarian cared for the monastery's books, which at the abbey's dissolution in 1539 totaled more than twenty texts and various manuscripts, and which were circulated annually for the nuns' education and enjoyment.<sup>79</sup> The circuitrice was responsible for "circulating" and ensuring that the nuns who were supposed to be engaged in their daily reading were doing so. This office may also have been related to the "reader" or legister, who was responsible for the weekly reading during meals as required by Benedict's *Rule*.<sup>80</sup> The searchers, sometimes called scrutatrices, had the duty of policing the house and reporting disorder to the prioress.<sup>81</sup> The mistress of novices was in charge of the novices (referred to as *scolares* at Barking), acting as their teacher and general guide, preparing them for the monastic life they would lead after they had professed their vows.<sup>82</sup> The almoness attended to the abbey's

77 C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 113.

78 *Ordinale*, 68; Sturman, 269.

79 Sturman, 269.

80 Eckenstein, 391; See also Fox's translation of the Benedictine Rule in Collet, 132-3.

81 Eckenstein, 216.

82 Power, 134; Sturman, 271-2.

almsgiving, which as mentioned above was also required by the *Rule*.<sup>83</sup> The offices of chambress and infirmaress are not specifically mentioned in the *Ordinale*, though a visitation report does mention Barking's infirmary; therefore, we may assume an infirmaress was appointed to oversee that area.<sup>84</sup> The office of chambress also probably existed since a large abbey like Barking certainly required attendance to care of clothing and bedding.<sup>85</sup> Other monasteries had these officers, but the important thing to consider about the absence or presence of specific offices is the overall flexibility of a system that allowed the nuns to make decisions themselves about how best to manage their communities.

At Barking a nun had to be professed a minimum of seven years before the abbess could appoint her to an office, which is an important indicator of how seriously they took their responsibilities since they restricted office holders to those they felt were mature and capable enough to handle the task.<sup>86</sup> The appointments were made each year on the first Monday of Lent. The obedientiaries stood down from their offices on Sunday, and the abbess evaluated their performance over the previous year. Those who had performed well were praised, rewarded, and reappointed; those who had not were replaced.<sup>87</sup> Now of course the nuns were human beings and challenges did arise. Not every nun was equally capable or qualified, but it is clear this annual system of review enabled the sisters to maintain a level of competence among those who held important positions. In fact, many of them exhibited their skills by holding their positions for several years, or better yet, by being promoted to higher offices. For example, Thomasina Jenney, who was sacrist before 1508, was promoted to prioress and held that

83 Power, 132; Sturman, 299.

84 *The injunctions of Archbishop John Peckham for the abbey of Barking*, 212.

85 Loftus and Chettle, 55.

86 Loftus and Chettle, 55; Oliva, *The Convent and the Community*, 85.

87 Loftus and Chettle, 55; Sturman, 268-9.

office until the dissolution in 1539.<sup>88</sup> Margaret Scrope served first as precentrix in 1527, then “lady of the pension” in 1535-6, and finally was subprioress at the dissolution three years later.<sup>89</sup> Competence can also be seen in the length of service of Barking’s later abbesses; in its last 150 years the majority of them held the office for thirteen years or more.<sup>90</sup> Katherine de la Pole served an amazing forty years in the fifteenth century.<sup>91</sup>

Careful management by competent women was vital. It was not in their best interests to create additional problems for themselves by mismanaging resources; it would be foolish to suggest they were not fully aware of this. It is essential to keep in mind, as no doubt did the nuns, the practical reasons for sensible and effective management; without it the house would fall into ruin, and the nuns’ life of dedication to their faith would disintegrate.

The *Rule of Saint Benedict* required nuns and monks to provide for themselves through their own labor, but for a large house such as Barking the ability to hire lay help (which is recorded in the surviving documents) was of vital importance.<sup>92</sup> There were several types of arrangements that existed at any given time: seasonal laborers who worked only for food and drink; contracted workers who made most of their money as self-employed businessmen, providing a good or service to the monastery;<sup>93</sup> household or farm workers who received eighty percent of their income in kind plus small cash

88 Loftus and Chettle, 52; Sturman, 300, 439.

89 A.I. Doyle, “Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey,” in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, 25 (1958), 234; Loftus and Chettle, 52; Sturman, 439.

90 Five out of seven abbesses, or 71%.

91 Loftus and Chettle, 42, 48.

92 J.E. Oxley, *The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary* (Manchester: The University Press, 1983), 282; Power, 150.

93 Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100-1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 176.

stipends; and finally, people like the priests who completely relied on the abbey for everything including bed, board, and wages. The constant creation and maintenance of relationships with workers in the lay community were undoubtedly some of the most important functions in the abbey. To keep track of what must have been a very fluid atmosphere inside the nunnery, particularly from season to season, doubtless took diligence and competence. Many of the smaller, impoverished nunneries could not afford to hire help, and several complaints are recorded by nuns stating that their daily chores were taking too much of their time and energy.<sup>94</sup> But Barking Abbey was fortunate because its financial status enabled its nuns to hire the help that was essential for allowing them to concentrate on their primary purpose – their spiritual obligations.<sup>95</sup>

### CONCLUSION

*E*nglish nunneries like Barking Abbey were clearly places buzzing with activity, and for their officer-nuns this meant high levels of responsibility and authority. It took considerable effort to see that life inside an enclosed environment was carried out as smoothly as possible for everyone. Though not all the nuns there aspired to hold office, nor were they all equally capable of doing so, those who did seem to have performed (for the most part) quite admirably. The proof is in the financial and spiritual health of the house when the doors were forever closed in 1539.

Curiously, historians of women and work in the late Medieval and Early Modern periods have tended to ignore or treat lightly the important jobs that nuns did to manage their communities, focusing almost entirely on women's work in secular society. We have seen that many secular women did have opportunities to work, but mostly in jobs that were low-wage, menial, and not desired by men. But to make a fair comparison for the women of Barking Abbey we need to look specifically at the work performed by higher status secular women because the nuns there consistently came from the upper gentry, aristocracy, and even at times royal, families.

<sup>94</sup> Power, 153.

<sup>95</sup> Loftus and Chettle, 56.

C.M. Woolgar has shown that many a great lady held at least some responsibility for overseeing the servants, and therefore aspects of the daily management of her own estate, but notes that the shift toward more females managing the house was only beginning in the sixteenth century.<sup>96</sup> Certainly some elite women often assisted in keeping accounts or watching over the domestic help, which Rowena Archer has argued was the case particularly where husbands were frequently absent on business or had died. In those cases women had little choice but to help manage affairs to protect property and inheritances. They were involved, but primarily only when circumstances dictated it.<sup>97</sup> When we view that against just the tasks consistently performed in the nunnery such as managing estates and natural resources, recordkeeping, hiring and supervising employees, provision of material resources, and even opportunities for promotion, the jobs of secular elite women cannot compare.

Despite this, even among historians of women's monasticism there are differences in opinion about the levels of responsibility and authority found in the nunnery.<sup>98</sup> Some suggest opportunities may not have been as plentiful as previously suggested because, in the end, women's lives were still controlled by male interests, in the case of nuns, the male-dominated Catholic Church.<sup>99</sup> Other historians stretching all the way back to include Eileen Power and Lina Eckenstein have found it important that nuns were occupying

96 Woolgar, 202-03.

97 Rowena E. Archer, "How ladies . . . who live on their manors ought to manage their households and estates: Women as Landholders and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages," in *Woman Is A Worthy Wight: Women in English Society c. 1200-1500*, ed. P.J.P. Goldberg (Wolfeboro Falls, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992), 149-181.

98 See for instance, *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe* (1986), edited by Barbara Hanawalt, which focuses so completely on secular women that the words "nun," "monastery," or "religious" are not to be found in its contents nor its index. As well, *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (1989), edited by Judith Bennett, et al, has only one section concerning women's monasticism, and it focuses on expansion and decline in the period 500 to 1100, failing to address office-holding patterns or administrative opportunities for religious women. David Herlihy actually includes a section titled "Convent" in his *Opera Muliebria: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (1990), but he only briefly covers convents in Normandy, followed by a discussion of the Beguines. The thrust of his coverage of convent work hinges on the profit motive and restrictions on religious women's ability to make enough money to survive. As with Bennett, there is essentially no mention of the many and varied administrative responsibilities that nuns assumed in order to manage their communities.

99 Maryanne Kowaleski and Judith M. Bennett, 25.

responsible positions of authority not experienced by most secular women, seeing nunneries as havens of independence. There is probably some truth in both arguments.

While nuns were ultimately answerable to the Church, which meant answerable to men, the reality is that complete freedom from male influence was a rarity for any woman of that time. The fact remains that nuns (especially abbesses) were remarkably adept at managing themselves, often in extremely challenging circumstances, and without requiring a husband to validate them financially or legally.<sup>100</sup> Evidence such as Barking Abbey's cellaress *Charthes* and Office of Pensions Account, as well as bishop's registers, account rolls, and petitions from nunneries large and small, shows that their obligations were extensive and indeed carried out daily by the sisters themselves and those they employed and supervised.

More research needs to be done in this area to place nuns' contributions into the debate on women's work because, on balance, opportunities for education and outlets for administrative skill existed inside the convent to a greater extent than anywhere else. As Penelope Johnson so succinctly put it, "In no institution other than monasticism could women participate so fully in shaping their own lives."<sup>101</sup>

Nonetheless, though it has been shown here that opportunities for work and advancement certainly existed in convents, this paper asserts that most nuns did not enter monastic life for the opportunity to develop an administrative career, but rather simply to serve God. All of the opportunities and responsibilities could have fostered a positive self-image, but the nun's primary identity remained locked in her role as a bride of Christ.

<sup>100</sup> Spear, 191.

<sup>101</sup> Penelope D. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 206.

Late-medieval and early-modern nuns could not have perceived their jobs in the same way that professional women do in the twenty-first century. While they may have viewed their offices as important and deserving of respect, everything they did was primarily to ensure their institution's survival and to bring them closer to God. Nothing mattered more. Barking's abbess had to oversee effectively the house and its estates, including maintenance of relationships with patrons and tenants, so that revenues would continue to be raised. Likewise, the cellaress and kitcheness had to make sure the nuns were physically fed so that they could go about their business of spiritually nourishing themselves and others. The infirmaress had to tend to the nuns' illnesses, keeping them healthy so their prayers for the community would continue. And lastly, the mistress of novices had to see to the spiritual and intellectual education of her charges so that new nuns would be professed, ensuring the community continued after elderly sisters passed away. In the end, they had to sustain themselves in order to serve God, thus all the hard work was simply an extension of their faith just as it had always been for countless monks and nuns whose lives were dictated by centuries of Christian and monastic tradition.

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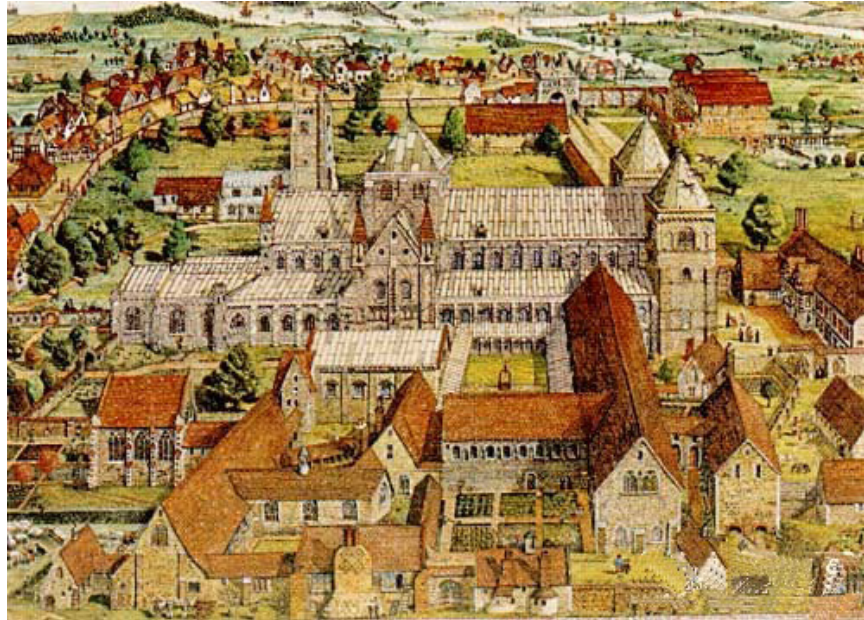
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**Re-envisioning Reproduction: Dividing Life from Death  
in Charles Etienne's *De la Dissection***

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*Charles Estienne's **De la Dissection des parties du corps humain** (1546) presents the uterus not only as a site of generation and life, but also putrefaction and death. Estienne first writes about the uterus as a surgical site where life and death converge and must be separated, and then as an anatomical site where pain and pleasure are divided because of Galenic theories about the uterus that involve generation and corruption. In spite of frequent attempts to visually quarantine the uterus from the rest of the body with a printed inset, these surgical and anatomical separations between life and death are often clearer in the texts than in the images, which are as much about invisibility as visibility.*

The humanist anatomist Charles Estienne begins the Third Book of his *De la dissection des parties du corps humain* (*On the dissection of the parts of the human body*, 1545-1546) with a disquieting image of a cesarean section, a fatal procedure for early modern women performed to save the child's life.<sup>1</sup>

1 Although this book clearly involved a collaborative process between the author, printmaker, and artists, I will refer to the author as "Estienne" for the sake of simplicity. Little proof of authorship currently exists for artists and printmakers engaged in Estienne's collaborative project. Estienne started his book in 1530 and finished it in 1539, but a lawsuit brought against him by the surgeon and artist Estienne de la Rivière, who composed and engraved the printed anatomical insets, delayed printing and dissemination until 1545, in Latin, and 1546 in French. Pierre Huard, *Charles Estienne et l'école anatomique parisienne* (Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, 1965), unpaginated; Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, *The French Renaissance in Prints* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1994), 231-2, 475.



**Image 1: First image demonstrating the procedure for a C-section**

With the firmly delineating contours of a printed inset surrounding the womb, the woodcut emphasizes the separation between the “dead and pregnant” mother and the “living child” in her uterus, as described in the textual caption suspended from a chain above the scene.<sup>2</sup> As in most of his other images of women, Estienne illustrates the female body with a woodcut image derived from an erotic print; the section of the woodcut that includes the uterus, which encloses a living fetus waiting to be rescued by the

<sup>2</sup> The caption reads: “A. The path and portrayal of how the razor should be led along the dead, pregnant woman’s stomach. B. The place where the incision should be made to pull the living child out of the mother, who is already dead.” Charles Estienne, *La dissection des parties de corps humain divisée en trois livres* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1546), 383. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

surgeon's dexterous hands, has been carved on a separate block inserted within the larger image of the dead mother, attempting to segregate life from death.

In spite of the relatively clear distinctions between life and death in the caption and the inset's attempts to demarcate these boundaries, the life and death relationships within the image prove to be ambiguous. Upon first glance, life is invisible and death is omnipresent in this image. We cannot see the living child embedded in the mother's womb. Furthermore, although the mother is described as "already dead" and her body has been partially opened, visual clues hint at a liminal state between life and death. Her softly curling hand and the muscular tension in her legs indicate subtle signs of life, but her neck and shoulders are slack with death, and a faint grimace of pain plays over her classicized profile. A c-shaped incision has been carved into her anatomized flesh to deliver the fetus, depicting the suspenseful moment immediately before the child's life—or at least its soul—will be saved. The postmortem caesarean section was a well-known procedure, with financial, legal, religious, and moral implications. Sometimes it saved the child's life, but it also was important to baptize dying children for the sake of their salvation, and it also determined the fate of the mother's dowry, because the fate of the dowry depended on whether she died with or without living issue. It was therefore a procedure with repercussions as profound in life as in the afterlife.<sup>3</sup>

I argue here that because the text of *De la Dissection* explores the paradoxical nature of the uterus as the site of life and death, generation and corruption, Estienne attempts to isolate the uterus from the rest of the female body with printed insets. In eight out of ten images, Estienne strategically employs the printed inset to visually quarantine the problematic uterus from the courtly, elegant female bodies that surround it. There are further visual subdivisions within these insets that indicate a necessity to separate the body to a

3 Katharine Park, "The Death of Isabella Della Volpe: Four Eyewitness Accounts of a Postmortem Caesarean Section in 1545," *BHM* 82 (2008), 169-87.

greater extent than the exterior inset will allow. These subdivisions, often playfully fashioned with folds of skin, separate the issues of generation and corruption in the uterus from the vagina and external genitals, which Estienne theorizes as sites of sexual pleasure. This project is never fully realized, however, since two prints in this series lack an inset, and the women in this series are ambivalently alive, even if they are textually dead.<sup>4</sup> In spite of Estienne's initial attempts to set the uterus apart from the rest of the body, he occasionally creates permeable boundaries between interior and exterior forms, life and death.

Estienne's text first presents the uterus as a surgical site where life and death converge and must be separated, and then as an anatomical site where pain and pleasure are divided because of Galenic theories about the uterus that involve generation and corruption. In spite of frequent attempts to quarantine the uterus visually from the rest of the body with a printed inset, these surgical and anatomical separations between life and death are often clearer in the texts than in the images, which are as much about invisibility as visibility.

### **Surgical Conceptions: The Limnality of Life and Death**

Image 1 foregrounds the display of what normally remains unseen inside the uterus, and further surgical and anatomical procedures in the following images progressively reveal its inner contents. Estienne was a visual thinker, and along with his elaborate images that lavishly displayed the body, he frequently used phrases that invoked the sense of sight, such as "faire voir," and "mettre sous les yeux" to describe the body as a spectacle offered to the eyes in his rhetorical, Galenic elaborations about surgery and anatomy.<sup>5</sup> His work on women's bodies has been theorized as two different systems

4 Bette Talvacchia has also noticed this indistinctness between life and death, stating that "Estienne's women do not give the impression of death; rather they loll in sensuous abandon. The postures of Estienne's female figures eroticize them and put them in a domain that lies symbolically between life and death, analogous to the remote, mythological realm from which their prototypes are taken." Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 166-7.

5 Hélène Cazes, "Le Cogito de l'Anatomiste: La Dissection des Parties du Corps Humain par Charles Estienne," in *Aesculape et Dionysos: Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean Céard*, ed. Jean Dupèbe (Geneva: Libraries Droz, 2008), 329-33.

of representation—a written text and a visual text with prints that showcase the importance of observation.<sup>6</sup> Building on these ideas about the significance of sight in Estienne’s Galenic theories, I focus on tropes of visibility as well as invisibility in surgical conceptions of life and death within the uterus, which remain completely unstudied in contemporary scholarship about Estienne.

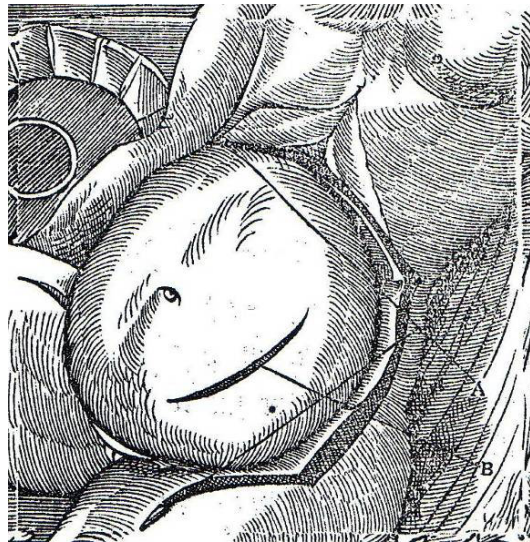


Image 1: detail of inset

While displaying the inner workings of the uterus and its components, Estienne also presents precarious and even fatal situations that require surgical intervention, since his book emphasizes practice along with medical theory. In his text, however, Estienne also purported to address educated anatomists, students and professors of medicine, surgeons and barbers, all present in his ideal anatomy theatre.<sup>7</sup> The practitioners who read Estienne’s

<sup>6</sup> Talvacchia 163.

<sup>7</sup> Cazes, “La Dissection des Parties du Corps Humain et Son Double: Les Anatomies Latines et Françaises de Charles Estienne (Paris, 1545-1546),” in *Tous vos gens à Latin: Le Latin, langue savante, langue mondaine XIVe- XVIIe siècles*, ed. Emmanuel Bury (Geneva: Libraries Droz, 2005), 366-7. The French and Latin editions were not absolutely identical, but for the most part they had the same information. The French edition has more terminology than the Latin version, since it also includes Latin words alongside the vernacular, and

text differed according to their linguistic skills, since barbers and surgeons who could not read Latin doubtlessly read the French edition. French or Latin editions also might have appealed to educated courtiers desiring humanist knowledge of the body, as well as visual entertainment from high-quality fonts and images.

The plurality of medical audiences and languages used in Estienne's text strongly suggests that he was not writing strictly for courtiers or learned physicians. Although he is sometimes identified as a royal physician, there is in fact no evidence that Charles Estienne, unlike his brother Robert, attended Francis I at Fontainebleau.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, however, he was clearly well connected with courtly medical circles through both his brother and his stepfather Simon de Colines, an illustrious printer of classical and humanist texts, including the first widely disseminated editions of the Greek medical writer Galen.<sup>9</sup> As John Freeman has argued, the medical culture at Fontainebleau combined a commitment to medical experience with an interest in medical humanism, focused on the study, translation, and interpretation of the works of ancient writers, including a number of works largely or completely unknown to medieval scholars. Being employed as a physician for Francis I involved familiarity with Galenic medical facts as well as entertaining the king with visual and literary sources.<sup>10</sup>

One of the principal centers for this kind of humanist textual scholarship in Galenic medicine was the University of Paris, where

Cazes argues that it is a scholarly "continuation" of the Latin edition. It should be noted that publishing this book in French would have opened up these ideas to lay readers beyond the medical community, but there is little evidence for a broader audience for his work.

8 John Freeman, "Physicians and Humanists in the World of Francis I," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 30 (1975), 124-35 is based on extensive use of archival sources. For Charles Estienne's work at the University of Paris, consult Charles Singer, *A Prelude to Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), xv-xxii.

9 Kay Amert, "Intertwining Strengths: Simon de Colines and Robert Estienne," *Book History* 8 (2005), 1-10.

10 Freeman 132-134. This trend also occurred in Italy, as described by Vivian Nutton, *The Rise of Medical Humanism, Ferrara 1464-1555* (Oxford: Society for Renaissance Studies, 1997).

Charles Estienne received his medical training.<sup>11</sup> The first edition of Galen published by a French press appeared in 1514, when Henri Estienne, Charles Estienne's father, issued a very small collection of his work.<sup>12</sup> After this, Galenic texts flooded Parisian presses, thanks to the efforts of Simon de Colines, Estienne's stepfather and editor.<sup>13</sup> Colines reprinted multiple editions of Galen between 1520 and 1546, with the bulk of publication between 1530 and 1546, precisely the years in which Estienne was compiling his book. Colines' most important publication in this area was the first printed edition of Galen's *De Usu Partium* (*On the Use of Parts*) in 1528, Galen's principal work of physiology, which was not widely disseminated in medieval Europe, but which was foundational to Estienne's work.<sup>14</sup> Book III of *De la Dissection* relies very heavily on Galen's *De Usu Partium*, as Estienne himself indicates, noting that "we won't see anything in this part rashly professed outside of this author's (Galen's) opinion."<sup>15</sup> By using the verb "to see" rather than the verb "to read," Estienne unites the visual and textual aspects of the Galenic body.

Despite his reverence for *De usu partium*, Estienne occasionally modifies Galen's work in the third and final chapter

11 Singer xviii; Estienne received his M.D. in 1542 under the training of the learned Greek A.J. Lascaris and Jacques DuBois (Sylvius) at the University of Paris.

12 Singer xv.

13 Singer xv; Huard unpaginated; Philippe Renouard, *Bibliographie des Editions de Simon de Colines 1520-1546* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1962), 55, 65; Richard Durling, *A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen* (London, 1961). The fifty-eight medical works that Colines published between 1520-1546 included forty-six editions of Galenic materials, eight editions of Hippocrates, and two editions by contemporary physicians. Most of these Galenic texts were editions of *De usu partium*, *De motu musculorum*, and *De facultatibus naturalibus*, as well as a pamphlet based on Galen's *Introductio seu Medicus*. All four were printed in small, pocket-sized volumes designed for students. Colines' 1514 French *Opera* was not the first printed edition of Galen; there were several Italian editions beginning in the 1490s. Colines' Hippocratic publications included the *Aphorismi*, *De natura humana*, *De flatibus*, *De morbis epidemiis*, and various Hippocratic commentaries on Galen.

14 Renouard 489.

15 Estienne 282, "ne soyons veuz en ceste part avoir rien temairement proferé ou produict quit soit oultre l'opinion & sentence dudict auteur." Estienne does not cite any of his contemporaries.

about women's uteri.<sup>16</sup> In his surgical section about women in the Third Book, Estienne's uterine cycles of life and death assume more extreme overtones than in Galen's *De Usu Partium*, where Galen stresses that reproduction is first and foremost about "immortality" through the propagation of animals. Because "anything composed of arteries, veins, nerves, bones, and flesh could not be made incorruptible," Nature found "a wonderful art whereby, when an animal dies, she may always put a new one in its place."<sup>17</sup> By contrast, Estienne does not discuss reproduction in terms of immortality and the continuation of life, but instead refers exclusively to unfortunate situations where either the mother or child is dead—situations of special interest to his audience of barbers and surgeons, who were entrusted with the relevant operations of saving newborn children or extracting dead fetuses to save the mother's life. Thus, Galen's work tends to be more theoretical, describing the structure and function of the uterus and vagina, whereas Estienne also includes the hands-on obstetrical procedures, instruments required by difficult childbirths, often invoking the authority of midwives (*sage-femmes*).<sup>18</sup>

Specifically, Estienne's surgical text graphically first describes methods for extracting dead children out of living mothers (to save the mother's life), then extracting living children out of dead mothers, and delivering twins closely nestled in the mother's uterus when one is alive and the other is dead.<sup>19</sup> After a lengthy

16 Estienne divided his book into a preface and three "books"—that is to say, three main sections further divided into chapters, and illustrated the first two books exclusively with male bodies, devoted respectively to bones, muscles, and body organs. The first book includes the definition of anatomy, the skeleton, cartilage, joints, ligaments, nerves, membranes, muscles, glands, veins and arteries, skin, nails and hair. The second book includes "the diversity of names of the exterior body parts" and includes illustrations of the lower abdomen and male genitalia, the upper abdomen (thorax), the tongue and throat, the head, the brain. The third book includes the female genitalia, eyes; individually illustrated muscles detached from the rest of the body, the dorsal spine, the anatomical theater, and dissection techniques. Notably, he only discusses surgical procedures involving the interrelationship between life and death in sections about women.

17 Galen, *On the Usefulness of Parts of the Body*, tr. Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 620-9. May's translation corresponds to the first Latin edition published by Simon de Colines, Galen, *Opus de usu partium corporis humani magni cura ad exemplaris Graeci veritatem castigatum, Nicolao Regio Calabrio interprete* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1528).

18 Estienne 297.

19 Estienne 284-291.

discussion of the sensory organs, including the eyes, Estienne begins his Third Book on women's anatomy with life and death issues in surgery, followed by issues of generation and corruption in anatomy, combined with the significance of visually demonstrating these concepts to the viewer:

We will describe, in the first place, the manner in which the living child should be pulled outside of the body of the mother, who is already dead. Then afterwards, we will show by which means the dead child should be pulled from the mother, who is still alive. After these things, we will proceed to the dissection of the uterus, still full of its fruit (i.e., pregnant) . . . In order to better explain and demonstrate these things to the eye, we will propose to you by means of images everything inside the woman's body, beyond what's found in the man.<sup>20</sup>

Estienne introduces the uterus as the ultimate location where life and death are situated, as well as the place where fertility emerges from corruption, and states that he will make these concepts visible with images. In some respects, the uterus as a simultaneous site for growth and decay was a familiar topos, and Estienne cites Galen on many of these ideas. The uterus had long been understood as a paradoxical organ: like the intestines, it was a site of putrefaction, associated with uncleanness and a certain lack of control. But where the intestines only produced fecal matter, the uterus produced menstrual blood, which was generally understood as even more toxic and impure—the poisonous residue of food that the imperfect female body was incapable of digesting fully. The menses could harm others, since sex during menstruation was thought to be dangerous to male partners, and it made women more vulnerable to illness than men. One particularly serious illness in Galenic theory, the suffocation of the uterus, resulted from the buildup of toxic menses and female seed in the womb, which could lead to convulsions and potentially, death. The best cure for uterine suffocation was orgasm, and ultimately pregnancy; a sexually unsatisfied uterus was

<sup>20</sup> Estienne 282, “Descriprons en premiere lieu la maniere comment il fault tirer l'enfant vif hors du corps de la mere déjà morte: puis après mostrerons par quel moyen il fault tirer l'enfant esteinct & mort/la mere estant encore vivante. Après lesquelles choses/ viendrons a la dissection de la matrice/encore pleine de son fruit...Pour mieulx donc expliquer & demonstrier a l'oeil lesdictes choses/te proposerons par figures tout ce qui est dens le corps de la femme/ oultre ce qui se trouve en l'homme.”

dangerous and unhealthy, while a satisfied one was generative and productive for the woman's well-being.<sup>21</sup>

In Estienne's book, there are attempts at visually separating the problematic female reproductive system full of issues involving growth, decay, and impurity from the courtly, eroticized bodies that surround it. First, Estienne's artists composed the figures and background for his female images on anatomy on complete blocks, based on the erotic Mannerist print series *The Loves of the Gods*, which was very popular at the court of Francis I.<sup>22</sup> Estienne's re-use of Caraglio's *Loves of the Gods* is framed as a conscious choice. Bette Talvacchia firmly identifies the visual relationship between the *Loves of the Gods* and Estienne's work, and she states that "with expert knowledge in the fields of classical studies, medicine, and printing, Charles Estienne was in a position to choose for his book the elements that would combine the latest developments in science, the most valued examples in art, and the most commercially viable mode of publication."<sup>23</sup> In addition, the series was widely copied in the sixteenth century because of its popularity and his appropriation of these prints satisfied market demand. Finally, the artists hired and directed by Estienne would not have been paid for their efforts if they did not follow his instructions, so his use of erotica as the basis for an anatomical text was almost certainly intentional.<sup>24</sup> Although Estienne does not acknowledge the artists involved in his production, most scholars believe that the artists Jean "Mercure" Jollat, François Jollat, and Geoffroy Tory are probably responsible for the bodies and landscapes that surround the anatomical insets, since several of

21 Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28, 42, 173-5, 250, 268; Helen King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics, and the Rise of Gynecology* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 52-9.

22 Herrlinger 87; Kellett 74-89; Talvacchia, 161-87. Rosso Fiorentino and Perino del Vaga drew the plates for this series, which Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio first printed in 1526. Eight of Estienne's figures come from this series, and the rest were probably inspired by Jacopo Berengario di Carpi's *gravida* figures.

23 Talvacchia 161.

24 Talvacchia 161-3.

the images are blazoned with Tory's Lorraine or Jerusalem cross and Jollat's mercury symbol (♀).<sup>25</sup>

Eight out of ten of these figures were then divided by cutting a square section out of the original intact figure and inserting a conspicuous block showing the organs in the process of dissection. His project of visual division was incomplete, however, since two images do not have any inset (see Images 5 and 6 below). Some of Estienne's figures of men also have this inset, but this visual device signifies differently when it is applied to male bodies. The penis, which did not have connotations of decay or corruption, is occasionally contained within a printed inset that also includes other organs from the upper body, such as the heart or lungs, which often signified corporeal nobility in the Medieval and Renaissance hierarchy of the body.<sup>26</sup> Even when the penis is included within these insets, it is extremely small or frequently unrecognizable because it is dissected beyond visual recognition. Very often, it is not included in the inset at all.

The printed insets in Estienne's illustrations of women consistently demonstrate both the uterus and external genitals, along with other organs exclusively from the lower bodily stratum—the intestines, which produced fecal matter, and the liver, which generated potentially poisonous humors in the Galenic tradition.<sup>27</sup> These insets never include any of the organs from the upper body—the heart, brain, and lungs are never visually represented in the illustrations of women. Although the heart, brain, and lungs are implicitly present in the illustrations of men and women alike, they are only on conspicuous visual display in the illustrations of anatomized men.

25 Choulant 152-5; Huard unpaginated; Suzanne Boorsch, Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts 231-2, 475. Ludwig Choulant believes that Rosso Fiorentino, Jean Cousin, or Jean Goujon are possibly the artists. Recently, Suzanne Boorsch has stylistically compared the work of Master I□V (perhaps a printer named Jean Viset at Fontainebleau) with Estienne's anatomical text.

26 Jacques Le Goff, "Head or Heart? The Political Use of Bodily Metaphors in the Middle Ages," In *Fragments for a History of the Human Body* v. 3, ed. Michel Feher, with Ramona Nadaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), 13-27.

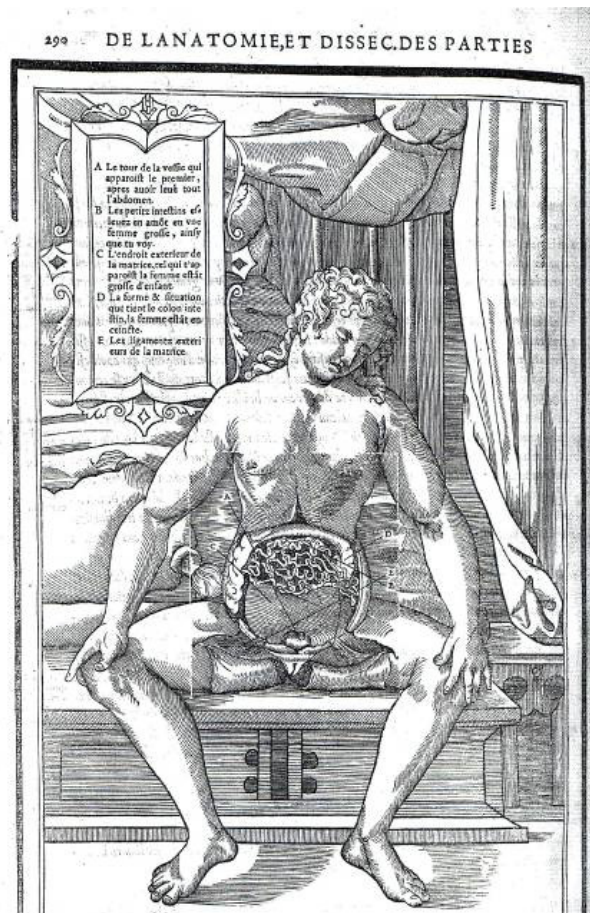
27 Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, trans. O.W. Powell and John Wilkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15-20.

In his illustrations of women, Estienne focuses intensely on the uterus and the surrounding organs that were considered especially corrupt. Although all the insets include both the interior and exterior parts of the external genitals within the inset, most visually and textually minimize the vagina (*col de matrice*) and labia and pubic mound relative to the uterus (*matrice*). The vaginal neck found inside women's bodies is never visually present in the inset, being concealed by swags of cloth or scrolling forms that separate it from the uterus, while the external genitalia are usually quite small. By contrast, the uterus is emphasized and enlarged. The breasts occupy an unusual position, half-in and half-out of Estienne's anatomical insets, reflecting their ambiguous status: although intimately connected with the uterus—after birth the menses were diverted to the breasts, where they were concocted into milk to feed the infant—they were separate in both location and function in the writings of Estienne and Galen.<sup>28</sup>

This difference in size, scale, and emphasis accentuates the isolation of the uterus from the external genitals, which are presented as distinct, divided forms. A good example of this is Estienne's second image, although it applies to all the others. The large womb of a pregnant woman, designated by letter C, is separated from the smaller external genitalia by three small strips of flesh (letter A points to the bladder [*vessie*]). The vaginal neck is invisible, although Estienne visually alludes to it in the carved ornament engraved on the chest that the woman sits upon, showing a lack of containment of sexual organs within the inset. This carving, directly situated beneath the anatomized woman's genitals, loosely resembles Estienne's conceptions of the vagina, with one opening at the top (to the uterus) and one at the bottom (to the external genitals). Off to the right-hand side of the bench, in another vaginally-shaped wooden carving with two circular forms flanking a columnar shape, Estienne also symbolically depicts the notion that there are ultimately only two chambers in the uterus, despite the theoretical notion of

28 Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Breast* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 49-91, 205-41; Estienne 302; Galen [1968], 625-7, 638-9, 712-15.

there being seven.<sup>29</sup> The mercury symbol (☿) above the uterine chambers is most likely the insignia of the artist Jean “Mercure,” or perhaps Master I☿V. Inscription of the male artist’s name upon female genitalia emphasizes that the body is mapped and controlled as intellectual property.



**Image 2: Second image representing a pregnant uterus, the bladder, and intestines**

For Estienne the female body becomes a site of male intellectual conquest involving a rebirth of surgical skill, knowledge, and valuable information that emerges from death. This is the case in his discussion of a cesarean section, a procedure that literally involves the separation of a living child from a dead mother. He

<sup>29</sup> Estienne 301-02.

differentiates the female body from the male body as a site where the surgeon must use his senses and wit to be especially attentive to life and death issues:

In this manner, you will openly see and discern everything that you will need to know about inside the womb without corrupting or destroying anything that could be used to further this knowledge. And...it (e.g., the dissection) mustn't be done before it is known to you, and absolutely certain, if the child is still alive or dead. And if you know by the pulsation or exterior apperception of the pulses that the child might still be alive, when the mother is at the point of death, and before she casts the last breath, you must prop her mouth open with a small gag made in a triangular form... To this end, the child will not suffocate because it can receive air.<sup>30</sup>

The dead, pregnant female body is presented as the location where life and death converge and must be carefully separated. The body is carefully incised with a circular cut, and the dead woman's mouth is propped open so that the living child can receive air in the womb, relating to the Hippocratic idea of the woman as an open tube where substances easily flow in and out of the body.<sup>31</sup> The pregnant uterus becomes a demonstration of the surgeon's skill, a site where hidden knowledge must be intricately opened and revealed, and only after the life and death status of the mother and child has been discerned through the surgeon's acute sensory perception. Knowledge itself is easily corruptible in Estienne's model, as one misplaced cut could destroy not just the life of a newborn child, but also valuable surgical information about the most secret and inaccessible part of the female body. If a male surgeon could overcome these surgical mishaps and gain intellectual mastery over the extreme complexity of the uterus, then by extension he could easily become informed about less complicated bodily organs.<sup>32</sup>

30 Estienne 286, "En ceste maniere verras apertement & discerneras tout ce qui sera necessaire a cognoistre au dedens de la matrice: sans rien corrompre ou gaster de ce qui pourroit duyre& server a cestedicte congnoissance. Et...elle ne se doit faire/devant qu'il te soit notoire&du tout certain si l'enfant est encore vif ou mort. Et si tu congnois par la pulsation ou apercepuance exterieure du poulx/que ledicte enfant soit encore vivante: adonc te fault/la mere estant a l'article de la mort/&devant elle iette le dernier souspir/luy tenir la bouche ouverte/avec ung petit baillon faict en triangle...a celle fin que l'enfant ne soit suffoqué ou estouffé a faulte de povoir prendre ou recepvair vent.

31 Leslie Dean Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 73.

32 Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (N.Y.: Zone Books, 2006), introduction. This historical concept discussed by Katharine Park involves the idea that the uterus is the most difficult and secretive part of the body to comprehend, in part because women were not dissected as often as men and also because women were believed to hoard this knowledge for their own purposes.

In dissecting the uterus, the wit and observational skills of the surgeon had to be carefully applied at all times. The anatomical and obstetrical instruments that appear in several of Estienne's images served the intellectual acumen of the anatomist—while the instruments separated life from death, the surgeon was required to differentiate these two states and act appropriately. Indeed, Estienne's description of a good surgeon includes characteristics of cleverness and experience with the fragmented body, as well as the ability to create a coherent body of knowledge from the consideration of dead, disparate organs. He notes that the surgeon must be nimble and intelligent in order to distinguish the bladder from the uterus within a tangled mass of body organs, arteries, and nerves, stating that one who does not know the difference “merits the name of flayer rather than surgeon.”<sup>33</sup> At the same time, he acknowledges the distress attendant on seeing things that one is not accustomed to during obstetrical and anatomical procedures.<sup>34</sup>

The unsightly and gruesome act of separating a dead child from a living mother's uterus by extracting it through the vagina is also considered a valuable skill in Estienne's text, as he writes in the following section. In this case, the living mother's womb must be preserved so that she can “still receive natural semen and bear children as she needs to.”<sup>35</sup> Hence, the contents of the womb are divided into fragments with the assistance of instruments so that the mother will survive:

We have found a way to split the child by the stomach and the chest by pulling at its entrails, so that it comes out in smaller pieces. Then afterwards, we spear the parts with a hooked needle to pull them outside more easily, the first and consequently the others. And in supporting one of our knees against the edge of the bed, we can take it out as easily as possible. For the hand alone will hardly be satisfactory enough in such work. And note indeed in this place that if you pull out the child in this way, never forget the umbilical cord or afterbirth enfolded within, nor leave behind a sole piece [of the child's body] in the [mother's] body, no matter how small it may be, because of inconveniences that may arise. And this is the way to pull the dead child outside of the living mother's body to conserve the mother's health and to keep her womb intact.<sup>36</sup>

33 Estienne 313, “meriter le nom d'escorcheur, que de chirurgien.”

34 Estienne 281, 287, 289, 313, “vue des choses qu'ilz ne leur sont accoustumées.”

35 Estienne 286, “tellement que puis apres elle puisse encore recevoir semence naturelle & porter enfant si besoin est.”

36 Estienne 288, “Eussions trouvé le moyen de fendre l'enfant par le ventre & par la poitrine pour luy tirer les entrailles: a fin qu'il feust plus menu au sortir. Puis après avec le crochet forchu eussions empoigné les parties plus aisées a tirer hors les premières & conse-

The uterus in this case is subject to two different types of fragmentation—separation of the dead child from the living mother and dismembering the fetus itself with medical instruments, because leaving part of the placenta or fetus in the uterus was a dangerous and well-known cause of maternal post-partum death. There is an attentive diligence involved in separating every last bit of the child from the mother, not to leave the smallest piece of death in a body that is still capable of generation and reproduction. This is true of the child and the afterbirth, which was considered to be more a part of the child than the mother in Estienne's text. The afterbirth is discussed as being primarily composed of the urachus and amnios, tenuously attached to the pregnant mother with an umbilical cord:

These two tunics, dependent on the afterbirth, are deployed in covering the child . . . Still, it's to be noted that between each of them, and in the capacity that they contain, there is a large quantity of humors different from each other, as much in abundance as in color . . . And as for the generation and nature of the humors, it's certain that these are engendered from the child's urine and the others from its sweat . . . Likewise, the intervals between the branches are filled by the liver's substance like a basket or small bed.<sup>37</sup>

Urine and sweat exude from the child, and these poisonous excremental materials fill the afterbirth that covers the child in the womb, which is a thoroughly Galenic concept.<sup>38</sup> Even though these substances are protective and assist in the child's nourishment and growth, they are also deadly, which is why Estienne insists on

quemment les aultres:& en arrestant l'ung de noz genoulx contre le bord du lict/l'eussions emporté plus legierement que faire nous eust esté possible. Car la seule main n'eust peu bonnement satissaire a tel ouvrage. Et note bien en cest endroit qu'en quelque moyen que tu tires l'enfant/iamais ne fault lascher le nombril que la secondine ne s'ensuyue sans en laisser une seule piece dens le corps tant soit elle petite/ a cause des inconveniens qui en pourroient advenir. Est telle est la maniere de tirer l'enfant mort hors du corps de la mere vivante/pour conserver la santé de ladicte mere. Et reserver la matrice son entiere."

37 Estienne 297-8, "Ces deux tuniques dependentes de la secondine/sont envoyées a la couverture de l'enfant...Encor est a noter qu'entre chascune d'icelles/& en la capacité qu'elles contiennent/y a grand quantité d'humeurs differentes l'une de l'autre/ tant en abundance qu'en couleur...Et quant a la generation & nature desdictes humeurs/il est certain que les unes sont engendrées des urines de l'enfant:& les aultres/ des sueurs d'iceluy... Tellement que les intervalles qui sont entre lesdictz rameaux/sont rempliz par ladicte substance du foye/en facon comme d'ung couffin ou petit lict."

38 Galen [1968], 59, 661, 665, 667-9.

removing every last bit from a living body. The “liver’s substance” — the poisonous humors concocted within the liver—even fills the smallest intervals between the various parts of the afterbirth that are compared to a *couffin*, or straw basket, a term with multiple connotations that simultaneously suggest fecundity and death. Although the word *couffin* has been transformed into the English word for “coffin,” in Renaissance France it also referred to a type of straw basket used to carry fruit and flowers, symbolizing fertility. Notably Estienne also refers to the pregnant womb as being “full of fruit,” a common Renaissance trope.<sup>39</sup> The term *couffin* also refers to a straw basket or bassinet for carrying babies, and is still in use today. In this way, Estienne creates an unsettling image of a safe container for infants with toxic substances within, contrasting the cradle with the grave.

Estienne describes the afterbirth as a site that negotiates the boundaries between life and death, but also as a valuable educational tool that provides visual clues about the causes of death *in utero*. The ability to locate and assess these somatic clues doubtlessly required years of training the eye so that a surgeon would know what to look for when creating a convincing account of a patient’s death, and this process required a strong set of optical skills developed in tandem with the haptic, surgical experience of the body. Estienne insists that dividing life from death and settling the causes of mortality are jobs for male surgeons, and hesitant, confused midwives and mothers must turn to them to find out if the cause of death is “the mother’s fault or because of some external accident.”<sup>40</sup> To discover whether or not the infant’s death is the mother’s fault, Estienne

39 The word “couffin” has multiple associations. In Godefroy’s *Dictionnaire de l’ancienne langue française*, it means a basket for fruit, “une petite corbeille ou panier à fruits,” but also a coffin in terms of a “basket” for a dead body, “un corps en son *couffin*.” Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l’ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du 9e au 15e siècles* (Paris: Champion Électronique, 2004), entry for “COFIN,” s.m, couffin, couffin, cophin.” Applications of this idea can be found in Jacques Gélis, *Arbre et le fruit: la naissance dans l’occident moderne* (Paris : Fayard, 1984) and Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) especially 4-7, 85.

40 Estienne 289, “la faulte de la mere/ ou a cause de quelque accident extérieure.”

recommends stretching out the afterbirth with the hands to “carefully consider all the parts in the light of the sun or of a candle” to look for irregularities, such as lumps, bruises, broken areas, or protrusions. If these incriminating markings appeared on the afterbirth, then it was probably the mother’s fault.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to describing the visual manifestations of death inscribed on the uterus as a series of bumps and livid bruises, Estienne also turns his autopsies into educational experiences by insisting that this visual information should be openly shown to surgical assistants so that they would eventually develop the visual experience so vital to the discipline of surgery.<sup>42</sup> Although Estienne initially seems to be fascinated with life and death coexisting in the womb, he is also interested in separating them, finding the cause of death, and asserting the skill of male surgeons, whom he admonishes to learn this material with their hands as opposed to using medicines or antidotes, to work quickly, to lack pity and a trembling hand, and to be “very sure, and very nimble, and very experienced with the numerous workings of the body,” for “otherwise there would be great danger for the living mother and the child.”<sup>43</sup>

Estienne emphasizes that surgery involves saving life from death with quick and nimble fingers guided by precise visual perception, unlike anatomy, which primarily focuses on learning about bodily structures from dissecting dead corpses. In contrast to the first and only image in Estienne’s book that illustrates a caesarean section performed on a dead mother to save a living child,

41 Estienne 289, “le bien considerer de toutes partz ou a la lueur du soleil / ou de la chandelle.”

42 Estienne 289. This is early example of an historical narrative that continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, in which the visual politics of bodily display and masculine authority coincided with medical experience. Lianne Mc Tavish has written about this at great length in several articles and a book. Lianne Mc Tavish, “On Display: Portraits of Seventeenth-Century Men Midwives,” *Social History of Medicine* 2001 (14), 389-415; Lianne Mc Tavish, “Blame and Vindication in the Early Modern Birthing Chamber,” *Medical History* 50 (2006): 447-64; Lianne Mc Tavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France* (London: Ashgate, 2005).

43 Estienne 289 “bien seure/& bien legiere & fort exercitée en plusieurs ouvertures de corps”... “aultrement y auroit grand danger pour la mere vivante & pour l’enfant.”

the remainder of women and children that are visually represented in the anatomical section are all dead.<sup>44</sup> In subsequent sections about uterine anatomy, distinct from surgery, Estienne moves away from separating death and life, increasingly focusing on the subdivisions between the various parts of the female genitalia and the attendant issues of generation and corruption, pleasure and pain.

### Anatomical Conceptions: Sexing the Image and Text

After these passages about surgical procedures that separate life from death, the reader turns to the anatomical section, which primarily involves the structure of the uterus, as well as concerns about humoral generation and corruption in the uterus divided from vaginal sexual pleasure, a topic that never appears in the surgical section. Following Galen, Estienne also expounds upon the womb as the site where dangerous monthly humors are purged, not merely a place where children gestate for nine months.<sup>45</sup> Estienne and Galen believe that women are especially susceptible to disease and illness because of the buildup of toxic humors in the uterus, which cause a host of specifically female diseases. Estienne differs from his classical source regarding the nature of this toxic buildup, however. Whereas Galen argues that female seed was the most dangerous fluid to be retained within the body, Estienne, following the *Diseases of Women* and the *Aphorisms*, both attributed to Hippocrates, identifies the menses—the bloody waste product of the imperfect female digestive system—as the root of the problem.<sup>46</sup> In general, Estienne follows both Galen and Hippocrates in identifying the uterus as the organ “most subject to many illnesses, as much for the difficulty of giving birth, as well as for the menstruum ordinarily passing through this place. And for this reason, the true anatomist ought to treat this part diligently.”<sup>47</sup>

44 Estienne 289, “aux descriptions & figures qui s’ensuyuent/ le corps de la mere estre mort/& pareillement celuy de l’enfant.

45 Galen [1968], 624.

46 Helen King, *Hippocrates’ Women* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 33.

47 Estienne 313, “ceste cy (i.e., “la matrice”) est la plus subiecte a beaucoup de maulx: tant pour la difficulté des enfentementz, comme aussy pour ce que les menstrues passent ordinairement par cest endroit. Et pour ceste cause, doit estre diligemment traictée ceste partie par le vray anatomiste”; Estienne might have obtained some of his Hippocratic ideas from Rabelais. Rabelais published Hippocrates’ *Aphorisms* in 1532, which contains case studies about the dangers of menstrual blood. See François Rabelais, *Hippocratis ac Galeni libri aliquot ex recognitione Francisci Rabelaesi* (Lyons: Gryphius: 1532). Simon de Colines also published editions of the *Aphorisms* in 1524 and 1532.

Galen is also responsible for Estienne's comparison between male and female genitalia, with the female organs being the most corrupt. This initially paints a picture of textual—and sexual—similitude rather than separation. Still, a gendered division still existed between male and female bodies because the uterus conjured up far greater concerns about impurity and corruption than the penis. For Galen's and Estienne, women's sexual organs were the inverted but analogous counterpart of the penis and testicles. As Galen put it, "in women the parts are within (the body), whereas in men they are outside...Consider first whichever ones you please, turn outwards the woman, turn inwards, so to speak, and fold double the man's, and you will find them the same in both in every respect." For Estienne, as for Galen, the penis corresponded to the vagina (*col de matrice*), and the testicles corresponded to the uterus (*matrice*). The uterus and vagina were actually two separate entities in this model, but the female "testicles," now called ovaries, were part of the uterine apparatus.<sup>48</sup> Like Galen, Estienne describes the vagina as the part of the body that extends from the cervix to the labia, the organ that corresponds to a man's rod:<sup>49</sup>

Now we describe the lower part of the uterus, which includes the neck (i.e., vagina) and its shameful member (i.e., the external genitals). These are the parts that exactly correspond to the virile member (man's penis). What is hidden inside of a woman is similar in appearance to what is external in men. This means that the foreskin of men's members corresponds with women's shameful part (*membre honteux*)...by this means you will say that there is nothing more in men than in women.<sup>50</sup>

48 Galen [1968], 629. This sixteenth-century trend of perceiving women's genitals as an inverted version of men's (also known as the "one-sex body") has been discussed in detail by Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990)

49 Estienne 309.

50 Estienne 314, "Descripvtions a present le bas de la matrice/lequel comprend le col & member honteux d'icelle: qui sont les parties aulcunement correspondents au member viril: ce qui est cache par dedens aux femmes/ semble que ce soit le mesme de ce qui sort aux homes par dehors: qui fait que le prepuce du member des homes se rapporte du member honteux des femmes...Par ce moyen, tu pourras dire/qu'iln'y a rien d'avantage a l'homme qu'a la femme."

In Galen and Estienne's models, although women's bodies are analogous to men's, they are nonetheless inferior and somewhat separate. The uterus and vagina were further divided into two parts, and there were even gendered subdivisions within the uterus itself. Following Galen, Estienne divides the left side of the uterus, gendered as feminine since it produced weaker, female children, from the right, masculine side that produced perfect men. For Estienne, male children are conceived from strong male and female seed that springs from the flawless, right-hand testicles.<sup>51</sup>

In general, Estienne writes about the *matrice* (uterus) and *col de matrice* (vagina) with great ambivalence, giving a sinister and disquieting representation of the uterus as an independent, dangerous, even predatory animal that threatens the woman's health, which has more in common with Platonic and Hippocratic ideas than Galenic ones.<sup>52</sup> Although he praises the uterus, noting that "the grandeur and magnitude of this part has no equal in the whole body, he nonetheless likens it, following Plato and Hippocrates, to an animal with a great appetite and attractive virtue for semen in order to "engender a lineage," as well as the place where monthly buildups of toxic humors are expurgated if a woman is not pregnant.<sup>53</sup> Similar to Estienne, but in a much more comic and lighthearted literary context, François Rabelais describes the uterus as a small, "terrible" out of control animal that wandered around the body unless it was satisfied by sex or pregnancy in his *Tiers Livre* of 1546:<sup>54</sup>

51 Estienne 302.

52 Park ch. 2; King 230-40. According to King, Galen explicitly rejects this idea for the most part, although in his work *To Glaucon* he says "later commentators are free to reinstate it." By this, he means that although he might not accept its validity, he can appreciate that others might in the future.

53 Estienne 291, 309, "Car a cedict orifice y a une vertu attractive de la semence naturelle: qui a fait que Platon nomma la matrice une beste/ayant appétit d'engendrer & faire lignée." Estienne explicitly refers to Plato, not Hippocrates, even though this is also a Hippocratic idea.

54 Rabelais received his doctorate of medicine at the University of Montpellier and practiced for ten years (1536-46). His training, like Estienne's, involved familiarity with humanism, Galenic, and Hippocratic works, and he edited the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* in 1532, which shows a keen interest in women's medicine. Very often, his medical interests coincided with his literary works in the humanist tradition of combining entertainment with medicine. For more information on these points, see Jean Plattard, *The Life of François Rabelais*, tr. Louis P. Roche (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), 182-207.

In a secret and intestinal place, a certain animal or member that is not in man, in which are engendered frequently certain humors, brackish, nitrous, voracious, acrid, mordant, shooting, and bitterly tickling, by which the painful prickling and wiggling of which—for this member is extremely nervous and sensitive—the entire female body is shaken, all the senses ravished, all the passions carried to a point of repletion, and all thrown into confusion. To such a degree that, if nature had not rouged their heads with a tint of shame, you would see them running about the streets like mad women...on the day of their Bacchanalia. And this, for the reason that this terrible animal that I am telling you about is so very intimately associated with the principal parts of the (female) body, as anatomy teaches us.<sup>55</sup>

The uterus, wandering around the “lower bodily stratum” with complete abandon, exuding repulsive humoral substances, causes women to behave like uncontrollable bacchantes. Like an animal, the uterus has a mind of its own and it wanders, attaching itself to the spleen, liver, or brain, causing illness, suffocation, and even death.<sup>56</sup> Galen explicitly rejects this idea in *De Usu Partium* and *De Interioribus* (*On Interior Things*), pointing out that the uterus is immobilized in the abdomen by a set of strong ligaments.<sup>57</sup> Estienne’s treatment of this topic shows his inability to let go of older, non-Galenic ideas in order to adopt Platonic and popular sixteenth-century ideas. Rather, he splits the difference, acknowledging the existence of the uterine ligaments, but emphasizing their thinness and flexibility, warning the aspiring surgeon, “you must understand that all of these ligaments in question are weak and free. For this reason, it’s the natural tendency of the aforementioned uterus to move about in various ways, or to change size and shape.”<sup>58</sup> In this

55 François Rabelais, *Tiers Livre*, ed. LeFranc (Paris: Champion, 1913), 245. “En lieu secret et intestine, un animal, un membre, lequel n’est en hommes, on quel quelques fois sont engendrées certaines humeurs salses, nitreuses, bauracineuses, acres, mordicantes, lancinantes, chatouillantes amerement, par la poincture et fretillement douloureux des quelles (car ce membre est tout nerveux et de vif sentement) tout le corps est en elles esbranlé, tous les sens raviz, toutes affections interinées, tous pensemens confonduz; de maniere que, si nature ne leurs eust arrousé le front d’un peu de honte. Vous les voiriez comme forcenées courir l’aiguillette, plus espovantablement que ne feirent oncques les proetides...au jour de leurs Bacchanales, par ce que cestuy terrible animal a colliguance à toutes les parties principales du corps, comme est evident en l’anatomie.”

56 Cadden 28, 42, 173-5, 250, 268.

57 Park [2006], 113. *De interioribus* was the title given to both medieval Latin versions of Galen’s *De locis affectis*.

58 Estienne 292. “Ces ligamentz dont est question/sont lasches & liberes: a raison qu’il estoit de necessité que ladicté matrice se retournast & remuast en plusieurs manieres/ou changeast souvent de grandeur & figure.”

way he reinforces the identity of the uterus as an entity that oscillates between human and animal, generation and corruption.

This combination of animal and human forms in the uterus has a visual counterpart in Estienne's illustrations—Estienne often includes animals in his prints of women in close proximity to the uterus. In Estienne's eighth illustration about the uterine ligaments, a bird grasps a ligament in its beak and pulls it forcefully outside the contours of her body, suggesting the inability of the inset to completely contain the uterus.



Image 3: Eighth illustration

In this image, as evident in the detail below, the bird's head and the viscera intermesh, a popular sixteenth-century connection, since poets and songwriters cleverly conflated genitalia with birds in sixteenth-century carnivalesque traditions.<sup>59</sup>



**Image 3: detail of inset, demonstrating uterine vessels, with a bird**

Estienne's nude in his fourth illustration (see Image 4 below) places her arms at the sides of her head at softly curved angles that strongly recall the handles of the vase below her. Textually, however, this image is about exposure and separation of the afterbirth. The swag on the vase echoes the strip of flesh deliberately and artfully peeled away to reveal her uterus. The vase itself alludes to the idea that the womb can wander outside of the printed inset, if not the body, since the shape of the vessel mimics a uterus with handles as "seminal vessels" and the bearded men as ovaries.<sup>60</sup> A grotesque bird off to the side looks at this uncontrolled spectacle and squawks in horror, once again drawing subtle connections between women's genitals and animals.

<sup>59</sup> Kate Van Orden, "Sexual Discourse in the Parisian Chanson: A Libidinous Aviary," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48 (1995), 4-9.

<sup>60</sup> Laqueur 131.



Image 4

The lack of containment and control present in Rabelais' grotesque literary description of the uterus also assumes an explicit visual form in Estienne's ninth illustration (see Image 5 below), ironically because the containing inset is visually absent. The lack of a containing inset permits stronger corporeal associations between the uterus, the intestines, and the rest of the feminine form. Several parts of the intestines exceed the contours of the body and tumble onto the pillows, and indeed the entirety of this anatomized woman's body also suggests a complete lack of inhibition, since she falls backwards onto a decorative, draped bed, spreading her

legs open with abandon. Her miniscule vagina is barely visible, and instead her gaping body cavity with a scrolling intestinal form, a liver, and a strategically split uterus presents the primary focal point. The indecorously exposed viscera and genitals are offset by delicate decorations of leafy fronds and cornucopias with fertile fruits and flowers surrounding the cartouche that graphically describes the inner recesses of the incised uterus. A hybrid feline-acanthus scroll bedpost gazes intently and directly at the woman's opened genitalia, further alluding to its animalistic nature.

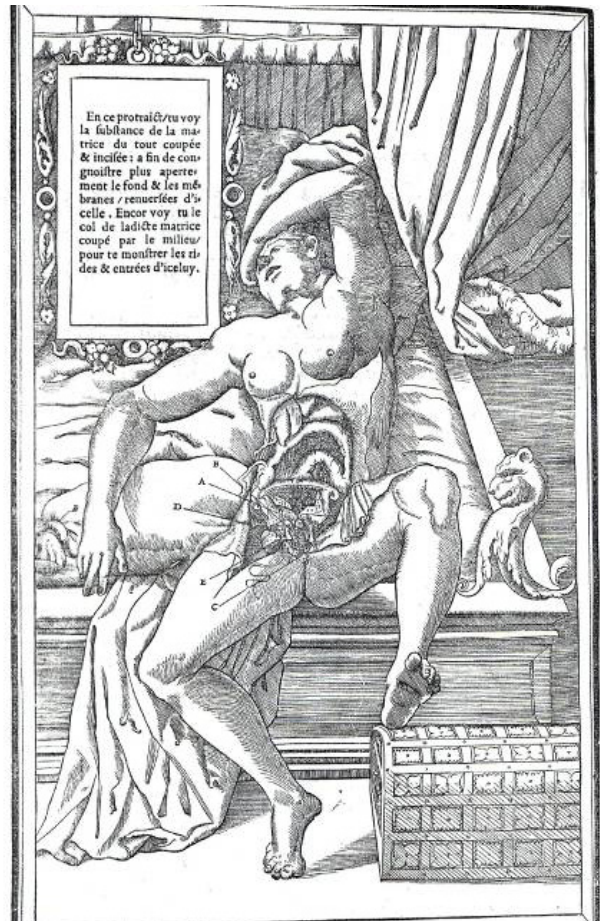


Image 5

These Platonic views about the uterus as a destructive animal that could wander and cause fatalities probably accounts for Estienne sharpening the divisions between the uterus (*matrice*), the vagina (*col de la matrice*), and the external genitalia (*parties honteuses*),

found in Galen's writings. While Estienne emphasizes the deadly difficulties of pregnancy in his first two sections, the vagina and external genitals are never discussed in these sections, only the membranes surrounding the pregnant womb. In the third section, describing uterine anatomy, the uterus is presented as entangled with the intestines, which are neatly packed around the womb, to hold it in place. The connection between the pregnant womb and the colon is even stronger, since it "completely touches" and "surrounds" the large intestine owing to its "larger and more inflated" state, stressing the close proximity of life and death in the corrupted, undigested bodily wastes of the intestines and flourishing life in the pregnant uterus.<sup>61</sup> Estienne also compares the uterus with a bladder, saying that they are "entirely similar in appearance," conjuring up associations with urine, yet another corrupt bodily by-product.<sup>62</sup>

The vagina, however, only "garnishes" the uterus in this section, implying a decorative and supplementary connotation. It is separate from the structure and function of the womb, and the external genitals are not connected to the uterus by ligaments, but are "consumed in its fat."<sup>63</sup> Estienne therefore notes how easy it is to separate the vagina from the uterus: "This (i.e., the uterus) can always be easily lifted and separated from the aforementioned part, providing that it has been so finely made and conjoined with the aforementioned neck that it seems to be the same substance."<sup>64</sup> The uterus is "finely conjoined" to the vagina, but also very easily detached from it. Although these parts "seem" to be made of the same material, they are not, since Estienne next describes the divergent anatomical composition of the uterus and the vagina in separate sections. The phallic "uterine neck," composed of "hard,

61 Estienne 291.

62 Estienne 291.

63 Estienne 291.

64 Estienne 292, "Laquelle toutesfoys se peult facilement lever & separer de ladicte partie: nonobstant qu'elle soit si exactement concreée & conioncte avec ledicte col/qu'il semble que ce soit une meme substance."

white cartilaginous flesh,” contrasts markedly with the spongy, bloody, fleshy substance of the uterus, which caused numerous fatalities for women.<sup>65</sup>

This division allows Estienne to separate the serious issues of generation and corruption that coalesce in the uterus from the pleasures of sex.<sup>66</sup> For Galen, it is a whole-body experience, while for Estienne it is about stimulating the external genitals, which are separate from the uterus and the rest of the body. Galen describes sex as extremely pleasurable, explaining how “the instruments for conception” are joined “with a remarkable faculty to produce pleasure.”<sup>67</sup> He does not situate this pleasure solely in the sexual organs, however, but primarily in the bodily humors:

I must next tell why a very great pleasure is coupled with the exercise of the generative parts and a raging desire precedes their use in all animals at their prime...Reflect with me on the sort of things that happen when...serous humors are heated, as they frequently are, especially when acrid humors collect under the skin of the animal and then itch and make it scratch and enjoy the scratching.<sup>68</sup>

Thus for Galen, the transfer and heating of serous humors within the body as a whole, including the uterus, ovaries, and sexual “instruments,” furnishes the primary cause of female arousal.<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, he deemphasizes the role of the external genitalia in this process, describing the purposes of this clitoris and labia as strictly “ornamental” and “protective, since they prevent the “female pudendum...from being chilled.”<sup>70</sup> The external genitalia have a protective function, whereas orgasmic pleasure is situated in the entire body.

65 Estienne 314.

66 Estienne 307-10.

67 Galen [1968], 622.

68 Galen [1968], 640.

69 Galen [1968], 640.

70 Galen 660; Katharine Park, “The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade,” in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Carla Mazzio and David Hillman (New York: Routledge, 1997), 171-93.

For Estienne, in contrast, while women's exterior genitals (the clitoris and labia) retain these functions, they also become the primary site of physical pleasure in sex, rather than the entire body. Thus the clitoris has a "glandular function . . . to enclose, retain, and receive some humidity in its natural sponginess," and the labia prevent the uterus from getting cold, but they are also organs of "pleasure and delectation," especially when certain "pleats or wrinkles" are "rubbed together."<sup>71</sup> In this case, it is very likely that he is discussing rubbing the labia and clitoris together, since he describes these parts as "situated at the base of the neck, towards the shameful member."<sup>72</sup> He also describes the overall phallic shape of the vagina as "pleasing."<sup>73</sup> Situating sexual pleasure in the exterior trappings of the clitoris and labia permits their division from the uterus, laden with sober connotations of corruption.

Estienne's final illustration (see Image 6 below) represents the external genitals. The woman opens her legs to reveal her external genitalia, and she is surrounded by instruments—a syringe to inject curative remedies directly into the uterus (*metrenchyte*), a hooked needle (*crotchet*) to extract a dead fetus to save the mother's life, and a speculum—which serve to penetrate or render visible the recesses of the vagina; these remain invisible to the viewer in this particular image, which lacks the inset of the others, creating a tension between what is seen and unseen. The external genitalia are visually separate from the *matrice* and *col de matrice*. The woodcut's caption recalls that the visible aspects of the external genitalia are only "partial" depictions, and that it "depends on the description of the uterus" to make any sense.<sup>74</sup> This caption textually separates

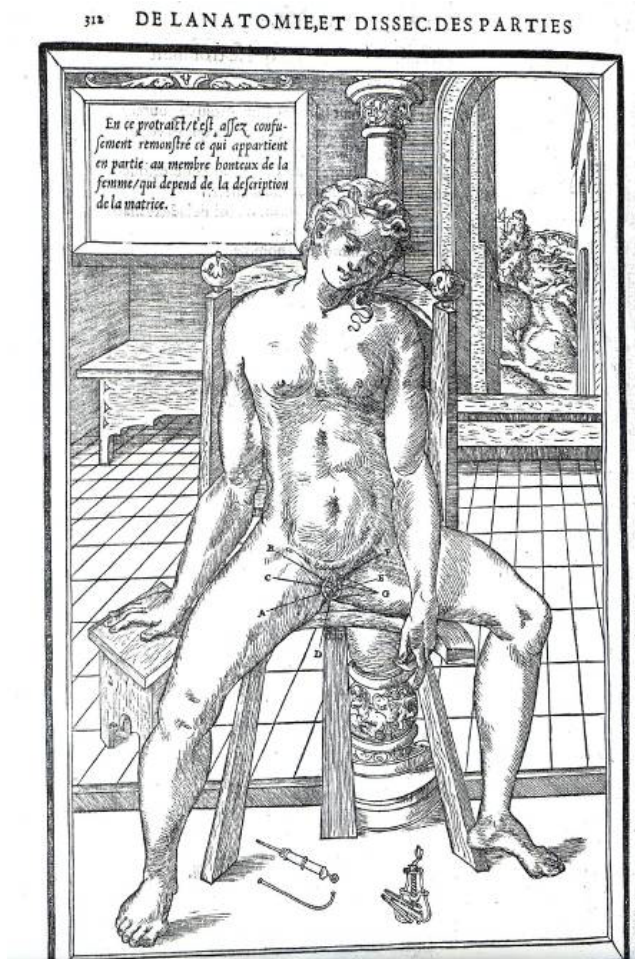
71 Estienne 314-315. En oultre/se trouvent au bas dudict col/vers la partie honteuse/ aulcunes rides ou repliz semblables a ce qu'on voit au dessus du palais d'un beuf. . . sans que lesdictes rides baillent quelque plaisir & delectation au frayer des deux parties l'une contre l'autre. . . (elle) apparence a la partie superieure dudict member/faisant office comme d'une glande: c'est a scavoir de confermer/arrester/& recevoir quelque humidité dens sa spongiosité naturelle."

72 Estienne 314, see footnote 47, "(elles) se trouvent au bas dudict col/vers la partie honteuse."

73 Estienne 315.

74 Estienne 312.

the external and internal parts of the vagina, although it vaguely reintegrates the vagina with the uterus through further, non-specific textual references. In a striking contrast with the uterus, the text about the external genitals refers to sexual pleasure, and this is the first visual representation of the clitoris, which Estienne identified as a primary site of women's enjoyment in sex in Western anatomy.<sup>75</sup>



**Image 6: last image demonstrating external genitalia, with surgical instruments**

Along with separating the uterus from the external genitals, Estienne separates male from female bodies. While Galen discusses male and female reproduction together in chapters fourteen and fifteen of *De Usu Partium*, Estienne places women's anatomy, including the pregnant and non-pregnant uterus, the vagina, and associated obstetrical procedures in their own separate chapter, which also includes brief sections on the eye and the display of the

<sup>75</sup> Park [1997], 171-93.

dissected body in anatomical theaters, which were widely understood as visual, performative, and medical sites of knowledge in the Renaissance.<sup>76</sup> Although Estienne also discusses individual muscles and the dorsal spine in the Third Book, he places a strong emphasis on the connections between the uterus and vision, as we have already seen in his visual representations and his textual emphasis on sight and display. Ordering the Third Book like this and persistently including visual themes within its organizational contours suggests female genitalia are associated with sight and display. Estienne's combined interests in the eyes, visuality, and female genitalia are perhaps unsurprising, since Galen thoroughly integrates concepts of vision into his description of the one-sex body:

In fact, you could not find a single male part left over that had not simply changed its position; for the parts that are inside in woman that are outside in man. You can see something like this in the eyes of the mole, which have vitreous and crystalline humors and the tunics that surround these and grow out from the meninges, as I have said, and they have these just as much as animals make use of their eyes. The mole's eyes, however, do not open nor do they project but are left there imperfect and remain like the eyes of other animals when these are still in the uterus.<sup>77</sup>

The imperfect, inverted, closed eyes of the mole are structurally similar to the uterus, presenting yet another example of tenuous animal-human boundaries in Estienne's Third Book.

76 Giovanna Ferrari, "Public Anatomy Lessons and the Carnival: The Anatomy Theatre of Bologna," *Past and Present* 117 (1987), 50-106; Jan C. Rupp, "Matters of Life and Death: The Social and Cultural Conditions of the Rise of Anatomical Theatres, with Special Reference to Seventeenth Century Holland," *History of Science* 28 (1990), 263-87. The anatomy theater at Bologna was probably in use in 1639, but was extended and perfected until 1737. This type of theater is analyzed in the context of early modern theatrical, visual, and architectural traditions, and the performative aspect of anatomy is foregrounded. Ferrara mentions that dissectors often pandered to the public with dramatic antics, and that there was sometimes music played as well. Rupp looks at the development of the anatomy theater in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch republic as a center not only for dissection, but all sorts of other cultural discourses. The Dutch anatomy theater as a cultural center included a display of vanitas paintings and memento mori messages in art and textual labels, natural history specimens and curiosities, and how they are connected to later 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch anatomy paintings by Rembrandt and others. Various anatomy theaters were established at Leiden in 1597, at Delft in 1614, and in Amsterdam in 1619, usually for physicians and surgeons, but also open to the general public. There were issues of aesthetics even in selecting dead bodies for the anatomy, since the ideal body was young, male, and rather large, so that the body parts could be seen from far away.

77 Galen [1968], 629.

Although moles' eyes were described as not being fully developed but still physically present, slightly blind but still able to see since the time of Aristotle, Galen grafts this concept onto the uterus and therefore turns it into a hybrid organ associated with visibility.<sup>78</sup> And yet, the sort of vision that is integrated with the female genitalia is also associated with blindness, imperfection, and invisibility. Similar to Galen's Aristotelian reference, Estienne's images of the female body betray an inability to visualize every aspect of life and death pertaining to the uterus, even as they voyeuristically emphasize the significance of sight.

**Conclusion: Scholars, Voyeurs,  
and the Framing of Textual Knowledge**

Estienne's fifth image stresses the importance of sight, (see Image 7 below) with a tiny peeping tom in a balcony peering intensely through his spectacles. While it is difficult to determine precisely what he looks at, his gaze seems to rest on the back of the magnificent chair upon which the anatomized woman sits. The back of the chair has a decidedly vaginal appearance—the two scrolling forms at the top mimic fallopian tubes, and the recessed cavity flanked by two columns recalls the uterine neck (*col*). The peeping tom holds a scroll, which echoes the scrolling form at the bottom of the pregnant uterus within the printed inset. The visual repetition of the two scrolls, one textual and one fleshy, blurs the boundaries between books and bodies and suggests that textual knowledge must be supplemented by direct experience with the body.<sup>79</sup> By extension, the viewer outside of the image is invited to follow the example of the peeping tom, to scrutinize the woman and her reproductive system with the eye of both scholar and voyeur.<sup>80</sup> The anatomized woman assists in this viewing process—she opens her legs by propping her left foot on a cartouche, simultaneously revealing her small vagina and framing textual knowledge associated with her innards.

78 Galen [1968], 629, footnote 17.

79 Andrea Carlino discusses this popular Renaissance trope in his *Books of the Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

80 Talvacchia 169.



**Image 7: fifth image demonstrating the afterbirth, with voyeur**

This textual framing of words with the body, and the repetition of the scrolling forms of the page found in those of the uterus reinforces the interplay of image and text, but it also cautions against reading this connection too literally—peering indirectly at the body through hazy spectacles, with visual expectations overly mediated by textual experience. Throughout the section on women's bodies, Estienne gestures to the intensity and ambiguity of life and death relationships implicated in the surgical and anatomical practices of pregnancy and childbirth.

However, the complexity of life and death matters situated within the uterus warrants a significant visual and textual space of its own in Estienne's book, separate from male genitalia. Estienne does not merely segregate the uterus from the rest of the female body in many of his woodblock prints, he also creates a separate space for women's surgery and anatomy in his book. Surgery becomes specific to women in his text—men are not textually subjected to the painful procedures performed on living flesh even though they seemed to be anatomically vivisected from a visual point of view. This emphasis on female surgical bodies is completely divergent from Vesalius' *De fabrica* (1543), where the uterus is part of a fragmented, pristine, sculptural, and classicized female body, or a separate, disembodied organ in anatomical practice. Estienne, by contrast, creates surgical and anatomical representations that fragment a liminally dead body from a living womb, or a dead womb with a living body. This intricately interwoven opposition between life and death characterizes Estienne's *De la dissection*, giving a sense of unexpected morbidity to conception, or life to the dead female body.<sup>81</sup>

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**WRITING AND REWRITING EARLY MODERN HISTORY:  
FIVE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH CHRONICLERS**

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*In the field of early modern historical writing, sixteenth-century English chronicles have been regarded as an outdated medieval form, and they and their authors have suffered in comparison with later works influenced by Renaissance humanism. Yet in the Tudor period, chronicles, especially the smaller, abridged versions, enjoyed a substantial readership and were reprinted multiple times—very often with revisions. The nature of and motivation behind these revisions reveal much about the varying personal priorities and backgrounds of the chroniclers as well as the readership for which they were writing. This study focuses on five sixteenth-century chroniclers, Thomas Cooper, Robert Crowley, Richard Grafton, John Mychell, and John Stow. While the revisions they made to their chronicles often entailed enlargement or abridgement, the decades of religious change and controversy spanning the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth both necessitated and elicited revisions that were more ideological in nature and reflective of the changing climates through which the chroniclers lived. This study reveals how these chronicles are important for the way they shed light on each chronicler's opinions, mentality, and social status, bearing personal witness to their culture and times, and also for what they can tell us about how a popular vernacular national history was shaped and developed within a broader social context.*

The paradox of sixteenth-century chronicle history is that while chroniclers are generally held in low repute, they were the most widely read historical writers of their era. This study examines the work of five sixteenth-century English chroniclers: Thomas Cooper, Robert Crowley, Richard Grafton, John Mychell, and John Stow. All of these chroniclers' writings were reprinted, revised, and abridged. This study demonstrates the importance of vernacular chronicles to contemporaries and seeks to restore their scholarly significance.

D. R. Woolf has documented the “death of the chronicle” and the emergence of better scholarship in the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> Chronicle history was unquestionably old-fashioned and little influenced by Renaissance humanism. The chroniclers used medieval models and wrote in the vernacular of the common people but were succeeded by more learned scholars in the early seventeenth century. Chronicle narratives clearly pale in comparison with the work of Camden, Bacon, and Raleigh. Chroniclers lacking a university education and drawn from the ranks of the commons were also victims of class prejudice in their own time as well as later. Most students of early modern historical scholarship have followed Bacon, who believed that members of the upper class were best suited to write history. As F. J. Levy has observed, “Anyone of a lower social status was doomed to compose chronicles.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the chroniclers borrowed freely from each other and produced what often appeared to be monolithic accounts.

In contrast, David Womersley has argued that chronicles had a “dominant presence in Tudor historical writing.”<sup>3</sup> Dominance was revealed in a substantial readership that supported multiple editions, and the publication of inexpensive abridgments testifies not only to the influence of chronicles, but their contribution to popular culture. Furthermore a study of revisionist practices in sixteenth-century chronicles reveals their complexity and diversity. This study, following the advice of Womersley, concentrates on the content of chronicles rather than “form and technique.”<sup>4</sup> Three chroniclers included in this essay were commoners, Grafton, and Mychell, and

1 D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11-78. The neglect of chronicles may be seen in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, IV (1557-1695)*, ed. John Barnard et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

2 “Afterward,” in Paulina Kewes, *The Uses of History in Early Modern Europe* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006), 416-19.

3 “Against the Teleology of Technique,” in Kewes, *The Uses of History in Early Modern Europe*, 103.

4 Kewes, 103.

Stow, but the inclusion of Cooper and Crowley demonstrates that the educated elite also contributed to chronicle scholarship.<sup>5</sup>

Stow is an excellent example of the citizen historian with no elitist pretensions. The most prolific English chronicler of his century, he was also the author of *A Survey of London*. Mychell, easily the most obscure of the group, was a mid-century Canterbury printer. Grafton, like Stow and Mychell, lacked a university education but was closely involved in the publication of the first English Bibles and served as Royal Printer to Edward VI. As a chronicler, he is best remembered for his controversy with Stow. Cooper and Crowley, on the other hand, were Oxford graduates. Cooper distinguished himself as a theologian and Elizabethan bishop of Winchester, not as a historian. His first chronicle, published in 1549, might have been forgotten if Crowley had not produced an unauthorized revision ten years later. Although Crowley published only one chronicle, he achieved prominence as an author, printer, and clergyman.<sup>6</sup>

Early modern chronicles were revised when the author issued a new edition of his work and not only extended the narrative chronologically but rewrote sections of a previously published account. Grafton and Stow produced abridged works that represent another kind of revision. Abridgements required the author to eliminate portions of the narrative with a simplified story that would

5 Works on early modern historiography include F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1967), D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2002). For the history of reading and the history of the book, see Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer, eds., *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) and Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

6 Biographies of each of the above appear in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Further information on Stow and Grafton, respectively, may be found in Barrett L. Beer, *Tudor England Observed: The World of John Stow* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie, eds., *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past* (London: British Library, 2004), and Andrea Manchester, "Chronicling the English Reformation: The Historical Works of Richard Grafton," Ph.D. Dissertation, Kent State University, 2007. See also John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982) and James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

fit a shorter and less expensive format. The problem of revision is complicated when an historical work is an amalgam of the writings of several authors. Historical writers of the period freely incorporated the work of predecessors and contemporaries, often without attribution. The second edition of Holinshed's chronicle (1587) is the classic example of this problem; Raphael Holinshed died seven years before the chronicle was published, he is the only known writer who cannot have contributed to it.<sup>7</sup> Earlier, John Mychell published multiple editions of a short chronicle at Canterbury that were revised, extended, and reissued by London printers. On the other hand, the work known as *An Epitome of Cronicles* (1559) was the work of three known authors, Thomas Lanquet, Thomas Cooper, and Robert Crowley.

Revision of chronicles involved not only enlargement, abridgement, and the input of multiple authors, but textual changes that were ideological. As Reformation history was by definition controversial, religious change during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth required historians to tune their writings to the orthodoxy of the day or conceal their true views in vagueness and obscurity. Chronicles with lives that stretched over several decades reveal how meticulously the authors strove to achieve religious correctness. Authors who became ordained clergy such as Cooper and Crowley often assigned greater importance to theological and doctrinal questions than lay writers, but no truly official reformation history was produced during the sixteenth century, except perhaps, for John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.<sup>8</sup> Although Grafton remained a layman, he expressed a commitment to religious reform in all of his historical writings, often in a polemical manner akin to that of Foxe.

Ideological controversy also had a political dimension since the reputations of Tudor monarchs and ministers were affected by their role in the Reformation process. Marcia Lee Metzger has

7 Annabel Patterson, *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 22f.

8 See the Privy Council directive of 1570 in John N. King, *Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 112-13.

shown that the revisionism of mid-sixteenth century chroniclers had a powerful impact on the reputations of Queens Mary and Elizabeth.<sup>9</sup> Working in an environment where publication needed official approval, historical writers of all persuasions needed to exercise a degree of caution unknown to later scholars.

## I

Although John Mychell's biography appears in both editions of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he has remained a rather shadowy figure.<sup>10</sup> His chronicles are concealed in the on-line catalogue of the British Library under the heading, "John Stow," and listed under "Britain—Appendix" in the *Revised Short Title Catalogue*. Mychell (d. 1556) learned the printing trade in London and by 1533 was a resident of Canterbury where his publication of works by William Tyndale, John Frith, and other reformers led to religious charges against him. He may have returned to London during the reign of Mary.<sup>11</sup> Three editions of *A Breuiat Cronicle* were published at Canterbury between 1552 and 1554 while later editions, issued between 1554 and 1561, were the work of two London printers, John King and Thomas Marshe.<sup>12</sup> These short chronicles are excellent examples of the work of a commoner who successfully targeted a non-elitist readership, and the Canterbury editions suggest local demand for an inexpensive national history in the city and the county of Kent.

9 "Controversy and 'Correctness': English Chronicles and the Chroniclers, 1553-1568," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27:2 (1996): 437-451.

10 See also E. Gordon Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1948), 107-8; M. L. Zell, "An Early Press in Canterbury?" *The Library*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, 32 (1977): 155-6; Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977), 40, 42 where the name is spelled Michel; and William K. Sessions, *John Mychell: Canterbury's First Printer from 1536 and from 1549* (York: Ebor Press, 1983).

11 Duff, *The English Provincial Printers, Stationers and Bookbinders to 1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 117.

12 In addition to the Canterbury editions, the four London editions at the British Library were consulted for this study. The latter are: c.122.b.34 [1554] John King; c.12.b.7 [1555/6] King; c.21.a.25 [1556] Thomas Marshe; G.5896 [1561] Marshe. Metzger, 439, argues that King and Marshe stole Mychell's copy after his death but does not prove this.

Beginning with the reign of Henry VIII, the Mychell chronicles were rewritten to make history fit the needs of the day. Two versions of the king's divorce demonstrate this practice. The earliest edition--1551/2--offers the Henrician and Protestant version of these events: "This year the king was by due process of the law divorced from lady Katherine his brother's wife...."<sup>13</sup> The section was rewritten for the 1554 edition to read: The "king divorced from his lawful wife Queen Katherine and because the Bishop of Rome would not consent to that unlawful divorce, both he and his authority were clear abolished this realm."<sup>14</sup> But not all references were edited for religious orthodoxy; for example, accounts of the execution of John Fisher and Thomas More and the introduction of an authorized Bible escaped revision.<sup>15</sup>

In the earliest edition of the Mychell chronicle, a marginal note, "great pity," was placed opposite an entry stating that a collection for the poor had ceased in 1540, but it was omitted from some later editions.<sup>16</sup> Did an editor merely tidy up the page by deleting a superfluous comment or is there a deeper meaning, perhaps evidence of declining compassion for the poor based on the principle that poor people were largely responsible for their own misfortune and therefore unworthy of pity?

Accounts of the death of Henry VIII offer further examples of revisionism. The 1554 edition states that under Henry VIII the people "lived long a joyful and a peaceable life reduced from the error of Idolatry to the true knowledge of God...."<sup>17</sup> Later editions accepted the claim that the reign was joyful and peaceable but

13 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (Canterbury, 1551), British Library, G.5894, fo. I5.

14 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), BL, C.122.b.34, fo. L5r.

15 Cf., Metzger, 439. Mychell clearly was sympathetic to Henrician religious reforms at the accession of Edward VI; but it is difficult to determine when he became a "devout Protestant."

16 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. L8v.; (London, 1561), BL, G.5896, fo. K8v.

17 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. N2v.

dropped “the error of Idolatry.”<sup>18</sup> In these editions either the editor or printer accepted the goodness of Henry VIII but could not permit a reference to the error of Catholic idolatry to stand. A somewhat garbled emendation appears in the editions of 1555/6 and 1561 which state that the people were “reduced from the error to the true knowledge of God.”<sup>19</sup> This puzzling phrase may alternatively be explained as an awkward attempt to achieve ambiguity on a sensitive religious issue or merely a printer’s error.

The reign of Edward VI was a controversial period that offered a veritable minefield for mid-sixteenth-century historical writers, but the short Mychell chronicles--like the abridgements of Stow--avoided difficulties by failing to provide an adequate description of the significant religious changes that took place. The 1554 edition readily concedes that the marriage of priests in 1549 was “granted lawfully by parliament,”<sup>20</sup> an observation carried forward in the edition of 1561. Catholic orthodoxy, however, may well explain the statement in the 1553 and 1554 editions that Nicholas Ridley and John Ponet “usurped” their respective bishoprics of London and Winchester, but in 1561 the text was changed to read that the two “had” the bishoprics.

A missing folio in the 1554 edition describing events following the death of Edward VI and the failed plot to transfer the throne to Lady Jane Grey may be another printer’s error or a crude attempt to censor an episode embarrassing to the Marian regime.<sup>21</sup> An entry for 10 July 1553 opposite the marginal note, “a rebellion made of the Duke of Northumberland,” ends abruptly with the duke taking “an army against the.” The next folio, O2r., begins 22 August with Northumberland’s execution. The missing folio is included in two other Marian editions [1553 & 1555/6 (BL,

18 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1555/6), BL, C.12.b.7, fo. N2v.; (1556), BL, C.21.a.25, fo. N2v.

19 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1555/6) BL, C.12.b.7, fo. N2v; (1561), fo. N1v.

20 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. N5r. Metzger, 439, 440 gives incorrect dates for legislation legalizing the marriage of priests.

21 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. O1.

C12b.7)]. Here Northumberland leads his army against “the lady Mary, right inheritor to the crown of this realm.” His efforts were doomed because his attempt “was not of God” and “could not come to no [sic] good success, for when he thought himself most strongest, part of the nobility and all the common people fell from him.”<sup>22</sup>

The 1553/4 edition of Mychell’s chronicle is important as one of the earliest narrative sources for Wyatt’s Rebellion. It gives the following account of the defense of London from rebel attack: “Lord William Howard joined in commission with the mayor, for the surer defense of London [because of the Londoners untrustiness].” The next edition of the Mychell chronicle omitted the bracketed section but added a reference to the Queen’s oration to the mayor and citizens exhorting them to be loyal against the rebels, a speech to which “all with one voice assented.”<sup>23</sup> Leaders of Wyatt’s rebellion, according to the 1554 edition, were “pretending to defend the realm from Spaniards and other strangers, intending to maintain heresies” and destroy Queen Mary.<sup>24</sup> To bring the chronicle into compliance with Elizabeth’s religious policy, the 1561 edition dropped the reference to “heresies” but left the rest of the narrative intact.

The Great Persecution was understandably minimized by Marian editors of the Mychell chronicles. In the 1555 edition we learn that “divers sacramentaries and many of them not converted suffered death by fire in many places of this realm.”<sup>25</sup> Names of the victims, the heroes of John Foxe, were often passed over; for example, John Rogers was merely one “Rogers” while Robert Ferrar, Edwardian bishop of St. David’s, became “one Farrer.” The last edition—1561—witnessed a rewrite of the Marian period bringing the narrative into tune with Elizabethan religious values. The Marian edition of 1556 referred to Reginald Pole on the occasion

22 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1555), BL, C.12.b.7, fo. O1r.

23 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (Canterbury, 1553/4), fo. N7v.; (London, 1554), fo. O4r.

24 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. O3r.

25 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1554), fo. P1r.

of his consecration as “my lord Cardinal Pole’s grace lord legate,”<sup>26</sup> the 1561 edition described the new archbishop of Canterbury as “Cardinal Pole the pope’s legate.”<sup>27</sup> The same edition stated people were “apprehended for religion,” and lamented in an entry for 1558 that “all this year ceased not the persecution for religion...”<sup>28</sup>

## II

*An Epitome of Cronicles* or *Coopers Chronicle* is considerably longer than the Mychell chronicles despite the title of the first two editions.<sup>29</sup> This work presents none of the problems of authorship characteristic of the Mychell chronicles. Three writers, Thomas Lanquet, whose early death at the age of twenty-four preceded publication, Robert Crowley, who contributed only to the unauthorized 1559 edition, and Thomas Cooper can be readily identified. At the time of his death in 1545, Lanquet had reached only 16 AD. When the first edition was published in 1549, Cooper, a married intellectual living at Oxford, had recently completed a revision of Thomas Elyot’s Latin-English dictionary. It has been said that this early work placed Cooper at risk of becoming nothing more than a “hack author;” the observation is another example of modern scholarly prejudice against chronicle scholarship.<sup>30</sup> The chronicle revealed Cooper’s reformist principles in an effusive dedication to Protector Somerset, who, Cooper wrote, was advancing “the true religion of Christ,” although the work did not extend beyond the first year of the reign of Edward VI.<sup>31</sup> Cooper remained in England after the king’s death in 1553, took a degree in medicine, and practiced that profession through the reign of Mary. Following the accession of Elizabeth, Cooper was reappointed as

26 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1556), BL, C.21.a.25, p.111r.

27 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1561), fo. N8v.

28 *A Breuiat Chronicle* (London, 1561), BL, G.5896, fo. O2v.

29 The first title appears on the 1549 and 1559 editions; the second on the editions of 1560 and 1565.

30 See Margaret Bowker, “Thomas Cooper” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For an assessment of Cooper’s dictionary scholarship see D. T. Starnes, *Renaissance Dictionaries* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954) and Lillian Gottesman in *Bibliotheca Eliotae* (1548) (Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1975).

31 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. a4r.

head of Magdalen School at Oxford, a post that he had held during Edward's reign, and ordained to the priesthood.

When the second edition of his chronicle was published in 1560, Cooper offered a new dedication to the Earl of Bedford in which emphasis shifted to the benefits of historical study. But about a year earlier Robert Crowley published an edition in which he extended and slightly revised the narrative published by Cooper in 1549. The 1559 edition, printed by William Seres, retained the dedication to Somerset and added a complete account of the reigns of Edward VI and Mary, carrying the story to the accession of Elizabeth.<sup>32</sup> It was this so-called unauthorized edition that prompted Cooper's vigorous attack the following year. "Certain persons for lukers sake," wrote Cooper, caused his chronicle to be printed without his knowledge. Finding no fewer than 500 faults of either the printer or author, he angrily denounced them as "utterly unlearned" and given to "unhonest dealing."<sup>33</sup>

Crowley's edition and the original edition of 1549 are nearly identical until the reign of Henry VIII. The two versions were uniformly hostile to Islam and agreed that Muhammad came of "base stock" and performed "magical acts" that gave him "great honor of the foolish people."<sup>34</sup> Less understandable is Crowley's allegation that two reformers, Philip Melanchthon and "Pomerane" [Johann Bugenhagen], were "infected with the pestilent heresies of Luther."<sup>35</sup> The earlier account of Cooper saw Luther as one who opposed idolatry, questioned papal supremacy, and "uncovered the strumpet of Babylon." To him Melanchthon and Pomerane were "men of

32 Beer, "Robert Crowley and Cooper's Chronicle: The Unauthorized Edition of 1559," *Notes and Queries*, 253:2 (June 2008): 148-52.

33 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. a1v. Cf. Metzger, 449. Cooper was not a bishop in 1560; he became bishop of Lincoln in 1571.

34 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. 158r.\_

35 In *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. 275r., Crowley allowed that the two reformers were "men of excellent learning," but omitted the phrase about restoring the gospel and added the charge of heresy. To complicate his views on Luther further, Crowley has several favorable references to Lutherans on the Continent at a later date.

excellent learning,” who assisted Luther in “restoring the Gospel to light and opening true religion.”<sup>36</sup>

Toward the end of Henry VIII’s reign, Crowley added an account of the burning of the French reformer, Peter Brulius [Brully], that Cooper had omitted. Crowley’s interest in Brulius’ martyrdom foreshadowed his extensive compilation of the Marian martyrs. “A preacher of the Gospel of Christ,” Brulius was active in Ghent as early as 1537 and later succeeded John Calvin as pastor of the French church at Strassburg. Subsequently, he returned to the Netherlands on the recommendation of Martin Bucer to preach among those who spoke French. Brulius was arrested in Tournai, imprisoned, and burned in 1545 “with a small fire to the end to make his torment the greater” when he refused to recant.<sup>37</sup> Crowley included a detailed account of the doctrines for which he perished. Brulius believed that the mass was “a mere man’s invention,” faith brings salvation, and “man’s free will is so letted by the fall of Adam, that without God’s grace it can do no good thing.”<sup>38</sup> It is not easy to explain why Crowley took an interest in a relatively minor reformer such as Brulius as there is no evidence that Crowley traveled abroad during the reign of Henry VIII or that Brulius visited England. It is possible that Crowley, returning from exile in Germany, wished to remember a man who was identified with the theologies of Bucer and Calvin.

In his new edition of 1560, Cooper described the accession of Edward VI with more restraint than Crowley, despite his earlier enthusiasm for Protector Somerset, and then turned attention to the Council of Trent. Cooper, returning to English affairs, incorporated

36 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. 275r., 275v.

37 Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1931), 358-9. See also J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe* (New York, 1880) 7: 546-7; Martin Greschat, “Martin Bucer” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1: 221-4; and D. F. Wright, ed., *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 165, 173.

38 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Dddd2r.

most of Crowley's celebration of policies to remove religious images from churches "for avoiding idolatry" and to forbid the superstitious use of beads. It is noteworthy that neither reformer condemned the use of beads, only the "superstitious" use of them.<sup>39</sup> Cooper said that the prayer book of 1549 abolished the mass whereas Crowley merely noted that the services were in English.<sup>40</sup> The two accounts differ significantly on politics; for example, Crowley said very little about the execution of Thomas, Lord Seymour, brother of the protector, while Cooper offered a much fuller account in which he considered allegations against the Duchess of Somerset.<sup>41</sup> In place of Crowley's brief account of Somerset's imprisonment in October 1552, Cooper stated categorically that Somerset was cast into the Tower "by means of Sir John Dudley, late made duke of Northumberland."<sup>42</sup>

Subtle differences distinguish Cooper's revision of Crowley's account of Wyatt's rebellion. The differences suggest that Cooper scrutinized Crowley's text with the great attention to detail and emphasis. Crowley wrote that the proposed marriage between the queen and Philip of Spain was "very evil taken of the people and of many of the nobility" who conspired among themselves to make a rebellion. He added that Sir Thomas Wyatt persuaded people in Kent that marriage would bring "most miserable servitude and establish popish religion."<sup>43</sup> Cooper's revision is very similar, but he associated opposition to Catholicism with the "people" in addition to Wyatt. In his version Cooper argued that the marriage was "so grievously taken" that for this "and religion they in such sort conspired against the queen, that if the matter had not broken out before the time appointed, men thought it would have brought much trouble and danger." Wyatt said, according to Cooper, that the queen would "bring in the pope" and "bring the realm into miserable servitude and bondage." Cooper retained Crowley's "miserable

39 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fos. 335, 338.

40 *Coopers Chronicle*, fo. 242r.

41 *Coopers Chronicle*, fos. 343v.-344r.

42 *Coopers Chronicle*, fos. 351v.-352r.; the same statement appears in the 1565 edition.

43 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Ffff.2v.

servitude,” but dropped the reference to the popish religion in favor of what was perhaps a less inflammatory phrase.<sup>44</sup>

Neither Crowley nor Cooper offered insight into the grassroots support for Wyatt in Kent, but both mentioned the Duke of Suffolk’s ill-fated sojourn into the Midlands. Only Cooper stated that Suffolk proclaimed his daughter, Lady Jane, queen adding that the people “did not greatly incline unto him.”<sup>45</sup> Although Cooper gave a slightly more detailed narrative of Wyatt’s entry into London, the differences are subtle with the exception of Cooper’s suggestion that the rebel’s defeat might have been attributed to the “great power” and “ordinance” assembled by the Earl of Pembroke. There was no disagreement that the executions of Lady Jane and her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, were undeserved. Crowley observed that the young couple were “innocents” compared with those who sat in judgment while Cooper wrote that the two were beheaded

(as it was thought), for fear least [sic] any other should make like trouble for her title as her father had attempted to do rather then for any guilt that was judged to be in her, which ignorantly received that which other unwittingly devised and offered to the prejudice of the queen.<sup>46</sup>

In each edition Thomas Wyatt stated at his execution that Princess Elizabeth was not involved in the rebellion.

Cooper’s 1560 edition gives less emphasis to the Marian persecution than Crowley, who listed 264 persons burned at the stake, among whom were 46 women, beginning with the execution of John Rogers 4 February 1555 and ending with four unnamed persons burned respectively at Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds in November 1557. In addition to those burned, Crowley mentioned a number of others who died in prison charged with heresy. Crowley did not write long accounts of the victims, but he listed many persons of lower social status, including “one Thomas, a blind boy,” burned at Gloucester, an

44 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 362r.

45 *Coopers Chronicle*, fo. 362v.

46 *Coopers Chronicle*, fo. 363r. Cf. D. L. Loades, *Two Tudor Conspiracies* (Bangor: Headstart History, 1992), 113-27.

“old woman” burned at Exeter, and Hugh Leverocke, a lame man at Stratford.<sup>47</sup> When Cooper published his new edition, he gave yearly totals of those burned as a consequence of the queen’s “vehement” persecution, the sum being at least 246. Cooper’s narrative emphasized the famous clergy who suffered martyrdom, John Bradford, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer: he may have witnessed the examination of the three bishops at Oxford.<sup>48</sup>

Cooper, unlike Crowley, perhaps inadvertently, recorded evidence of the limited success of the Edwardian Reformation. After describing the fear of many people that the new reign would offer “alteration of religion,” Cooper wrote:

In this time the people showed themselves so ready to receive their old religion that in many places of the Realme, understanding the Queen’s pleasure, before any law was made for the same, they erected again their altars and used the mass and Latin service...<sup>49</sup>

Both Cooper and Crowley related a curious event that never occurred, namely the burning of the corpse of Henry VIII. Dr. Hugh Weston, hated by Protestants for his role in the trials of the Oxford martyrs, fell into disfavor with Marian clergy because of immoral behavior and found himself in the Tower when the queen died. After Weston was released at the accession of Elizabeth, “it was the common opinion, if he had not so suddenly ended his life,” that he would have divulged a scheme to burn the king’s body at Windsor.<sup>50</sup>

47 Crowley’s detailed compilation appeared before John Foxe’s *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum*... was printed at Basel in the late summer of 1559. Foxe, a close friend of Crowley, published the first English edition of the *Acts and Monuments* in 1563. See J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (London: SPCK, 1940), 118-24; Ramona Garcia, “‘Most Wicked Superstition and Idolatry’: John Foxe, His Predecessors and the Development of an Anti-Catholic Polemic in the Sixteenth-Century Accounts of the Reign of Mary I,” 79-87 in David Loades, ed., *John Foxe at Home and Abroad* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); and John N. King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 72.

48 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fos. 364-77.

49 *Coopers Chronicle*, fos. 359v., 360v.

50 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Gggg4r.; *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 375v. Crowley added that the bones of Edward VI were to be burned along with those of his father.

During 1558, the last year of Mary's reign, Crowley concentrated primarily on religious persecution, but mentioned briefly the fall of Calais to the French and the coronation of Ferdinand as Holy Roman Emperor at Frankfurt. Cooper's account of the fall of Calais is longer and in every respect better than Crowley's. In their descriptions of the coronation, both noted that the emperor was crowned in the afternoon without a celebration of mass because of opposition of Protestant electors. Only Cooper took an interest in the devastating epidemic that appeared in the summer of 1558. "This summer about the month of August," he wrote, "the grievous sickness and dangerous fevers that began a year or two before in such manner raged as I think never plague or pestilence in England killed a greater number."<sup>51</sup>

At the queen's death, Crowley noted that "her bishops and she burned even to the last breath." But God "to give his soldiers a breathing time, took this rod of his from them the xvii. day of November and set up in her place the second daughter of the noble King Henry...."<sup>52</sup> In the 1560 edition Cooper discarded Crowley's phrasing and wrote more charitably that the absence of Phillip contributed to the queen's untimely death. According to Cooper, she "conceived great unkindness, and not long after falling dangerously sick ended her life...."<sup>53</sup> Five years later in the 1565 edition Cooper, revising his own account of the queen's death, stated that she shed "much innocent blood," lost Calais, made "strangers" privy to secret affairs of the realm, and was responsible for the "waste and spoil" of the realm's treasure.<sup>54</sup>

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, Cooper hoped optimistically that the restoration of the "Gospel" could be achieved without the "division of minds and judgments whereby we are

51 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 377r. Cf. Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England, 1547-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 110.

52 *Epitome of Chronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Hhhh1r.

53 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 377r.

54 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1565), fo. C1v.

now miserably distracted,” but the 1560 edition ended before the restoration of the Church of England had been completed.<sup>55</sup> For his part, Crowley, the returning exile, showed almost ecstatic enthusiasm in anticipation of bold religious reform as the new reign opened, but his chronicle also ended before the religious settlement. Five years later Thomas Cooper was more subdued. He was impressed by what he termed the restoration of royal supremacy over the “state ecclesiastical” as well as the restoration of first fruits and tenths to the crown. He further noted that “book of common prayers and administration of sacraments in our mother tongue was restored,” but he was silent on whether religious unity had been achieved or whether the Gospel had been restored effectively.<sup>56</sup> Whatever his thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the Elizabethan religious settlement, Cooper ended the chronicle on a high note praising this “happy realm of England” and beseeching Almighty God “to preserve and to continue” the queen’s “reign over us.”<sup>57</sup>

Thomas Cooper’s chronicles place English history in a broad European context that is missing in the Crowley edition as well as in the Mychell chronicles. He devotes more space to French, German, Italian, and Ottoman affairs than most other chroniclers, always emphasizing religious issues, but he also revised his own work by adding more European details. For example, the 1560 edition has a fuller account of the meeting of the Diet at Speyer in 1544 than the 1549 edition.<sup>58</sup> Cooper, on the other hand, abbreviated Crowley’s impassioned account of Martin Bucer’s encounter with Catholic authorities at Augsburg in 1548 where he refused to sign the “emperor’s book” or Interim “with great danger of his life.”<sup>59</sup>

55 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 377v.

56 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1565), fo. C2r.

57 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1565), fo. D4v.

58 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 321v.; *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1549), fo. 290r.

59 *Epitome of Cronicles* (London, 1559), fo. Dddd4r.; *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 341r. See E. G. Rupp, “The Swiss Reformers and the Sects,” *The New Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958) II, 112; Lewis Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 121-2.

If the period from the accession of Mary in 1553 through Wyatt's Rebellion in 1554 is examined, Cooper's 1560 edition offered entries noting the death of Maurice, Duke of Saxony, the war of the Duke of Brunswick, pestilence in Paris, and the conquest of Corsica by the French with the assistance of the Turks. Crowley included none of these. While Crowley wrote briefly that Michael Servetus was burned at Geneva "for denying the eternal deity of Christ," Cooper gave a fuller account in the 1560 edition:

About the end of October [1553] Michael Servetus was burned at Geneva, for that he had holden and taught many wicked opinions concerning the Trinity and deity of Christ and defended the same very stubbornly even at this death, declaring no token of repentance..<sup>60</sup>

Although the academic backgrounds of Cooper and Crowley were similar, they had different views of the recent past. Both were Oxford graduates who would have been acquainted with each other, and both became ordained priests committed to the Church of England. Crowley, however, was a vigorous advocate of social reform who went into exile at Frankfurt am Main after the death of Edward VI while Cooper remained in England after 1553 and supported his family through the practice of medicine. Paradoxically, Cooper's historical writing reveals a greater knowledge of European affairs than that of Crowley who actually lived in Germany during the reign of Mary. The two chroniclers' differing interpretations of their own times reveal the gulf that separated Protestant intellectuals at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign and serve as an excellent example of how chronicles offer insight into critical contemporary issues.

### III

Richard Grafton, born in 1507, unlike Cooper and Crowley, did not receive a university education but was apprenticed to the London Grocer's company in 1526. He became a committed evangelical and by the mid 1530s, was closely involved in efforts to make an English Bible available and began a career as a printer. As an early partisan for the evangelical cause, Grafton acquired powerful patrons, such

<sup>60</sup> *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), fo. 361v.

as Thomas Cromwell and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, but also gained powerful enemies, such as Bishops Stephen Gardiner and Edmund Bonner. While his patrons secured him exclusive privileges as a printer, he was imprisoned twice during Henry VIII's reign.

Under Edward VI, he enjoyed the position of Royal Printer and entered the sphere of historical writing by printing *Hall's Chronicle* in 1548. But under Mary, Grafton promptly lost his position as Royal Printer and was again imprisoned for a time for printing the proclamation that named Lady Jane Grey as Queen. Yet he remained in England and evaded further persecution. Only during the reign of Elizabeth did he begin producing his own chronicles. His *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* was first published in 1562, and again in 1563, 1564, 1570, and 1572. His larger work, *A Chronicle at Large*, appeared in 1568.

While he belonged to no elite either by parentage or education, Grafton did experience one of the pivotal events of his time, the English Reformation, as a direct participant with an agenda, rather than solely as an observer. It is this area in particular where his chronicles shed light on more than the historical facts of his time, providing unique insight into how one historian's beliefs and personal experiences shaped his motives and presentation of history. With his chronicles, Grafton made use of the historical works available to him, but he then revised these accounts in numerous small but polemical ways. He later revised his own chronicles to champion the ideology of the Elizabethan Church and participate in the Protestant mythmaking best exemplified in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.<sup>61</sup>

The 1570 edition of Grafton's *Abridgement* contains revealing examples of revision, made to defend two controversial figures, Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell. Grafton had taken stronger positions on both in his 1568 *Chronicle at Large* and then revised his 1570 *Abridgement* to reflect them. However, he also revised his

61 Manchester, "Chronicling Bloody Mary: Richard Grafton's Depiction of the English Reformation," *Proceedings of the Ohio Academy of History* (1999): 39-49, and "Chronicling the English Reformation: The Historical Works of Richard Grafton" (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2007).

1570 *Abridgement*, particularly its account of the rebellions of 1549, in an effort to secure his own status as the historian for the more middling ranks of Elizabethan society and to damage the reputation of his main rival in the market for short chronicles, John Stow.

Beginning with the first edition of his *Abridgement* in 1562, it was apparent that Anne Boleyn was a sensitive topic for Grafton. He took greater care with the way she was presented in his chronicles than did Cooper or Stow. For example, the 1562 *Abridgement*'s account of the origins of Henry VIII's divorce from Katherine of Aragon is closely modeled on *Cooper's Chronicle* (1560) and states that Henry VIII "did cast singular favor to Lady Anne Boleyn" even in the early stages of the divorce process.<sup>62</sup> However, Cooper was quite non-committal as to whether Henry's doubts about the validity of his marriage to Katherine first originated within himself, or whether they were instilled in him by Cardinal Wolsey.<sup>63</sup>

Grafton, unlike Thomas Cooper, was sensitive to the implication that admitting Henry's early attraction to Anne Boleyn opened the door to Henry being accused of seeking a divorce from Katherine merely because he was smitten with a young temptress. Therefore, Grafton changed Cooper's version to state that "most men did judge" that Henry's concerns about the legality of his marriage were indeed first planted in his head by Wolsey.<sup>64</sup> In this way, he defended the role of Anne Boleyn in the divorce, downplaying the idea that she was the impetus behind it. Another example of Grafton's greater concern for Anne's reputation is the fact that his *Abridgement* (and *Coopers Chronicle*) refrained from mentioning that Anne Boleyn dressed in yellow, an insultingly cheerful color, at the death of Katherine of Aragon in 1536. There can be no doubt that Grafton knew about this detail, for it is in *Hall's Chronicle*.<sup>65</sup>

62 Richard Grafton, *An Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* (London, 1562), 128-129, [STC 12 148].

63 *Coopers Chronicle* (London, 1560), 289, [STC 15 218].

64 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1562), 128-129, [STC 12 148].

65 Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1548), 227, [STC 12 721].

Stow, however, chose to pass along this piece of information about Anne Boleyn in his 1565 *Summary*.<sup>66</sup>

With *A Chronicle at Large* (1568), Grafton made an even stronger defense of Anne Boleyn. In one case, while using nearly an entire passage from *Hall's Chronicle*, Grafton specifically omitted one sentence:

that the queen's ladies, gentlewomen and servants, largely spake and said that she so enticed the king, and brought him in such amours, that only for her sake and occasion, he would be divorced from his queen, this was the foolish communication of people contrary to the truth.<sup>67</sup>

However, Grafton went even further in Anne Boleyn's defense in the *Chronicle at Large*, stating unequivocally that she was innocent of adultery and incest and unjustly executed.<sup>68</sup>

One year later, Grafton published the 1570 edition of his *Abridgement* and revised its account of Anne Boleyn. In the 1570 edition, the line stating that Henry VIII, early in the divorce process, "did cast singular favor to Lady Anne Boleyn," was removed, and thus the *Abridgement* was brought more into line with the *Chronicle at Large*'s staunch defense of Anne, removing even a slight suggestion that she motivated Henry to divorce Catherine.<sup>69</sup> Grafton must have been distressed by Anne Boleyn's demise, as he was an active evangelical in the 1530s, and she was known to favor this cause.<sup>70</sup> Religion, therefore, is one reason for his efforts to portray Anne sympathetically. However, with the *Chronicle at Large* in 1568, Grafton was probably also trying to please Anne

66 Stow, *Summary* (London, 1565), 191, [STC 23 319].

67 Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1548), 184, [STC 12 721]. Grafton, *Chronicle at Large* (London, 1569), 1182, [STC 12 147].

68 Grafton, *Chronicle at Large* (London, 1569), 1127-1128, [STC 12 147].

69 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 136, [STC 12 151].

70 Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 153; Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 260-268.

Boleyn's daughter, Queen Elizabeth, by bestowing saint-like martyr status upon her mother, and he also revised his 1570 *Abridgement* to continue this aim.

Thus, the subtle revisions that Grafton made both to Cooper's and Hall's versions of Anne Boleyn, and then later to his own as well, reveal how her role in history and reputation took on a new importance and new interpretations once her own daughter was on the throne. The revisions also suggest that Grafton took a personal interest in Anne Boleyn and, more so than Stow or Cooper, sought to defend her and to shape her story into that of a martyr-heroine of the Evangelical cause.

Another instance of Grafton performing revision involved the alteration of his 1570 *Abridgement* to perpetuate a stance taken in the *Chronicle at Large*. Again, Grafton came to the defense of another person, Thomas Cromwell. In the 1562 *Abridgement*, Grafton recounted the fall of Henry VIII's chief minister, who "was apprehended and committed to the Tower and was condemned by Act of Parliament."<sup>71</sup> With his lengthier *Chronicle at Large* in 1568, Grafton chose to use the account of Cromwell's end given in *Hall's Chronicle* with one major difference. Hall wrote that Cromwell "was attainted by Parliament, and never came to his answer, which law many reported, he was the causer of the making thereof, but the truth thereof I know not."<sup>72</sup> Grafton, in the *Chronicle at Large*, made a major revision, changing "but the truth thereof I know not" into "that is false and untrue."<sup>73</sup>

According to Sir Geoffrey Elton, Grafton was correct. The use of "condemnation by attainder only without judicial trial" goes back to 1459. Cromwell was not the creator of this method, "disagreeable, legal though it was," and, under his charge it was used against only Elizabeth Barton (the Nun of Kent) and her

71 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1562), 136, [STC 12 148].

72 Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1548), 242, [STC 12 721].

73 Grafton, *Chronicle at Large* (London, 1569), 1250, [STC 12 147].

accomplices, whose actions did not easily fit the existing treason law.<sup>74</sup> Once again, Grafton revised his *Abridgement* in 1570 to insist that Cromwell was not the creator of this controversial practice. The way he chose to do this, however, is very interesting. He scrapped the original passage from his *Abridgement* and instead copied, almost word for word, the account from Stow's 1565 *Summary*. Stow had written that Cromwell "was attainted by Parliament and never came to his answer: which law he was the author of, he was there attainted of heresy and high treason."<sup>75</sup> Grafton changed this sentence to read "he was attainted by Parliament and never came to his answer, which law many reported, he was the causer of the making thereof, but that is false and untrue. He was attainted both of heresy and treason."<sup>76</sup>

Inasmuch as Grafton had known Cromwell and worked with him to produce an English Bible, it is not surprising that Grafton would spring to his defense. Grafton, who went to prison in 1540 for printing a pro-Cromwell ballad, must have felt loyalty towards him and was probably sensitive to criticism of Cromwell. Yet the fact that Grafton in 1570 revised his *Abridgement* to use Stow's 1565 passage almost verbatim, but then blatantly contradicted him, does suggest that provoking Stow, as much as defending Cromwell, was the motive for this revision.

Indeed, there is considerable evidence that Grafton's animosity towards his rival chronicler inspired revisions to his 1570 *Abridgement*. One significant revision that Grafton made concerned his coverage of the rebellions of 1549, both Kett's rebellion in Norfolk against enclosure of common lands and the rebellion in Cornwall and Devonshire against the new *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>77</sup> For the 1570 *Abridgement*, Grafton drastically changed his previous

74 G. R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 390-391.

75 Stow, *Summary* (London, 1565), 199, [STC 23 319].

76 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 145, [STC 12 151].

77 Cf. Beer, *Rebellion and Riot*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2005) and Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

account of these rebellions, providing a new account that was far more condemnatory and harsh towards the rebels than his previous account. For example, the earlier (1564) version states:

Soon after began great sedition in England, for the common people in all parts of the realm, specially in Norfolk and Devonshire, rose against the nobles and gentlemen. Some of them, and namely in Norfolk, not mentioning religion, found themselves grieved with parks, pastures and enclosures, made by the gentlemen, and required the same to be disparked, and set among the commons. They of Devonshire did not only require that, but also their old religion and the act of six articles to be restored.<sup>78</sup>

The 1570 edition of this part takes pains to point out that the government was trying to address the grievances caused by enclosures of common lands, but the “greedy” rebels, behaving “rashly and lewdly,” launched a “plain rebellion and insurrection.”

About the beginning of June the King’s Majesty by the advice of the Lord Protector and the rest of his council, caused a proclamation to be published, wherein was express commandment given that all such persons as had enclosed any part of the commons (that in times past had been laid out for the relief of the poor) into parks or otherwise had made the several to the hurt of any poor subject, that all such grounds so enclosed or emparked should by a day, be laid out again to the commons as before they had been, upon a pain. The commons being greedy hereof, would not tarry to see what order and justice the magistrates would do therein, but rashly and lewdly, took upon them the reformation thereof themselves, and began to spoil gentlemen’s parks, and did much other mischief, which at the last grew to a plain rebellion and insurrection.<sup>79</sup>

In the 1570 version, Grafton related that rebels in Devon “did not only require the pulling down of all enclosures, but also required the restitution of the mass, the administration of the sacraments and all the Latin service in such manner as the same was used in the time of King Henry the Eighth.” As well, he placed more emphasis on the rebels’ criminal and destructive actions: “But Norfolk and the other shires made no mention of religion, but fell to spoiling of parks, and pulling down of hedges, and stopping up of ditches, with

78 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1564), 148, [STC 12 150].

79 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 155, [STC 12 151].

many other riotous acts.”<sup>80</sup> Grafton, therefore, revised his account of the 1549 rebellions to be a harsher denunciation of those who rebelled against the social order and reformed religion.

This leads to the question of why Grafton did this, and the answer involves John Stow. In the market for short chronicles, Stow was Grafton’s archrival, and the two had long been using the dedications and prefaces of their chronicles to criticize each other. Grafton’s 1570 *Abridgement*, dedicated to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, referred to certain books, “Summaries of Histories,” that

Contain fond and unmeet matter, as the memories of superstitious foundations, fables and lies foolishly stowed together, written rather in maintenance and favor of lewd doings, than for the suppression of the same, which also contain matter to the defacing of Princes’ doings, and wherein the gates are rather opened for crooked subjects to enter into the field of rebellion, than the hedges or gaps of the same stopped: Therefore I thought myself by duty and necessity occasioned, once again to travail not only in the amending of such things as before escaped me in the former impression of my Abridgement of the Chronicles of England: But also in adding to the same, some good lessons and examples to train subjects to the obedience of their Prince, and thereby (as much as in me lieth) not only to stop the gaps, which other by their fond writing, have opened to the hateful spoil and wild waste of rebellion.<sup>81</sup>

In the preface of his 1567 *Summary*, Stow had referred to “unfruitful grafts” in an oblique insult of Grafton. Therefore, when Grafton referred to “lies foolishly stowed together,” it can only be a swipe at Stow. In the passage above, Grafton clearly accused someone of writing seditious books that promoted rebellion. Was it Stow? Another hint are the metaphors that Grafton chose for rebellion: “gates are rather opened...to enter into the field of rebellion, than the hedges or gaps of the same stopped,” and “to stop the gaps...opened to the hateful spoil and wild waste of rebellion.” These phrases sound like veiled references to the issue of enclosure of common lands and the rebellions of 1549.

80 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), 155, [STC 12 151].

81 Grafton, *Abridgement* (London, 1570), [STC 12 151].

While E. J. Devereux argued that the dedication to Grafton's 1570 *Abridgement* accused Stow of writing books that promoted rebellion,<sup>82</sup> little attention has been given to the enclosure-related language that Grafton used and its significance. An examination of Grafton's and Stow's accounts of the 1549 rebellions shows that Grafton, in his dedication, was specifically singling out the treatment of these rebellions in Stow's 1567 *Summary*. Here, Stow by no means praised the rebels, but he did not criticize them either; he merely stated that "God brought it to pass" that the King's forces were victorious against them, and regretted the loss of lives—both the soldiers and the rebels.<sup>83</sup>

Clearly Grafton felt that Stow's *Summary* was not harsh enough on the rebels, laudatory enough towards the soldiers (led by John Dudley, Leicester's father), or a sufficiently strong defense of the social order. Therefore, Grafton revised his own account for the 1570 *Abridgement* and included the blatant hints in its dedication as a tactic to discredit his rival, John Stow. It was probably not a coincidence that Grafton chose to paint Stow as soft on rebellion in 1570, shortly after the Northern Rebellion against Elizabeth's rule had just been defeated—a time when his accusations would have maximum effect.

Financial considerations are an ostensible motive for Grafton and Stow's rivalry. Grafton, having enjoyed exclusive privileges as a printer, courtesy of powerful patrons, in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, was not accustomed to open competition with a commercial rival, and therefore sought means to eliminate him. But there is more to it than that. Grafton also saw a different purpose for history—didactic and more polemical—and sought to tell his own "personal" story and also to defend the Elizabethan church and government. For Grafton, a unified theme or idea was what

82 E. J. Devereux, "Empty Tuns and Unfruitful Grafts: Richard Grafton's Historical Publications," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, (1990): 52. See also D.S. Kastan, "Opening Gates and Stopping Hedges: Grafton, Stow, and the Politics of Elizabethan History Writing," in *The Project of Prose in Early Modern Europe and the New World*, ed. Elizabeth Fowler and Roland Greene (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66-79.

83 Stow, *Summary* (London, 1567), 165, [STC 23 325.5].

mattered in history, more so than the accuracy of all the names and dates (the area where Stow aimed most of his criticisms of Grafton's *Abridgement*). Thus, an examination of Grafton's revisions with Anne Boleyn, Thomas Cromwell, and the rebellions of 1549 yields valuable insight into the many ways, big and small, that Grafton manipulated his sources and his own works to shape his own, preferred, account of the sixteenth century and then to promote it over those of other historians.

The fact that Grafton went out of his way in his *Chronicle at Large* (and then in his revisions to the 1570 *Abridgement*) to depict both Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell in the light of evangelical martyrs is particularly noteworthy because, in the *Chronicle at Large*, Grafton based his accounts (aside from revisions concerning Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell) nearly verbatim upon those of *Hall's Chronicle* (whereas he had predominantly used *Cooper's Chronicle* in his *Abridgement*), but he excluded nearly everything that *Hall's Chronicle* had to say about any other persecuted evangelicals in the reign of Henry VIII. Realizing that he retained and revised the "stories" of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell even as he sought to downplay the persecution of all other evangelicals during the reign of Elizabeth's father implies that Grafton was especially concerned with defending them. His reasons for these revisions were variously practical (pleasing Elizabeth), personal (defending his fellow evangelicals) and polemical (putting forth his desired historical message). Yet by excluding all other persecutions of evangelicals under Henry VIII in his *Chronicle at Large*, Grafton could have been, as he had with Anne Boleyn, supplying a new account of Henry VIII that might be more pleasing to Queen Elizabeth. But it also strongly suggests that he was personally uncomfortable with Henry VIII's persecutions and wanted to present a unified story of sixteenth century England that showcased evangelical progress, with Mary's reign being the lone anomaly.<sup>84</sup>

84 Manchester, "Chronicling the English Reformation," 107-110.

Working solely in the reign of Elizabeth, Grafton never had to revise his chronicles to adapt to different reigns or political climates. Rather, Grafton made use of revisions to shape accounts of events to reflect his own opinions, born of experience, as well as to promote his view of history and to make his chronicles serve as tools of Protestant myth making for England very much in the manner of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.

#### IV

Whereas Grafton, Mychell, and Crowley were originally printers and Cooper is best known as a churchman, John Stow's long life (1525-1605) was devoted to historical scholarship. He may not have been the best historian of the sixteenth century, but he wrote more than any one else and continuously revised what he wrote. Stow's first chronicle was published in 1565 while the last edition of the *Annales of England* appeared forty years later. Although Stow's chronicle scholarship has been discussed elsewhere, his revisionism included chronological extension of older works, abridgement of longer narratives, and revision of previous editions by insertion of new details, deletion, and correction of errors. Further revision of Stow's chronicles appeared posthumously as Edmund Howes produced new editions of Stow's works for seventeenth-century readers.<sup>85</sup>

Extension was essential to keep the chronicles current over four decades and marketable in a competitive environment. As Stow concluded his first chronicle, published in 1565, he envisaged a process of extension and revision.

Thus (good reader) I have brought as thou seest, this small abrigement [sic] or Summarie of our English Chronicle to these our present days; meaning as time shall increase, so to increase the same if I be not discouraged of thee in these my simple beginnings. Wherefore I beseche thee to judge favorably, and to correct friendly, so as thy correction may rather be an Instruction then a condemning of me.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> See Beer, *Tudor England Observed: The World of John Stow* (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 1998); "English History Abridged: John Stow's Shorter Chronicles and Popular History," *Albion* 36:1 (2004): 13-27; and "John Stow," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>86</sup> *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles...* (London, 1565), fo. 248v.

When the edition of 1575 appeared, for example, Stow had extended the narrative substantially beginning at page 517 and ending at page 570. But he did more than extend the earlier work; he rewrote an account of Londoners walking on the frozen Thames on New Year's Eve 1564 and offered a different narrative of the plague of the same year and its effect on rich and poor citizens.<sup>87</sup>

Stow's chronicles not only appeared over many years but also in different formats, and his writings offer excellent examples of how length affects the character of historical writing. As Stow's abridged chronicles, appearing in no fewer than nine editions from 1566 to 1604, were among his most important contributions, he regularly compressed his narrative to fit the smaller (and cheaper) format. In the abridgement of 1604, Stow gave a short, serviceable account of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, describing the attack on London, the beheading of the archbishop of Canterbury, and the confrontation between Wat Tyler and Richard II. However, the only mention of John Ball, the radical preacher, was a reference to his execution: "John Ball was brought to St. Albans and there drawn and quartered."<sup>88</sup> Readers fortunate enough to have access to the *Annales of England* were treated to a highly-detailed narrative of the rebellion extending over twenty pages. Whereas John Ball received merely a mention in the abridgement, the *Annales* told how Ball "went into the streets and wayes, and into the fields to preach and there wanted not of the commons that came to hear him...." Stow went on to relate Ball's religious belief that "from the beginning all were made alike by nature, and that bondage or servitude was brought in by injust [sic] oppression of naughty men against the will of God . . . ."<sup>89</sup>

87 *A Summarie of the Chronicles of England* (London, 1575), pp. 512-15.

88 *A Summarie of the Chronicles of England, Diligently Collected, Abridged, and Continued unto This Present Yeare of Christ, 1604*, ed., Barrett L. Beer (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2007), 132.

89 *Annales of England* (London, 1605), 468-9. Stow's sources included Henry Knighton, Thomas Walsingham, and Chaucer.

Similarly, in the *Annales of England* Stow devoted no fewer than fifteen pages to the story of the Spanish Armada of 1588. Readers of the small abridgement, however, got a severely truncated account that says very little about the fighting in the channel, nothing about sea battle off Gravelines, and nothing about the fate of the Spanish fleet. About all an avid reader learned was that the English prevailed through the power of God.<sup>90</sup> Here is cheap history with a vengeance. Abridgement is a form of revision that invariably produces an inferior, simplified account, and Stow's abridged chronicles were no exception to the rule.

As Stow prepared new editions of the chronicles, he regularly inserted new material into the old narrative. In the abridged chronicle of 1598, Stow noted the charitable bequests of Sir Andrew Judd, lord mayor of London, which included the founding a "one notable free school" at Tonbridge, Kent, as well as alms houses for the poor near St. Helen's church in London. Six years later in the 1604 edition, he added other benefactions of Judd including a bequest of lands valued at over sixty pounds to his own company, the Skinners, from which they were obliged to pay annual sums to the schoolmaster and usher of Tonbridge school and to poor people at St Helen's.<sup>91</sup> The 1604 abridgement recorded a curious disturbance in 1556 when the lord mayor, Sir William Garrarde, dined at the Middle Temple. "Certain gentlemen of the younger sort" held down the mayor's sword by force as he was exiting. The incident was serious enough for two leaders of the Middle Temple to be summoned to appear before the Lord Treasurer and the Privy Council and to land fourteen of the culprits in Fleet prison, but not sufficiently significant to have been included in the earlier 1598 abridgement.<sup>92</sup>

90 *A Summarie of the Chronicles Diligently Collected, Abridged and Continued...* (London, 1604), 374-6.

91 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 238.

92 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 263-4. Stow also added an entry to the 1604 edition on the voyage of Sir Francis Drake to the West Indies and Florida in 1585-1586 that culminated in the burning of St. Augustine, 357-8.

Stow occasionally deleted or abbreviated references in a later edition; for example, a hostile reference to his brother, Thomas, as a false accuser in the 1598 abridgement was removed from the 1604 edition.<sup>93</sup> The two brothers had a protracted feud related at least in part to a dispute over the inheritance of their mother's estate. In the 1604 abridgement a listing of charitable bequests of Sir Rowland Hill in 1549 was shortened.<sup>94</sup> A meticulous scholar, Stow corrected his errors; in the 1604 abridgement the death of the Empress Matilda, mother of Henry II, was given as 1185, but the following year the date was corrected to 1167 in the *Annales of England*.<sup>95</sup>

Stow's report of the death of Queen Elizabeth in the last edition of the *Annales* (1605) is a good example of succinct but colorless historical writing that cried out for revision. He noted that Thursday, the day of the queen's death, had been a fatal date for Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary but offered no eulogy. Because Elizabeth had reigned for nearly forty-five years and few could remember a king, the change of sovereigns was "well pleasing" to the nobility and gentry.<sup>96</sup> Stow's continuator, Edmund Howes, added a long and effusive "commemoration" on Elizabeth's death to later editions. "She was," wrote Howes, "resolute and of an undaunted spirit, all of which special virtues apparently approved and publicly known to the whole world." With great confidence he concluded, "Her subjects' love daily increased upon her without ceasing or intermission during her whole reign."<sup>97</sup>

93 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604); *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1598), 249.

94 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1598) 260; *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 235.

95 *A Summarie of the Chronicles* (London, 1604), 60; *Annales of England* (London, 1605), 230.

96 *Annales of England* (London, 1605), 1425-6. Stow covered the queen's death in merely five lines.

97 *Annales or General Chronicle of England* (London, 1631), 813-5. For an examination of the emergence of the Elizabethan myth, see Jason Scott-Warren, "Harington's Gossip," in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 221-41.

The chroniclers studied in this essay wrote in an era of religious and political upheaval, and their revised narratives reflect changing times. Stow, Grafton, and Mychell viewed the Reformation through the lens of the laity but had very different perceptions, while Cooper, the future bishop, appreciated issues that escaped non-elite lay writers. Crowley, the Oxford-educated social reformer, satirist, and Elizabethan Puritan, reveals another dimension of the English Reformation.<sup>98</sup> Stow's lack of sympathy for the deceased Queen Elizabeth betrayed his enthusiasm for the new male occupant of the throne, but Edmund Howes revised the section presumably to attract readers and glorify the late queen.

Sixteenth-century chroniclers were not conspicuously heroic figures, and it is noteworthy that none of the five examined here suffered imprisonment for his historical writing. The rivalry between Grafton and Stow, and Stow's attacks on his brother, reveal a few of the less praiseworthy aspects of chronicle scholarship. The chronicles reflect the individualism of their authors and the changing influences of the era in which they were written and therefore do not tell a single consistent story of the past. Revisionism makes chronicle history more important but at the same time more challenging because the narratives embody significant changes as a consequence of textual revision.

Mychell, Cooper, Crowley, Grafton, and Stow were not only chroniclers of the distant past but also eyewitnesses to an important period of early modern history. The significance of chroniclers as primary sources for the period in which they lived and wrote is often ignored. Their narratives are important for the details they contain and omit and for the individual author's historical priorities. Although chronicles are not autobiographical, they shed light on the author's mentality and social status. Differing perceptions of the recent past reveal the political and religious complexity of the sixteenth century, but each chronicler was an authentic personal witness to the age in which he lived.

<sup>98</sup> John N. King, "Robert Crowley" in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1:456

Published in a variety of formats, English chronicles reached a growing and diverse population of readers and helped create and popularize a vernacular national history. The popularity of chronicles is demonstrated by the large number of editions. Readers wanted a concise account of the national past with an emphasis on wars, great battles, deeds of great men, rebellions, famines, and droughts. Demand for expanded editions also indicates that sixteenth-century readers had a fixation on recent history, a cultural presentism that connects them with later generations. Buyers of the less expensive abridgements were apparently satisfied with a superficial framework that listed major events past and present. The growing importance of the English language during the century is reflected not only in the English *Bible*, the *Book of Common Prayer*, the literary works that preceded Shakespeare, but also in the creation of a national history articulated in chronicles.

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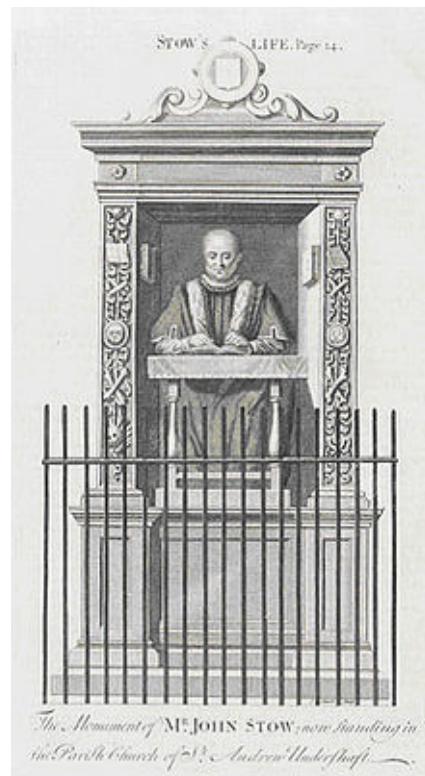
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*The John Stow monument in the parish church of St. Andrew Undershaft*

**“Mutual Comfort”:  
Courtly Love and Companionate Marriage  
in the Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser**

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*The interaction between courtly love poetry and the development of companionate marriage has received little critical attention. Rather, critics of courtly love poetry focus on authorial ambition and self-presentation. This paper explores how the revision of the courtly love genre in the poetry of Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser participated within the societal transformation toward companionate marriage. The individualized female characters in their poetry shatter courtly stereotypes, but the relationship options presented either fragment the sequence, as in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, or enable it to drive forward to completion, as in Spenser's *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*. I argue the significant innovations in Sidney's treatment of the female love object paradoxically drive the desire in his sequence and ultimately undo it, given the lack of a pragmatic relationship outcome. That work lays the foundation for confrontation with courtly love in Spenser, in Book III of the *Faerie Queene*, and then the presentation of a reciprocal relationship in the *Amoretti* that flourishes in, later, the companionate marriage in *Epithalamion*.*

Critical analysis of Renaissance courtly love poetry entrenches the conclusion that it is really about male ambition and self-presentation rather than emotional love. In articulating these arguments, gender issues either disappear or take center stage only as a critique levied against the poets participating in the subjugation of women. Arthur Marotti points out that a sonnet sequence “wittily reconverts the language of ambition into the language of love.”<sup>1</sup> The refashioning of language distorts love poetry's investment in emotional love.

1 Arthur Marotti, “‘Love is Not Love’: Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order,” *ELH* 49, no 2 (Summer 1982): 402.

Elizabeth Heale sees the courtly love tradition as an opportunity for the male poet's "self-presentation."<sup>2</sup> She concludes that the issues at stake are "masculine vulnerability and loss of the gathered self."<sup>3</sup> The authorial status of the poet enables the resumption of male dominance. In other words, as Catherine Bates explains, the "poet's self-abasement before the venerated object of his praise is merely a posture."<sup>4</sup>

In this critical tradition, the poetry of Sir Phillip Sidney and Edmund Spenser typifies the assertion of male superiority. The above-mentioned critics cite Sidney's political motives and growing frustration with Queen Elizabeth. They view Spenser's sonnet sequence *Amoretti* and his marriage encomium *Epithalamion* as an example of the male figure seeking to control his bride<sup>5</sup> and advance his personal agenda. While these critics rightly focus on the relationships between the male poet and female beloved in the poetry of Sidney and Spenser, they fail to account for how these poets deploy the language of love. Both Sidney and Spenser appropriate and revise the courtly love tradition, and both present individualized female characters. Ultimately, Sidney's poetic innovations are interrupted and limited by the intrusion of a socially impractical relationship option. However, Spenser's texts uniquely personalize beloved and lover playing a game modeled on courtly love as their relationship develops to the point that both choose to commit in a companionate marriage, a union based on love, acceptance, friendship, and a greater recognition of female value.

While historians agree on the increasing prevalence of companionate marriage from the late medieval period through the Re-

2 Elizabeth Heale, "Misogyny and the Complete Gentleman in Early Elizabethan Printed Miscellanies," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 235.

3 Heale, 243.

4 Catherine Bates, "Astrophil and the Manic Wit of the Abject Male," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 41, no 1 (Winter 2001): 2.

5 For this argument and a demonstration of the majority tradition accepting this position, see Judith Owens, "The Poetics of Accommodation in Spenser's 'Epithalamion,'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 40, no 1 (Winter 2000): 41-62.

naissance, many questions remain concerning how the transition away from an economic model of marriage gained popular acceptance.<sup>6</sup> How did companionate marriage as a model for emotional investment and love come to replace more economic models of marriage as exchange of goods and land? Examining the treatment of relationships in popular literature provides a partial answer to this question. In Spenser's poetry, the prioritization of love and personalized depiction of the female love object cohere in a defense of companionate marriage as opposed to a more mercantilist or courtly love model.

I argue that even though the critique of Sidney ignores the significant innovations in his treatment of the female love object, that criticism does highlight the fact that the outcome in *Astrophil and Stella* does little to advance reciprocal relationships. However, in contrast, Spenser, in Book III of the *Faerie Queene*, first provokes problems with courtly love relationships and then legitimates the alternative of love as an emotional experience. The *Amoretti* further develops this alternative in the concord of courtship, and that alternative flourishes in the hermeneutic privileging of companionate marriage in *Epithalamion*.

### Courtly Love and Sir Phillip Sidney

Critics have hotly debated the definition of what exactly constitutes courtly love poetry, and the role of the lady is a central component of that debate.<sup>7</sup> While Jacques Lacan and later critics like Bates and Sheila Cavanaugh identify courtly love poetry as synonymous with inequality, Sidney's presentation and treatment of Stella undermines

6 See Martha Howell, "The Properties of Marriage in Late Medieval Europe: Commercial Wealth and the Creation of Modern Marriage," in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Isabel Davis, Miriam Muller, and Sarah Rees Jones (Belgium: Brepols, 2003) 17. She defines companionate marriage as associated with "sexual desire, mutuality, friendship, and exclusivity" (17). This concept will be more fully addressed in sections two and three.

7 See Janina Traxler, "Courtly and Uncourtly Love in the Prose *Tristan*," in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture*, eds. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 1994), 162, where she says these are a natural attraction for the beloved, a belief that the lover is unworthy of the beloved, and "a tendency for the characterization of the love to rise above mere carnality to something more spiritual." See Bernard O'Donoghue, *The Courtly Love Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1982). He presents a more expansive definition. He says that the attraction/love results in the lover becoming the lady's servant. This master/slave dynamic plays a central role in most definitions of courtly love and particularly in critical approaches focusing on power and gender dynamics in the courtly love tradition. O'Donoghue also points out the key feature of separation or distance as frustrating the potential relationship between the lover and lady.

the validity of this critical conclusion. Similarly, Marotti and Louis Montrose in the New Historicist tradition symptomatically treat Sidney's political motives as evidence for his use of poetry to support his self-presentation. However, Sidney interrogates the Petrarchan tradition to recuperate Petrarch from the empty stereotypes in other poetry sequences. In so doing, he depicts Stella as highly personalized and affective, a woman both desired and desiring. Ultimately, however, the aforementioned critics do highlight a central fracture in both Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and the traditional courtly love genre; they sublimate anxiety about impossible relationship options. In the pervasive concern with shame and public perception concerning an illicit (adulterous) relationship, both *Astrophil* and *Stella* end the sequence as emotionally ambivalent, isolated, and fragmented. While none of the aforementioned critics examine the impossibility of pragmatic relationship options as leading to anxiety, their critical readings aid my effort to realign the treatment of Sidney to recognize the innovations he brings to courtly love poetry as well as acknowledge the frustrated ending.

In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Jacques Lacan uses the courtly love genre to represent the effort to control behavior and figure frustrated desire. He reads courtly love as defining an ideal "to be found at the origin of a moral code, including a whole series of modes of behavior, of loyalties, measures, services, and exemplary forms of conduct."<sup>8</sup> For Lacan, courtly love's connection with a moral code means that desire and anxiety are inextricably intertwined. Any code that states what is allowed simultaneously marks that which is not allowed, and in the realm of erotics, the transgressive nature of desire complicates any attempt to ascribe to an acceptable code.<sup>9</sup> His explanations of sexuality and identity shed light on how courtly love attempts to create a fictionalized, femi-

8 Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), 145

9 Lacan, 151-153

nized love object that “stands in for male lack.”<sup>10</sup> The twisting of the language of love to express political goals and male desire centers the emotion in the sequence on the poet, implying that the female subject—both as topic of the sequence and person under the domain of the sovereign poet—is incapable of love. However, in his treatment of Petrarchanism, politics, and Stella, Sidney revises courtly love poetry.

Just as the invocation of Petrarchan tropes ranges from authentic to (un)intentionally parodic in the poetry, critics often confuse inaccurate assumptions about Petrarchanism with what Petrarch really wrote. As a result, critics like Marotti and Montrose have labeled Sidney’s poetry as Petrarchan and sacrificed it on the altar of masculine lack. Their symptomatic treatment of Sidney often highlights his political and authorial projections to the detriment of the female love object. All of these critical assumptions regarding Petrarch and Sidney depend upon an inexact definition of Petrarchanism. To understand how Sidney, as Patricia Berrahou Phillippy states, “both struggles against Petrarchism and points toward its limits,”<sup>11</sup> we must look at how Sidney actually returns to the psychological ambivalence and high degree of personalization in Petrarch originally.

Sidney’s sequence consciously avoids and even parodies Petrarchan stereotypes while also returning to the original emotional depth in Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*. In sonnet 15, Sidney criticizes his own and others’ reliance on stereotyped tropes:

10 Bates, 7. See also Neal Goldstein, “*Love’s Labor’s Lost* and the Renaissance Vision of Love,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1974): 339. What he calls anti-feminism depends largely upon what Lacan sees as characteristic of courtly love in which “nothing seems to point to what might be called the advancement of women or indeed their emancipation” (147). These readings focus on aspects of the courtly love genre as deployed by some writers, but as I will argue, this blanket approach does not properly apply to Sidney, who revises courtly love poetry.

11 Patricia Berrahou Phillippy, *Love’s Remedies: Recantation and Renaissance Lyric Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1995), 142. I am in debt to her thoughts on the recasting of Petrarchanism, but I use it to support my argument that Sidney fundamentally changes the courtly love tradition to allow the genre to change from a lyric form for political and social purposes to a genre of poetry about and for the emotional experience of mutual love.

You that poor Petrarch's long deceased woes,  
 With new-born sighs and denizen'd wit do sing.  
 You take wrong ways, those far-fet helps be such,  
 As do bewray a want of inward touch:  
 And sure at length stol'n goods do come to light (7-11).<sup>12</sup>

Sidney is aware of the ease with which Petrarch's woes can be domesticated, "denizen'd," and in that process of appropriation, the authenticity of Petrarch's original is lost, becoming nothing more than "stol'n goods." Just as the first sonnet ends with an admonition to "look in thy heart and write" after worrying about the accomplishments of others, sonnet 15 consciously separates the empty copying of Petrarchan stereotypes common to late sixteenth-century England and the writing of love poetry.

Sidney distinguishes between crude imitation and creative emulation of Petrarch. In sonnet 71, he uses Rime 248 from Petrarch wherein Petrarch lauds Laura's beauty and virtue as the perfection of nature and heaven. Sidney also celebrates Stella's beauty and virtue. However, Sidney's unexpected ending diverges from the Petrarchan model: "So while thy beauty draws the heart to love, / As fast as thy Virtue bends that love to good: / 'But ah,' Desire still cries, 'give me some food'" (12-15). By drawing upon what Richard Strier calls the "sustained insistence on the importance and value of the bodily"<sup>13</sup> in Petrarch and adding a spin uniquely Sidneyan, this ending demonstrates a poet interrogating a great model (Petrarch) to emulate that which he admires while injecting his own creativity. In this way, Sidney recuperates Petrarchanism from the empty stereotypes. Just as Petrarch struggles with attraction to Laura and

12 Sir Phillip Sidney, "Astrophil and Stella," in *Sir Philip Sidney: Selected Writings*, ed. Richard Dutton (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987). All Sidney citations from this text.

13 Richard Strier, "The Refusal to be Judged in Petrarch and Shakespeare," in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Michael Schoenfeldt (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 73. I am indebted to Strier's reformulation of Petrarch and clarification of Petrarchanism. Without Strier's work on Petrarch, I would have read Petrarch and, therefore, Petrarchanism in Sidney and Spenser, with the same stereotypical bias that equates Petrarch with distilled tropes and positions with little in common with what Petrarch actually wrote.

awareness of the transgressive element of his attraction to a married woman, Sidney explores this same psychological ambivalence in regard to his desire, concluding “Then Love is sin, and let me sinful be” (14.14). Petrarch explores the tension between his desire and his admission of the sinfulness of desire, and Sidney is most purely Petrarchan when he presents the potentially transgressive component of the relationship between Astrophil and Stella. Therefore, Sidney revises the courtly love genre by both critiquing the hollowing out of Petrarch’s poetry through inaccurate copying and directly engaging with the emotional valences of Petrarch.

The dimensions of desire in *Astrophil and Stella* are further marked by the intersection of desire for Stella (and Stella for Astrophil) with politics. Maureen Quilligan claims that “it is the author’s total control over Stella as a (silent) character in his plot which enacts his masculine, social mastery.”<sup>14</sup> She sees the repeated references to Sidney’s political career as allowing him to complain about career frustrations and posture for preferment through using a falsely professed love for Stella. For example, she reads sonnet 30’s references to “the Turkish new-moone,” “Poles’ right kind means,” “Muscovy,” and other locations of his political service as unnecessarily distracting the reader from Stella in order to prioritize Sidney’s political career. However, all of these sonnets about political frustrations and activities also profess a willingness to suffer greater political disadvantage for Stella. Indeed, they frame the political ambition as coming not from Sidney/Astrophil, but “Others [ . . . ] think that I think state errors to redress” (23.7-8). On closer examination, there is little evidence for the criticism of Sidney’s careerist ambitions. Instead, there is an acute awareness of the political consequences of this love and (most of the time) a willingness to suffer those consequences: “I see my course to lose myself doth bend: / I see and yet no greater sorrow take, / Than that I lose no more for Stella’s sake” (18.12-14). In placing desire for Stella against self-ruin and social pressure, Sidney revises not only the courtly love tradition but also undermines its supposed purpose of prescribing

14 Quoted in Phillipy, 157.

behavior for the aristocracy. Friends advise him “that to my birth I owe / Nobler desires, least else that friendly foe, / Great expectation, wear a train of shame” (21.6-8). The weight of the aristocratic order opposes the transgressive relationship desired in the sequence, and by recognizing the cost of shame, Sidney’s poetry ceases to support that aristocratic order and begins to challenge it. Politics certainly texture Sidney’s poetry, but not in the way Quilligan assumes. Sidney’s political experience makes his willingness to defy the advice of friends and accept the political consequences more striking, because he knows what could happen.

Further, Stella’s own resistance is actually the product of a worried woman aware of social expectations. She echoes the advice of his friends, and resists her desire in the face of social pressure:

I joyed, but straight thus wat’red was my wine,  
That love she did, but loved a Love not blind,  
Which would not let me, whom she loved, decline  
From nobler course, fit for my birth and mind (62.5-8).

The mutual awareness of political pressure and expectations of class reverse the conclusion that the sonnet sequence works to advance Sidney’s political career; rather, the sequence testifies to moments wherein he willingly chooses to stymie it. These moments not only revise but undermine the courtly love tradition in such a way that the emotional struggle accompanying desire between two people takes center stage.

Related to the sophisticated political valences in the sequence, the presentation of Stella as a speaking, desiring, reasoning lady most directly challenges the courtly love tradition. As we will see, however, the frustration and fragmentation of the sequence’s ending relates to the pragmatic difficulties accompanying the proposed relationship. The intrusion of practicality largely depends upon the identity of Stella as the married Lady Rich, which Sid-

ney repeatedly references but especially notes in sonnet 35 when he puns on the word “rich” and follows it with “naming my Stella’s name” (10).<sup>15</sup> Critics have attacked Stella’s voicedness “as part of Astrophil’s project of valorizing the voice of the male poet by manipulating and silencing Stella’s voice”<sup>16</sup> or as merely participating in a social order that allows women to speak only in relation to men. However, the actual sequence does not support these arguments.

Sonnet 57 describes Stella’s empathy and a point of change in which she begins to reciprocate Astrophil’s desire. He hopes to catch her unguarded so that his moans and complaints will induce her momentary sympathy. Instead, she internalizes his pain and shares in his expression:

She heard my plaints, and did not only hear,  
But them (so sweet is she) most sweetly sing,  
With that fair breast making woe’s darkness clear:  
A pretty case—I hoped her to bring  
To feel my griefs, and she with face and voice  
So sweets my pains, that my pains me rejoice (9-14).

In this moment of emotional exchange, Astrophil and Stella are united in experiencing and projecting feelings. Theresa Brennan would call this the “transmission of affect,” by which she means “that the emotions or affects of one person, and the enhancing or depressing energies these affects entail, can enter into another.”<sup>17</sup> Brennan explores how the transmission of affect influences the development of relationships. When affect leads to a synchronization

15 Walter Friedrich, “The Stella of Astrophil,” *ELH* 3, no 2 (Jan 1936): 114, argues that Stella has been misinterpreted as Lady Rich. His evidence for this claim is the dedication of the “Doleful Lay of Clorinda” to Sidney’s widow. However, since 1936, his position has been disproved and the identity of Lady Rich as Stella solidified. Sidney had earlier (1570s) courted Penelope Devereux before her marriage to Lord Rich.

16 Phillipy, 158.

17 Theresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004), 3.

of feelings and emotions, the reciprocity of that exchange creates a strong emotional bond. Using Brennan, I argue that the exchange of affect in Sidney's sequence marks a mutual relationship that transcends the criticism of both the courtly love genre from Lacan and also the specific criticism of Sidney as careerist, misogynist, or manipulative. In addition to the example of sonnet 57, there are multiple references to Stella's expressions and the emotions signified.<sup>18</sup> Careful attention to the lady's emotional state and the perception of that state by the lover (and vice versa) personalizes both the lady and the relationship.

In spite of these innovations, the intrusion of transgressive desire mitigates Sidney's revision by reinforcing the dominant view of aristocratic marriage. With both Sidney and Lady Rich as married aristocrats, adultery not only challenges their social order, especially from Lady Rich, but also places paradoxical limits on the relationship. Broken marriage bonds on the part of the woman violated the marriage contract, a largely economical property arrangement. The emotional reciprocity of the sonnet sequence looks forward to the kind of relationship Emma Lipton calls "sacramental marriage," which I will argue is quite similar to companionate marriage,<sup>19</sup> but given that Astrophil and Stella experience this reciprocity in a relationship without the potential outcome of marriage, that reciprocity ultimately prefigures their undoing. The transgressive desire

18 See sonnet 66 where "Stella's eyes sent to me the beams of bliss" (11) and also sonnet 86 where her "change of looks" (1) is lamented because that transmission of affect (dissatisfaction) signifies pain and uncertainty for the relationship. Multiple other examples exist to support this point.

19 Emma Lipton, *Affections of the Mind: The Politics of Sacramental Marriage in Late Medieval English Literature* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2007), 3. Lipton defines sacramental marriage as "based in love and mutual consent" (3). This model of marriage closely parallels what I refer to as companionate marriage. Her formulation of sacramental marriage as responsive to the aristocracy's hierarchical model of marriage tightly bound to economic concerns supports my later argument that the rise of companionate marriage reformulated social views concerning marriage and the women involved in those marriages. Indeed, sacramental and companionate marriage undermine dominant models and require mutuality. In so doing, these models aid in the revision of accepted views of women in those marriages. While neither sacramental nor companionate marriage creates a state of gender equality, both, I will argue, are essential steps toward the demands for equality later.

that drives the sequence also collapses the relationship as the implications of that transgressive desire intrude in the form of anxiety, alienation, and shame.

The sonnets most interested in naming Lady Rich as Stella are also most invested in the potential adultery and lover's jealousy. In sonnet 24, Sidney indirectly speaks of his opposition, Lady Rich's husband:

But that rich fool, who by blind Fortune's lot  
 The richest gem of love and life enjoys,  
 And can with foul abuse such beauties blot;  
 Let him, deprived of sweet but unfelt joys,  
 (Exil'd for aye from those high treasures, which  
 He knows not) grow in only folly rich (9-14).

A dichotomy is implied between the rich fool and wise lover who appreciates the lady's real riches when the fool cannot in spite of possessing her. This sentiment is echoed at the end of sonnet 37 where the lady "Rich in all beauties" is celebrated for all things except that "Rich she is" (6,14). Ironically, the lady's label of Rich by virtue of her husband's name makes her most un-wealthy in that her desire is bounded by the contract of marriage.

In the three songs in which Stella's actual voice is quoted, there is an underlying concern with shame and illicit desire as defined in relation to marriage. In the fourth song, Astrophil argues that "Jealousy itself doth sleep" (10) and "Fear not else, none can us spy" (22) to convince Stella to "Take me to thee, and thee to me" (5). Who else would jealousy be then the same "rich fool" of sonnet 24? The insidious presence of the lady's husband as limiting the desire of both Astrophil and Stella corrodes the progression of the relationship. As Stella ends each stanza with negation—"No, no, no, no, my dear, let be"—she mediates between the transgressive desire of the

lovers and the intruding limits of her marriage. Even in the eighth song when Astrophil and Stella “Did for mutual comfort meet,” (6) her oppression is that “Her fair neck a foul yoke bare” (10). A yoke and marriage are commonly associated in the Bible as well as in early modern sermons and literature. Hence, the oppressive presence of Stella’s marriage both drives the transgressive desire she and Astrophil share and places limits on it. In this song she again refuses Astrophil’s advances, urges him to stop loving her, and then leaves him at the song’s end. As the sequence progresses to the end, Stella continues to profess love but refuse to exceed the boundaries of her ‘yoke.’ As the two become both psychologically and physically alienated from each other, the transgressive nature of their desire sabotages the tenuous relationship the two had built. With this fragmentation, Sidney’s sequence ends in a very similar place to other courtly love poetry, which is why many of the aforementioned critics include Sidney when identifying ambitious masculinity and misogyny in courtly love poetry.

The courtly love tradition contains virtually no viable relationship options, which is a *prima facie* characteristic of the genre. Sidney significantly revises the tradition in regard to Petrarchanism, politics, and the personalization of Stella, but Stella really has to choose between adultery or remaining the cruel, resistant stereotype. Without pragmatic options, Sidney’s sequence participates in the courtly love paradigm. However, Sidney’s innovations figure the possibility of an alternative poetic approach that centers the lyric form on the emotional experience of mutual love without the component of transgressive desire. Spenser’s depiction of relationships in Book 3 of the *Faerie Queene* takes up where Sidney left off by exploring the inherent contradictions of the courtly love tradition and positing other options.

### **Companionate Marriage and Book III of the *Faerie Queene***

Both courtly love and the challenges to it found in Spenser’s writing depend upon transformations. These transformations lead either to a traditional courtly love outcome or a concord of mutuality similar

to companionate marriage. In Spenser's inventive fashion,<sup>20</sup> the language of love shows the failure of courtly love and directs attention toward an alternative transformative process involving both the lady and lover. This transformation juxtaposes the futile ends of courtly love and the pragmatic possibility of companionate marriage. In Book III of the *Faerie Queene*, the world of Fairyland both critiques the courtly love tradition and presents a companionate alternative.<sup>21</sup>

Companionate marriage in early modern society challenges the norm by presenting a more horizontal version of love as opposed to older hierarchical models. Lawrence Stone provides the most complete definition of the term companionate marriage and also a theory for why companionate marriage spread and replaced the more economic model of arranged marriages. Stone focuses on the rise of affective individualism as the cause behind the shift from economic models of marital exchange to companionate marriage.<sup>22</sup> However, his representation of companionate marriage depends upon material from the aristocracy and upper classes, which would support a conclusion that companionate marriage flourished only among these upper classes. Yet, he also claims that "the ideal companionate marriage first developed as a norm among the more pious, often nonconformist, middle-class families of the late seventeenth century."<sup>23</sup> This inconsistency has sparked numerous responses, and as Elizabeth Heale points out, the emphasis upon free choice and mutual obligation threatened the aristocratic system in the middle

20 Spenser's reputation for rejecting the traditional forms, uses, and meanings of language derives from his unique vocabulary and derivation of a unique sonnet form. Rebeca Helfer, "The Death of the 'New Poete': Virgillian Ruin and Ciceronian Recollection in Spenser's 'The Shepheardes Calender,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 56, no 3 (Autumn 2003): 737, explores Spenser's role as a "literary architect." She deals primarily with his rhetorical inventiveness and fusion of Cicero and Virgil. However, the point about Spenser's linguistic inventiveness connects to the invention of an alternative to courtly love as adoration for another person depending upon mutuality.

21 Gareth Roberts, "Women and Magic in Love Poetry," in *Representing Women in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: UofMissouri Press, 1997), 73, argues, as I do, that "Spenser's book of chastity becomes even more surprising as a critique of love poetry." His essay informs my argument about the critique levied in Book III, but he does not examine the alternative portrayal of marriage that comprises a central component of my argument.

22 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 153.

23 Stone, 234.

to late sixteenth century.<sup>24</sup> Some attack Stone's methodology and conclusions while many feminists attack the idea of companionate marriage as desirable.<sup>25</sup> All, however, recognize that ideas concerning marriage in the late medieval and early modern periods began the transformation into accepting and proliferating companionate marriage.

I urge that we use this agreement as a point of departure to first ask why companionate marriage became the dominant paradigm. A number of scholars have attempted to answer this question, and Martha Howell points out that there is not a clear explanation of why companionate marriage succeeded. She posits that companionate marriage better fits into a changing economic system where movable property replaced immovable ties to land and family estates.<sup>26</sup> While her essay provides a significant answer, it is still only a partial answer. Including the influence of the Protestant Reformation provides another piece of the puzzle. Christine Peters writes about the "distinctively Protestant emphasis on companionate marriage."<sup>27</sup> While all of these components participate in the rise of companionate marriage, I argue that they leave out something that Stone's initial argument implied: the focus on the language of love, the portrayal of marriage as "a prime source of personal pleasure, both emotional and sexual,"<sup>28</sup> and the central role of literature and popular culture.

24 Elizabeth Heale, "Women and the Courtly Love Lyric: The Devonshire MS (BL Additional 17492)," *The Modern Language Review* 90, no 2. (Apr 1995): 305.

25 See John Gillis, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10 (1979): 121-128, for a discussion of Stone's neglect of the poor in his study, and see also Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978). For a feminist critique of companionate marriage, see Lois Schwoerer, "Seventeenth-Century English Women Engraved in Stone?" *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 16, no 4 (Winter 1984): 389-403. I will more directly address the issue of whether companionate marriage was an improvement in the status of women in section three.

26 See specifically the section "Property and Marriage" beginning on page 30.

27 Christine Peters, "Gender, Sacrament and Ritual: The Making and Meaning of Marriage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England," *Past and Present* 169 (2000): 63.

28 Stone, 165.

Indeed, the portrayal of prototypical companionate marriage in popular entertainment allows us to realize a largely unrecognized role played by poets like Spenser and Sidney. With the confluence of the rising Protestant view of marriage and the literary revision of more economic or misogynistic models, the foundations were laid for change. Just as Sidney's revisions to the courtly love genre significantly impact our understanding of the role and power of the lady, Spenser interacts with courtly love to support mutual love and attachment as integral components of a relationship. In cooperation with the economic, social, and religious trends, the confrontation with and critique of older models of marriage and courtship paved the way for the transformation of marriage away from the more economic, male-dominated systems to companionate marriage. While companionate marriage certainly is not a purely egalitarian model, it does emphasize leveling out the hierarchy, which engenders a greater focus on female agency through prioritizing mutual love. Spenser's interaction with love in Fairyland occurs most clearly in Book III of the *Faerie Queene*, and this book simultaneously undermines courtly love and supports an alternative emphasizing mutuality and emotional commitment.

Fairyland reflects the practical consequences of the courtly love tradition while also exemplifying what Spenser sees as the beneficial transformation in the language of love, which allows for the more equal concord of mutual love in companionate marriage.<sup>29</sup> By combining expression and emotion as Spenser does, feelings function to emphasize similarity. Rei Terada analyzes the place of emotion in a postmodern world, but no matter the time period, she argues that "it is the special mission of feelings to identify correspondences, phenomenalizing the unity between subjects and objects."<sup>30</sup> Terada's connection of feelings with unity between subjects and objects

29 Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman: The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England* (University Park: Penn State UP, 1992), 251, claims that the *Faerie Queene* includes "the most extensive and eloquent defense and encomium of the feminine [. . .] in the Renaissance."

30 Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the "Death of the Subject"* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001), 12.

is important in linking Sidney's innovations with the paradigm of love developed by Spenser. In Sidney's text, Stella and Astrophil's exchange of affects emphasizes their similarity. In much the same way, Spenser's appropriation of Sidney and inscription of this type of love emphasizes likeness; this makes attempts to define women as radically other more difficult. To flesh out Spenser's view of love and marriage, we must begin by exploring the seeming dichotomy between Fairyland as reflecting surface and exemplar. The transformation enacted *upon* Florimell in contrast to the transformations enacted *by* Amoret and Britomart show the failure of the "reflecting surface" of courtly love and the "exemplar" in the alternative of companionate marriage.

For Spenser, erotic desire and love occur simultaneously, and his view of love includes sexuality while separating transgressive from healthy desire. Stan Hinton points out that "Along with the positive power of love to provoke virtue, there is even in the virtuous, the inevitable smart and the thin line between love and lust."<sup>31</sup> By exploring the transformations connected to transgressive desire and love, a polemic of courtly love and actual love emerges. While the story of Florimell has been interpreted in a variety of ways, her character exemplifies the effect of the perverse transformation of transgressive desire. Just as the courtly love tradition often transforms a woman into merely an object to substitute for lack, Florimell is transformed into an embodiment of transgressive desire itself. Florimell constantly flees with "her eye she backward threw, / As fearing euill, that pursewd her fast," and even the good knights Arthur and Guyon chase her (3.1.16.1-2).<sup>32</sup> These usually good knights join the pursuit "full of great enuie and fell gealosy" (3.1.18.2). While some critics have read this incident as a struggle

31 Stan Hinton, "The Poet and his Narrator: Spenser's Epic Voice," *ELH* 41, no 2 (Summer 1974): 169.

32 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche (London: Penguin, 1978). All quotations from *The Faerie Queene* come from this edition.

only between lust and love,<sup>33</sup> envy and jealousy are emotional states more closely aligned with the transgressive desire that sabotages the relationship between Astrophil and Stella. The lover's jealousy of the husband and envy of his possession of the lady derives from the transgressive nature of their desire as exceeding the boundaries of socially approved behavior, and these motivations mark that desire as necessarily transgressive. Similarly, Spenser's use of these terms registers inappropriately directed desire.

In Sidney's sequence, he recuperates both Petrarch and the lady from the dominant courtly love tradition in order to explore a possible relationship. In his depiction of transgressive desire, Spenser also highlights the inadequacy of empty Petrarchan stereotypes and iconic women. William Alan Oram explains that a female witch creates an impersonator, Snowy Florimell, "out of the materials used for traditional comparison in Petrarchan love poetry—eyes like lamps, hair like golden wire, skin white as snow. The False Florimell behaves like a sonnet lady too, remaining beautiful but unattainable."<sup>34</sup> Snowy Florimell essentially displaces the real Florimell. In fact, Snowy Florimell imitates Florimell so well that "fairer than her selfe" she seems (3.8.9.5). In transforming Florimell into her sonnet-lady form, the identity of the real character disappears. By parodying the confusion of Snowy Florimell and Florimell, Spenser critiques any kind of desire that does not focus upon the character of a person. As David Miller states, "But for Spenser the internalized image of the beloved is not less 'real' than her physical presence but more so."<sup>35</sup> In the character Florimell, the flaws of a courtly depiction emerge when transgressive desire drives attraction.

33 David Miller, "Spenser's Vocation, Spenser's Career," *ELH* 50, no 2 (Summer 1983): 199, explains the struggle experienced by Arthur and Guyon in this instance: "But men also shape themselves as moral creatures, a meditative process analogous to gestation but more complex, in which 'love' (the impulse to form) struggles with 'lust' (the impulse to matter), seeking to fashion the inner man as it did aboriginal chaos."

34 William Alan Oram, *Edmund Spenser: Twayne's English Author Series*, ed. Arthur Kinney (New York: Twayne Publishing, 1997), 120.

35 Miller, 230. In using *An Hymne in Honour of Beautie*, Miller articulates that for Spenser "Beauty, after all, is not the 'outward shew of things' (191). Mere 'proportion of the outward part' never moves 'affection of the inward mind'" (203). This clear position reiterates the point made above concerning the failure of valuing outward beauty alone while pointing toward a necessary appreciation of all aspects of a beloved, which only love can do.

In the Florimell story, Spenser problematizes the courtly love tradition that employs stereotypical Petrarchan tropes, empty ideals of women, and desire that values appearance above character.<sup>36</sup> Sidney's struggle to revise this tradition both makes Spenser's critique possible and infuses it with more meaning and effectiveness. Indeed, "the suspect nature of beauty as a motivating principle"<sup>37</sup> derives from the separation of beauty from personalization. In Book 3, a model of love increases the disconnect between men and women if it is based only on external beauty, dismissal of female uniqueness, and transgressive desire. The transformation enacted upon Florimell precludes any possibility of a real relationship. Spenser follows this critique embedded in the allegory of Fairyland by presenting an exemplar.

That alternative also includes transformation, but the transformations experienced by Amoret and Britomart simultaneously reinforce the critique of courtly love and adumbrate a companionate marriage model. As such, Fairyland in this case serves as the exemplar for society, rather than the reflection. Amoret begins "pure and vnspotted from all loathly crime" (3.6.3.4), the expression of "goodly womanhead" (3.6.51.9). Initially, Amoret's experiences echo Florimell's when she is abducted by Scudamore and then later by Busirane. The capture and torture of Amoret has been read as pornographic,<sup>38</sup> but Susanne Lindgren Wofford argues that "Spenser looks at Busirane's art from the point of view of a woman and condemns it."<sup>39</sup> I would argue that the scene is both pornographic and condemnatory. The pornographic elements both enhance the commentary and inscribe transgressive desire into a threatening scene

36 Transformation on the basis of lust fails, and the effect of that transformation is stasis, and "Stasis, here as elsewhere in Spenser, is degrading" (Oram, 119). Hence, transformation and stasis in the courtly love tradition are both problematic.

37 Hinton, 177.

38 See Sheila Cavanaugh who reads this as torture and Spenser as writing sadistic pornography. A variety of approaches on this topic exist.

39 Susanne Lindgren Wofford, "The Bold Reader in the House of Busyrane," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1993), 748.

wherein Amoret (and Britomart) can either go the way of Florimell or choose a view of love as shared desire developing in a mutual relationship.

By personalizing and describing the female perspective, Spenser revises the courtly love traditions much as Sidney does by inhabiting the role of Stella. Spenser specifically has Scudamore use the verb “pend” to quantify Amoret’s torture (3.11.11.1). As her lover, he likely has intimate awareness of the ways penning can be used against a woman, and the term as a pun references both written attacks and the penis.<sup>40</sup> Just as the traditional courtly love poet uses his pen to create an idealized female figure to play against, Busirane uses his pen to try to transform Amoret into a lady responsive to his attempts at reconfiguration. Yet, in this torture, Amoret resists his transformative efforts, though her chest and bowels are riven apart and a dart pierces her heart. She resists “All for she Scudamore will not deny” (3.11.11.5). Just as Sidney’s poetry inhabits Stella’s role and voicedness, Spenser creates a strong female who refuses to be idealized into a courtly love construct. Spenser centers the reader’s attention on Amoret’s perspective and suffering by describing Amoret’s resistance and connecting her torture to both literary and potentially physical sexual violation. In so doing, he critiques the institution that participates in that form of literary torture. Wofford states that Busirane is “a figure of the male poet who has drawn her into a pornographic love poem (a love poetry that abuses women by literalizing the clichés of Petrarchan sonnets).”<sup>41</sup> While the literalization of stereotypical Petrarchan tropes supports my reading of this event as a critique of courtly love poetry, it is important to look beyond this critique to the reversal of focus.

40 Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 49, notes that the pen is associated with the penis. See also Maurice Hunt, “Managing Spenser, Managing Shakespeare in *Comus*,” *Neophilologus* 88 (April 2004): 322, who notes this connection, but he points out that it is a rare pun: “Less common, quite rare in fact, is the similar (and more biologically precise) metaphor of the male poet’s pen as a phallus, creating new life on the virginal whiteness of paper.” However, in spite of this rarity, he directly connects the phallic use of the word pen to the torture of Amoret by Busirane (325).

41 Wofford, 749. See also Mark Rose, *Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1970), who develops the idea that the tortures in the house of Busirane are literalizations of the conventions of Petrarchan sonnets.

In courtly love poetry, the poet figure and the reader occupy the same space, but in the torture of Amoret, Spenser focuses on the female victim rather than the male torturer. The lurid description of Amoret's wounds blurs the boundary between the exposure of her body and emotions. She stands bound "bleeding forth her fainting spright" (3.12.20.7) from the "wide wound" (3.12.20.5) in her chest, and "At that wide orifice her trembling hart / Was drawne forth, and in siluer basin layd, / Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart" (3.12.21.1-3). Spenser's interest in her transfixed heart echoes a common trope in courtly love poetry wherein the beloved is compared to a hart or deer to be pursued by the lover and fixed with an arrow or dart. In Amoret's case, that pursuit is literalized as well as the violent implications of the conflation of her body and emotions. In spite of Busirane's efforts to "all perforce to make her him to loue," (3.12.31.6) his attempt to incite Amoret's desire depends upon violating force. By intricately describing how Busirane attempts to control Amoret's love and showing both its failure and the horror, Spenser aligns the reader with Amoret, the female perspective, particularly when posing the question "who can loue the worker of her smart?" (3.12.31.7). This rhetorical question not only applies to Amoret as the implied antecedent of "her," but the lack of Amoret's name in the stanza introduces ambiguity that also implicates the reader, as if to say 'Reader, could you love someone who wounds you while professing love?' or even the author, as if to say 'Can you blame me for not loving someone who hurts me to force love?' This reversal of perspective heightens the tension of the moment wherein Busirane wounds Britomart in her "snowie chest, / That little drops empurpled her faire brest" (3.12.33.4-5). His attack of Britomart echoes his assault of Amoret, but unlike Amoret, Britomart's wound not only spurs her resistance but galvanizes her "exceeding wroth" (3.12.33.6). Britomart defeats Busirane and forces him "his charmes backe to reuerse" (3.12.36.2). This compelled reversal undoes the physical torture through verbal means, furthering the earlier pun of "pend" as applying to both writing (as in traditional courtly love poetry) and assault with the male body.

By staging Britomart's rescue of Amoret as dependent upon forcing Busirane to reverse his written spells, Spenser depicts the defeat of courtly love and points to an opposing view of relationships.<sup>42</sup> Thomas Roche, Jr., sees a commentary on marriage in this scene that participates in this opposing view:

He (Busirane) is an abuse of marriage because the mind he possesses cannot distinguish between the act of marriage and adulterous love. He is an abuse of marriage because the falsity of his view of love can lead only to lust or death [. . .] He becomes the denial of the unity of body and soul in true love.<sup>43</sup>

In the rejection of courtly love, Spenser identifies an alternative: the celebration of mutual love as the cement of a companionate marriage and expressed through healthy sexual interaction. By texturing this alternative into the story, Spenser uses allegory simultaneously to critique courtly love, as Sidney does, and then to go beyond merely criticizing that paradigm to present an alternative.

Beyond the rescue scene Roche focuses on, the reunion of Amoret and Scudamore further solidifies the view of marriage in Book III. As soon as Amoret is rescued and able to reunite with Scudamore, her tested love motivates her to embrace him as her husband and sexual partner, which she could not do initially. Their union depends upon reciprocal desire:

Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,  
And straightly did embrace her body bright,  
Her body, late the prison of sad paine,  
Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight:  
But she faire Lady ouercommen quight  
Of huge affections, did in pleasure melt,

42 John Rooks, *Love's Courtly Ethic in The Faerie Queene: From Garden to Wilderness*, ed. David M. Bergeron (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1992), 85, observes that "The Amoret-Busirane episode is littered with the trappings of a courtly affair." He presents Busirane in another light and blames Amoret for being the "victim of her own desire" (85). While I disagree with his conclusions, the treatment of the Busirane episode as an allegory of a courtly love affair enacted is an important point in support of my own argument.

43 Thomas Roche, Jr., "Love, Lust, and Sexuality," *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1993), 142.

And in sweete rauishment pourd our her spright.

No word they spake, nor earthly thing they felt,

But like two senceles stocks in long embracement dwells (3.12.45).

In this 1590 sonnet, Amoret and Scudamore experience the confluence of mutual love, desire, and pleasure, whereas previously only one or the other is described as experiencing desire or love. In addition, the overt sexuality in the pouring out of “spright” alludes to orgasm, and Spenser intentionally uses adjectives with positive connotations like “sweet” and connects their physical “embracement” to a non-earthly or potentially divine union, a common view of certain Neoplatonists.<sup>44</sup> Together, this evidence juxtaposes a type of approved sexual pleasure with the transgressive sexual violence of Busirane.<sup>45</sup> In fact, in the next stanza (46), Spenser changes the mythology of the Hermaphrodite and compares the hermaphrodite of his vision (a blissful picture of sexual and spiritual mutuality) to Amoret and Scudamore.<sup>46</sup> For Spenser, Amoret is the paragon of virtue,<sup>47</sup> especially after her transformation from a victim to a strong, personalized woman, who is an equal partner in a marriage she chooses (at the end if not the beginning).

44 A.J. Smith, “The Metaphysic of Love,” *The Review of English Studies* 9 (Nov 1958): 364, looks at different Neoplatonists and shows that many schools accepted certain kinds of physical love as aiding in divine love: “There was general agreement that the chief effect of the higher kinds of human love was the conjoining of the souls of the two lovers to make a perfect union, or unity. Indeed, love itself was commonly defined as a ‘desire to unite oneself with the thing esteemed good’, which ‘would be the soul of the beloved’. Speroni put it neatly when he said that lovers in a perfect love were joined so completely that they lost their proper semblance and became a strange third species, neither male nor female, resembling a hermaphrodite. But the standard conceit was that such lovers’ souls, transformed into each other by a kind of miracle, become ‘one soul in two bodies.’”

45 Stephen Greenblatt, “To Fashion a Gentleman: Spenser and the Destruction of the Bower of Bliss,” in *Critical Essays on Edmund Spenser*, ed. Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 100, states that a fine line between excess and acceptable pleasure exists that depends upon the purpose for justification. If the pleasure serves “some useful purpose, some virtuous end,” then it is acceptable. For Spenser, pleasure in marriage is part of a useful purpose, the marriage itself, and the virtuous end of reproduction.

46 Donald Cheney, “Spenser’s Hermaphrodite and the 1590 Faerie Queene,” *PMLA* 87, no 2 (Mar 1972): 193, argues that the idea of the blissful hermaphrodite was recognizable for Spenser’s readers, though less common than that of the forced, deforming transformation. Cheney refers to this hermaphrodite as “an emblem of completeness and fulfillment” and connects that emblem to the union of Amoret and Scudamore (193).

47 Maureen Quilligan, 141, explains that for Spenser, “the chastity he truly extols is Amoret’s: it is the chastity not of a virgin queen, but of a wedded wife.”

The empowering self-transformation of Amoret enables mutuality rather than isolation; similarly, Britomart transforms herself into an errant knight searching for her chosen beloved. At the end of the transformative process, Britomart “is accepted on her own terms as knight and as lady, neither potential destroyer nor potential victim; and, herself an example of concord, she achieves a further concord in her connection with Artegall.”<sup>48</sup> This metamorphosis based on love is both beneficial and self-willed, unlike the transformations of lust elaborately described in Ovid. Amoret and Britomart actively participate in transformation, unlike Florimell, and this willing participation distinguishes the critique of literalized courtly love from the presentation of companionate marriage. Britomart’s transformation begins because of love of Artegall, “Whose image she had seen in Venus looking glas” (3.1.8.9). She “resolu’d, unweeting to her Sire, / Advuent’rous knighthood on her selfe to don” (3.3.57.5-6). Britomart’s actions exceed the patriarchal order of her father, but that does not result in a condemnation of her actions. Rather, this step necessarily precedes her search for mutual love. As she knights herself and prepares to seek out her beloved, she “fashions herself through loving another.”<sup>49</sup> Here the aloof, impersonal lady of many sonnet sequences dissolves in the face of a woman confident in her strength, virtue, and ability. This unique person chooses to love another, and she matures through this love. If indeed “love is a kind of friendship, friendship a kind of love,”<sup>50</sup> then love requires the man and woman to share their affect-ion in much the same way as Stella and Astrophil’s exchange of affect. This reciprocity undermines the assumed hierarchy of marriage and becomes a central component of companionate marriage. The metamorphoses of Britomart and Amoret function as catalysts for their entrance into a mutual relationship with their lovers.<sup>51</sup>

48 Kathleen Williams, “Venus and Diana: Some Uses of Myth in *The Faerie Queene*,” in *Spenser: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Harry Berger, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 110.

49 Lauren Silberman, “The Hermaphrodite and the Metamorphosis of Spenserian Allegory,” in *Critical Essays on Edmund Spenser*, ed. Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 160.

50 Williams 101.

51 Miller explains, “The lover’s internal portraiture transforms the beloved, but it also transforms the lover himself” (204). This position further substantiates the articulated

Friendship depends upon concord, which for the Renaissance person means the unity of likeness and unlikeness. However, *amicitia*, the highest form of friendship, was most often applied to male-male relationships in the early modern period. Spenser's depiction of the friendship in a companionate relationship challenges that approach. Together with other producers of popular culture, this challenge, as Walter Eggers, Jr., concludes, "offers a new social vision."<sup>52</sup> The fusion of friendship with marriage begins to realize the potential for marital equality and support those arguing that "marriage must be a friendship if it is to flourish and endure."<sup>53</sup> While debate about the benefit of companionate marriage for women has occupied critical discussion, the reality is that there were "vast changes in familial organization, marriage, and gender ideology that took place in early modern England."<sup>54</sup> These changes enabled a shift in the status and view of women because mutual love requires what June McCash calls an accompanying "positive attitude toward women."<sup>55</sup> While quantifying what a "positive attitude" means is difficult, I agree with McCash that shifting attitudes about women inherently precipitate shifts in status. In the case of companionate marriage, these shifts invited a realignment of order in romantic relationships such that women were given more choice and control.

Through Spenser's trio of female characters—Florimell, Amoret, and Britomart—he exposes his discomfort with courtly love. Further, his critique depends upon the innovations introduced

position that love is a process of beneficial change in contrast to the destructive transformations of lust or the idealized stasis in Petrarchan conventions.

52 Walter F. Eggers, Jr., "Love and Likeness in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 28, no 3 (Summer 1977): 333.

53 Robert Arthur Horton, *The Unity of The Faerie Queene* (Athens: U of Georgia Press, 1978), 106.

54 Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: CornellUP, 1993), 42.

55 June Hall McCash, "Mutual Love as a Medieval Ideal," in *Courtly Literature and Context* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 1990), 432. Her essay focuses on the development of mutual love in the late medieval period as paving the foundation for changing ideas about love in the Renaissance. While her focus is different from my own, we both agree that attitudes and feelings about love cause a subsequent change in the view of female worth.

by Sidney, but it importantly presents an alternative, the “exemplar,” that requires there to be pragmatic outcomes such as marriage without the complication of a socially transgressive affair. However, the allegory of the characters does not build the case for love and female worth as clearly as a more direct statement, which emerges in Spenser’s next project: his own sonnet sequence in which he confronts courtly love and defends companionate marriage.

### **The Companionate Marriage Experiment in *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion***

*In* contrast to *Astrophil and Stella*, Spenser’s sequence of *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* cannot be undone by the implications of shame and rejection accompanying socially transgressive desire and adultery. As such, the integral presence of a pragmatic relationship outcome marks Spenser’s sequence as unique and the natural realization of Sidney’s innovations. Spenser’s *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* celebrate a real woman, Elizabeth Boyle, whom Spenser loved and married on June 11, 1594.<sup>56</sup> Marotti points out, “Unlike the other sonnet sequences of the 1590s, the *Amoretti* celebrates a relationship of amorous mutuality. . . Spenser created a sphere of reciprocity

56 J.B. Fletcher, “Mr. Sidney Lee and Spenser’s *Amoretti*,” *Modern Language Notes* 18, no. 4 (April 1903): 111-113, concludes the debate about a subject that was pertinent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Though earlier scholars had argued that Spenser was merely writing about an “Idea,” Fletcher and most scholars since have found direct connection between the personal nature of Spenser’s lady and the actual Elizabeth Boyle. Alexander Judson, *The Life of Edmund Spenser, The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, and Frederick Morgan Padelford, Vol. 9 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1945), states that “the sequence as it stands was intended by the poet to celebrate his courtship of Elizabeth Boyle and to suggest, at least in a broad general way, the course of this affair” (171). See also G.K. Hunter, “Spenser’s *Amoretti* and the English Sonnet Tradition,” *A Theatre for Spenserians*, ed. Judith M. Kennedy and James A. Reither, Papers of the International Spenser Colloquium, 1969 (Toronto: UToronto Press, 1973), who argues that the sequence is “arranged as a history of a courtship leading up to marriage, or the expectation of marriage—and this again is not the natural or inevitable end to a sonnet sequence” (124). This quotation is important for two reasons: first, the biographical basis of the sequence is noted, and second, the unique emphasis on a pragmatic relationship option (companionate marriage) separates this sequence from others of the time. Corroborating these scholars, Waldo McNeir, “An Apology for Spenser’s *Amoretti*,” in *Essential Articles for the study of Edmund Spenser*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972), argues that Spenser “intended” the sonnet sequence “as a record of his courtship of Elizabeth Boyle” (526).

in which love could be fulfilled.”<sup>57</sup> In other words, Spenser defends love as a state of reciprocity that requires both the inherent recognition of the female beloved’s value and the pragmatic outcome of a companionate marriage.

By choosing to use a sonnet sequence to explore a relationship based upon love and “sustained personal commitment”<sup>58</sup> from both parties, Spenser articulates the foundation for a companionate marriage. Though critics like Gregory Chaplin<sup>59</sup> read Spenser’s texts as presenting a choice between marriage and *amicitia*, the poetic texts offer a third alternative: the fusion of marriage and *amicitia*. Spenser’s poetry helps build a model for marital concord that includes a space for marital equality to eventually occupy.

Like Sidney, Spenser’s personalized subject in *Amoretti* directly challenges the desirability of courtly love. Spenser’s lady, like Stella, is also the addressed audience of the sonnet. While the consequences of transgressive desire—shame, political rejection, etc.—mediate Stella’s centrality, Spenser’s lady is “the only woman about whom he cares.”<sup>60</sup> Her personalization includes an emphasis upon the lady’s mind as connected to her beauty and virtue. In sonnet 15, Spenser addresses “ye tradefull Merchants” and compares various jewels and precious metals to his lady’s features, but the conclusion and highest praise is not the lady’s golden hair or ivory skin, but instead “that which fairest is, but few behold, / Her mind adorned with

57 Marotti, 416.

58 Harry Berger, Jr., “Orpheus, Pan, and the Poetics of Misogyny: Spenser’s Critique of Pastoral Love and Art,” *ELH* 50, no 1 (Spring 1983): 49.

59 Gregory Chaplin, “‘One Flesh, One Hear, One Soul’: Renaissance Friendship and Miltonic Marriage,” *Modern Philology* 99, no 2 (Nov 2001): 266-292, has heavily informed this paper, particularly in regard to the Miltonic view of marriage as finding some of its origins in Spenser. See pg. 268 for his discussion of the choice he states Spenser provides.

60 Ilona Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 153. Donna Gibbs, *Spenser’s Amoretti: A Critical Study* (Brookfield: Gower, 1990), also recognizes that the lady is the reader and that the poems were composed to her to read, but she sees the lady as a figure who eventually plays a conventional role. Both Bell and I disagree with Gibbs’ conclusion about the lady’s role, but the recognition of the lady as being addressed as a reader is essential.

vertues manifold" (1,13,14).<sup>61</sup> The appreciation of the lady's virtue results from the lover's regard for the actual lady herself, rather than an idea of a woman. The sonnet contrasts the merchants who value the jewels and other material riches and the lover who values the lady's mind and virtues most. These merchants participate in a system of exchange dependent upon the commodification of the various jewels and gold. Since these commodified objects—the lady's 'ivory' skin and 'golden' hair—also mimic traditional courtly love praises of the lady, Spenser equates trading merchants and traditional courtly love poets. Both search for objects of value but exchange those objects or possess them for their commodity or trade value. While this system works for exchange of jewels and gold, the sonnet separates Spenser's lady from the commodification of other ladies in traditional courtly love sequences. By bracketing the lady's highest qualities as outside the system of exchange, the lady exceeds the courtly love system.

Similar to Sidney, Spenser criticizes the stereotypical use of Petrarchanism. However, unlike Sidney, for whom Petrarch's psychological ambivalence resonated given the transgressive nature of desire in *Astrophil and Stella*, Spenser rejects both the hollowing out of Petrarch and the emotional state of both Petrarch and Sidney's sequences. In sonnet 59, Spenser reverses the familiar trope of the lost bark. In contrast to the lost, unguided bark commonly used to describe the emotional state of the poet, the lady here is "like a steady ship [. . .] and keepes her course aright" (5,6). The lady's "stedfast might" also steadies the lover who is not tossed about by uncertainty, regret, or shame; instead, Spenser says "he most happy who such one loves best" (11,14). Ilona Bell notes that the reversal in status from woman as the weaker vessel to "steady ship" supports "the poet/lover's newly discovered capacity to love the female reader *for* her strength and self-assurance."<sup>62</sup> What Bell does not connect

61 Edmund Spenser, "Amoretti," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1993). All "Amoretti" quotations come from this edition.

62 Bell, 173.

is that the sense of surety in this sonnet depends upon the progression of a relationship in a direction with a pragmatic outcome of companionate marriage. By removing the consequences of socially transgressive desire, the capacity for love in Spenser's sequence is less susceptible to anxiety. The direct contrast between the lady here and the traditional poet figure in a courtly love sequence further entrenches the critique of the courtly love tradition.

In addition to valuing the lady's strength, entering into a companionate relationship requires gaining respect for the lady's intelligence. Spenser's lady possesses dazzling intelligence. Sonnet 43 speaks of the lady's "deep wit" and sonnet 81 "her words so wise." Yet, in the paired sonnets 28 and 29, a scenario occurs that showcases the lady. She wears a laurel leaf, the symbol of poets, which the lover says "Gives me great hope of your relenting mynd" (28.2). Here, as in the previously cited sonnet 15, Spenser connects virtue with the lady's mind. Spenser repeatedly references one of the things he values most as the lady's mind, the seat of her virtue, wit, wise words, and will, which determines whether she will relent. In this convergence of traits, the lady is not only ascribed with a sense of agency but also as an intelligent person whose mind endows her with the ability to be virtuous, wise, and witty. That connection immediately distinguishes the lady from Daphne in Ovid's story of transformation, the topic of the next reflections in the sonnet. Some scholars read this as a threat to the lady, but Louis Martz says, "I do not see how this interchange can be taken as anything but smiling and good-humored, yes, even humorous, in our sense of the word."<sup>63</sup> While Martz does not discuss the unique strength of the lady as a result of her intelligence and the poet's value of that intelligence, these personal characteristics make the transformation non-threatening.

Spenser traditionally subsumes Ovidian transformation myths and shapes them for his own purposes (as he did with the Hermaphrodite myth), removing the destructive connotation of trans-

63 Louis Martz, "Amoretti," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1993), 805.

formation. Spenser conceives of transformation based upon love as necessary. As with *Amoret*, transformation is essential for the union of marriage, which depends upon mutuality and compromise. At the same time, the lover undergoes a transformation and comes to depend upon the lady.<sup>64</sup> Through their interactions, “Spenser makes a point of telling us that he has learned the art of courtship, not from earlier poets, but from the experience of communicating to and with a particular Elizabethan woman.”<sup>65</sup> Particularly in the exchange in sonnets 28 and 29, Spenser’s poet figure learns he cannot control the courtship. The lady turns the tables in the next sonnet and the lover admits defeat:

See how the stubborn damzell doth deprave  
 My simple meaning with disdaynfull scorne:  
 And by the bay which I unto her gave,  
 Accoumpts my selfe her captive quite forlorn.  
 “The bay,” quoth she, “is of the victours borne,  
 Yielded them by the vanquisht as theyr meeds,  
 And they therewith doe poetes heads adorne,  
 To sing the glory of their famous deedes (29.1-8).

The lady’s retort is unique in these sonnet sequences; the fact that the retort is an intelligent argument that vanquishes the poet is truly revolutionary. The give and take in this exchange “accommodates both sides of the battle; the victorious poetic and creative source is both himself and his lady.”<sup>66</sup> Just as Spenser presents a view of mar-

64 Miller writes about the transformative process essential for lovers. His analysis of the *Amoretti* and *Faerie Queene* validate the argument distinguishing between the negative transformative process of lust and the beneficial transformation of love.

65 Bell, 161. Martz in particular reads Spenser as the experienced male figure educating the witty but fickle lady. However, Bell reads the lady as teaching the poet figure how to proceed in courtship. I agree with her interpretation and use her argument to support my own that Spenser’s sonnet project undermines the courtly love tradition, which would more closely subscribe to the male educator theory, to pose a model requiring mutual equality leading to companionate marriage.

66 Miller, 547.

riage that depends on mutuality, the successful courtship depends upon a certain edginess that requires two equal combatants. While she may be “stubborn,” that very quality enables her retort and on-going participation in the verbal debate and play staged throughout the sequence. The lady’s attributes of virtue, wit, and intelligence make her a match for the poet, who in her finds a companion suited to him.

While Spenser’s portrayal of the lady deviates from tradition and depends upon Sidney’s revisions, Spenser goes further to parody the conventions as well. Oram explains that Spenser “shows the deficiencies of the Petrarchan tradition [. . .] by playing the Petrarchan lover.”<sup>67</sup> While Oram confuses stereotyped conventions with what Petrarch actually does in his poetry, it is important to note that Spenser intentionally parodies accepted conventions. In the act of parody, Spenser both accentuates his lady’s personality and points out the inadequacy of convention in forming reciprocal relationships. Sonnets 16 and 18 demonstrate this overt parody. In sonnet 16, the lady saves the poet, a reversal of traditional roles:

One of those archers closely I did spy,  
 Ayming his arrow at my very hart:  
 When suddenly with twinkle of her eye,  
 The Damzell broke his misinteded dart.  
 Had she not so doon, sure I had bene slayne,  
 Yet as it was, I hardly scap’t with paine (9-14).

The reference to the archer alludes to Cupid who usually initiates love in these sonnet sequences, yet the plural “archers” belittles the belief in and use of an irresistible external source unrelated to the people involved as the cause of love. These archers’ darts, like Cupid’s, are aimed at the heart of the victim they intend to force to love. Instead, the lady’s eye saves the poet, the same eye that inspired his love earlier. By delineating between the archers and the

67 Oram, 182.

lady—and placing the lady’s power as greater through her ability to break their darts—the poet also delineates between different kinds of desire. This distinction points out the failure of the conventions while showing both the lady and lover playing with them.

The appropriation of courtly love terms into a game played by both participants emphasizes the importance of mutuality. In sonnet 18, the poet describes the lady’s awareness of the game as they have decided to play it. These two equal participants know their roles and gleefully distort them by seeming to follow them:

But when I pleade, she bids me play my part,  
 And when I weep, she sayes teares are but water:  
 And when I sigh, she sayes I know the art (9-11).

Venturing into the hyperactive awareness of many of Shakespeare’s characters concerning the relation between playing and reality, the lady and poet play out the conventions while undermining them through the comparison to “art” and show. This cooperative game of courtship adumbrates the later reality of a cooperative marriage.

By taking the topic of courtship and infusing traditional tropes, such as the pursuit of deer in a hunt, with new interpretations, Spenser’s poetry undermines the status quo to present an exemplary alternative. In courtly love, the hunting of the deer signifies only pursuit, but for mutual love, this trope becomes an opportunity to reflect on will and the boundaries of love. James Martel points out that “the question of love becomes one of boundaries.”<sup>68</sup> This observation leads him to ask, “If love always relates us to ourselves and to one another on the basis of that which cannot be seen, how much is love our own?”<sup>69</sup> Martel focuses on how the dominant theory of love reinscribes boundaries mapped out by difference between lovers and groups that enable power structures. However,

68 James Martel, *Love is a Sweet Chain: Desire, Autonomy, and Friendship in Liberal Political Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 3.

69 Martel, 3.

he also outlines a subversive theory of love that he identifies with Aristophanes' story in the *Symposium*. He argues that "this love is more democratic. It reinforces rather than disenfranchises human beings."<sup>70</sup> Martel differentiates between the dominant and minority views of love while also noting that concern with boundaries and the self necessarily occurs with either theory. However, his association of the more democratic view of love with the hermaphrodite image intersects with Spenser's ongoing interest in that image as a blissful emblem of marital union. Martel's point about subversive love creates a space for the mutual love of a prototypical companionate marriage in the necessary boundedness and hierarchy of any love relationship in Spenser's time.

Spenser's sonnet 67 uses the pursued deer trope to explore the intersection of boundaries with the more democratic view of love he proposes.

Lyke as a huntsman after weary chace,  
 Seeking the game from him escapt away,  
 Sits downe to rest him in some shady place,  
 With panting hounds beguiled of their pray:  
 So after long pursuit and vaine assay,  
 When I all weary had the chace forsooke,  
 The gentle deare returnd the self-same way,  
 Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.  
 There she beholding me with mylder looke,  
 Sought not to fly, but fearelesse still did bide:  
 Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,  
 And with her owne goodwill hir fymely tyde.  
 Strange thing me seemd to see a beast so wyld,  
 So goodly wonne with her owne will beguyld.

70 Martel, 5.

Even upon cursory inspection, the tenderness and wonder of the poet and the agency of the beloved emerge. While the poet as hunter has failed in his pursuit—a common enough outcome in courtly love poems—the deer’s return deviates from the traditional story. When the poet ceases to be the hunter, the beloved “deare,” with a pun on deer and the expression of affection, chooses to transform from “beast so wyld” to female partner. The state of pursuit reflects the dominant view of love as depending upon hierarchy. However, by ending the pursuit, the poet recognizes the lady’s agency and moves closer toward the more democratic view of love.

Anne Lake Prescott finds Marguerite de Navarre’s sixth lyric in the *Chansons Spirituelle* a fitting reference for sonnet 67’s end of pursuit. In this song, a young hunter asks an old woman in the forest why he fails in hunting his deer. She explains that he must rest by a spring and “spread the net of a humble heart” for “the deer will turn back and let itself be caught by love.”<sup>71</sup> While the Christlike quality of the deer is an important feature here, so too is the will of the deer and the transformation of the hunter. He ceases to be the dominant pursuer and becomes the humble, open seeker dependent upon the deer/lady’s approval. Mary Villeponteaux says that the lady is “flawed by a desire for maisterie” that she must learn to overcome.<sup>72</sup> By presenting the lady in this power dynamic, Villeponteaux supports Martz’ reading that Spenser the patient educator must tame the lady. This reading fits into the dominant theory of love described by Martel. However, I argue that Villeponteaux’s recognition of the lady’s will touches upon a precondition of the more democratic kind of love in which the poet’s admission of the lady’s will is a necessary precondition to a companionate marriage. Though Villeponteaux reads the lady’s will negatively, the evidence for the lady’s will and the poet’s reaction to it places Spenser on an equal playing field with the lady rather than as her teacher.

71 Anne Lake Prescott, “Allegorical Deer and *Amoretti* 67,” in *Edmund Spenser’s Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1993), 810.

72 Mary Villeponteaux, ““With her own will beguyld”: The Captive Lady in Spenser’s *Amoretti*,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 14 (1988): 30.

However, Spenser's awareness of the gender inequalities of his society creates wonder at the lady's acceptance of him, as seen in his comment on the "strange thing." The argument for "married liberty" depends upon embracing the lady as a companion and revising the views of early modern society that marriage was "a contract giving the husband legal powers over his wife."<sup>73</sup> While the legal status slowly changed, as Stone notes when tracing the development of companionate marriage, there had to be an attitudinal shift in actual relationships and in popular culture artifacts like Spenser's poetry and Shakespeare's comedies. The combination of love and will creates an "exemplar" for society, an allegory of what marriage and relationships between men and women can become when based upon mutuality and reciprocity.

As the *Amoretti* develops the alternative to courtly love, the *Epithalmion* demonstrates the viability of the alternative: a companionate marriage based on love and mutual commitment that uses sexuality as a means of expressing those feelings. Spenser does not address the public sphere in the celebration of his wedding: "So I unto my selfe alone will sing, / The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring" (17,18).<sup>74</sup> By privatizing the celebration, Spenser personalizes the marriage relationship as he did the courtship.

Linguistic shifts in the poetry signify the movement from isolation to unity made possible by the mutual transformation of love. As Spenser imagines the day progressing to the wedding and then to the nuptials and consummation, he speaks of "the safety of our joy" in the marriage bed (325). With this movement to mutual pleasure, the language shifts from first person singular to first person plural. No longer does the poet speak only of himself or sing just to the woods: "The woods no more shal answere, nor your echo ring" (314). He welcomes night as a time for them to revel in each other's company, and from the end of his song to the woods, he uses only

73 Oram, 187.

74 Edmund Spenser, "Epithalamion," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1993). All quotations from this text.

“us,” “we,” and “our.” Characteristic of Spenser’s earlier points defending the transformation of love as necessary and good, this transformation of language makes apparent an important realization: “the poet’s self has discovered that it was never really alone in the radical, singular meaning of the term.”<sup>75</sup> Isolation ends with love and companionate marriage, but this discovery of unity occurs with the rejection of the language of love as it has been perverted.

Spenser the poet offers his poem, his best wish and gift, to his beloved. For the poet, this is his greatest possession, and he gives it only to the woman whom he values above all others:

Song made in lieu of many ornaments,  
 With which my love should duly have bene dect,  
 Which cutting off through hasty accidents,  
 Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,  
 But promist both to recompense,  
 Be unto her a goodly ornament,  
 And for short time an endlesse monument (427-433).

Aware that the day of the wedding is “short” and that the progression of time will change things from the way they are during courtship, Spenser creates a “moniment” to his beloved Elizabeth. His confrontation of mutability with poetry is part of the early modern quest to eternize through verse, but his dedication of his poetic work to his wife is inimitable for his time.<sup>76</sup> Spenser’s poetry defines a companionate relationship and foreshadows a similarly companionate marriage.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Neuse, “The Triumph Over Hasty Accidents: A Note of the Symbolic Mode of the *Epithalamion*,” in *Spenser: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Harry Berger, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 61.

<sup>76</sup> Oram states, “But this facing of mutability with an offering of love is a gesture as affirmative as any in Spenser’s poetry” (212). The discussion of mutability is apropos but not germane to the argument I am making. Oram’s position is important to address; it contributes to the position of Spenser portraying a different form of marital union.

By borrowing Sidney's revisions and extending them, Spenser's sonnet sequence shows the problematic lack of futurity in courtly love relationships and supports a courtship leading to companionate marriage. This revision necessarily requires the early modern audience to rethink female worth if a successful model of marriage depends on mutual transformation and recognition of female will and intelligence. As Ilona Bell points out, "From the magisterial imposition of male authority to the acceptance of gender equality is not an instantaneous Ovidean metamorphosis, but a slow, painstaking process of social change."<sup>77</sup> Bell argues for a reading of courtly love poetry and sonnet sequences as courtship in order to rethink gender relations and issues of the female voice and equality. I argue that we must further connect her argument to the development of companionate marriage as it relates to female worth and increasing female equality. We must consider the popularity of Spenser's *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*<sup>78</sup> combined with the wider audiences reached by Shakespeare's comedies and religious sermons<sup>79</sup> urging more reciprocal relationships. Together, these influences support the movement to companionate marriage. Without Sidney and Spenser's search for "mutual comfort," the tradition of courtly love poetry would have continued unchallenged, leaving the beloved and the lover only the option of the dominant theory of love as lack without the alternative of a more democratic view of love enabling companionship and greater equality.

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<sup>77</sup> Bell, 175.

<sup>78</sup> Bell, 184.

<sup>79</sup> See Rudiger Schnell's article translated by Andrew Shields "The Discourse on Marriage in the Middle Ages" in the July 1998 *Speculum*. It includes a number of sermons highlighting the growing emphasis on love, unity, and cooperation in marriage.

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*Sir Philip Sidney (unknown artist)*

*National Portrait Gallery, London*

***Much Ado and Pride and Prejudice:***  
**Twin Characters and Parallel Plots**

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*Much Ado About Nothing and Pride and Prejudice are telling a similar story which centers on Beatrice and Benedick in the first case and Darcy and Elizabeth in the second. The article also argues that Jane Austen had Much Ado in mind while writing Pride and Prejudice, but this second proposition is not readily provable (as such borrowings often are) by direct quotation and comparison. Jane Austen's familiarity with Shakespeare and the similarity of her plot suggest the truth of this second proposition, but more important for this paper are the comparisons between the narratives themselves since they tell important things about the nature of both stories.*

*In Much Ado, we have two intelligent, articulate people, smarter than anyone else around them, who fight with each other wittily and nearly endlessly. It is a form of courtship, and it is brilliant entertainment. The problem is that we won't be satisfied unless our two favorites come together at the play's conclusion for a happy ending. And yet the dynamic of their relationship takes them further away from what they and we want. How can we possibly have our insult comedy and yet eat our wedding cake too? Darcy and Elizabeth are in a similar fix. The remainder of the paper tracks the mechanisms by which Shakespeare and Austen have maneuvered through nearly impossible difficulties in plot and character construction to a happy result.*

King Charles I was not the most brilliant of rulers. Even Winston Churchill, who liked and sympathized with him, said, "None had resisted with more untimely stubbornness the movement of his age."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Charles I famously wrote on his copy of *Much Ado About Nothing* "Beatrice and Benedick," and while he was usually wrong, in this judgment of the true stars of this most spectacular of Shakespeare's wit-combat shows he was triumphantly correct. The editors of the Folger *Much Ado* say, "It is generally agreed that Beatrice and Benedick are the model for the witty lovers in comic drama of later centuries; and it can be argued that they led as well

1 Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples Volume Two: The New World* (London: Cassell & Company, 1974), 216.

to Jane Austen's Elizabeth and Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* and to Scarlett and Rhett in *Gone with the Wind*.”<sup>2</sup> While Scarlett and Rhett are beyond the scope of this essay, I will argue that *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Pride and Prejudice* are telling an essentially similar story which centers on Beatrice and Benedick in the first case and Darcy and Elizabeth in the second. There is, of course, much evidence to support Darcy and Elizabeth as the stars of *Pride and Prejudice*. Perhaps one of the clearest examples is a popular one. On Amazon.com, there are two pages of Darcy sequels and retellings—including *Mr. Darcy, Vampire*—and nothing even remotely similar concerning Bingley.<sup>3</sup> A secondary point for this essay is that Jane Austen had *Much Ado* in mind while she was writing *Pride and Prejudice*, but this second proposition is not essential to my argument, nor readily provable (as such borrowings often are) by direct quotation and comparison.

Let me begin with the weaker of my two arguments—that Jane Austen was adapting or re-imagining *Much Ado*. As a child, she was greatly influenced by Anne Lefroy, the wife of the rector George Lefroy, “Mrs. Lefroy was an ideal that can be discerned behind the faults and imperfections of all Jane Austen’s heroines.”<sup>4</sup> Anne Lefroy’s brother Egerton Brydges “wrote that his sister ‘had an exquisite taste for poetry, and could almost repeat the chief of English poets by heart, especially Milton, Pope, Collins, Gray, and the poetical passages of Shakespeare.’”<sup>5</sup> By 1814 in *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen was writing, “Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing how. It is part of an Englishman’s constitution.”<sup>6</sup> In her case, with Shakespeare as part of the furniture of her childhood, it may have seemed to be so.

2 Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, eds. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1995), xvi.

3 [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Mr.+Darcy&x=0&y=0#/ref=sr\\_pg\\_1?rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3AMr.+Darcy&keywords=Mr.+Darcy&ie=UTF8&qid=1298420477](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Mr.+Darcy&x=0&y=0#/ref=sr_pg_1?rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3AMr.+Darcy&keywords=Mr.+Darcy&ie=UTF8&qid=1298420477)

4 Jon Spence, *Becoming Jane Austen: The True Love Story that Inspired the Classic Novels* (New York: MJF Books, 2003), 30-31.

5 Spence, 31.

6 Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (London: Richard Bentley, 1882), 54.

In 1949, Elizabeth Jenkins said in her biography of Jane Austen, “When Macaulay mentioned Shakespeare and Jane Austen in the same breath, he did not suppose it necessary to state the obvious differences of their art and scope; admirers of Jane Austen understood what he meant in making the comparison, and feel that however far apart they stand, the two share the quality, in however differing degrees, of creating character.”<sup>7</sup> More than fifty years later, John Wiltshire, after an extensive and enlightened analysis of Shakespeare’s influence on Austen, reached similar though much broader conclusions, “Jane Austen could treat Shakespeare casually, yet at the same time use quotations from him to specific effect in her novels, because she had in fact assimilated his work in a more thorough and complete way, a way which enabled her to be independent. She may be deeply indebted to Shakespeare, not for phrases and characters, but for the principle of organization of her novels, for her way of conceiving of dramatic conflict, and her capacity, through generating moral and psychological sets of affinities between her characters, to provide a sense of a homogeneous world.”<sup>8</sup> In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen is also clearly indebted to Shakespeare for the bedrock of her characters. She may indeed have added a Regency wing or two, but the foundations and the original building are Shakespeare’s. In Wiltshire’s words, “Darcy and Elizabeth are playing together in the presence of Shakespeare.”<sup>9</sup> A direct comparison of the narratives will help to make this clear. Thus, by proving the stronger of my two points—that *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Pride and Prejudice* are telling an essentially similar story—I can also bolster this weaker case. It is, after all, easier to pursue the well-tested mechanisms of comparative literature than it is to read the mind of a long-dead author who has, unfortunately, neglected to leave us letters, notes, or obvious quotations.

In *Much Ado*, we have two intelligent, articulate people, smarter than anyone else around them, who fight with each other

7 Elizabeth Jenkins, *Jane Austen* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1949), 87-88.

8 John Wiltshire, *Recreating Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 75.

9 Wiltshire, 71.

wittily and nearly endlessly. It is a form of courtship, and it is brilliant entertainment. Indeed, except for Hamlet consistently and Prince Hal and Falstaff, occasionally, no one else in Shakespeare has comparable dialogue. We love these two sparring lovers and wait for the next wit combat with higher and higher expectations that Shakespeare consistently meets and then persistently exceeds. The problem is that we will not be satisfied unless our two favorites come together at the play's conclusion for a happy ending. And yet the very nature of their relationship, nearly every word in their immensely clever discourse, takes them further away from what they and we want. How can we possibly have our insult comedy and yet eat our wedding cake too? Darcy and Elizabeth are in a similar fix. One of the first reviewers of the novel said of Elizabeth, "She is in fact the *Beatrice* of the tale; and falls in love on much the same principles of contrariety."<sup>10</sup>

It is a nearly impossible task. Shakespeare had tried it before with *The Taming of the Shrew*, and the conclusion of that play is still a matter of lively controversy. There are, in fact, many examples where either the happy ending or some other element of the story must be changed or sacrificed. In Oscar Wilde's 1895 play *An Ideal Husband*, the former lovers Lord Goring and Mrs. Chevelly battle away furiously and wittily, while Mrs. Chevelly tries desperately to engineer a marriage between them. Unfortunately for her plans and perhaps for Goring's future happiness, their bitter insults overwhelm any positive results, and Goring marries the intelligent but far less combative Mabel Chiltern.<sup>11</sup> Noel Coward concludes *Private Lives* with Amanda and Elyot sneaking out of the door with their suitcases, leaving their discarded lovers, Victor and Sibyl, behind.<sup>12</sup> Amanda and Elyot have not resolved their differences,

10 Unsigned review in the *Critical Review* published in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage vol. I* edited by B.C. Southam (New York: Routledge, 1995), 44.

11 Oscar Wilde, *Two Plays by Oscar Wilde: An Ideal Husband and A Woman of No Importance* (New York: Signet Classic, 1997).

12 Noel Coward, *Play Parade* (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Company, 1933), 263.

nor are they likely to do so. Far from being the end of their conflict, the conclusion of the play is nothing more than a signal for another round of angry argument and vociferous lovemaking. In this case, Coward's fiction suggests, there is no resolution, only greater and greater conflagrations.

Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is another such story. Rex Harrison, who starred in *My Fair Lady*, the musical version of Shaw's play, said, "Relating opposing ideas was something Shaw did brilliantly, but the relationships between men and women—those got him really stuck."<sup>13</sup> While his judgment is understandable, it is ultimately unfair. Shaw's ambiguous ending, with Eliza declaring she will never come back and Higgins being sure that she will, is arguably the nearest possible approach to a conventional comic conclusion in difficult circumstances.<sup>14</sup> To do otherwise would be to run roughshod over the characters, and when the musical made its way to an authentically happy ending, it was only after Lerner and Loewe humanized or at least harmonized the characters, moving a little closer to the old Broadway conventions, uncovering a love story and even managing to work in a chorus of servants singing "Poor Professor Higgins." Most of all, they were sharpening characters to clarify—and when necessary to create—the appropriate emotions. In other words, they were working very hard to get around the difficulties of the plot Shaw had left them.<sup>15</sup>

It is no surprise then that Reuben A. Brower says, "The triumph of *Pride and Prejudice* is a rare one, just because it is so difficult to balance a purely ironic vision with credible presentation of a man and woman undergoing a serious 'change of sentiment'. Shakespeare achieves an uneasy success in *Much Ado About*

13 Rex Harrison, *A Damned Serious Business: My Life in Comedy* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 73.

14 Bernard Shaw, *Androcles and the Lion, Overruled, Pygmalion* (New York: Brentano's, 1916), 107-209.

15 Alan Jay Lerner, *My Fair Lady: A Musical Play in Two Acts* (New York: Signet Books, 1956).

*Nothing*.”<sup>16</sup> So, how does Shakespeare succeed and Jane Austen triumph (or vice versa) in this plot and with these characters that they share?

First, someone must say what the lovers, in fact, feel. In Juliet McMaster’s words, “We see in Elizabeth as in Beatrice the subsumed attraction that is behind their antagonism—although they always fight with their men, they are always thinking of them.”<sup>17</sup> In Act II, Scene i, for example, Beatrice begins speaking (about Don John) at line 3. She has dragged Benedick’s name into her conversation by line 7.<sup>18</sup> In other words, it took her approximately eleven seconds. Shakespeare’s method of having someone else say what the lovers feel is, not surprisingly, more spectacular and theatrical. The scenes to fool Benedick and Beatrice into falling in love with each other, which Don Pedro stages, are both effective and funny. Both of Don Pedro’s victims announce a change of heart or at least a new willingness to express and act on the feelings that were already in their hearts. Jane Austen’s version has, among other things, Miss Bingley maliciously teasing Darcy about his admiration of Elizabeth and asking, “When am I to wish you joy?”<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth’s journey to understanding how she feels about Darcy is considerably longer, in part because the novel is told from her point of view, and all suspense would be lost if she made up her mind too early.

Still, it is the nature of these warring lovers to struggle even against their deepest desires. And it is hard for them to get past the notion that a quick quip is better than a halting truth. As Benedick

16 Reuben A. Brower, “Light and Bright and Sparkling: Irony and Fiction in *Pride and Prejudice*” published in *Casebook Series. Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, and Mansfield Park* edited by B. C. Southam (London: MacMillan Publishers LTD, 1985), 185.

17 Juliet McMaster, “Love and Pedagogy: Austen’s Beatrice and Benedick” published in *Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice* edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), 43.

18 All references to *Much Ado* are from *The Arden Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. A. R. Humphreys (New York: Methuen, 1981).

19 All references to *Pride and Prejudice* are from *The Oxford Illustrated Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 27.

tells Beatrice, “Thou and I are too wise to woo peacably.”<sup>20</sup> Somehow a more serious element must be introduced into these extremely sprightly comedies, and the lovers must have a chance to work (or at least speak) together in sadness and seriousness of purpose. Therefore, each story gives us a second pair of lovers, more traditional in some ways, less experienced, and certainly less articulate. Plus, each story binds the secondary lovers to the primary ones in bonds of family and friendship. Hero is Beatrice’s first cousin and best friend; Jane is Elizabeth’s favorite sister. Claudio is Benedick’s best friend, just as Bingley is Darcy’s.

The secondary love stories will plunge their lovers into pain and grief, as love stories tend to do halfway through comedies in any event, but these secondary lovers are specially built to break down. Hero and Jane are beautiful but silent—at least with the men they love. And Claudio and Bingley are nearly incapable of expressing themselves and practically incapacitated by self-doubts. Here is J. R. Mulryne’s judgment on Claudio, “He is easy prey for Don John because of a deeply-ingrained mistrust of his own feelings; he cannot exclude the possibility of his being quite wrong even about his most intimate beliefs.”<sup>21</sup> Darcy says essentially the same thing about Bingley, “Bingley is most unaffectedly modest. His diffidence had prevented his depending on his own judgment in so anxious a case, but his reliance on mine, made every thing easy.”<sup>22</sup> So, the secondary love affairs collapse. The pain of these friends and relatives acts as dampening rods for the atomic chain reaction of the primary lovers’ wit. In other words, they are forced to be serious and can therefore move toward marriage.

In the case of Darcy and Elizabeth, the process is slowed by the fact that Darcy is (as his words above suggest) the main cause of that collapse. As a result, *Pride and Prejudice* must have another

20 Shakespeare, V.ii.67.

21 J. R. Mulryne, *Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), 40.

22 Austen, 371.

failed romance, this one between Elizabeth's sister Lydia and Elizabeth's former suitor Wickham. For this second catastrophe, Elizabeth and Darcy can be on the same side, and once Darcy has fixed everything in both cases, like an aristocratic and very wealthy Cupid (including apologizing to Elizabeth for his interference in Bingley's life and wedding plans), the real ending is at last at hand.

Indeed, the narrative of *Pride and Prejudice* is considerably more dilatory than that of *Much Ado*. It is, after all, a novel with 124,949 words, not a play with 24,407. The two romances of Elizabeth's sisters share between them almost all the details in the Claudio and Hero plot, including the possibility of their fathers participating in duels. Leonato makes his challenge clear to Don Pedro and Claudio, whatever his unspoken reservations may be, "My lord, my lord,/ I'll prove it on his body if he dare."<sup>23</sup> In Mrs. Bennet's overwrought words, "And now here's Mr. Bennet gone away, and I know he will fight Wickham, wherever he meets him, and then he will be killed, and what is to become of us all?"<sup>24</sup> Also, in these secondary stories we find fathers condemning their daughters. Leonato declares, "Why, doth not every earthly thing/ Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny/ The story that is printed in her blood?"<sup>25</sup> Bennet insists he will never again admit Lydia or her new husband to his home, "Mrs. Bennet ... let us come to a right understanding. Into *one* house in this neighborhood, they shall never have admittance. I will not encourage the impudence of either, by receiving them at Longbourn."<sup>26</sup>

Also because there are two secondary courtships in *Pride and Prejudice*, the reprehensible side of Claudio's character can be paralleled, not by the passively and consistently virtuous Bingley but by the ever-wicked Wickham. Claudio asks Don Pedro, "Hath Leonato any son, my lord?" And Don Pedro, who understands the

23 Shakespeare, V.i. 73-74.

24 Austen, 287.

25 Shakespeare, IV.i. 120-121.

26 Austen, 310.

point of the question, replies, “No child but Hero, she’s his only heir.”<sup>27</sup> Claudio then proceeds with what will be an arranged marriage to Hero, even though he is not well enough acquainted with her or her family to know whether or not she has siblings. It is Claudio who determines to disgrace her in church without first having a private conversation with her to investigate Don John’s slanders. It is Claudio who says, when he thinks Hero to be recently dead from the shock and shame of his accusation, “What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.”<sup>28</sup> And it is Claudio who agrees to marry (albeit as a punishment) Hero’s imaginary cousin. Leonato’s description of her is suited to secure Claudio’s consent, “My brother hath a daughter,/ Almost the copy of my child that’s dead,/ And she alone is heir to both of us.”<sup>29</sup>

Hero suggests an excuse for Claudio even while he is attacking her in church, “Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, even after he unceremoniously drops her for the newly wealthy Miss King, Elizabeth defends Wickham to her Aunt Gardiner, “What is the difference in matrimonial affairs, between the mercenary and the prudent motive? Where does discretion end, and avarice begin? Last Christmas you were afraid of his marrying me, because it would be imprudent; and now, because he is trying to get a girl with only ten thousand pounds, you want to find out that he is mercenary.” Mrs. Gardiner responds, “But he paid her not the smallest attention, till her grandfather’s death made her mistress of this fortune.”<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth will soon find that Wickham’s sins amount to more than a willingness to marry for money. Darcy informs her that Wickham had attempted to elope with Georgiana, Darcy’s fifteen-year-old sister, and that “Mr. Wickham’s chief object was unquestionably my sister’s fortune ... but I cannot help supposing

27 Shakespeare, I.i. 274-275.

28 Shakespeare, V.i. 132-133.

29 Shakespeare, V.i. 282-284.

30 Shakespeare, IV.i. 62.

31 Austen, 153.

that the hope of revenging himself on me, was a strong inducement.”<sup>32</sup> After Wickham succeeds in running away with Elizabeth’s sister Lydia, Mr. Gardiner, who discovers the wayward couple, reports, “They are not married, nor can I find there was any intention of being so.”<sup>33</sup> Only the liberal application of Darcy’s money brings about a wedding.

Yet however unkind the suitors may be, in both *Much Ado* and *Pride and Prejudice*, the secondary love stories must be successfully concluded before we can reach the primary or true happy endings. This is necessary not only because Beatrice and Elizabeth are expected to worry about the happiness of others before their own, but also because both authors have denied the audience what it wants most until the story finishes—and it is one more distinction between the stars and the supporting players.

Finally, there is a large comic element shared by these narratives—the ridiculous humor of Dogberry and Mr. Collins. They too serve their purpose in the success of a plot structure that nearly always fails. When the secondary lovers plunge these comedies into gloom, there is a danger that the very nature of the narratives will change irretrievably and there will be no way of getting back to an essentially carefree and therefore completely happy ending. Dogberry and Mr. Collins throw their considerable weight onto the comic side of the scale. Who, in the presence of such determined, self-important, and ridiculous folly, can possibly believe that the story will end in tragedy or even tragi-comedy? In addition, the humorous territory the two of them create allows a breathing space for the audience and for some of the characters. It is in Dogberry’s presence, for example, that Claudio and Leonato agree that Claudio will marry Hero’s (imaginary) cousin, and it is in Mr. Collins’ home that Darcy first proposes to Elizabeth. And Mr. Collins certainly and Dogberry possibly provide one more service. They help to demonstrate the scarcity of good marriage partners and to reconcile the audience and the readers to the less than perfect

<sup>32</sup> Austen, 202.

<sup>33</sup> Austen, 302.

matches that precede or accompany those of the main characters. Thus, Dogberry says in enumerating his supposed virtues, “I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer, and which is more, a householder, and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina.”<sup>34</sup> And when Jane wishes that Elizabeth might find a man to bring her as much happiness as Bingley has brought Jane, Elizabeth teasingly responds, “Perhaps, if I have very good luck, I may meet with another Mr. Collins in time.”<sup>35</sup>

So, Shakespeare and Jane Austen have given us what we wanted and by almost all the laws of the writing of fiction could never have. Here are two lovers in two stories who will not admit their love, two wits who will not bridle their cleverness, two dominant personalities who cannot be tamed or even temporarily silenced. They are two of the unlikeliest candidates for the happy ending of a peaceful wedding ever put between the covers of a book or onto a stage. We are likely to agree with Leonato’s judgment early in the play, “O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.”<sup>36</sup> But things change, and we have Beatrice saying to Benedick, “I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.”<sup>37</sup> If that seems too sweet to carry conviction, here are Elizabeth’s words to Darcy, “To be sure, you know no actual good of me—but nobody thinks of *that* when they fall in love.”<sup>38</sup> And perhaps that touch of realism is the last piece of the answer as to why these two love stories have worked so well and been enjoyed for so long by so many.

34 Shakespeare, IV. ii.77-79.

35 Austen, 350.

36 Shakespeare, II.i.330-331.

37 Shakespeare, IV.i.285-286.

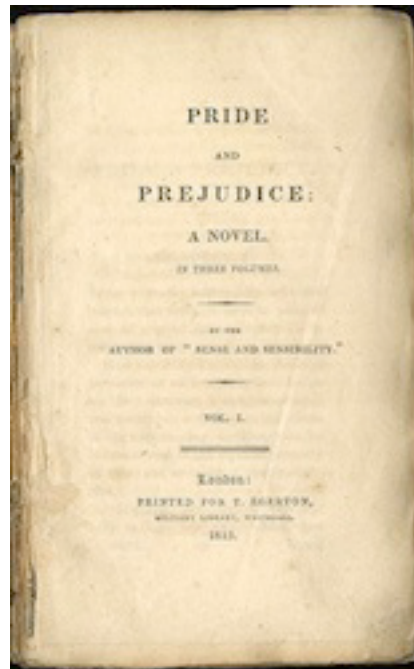
38 Austen, 380.

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## Love and Marriage on the Medieval English Stage: Using the English Cycle Plays as Sources for Social History

*James H. Forse*

*Bowling Green State University, Emeritus*

*Much scholarship concerning the concept of “companionate” marriage traces its origins to the early modern period as clergymen, especially Protestant ones, began to publish “guides” to the relationships and respective duties of husbands and wives in the 1500s and 1600s. Studies of marriage in the Middle ages concentrate on marriage among the nobility, since there is more documentary evidence about the medieval elites. Examinations of sermons reveal that the Church, especially after the twelfth century, stressed the sanctity of marriage as an institution created by God and blessed by Christ at the marriage at Cana, but sermons say little about the day-by-day relationship of husband and wife. Yet there are clues in the play scripts of the English cycle plays that some notion of marriage as a “companionate” relationship may have existed among the common classes during the Middle Ages.*

Much scholarship about concepts of “companionate” marriage traces the origins of those concepts to the early modern period, when clergymen, especially Protestant ones, began to publish “guides” to the respective duties of husbands and wives.<sup>1</sup> Printing records demonstrate the interests and concerns of the Commons in early modern England about the nature of marriage. Several “conduct books,” as we now call them, discussed, argued, and moralized about the marital bond and the respective roles and duties of husbands and wives towards one another. Some were reprinted several times, suggesting a wide circulation. Translations of Erasmus’ *Encomium matrimonii* were printed six times between 1525 and 1585, eight printings of Miles Coverdale’s translation of Heinrich Bullinger’s *The Christen state of Matrimonye* appeared between 1541 and 1575,

1 Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled. Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983), 31-49; Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 79-98; Carter Linberg, *Love: A Brief History through Western Christianity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 125; Rosemary O’Day, *The Family and Family Relationships 1500-1900* (New York: St. Martin, 1994), 41-5; Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England. Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 150-4, 157-9, 175-84.

and Edmund Tilney's *Flower of Friendship* was printed seven times between 1568 and 1587.<sup>2</sup> It is this sort of evidence that leads many scholars to assume that the notion of a loving and companionate marriage only began to become fixed in the popular mind-set in the early modern era.

However, not much has been written about concepts of marriage among the Commons in the Middle Ages. Until recently, studies of medieval marriage centered on marriage among the elite, especially its contractual nature, since there is more documentary evidence about elites. Even that evidence is sparse before the 1500s. Christopher Brooke notes that most family records before then relate only to royalty and the nobility, or prosperous urban merchants. For instance, we only know the birth date (31 May 1443) of Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443-1509), mother to King Henry VII, by a chance mention of her birth in Margaret's Book of Hours. Details concerning the life of St. Catherine of Sienna growing up in a prosperous family are recorded in her biography written by her confessor Raymond of Capua, but the main emphasis of the biography is Catherine's saintliness. There is little detail about the

2 To list several of these conduct books: Desiderius Erasmus, *A right frutefull epistle, deuysed by the moste excellent clerke Erasmns [sic] in laude and prayse of matrimony, translated in to Englyshe, by Richard Taueremour* (London: Robert Redman, 1525, and reproduced in Thomas Wilson's *The arte of rhetorique* in 1553, 1560, 1562, 1584, 1585); Heinrich Bullinger, *The Christen state of Matrimonye*, tr. Miles Coverdale in 1541, 1542 (twice), 1543 (or 1546), 1548, 1552 (with five variants), 1575; Edmund Tilney (1568 in three printings, reprinted in 1571, 1577, 1587), *A Briefe and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Mariage, Called the Flower of Friendship*, ed. Valerie Wayne (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1992); Stefano Guazzo, *The euile conuersation of M. Steuen Buazzo* (London: Thomas East, 1586); Henrie Smith, *A Preparatiue to Mariage* (London: by Thomas Orwin for Thomas Man, 1591, printed thrice more in that year); John Dod and Richard Cleaver, *A godlie forme of householde gouernment* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598, reprinted again that year by Felix Kingston, and reprinted 1600 and 1612); William Whately (1617), *A Bride-Bush: or, A Wedding Sermon* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum: W. J. Johnson, 1975, rpt. 1617 ed. which was reprinted in 1619 and 1623); William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum: W. J. Johnson, 1976, rpt. 1622 ed. which was reprinted twice in 1627, and again in 1634). We will refer largely to Gouge in this essay because his treatise incorporates most of the thoughts expressed in earlier works, and is the most detailed and specific. For Bullinger's influence see Carrie Euler, "Heinrich Bullinger, Marriage, and the English Reformation: *The Christen state of Matrimonye in England, 1540-53*," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXXIV (2003), 367-73.

relationship between her father and mother.<sup>3</sup> So, as Beatrice Gottlieb puts it, “For historians the relationship between husband and wife is a mystery. . . .”<sup>4</sup> Medieval legal texts tend to treat marriage in terms akin to a business contract, and social historians note that aristocratic marriages often were means by which one or more families enriched themselves. Some scholars attribute much the same motives and attitudes towards marriage to the common classes as well. Studies of dowry contracts drawn up by non-noble families may seem to confirm that assessment, but, of course, by their very nature these written contracts also mostly pertain to the wealthiest classes.<sup>5</sup>

To determine medieval notions of love and marriage, some scholars turn to literary sources such as the *Roman de la Rose* and Chaucer’s works, but these sources tend to emphasize romantic love, and/or courtly love—which, according to Andreas Capellanus’ *The Art of Courtly Love*, posited that “love can have no place between husband and wife”<sup>6</sup>—or they focus on changes in marital law resulting from the growth of commercial wealth during the late medieval period.<sup>7</sup> Again the focus tends towards love and marriage among the elite, the intended audience of the authors.

Ecclesiastical sources offer glimpses into what the clergy presented to the Commons as underpinnings of marriage. Medieval sermons and diocesan statutes, especially after the 1100s, stress

3 Christopher N. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 11-15, 23, 34-6; Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-century France*, tr. Elborg Forster (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978), passim.

4 Beatrice Gottlieb, *The Family in the Western World from the Black Death to the Industrial Age* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), 89.

5 Kathryn Jacobs, *Marriage Contracts from Chaucer to the Renaissance Drama* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 4; Brooke, 15; Denis de Rougement, *Love in the Western World*, tr. Montgomery Belgion (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983), 33-4; Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Wife* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 47; Linberg, 94.

6 Linberg, 98.

7 Martha Howell, “The Properties of Marriage in Late Medieval Europe: Commercial Wealth and the Creation of Modern Marriage,” in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Isabel Davis, Miriam Muller, and Sarah Rees Jones (Belgium: Brepols, 2003) 17; Helen Cooney, ed. *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), passim; Jacobs, passim.

marriage as an institution created by God, a sacrament blessed by Christ at the marriage at Cana. Much of the evidence in ecclesiastical sources centers around issues concerning what constituted legal marriage.<sup>8</sup> Canon law stresses the husband's superiority, but from the 1200s on, canonists granted a kind of equality between husband and wife concerning sexual rights and obligations. Canonists and Scholastics, like Richard of St. Victor and St. Thomas Aquinas, began to stress friendship, mutual affection, and companionship as essential components of marriage; therefore, canonists viewed sex within marriage as strengthening and maintaining marital bonds.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, much of this evidence has caused historians, as Rosemary O'Day puts it, "to treat prescriptive sources as though they were descriptive."<sup>10</sup>

There are, however, hints in the scripts for "Adam and Eve" and "Noah" within the English cycle plays (from York, Chester, Wakefield, and N-town) that some notion of marriage as a "companionate" relationship existed among the Commons during the late Middle Ages. Kathryn Jacobs asserts those scripts are: "the one species of literature most committed to the social relations of men and women . . . ."<sup>11</sup> Yet using play scripts as historical sources presents an interesting paradox when attempting to study the nature of marriage among commoners. Many historians are loath to use play scripts as source material, viewing them as "stereotypical" depictions meant for didactic and entertainment purposes. Nonetheless there is a

8 Rüdiger Schnell and Andrew Shields, "The Discourse on Marriage in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 771-86. Schnell and Shields discuss the differences between discourse on women and discourse on marriage, noting that discourse on marriage stresses mutual responsibilities and faults between women and men as opposed to discourse on women, which generally presents a misogynistic picture of women. See also, for example, David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 66-73, and Brooke, 26, 130-42.

9 Brundage, James A. *Sex, Law and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1993), 67-8, 71. The book collects several of his articles published between 1995-1991 dealing with canon law and its treatment of sexual norms and sexuality; also see Linberg, 110.

10 O'Day, 29.

11 Jacobs, 96.

paucity of other materials historians can consider “reliable,” primary sources. A few, extant, medieval conduct books, household manuals, poems, and peasant wills offer clues for what were considered the “proper” relationships and roles of husband and wife,<sup>12</sup> but these may not necessarily portray what may have been the day-by-day marital conditions under which commoners lived and worked. On the other hand, community-oriented, performance documents of medieval townsmen and villagers—such as the English cycle plays—may (as I hope to illustrate) be able at least to flesh-out a picture of medieval commoners’ perceptions about marriage.

William Tydeman<sup>13</sup> asserts the English cycle plays:

had to declare both openly and tacitly their affinities with the life of the market place, the backstreet, the farmyard, and the language, both verbal and visual, had to convince onlookers that the men and women of the Bible looked, and even more importantly, spoke as they did themselves.

Mervyn James maintains that those plays present a simultaneous reflection of the relationships between what he calls “the spiritual body,” meaning the connection between humankind and God, and “the social body,” meaning the connections between guilds and city.<sup>14</sup> If we expand this view to include not only the relationships presented between guild and city and humankind and God, but also the ordinary relationships among ordinary humans (as Tydeman maintains), we see that one primary human-to-human relationship as presented in the Adam and Eve and Noah plays is the relationship between husband and wife.

Plays in the vernacular dramatizing Biblical stories date back to at least the 1100s. Those, and the later cycle plays obviously were meant to present Biblical stories and characters in a form recognizable

12 Joseph and Frances Gies, *Marriage and Family in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper, 1987), passim.

13 William Tydeman, “A Introduction to Medieval English Theatre,” *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 26-7.

14 Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 11.

to audiences made up largely of commoners.<sup>15</sup> Except for Pharaoh and King Herod (integral to Exodus and the Nativity), there are no extant cycle plays dramatizing aristocrats and kings. The stories of David and Bathsheba, Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah have been, in modern times, juicy plotlines for stage, cinema, and television, but in the English cycle plays characters in Old Testament stories are, for the most part, limited to the common classes. As evidenced in a proclamation from Chester in 1532, city authorities viewed the plays as important “for the augmentation & increased faith in our [Lord] Jesus Christ & to exhort the minds of the common people” and “also for the commonwealth & prosperity of this City.”<sup>16</sup>

J. W. Robinson notes that the authors of the York and Wakefield (or Towneley) cycles make frequent references or allusions to various occupations of audience members, seek to engage the feelings of audience members, and over all display sympathy and “interest in contemporary rural life.”<sup>17</sup> The provenances of the Chester and N-town manuscripts (as described below) make it difficult to ascribe their compositions to a single author, though antiquarians in the Tudor and Stuart eras averred that the Chester plays were devised sometime in the last quarter of the 1300s by Henry Frances, a monk from St. Werburgh’s Monastery.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, the similarities of characterization and dialogue in these scripts to those of York and Wakefield indicate the Chester scripts also were meant to appeal to an audience of common folk.

Since designed so that commoners could identify with their characters, what (if any) portrayal do the plays give of the “reality” of marriage among commoners in late medieval England? What conclusions (if any) about the perceived nature of marital relationships can be drawn from the portrayal of what was conceived

15 J. W. Robinson, *Studies in Fifteenth-century Stagecraft* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), 19; Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 62-5.

16 *Records of Early English Drama. Chester*, ed. Lawrence M. Clopper (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 27.

17 Robinson, 17, 31, 53, 56-8.

18 *Records. Chester*, 28.

in the Middle Ages as the archetypal married couple, Adam and Eve, as these two are portrayed in the York, Chester, Wakefield (or Towneley), and N-town (or Coventry) cycles? Are Adam and Eve and Noah and Mrs. Noah, as portrayed in these plays, a reflection of how a “normal” late medieval couple may have functioned, or are they simply hackneyed and (at times) comedic depictions of love and marriage in the Middle Ages?

There is one extant manuscript of the York cycle, definitively dated to the second and third quarters of the 1400s. Dating the five extant manuscripts of the complete Chester cycle presents problems, but scholarly consensus suggests about 1519. The accepted dating of the single extant Wakefield manuscript is from the late 1400s to the very early 1500s, and consensus dates the extant N-town manuscript to the third quarter of the 1400s. However, scholars agree that scripts within all four sets of manuscripts show evidence of compilations and revisions from earlier forms, suggesting that all the scripts probably have origins as least as early as the late 1300s or early 1400s.<sup>19</sup> I believe the majority of the textual revisions reflected of shifts in the religious emphases or concerns of the church hierarchy, such as a desire by to purge them of what was considered superstition. Though I cannot assert depictions of medieval marriage in the York, Chester, Wakefield, and N-town texts are exactly the same from the mid-1300s to mid-1500s, I believe they do present the gist of what commoners believed about marriage throughout that time frame.

We should bear in mind the variations in type and quality of the extant manuscripts. An official copy of the York manuscript, probably compiled from performance scripts of individual plays at the orders of the city corporation, lends its text a degree of “certainty” that neither the Chester nor the Wakefield nor the N-town

19 R. T. Davies, ed., *The Corpus Christi Play of the English Middle Ages* (Towata, NJ: Rowan and Littlefield, 1972), 52-4, 58, 59; James H. Forse, “Pleasing the Queen but Preserving Our Past: Cheshire and Lincolnshire Attempt to Continue Their Cycle Plays and Satisfy Elizabeth’s Injunctions,” *Popular Culture Review*, 18 (2007), 103-08.

manuscripts possess.<sup>20</sup> There are eight extant Chester manuscripts, five containing full versions of the cycle. The five full versions probably were copied from a single, base text, creating “a synthetic text” or “a judicious conflation of the extant versions.”<sup>21</sup> We are not certain whether or not the Chester scripts were performance texts. The Wakefield manuscript also is referred to as the “Towneley” cycle, because it once belonged to the Towneley family of Lancashire, but most scholars agree its origins were in Wakefield, Yorkshire.<sup>22</sup> The manuscript contains 68 stage directions, which led Peter Meredith to assert, “this is a manuscript connected to performance.”<sup>23</sup>

Sir James Cotton acquired the N-town manuscript from one Robert Hegge of Durham in 1629. Though the provenance of the document is murky, scholars concur that it probably was compiled in the third quarter of the 1400s. Cotton’s librarian, Richard James, entitled the manuscript “*Ludus Coventriae*,” but modern scholars dismiss the connections to Coventry, noting its dialect is that of the East Midlands or Norfolk. The banns, included in the document, were written for bann criers to advertise the plays. These simply state performances will be “Sunday next in N. town.” Perhaps “N town” refers to Northampton or Norwich; perhaps “N” simply means “*nomen*,” a direction to the bann criers to insert the name of the appropriate town. In short, we cannot know whence the manuscript derives, nor where the cycle was performed. Yet the Latin stage directions suggest the original scripts were performance texts.<sup>24</sup>

The Adam and Eve plays in these cycles dramatize episodes from *Genesis* 1-3, describing humankind’s creation and fall from grace. In *Genesis* 1: 27, God creates Adam and Eve virtually simultaneously (“male and female created he them”). In *Genesis* 2:

20 Martin Stevens, *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), 17; Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 52.

21 Ronald W. Vince, *Ancient and Medieval Theatre* (Westport: Greenwood, 1984), 143.

22 Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 53.

23 Peter Meredith, “The Towneley Cycle,” *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 141, 144.

24 Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 54-8.

15-25, God first creates Adam, places him in the Garden of Eden, and warns Adam, before the creation of Eve, not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Variations in the dramatizations of the Adam and Eve story among the four cycles most likely reflect individual emphases that clerical authors drew from the several gospel harmonies and exegetical commentaries available to the medieval clergy.<sup>25</sup>

Each cycle presents the story in different format. In the York manuscript the story is spread out over four short plays (“The Creation of Adam,” “Adam and Eve in Eden,” “The Fall of Man,” and “The Expulsion from Eden”). The Chester, Wakefield, and N-town cycles incorporate the Adam and Eve story within a single, longer play. In the Chester cycle Adam and Eve appear in the second play, depicting their creation through the account of the murder of their son Abel by his brother Cain. In the Wakefield and N-town cycles the story of Adam and Eve is presented as a part of the first play, labeled “The Creation,” and a second play portrays the murder of Abel by his brother Cain.

The York play follows *Genesis* 1:27—the simultaneous creation of Adam and Eve—and expands on the Biblical account. In the York text God tells Adam to take Eve as his wife; Adam and Eve praise God and ask him what they should do; and God then delivers the couple into the Garden of Eden and grants Adam lordship over the Earth. God then warns Adam and Eve together not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam replies: “Alas lorde, that we shudd do so yll, / Thy blyssed byddying we shall fulfill.” Eve reiterates Adam’s reply, and God again warns Adam about the Tree of Knowledge, specifically mentioning Eve’s name.<sup>26</sup>

*Genesis* 2: 15-25 is dramatized in the Chester text. God breathes life into Adam, transports him to the Garden of Eden, and prohibits him from eating of the Tree of Knowledge. God then lays Adam down, puts him to sleep, and removes his rib to create Eve.<sup>27</sup>

25 Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 29.

26 Richard Beadle, ed. *The York Plays* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), IV.

27 David Mills, ed., *The Chester Mystery Cycle* (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1992), 26-31.

The N-town play conflates *Revelations* 12:7-9 and *Genesis* 1 and *Genesis* 2. Describing Adam and Eve's creation, God proclaims:

The sixth day my work I do  
And make thee, man, Adam by name:  
In earthly paradise withouten woe  
I grant thee bidding less thou do blame.  
Flesh of thy flesh and bone of thy bone,  
Adam, here is thy wife and make.

Eve, though created from Adam's rib (*Genesis* 2), is created immediately after Adam (*Genesis* 1), and both are then transported to Eden: "Now come forth, Adam, to paradise." It is somewhat unclear if both Adam and Eve are warned of the forbidden fruit. God says, "Eat not this fruit nor me displease, / For then thou diest—thou scapest not." The use of the singular "thou" might suggest God is speaking to Adam alone, but Eve later tells God: "We may both be blithe and glad / Our Lordes commandment to fulfil." Those lines, and Adam's thanks to God that "All this weal is given to me/ And to my wife that on me laugh," indicates that God bestowed possession of the Garden of Eden jointly on him and Eve.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, in the Wakefield cycle, immediately after the fall of Lucifer (like the N-town script a conflation of *Revelations* 12:7-9 with *Genesis*), God creates Adam, then Eve. Adam and Eve stand and admire the world around them and *each other*, and then are led by an angel to the Garden of Eden<sup>29</sup> This stage direction ("Adam and Eve standing admire each other") is the fullest indication in any of the manuscripts that Adam and Eve feel affection and admiration for one another. Perhaps we may read the scene as clearly reflecting late medieval motions that marriages should be built upon an affectionate and companionate relationship. According to Joseph and Frances Gies, though sparse in number: "Peasant wills testify to the affectionate regard of husbands for their wives."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 76-8.

<sup>29</sup> Martial Rose, ed., *Wakefield Mystery Plays* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), 64-5.

<sup>30</sup> Gies, 246.

As for the temptation of Eve, *Genesis* 3:6 gives no literal statement that Eve was the “weaker vessel,” or that she was singled out by the serpent because of that, or even that she was separated from Adam at the time of the temptation. It simply states:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave unto her husband *with her* [italics mine]; and he did eat.

All the cycle plays, however, present Eve *as alone* when tempted by the serpent, and all have variations in that part of the story.

In the York and Wakefield, and probably the N-town plays, Eve is present when the Lord forbids eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Rosemary Woolf points out: “in Chester Satan in his opening monologue explains his decision to approach Eve,” and Eve’s sin “is reduced to sheer obstinate perversity.”<sup>31</sup> But also in the Chester version Eve is created *after* God’s warning to Adam, and Adam never tells her of the forbidden fruit.<sup>32</sup> The York text is similar to Chester’s in that the serpent notices: “he has made him a mate, / and harder to her wol me hye / That redy way.”<sup>33</sup> However, unlike the Chester text, where Eve immediately succumbs to the serpent’s blandishments, York’s Eve resists, giving in only when he upbraids her for not trusting him.

The Wakefield and N-town texts expand on Eve’s resistance, and reiterate a theme of mutual affection between husband and wife. Both scripts portray Eve alone when meeting the serpent. Wakefield’s Adam tells Eve to stay while he “goes and visits far and near to see what trees have been planted.” Eve replies, “Here gladly sir will I remain.”<sup>34</sup> N-town’s script suggests Eve leaves Adam alone: “In this garden I will go see / All the flowers of fair beauty.”

31 Rosemary Woolf, *The English Mystery Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 123.

32 Mills, *Chester Cycle*, 30-31.

33 Beadle, *York Plays*, 15-16.

34 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 66.

Both scripts suggest the two have joint husbandry over Eden. Only in the Wakefield manuscript does Adam warn Eve not to look on the Tree, and she promises not to go near it. Here we see another instance of affection and mutual concern between Adam and Eve. The Wakefield manuscript clearly reflects marital ideals professed by late medieval clergy as expressed in *Corinthians* 7:3 “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”

Unlike the Chester and York cycles, the serpent of the Wakefield and N-town plays makes no speech in which it chooses to tempt Eve because she is the “weaker helpmate.” The serpent tells Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit and she and Adam will be worshipped. In both plays Eve refuses to eat because of fears of losing “our lordship,”<sup>35</sup> meaning the lordship that she and Adam *jointly* hold over the Garden—another indication of a “companionate” marriage, a partnership. Both scripts contain extended dialogue consisting of the serpent’s wheedling and Eve’s refusals until eventually she does eat the forbidden fruit.

*Genesis* 3:6 also gives no indication that Eve tricks or tempts Adam into eating the forbidden fruit, nor that the couple were separated when the forbidden fruit was picked from the tree. To reprise a part of that text: “she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her.” The authors of the cycles, however, add the implication that Eve was alone when tempted by the serpent, and then tempted or tricked Adam to eat, drawing upon a time-honored scriptural interpretation dating back to St. Augustine.<sup>36</sup> In the York and Chester plays Adam continues, through the expulsion from Eden, to blame Eve for their misery. In the Chester version he even declares that his wife and the devil are like brother and sister.<sup>37</sup>

In the York version as the two are being expelled from the

35 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 67-8; Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 78.

36 Woolf, 116.

37 Mills, *Chester Cycle*, 38.

garden, while Eve admits her guilt, she reproaches Adam for *not giving her the guidance* to avoid her sin.<sup>38</sup> Here the text echoes a staple of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century conduct books that hold husbands responsible for their wives' education.<sup>39</sup>

The Wakefield manuscript portrays Adam coming upon Eve as she is eating the forbidden fruit, and reproaching her. When coaxed by Eve to eat, he refuses once, and after eating proclaims: "Alas! What have I done for shame! /Ill counsel came from thee! / Ah Eve, thou art to blame."<sup>40</sup> Unlike the Adams of Chester and York, Wakefield's Adam recognizes he has sinned before the couple are confronted by God.

*Adam:* This work, Eve, thou has wrought,  
and made this bad bargain.

*Eve:* Nay Adam, chide me naught.

*Adam:* Alas, dear Eve, whom then?<sup>41</sup>

Notice, even in reproach in the Wakefield text Adam calls his wife "dear Eve." And when Eve blames the serpent, Adam acknowledges that his own pride was his undoing, taking his sin upon himself.

The N-town manuscript depicts a similar episode, with lines that suggest Eve was herself duped into thinking the serpent was a good angel. When offering Adam the fruit, she tells him a "fair angel" told her "To eat that apple take never no dread." When both realize their sin she calls the serpent a "false angel," and when explaining her actions to God she admits she followed the bidding of "A worm with an angeles face."<sup>42</sup> Like the Wakefield version, Adam and Eve recognize and acknowledge their sin before God appears before them.

38 Beadle, *York Plays*, 15-16.

39 William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976, rpt. London: John Haviland for William Bladen, 1622), 369.

40 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 70.

41 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 70.

42 Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 80-2.

Yet, while it is only in the Wakefield and N-town manuscripts that Adam admits equal guilt before God's appearance, ultimately in the Chester and York plays Adam does admit that his guilt is equal to Eve's—that *theirs is a joint transgression*. In the York script Adam's admission of equal guilt is made during the expulsion from Eden. In the Chester version it comes later when Cain visits his parents after he has killed his brother Abel. Adam finally accepts blame for his sin and exclaims: "no more joy to me is led [given], save only Eve my wife."<sup>43</sup> It may be an afterthought, but we should note that Adam is saying that "Eve my wife" is a "joy to me."

The story of Adam and Eve as presented in these cycle plays may, in fact, reveal something about the attitudes of the Commons as well as the teaching of the Bible through plays. Social historians suggest that the High Middle Ages was a period of transition for the families of commoners. Even before the Tudor religious reformations, notions about marriage in late medieval England were giving greater emphasis to its social and spiritual status. Given the earlier concerns of the late fourteenth century with involving the laity more in matters of liturgy and spirituality, and the later concerns in the sixteenth century of clergymen with definitions of marital relationships, it may be that the cycle plays are reflecting these issues, and at the same time presenting a window on the commoners' perspectives about the nature of marriage for a time from which we have precious few sources.

One thing seems clear, whether we view the more antagonistic version of Adam's and Eve's relationship as presented in the Chester and York manuscripts, or the more loving and companionate one presented in the Wakefield and N-town texts, all four versions still are stressing the importance of the marital relationship and its nature as a mutual (if slightly unequal) partnership. For instance, in the N-town text Adam seems to accept equal blame for their sin, and Eve laments: "Alas! That ever *we* (my emphasis) wrought this sin."<sup>44</sup>

43 Mills, *Chester Cycle*, 47-8.

44 Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 86.

In all four texts Adam and Eve, regardless of blame or consent, are responsible not only to God, but to each other, or as *Genesis* 2:24 proclaims: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

The Noah plays in the four cycles also suggest the Commons believed that the marital relationship is a partnership. Just as Eve reproaches Adam for *not giving her the guidance* to avoid her sin, in the Noah plays from the York and Wakefield cycles, Mrs. Noah ascribes her resistance to entering the Ark to the same rationale. Neither God nor Noah revealed to Mrs. Noah God’s instructions to build an ark, and His intentions to flood the whole earth. So Mrs. Noah complains to her husband that he has left her alone for long periods of time, neglected to provide for the family, never told her of his doings, never included her in his plans, never told her the flood would cover the earth.<sup>45</sup> Given that situation, it would seem perfectly natural to audiences in York that Mrs. Noah believes Noah has lost his mind when he warns her that the earth will be flooded: “Now, Noah, in faith thou fons full fast [you are acting extremely foolishly].”<sup>46</sup> A few lines later she states: “Thou art near wood, I am aghast [you are mad, I fear].” After Noah and his sons have dragged her onto the ark, she complains:

Noah, thou might haue let me wit [know].  
Early and late thou went thereout,  
And ay at home thou let me sit<sup>47</sup>

A few lines later she insists he never sought her thoughts: “Thou should have wit [found out] my will, / If I would assent theretill,” and goes on to say that this is the first time she was told of all this, and that she should have been consulted on a matter so important to their survival:

<sup>45</sup> Beadle, *York Plays*, 84-5.

<sup>46</sup> *York Mystery Plays. A Selection in Modern Spelling*, eds. Richard Beadle and Pamela A. King (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 24-5.

<sup>47</sup> *York. Modern Spelling*, 25.

Now at first I find and feel  
Where thou hast to the forest sought,  
Thou should have told me for our sele [well-being]  
When we were to such bargain brought.<sup>48</sup>

She then laments that while her immediate family will escape the flood, her friends and cousins “Are overflowed with flood.”<sup>49</sup>

Like York’s Mrs. Noah, Wakefield’s Mrs. Noah also complains she has never been informed of Noah’s activities nor the reasons behind those activities:

Tell me, on your life, where thus long could thou be?  
To death may we drive, because of thee, Alack.  
When work weary we sink,  
Thou dost what thou think,<sup>50</sup>

She doubts the immediacy of Noah’s warnings because, she says:

For thou art always depressed, be it false or true . . .  
All I hear is thy crow,  
From even till morrow,  
Screeching ever of sorrow<sup>51</sup>

Thus, when it comes time to board the ark, Mrs. Noah insists on remaining behind to continue her spinning, seeming to doubt all the signs that a great rain is coming.<sup>52</sup> When Noah attempts to force her onto the ship, a comic brawl breaks out between them, in which the dialogue indicates that Mrs. Noah gains the upper hand:

**Wife:** Out, alas, I am overthrown! Out upon thee man’s wonder!

**Noah:** See how she can groan, and I lie under:<sup>53</sup>

48 York. *Modern Spelling*, 26.

49 York. *Modern Spelling*, 26-7.

50 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 94.

51 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 95.

52 Jane Tolmie, “Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses,” *Early Theatre*, 5 (2002), 11.

53 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 100-01.

At the fight's conclusion, Mrs. Noah agrees to end their strife and enters the ark of her own volition.<sup>54</sup>

Chester's Mrs. Noah, along with her sons and daughters-in-law, participate in building the ark and gathering pairs of animals, but as in the York and Wakefield plays, Chester's Mrs. Noah is not privy to God's commandments. Noah, it seems, makes little effort to convince her of the impending doom, as revealed in Mrs. Noah's lines when bidden to enter the ark: "By Christ, no or I see more need, / though thou stand all day and stare." Later, in a perfectly understandable human concern, she refuses to get into the ark if her friends ("gossips") are left behind to drown. Her refusal sets up comic stage action; Noah's and his sons' spoken lines indicate that over her protests Mrs. Noah is dragged forcibly into the ship.<sup>55</sup>

All three plays present a Mrs. Noah who, uninformed by her husband about the impending world-flood, refuses to embark (figuratively and literally) on what she perceives to be a foolish action. All three plays resolve Mrs. Noah's reluctance to enter the ark with comic violence. Perhaps there are darker meanings behind the seeming clownish humor; perhaps the episodes are meant to demonstrate, and warn against, female rebellion.<sup>56</sup> Yet, whether taken as mere slapstick humor or as examples of women's lack of meaningful voice in a patriarchal society, it is clear that in all three plays Mrs. Noah was scripted "to convince onlookers that the men and women of the Bible looked, and even more importantly, spoke as they did themselves."<sup>57</sup> And it is clear that the three different Mrs. Noahs represent "wives [excluded] from the inner lives of

54 Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 101-02.

55 Mills, *Chester Cycle*, 52-7.

56 Tomlie, 11-31.

57 Tydeman, 26-7.

husbands,”<sup>58</sup> and believe that as spouses they should be treated as near-equals, informed of their husbands’ activities and included in their husbands’ plans and decisions—in other words treated as “yokemates” and companions, not servants or children.

The N-town version of the story of Noah is shorter than the other cycle plays, and lacks their comic relief. It is closest to the Biblical account, and its Mrs. Noah is compliant with her husband’s wishes. The play opens with Noah, Mrs. Noah, and their sons and daughters-in-law professing their faith in God and their awareness of the sinfulness of humankind. In line with what was a theme of all the later conduct books published around the turn of 1600s,<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Noah asserts their partnership, and states it is her and Noah’s duty to teach their children: “Unto us twain it doth long/ Them to teach in all degree/ Sin to forsaken and workes wrong.” When informed by an angel the great flood is coming and Noah must build an ark, Noah states his willingness to obey God’s will, and Mrs. Noah and the rest of the family follow his lead. The Latin stage directions depict Noah and all his family crossing the playing area to get to the ship.<sup>60</sup> Kathryn Jacobs maintains the York, Chester, and the Wakefield Noah plays depict a Mrs. Noah who “expected a companionable marriage,” and that “she has not received this.”<sup>61</sup> Instead of the lack of communication between husband and wife portrayed in those scripts, the N-town “Noah” depicts what probably was considered “ideal” family behavior—an husband and wife acting in agreement and concert to preserve their progeny and teach and lead their family in a godly manner.

In the cycles’ Nativity plays, Joseph, in a sense, takes on the role of Mrs. Noah, with Mary as the dominant partner. Like in the Noah plays, God only informs Mary of His intentions, and, like

58 Tomlie, 12, 13.

59 O’Day, 41-5; Macfarlane, 150-4.

60 Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 92-5; quotation on page 93.

61 Jacobs, 102.

Noah, Mary does not inform Joseph of her visitation by the angel, nor her pregnancy through the Holy Spirit. In York's "Joseph's Troubles about Mary" Joseph laments: "I am beguiled—how, wot [know] I not, / My young wife is with child full great," and as his monologue continues it is clear he knows he is not the father.<sup>62</sup> When Joseph asks Mary "Whose is't Mary?" her response to most would sound ambiguous, if not equivocal: "Sir, God's and yours." Her handmaiden tells Joseph no man has seen Mary, but an angel came to her once. Joseph's response to that story seems perfectly natural: "Nay, some man in angel's likeness / With somekin guad [trick] has her beguiled."<sup>63</sup> He repeats his question to Mary six more times, and each time she gives the same answer, an answer the uninformed Joseph cannot understand nor accept.<sup>64</sup> The Wakefield play presents a similar scenario;<sup>65</sup> Joseph recounts second-hand information he has received about Mary's pregnancy: "I asked those women who had that done, / They told me an angel had come."<sup>66</sup> Under those circumstances his statement:

Should an angel this deed have wrought?  
Such excuses help me nought,  
Nor no cunning that they can;  
A heavenly thing, forsooth, is he,  
And she is earthly; this may not be;  
It is some other man.<sup>67</sup>

reflects a skepticism that would seem natural to his audience.

Chester's and N-town's plays present a similar picture. Joseph is surprised to find his young spouse pregnant; he asks who

<sup>62</sup> York, *Modern Spelling*, 50.

<sup>63</sup> York, *Modern Spelling*, 52-3.

<sup>64</sup> York, *Modern Spelling*, 52-6.

<sup>65</sup> Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 179-83.

<sup>66</sup> Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 182.

<sup>67</sup> Rose, *Wakefield Mystery*, 182.

is the father. He is told Mary has been with no man, but was visited by an angel, and just as in York's and Wakefield's plays, his reaction is that the story of an angelic visitation is a "cover story."<sup>68</sup>

Joseph, like Mrs. Noah, has been left "out of the loop," so to speak. He only learns the truth of Mary's pregnancy when an angel tells him. Like Mrs. Noah, Joseph is not "educated" by his spouse, not informed of God's plan, and like Mrs. Noah, he reacts as a spouse complaining about a not being treated as a partner. In the York nativity plays, for instance, Joseph is portrayed as an old man who, because of his uncertainties about the paternity of Mary's child sometimes is "churlish and grumbling," and other times "contrite and solicitous."<sup>69</sup> Joseph warns old men to beware of marrying a young wife, a message reflecting contemporary sermons suggesting men seek women who are compatible to their age and status.<sup>70</sup> Clearly the clerical authors of cycle plays believed audiences expected to see something like a companionate marriage even when they dramatized the marital relationship of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.

What is interesting is that dramatizing marriage as a "partnership" is older than the English cycle plays. It also appears in the Anglo-Norman play *Jeu d'Adam*, dated circa 1120. After their creation, God presents Eve to Adam as:

I have given you a worthy companion:  
Your wife, Eve by name.  
She is your wife and partner;  
You ought to be entirely faithful to her.  
Love her, and let her love you<sup>71</sup>

68 Mills, *Chester Cycle*, 105-06; Davies, *Corpus Christi*, 134-8.

69 Jacobs, 103, 111-12; Robinson, 62.

70 Brooke, 31.

71 David Bevington, ed., "Service for Representing Adam," *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 81.

God admonishes Eve;

Love Adam, and hold him dear.  
 He is your husband, and you his wife . . .  
 If you do well as his *helpmeet* [emphasis mine],  
 I will place you with him in glory.

To which Eve responds, “I will acknowledge you as sovereign, / Him as my partner and stronger than I.”<sup>72</sup> Later, after unsuccessfully tempting Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit, the Devil approaches Eve, who according to Patristic tradition succumbs to his temptations. Adam, seeing his wife converse with the Devil, warns her of the Devil’s treachery, stating: “I do not want a scoundrel who has done such things / To have access to you.”<sup>73</sup>

Here, our twelfth-century Adam voices a consistent theme found in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conduct books—to wit, husbands must keep their wives from contact with unsavory individuals. For instance, William Gouge (1622) wrote: “Husbands an wiues ought to be carefull to keepe one another from the temptations of Satan” and avoid “what occasions are offered to draw either of them into sinne.” In *Basilikon Doron* King James I advised his son and heir, Prince Henry, that a husband should: “keepe carefully good and chaste companie about” his wife, and assure that “lasciuious, or riotous persons . . . come not at her.”<sup>74</sup>

Nonetheless, Adam succumbs to Eve’s wheedling, but just before he eats of the forbidden fruit, he says: “I’ll trust you in this/ You are my partner.”<sup>75</sup> The word in Old French is “*per*,” literally “equal.”<sup>76</sup> Immediately after eating, Adam blames Eve, but even in his lamentations he speaks of her as his partner:

72 Bevington, 82.

73 Bevington, 90-4.

74 William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum: W. J. Johnson, 1976, rpt. 1622 ed.), 241, 409; King James I, *Basilikon Doron*, in *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard MacIlwain (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1918), 36-7.

75 Bevington, 95.

76 *Oxford English Dictionary Oxford* (www.oed.com), “peer, n. and adj.” [www.oed.com/maurice.bgsu.edu/view/Entry/139725?rskey=T2p0Cr&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid](http://www.oed.com/maurice.bgsu.edu/view/Entry/139725?rskey=T2p0Cr&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid) (accessed 14 September 2011); *Second College Edition. The American Heritage Dictionary*, “peer” (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 915:

And whom shall I beseech to aid me,  
 When my own wife has betrayed me,  
 She whom God gave me as partner?<sup>77</sup>

And when confronted by God, Adam admits his guilt, but again ascribes his transgression to Eve's urging. Yet God holds him equally responsible, telling Adam, "You trusted your wife more than me, / You ate the fruit without my permission."<sup>78</sup> God then berates Eve, but not for leading Adam into sin, for *her own* disobedience. Eve admits her personal responsibility when she answers, "I have sinned, it was by my folly."<sup>79</sup> Adam berates Eve yet again in his grief over the expulsion from Eden, and Eve takes the blame upon herself for their mutual transgression:

I have sinned greatly toward God and you . . . .  
 I gave it to you; I thought it for the best,  
 And I led you into sin, for which I can't reproach you.<sup>80</sup>

God, as portrayed in each of these Adam and Eve texts, makes no distinction between blame placed on Adam and blame placed on Eve. God treats Adam and Eve as partners, even refers to them as partners, "helpmeets," sharing joy and sorrow in the time of blessing and in the time of woe. And in each text, despite the patriarchal bent to the relationship of Adam and Eve, there are times when Eve is holding up Adam—admonishing him to admit his fault, or taking blame on herself when Adam is in despair.

To conclude, just as the Adam and Eve texts portray spouses that expect to be partners in the marital relationship, so too do the Noah and Mrs. Noah and the Joseph and Mary texts. Since, as Tydeman maintains, the clerical authors of these texts sought to show the common people that "the men and women of the Bible looked, and more importantly, spoke as they did themselves,"<sup>81</sup> it seems evident the cycle texts do provide us with another source for social history. The texts obviously reflect an underlying assumption among the Commons of the Middle Ages that marriage should be a compainionate relationship of "almost" equal partners.

77 Bevington, 96-7.

78 Bevington, 99.

79 Bevington, 100.

80 Bevington, 103-05

81 Tydemann, 26-7., .

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*The Marriage at Cana*  
*Giotto (1304-1306)*  
*Fresco: Scrovegni Chapel, Padua*

## *Notes*

### Robert Yaxley, Tudor Physician

*Phyllis Johnson Walton*

*Independent Scholar*

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the month of October, 1540, Robert Yaxley, doctor of Physic of the city of London, dwelling in the parish of St. Michael in Cornhill, made his last will and testament.<sup>1</sup> (Although a recent statute allowed for transfer of real property by will,<sup>2</sup> any land owned by Dr. Yaxley would almost certainly have been held in trust and not subject to the terms of his will.) After bequeathing his soul to Almighty God, his blessed mother, Saint Mary, and all the company of heaven, and his body to be buried in the churchyard of St. Michael's, he made provision for the church. Moneys were allotted for torches, an alter cloth and vestment, and masses with "no other wyne but redd wyne of the best that may be hadde," and a "continuall taper to be borne at the tyme of celebracon upon saynt Kateryns aulter, and to paye yerely for the said taper."<sup>3</sup> Seven years before Parliament legislated the restoration of the cup to the laity, he also provided that the best red wine be used to give communion, a healing sacrament, to the sick and to women with child.<sup>4</sup> "I will that all women with child and syke people reseevyng

1 Prerogative Court of Canterbury. F, 18, Alenger.

2 32 Henry VIII ch. 1.

3 I have used Michael T. Walton's transcription of the wills and expanded common scribal abbreviations.

4 See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 34-36, for the curative and prophylactic powers of the Host.

the blessed Sacrament to be houstled<sup>5</sup> with the same wyne as farr as it will extend in case they will them selffs.” He concluded his gifts to the parish by bestowing on St. Kathryn’s alter his own large silver and gilt with beryl reliquary, a pax,<sup>6</sup> and a communion-cloth case.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Yaxley then bequeathed to each of his servants, both male and female, ten shillings. He made two specific gifts of silver cups, each worth 4 marks sterling, one to his wife’s niece, Ann Hamond, and the other to Margaret Brigges [Bruges], the daughter of a fellow physician, Peter Fernandez.

After instructing his executors to expend 40 shillings sterling on the poor, he gave “all the rest of my goodes moveable and unmoveable, debts, annuities, and specialties with all other lyke, . . . to my wife to bestowe or caus to be bestowed . . . at her discrecion for the whelth<sup>8</sup> of my soul and all Christian soules.”<sup>9</sup>

Two days later, on the 24 day of October, his wife Margaret made her own will.<sup>10</sup> Where Robert’s will followed a neat order, it could have been drafted from the then equivalent of the fill-in-the-blank wills we now find in office supply stores or drafted by Legalzoom.com, Margaret’s will is of a very different nature. Robert has expired, for she refers to herself as the “late wyf to Robert Yaxlee.” She begins much as her husband did, bequeathing her soul to Almighty God and to his blessed mother and her body to be buried near her husband. She gives an alter cloth worth 5 shillings to the high alter of St. Michael’s. Then, almost as if she were distracted while looking around the room, she bequeaths to Margaret Brograve

5 Administered the Eucharist.

6 A flat tablet adorned with a sacred image that worshipers kissed.

7 Corporass.

8 Weal, welfare.

9 P.C.C., F., 18, Alenger.

10 P.C.C., F., 18, Alenger.

a satin gown—or maybe her damask gown instead—four pairs of coarse sheets, one pair of fine, blankets, tablecloths, and one of her best towels.

Reminded of her duty, she directs her executors to distribute 20 pounds sterling to the poor; then she returns to the delightful chore of parceling out some of her household goods between her husband's nephew, Richard, her own niece Anne Hamond, and Margaret Briggles, each of whom had benefited by Robert's will, and Elyn Campion.

Is she prompted by the scribe to insert the obligatory gift of 10 shillings to each of her women servants and 20 shillings to her male servant Peter? That taken care of, she remembers her sister Verney with a black velvet kirtel and sleeves, and a gold ring.

Now we start to see Margaret as a woman who loved jewelry. I can almost see her, having pulled her jewelry casket to her lap, going through the casket piece by piece. A ring here, a broach there, coral beads, hoops of gold, a gold enameled pomander, crosses, a diamond, a ruby.

Then there is another set of sheets and a silver pot to give to Mary Atkynson, and gifts of a French hood, gowns, another kirtel, a scarlet petticoat, and nightgowns. Having, in her thoughts, come to the bed, she bequeaths bed hangings, pillows, and more sheets. Next, a stone pot with a silver gilded lid—perhaps the chamber pot?

By what train of consciousness does she now give Richard Yaxley, her husband's nephew, the clothing that had belonged to her husband, especially since Robert himself had directed her to use his property for the welfare of his soul? Perhaps, recalling this, she then bequeaths an alter cloth made of cloth of gold and velvet to the town of Melles [Mellis], the Yaxley family parish in Suffolk.

Margaret has not exhausted her own resources. She bestows clothing of satin, damask, and velvet, silver cups, pots, basins, and ewers, and jewelry, including “a payr of [sandlewood] bedes gawdyd with gold which was king Henry the viiiths.”

In addition to her gifts to church, charity, and servants, Margaret remembers over twenty people in her will, most of them women friends and relatives. Although it is impossible to identify many of the beneficiaries, their surnames, including Verney, Campion, Bruges, Brograve, and Lodge, suggest connections to persons prominent in the City of London. The wills also are evidence of the Yaxleys' friendship with the Sidneys and the Pagenhams. Sir William Sydney, knight, is named Robert's overseer, and Margaret's executor. Molle Sidney is referred to as Margaret's goddaughter.

Margaret did not long survive her husband, for the wills of both were probated December 4, 1540, six weeks after the drafting of Margaret's.

The wills present the Yaxleys at the end of their lives—pprosperous, respected, and religious. Much of their prosperity and respect came from Robert's medical practice and his work in London, but Robert's was not a Dick Whittington story. The Yaxley family, originally surnamed Herbert (Herberd), had their ancestral home in Suffolk, in the parishes of Yaxley and Mellis near the town of Eye and about 90 miles from London. Robert's father Richard was born about 1440, and appears in the surviving records first as Richard Herbert, then as Richard Blogate (his mother was the heiress of John de Blogate of Yaxley), and finally as Richard Yaxley.

Robert was Richard's second son; the older brother, John Yaxley, as heir, maintained his ties to the ancestral home and was buried at the parish church in Mellis, one of the two adjoining family villages, the other being Yaxley. John had been a member of Grey's Inn in London and one of ten serjeants-at-law under Henry VII. "It has been remarked that Yorkist and early Tudor England saw the emergence of a new professional managerial class; the nucleus of this class was formed by the common lawyers."<sup>11</sup> Unlike the greater number of lawyers who gained social status due to their success in royal service, John Yaxley came from the established gentry;

11 E.W. Ives, "The Common Lawyers in Pre-Reformation England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 18 (1968):145-173 at 153.

his father Richard was a justice of the peace.<sup>12</sup> His descendants remained in Suffolk and their names appear in the Nicholas Bacon manorial rolls.

While his brother John was pursuing an extremely successful legal career, Robert entered into the study of physic. He became a questionist at Cambridge in November, 1477. He would have been about 16 years old at the time, so we can infer that he was born between 1459 and 1461. He became a bachelor of medicine in 1486, at about age 26, but it was not until eleven years later that he took his M.D.<sup>13</sup> Prior to that date, he was probably in practice, for in May 1497, John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, granted him a ten-mark annuity.<sup>14</sup>

Although Robert would make his life in London, as his and his wife's wills show, he remained attached to his family and Suffolk. In 1503, Robert joined his brothers John and Richard in a real estate transaction.<sup>15</sup> In 1513 he again participated in a Yaxley family legal matter involving the jointure of his nephew Anthony's wife, Elizabeth.<sup>16</sup> Both contracts dealt with Suffolk property.

It may be that Robert's London life also involved legal matters. Court records for 1500 describe an action by Robert Yexlee, gentleman, against Richard Hanchit, citizen and skinner, on a bond given April 5, 1498. Hanchit claimed the bond was invalid because he gave it under duress, Yexlee "threatening his life and the

12 Ives, 157.

13 Cambridge University Grace Book A, 120, spelled Jaxle. C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England* (London: Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1965), 306, cite the majority of documents that refer to Robert Yaxley.

14 Alfred W. Gibbons, *Ely Episcopal Records; A Calendar and Concise View of the Episcopal Records preserved in the Muniment Room of the Palace at Ely* (Lincoln: James Williamson, 1891), 415; *Reg. Alcock, Ely Diocesan Remembrancer*, 109, p. 76 cited in C.H. Talbot and E.A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England; A Biographical Register*, 306.

15 MS 2368, "Sir Nicholas Bacon Collection of English Court and Manorial Documents," <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/findaid/bacon/15.html>.

16 MS 4380, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/findaid/bacon/15.html>.

amputation of his limbs.” It seems unlikely that this Robert Yexlee is identical with Robert Yaxley, M.D., who is usually identified by his occupation, but the sum involved, 100 shillings, argues that the plaintiff was a person of substance.<sup>17</sup>

As one might expect, we also know little about Robert’s actual medical practice, but what we do know shows him to have been one of the most important physicians in the country. He was one of the first six fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of London established by Henry VIII in 1518, each of whom was referred to by name in the Letters Patent.<sup>18</sup> Although Robert was not a court physician, he was paid from the Privy Purse at least twice. He received the sum of 13 pounds, 6 shillings 8 pence in December 1513 for treating Mary Tudor, the king’s seventeen-year-old sister, for a period of ten weeks.<sup>19</sup> On 1 February 1532, he along with another physician received 4 pounds, perhaps for the treatment of Lord Richmond, the king’s illegitimate son who had been ill in January. It is also possible that he was paid for service to Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire, the father of Anne Boleyn, who was given money for a physician on February 1.<sup>20</sup>

17 Jonathan Mackman and Matthew Stevens, “CP40/952: Easter term 1500,” Court of common pleas: The National Archives, CP40: 1399-1500, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=118167>.

18 Pat. 10 Henry VIII, p. 2 m. 15. William Munk, *The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 2d rev. ed. (London: By the College, 1878) I:1-2.

19 J. S. Brewer (editor), “The King’s Book of Payments, 1513,” Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 2:1515-1518, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=90979>. “Rob. Yaxley, Dr. in Physic, 10 weeks’ attendance on the Princess of Castile, 13l. 6s. 8d.” Mary was referred to as the Princess of Castile after she was betrothed by her father to the future Charles V, prince of Castile. Henry VIII did not renounce the betrothal until 1514, the year Mary was married to Louis XII of France.

20 James Gairdner (editor), “Henry VIII: Privy Purse Expences,” Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 5:1531-1532, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77503>. Entry for January 23<sup>rd</sup> states: “To a physician that went to my lord of Richmond, 40s.”

When Robert was in his late seventies, he was still practicing medicine. In January 1539, he and Edward Wotton, M.D. were paid annuities for their care of Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, then resident in the Tower.<sup>21</sup> She survived him and was not executed until May 1541.

(Later in the sixteenth and in the seventeenth century, the Yaxleys were known as one of the prominent recusant families. At least three of Robert's nephews were priests<sup>22</sup> and the Spanish ambassador referred to Robert's great-nephew Francis as a "good catholic" during the early part of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>23</sup>)

The meager data we have, which consist of his concern for new mothers shown by his will and his care of King Henry VIII's sister Mary and Henry's female cousin Margaret Pole, suggest that Robert had a special interest in the medical treatment of women. He certainly seems to have cared for and valued them. His female servants received the same bequest as his male servants; his wife was executor of his estate, and he singles out two women for special gifts in a will otherwise devoid of personal bequests.

The wills of many fifteenth and sixteenth century medical practitioners bequeath books on physic and surgery, but Robert's makes no such reference.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps that is due to the nearness of his death, which did not allow him to make many specific gifts, or it may be that given his age, he was close to eighty years old, he had already given away his books. The Great Fire of 1666 destroyed

21 "Letters and Papers: January 1539, 26-31", Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 14 Part 1: January-July 1539 (1894), pp. 51-77. Item 181. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=75842>.

22 Walter C. Metcalfe, ed. *The Visitations of Suffolk, made . . . 1561, . . . 1577, and . . . 1612, with Notes and an Appendix of Additional Suffolk Pedigrees* (Exeter: Wm. Pollard, 1882), 81-2.

23 Alfred Frederick Pollard, "Yaxley, Francis," *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Sidney Lee (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1900) 63:305-6.

24 Michael T. Walton and Phyllis J. Walton, *Medical Practitioners and Law in Fifteenth Century London* (Raleigh, NC: Lulu, 2007), 192-5.

the library of the Royal College of Physicians and any books Robert may have given to it. Thus, we have no evidence from his books about Robert's medical interests.

Robert apparently spent most of his later adult life in London, most of it in the parish of St. Michael Cornhill, where, by 1504, when he was about 45 years old, he was a leading figure. The affairs of the parish were in disarray and the Drapers' Guild took over its management, including the right of patronage. Robert, as parishioner of the church, was one of the members of the commission enacting new ordinances for its governance. This group of parishioners also had the responsibility to review and audit the accounts of the churchwardens.<sup>25</sup> In 1522, Dr. Yaxley is listed in a royal valuation of lands and goods of the parish.<sup>26</sup> In 1540, he was buried in its churchyard. Even now, the website for the parish lists two famous burials: Robert Fabyan, sheriff of London and author of the *The New Chronicles of England and France*, and Robert Yaxley, physician.<sup>27</sup>

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25 *The Accounts of the Church Wardens of the Parish of St. Michael Cornhill*, ed. William Henry Overall (London: Alfred J. Waterlow, [1868], 200).

26 J. S. Brewer (editor), "Henry VIII: September 1522, 1-5," *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 3: 1519-1523, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=91103>.

27 <http://www.st-michaels.org.uk/history.htm>.

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*St. Michael's Cornhill, c. 1830 by Thomas Hosner Shepherd*  
*Rebuilt by Christopher Wren after the London Great Fire of 1666*

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**A Tale of Two Shakespeares:  
Staging Shakespeare at Conservative Christian Colleges**

*Christine Sustek Williams*

*Lee University*

*American Theatre* publishes an annual list of the top ten plays in production in regional theatres each year and simply removes all Shakespeares from consideration. Otherwise the top ten list would simply be the top ten Bard List. However, when it comes to attempting Shakespeare on the college stage, I argue that many theatre teachers in higher education think twice, or even thrice, before brushing off the old complete works. Most students are quite intimidated when they reach for Shakespeare, having been told for many years that his work is hard to read and harder to understand. Add to that sentiment a common belief that Shakespeare is boring and old, and visions of theatrical dud are born. Ten years ago, those visions certainly appeared to me when setting out to direct Shakespeare at a small Baptist university of about 3200 students.

Because I had written my dissertation on the theatre of the Tudor period, and most of my scholarly papers dealt with that era, everyone assumed that I must be an expert on Shakespeare and desired to direct nothing but plays by The Bard. However, my research centered neither on Shakespeare, nor the London stage, but on local, provincial theatrical performance activity in Tudor England. Truth be told, I was terrified of coming near Shakespeare as a director. I felt wholly inadequate in my abilities to take this great literary giant and put him on my little stage at a small Baptist university in South Carolina. What if I directed it poorly? What if I did not catch something I should have caught? And even more difficult, how do I approach characters that do and say things that seemed to clash with my school's strict moral code. For instance,

an administrator suggested that I should produce a Shakespearian play that included drunken characters by portraying them as “silly and stupid” instead. However, despite my trepidations, I decided to tackle Shakespeare for the first time several years ago. I then had the confidence to do so again just last year. These two productions were quite challenging for reasons that had nothing to do with my fears about perceived inadequacies to produce the Bard. Instead they stemmed from far different issues.

In 2004, when a new assistant professor of theatre, I decided to dip my toe into the water with *The Taming of the Shrew* at my small Baptist university in South Carolina. The university's theatre program was growing, and the students were yearning for a challenge. I decided it was time to challenge them, and at the same time challenge my fears about directing Shakespeare. I chose *Shrew* simply because I believed it was one of the most popular Shakespearean plays, and easier for students and audiences to access. However, it also meant, as I discovered, I had chosen a play with quite a few “problems.”

First and foremost, how to deal with Kate? At the end of the play she is quite sadly, almost the epitome of the woman the Southern Baptist Convention would have been quite happy to support: broken, subdued, and submissive. The conservative Baptist perspective on my campus was that women could not be preachers, i.e. God did not use women to preach His Gospel and lead His people toward Christ. On a campus where a conservative Baptist mission was of paramount importance, women were reminded consistently that they were not equal to men. As a Christian, but not conservative Baptist, female, this (in my opinion) antiquated philosophy did not sit well.

The last thing I wanted to do was, however subtly, support the opinion that wives should be mild and meek. So, as I worked with the actress playing Kate, we talked a lot about who Kate was, and why, or why not, and how, or how not, she would make that

last speech. Ultimately, we decided that we did not believe Kate would let herself be broken. Instead, we believed that she was savvy enough to know that she needed to change tactics with Petruchio, but that she could still be a strong woman. We chose to make use of the idea presented in feminist performances of *Shrew* that the actress could display Kate's dissatisfaction with the turn of events through the way she delivered her lines, making it clear that she did not truly believe her words, but instead had learned how to play the game.

Lauren Love in "Resisting the Organic" talks about this method referring to her performance as Gwendelyon from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In that performance she chose to address several lines directly to the audience to show that Gwendlyon did not really believe everything she said. Love writes, "when an actor manipulates subtext she gives the audience clues about the character's intentions which are not completely revealed on the surfaces of the words of the text."<sup>1</sup> We chose to utilize Love's theory for portraying Kate in our production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Other challenges born of the university's stated, Christian mission reared their heads during the production process. As a Baptist institution, the university resolutely disapproved of any form of drinking alcohol. I did not foresee any problem there—there are no immoral situations nor drunken scenes or characters in *Shrew*. However, a college administrator objected to a part in the final scene of the play, where Petruchio lifts his glass to offer a toast. When I stated that we would use water and glasses that did not give any hint of alcohol, I was told that the very word "toast" implied alcoholic beverages, so I must cut out that reference in performance.

I believe my then college administrators (like many other people) assumed that Shakespeare, an icon of "high culture," is quite clean in terms of language, and therefore relatively "safe" for a production at conservative, Christian university on a stage housed in a building with a steeple. Anyone who has studied Shakespeare

1 Lauren Love, "Resisting the Organic." *Acting (Re)Considered*. ed. Phillip Zarilli (New York: Routledge, 1995), 285.

closely knows that assumption is dead wrong. His plays are full of words, phrases, and *double-entendres* that would raise the eyebrows of many if their meanings were made plain in 21<sup>st</sup>-century English.

*Shrew* is no exception, and given my experience with an administrator over the mere implication of alcoholic beverage in *Shrew*'s script, I realized that my college administrators would object to any hints of sexuality on their stage. What then, for instance, was I to do with the hilarious exchanges in Act IV, scene 3 (lines 155-163)<sup>2</sup> between Petruchio, Grumio, and the Tailor about Kate's new gown—exchanges full of double-entendre?

**Petruchio:** Well, sir, in brief the gown is not for me.

**Grumio:** You are i'th' right, sir. 'Tis for my mistress.

**Petruchio:** (to the tailor) Go, take it up unto thy master's use.

**Grumio:** (to the tailor) Villain, not for they life. Take up my mistress' gown for thy master's use!

**Petruchio:** Why, sir, what's your conceit in that?

**Grumio:** O, sir, the conceit is deeper than you think for. 'Take up my mistress' gown to his master's use'—O fie, fie, fie!

We opted to eliminate the double-entendre by cutting the lines referring to "his masters use," resulting in an exchange among the characters that read:

**Petruchio:** Well, sir, in brief the gown is not for me.

**Grumio:** You are i'th' right, sir. 'Tis for my mistress.

**Petruchio:** (to the tailor) Go, take it up.

Sadly, without the double-entendre in the interplay of words, the truncated exchange lost any comic bite or purpose.

Fortunately, I was saved from further "cleansing" of the script because several of the sexually charged lines in *The Taming of the Shrew* slipped by administrators, actors, and audiences, who simply did not understand the references. A case in point: when rehearsing the wooing scene between Hortensio, Lucentio and Bianca in Act

2 *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 133.

III, scene 1 (lines 74-78),<sup>3</sup> Hortensio offers Bianca a gamut (diatonic scale) he has written. Bianca reads the “gamut of Hortensio:”

A—re—to plead Hortensio’s passion.  
 B—mi—Bianca, take him for thy lord,  
 C—fa, ut—that loves with all affection.  
 D—sol, re—one clef, two notes have I,  
 E—la, mi—show pity, or I die.

Obviously, as with many other lines in the script, I chose not to explain to my student-actors the sexual double-entendre contained in the phrase “one clef, two notes have I.” However, the actor playing Petruchio was watching the scene and noticed the line. A particularly quick-witted student, he looked at me and said: “does that mean what I think it means?” I nodded yes, but also gestured to him to refrain from sharing his discovery with the rest of the cast. The double-entendre went unnoticed by cast and audience alike.

As is obvious, these modifications and deletions resulted in a much tamer, but less uninhibited and funny, version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. And my efforts to shape the production to suit the play to this production environment meant my student performers were deprived of the opportunity to appreciate the full richness of the language and sophistication of the script. The experience of directing *The Taming of the Shrew* at that conservative, Baptist university opened my eyes to the challenges of producing Shakespeare in a college promoting what I would call a Christian mission. It made it clear to me that many of Shakespeare’s plays could not work well in such an atmosphere. How on earth, for example, would one deal with the scene between Caliban and the drunken butler Stefano in *The Tempest*, or comparable scenes in *Twelfth Night* featuring Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek? How much comedic dialogue would one need to cut from *Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *As You Like It*—in other words most, if not all, of Shakespeare’s comedies—because of sexual puns and double-

3 *Riverside*, 125.

entendres? For that matter, how could I stage scenes in *Romeo and Juliet* involving Mercutio, Benvolio, and Romeo, or certain scenes from *Hamlet* (like Ophelia's mad scene), for the same reasons? Because of these issues I did not attempt another Shakespearean production during my tenure there.

In 2007 I moved to Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee. Lee University, a bit larger than my previous university (about 4300 students), also is also a Christian, liberal arts university, affiliated with the Church of God, a Pentecostal denomination. It too professes a similar moral atmosphere as my previous institution, stressing avoidance of the consumption of alcohol and promiscuous sexuality. Actually, students at Lee University have more rigorous religious obligations than required at my previous university. Students at Lee are required to attend two chapel meetings per week; the Baptist university only required two chapel meetings per month.

The theatre program at Lee University is not much older than that of my previous university, but it is larger and far more developed. For instance, at the Baptist university the only theatre venue was a large, 1500-seat auditorium that also served as a convocation hall and chapel. At Lee there are two venues, a 450-seat auditorium and an 100-seat thrust theatre. Administrators at Lee also are far less suspicious of theatre and more trusting of its theatre faculty.

When, in the Fall of 2010, I decided to try my hand at another Shakespeare, it had been well over six years since the university's last Shakespearean production. An entire "generation" of students had graduated without seeing Shakespeare performed on the Lee University stages, and as when I staged *Shrew* at the Baptist university, I had students begging for the challenge. I decided to tackle a quite different play, the less-than-often-produced *The Winter's Tale*. Many questioned my choice, wondering why I choose such a lesser-known play. My vice president described it

quite aptly as a “schizophrenic” play with one half comedy and one half tragedy. However, I felt the themes in the play of forgiveness, resurrection, and love were suitable themes for a Christian college, and also for today’s world at large, and that our audiences would have no issues about the dramaturgical oddity of the script.

I was not faced with the issue of “cleansing” of the script that I had faced during *The Taming of the Shrew*. At Lee University the content and possibly explicit words were not an issue. For example, the character King Leontes’ twice calls the baby Perdita a “bastard” (Act II, scene 3, lines 74, 76).<sup>4</sup> Administrators deemed that the word was appropriate to the overall message of the play. It is important to note, however, that administrators at Lee would object to the word “bastard” if used in the more colloquial, modern sense the word.

I did have doubts about the appropriateness of what might have been an “eyebrow-raising” speech for our primarily Pentecostal audience. In Act IV, scene 4, a servant describes a peddler’s wares:

He hath songs for man or woman, of all sizes; no milliner can so fit his customers with gloves: he has the prettiest love-songs for maids: so without bawdry, which is strange; with such delicate burthens of dildos and fadings, ‘jump her and thump her;’ and where some stretch-mouthed rascal would, as it were, mean mischief and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the maid to answer ‘Whoop, do me no harm, good man;’ puts him off, slights him, with ‘Whoop, do me no harm, good man (lines 191-200)’<sup>5</sup>

The speech is full of sexual innuendos, and though a modern audience might not noticed them, it certain would notice the word “dildos.” (Interestingly, this is the first use in print of the word.) Because of its length, Act IV, scene 4 became dubbed in rehearsals as the Bible” scene,” and therefore I was in the midst of cuts to shorten it. This was a perfect speech to omit. The

<sup>4</sup> *Riverside*, 1579.

<sup>5</sup> *Riverside*, 1590.

servant had already announced that the peddler was selling numerous items and waiting for admittance, so cutting this speech caused no harm dramaturgically or to the humor of the scene. To my knowledge we received no complaints regarding the language in the play.

I must add that I believe the different venues in which I produced *Shrew* and *Winter's Tale* may have some bearing on the vitality of the two productions, and especially on the differing attitudes of administrators concerning "cleansing" scripts at my previous institution and Lee University. *The Taming of the Shrew* was performed in a large, multi-purpose space that doubled as a chapel. *The Winter's Tale* was produced in a small theatre that holds no connection to a worship space.

*Shrew* was performed in a large, forty-foot proscenium theatre with over 1500 seats. The space is almost cavernous, creating a distance and lack of immediacy between the performers and audiences, which, in my opinion, dampened down much of the comedy and flow of the play. Added to this, the space functioned more often as a church for the campus community than as a theatre. This dynamic complicated performances on this stage. Therefore, consciously or unconsciously, university administrators and audiences had preconceptions about what was appropriate to perform on a stage that twice a month featured sermons, praise and worship.

*The Winter's Tale*, on the other hand, was performed in a small theatre. Audience members were never far from the action, with our aisles leading through the audience to the stage. Characters entered and exited amidst the audience, and on occasion some action occurred in the aisles. This was a venue that lent itself to an intimate experience for the audience. Audience members were never distanced from the action. At the same time, I believe

the fact that *Winter's Tale* was produced on a stage that had no connection to a worship space made a difference in what administrators considered appropriate for performance. I do question whether the multiple uses of the word "bastard" in *Winter's Tale*, even in its most correct context, would have been deemed appropriate by administrators if performed on our main stage—a 450-seat auditorium that twice weekly serves as place of worship, and where some main stage productions are scheduled for Homecoming and Spring Recruitment days.

In *The Republic*, Plato argues that theatre is dangerous because it would expose citizens to impure ideas. This concept seems alive and well on some college campuses. Certainly theatre has the power to ask questions that some would rather they not be asked. Theatre also can expose audiences to ideas, people, and themes that some might deem questionable for young minds. *The Taming of the Shrew* drifted too closely in that direction for administrators' comfort at my previous institution. This may account for much of the intervention that resulted in "sanitizing" the script. Some of administrators' concerns also may have arisen from the newness of the theatre program. Unlike Lee University, with its older and more established theatre program, the program there had not yet established sufficient trust between its theatre program and the administration.

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## *Review Essay*

### **The Changing Portrayal of Sir Thomas More's Life**

Gary Cirelli

*Independent Scholar*

#### **Introduction**

Sir Thomas More is an important figure in European intellectual history. During his lifetime, he was known throughout Europe as an accomplished thinker, writer, and lawyer. His devotion to the Church, pious lifestyle, and dramatic execution at the hands of Henry VIII made him a Catholic martyr, leading to his canonization in 1935. The facts of his remarkable life, his status among early modern Humanist intellectuals, friendship with Erasmus, his written works, like his famous *Utopia*, make it unsurprising that numerous scholars have written about More and analyzed his works. However, many of these scholars do not fully address a darker side of More's life: his pursuit and execution of Protestants during his tenure as Lord Chancellor of England.

Born in London in 1478, Thomas More followed in his father's footsteps to become a lawyer. More spent two years at Oxford University, where he studied under the Humanist scholars Thomas Linacre and William Grocyn, and later, while in law school in London (1494-1502), he came into contact with John Colet, William Latimer, and other Humanist scholars from the Oxford Humanist circle. He lived near London's Carthusian monastery, where he often worshipped. Though he never took monastic vows, he continued to wear a hair shirt for the rest of his life. Like Colet and Erasmus, More took Classical scholarship and applied it to the Bible and writings of early Church Fathers, joining the ranks of what later are called Christian Humanists—who called for reform of the Church but rejected Martin Luther's break with Rome.<sup>1</sup> After finishing law school, More went on to be appointed Under-Sheriff of

1 Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 3-33.

London (in 1513), a member of Henry VIII's Privy Council (1517), Royal Secretary (1520), was knighted and became Under-Secretary of the Treasury (1521), Speaker of the House of Commons (1523), High Steward of Oxford and Cambridge Universities (1524 and 1525), Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1525), and Lord Chancellor of England (1529), before being imprisoned and executed for treason in 1535.<sup>2</sup>

Serving as Lord Chancellor from October 1529 to May 1532, Thomas More was only the third layman in English history to hold the office. As Chancellor, More's primary job was to oversee the court of equity, place the Great Seal on legislation, write charters, draw up treaties, and partake in activities of the Star Chamber while serving as its President.<sup>3</sup>

More's campaign against Protestantism through printed works predates his tenure as Chancellor. One of his earlier tracts, *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523), was so vulgar that Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (More's close friend and fellow Christian Humanist) told his friends the work was full of bitterness; both Henry VIII and Thomas Wolsey, out of embarrassment, urged him to publish the tract under the pseudonym William Ross.<sup>4</sup> In 1528 he was commissioned officially by the Bishop of London to read heretical books and write responses. This led to the writing of several religious tracts, among them: *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), *The Supplication of Souls* (1529), *The Confutation*

2 To offer a brief job description of some of the positions undertaken by More: the Under-Sheriff of London's job was to judge minor civil and criminal cases within the city. Speaker of the House of Parliament represented the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was in charge of lands, finances, and the court of equity within the duchy. Finally the Royal Secretary managed the King's correspondence, held his signet seal that authorized expenditures, and also checked grants of land, pardons, protections, and other documents. For more information see J.A. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

3 The Star Chamber was a separate court behind closed doors usually made up of certain members of the King's Royal Council. It dealt with various crimes such as conspiracy, libel, and sedition.

4 Jasper Ridley, *The Statesman and the Fanatic: Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More* (London: Constable, 1982), 132-135.

of Tyndale's *Answer* (1532). These tracts attacked Lutheranism, some stating that heretics deserved to be burned.<sup>5</sup>

More also used the power of his office to combat emerging Protestantism in England. In May 1530, More sat on a commission which advised Henry to prohibit the printing of an English version of the Bible. Fearing an English translation would only increase the danger of heresy within the country, heresy already fueled by imported books, More convinced Henry to issue a proclamation banning the printing, distribution, reading, and importation of heretical books. He himself continued to attack Protestantism by publishing works refuting Protestant ideas, and, as Lord Chancellor, setting up a spy network, interrogating suspects, and finally burning relapsed heretics.

Many historians have minimized, or neglected, this darker aspect of More's life. One reason lies in the fact that sources for More's career as Lord Chancellor are somewhat sparse. His official papers were not placed in the government archive due to his execution as a traitor.<sup>6</sup> In addition many of the facts we have about More come from his contemporaries' recollections, which usually paint him in a positive light and exclude his official campaign against Protestantism. If this were not enough, the only well-known, primary source that writes about More's persecution of Protestants is John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*<sup>7</sup>—a work written to advance

5 It should be noted that all aforementioned publications were written in Latin, which was the main mode of communication in intellectual circles. More also felt Latin was a better way to communicate because he feared that if commoners read his or others writings they would misunderstand them and further heresy could take place.

6 Guy, *Public Career*, ix

7 John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*. London: Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1641. The 1641 edition is a reprint of the 1583 edition, the final of five revisions that Foxe and publisher John Day released his lifetime. It is also important to note that the titles "Acts and Monuments" or "Book of Martyrs," as it is also sometimes known, are shortened versions of the actual title which is *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes touching matters of the Church, wherein are comprehended and described the great persecutions & horrible troubles, that haue bene wrought and practiced by the Romishe Prelates, special-lye in this Realme of England, and Scotlane, from the yeare of our Lorde a thousande, unto the tyme nowe present*.

the Protestant agenda, and therefore sometimes questionable as to the reliability of some incidents Foxe relates.<sup>8</sup>

John Foxe directly links Thomas More to the burnings at the stake of seven Protestants. The first was Thomas Hitton, who was interrogated by More and sent to his death in 1530. After Hitton came Thomas Bilney, who was interrogated by More and executed as a relapsed heretic in Norwich in 1531. John Tewkesbury, who was interrogated by More and executed the same year, followed Blinney. Foxe also named Richard Bayfield as being interrogated by More in 1531, recanting his Protestant beliefs, only to relapse and be executed. The last martyr Foxe linked to Thomas More was John Bainham, interrogated by More and sent to stake in 1532. Bainham's story presents More as an obsessive destroyer of Protestants. Foxe writes: "Sir Thomas More, after he had brought this good man to his end, ceased not to rave after his death in his ashes, to pry and spy out what sparks he could find of reproach and contumely, whereby to rase out all good memory of his name and fame."<sup>9</sup>

All of these men were burned between 1529 and 1532, when Thomas More, as Lord Chancellor, was involved directly in prosecuting Protestants. However, from Foxe we learn that More also was involved in the martyrdoms of two other individuals after his tenure as Lord Chancellor. John Frith was investigated and arrested by More for distributing copies of illegal books in 1532, but not burned until 1533, the year after More resigned as Lord Chancellor. According to Foxe, More's most famous victim was William Tyndale, who published the first English *New Testament*. Tyndale and More exchanged literary blows with throughout their lifetimes, and More had agents hunting down Tyndale, who was hiding out in the Netherlands. More already had been executed (1535), but it was one of those agents who, in 1536, informed

8 See, for example, Ronald E. Shields and James H. Forse, "Creating the Image of a Martyr: John Porter Bible Reader," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 33 (2002), 725-34.

9 John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. George Townsend, vol 4 (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 688.

Imperial authorities in the Netherlands that Tyndale was incognito in Antwerp. Tyndale was arrested, and subsequently executed at Vilvorde Castle near Brussels.<sup>10</sup> Only in the last quarter of the twentieth century has this darker picture of Thomas More's role in the early stages of the Henrician religious reforms emerged. Why is it that this negative information about Thomas More found in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* received little attention in biographies of Thomas More until the last quarter of the twentieth century?

### John Foxe and his *Acts and Monuments*

John Foxe received a Master of Arts from Oxford in 1543, and sometime about then become a Protestant. By 1555 Foxe was in exile on the Continent, escaping "Bloody Mary" and her reinstatement of Catholicism in England. It is there Foxe began to compose what would become known as *Acts and Monuments*, or *Book of Martyrs*—a work printed, revised, expanded, and reprinted, five times during his lifetime. By the 1583 edition, the last printed in Foxe's lifetime, *Acts and Monuments* had grown to two large volumes, about 2000 pages printed in double columns.<sup>11</sup>

Foxe sought to present a history of Christian persecutions from the earliest times in Rome to his present time in England. Foxe believed he could give hope to Protestants in England who were being persecuted by Queen Mary and her Catholic regime. For his account of English persecutions, Foxe used many documents (some of which have since been lost)—trial reports, eyewitness testimony, episcopal registers, printed books from the time of the Henrician martyrs. Foxe continually collected and compiled accounts of martyrs' deaths, and the length of his work grew with each new

10 Brian Moynahan. *If God Spare My Life: William Tyndale, Thomas More, and the Writing of the English Bible—a Story of Martyrdom* (London: Little, Brown, 2003), 246, 340; Townsend, *Foxe*, 619-698.

11 William Haller has charted the number of editions to be fourteen, five being released during Foxe's life and nine after his death. William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London: Ebenezer Baylis and Son, 1967), 9; John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xli.

edition.<sup>12</sup> If he found new information, or learned that some sources were false, he corrected the problem for the next edition. However, J. R. Mozley points out that Foxe's dates often do not match up across multiple editions, nor did he seem to care if they clashed. Foxe relied on transcribers search out and copy to the various registers, so some problems in his work may have more to do with bad transcriptions than Foxe's own research. Foxe also was very unsystematic in how he used the information he found, adding and removing verbatim documents at random from edition to edition,<sup>13</sup> and sometimes his stories evolved in other directions from edition to edition to suit specific Protestant purposes.<sup>14</sup>

In his own lifetime critics of Foxe seized on these errors to discredit his claims. Nicholas Harpsfield, who produced a sixteenth-century biography of Thomas More, wrote in his 1566 publication *Dialogi Sex* that Foxe could not be trusted. However while Harpsfield had much to say about all the ways in which Foxe was smudging the truth, he is strangely silent about Protestant martyrs around the time More was Lord Chancellor. The same thing can be said about the 1604 publication, *A Treatise of Three Conversions of England* by Robert Parsons. While he has much to say about Foxe personally—he accuses Foxe of hiding the Episcopal registers that could reveal the truth about what happened—and denigrates Foxe's martyrs as “rogues, thieves, and traitors,” he too is silent concerning stories about Protestant martyrs at the time of Thomas More.<sup>15</sup>

Criticism of *Acts and Monuments* appeared again in the nineteenth century, when Reverend S. R. Maitland (an Anglican minister), and on a smaller scale J. S. Brewer and James Gairdner, discredited Foxe. Maitland writes: “any attempt to set up Foxe...

12 J. R. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 124, 153, 155, 157.

13 Mozely, 154, 165.

14 Shields and Forse, 727-34.

15 Mozley 177-178.

as an authority of any kind is perfectly absurd.”<sup>16</sup> J. R. Mozley writes that Maitland’s main criticism was that Foxe was not precise enough in his methods, as he did not provide enough documentation to back-up his claims.

In the last half of the twentieth century interest in *Acts and Monuments* as an historical source resurfaced. New, annotated editions of *Acts and Monuments* were published, and scholars checked many of Foxe’s stories against other, contemporary documents and found them consistent with that evidence. And, as Mozley points out, Maitland and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians criticize Foxe for failing to use historical methodology not developed until the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> George Townsend attributes Maitland’s dislike for Foxe to Maitland’s desire to defend the history of and the Anglican Church.<sup>18</sup> Because of the new scholarship on Foxe, Townsend and other scholars strongly defend *Acts and Monuments*, if used carefully, pointing out that is one of the few sources for the successive Tudor reformations we possess.<sup>19</sup> Townsend writes: “If Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* had not been written...no book in the English language can be mentioned which would supply its place.”<sup>20</sup> This new acceptance of the historical value of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* caused the shift in portrayals of Thomas More in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

### Early Biographies of Thomas More and Their Influence

Before examining some of the twentieth century biographies of Thomas More, it is important to give a quick review their antecedents. As mentioned, modern biographies of Thomas More

16 S. R. Maitland, *Review of Foxe the Martyrologist’s History of the Waldenses* (London: J. G. and F. Rivington, 1837).

17 Mozley, 181.

18 George Townsend. “The Objectors and Objections to the General Authority and Veracity of Foxe’s ‘Acts and Monuments of the Church’ Considered.” In John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. George Townsend, 163-236. 8 vols (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1965), 167.

19 See, for example, David M. Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 273-88.

20 Townsend, “The Objectors and Objections,” 231.

often are skewed by an over reliance on encomiums written by his fellow Humanists like Erasmus, and biographies of More written in the sixteenth century by William Roper, Nicholas Harpsfield, and Thomas Stapleton.

Thomas More's son-in-law, William Roper, wrote his biography of More around 1577, and though not published until 1626, it serves as the foundation for later accounts of More's life.<sup>21</sup> Less than one hundred pages in length, Roper used his personal recollections to create a biography intended to be a family manuscript, meant only for those who loved and wished to remember More. Roper's biography, of course, portrays More in a positive light, and there is no mention of More's zeal in pursuing Protestant heresy.<sup>22</sup> Roper gave his manuscript to Nicholas Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury, who used it to create a more detailed description of More's life, augmenting his account with the writings of both Erasmus and More, as well as oral reminiscences of people who knew him.<sup>23</sup> As might be expected, neither Roper's nor Harpsfield's works were printed during the reign of Elizabeth I. Portrayals of More as a saint who lost his life serving the Catholic Church would find little favor with his executioner's Protestant daughter.<sup>24</sup>

Harpsfield's efforts were followed by a Catholic cleric in exile, Thomas Stapleton, who like More, wrote anti-Protestant texts. In his Latin biography of More in 1588, Stapleton relied on a very few documents and various stories that he had heard from other exiles.<sup>25</sup> Once again, and it cannot be stressed enough, Stapleton's

21 William Roper, *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore*, ed. E.V. Hitchcock (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

22 Marius, xv.

23 R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co Inc., 1935), 32; and Marius, xvii; Nicholas Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, ed. E.V. Hitchcock (London: E.E.T.S., 1932).

24 Marius, xvii.

25 Chambers, 39; Thomas Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, ed. E.E. Reynolds (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966).

Thomas More essentially is a copy of the Thomas More we find in the biographies of Roper and Harpsfield. Stapleton viewed More's story as one of triumph that could be used to comfort Catholics in difficult times. Stapleton emphasized that even though he was a layman, More was a saint in his own right who was a devoted father and faithful servant of the Church. Three other early modern biographies of More exist: a "life" by Cresacre More (Thomas's grandson) printed in 1631, another by John Hoddeson in printed in 1662, and one by an anonymous author writing under the name of "Ro.Ba, found only in manuscript, and first printed in 1950."<sup>26</sup> All three continue in the same vein as the previous three—Thomas More is a saint, there is no mention of persecuting heretics. Modern authors do not cite these last three frequently.

After Ro.Ba. there was not another major biography of More published until 1891—Father T. E. Bridgett's biography *The Life and Writings of Sir Thomas More*.<sup>27</sup> Richard Marius writes that Bridgett's work is the best modern biography of More (presumably up to the publication of his),<sup>28</sup> Like the early modern authors, Bridgett presents More as a pious man of God, but in addition to using Roper's, Harpsfield's and Stapleton's biographies as primary sources, Bridgett also uses Erasmus's account of More's life. This new source set a trend for Thomas More historiography. Erasmus's account serves as one of the primary sources which subsequent biographers use to support claims about More, his non-involvement with heresy, and the motives behind his publication of *Utopia*.

Problems are evident in the primary sources about Thomas More available to modern biographers. Most of the early modern

26 Chambers, 40-41; Cresacre More, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More*, ed. James L. Kennedy (Athens, PA: Riverside Press, 1941), first printing in 1631 (Douai: B. Bellière); John Hoddesdon, *The History of the Life and Death of Sr. Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor England, in King Henry the Eighth Time* (London: printed for George Eversden and Henry Eversden, 1662); Ro.Ba., *The lyfe of Syr Thomas More, sometimes Lord Chancellor of England*, ed. E.V. Hitchcock and Philip E. Hallett (London: Oxford University Press, 1950).

27 T.E. Bridgett, *The Life and Writings of Thomas More* (London: Burns & Oats 1891).

28 Marius, xix,

sources were written by men who were overtly, or covertly Catholic. Two of them, William Roper and Cresacre More, were members of More's family, and Stapleton and Erasmus were Catholic clerics—Erasmus also was More's close, personal friend. Most of these sources stress More's Catholic piety and martyrdom in support of the Catholicism. We can safely assume their perspectives prevented them from acknowledging the negative aspects of More's life. The willingness of later authors, beginning with Bridgett, to accept at face value the accounts of Roper, Harpsfield, and Stapleton leaves gaps in More's story—gaps not addressed until the 1980s in the publications of J. A. Guy and Richard Marius. Finally, and most importantly for this study, none of the early modern sources discussed above address the idea that More could have possibly persecuted Protestants. In relying heavily on these texts, some modern authors use them as the basis to refute of any evidence suggesting negative aspects of More's life and career. This insistence on ignoring certain lines of evidence is rampant throughout works about Thomas More until the last quarter of the twentieth century, when authors began using John Foxe as a reliable source.

### **Twentieth-century Publications on Thomas More and the Inclusion of John Foxe**

When we track publications on More into the twentieth century, we see a shift in portrayals of More's life from a man who was unjustly executed for his steadfast faith to a man who strove to stamp out heresy with fire. The deciding factor in this shift was the renewed scholarship on John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* that led to its acceptance as a reliable primary source.

In the first half of the twentieth century scholars tended to repudiate John Foxe's claims that Thomas More persecuted Protestants. H.G. Ganns' "Sir Thomas More and the Persecution of Heretics: An Historical Inquiry" (1900),<sup>29</sup> presents Thomas More

29 H.G. Ganns, "Sir Thomas More and the Persecution of Heretics: An Historical Inquiry," *Catholic Quarterly Review* 25 (1900): 531-548.

as a kind-hearted man who “was an avowed advocate and fearless champion of freedom of conscience perilously in advance of his time.”<sup>30</sup> Ganns’ maintains that ever since his death, More’s good name has been tarnished by lies. Though he gives no specific citations from *Acts and Monuments* anywhere within his article, Ganns accuses Foxe of lying about More’s persecution of Protestants.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the biographies of Thomas More, which flood the market between 1930 and 1965, do not cite Ganns when refuting the idea that More may have a part in the persecution of heretics.<sup>32</sup> This may have something to do with Ganns’ writing style, which seems “over the top” in its defense of Thomas More’s reputation.<sup>33</sup>

Henri Brémond’s 1920 brief biography, entitled *Sir Thomas More: The Blessed Thomas More*, also declares Foxe a liar.<sup>34</sup> Brémond, like Bridgett, relies on the accounts of Roper, Erasmus and company. He stresses that the real Thomas More cannot be found by studying his actions in the courts, and that “his life, indeed, is spotless, and his biographer can relate it without paraphrase or reticence.”<sup>35</sup> Brémond continues the tradition that sought to make More a saintly figure in Catholic history. Christopher Hollis follows Brémond’s lead in his biography, *Sir Thomas More* (1934), taking care to remind the reader that Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* could not be trusted as a reliable source for accusations against More.<sup>36</sup>

30 Ganns, 535.

31 Ganns, 533.

32 The interest in Thomas More probably stems from the efforts that led to his canonization by the Roman Catholic Church in 1935. He was later made Patron Saint of Statesman in 1980, and not surprisingly there was an increase in publications on More then as well.

33 An example of Ganns’ style: “Not a remote insinuation of scandal ever affected the stainless integrity of More, not a more of suspicion ever flitted over his untarnished ermine, while obsequious servility, unpardonable ingratitude, criminal malversation in office, left blotches on ‘the greatest, wisest and meanest of mankind’ that three centuries of persistent and aggressive apologetics have not explained away, much less effaced.” (Ganns, 535).

34 Henri Brémond, *Sir Thomas More: The Blessed Thomas More* (Manchester: R&T Washbourne Ltd., 1920).

35 Brémond, 2, 13.

36 Christopher Hollis, *Sir Thomas More* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934).

These defenses of More's life and reputation coincide with the campaign to proclaim him a saint of the Catholic Church. Pope Pious XI canonized Thomas More in 1935, and several biographies of Thomas More were published over the next few decades. R. W. Chambers' *Thomas More* (1935) is considered the best of these. Chambers does go into some detail about Foxe's accounts of More's persecution of Protestants. His is the first detailed defense against Foxe's charge that More tortured and executed heretics. Though Chambers insists that Foxe's stories about More are false, he does address other authors, in works not specifically dealing with Thomas More, who had accepted Foxe's stories as true. Unlike earlier biographers, and Chambers also relies heavily on More's correspondence, and provides a detailed analysis of *Utopia*, claiming a study of More's writings is the only way a scholar could truly understand him.<sup>37</sup> This, perhaps, is Chamber's most valuable contribution to the historiography of Thomas More, for it influenced the methodology of subsequent biographers.

After Chambers, several biographies of Thomas More appeared: Algernon Cecil's *A Portrait of Thomas More: Scholar, Statesman, Saint* (1937), Theodore Maynard's *Humanist As Hero: The Life of Sir Thomas More* (1947), W. E. Campbell's *Erasmus, Tyndale, and More* (1950), Leslie Paul's *Sir Thomas More* (1959), and Bernard Basset's *Born For Friendship: The Spirit of Sir Thomas More* (1965).<sup>38</sup> Though they should be commended for their efforts at producing modern, historical biographies, each continues the themes of those who came before them. These biographies still rely heavily on the early modern biographies of Roper, Harpsfield, and Stapleton. They gloss over his career as Lord Chancellor and involvement in the

<sup>37</sup> Chambers, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Algernon Cecil, *A Portrait of Thomas More: Scholar, Statesman, Saint* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937); Theodore Maynard, *Humanist As Hero: The Life of Sir Thomas More* (New York: Hafner Publishing, 1947); Leslie Paul, *Sir Thomas More* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1959); W. E. Campbell, *Erasmus, Tyndale, and More* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1950); Bernard Basset, *Born For Friendship: The Spirit of Sir Thomas More* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965).

persecution of Protestants, denigrating Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and authors who used it as a reliable, historical source. Maynard and Campbell, however, do attempt to present Thomas More within a broader picture of his intellectual world. Maynard expands upon More's place in the history and ideas of Humanism, and Campbell interweaves More's biography with biographies of his close friend, Erasmus and his great nemesis, William Tynsdale.

In the 1980s scholars begin to recognize, with reservations, the worth of utilizing Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* as a primary source. As concerns the life of Thomas More, this new acceptance of Foxe also led to an increase in consulting a variety of other sources, as well as an acceptance that More did have something to do with the arrest and persecution of Protestants. This new path was first taken by J.A. Guy in his article "Sir Thomas More & the Heretics" (1980). Guy's article was a sample of what later appears in his book, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*.<sup>39</sup> *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* is a splendid book that offers the reader a more intimate look into More's career. Using public records for the first time in a Thomas More-focused piece, Guy successfully charts the rise and fall of Thomas More in the political arena, with special attention paid to his long battle against heresy.

Guy notes that, as Lord Chancellor, More believed it was his duty to suppress heresy and protect the people from the sedition he believed followed in its wake.<sup>40</sup> More first began his assault on heresy by convincing Henry to issue two proclamations against possessing heretical books. The first made it illegal to own certain "banned books;" the second warned the people to be vigilant against heretics and forbade unlicensed preaching. More even went as far as to announce in Parliament that the destruction of heresy was an official government policy.<sup>41</sup> Using additional public records, Guy

39 J. A. Guy, "Sir Thomas More & the Heretics" *History Today*, 30 (Feb. 1980): 11-15.

40 Guy, *Public Career*, 104.

41 Guy, *Public Career*, 172.

shows that on October 25, 1530 Chancellor More sent one John Porseck and his friends to the Tower of London for possession of banned books. Upon their repudiation of Lutheranism, More required them to ride on horseback, backwards, through London to a spot where they were to burn all their contraband. Around the same time More caught John Tyndale (the brother of More's nemesis William Tyndale) and his friends distributing his Tyndale's *New Testament*. After their imprisonment and confessions, they too were sentenced to ride backwards on horseback through London while offal and rotten fruit was thrown at them.<sup>42</sup>

Guy turns to the various charges leveled against More by Foxe, and sketches the story of each martyr that More helped send to the stake, one of whom More called "the devil's stinking martyr!"<sup>43</sup> With Guy's publications leading the way, other historians began to acknowledge the probable validity of Foxe's accusations. Historian Jasper Ridley published the most memorable of these new counter-attacks on Thomas More's saintly reputation in 1984. The title of his book, *The Statesman and the Fanatic: Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More*, reveals the depth of Ridley's war on More's saintly reputation. Like Guy, Ridley turned to John Foxe for some added ammo.

In brief, Ridley's book is a two-figure biography, bouncing between chapters on Thomas Wolsey (the statesman) and chapters on Thomas More (the fanatic). Ridley presents a darker side to More's life and career. He paints Thomas More as a religious fanatic who betrayed his earlier ideas of moderation and freedom of conscience, and took actual pleasure in tracking and capturing heretical Christians. Citing Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, Ridley identifies five men Thomas More arrested, interrogated, and sent

42 Guy, *Public Career*, 173.

43 The Protestant martyr to whom the author refers is Thomas Hitton, who was burned at Maidstone in 1530. Hitton was a priest who was caught with letters from English heretics. After being excommunicated by Archbishop Warham and refusing to give More the location and name of his parents, Hitton was burned and in More's *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* Hinton is referred to as "the devil's stinking martyr!" For more information on this and Guy's writings on the other men More helped persecute, see Guy, *Public Career*, 164-174.

to the stake.<sup>44</sup> As shown above, seven deaths should actually be attributed to More's activities. Ridley observes that both William Tyndale and John Foxe labeled him as unnecessarily cruel, even seeking to destroy a man's reputation after he had been burned at the stake.<sup>45</sup> And he points out that none of More's supporters, nor More himself, ever refuted Tyndale's and Foxe's accusations of excessive cruelty.<sup>46</sup> Ridley uses a wide selection of sources, including More's own writings, to paint More as an authoritarian conservative, a cold and distant father, a man who believed women were instruments of Satan, and a man who was so alarmed at his own sexuality that he sought to repress it in any way possible, including wearing a hair shirt and self-flagellation—Ridley's explanation of a practice apologists use to demonstrate More's deep religiosity.<sup>47</sup>

Ridley's book is a full-blown attack on More's reputation as a kindly, saintly man who died for his beliefs. Ridley's Thomas More is obsessive and bitter, hell-bent on destroying heresy and choosing to leave his post as Lord Chancellor only after his defeat by Anne Boleyn's faction became inevitable. Though later publications do not give such a condemnatory picture of Thomas More, Ridley's and Guy's works pointed the ways to use *Acts and Monuments* as a reliable source. Foxe's work is a prominent source in the biographies of Thomas More by Richard Marius and Peter Akroyd.

Richard Marius' *Sir Thomas More: A Biography* (1984, reprinted Harvard University Press, 1999), and Peter Akroyd's *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (1998) are the last major publications about Thomas More in the twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> Both books try to combine and synthesize the previous scholarship on More, as well as the

44 Guy, *Public Career* 252-57. Using Foxe, Ridley attributes the deaths of Thomas Hitton, Thomas Blinney, Richard Bayfield, John Tewkesbury, and James Bainham to More.

45 Ridley, 239. See John Foxe's account of John Bainham's death (*Acts and Monuments*, ed. Townsend, v 4 688).

46 Ridley, 239.

47 Ridley., 30, 62, and 125.

48 Peter Akroyd, *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998).

surrounding literature from the period in which he lived, to create a complete picture of the man. Marius and Akroyd present More as a man capable of feeling every emotion and committing any action. They take special care to explain his upbringing, the culture of London, what English society was like at the time, Humanism, the impact of the Reformation, and what More did while serving Henry VIII. They primarily rely on Foxe as their major source for showing that More did, in fact, actively persecute Protestants, and reinforce Foxe's charges with other sixteenth-century source material. They attempt to understand what it was about More's psyche that made him despise heresy so much that he would send another man to his death. Previous treatments of More note his aggressive literary battle against heresy, but they downplay those writings, explaining them as only the works of a devoted Christian protecting his faith.

Marius and Akroyd reject this simple explanation, taking cues from Guy and Ridley, to search for deeper understanding of the complexity of the world around Thomas More in addition to the man himself. They fall short, as one might expect of single volume biographies, but they do represent an evolution that suggests perhaps the best direction is to focus on studying specific aspects of Thomas More's life and career instead of his life in its entirety. A modern example of that approach is Craig D'Alton's "William Warham and English Heresy Policy After the Fall of Wolsey" (*Historical Research*, 2004).

D'Alton examines the actions taken by the government to combat heresy after Cardinal Thomas Wolsey was stripped of his duties. He asserts that Archbishop of Canterbury William Warham took the lead in attempting to silence heretics, through pamphlets and ecclesiastical pressure, but Warham did not attempt to bring the full weight of the state down upon them. D'Alton maintains that it was when Warham's approach seemed ineffectual; it was Lord Chancellor Thomas More who began a radically different policy of hunting down, capturing, and burning Protestants.<sup>49</sup> It is only with

49 Craig D'Alton, "William Warham and English Heresy Policy After the Fall of Wolsey," *Historical Research*, 77 (2004), 337-57.

the acceptance of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* as a legitimate primary source, and the work of late twentieth-century biographers that such reinterpretations of the life of Thomas More and the complexities of the Henrician religious reforms could occur.

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*Study for Portrait of the More Family by Hans Holbein the Younger*