English Catholic Literary Culture, 1640–1660

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Abstract

This thesis is the first study of English Catholic literary culture produced during the 1640s and 1650s. It investigates how different Catholic communities responded creatively to the civil wars and Revolution. I argue that recovering this diverse literature provides new insights into both the *longue durée* of early modern Catholicism and the canonical authors of the English Revolution. Contrary to prevailing scholarly assumptions, I demonstrate that Catholics were not uniformly or unequivocally royalist, but sustained the tradition of Catholic resistance, adapting the writings of militant Elizabethan Jesuits, such as Robert Persons, for new circumstances. The complex allegiances of English Catholic writers can help us reconsider the traditional literary history of the mid-seventeenth century, which categorizes genres and forms using polarised polemical labels. This thesis interrogates the relationship between literary style and religious and political identity. The first three chapters discuss how Catholics deployed genres often associated with stereotypes of Cavaliers, republicans, and royalists. I analyse verse miscellanies compiled by a group of gentry families; tyrant tragedies by the celebrated Jesuit dramatist, Joseph Simons, revived for performance at the English College, Rome, in the 1640s; and tragicomedies staged at St. Omers College after the regicide. Cross-confessional similarity and difference, as the fourth chapter shows, preoccupied Richard Crashaw and his fellow exiled Catholic converts, who reflected imaginatively on the relationship between style and identity in poetry and polemical life-writing. The final chapter suggests that Catholic arguments for toleration, especially by Thomas White, alias Blacklo, challenged confessional distinctions by borrowing ideas and idiolects from across the political spectrum and by disguising the writers' own Catholic commitments. This thesis contends that confessional and political identities were ascribed to literary styles through contested and contingent acts of rhetoric and interpretation. It recovers a thriving transnational literary culture and proposes new ways of reading post-Reformation literary politics.

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Abbreviations

ABSJ	Archivum Britannicum Societatis Jesu, British Jesuit Archives, Farm Street, London
AVCAU	Archivum Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe, Rome
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome
Beinecke	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven
BHO	*British History Online*
BL	British Library, London
Bodleian	Bodleian Library, Oxford
EHR	*English Historical Review*
ELR	*English Literary Renaissance*
HLQ	*Huntington Library Quarterly*
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
RES	*Review of English Studies*
Stonyhurst	Library and archives of Stonyhurst College, Clitheroe, Lancashire
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
TP	*Tixall Poetry*, edited by Arthur Clifford (Edinburgh: Longman, 1813).

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Conventions

Quotations from manuscript sources follow the principles of semi-diplomatic transcription. Standard contractions and abbreviations are silently expanded. Deletions are shown with a line through the cancelled text and insertions are indicated by triangular brackets, <…>.

Unless stated otherwise, all quotations from the Bible refer to the Douai-Rheims translation, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ, Translated Faithfully into English, out of the Authentical Latin* (Rheims, 1582) and *The Holie Bible Faithfully Translated into English, out of the Authentical Latin*, 2 Tomes (Douai, 1609–10). References to book, chapter, and verse are given in the body of the text.

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Introduction

This thesis examines the writings of English Catholics produced during the civil wars and Revolution. Composed in English and Latin, at home and abroad, and widely circulated in print and manuscript, this neglected literary culture traverses a range of forms and styles. Catholic writers used familiar genres in unfamiliar ways, reinterpreting anti-Puritan satire, love lyric, Pindaric odes, tyrant tragedy, royalist tragicomedy, devotional poetry, spiritual autobiography, political dialogue, and panegyric. Whereas earlier generations of Catholics and the range of new political movements and religious sects that emerged in the 1640s and 1650s have received substantial attention, mid-seventeenth-century Catholic writing has been significantly understudied. In recovering this diverse and imaginative literature, this thesis seeks to transform how we understand both the *longue durée* of early modern Catholic culture and the literature of the English Revolution.

English Catholics offer a uniquely complex perspective on the events of the 1640s and 1650s. They were variously blamed for the wars, persecuted, tolerated, and appealed to for assistance by different sides at different times.[1] The same decades witnessed both intense anti-Catholic hysteria, as Puritans and pamphleteers claimed to have discovered a popish plot at the heart of Charles I's government, and new opportunities for Catholics, as large numbers obtained public office and bore arms in the service of their king for the first time in over a century.[2] Earlier generations of Catholic recusants had defined themselves in opposition to the English Protestant monarchy, which they denounced as a tyrannical usurpation; now many vested their hopes in demonstrating their loyalty to the embattled Stuart kings. As Michael

[1] William Sheils, 'English Catholics at War and Peace,' in Christopher Durston and Judith D. Maltby (eds), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 138; J. C. H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1976), 165.

[2] Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Scott Sowerby, 'Trading Toleration for Troops: Charles I and Catholics in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms,' in Paul D. Halliday, Eleanor Hubbard, and Scott Sowerby (eds), *Revolutionising Politics: Culture and Conflict in England, 1620–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 216–235.

Questier notes, to some Catholics the wars seemed 'a wonderful opportunity for a magnificent gesture, refuting so many years of puritan slanders that Catholics were fundamentally disloyal'.[3] That the civil wars, which many thought an unmitigated catastrophe, could be seen as a propitious opportunity indicates the idiosyncrasies of the English Catholic experience of these decades. They reassessed longstanding traditions of resistance that were being taken up by, and increasingly associated with, their fiercest opponents. In *Eikon Basilike* (1649), Charles I's persona acknowledged these inversions: 'I am sorry the papists should have a greater sense of their allegiance than many Protestant professors, who seem to have learned and to practise the worst principles of the worst papists'.[4] While earlier ideas of Catholic loyalism certainly persisted and underpinned Catholic royalism, extraordinary circumstances transformed old paradigms; after the regicide, loyalty meant submitting to the new non-monarchical regime and royalism became an oppositional, even traitorous, creed. In response to these upheavals, Catholics reimagined their allegiance and identity. Many of the concepts and issues which have dominated literary and historical scholarship on Catholicism – loyalty, treason, resistance, and the relationship between spiritual and temporal authority – were reconceived in ways that can help us look afresh at the entire post-Reformation period.

English Catholicism has become a major area of early modern historiography in the last few decades. Since the revisionist historians of the 1980s, particularly Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy, dismantled a triumphalist narrative of the emergence of Protestant England, Peter Lake, Michael Questier, and Alexandra Walsham among others have integrated Catholicism into mainstream British history, recognising the community's continuing

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[3] Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c.1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 502.

[4] John Gauden and Charles I, *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings*, ed. Philip Knachel (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 89. Though the book's authorship continues to be debated, its most recent editors convincingly argue that it should be seen as 'a product of authorial cooperation' between Gauden and the king, see Jim Daems and Holly Faith Nelson (eds), *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings with Selections from Eikonoklastes, John Milton* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2006), 20.

significance to the political and cultural life of post-Reformation Britain.[5] Literary studies took a little longer to exorcise its Whig Protestant master-narrative, when Alison Shell's field-defining 1999 monograph recovered an entire English Catholic literary tradition, and demonstrated the role played by anti-popery in both the early modern imagination and the subsequent construction of the English literary canon.[6] Since then, a thriving field of literary scholarship has emerged, ranging across Catholic depictions of martyrdom, nationhood, conversion, and gender.[7] Historians have also increasingly turned to literary texts and methodologies, treating, as Lori Anne Ferrell puts it, 'words in and of themselves as the stuff of history'.[8] Yet despite this scholarly industry, English Catholic writers of the 1640s and 1650s have been sorely neglected.

What work has been done on mid-seventeenth-century Catholicism has often been limited in its sources and conclusions. It has predominantly focused on the question of which 'side' in the wars Catholics supported. In the 1970s, statistical analyses of the make-up of the armies produced differing results: Keith Lindley inferred that the majority of Catholics living in the counties remained neutral, while Peter Newman argued that high proportions of the

[5] John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975); Christopher Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400–c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Michael Questier and Peter Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Ethan Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

[6] Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[7] Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999); Susannah Brietz Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Arthur Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Molly Murray, *The Poetics of Conversion in Early Modern English Literature: Verse and Change from Donne to Dryden* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For overviews see Robert Miola (ed.), *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and Ronald Corthell, Frances E. Dolan, Christopher Highley, and Arthur Marotti (eds), *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[8] Lori Anne Ferrell, 'Revisiting Revisionism: Personalities and the Profession,' *HLQ* 78.4 (2015): 574.

Catholic nobility and gentry served as officers in the king's armies.[9] Alexandra Tompkins' doctoral thesis interrogated this paradox, analysing intra-Catholic factions and politics during the interregnum and crucially challenging 'an either/or "royalist/neutralist" dichotomy'.[10] Despite Tompkins' intervention, scholars continue to remark, often in passing, that virtually all Catholics were committed royalists and that the tradition of resistance had died out by the mid-seventeenth century.[11] In fact, as we shall see, the writings of Elizabethan Jesuit controversialists and resistance theorists, notably Robert Persons (1546–1610), continued to be read and celebrated. One prominent Catholic supporter of Cromwell, the priest and philosopher, Thomas White, alias Blacklo, and his circle have received substantial attention, yet privileging this particular group risks distorting the larger picture.[12] Mark Williams has demonstrated the complex interaction between confessional identity and political royalism from the perspective of Irish exiles.[13] Most recently, Eilish Gregory has produced a detailed account of the sequestration of Catholics' property and their use of petitioning, lawyers, and cross-confessional networks to mitigate its impact; Gregory emphasises continuity and reaffirms the fact that Catholics were not 'isolated from their communities'.[14] The techniques of close textual analysis and the evidence of literary history have not been brought to bear on this topic, but I contend that they generate a better insight into how Catholics understood the

[9] Keith Lindley, 'The Part Played by the Catholics,' in Brian Manning (ed.), *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 126–176; P. R. Newman, 'Catholic Royalist Activists in the North, 1642–46,' *Recusant History* 14 (1977): 26–38; P. R. Newman, 'Catholic Royalists of Northern England 1642–1645,' *Northern History* 15 (1979): 88–95; P. R. Newman, 'Roman Catholic Royalists: Papist Commanders under Charles I and Charles II,' *Recusant History* 15 (1981): 396–405.

[10] Alexandra Kate Tompkins, 'The English Catholic Issue, 1640–1662: Factionalism, Perceptions and Exploitation' (PhD diss., University of London, 2010), 261.

[11] Christopher Highley, 'Henry VIII's Ghost in Cromwellian England,' in Alexandra Walsham, Bronwyn Wallace, Ceri Law, and Brian Cummings (eds), *Memory and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 110–111; Gabriel Glickman, *The English Catholic Community, 1688–1745: Politics, Culture and Ideology* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 28, 49.

[12] Most notably, Stefania Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists: Between Politics and Theology during the English Civil War* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008). See chapter five.

[13] Mark Williams, 'Between King, Faith and Reason: Father Peter Talbot (S. J.) and Catholic Royalist Thought in Exile,' *EHR* 127.528 (2012): 1063–1099.

[14] Eilish Gregory, *Catholics during the English Revolution, 1642–1660: Politics, Sequestration and Loyalty* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2021), 17.

civil wars and Revolution and their role in them. In his major recent study of 'England's Second Reformation', the mid-seventeenth-century conflict over the nature and reform of the national Church, Anthony Milton admits paying only 'limited attention' to Catholics and states the 'urgent need for sustained research on the position and activities of Catholics during this period'.[15] I hope not only to fill this gap, but also to argue that our understanding of the English Revolution in its entirety is greatly enhanced by examining Catholics' participation in contemporary discourse. Although I draw upon and contribute to historical scholarship, what follows is not a political, nor narrative, history. My primary concern is to ask how the overlooked writings of Catholics can help us think again about the literature of England's revolutionary decades.

English Catholic writing does not neatly conform to the traditional categories of mid-seventeenth-century literary history: royalist, radical, Puritan, or republican. The foundational critical accounts of the so-called 'literature of Revolution' posited an inevitable connection between literary genres and political identities. Nigel Smith argued that 'identity, politics, and genre are bound together', claiming 'You *are* your genres'.[16] David Norbrook similarly asserted that 'republican politics produced a republican poetics' and identified a partisan literary tradition stretching from the 1620s to the 1670s.[17] Informed by a new historiographical emphasis on the variety and flexibility of mid-century political and religious commitments, subsequent criticism has questioned the notion of polarised royalist or republican poetics.[18] In

[15] Anthony Milton, *England's Second Reformation: The Battle for the Church of England, 1625–1662* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 6.
[16] Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 4–5.
[17] David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10. For similar treatments of royalist writing, see Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), and Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[18] Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds), 'Introduction,' in *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 3; Barbara Donagan, 'Varieties of Royalism,' in Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds), *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 66–88; Andrew Hopper, *Turncoats and Renegadoes: Changing Sides during the English Civil Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

his study of Andrew Marvell, Nicholas McDowell highlights personal connections and literary networks, which transcend ideological boundaries and instead promote the 'cause of wit'.[19] Niall Allsopp's recent book on sometime-royalist poets, who came out in support of the Commonwealth in the 1650s, largely avoids polemical categories and the concept of 'side-changing', instead analysing how these poets formulated new ideas of sovereignty suitable to the changed regime.[20] Sensitive to the continuing 'political lability and uncertainty' of the 1640s through to the 1680s, Matthew Augustine also rejects 'oppositional frameworks' and characterises mid-seventeenth-century literature in terms of an 'aesthetics of contingency'.[21] This thesis builds on these insights, while also arguing that stereotypes remained imaginatively powerful and polemically useful. Contemporaries expended much rhetorical energy in defining and locating a wide variety of identities and ways of speaking, however exaggerated or fictional they might be.[22] Contrary to the usual scholarly emphasis on how such fictions sustained a distinction between self and other, Catholic writers navigated the period's conflict in ways that illuminate how the crafting of identity also involved forging alliances and correspondences across seeming divides. This thesis reassesses the complex and creative relationship between literary style and religiopolitical identity in an age of uncertainty and transformation.

Literary style describes both the idiosyncrasy of an individual writer and patterns shared by members of a group or movement. Jeff Dolven seems to articulate the self-evident when he claims that 'Style projects a way of putting your life together', that it 'defines communities, both of works and of people', and 'is a bearing toward the world'.[23] His various analogies of

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[19] Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[20] Niall Allsopp, *Poetry and Sovereignty in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[21] Matthew Augustine, *Aesthetics of Contingency: Writing, Politics, and Culture in England, 1639–89* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 23. See also Christopher D'Addario and Matthew Augustine (eds), *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).
[22] Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11; Koji Yamamoto (ed.), *Stereotypes and Stereotyping in Early Modern England: Puritans, Papists and Projectors* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022).
[23] Jeff Dolven, 'Reading Wyatt for the Style,' *Modern Philology* 105.1 (2007): 74, 81.

clothing, gesture, and painting indicate that the concept of style is at once ubiquitous and very difficult to pin down. Introducing his wide-ranging and canon-challenging anthology of mid-seventeenth-century poetry, Peter Davidson notes the problems with 'tak[ing] style as an invariable marker of political or religious allegiance'.[24] What does it mean to write like a Catholic? Or a royalist or republican? As McDowell has convincingly argued, Richard Crashaw's poetry, despite its association with Roman Catholicism, was read approvingly by the Ranter Abiezer Coppe and shares 'similarities of thought and expression' with the works of the New Model Army preacher John Saltmarsh.[25] In *The Universal Baroque*, Davidson also challenges the exclusive identification of the baroque with the Counter Reformation and makes the case for 'an international system of communication in all the arts' that was 'supra-confessional and genuinely international'.[26] Contemporaries did search for confessional affinities in certain texts and forms however. *Eikon Basilike* (1649) and Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1642), two works of life-writing that for lots of readers are characteristically 'Anglican', appeared in French and Latin translations in the 1640s in which their authors were (mis)identified as Roman Catholics.[27] The problem of how to interpret style is especially apparent in a very recent chapter by McDowell about the impact of Andrew Marvell's brief conversion to Catholicism on his devotional poetry. Discussing the popularity of Counter-Reformation aesthetics and models among poets in Caroline Cambridge, McDowell cautions

[24] Peter Davidson (ed.), *Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse, 1625–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), l, lvi.
[25] Nicholas McDowell, 'The Beauty of Holiness and the Poetics of Antinomianism: Richard Crashaw, John Saltmarsh and the Language of Religious Radicalism in the 1640s,' in Ariel Hessayon and David Finnegan (eds), *Varieties of Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 38.
[26] Peter Davidson, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 2.
[27] François de Marsys, *Les Memoires du Feu Roy de la Grand' Bretagne Charles Premier* (Paris, 1649), éiiir, Bodleian, (OC) 55 d.158 (1); see Ronald Asch, *Sacral Kingship between Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment: The French and English Monarchies 1587–1688* (New York: Berghann Books, 2014), 99–100. Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, trans. John Merryweather (Paris, 1644), ãiiiir–ãiiiiv, Bodleian, Antiq.f.U.1644.1; see Kathryn Murphy, '"The Best Pillar of the Order of Sir Francis": Thomas Browne, Samuel Hartlib and Communities of Learning,' in Kathryn Murphy and Richard Todd (eds), *'A Man Very Well Studyed': New Contexts for Thomas Browne* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 289–290.

that an interest 'in the style of Jesuit manuals of sacred eloquence should not be taken as indication of a susceptibility to Catholic conversion, nor even of particular attraction to Laudian devotional modes'.[28] And yet, McDowell also speculates that Marvell's later poetry sometimes recalls his conversion by employing these same baroque image patterns and tropes at 'moments of spiritual and bodily temptation'.[29] At stake here is an important but unacknowledged paradox: style both is and is not an indicator of confessional and political identity in different contexts.

The following chapters confront this issue in various ways. I show how mid-seventeenth-century Catholic writers imitate, appropriate, invert, and parody forms and tropes identified with a range of religious and political groups and stereotypes from royalists to Levellers. Chapter one scrutinises the relationship between the labels Catholic and Cavalier by examining how Catholic royalist gentry engaged with and reframed anti-Puritan satire, love lyric, and pastoral. By contrast, chapter two compares Jesuit tyrant tragedies to the use of Senecan drama by supporters of the regicide, such as Marchamont Nedham and John Milton. These diverse texts ruminate in surprising and self-conscious ways on the relationship between form and politics. Analysing how Catholics used many of the major genres and idiolects of the period's literature, this thesis challenges traditional understandings of the meanings and religious politics of various styles. It proposes that, instead of asserting a fixed connection between certain forms and ideologies, we need to examine how religious and political identities were ascribed to literary styles through acts of interpretation. I suggest that this process of interpreting and labelling was contested, contingent, and highly creative, offering new ways of reading post-Reformation literary politics and the construction of confessional identity.

The adjectives used in my title, 'English Catholic Literary Culture', are therefore not

[28] Nicholas McDowell, 'The Conversion of Andrew Marvell: Religion, Poetics, Sexuality,' in Matthew Augustine, Giulio Pertile, and Steven Zwicker (eds), *Imagining Andrew Marvell at 400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 29.
[29] McDowell, 'The Conversion of Andrew Marvell,' 31.

as straightforward as they might seem. The term 'Catholic' was the subject of much debate. In earlier periods it encompasses recusants, who refused to attend the parish church, and Church Papists, who did attend but remained privately committed to the old faith.[30] From the 1620s onwards, as Anthony Milton has shown, avant-garde conformists and Laudian clergy appropriated the term, identifying themselves as both reformed and part of a universal Catholic Church.[31] As we shall see, in the 1640s and 1650s, definitions became even more contentious. The accusation of popery was levelled widely at Church of England bishops and Roman Catholics alike, and in the 1650s, the influence of the French Gallican Church led some English Catholics to question the extent of the papacy's authority over them, producing a split between English and Roman Catholicisms. We can adopt the broad definition suggested by Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó Hannracháin: '"Catholic" is taken to simply imply those believers, and their clergy, whose attachment to the church universal meant alignment – doctrinal, liturgical and jurisdictional – with norms that could meet with approval in Rome'.[32] However, even this requires the caveat that those who questioned Rome's jurisdiction in political matters, like Thomas White, can still be designated Catholics. Rather than seeking to smooth over these ambiguities, I suggest that contemporaries were also preoccupied by the fuzzy edges of this crucial term. As chapter four demonstrates, Roman Catholic converts and exiled Laudian clergy in mid-century Paris claimed competing Catholic identities in often vicious polemical exchanges over the nature of the true Church. I argue that across different literary genres and among very different communities and institutions, much rhetorical and interpretative effort

[30] Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for the Royal Historical Society, 1993). See also Brad S. Gregory, 'Situating Early Modern English Catholicism,' in James E. Kelly and Susan Royal (eds), *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory, and Counter-Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 17–40.
[31] Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[32] Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó Hannracháin, 'Alternative Establishments? Insular Catholicism and Presbyterianism,' in Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó Hannracháin (eds), *Insular Christianity: Alternative Models of the Church in Britain and Ireland, c.1570–c.1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 2.

went into defining and imagining English Roman Catholic confessional identity. '[T]here is no such thing', Brian Cummings has trenchantly claimed, 'as intrinsically "Catholic" writing'.[33] Certainly, writers and texts across the confessional spectrum shared far more than scholars of early modern literature and religion have sometimes implied. However, rather than defending or dismissing an inherently confessional literature or an exclusively Catholic style, this thesis analyses how confessional and political identity was constructed, projected, and interpreted in a range of literary texts.

The term 'English' in my title also requires some explanation. The archipelagic turn in studies of the 'Wars of the Three Kingdoms', early modern literature, and more recently Catholicism cautions against restricting attention to only one of the four nations of Britain and Ireland.[34] However, this thesis concentrates on English writers because the wealth of potential material demands some boundaries and because the institutions and communities I study were generally organised by nation. For instance, Scottish and Irish Catholics had their own colleges and churches on the continent. Many of the texts discussed here were written and circulated abroad, and questions of national belonging are often at the forefront of these writers' minds. I therefore do not restrict myself to texts written in English or England. Much invigorating recent research, particularly by Victoria Moul, has demonstrated the insights to be gained when we afford Latin, England's second major language and Europe's lingua franca, its due place in early modern literary history.[35] It was Latin that facilitated transnational exchanges and

[33] Brian Cummings, 'Shakespeare and the Inquisition,' *Shakespeare Survey* 65 (2013): 309.
[34] John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (Harlow: Longman, 1993); John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics, 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Gabriel Glickman, 'A British Catholic Community? Ethnicity, Identity and Recusant Politics 1660–1750,' in Kelly & Royal (eds), *Early Modern English Catholicism*, 60–80. See also the national range of Robert E. Scully (eds), *A Companion to Catholicism and Recusancy in Britain and Ireland: From Reformation to Emancipation* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).
[35] Victoria Moul, *A Literary History of Latin & English Poetry: Bilingual Verse Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Victoria Moul (ed.), *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

encounters, not the vernacular which few beyond this island understood.[36] I access the transnational networks and literary cultures to which English Catholics belonged by analysing both their Latin and English poetry and drama. Embracing Liesbeth Corens' and Timothy Raylor's work on Catholic and royalist mobility respectively, which encourages us to move beyond the sometimes limiting and pejorative framework of 'exile', I consider how living abroad could be a source of dislocation and disenfranchisement, but also of meaningful intellectual, political, and artistic encounters.[37] From this ambivalent perspective, these writers conceive of national identity and its relation to religious allegiance in distinctive ways. In his study of early modern transnationalism, Brian Lockey argues that 'the cosmopolitan investment in the traditional conception of the transnational Christian Commonwealth, which persisted within royalist political theory, remained as an essential legacy of the late sixteenth-century English Catholic exiles'.[38] Lockey concentrates on how Elizabethan Catholics, such as Cardinal Allen, Robert Persons, and Nicholas Sander, influenced mid-century Protestant writers, notably Richard Fanshawe, John Milton, and Aphra Behn. This thesis demonstrates that mid-century Catholics continued to engage with these questions of national, international, and religious belonging. As we shall see, 'English', like 'Catholic' is a contested and frequently reinterpreted label, productive of literary experiment and innovation.

This study is concerned with literary culture: the production and consumption of texts within various overlapping imagined and actual communities. It rejects an inquisitorial mode of criticism aimed at extracting the latent religious beliefs of individual writers, and instead turns to the literary cultures of self-consciously Catholic communities: a recusant country

[36] Jane Stevenson, 'Centres and Peripheries: Early-Modern British Writers in a European Context,' *The Library* 21.2 (2020): 157–191. Stevenson's forthcoming bibliography, 'British Authors Published Abroad', will transform research on early modern transnationalism and its literature.
[37] Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1, 3; Timothy Raylor, 'Exiles, Expatriates and Travellers: Towards a Cultural History of the English Abroad, 1640–1660,' in Philip Major (ed.), *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and Its Aftermath, 1640–1690* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 42–43.
[38] Brian Lockey, *Early Modern Catholics, Royalists, and Cosmopolitans: English Transnationalism and the Christian Commonwealth* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 222.

house, Jesuit colleges abroad, the exiled royal court in Paris, and circles of prisoners and philosophers in London. This foregrounds the extent to which circumstances and environments, rather than abstract ideology, inform literary texts and notions of allegiance. I trace the social, institutional, intellectual, and religious contexts which produce literary culture. This approach also avoids misrepresenting Catholicism as a homogenous entity, which certain individuals instantiate. Michael Questier has argued that even if contemporaries claimed to represent the entire 'Catholic community' in order to pursue their own agendas, English Catholicism was in fact highly 'variegated', existing 'as a series of entourages and networks'.[39] Catholic community-making served both the practical necessity of maintaining a proscribed faith and a pressing soteriological purpose, implementing the doctrine that salvation depended upon membership of the Church.[40] Organised by place, rather than chronologically, this thesis illustrates the multiple different ways these various kinds of Catholic experienced and responded to the wars and Revolution. From these distinctive communities emerged contrasting representations of Catholic identity and a varied range of literary texts.

Each chapter discusses a site of literary production and its most significant genres: the manuscript verse miscellanies of love lyric and anti-Puritan satire, compiled by the so-called 'Tixall circle', the intermarried Aston, Fowler, and Thimelby families in Staffordshire; an oration and two tyrant tragedies, by the Jesuit playwright, Joseph Simons, revived for performance at the English College, Rome, in the 1640s; historical tragicomedies about medieval English kings, written and staged at the English College at Saint-Omer in the 1650s; conversion narratives and devotional poetry by the Laudian converts to Catholicism, Thomas Vane, Hugh Cressy, Thomas Bayly, and Richard Crashaw, gathered in Paris; and, finally, the

[39] Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*, 9, 17. Geoff Baker employs a similar approach in *Reading and Politics in Early Modern England: The Mental World of a Seventeenth-Century Catholic Gentleman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 3–5.
[40] Corens discusses the spiritual significance of Catholic community-making in relation to confraternities, *Confessional Mobility*, 143.

political pamphlets, poetry, and drama arguing for toleration by connected writers and thinkers living in London, notably the followers of Thomas White, alias Blacklo. I present new archival research into the print and manuscript remains of each group, analysing previously unknown texts and evidence with which to reassess the role Catholics played in mid-seventeenth-century literature and politics.

Focusing on a major genre in each chapter accentuates how Catholics echo, or differ from, canonical Protestant writers. How does the poetry of the Aston and Thimelby families compare to that of Suckling, Denham, and the so-called Cavalier poets? How do the politically-charged tragicomedies performed at St. Omers alter our understanding of a dramatic genre invariably identified as royalist? And what do the Catholic tracts arguing for toleration share with the boisterous pamphlets by Leveller writers like John Lilburne and Richard Overton? Reading these Catholic authors alongside well-studied texts challenges scholarly accounts of certain genres and forms and throws the relationship between identity and style into relief.

This is not a comprehensive account of every English Catholic writer from 1640 to 1660, nor could it be. Neglected authors are preferred over figures who are already well known to scholars, such as Walter Montagu, Toby Matthew and Kenelm Digby. A less well-studied but similarly extravagant figure, the distinguished Latin poet, James Alban Gibbes (1611?–1677), who lived in France, St. Omers, and Rome, and received an honorary Oxford degree in 1671, is not covered here because, though he was active in the mid-century, much of his poetry was printed after the Restoration and its extent demands an entire study to itself.[41] In selecting texts and writers to include, I have prioritised those which best illustrate how Catholics engaged with contemporary events and most clearly illuminate the relationships between community, confessional identity, and literary style. The devotional life-writings produced in convents and

[41] D. K. Money, 'Gibbes, James Alban (1611?–1677), Latin Poet', *ODNB* (2004), accessed 13 December 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/10585. D. K. Money, *The English Horace: Anthony Alsop and the Tradition of British Latin Verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 42–50.

women's religious houses are not included here, both because they are receiving ample treatment in current scholarship and because they do not comment as insistently or explicitly on political debates and upheavals as other texts.[42] I offer a range of representative examples and a framework for understanding both mid-seventeenth-century Catholicism and the crafting of confessional identity that can be employed to re-evaluate a variety of other authors and texts in the future.

Piecing together these diverse textual communities and scrutinizing their innovative interventions in familiar literary traditions, this thesis provides a new perspective on both Catholic writing and the literature of the Revolution. Scholarship on Catholicism has often stressed its subjects' victimhood and marginalisation. By contrast, I argue that amid the upheavals and innovations of these decades, Catholics imagined and worked towards different possible identities and futures. Far from being restricted to lament or martyrology, the literary culture of mid-century English Catholicism is defined by its variety, by turns comedic, irreverent, erotic, politically incisive, and playfully self-reflexive. It also provides the basis for an alternative narrative of the literature of the 1640s and 1650s. Vernacular pamphlets are read alongside spectacular baroque performances, ecstatic religious poetry alongside Cromwellian panegyric. The languages of libertinism, the Norman Yoke, ancient republican liberty, and religious ecstasy, familiar aspects of the period's intellectual and political discourse, appear here in highly unfamiliar ways that force us to reassess dominant critical narratives. Standard interpretations of major genres, such as anti-Puritan satire, tragicomedy, and Protectorate heroic drama are revised by considering how Catholics appropriated and rewrote these forms. Some of the period's most influential and ubiquitous polemical stereotypes, the Catholic Cavalier, the plotting Jesuit, and the religious convert, invariably encountered through the

[42] For instance, James Kelly, *English Convents in Catholic Europe, c.1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Victoria Van Hyning, *Convent Autobiography: Early Modern English Nuns in Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

terrified eyes of their opponents, are here listened to in their own words.

This thesis reveals how Catholics reimagined their community, allegiances, and literary traditions in response to the civil wars and Revolution. But it also argues that recovering these forgotten texts transforms our understanding of major authors, including Denham, Milton, Waller, Hobbes, and Marvell. More broadly, it seeks to provide a new account of the complex relationship between religion, politics, and literary form in post-Reformation Europe.

Chapter One

Catholic Cavaliers

In the early 1640s, the English people faced a terrifying prospect; a cabal of 'blood-thirsty Popish Cavaliers', they were told, were seeking to pull down the English Church and government, and replace it with idolatry and tyranny.[1] Anti-Catholic hysteria and not wholly ungrounded fears of scheming Catholic courtiers fanned the flames of civil war.[2] This crisis, a moment David Cressy has called 'the revolution before the Revolution, the revolution that led to Civil War', was marked by dramatic political mobilisation.[3] In print and manuscript, unprecedented numbers of polemical texts produced and replicated a set of polarised stereotypes; among them was 'that most accursed confederacy, made up […] of Jesuits and Papists and Atheists, of stigmaticall and infamous persons in all kindes, with that bloody and butcherly Generation, commonly knowne by the name of Cavaliers'.[4] While historians and literary scholars have studied the anxieties and polemical fictions of this period in detail, little attention has been paid to how Catholics themselves experienced and represented this moment of seismic transformation. This chapter reconsiders one of the most ubiquitous yet elusive stereotypes of the mid-seventeenth century, the Popish Cavalier. It does so by analysing the prodigious literary productions of a group of intermarried English Catholic royalist families: the Astons, Fowlers, and Thimelbys.

Across multiple generations, these families, connected by faith, class, and marriage, produced substantial compilations of verse. Walter Aston, 1st Lord Aston of Forfar (c.1584–1639) was brought up as a ward of Sir Edward Coke and became a prominent member of the

[1] William Prynne, *The Popish Royall Favourite* (London, 1643), ¶3v.
[2] Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot*; David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 29; Robert Clifton, 'Fear of Popery,' in Conrad Russell (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973), 144–167.
[3] Cressy, *England on Edge*, 426.
[4] John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme, or, Truth Pleading as well the Necessity, as the Lawfulness of this Present War for the Suppressing of that Butcherly Brood of Cavaliering Incendiaries* (London, 1642), 2.

Jacobean court, patron to Michael Drayton, and follower of Prince Henry.[5] Aston converted to Catholicism at some point in the 1620s and served as ambassador to Spain in 1619–25 and 1636–38. His children and their spouses and friends were prolific composers and compilers of letters, love poetry, satire, elegies, and occasional verse. Since the nineteenth century, this group has been named after the Astons' ancestral seat, perched above the River Trent in Staffordshire: Tixall Hall (Figure 1).[6] There are four major records of the Tixall coterie: a verse miscellany collected in the late 1630s by Walter Aston's daughter, Constance Aston Fowler (Huntington Library, MS HM 904);[7] her brother Herbert Aston's miscellany compiled between 1634 and 1656 (Beinecke, MS Osborn b4); several generations of the family's letters;[8] and a nineteenth-century transcription of yet more manuscript poetry which has been lost.[9] Recently, the second main hand in Constance's miscellany has been attributed to a Jesuit missionary priest William Southern (alias Smith), who operated near the Staffordshire estates of Constance's husband Walter Fowler in the late 1630s.[10] Southern's own manuscript book of political meditations composed in the following decade also survives (Trinity College Dublin, MS 1194). Across their various miscellanies, the Astons forged an affectionate community, united by confessional, political, and aesthetic priorities. Examining the diverse writings of these cosmopolitan court Catholics, I ask how they responded to, and intervened in, the literary and political culture of mid-seventeenth-century royalism.

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[5] A. J. Loomie, 'Aston, Walter, Baron Aston of Forfar (1584–1639),' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 13 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/828; Dennis Kay, 'Poems by Sir Walter Aston, and a Date for the Donne/Goodyer Verse Epistle "*Alternis Vicibus*,"' *RES* 37.146 (1986): 198–210.

[6] Arthur Clifford (ed.), *Tixall Letters; or The Correspondence of the Aston Family, and their Friends* (Edinburgh: Longman, 1815), 2 volumes. For an analysis of Clifford's sometimes problematic editorial practice, see Van Hyning, *Convent Autobiography*, 56–58.

[7] Deborah Aldrich Watson (ed.), *The Verse Miscellany of Constance Aston Fowler: A Diplomatic Edition* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance English Text Society, 2000).

[8] BL, Add. MS 36452; the majority of these letters are printed in Clifford (ed.), *Tixall Letters*.

[9] *TP*.

[10] Cedric C. Brown, 'William Smith, Vere Southerne, Jesuit Missioner, and Three Linked Manuscript Miscellanies,' in Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Starza Smith (eds), *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 91–112, and Helen Hackett, 'Unlocking the Mysteries of Constance Aston Fowler's Verse Miscellany (Huntington Library MS HM 904): The Hand B Scribe Identified,' in Eckhardt and Smith (eds), *Manuscript Miscellanies*, 113–132.

Figure 1



The Astons occupied an ambiguous position in early modern England, both intimately connected to powerful figures of the 1630s and 1640s and marginalised by their commitment to a proscribed faith. In 1636 Constance described a visit to Tixall where 'there was all my Lord of Esicke's museick, and ther, according to our owld fassion, did wee daince all our owld dainces over and over againe'.[11] That the earl of Essex, then living at Chartley Castle, six miles from Tixall, loaned his musicians to his Catholic neighbours demonstrates the extent of cross-confessional co-existence in local areas, which much recent scholarship has emphasised.[12] Within a few years, Essex would become a leading parliamentarian general and Constance's

[11] Clifford (ed.), *Tixall Letters*, vol. 1, 91.
[12] John Morrill, 'Devereux, Robert, third earl of Essex (1591–1646),' *ODNB* (2008), accessed 14 December 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/7566; Adam Norton and Nadine Lewycky (eds), *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

language of immemorial festive ritual (precocious for a fifteen-year-old) would take on partisan royalist connotations. In ten years, the Astons went from diplomats to delinquents, but their status and influence in the 1630s continued to yield opportunities in the war-torn 1640s. The second Lord, also named Walter (1609–1678), was married to Lady Mary Weston, daughter of Richard Weston, Earl of Portland and Charles I's Lord High Treasurer, a match that, as we shall see, proved helpful for maintaining bipartisan alliances across these decades.[13] In March 1648, Walter was discharged from sequestration, either, as Terence Smith explains, because of his wide-ranging personal connections or because his grave financial situation rendered the punishment futile.[14] A defeated and bankrupt royalist by the late 1640s, Aston travelled to Spain to beg financial aid from his father's old patron, King Philip IV.[15] These enduring Anglo-Spanish connections also broadened the family's literary horizons; their surviving manuscripts include translations from contemporary Spanish literature and evince a familiarity with the Spanish baroque poet Luis de Góngora (1561–1627), and the plays of Lope de Vega (1562–1635).[16] The family even benefited from influential contacts at the heart of the English Republic. Frances Aston, sister to Herbert and the younger Walter, married Sir William Pearsall who apparently 'enjoyed a great friendship' with the regicide John Bradshaw. Pearsall and Bradshaw were former contemporaries at Gray's Inn, but they remained in touch; when the latter became president of the Council of State, he would relay details of the

[13] Aldrich-Watson (ed.), *The Verse Miscellany of Constance Aston Fowler*, xxiv.
[14] Terence Stephen Smith, 'The Persecution of Staffordshire Roman Catholic Recusants: 1625–1660,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30.3 (1979): 337–338.
[15] See Walter's petition to the king of Spain, BL, Add. MS 36452, ff. 169r–170r.
[16] Helen Hackett, 'The Aston-Thimelby circle at Home and Abroad: Localism, National Identity, and Internationalism in the English Catholic Community,' in David Coleman (ed.), *Region, Religion and English Renaissance Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 133; and Alexander Samson, 'The Literary Glocal: Sir Walter Aston between Staffordshire and Madrid,' *HLQ* 82.4 (2019): 601. The first Lord Aston's 'A Stranslation [*sic*]' from an unidentified Spanish poem, and his secretary Sir Richard Fanshawe's translation of Gongora's 'Con differencia tal, con gracia tanta' appear at Huntington Library, HM 904, ff. 188r–189r; Herbert's rendering of another Gongora poem appears in Beinecke, Osborn b4, ff. 49v–50r, see Tony Frazer, *Spanish Poetry of the Golden Age in Contemporary English Translations* (Exeter: Shearsman Books, 2008), 56–57. On the family's connections to Fanshawe, see Peter Davidson (ed.), *The Poems and Translations of Sir Richard Fanshawe, Vol. I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 43–44, 349–351.

Commonwealth's policy toward recusants to Pearsall.[17] In the divisive 1640s and 1650s, the Astons continued to depend upon and cultivate courtly and diplomatic connections.

The Astons' surviving poetry miscellanies reflect this ambivalent religiopolitical position. Herbert and Constance's manuscripts include highly popular pieces by Robert Herrick, Ben Jonson, Henry King, Frances Quarles, William Strode, and Sir Henry Wotton.[18] Herbert's miscellany reflects tastes current at the Inns of Court and universities.[19] The fashion for neo-platonic love and its satirical subversion, fostered at the court of Henrietta Maria in the 1630s, exerts a considerable influence on their poetry which juxtaposes the bodily and the spiritual, and elevates beauty to a virtue and love to a kind of religion.[20] The Tixall poets' own compositions imitate libertine verse, royalist pastoral, and neo-platonic love poetry. Herbert copies out a unique elegy 'On the death of my Lord Francis Villiers', the third son of the Duke of Buckingham, who died fighting for the king in July 1648 and became a Cavalier icon.[21] The poem laments the passing of the Caroline age in rustic pastoral terms: 'Who now shall grace our playnes o hone o hone/ Or teach Loue to the swaynes o hone o hone'.[22] Yet, alongside such ostensibly royalist poems, the Tixall manuscripts also feature Catholic devotional and martyrological texts, positioning the family within longstanding recusant traditions. There is also some evidence that the networks of manuscript transmission to which they belonged were identifiably Catholic. Two conventional love poems which appear consecutively in Herbert's miscellany exist in only one other manuscript, which contains both popular love lyrics and

[17] George Oliver, *Collections, Illustrating the History of the Catholic Religion* (London: Charles Dolman, 1857), 208–210. The two men were admitted to Gray's Inn in 1622, Joseph Foster (ed.), *Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521–1889* (London: Hansard, 1889), 168.
[18] Huntington Library, HM 904, ff. 13r, 137r–139r, 146v–149v; Beinecke, Osborn b4, ff. 42v, 23r–23v, 27r–27v, 38r.
[19] Helen Hackett, 'Sisterhood and Female Friendship in Constance Aston Fowler's Verse Miscellany,' in Susan Wiseman (ed.), *Early Modern Women and the Poem* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 134.
[20] Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Joshua Eckhardt, *Manuscript Verse Collectors and the Politics of Anti-Courtly Love Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[21] McDowell, *Marvell and the Cause of Wit*, 166–178.
[22] Beinecke, Osborn b4, f. 48v.

other Catholic texts, notably the only witnesses of Sir Tobie Matthew's sonnets addressed to various saints.[23] Similarly, Sir Henry Wotton's highly popular poem, 'Quivering feares, heart-tearing cares', is uniquely titled 'Rusticatio Religiosi In Vacantiis' in the Tixall collections and 'A Religious Rustication' in a miscellany of English and Latin poems and plays, compiled by students of the English Jesuit College at Saint-Omer.[24] Finally, a miscellany of Latin poems, belonging to John Aston and dated 1648, includes an elegy on the ecstasy of the soul, 'Extasis animae', which also features, with some variants, in another mid-seventeenth-century St. Omers manuscript.[25] The Tixall poets engaged with and participated in mainstream Protestant literary culture, but they also belonged to recusant and exile networks, and, as we shall see, adapted dominant literary genres and tropes in noticeably Catholic ways.

Interest in women's writing and miscellany culture has prompted considerable work on some portions of the Aston material. Scholars have predominantly focused either on Constance's miscellany and her letters brokering a match between her brother Herbert and her friend Katherine Thimelby in the 1630s, or on the post-Restoration letters of Katherine's sister Winefrid Thimelby, nun and eventual Prioress of St. Monica's, Louvain.[26] While Helen Hackett's considerable work on the Tixall coterie recognises the significant influence of courtly and international acquaintances and literary forms on their poetry, she largely concentrates on the 1630s and the women of the circle.[27] The significant impact of the civil wars on their lives

[23] 'Come prithee Cupid play with mee' and 'All that I can sing of love', Beinecke, Osborn b4, ff. 33r–34r; they appear in Huntington Library, HM 198.2, ff. 49r, 11v. On HM 198.2, see Anthony G. Petti, 'Unknown Sonnets by Sir Toby Matthew,' *Recusant History* 9.3 (1967): 123–158.
[24] *TP*, 297–300; Stonyhurst, MS. B. VII. 23. Vol. 1, f. 127r.
[25] John Aston's version survives in Bodleian, Tanner MS 330, f. 41v and the St. Omers' version at Bodleian, Rawl. poet. 215, f. 42v.
[26] On Constance and Herbert, see Jenna Lay, *Beyond the Cloister: Catholic Englishwomen and Early Modern Literary Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 121–142; On Winefrid Thimelby, see Claire Walker, '"Doe Not Supose Me a Well Mortifyed Nun Dead to the World": Letter-Writing in Early Modern English Convents,' in James Daybell (ed.), *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450–1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 159–176; Jane Stevenson, 'The Tixall Circle and the Musical Life of St. Monica's, Louvain,' *British Catholic History* 33.4 (2017): 583–602; and Van Hyning, *Convent Autobiography*, 37–82.
[27] Helen Hackett, 'Sisterhood and Female Friendship,' 122. See also Hackett 'Unlocking the Mysteries of Constance Aston Fowler's Verse Miscellany,' and 'The Aston-Thimelby Circle at Home and Abroad'.

and writing has been entirely ignored. Jenijoy La Belle's early article on HM 904 claimed that 'Constance did not live in history, but in language: she created a little self-contained world made cunningly of love and rhetoric'.[28] Subsequent critics have often replicated this mistake, erroneously depicting the Astons as parochial and isolated, and their writing as preoccupied with domestic concerns and untouched by national politics.[29] This is partly informed by a series of assumptions about recusant marginalisation, seclusion, and secrecy; however, as Gašper Jakovac has convincingly argued, contrary to the 'notion of a gloomy Catholic country house which must barricade itself from the outside world in order to survive', recusant households depended upon national and international networks for survival, and in pursuit of 'reputation and influence' participated in local charity, hospitality, and festive ritual.[30] This chapter investigates how these writers responded eloquently to the upheavals of the 1640s and closely engaged with contemporary religious and political conflict.

The terms 'Cavalier' and 'royalist' poetry have been called into question by much recent scholarship which demonstrates that styles and forms were shared by writers across the political spectrum.[31] Nigel Smith and Nicholas McDowell have therefore attempted to redefine what used to be called 'Cavalier poetry' in terms not of a shared politics but of a common (and often literally collaborative) 'imitation and translation of continental lyric forms'.[32] This chapter develops these insights by exploring how the Tixall coterie's poetry expresses the

[28] Jenijoy La Belle, 'A True Love's Knot: The Letters of Constance Fowler and the Poems of Herbert Aston,' *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 79.1 (1980): 17. Jenna Lay also challenges La Belle's claim, though she does not acknowledge the family's engagement with contemporary politics, *Beyond the Cloister*, 132–133.
[29] Julie Sanders, 'Tixall Revisited: The Coterie Writings of the Astons and the Thimelbys in Seventeenth-Century Staffordshire,' *Staffordshire Studies* 12 (2000): 75–93; Sajed Chowdhury, 'The Poetics of "Making" in the Manuscript Writings of Constance Aston Fowler,' *The Seventeenth Century* 35.3 (2020): 338.
[30] Gašper Jakovac, 'The Catholic Country House in Early Modern England: Motion, Piety and Hospitality, c.1580–1640,' in Kimberley Skelton (ed.), *Early Modern Spaces in Motion: Design, Experience, and Rhetoric* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 94, 102.
[31] See for instance James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); D'Addario and Augustine (eds), *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell*.
[32] Nicholas McDowell, 'Towards Redefinition of Cavalier Poetics,' *The Seventeenth Century* 32.4 (2017): 425. Nigel Smith, 'Cross-Channel Cavaliers,' *The Seventeenth Century* 32.4 (2017): 433–453.

particularly complex interaction between Catholicism and royalism. However, it also acknowledges the imaginative and polemical force of the Cavalier stereotype. Just as McDowell's study of Andrew Marvell charts how literary and aesthetic preferences cut across ideological boundaries whilst recognising the important rhetorical use made of the figure of the Cavalier in newsbooks and lyric poems, this chapter examines how these Catholic writers variously embrace, reject, revise or parody the fiction of the swaggering, rakish royalist.[33]

While many of the poems in these manuscripts record social encounters, marriages, births, and deaths, we need to avoid straightforwardly identifying the voice of each poem with its author or compiler. Instead, in the poems they copied and composed, these writers disguise and transform themselves through pseudonyms, personae, and alternative voices. This is more than an erudite game. In the late 1630s and early 1640s, when partisan identities were forming, literary culture became increasingly prosopopoeic; libels, satires, prophecies, (mock-)petitions and sermons claimed to speak for the people, the country, the king, parliament, or even God. The Astons' polyphonic verse miscellanies borrow these techniques and invert them; they ventriloquise a range of contemporary political and religious stereotypes. Not only do individual poems use prosopopoeia, but these entire anthologies are best understood as prosopopoeic, as compilations of the voices of Laudians, royalists, libertines, Puritans, zealots, tyrants, martyrs, and Jesuits, out of which their own voices only rarely and then ironically emerge. Analysing these polyvocal miscellanies offers a new insight into the literary cultures of royalism and its intersection with confessional identity. It demonstrates the diverse and imaginative ways in which the king's various supporters represented the wars and their role in them.

Prosopopoeic politics

Herbert Aston signed his name and began compiling his manuscript miscellany on 29 July

[33] McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance*, 163 and *passim*.

1634.[34] Over the next decade, he gathered fifty-seven love poems, pastorals, satires, and anti-platonic burlesques, numbered them consecutively and labelled each either 'Cantus' or 'Song'.[35] Between 1648 and 1656, five further poems were added, three in a different hand.[36] From Song 50 onwards, the subject matter of Herbert's collection becomes increasingly political; love poetry is replaced by satirical attacks on religious radicals and parliamentarians. The increasing politicisation of this miscellany enacts the transformation of English literary culture amid the coming of war. This section analyses the libels and satires Herbert copied, arguing that they demonstrate the complex affinities and differences between English Catholics, Laudians, and Puritans.

Using prosopopoeia to voice archetypal separatists and rebels, the poems chosen by Herbert are what Andrew McRae calls 'anti-puritan dramatic monologues'.[37] These poetic caricatures seek to attack an opponent in their own (exaggerated) words. Several critics have argued that the copious satires and libels of the period identified and fixed ideological difference; as Smith puts it, satire 'was a way for political and religious communities or community values to be sustained'.[38] Others have suggested that these anthologies constitute forms of news-circulation, historical record-keeping, ruminative political thinking, and even 'participatory citizenship'.[39] Herbert's collection fulfils many of these functions simultaneously. Adam Smyth cautions against reading such manuscript 'collections as expressions of a settled politics' and suggests that readers valued 'verse libels as instances of

[34] Beinecke, Osborn b4, f. 1v.
[35] Beinecke, Osborn b4, ff. 1r–48v.
[36] Internal evidence dates this portion of the book: the poem on f. 48v commemorates Francis Villiers' death in 1648, and that on f. 50v the marriage of Lord and Lady Southcote in 1656.
[37] Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire, and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 173.
[38] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 297. See also McRae, *Literature, Satire, and the Early Stuart State*, 224.
[39] Cressy, *England on Edge*, 239; McRae, 'Reading Libels: An Introduction,' *HLQ* 69.1 (2006): 10. Alastair Bellany, 'Railing Rhymes Revisited: Libels, Scandals, and Early Stuart Politics,' *History Compass* 5.4 (2007): 1163, 1146, 1150.

wit, as skilful examples of their genre'.[40] Herbert's manuscript certainly does not articulate a 'settled politics', but its collection of satire is intriguing precisely because of the pronounced gap between his religious identity and that of his poems' speakers. All these satires include elements of anti-Catholic rhetoric, and the stark polarities they attempt to draw are repeatedly undermined by the wider Catholic manuscript context in which they appear. Herbert's collection intimates the unstable variety of mid-century religious politics.

The most explicitly anti-Catholic satire in Herbert's book is 'Song 53: The Roundheads race'.[41] This poem circulated widely in print and manuscript.[42] After its first printing in 1642, the poem appeared in a different form in the popular devotional poet and emblematist Francis Quarles' *The Shepeards Eclogue* (1644). In this version, it is spoken by 'Anarchus', an allegorical personification of the social and spiritual chaos that many feared was about to engulf England.[43] Functioning as both reportage and parody, the poem captures the extraordinary millenarian excitement of religious radicals and iconoclasts:

> Know now my brethren heauen is cleere,
> And all the clowds are gone;
> The rightious man shall florish, and
> Good dayes are coming on (f. 42v).

The song's refrain 'hye then up goe wee' mixes heavenly and social ascent, and its upward movement contrasts with all that these revolutionaries bring crashing 'down'. The speaker takes particular aim at 'Romes trash & trumpery', threatening

> What eare the Papists hands haue bult
> Our hammers shall undoe
> Weele breake their pipes, & burne their copes
> And pull downe churches too (f. 43r).

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[40] Adam Smyth, '"Reade in One Age and Understood i'th' Next": Recycling Satire in the Mid-Seventeenth Century,' *HLQ* 69.1 (2006): 75, 78.
[41] Beinecke, Osborn b4, f. 42v.
[42] For instance, Bodleian MSS Ashmole 36-37, f. 8v; Don. c.57, f. 27v; and Rawl. poet. 26, f. 133. See Cressy, *England on Edge*, 337, and Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 125.
[43] *The Distractions of Our Times* (London, 1642), 7–8; Francis Quarles, *The Shepheards Oracle* (Oxford, 1644), 11. It was printed again in Francis Quarles, *The Shepheards Oracles* (London, 1645), 125–127. See Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism, 1628–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 70.

These lines echo Puritan accusations that the Church of England had been dangerously Romanized under Laud; 'Papists' here thus refers both to Roman Catholics and avant-garde conformists. In the 1630s, court Catholics had made common cause with Laudians against Presbyterians and separatists, presenting themselves as loyal and peaceable subjects in contrast to unruly Puritans.[44] Herbert's copying of this and similar poems projects a united Catholic and Laudian perspective against the common Puritan enemy. Yet, this poem might have been appealing to an English Catholic for another reason. The speaker threatens increasingly radical reforms and, in the process, becomes ever more difficult to take seriously. Along with popish trash, 'all arts and learning', 'all that smells of witt', and all social hierarchy are turned upside down: 'weele teach the nobles how to bow/ and keepe the gentry downe' (f. 43v). It depicts anti-popery as a radical revolutionary sentiment, threatening the disintegration of society, not as the mainstay of English Protestant self-definition, as Peter Lake has influentially argued it was during a slightly earlier period.[45] These poems imply that anti-popery was a separatist, insurrectionary vice that should be done away with along with its Puritan proponents.

Herbert's satires all emphasise the affinities between Laudians and Catholics, and the role of religious radicalism in the growing conflict. 'Song 51' beginning 'Here's a thing whose brayne is sicke/ Wilder then a Lunatick' (f. 40r) is unique to this manuscript and therefore may have been composed by Herbert himself. It echoes and develops the opening rhetorical question of Richard Corbet's popular satirical monologue 'The Distracted Puritane':

> Am I madd, o noble Festus,
> When zeale and godly knowledge
> Have put me in hope
> To deale with the Pope.[46]

[44] Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 479–481. See also his *Newsletters from the Caroline Court, 1621–1638: Catholicism and the Politics of Personal Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society, 2005), 32 and *passim*.
[45] Peter Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice,' in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642* (London: Longman, 1989), 72–106.
[46] Richard Corbet, 'The Distracted Puritane,' in Davidson (ed.), *Poetry and Revolution*, 304, ll. 1–4.

Herbert's poem answers this question in the affirmative. Each stanza describes a different radical and their eccentric religious ideals:

> Here's a youngster lately came
> Ouer seas from Amsterdam,
> Hates the whore of Babilon
> Kings nor Bishops heele haue none
> Pictures all he dammes to Hell
> Maypoles, surplis, cross, & bell (f. 40v).

Whilst anti-episcopal sentiment ran high around 1642, there is little evidence of opposition to monarchy per se at this point. 'Kings nor Bishops' is thus a libellous hyperbole and alludes not to a Puritan position but to the Laudian argument that any threat to the Established Church was also a threat to royal authority. As Caroline Hibbard and Michael Questier have shown, this line of thinking, which emerged in the 1630s, was exploited by court Catholics; they championed *iure divino* episcopacy and campaigned for a new English Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy to be established.[47] The poem attacks reformers by progressing from recognisable Puritan stereotypes to exaggerated fanaticisms. Each stanza turns to a new distraction: 'Here's a naked thing doth run/ He adores the flaming sun', 'Here's an Indian more vnciuill/ He doth inuocate the Diuill' (f. 41r–41v). The poem enacts the splintering of England's religious landscape in hyperbolic terms and attributes anti-Laudian and anti-Catholic sentiment to lunatics, pagans, and devil-worshippers.

Images of descent and the use of *reductio ad absurdum* recur across these poems. Song 56 'No pedigrees nor prodigies' (f. 46r) offers a genealogy of the crisis, through echoic parallelism – the object of each clause reappears as the subject of the next. It begins with the devil who 'begot a monster' and ends with his latest descendant 'the commonwealth' (ff. 46r–46v). The popular mock-monologue, 'Song 57: The Humble Petition of the House of

[47] Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 479–481, 502, and *Newsletters*, 32; Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot*, 48, 94, and *passim*.

Commons', also imagines a gradual decline into anarchy.[48] It voices the parliament's performatively polite, but increasingly threatening, demands to Charles I. The speaker begins

> IF Charles thow wouldst but grow so kind
> To giue us leaue to chuse our mind
> of all thy store
> When we thy Loyall subiects find
> Tho'hast nothing else to giue behind
> Wee'le aske no more (f. 47v).

Each plea is spoken with deference and followed by the unconvincing assurance 'Weele aske no more', only for the next stanza to make a further revolutionary request. These accumulating demands reach a climax in the last lines:

> But if you will make Hull your owne
> Then one thing more wee must set downe
> forgot before
> Sr John shall then giue up the towne
> If you will plese resigne your Crowne
> Wee aske no more (f. 48v).

This closing reference dates the poem to after April 1642, when Sir John Hotham refused the king entry to the garrison at Hull. The periphrastic conditional and interrupting 'plese' are comically absurd in their politeness. By exaggerating contemporary reforming agendas and softening the rhetoric in which they were phrased, this satirical 'Petition' takes aim at both 'moderate' and 'radical' parliamentarians. It implies that any concessions would not matter but lead to further upheaval. Moderation here becomes a rhetorical guise, a meaningless civility disguising ruthless ambition. While these poems might seem to polarise and fix opposing sides, they are also animated by layers of ironically intersecting voices. In 'The Humble Petition', the royalist poet is impersonating a radical impersonating a polite petitioner. In 'The Round Head's Race', it is unclear if we are listening to a horrified Quarles, an excited 'Anarchus', a genuine opponent of the king, or some amalgam thereof.

[48] Both these poems also appear in a collection of royalist satires once belonging to Edward, second Viscount Conway, where they are attributed to 'Thomas Weaver of C. Church Oxon' and Sir Henry Killigrew, respectively, Huntington Library, HM 16522, pp. 6–8 and vii–ix.

Herbert commented on the conflict between king and parliament in his own voice in a letter written in 1663 to his adoptive aunt, Anne Sadleir, a committed Anglican.[49] Sadleir had recently rescued the Aston family from penury by leaving her husband's wealth to Walter, second Lord Aston. In this extraordinary correspondence, both Sadleir and Herbert politely but firmly defend their own confession, while fruitlessly attempting to evangelise the other. Sadleir claims that 'this aduantage I must tell you our Religion haue ouer yours wee haue the liberty to read all bookes as well as yours though you must read none of ours'.[50] Herbert responds by comparing different kinds of liberty:

> The Protestants liberty of reading all bookes & further freedome of being their owne caruers & directors in spirituall matters & our restraint I confess, but the aduantage by it I canot yeald to, the effect of it in our litle kingdome are sad proofes of the contrary in any corporate distemper.[51]

Herbert depicts Protestantism as unrestrained and implies that the liberty it affords eventually leads to the chaotic licence of political disorder. He locates the causes of mid-seventeenth-century anarchy in what he deems Protestant schism. There are affinities between this claim and the *reductio ad absurdum* or slippery-slope arguments of the satires, in which reforms and innovations become ever more extreme and unreasonable. As will become apparent, mid-century Catholics frequently interpreted the English Revolution as the inevitable outcome of the Protestant Reformation. In the book of poems and meditations compiled around 1644 by the missionary priest William Southern, who also contributed to Constance Aston Fowler's miscellany, there is a political lament entitled 'A Deploration of the Revolt of England from the Received Faith'. It insists that the Reformation is 'the cause of englands destructio*n* now thretned by sivell warr'.[52] Southern also uses prosopopoeia to depict the conflict; 'A

[49] See Arnold Hunt, 'The Books, Manuscripts and Literary Patronage of Mrs Anne Sadleir (1585–1670),' in Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson (eds), *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), 205–236.
[50] Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.5.5, Letter 10.
[51] Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.5.5, Letter 6.
[52] Trinity College, Dublin, MS 1194, p. 17.

lamentation by the Church in England for her present misery' personifies the Church as a 'good wife' bemoaning the absence of her husband, Christ:

> This house is Englands Ile
> of late renowned by fame
> but now by errors guile
> is fallen out of frame
> And I thy Church the goodwife Am
> who makes this wofull mone
> And Jesus Christ is my goodman
> Who now is gone from home.[53]

Southern's miscellany suggests one Catholic way of reading the satires in Herbert's collections; they associate parliamentarians with European Calvinists, 1517 with 1642, and trace all civil disorder and rebellion back to the primal sin of the Reformation.

Herbert avidly consumed the railing royalist wit of the late 1630s and early 1640s, but his miscellany also betrays significant fault lines within the cross-confessional royalist coalition. One poem, which he titles 'Cantus 17: Let all the purifyed sect' exemplifies this.[54] This anti-Puritan satire, which dates from the 1630s, takes the form of a parodic panegyric for the New World. It encourages 'All Zelous bancarouts punks deuout/ Preachers suspended rabbles rout' to depart for America and, as the refrain puts it, 'To build new babels strong and sure/ Now cald a church vnspotted pure' (f. 13r). The mock-Puritan speaker's account of the promised land of America evokes a sickly abundance and transgressive sexual freedom (f. 14v). In the final stanza, the conformist voice behind this Puritan disguise comes to the fore:

> Let Anserdame send forth her bones,
> Her fugitiues and runnegates:
> Let Bedlem, a Newgate, and the clinck
> Disgorge them selues into this sinke
> Let Bredewell and the stues bee swept,
> And sent thether to bee kept
> So shall our church cleansd and made pure,

[53] Trinity College, Dublin, MS 1194, p. 50. This poem also appears in Southern's 1650s miscellany, Bodleian, Eng. poet. b. 5, pp. 102–105. See Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 164.
[54] Osborn b4, f. 13r. The only other extant copy is dated May 1634, *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 1, 1574–1660*, ed. W. Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860), *BHO*, accessed 24 November 2022, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1.

Keepe both it selfe and state secure (f. 15r).[55]

The 'purified sect', addressed in the first line, is here identified as the population of London's prisons. The emphatically placed 'Disgorge' pictures hosts of nonconformists, accumulated in the two tricolons of the first three lines, being vomited up by the capital and washed away in the sink of New England. The refrain is altered so that 'church' no longer refers to a spurious elect but to the Established Church 'cleansed' of nonconformity. The poem's speaker is unmasked as a conformist committed to the safety of Church and State and the earlier hyperbole now reads as a rhetorical tactic, false promises intended to tempt sectaries to flee into exile. This witty climactic inversion viscerally differentiates between nonconformists and 'our church'. Yet, the broader coterie context problematizes this reductive map of the religious landscape. One poem in Constance's miscellany, copied by William Southern, imagines the delights of heaven where 'threatninge words to prison vile/ shall not torment thy mind'.[56] In a similar way to the mock-Puritan's utopia, Southern's poem consoles an imagined recusant reader by painting a vivid picture of the ideal eternal homeland to which they are destined and where

No persecuting potentate
Doth rule or gouerne there
No temperrisinge schismatike
Hath office there to beare (f. 19r).

In this context, the mock-ballad's reference to London prisons – 'Newgate, and the clinck' – evokes not only Protestant separatists, but also the recusants and Catholic priests who had long been intimately acquainted with these institutions.

Contemporary pamphlets and libels frequently associated Protestant non-conformists with papists, especially Jesuits. One popular poem, sometimes entitled 'Oxford Riddle', turns these alleged similarities into a literary game; it begins 'There dwells a people on the Earth/

[55] The word 'bones' is likely a mis-transcription for 'brattes', which is the reading of the copy in the *State Papers*.
[56] Huntington Library, HM 904, f. 19r.

that reckons true Allegiance treason', and goes on to describe this people's fondness for lying, foreign gold, killing kings, and damning 'all soules but such as they are', asking 'Riddle me, riddle me, who are they?'[57] All these accusations were sometimes levelled at Catholics, but here they ultimately refer to those 'That Idolize Pym, Brookes, and Say', that is godly parliamentarians.[58] Abraham Cowley makes a similar comparison in *A Satyre: The Puritan and the Papist* (first printed 1643), which attacks the Puritans by comparing them to their most hated opponents, the papists: 'So two rude *waves*, by stormes together throwne,/ Roare at each other, fight, and then grow *one*'.[59] Unsurprisingly, Herbert's miscellany avoids this particular subgenre of witty libel, but it does at times inadvertently evoke its logic. Herbert is preoccupied throughout with the differences and similarities between a range of ironic and compromised voices and identities.

In one instance, Herbert alters another writer's satire along Catholic lines and in doing so further registers the divisions between Laudians and Catholics. He copies out William Strode's highly popular miscellany piece 'A Song of Capps', a comic taxonomy of the different headgear worn by various professions and religious groups. Like haircuts, hats were another way of categorising and dividing people in mid-century Britain.[60] Strode's poem extols the so-called 'Canterbury Cap' worn by Laudian clergy and objected to by Puritans:

> Both East and West and north and south,
> Where ere the Gospell findes a mouth
> The Cap diuine doth thether looke
> Tis square like scollers and ther Bookes.[61]

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[57] Huntington Library, HM 16522, pp. 17–18. Versions of this poem appear in Bodleian, MSS Ballard 47, f. 7, Rawl. poet. 62, f. 45v, and Rawl. poet. 71, p. 139, and in Folger Shakespeare Library, V.b.110, p. 49. It was also printed with the satirical *The Humble Petition of the House of Commons* (Oxford, 1643), A4r–A4v, which Herbert does include.
[58] Huntington Library, HM 16522, p. 18.
[59] Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth, and Allan Pritchard (eds), *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley, Vol. 1* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 104, ll. 1–2. The poem also appears in Huntington Library, HM 16522, pp. 83–87.
[60] See for instance John Cleveland's poem 'Square-Cap,' in Brian Morris and Eleanor Withington (eds), *The Poems of John Cleveland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 43–45.
[61] The poem circulated widely in manuscript and was first printed in *Sportive Wit: The Muses Merriment* (London, 1656), 23–27, which is the version quoted here.

In Herbert's copying 'findes a mouth' is replaced by 'fines moleste' (f. 23v). Judging by a survey of seventeen print and manuscript witnesses to the poem, this variant is Herbert's invention.[62] Whereas Strode implies that the caps worn by Church of England divines evince the Gospel's presence, Herbert takes 'Gospel' to mean Catholic teaching and suggests that wherever the Canterbury cap is found, punitive financial measures against Catholics will soon follow. Despite accusations of popery levelled at the bishops and rumours of Charles I's conversion, Laud and the Established Church remained fundamentally anti-Catholic.[63] This subtle variation to the text complicates the stark dividing lines that satire is often thought to draw.

These prosopopoeic satires might seem to indicate the sharp polarisation of mid-seventeenth-century literature. They operate by appropriating and exaggerating a set of rhetorical gestures, a way of talking and thinking, that was readily identifiable with a Puritan. Yet, reading this mode in the context of Herbert's miscellany suggests that mid-century satire grappled with a more complex range of different positions and alliances. Bringing together the mock-voices of Puritans, Laudians, royalists, and parliamentarians, Herbert's anthology reflects on the making and unmaking of identities, the porousness between them, and the ambiguous position of English Catholics in the emerging crisis.

Personal politics

While Herbert's miscellany records the war of words of the early 1640s, he and his relatives also became directly involved in the armed conflict. Various of their letters to and from the front line survive; these not only evince the major impact of the civil wars on their lives and

[62] I have found no other version which reads 'fines molest', 'finds a mouth' appears in: *Sportive Wit*, 23; Edward Phillips, *The Mysteries of Love & Eloquence* (London, 1658), 95; *An Antidote Against Melancholy* (London, 1661), 31; *Wit and Drollery. Jovial Poems* (London, 1682), 264–265. BL, Add. MS 30982, f. 148r, Sloane MS 1792, f. 69r, Harley MS 6931, f. 32v, and Add. MS 15227, f. 49v; Folger Shakespeare Library, V.a.345, p. 230, and V.a.170, p. 172; Beinecke, Osborn, b200, p. 356, and Osborn b213, p. 67; Bodleian, Douce f. 5, f. 1v, Rawl. poet. 246, f. 14r, and Eng. poet. e. 14, f. 17r; Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 325, f. 87r, and MS 328, f. 41v.

[63] Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot*, 61–62.

writings, which critics have almost entirely ignored, but also demonstrate how their royalism interacted with the religious and familial aspects of their self-definition.

Fighting at the siege of Lichfield in 1646, Walter Aston wrote to his wife about personal priorities and public obligations. He interprets the civil wars in the supernatural terms of a battle between good and evil, in which the virtuous are tested: 'the tyme of tryall now is but short, and beleeve every one must undergoe some sharpe brunts'.[64] In contrast to the cynical parodying of such rhetoric in Herbert's anthology, Walter's ominous euphemisms cast himself and his family as actors in an apocalyptic struggle. In other letters, he prays that God 'send a suddayne end to these unhappy distractyons that I may once more be so happy as to enioy your and my childrens company which is what I desyre the most in the world'.[65] But he also counsels his wife that 'nether you nor I must or aught to expect' to be reunited 'till the King be setled in his throne in peace'.[66] Walter's letters articulate his religious piety, deep affection for his family, and strict understanding of the duties of the subject, sacrificing personal comforts in pursuit of victory and peace.

The personal is bound up with the political in Walter's self-representation and had practical consequences for his military service. His intimate letters request his wife's help:

> I may very well hope for a peace for I receved yesternight a letter from your Brother Portland, that sayeth the king is uppon a trety […] in respect your brother Ben hath a frendship with Sr Willyam Bruerton, you applying your selfe that way will have more favor than by my cosen Crompton who is off a contrary factyon.[67]

Aston combines expressions of affection with political negotiation. Lady Mary's brother, Benjamin Weston was apparently friendly with Sir William Brereton, a prominent member of the Staffordshire gentry, whom John Morrill describes as 'a model puritan magistrate' and

[64] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 115r.
[65] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 119r.
[66] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 117r.
[67] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 115r.

'Protestant nationalist with marked anti-Catholic views'.[68] That Walter Aston thought it possible for personal connections to bridge such an ideological gulf demonstrates the breadth of cross-confessional cooperation even at moments of crisis. Not everyone was as accommodating, however. Walter's fellow commanders at the Cathedral Close in Lichfield, Sir Thomas Tildesley and Sir Hervey Bagot, both recusants, wrote to Brereton, condemning his 'outragious and barbarous violence utterly to deface and destroy the Lord's house, one of the most ancient monuments of Christian piety in this kingdome'.[69] They promised to die before surrendering:

> [K]now, sir, it is our resolution rather to suffer evill at your hands then to doe it with our owne, rather to be martyrs than traytors, and rather to offend them who can but kill the body, then him who can destroy both soule and body in hell.[70]

Lichfield Cathedral had not been a Catholic church since the Reformation, but Tildesley and Bagot understand their defence of it and the king as a divine obligation. They depict themselves as holy warriors and would-be martyrs. Their rhetoric contrasts starkly with Aston's attempts to broker peace through pre-war networks of kinship and friendship, making him appear both more pragmatic and more moderate.

The relationship between the individual and the state also preoccupies a letter to Herbert from his wife, Katherine, written at some point between their marriage in 1638 and her death in 1658. She complains

> but oh how long my lord of Holland may kepe you, undoes all my comforts. To morrow I looke to heare from you some sartainty when I may expect you: indede, I am not able to think of longer then you imagined it would be when we parted, and your expressions how much you sofer by it though an unspekable hapines proves now the increse of my sofring, espetially where you say I was accesary toot by thinking it fit […] I am resolv'd to have no rome for anything but love hereafter.[71]

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[68] John Morrill, 'Sir William Brereton and England's Wars of Religion,' *Journal of British Studies* 24.3 (1985): 312–313.
[69] Clifford (ed.), *Tixall Letters*, vol. 2, 137.
[70] Clifford (ed.), *Tixall Letters*, vol. 2, 138–139.
[71] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 40r.

Katherine's letter draws on longstanding epistolary tropes for describing distance and separation; the polyptoton of 'sofer […] sofering' synchronises the couple's feelings, even as it emphasises their being parted. Katherine imagines political service as an intrusion into personal life and regrets having encouraged Herbert to depart on this business, serving as an 'accesary toot'. While Walter's letter projects a consistent pious stoicism, Katherine admits the discomfort of doing what is 'fit'. She concludes by insisting that in future she will banish all concerns other than those of love. Her spatial metaphor 'to have no rome for' relates to other dominant tropes used for thinking about the relationship between the individual and the public realm: different 'spheres' or 'domains' of action, notions of privacy and intrusion. Several scholars have used equivalent language to describe the Tixall group and their 'little self-contained world made cunningly of love and rhetoric'.[72] However, while Katherine fantasizes about seclusion, she also registers its impossibility; her resolution is a self-consciously futile gesture given their enforced separation and the letter's rhetoric is in pronounced conflict with political reality. This epistolary gesture emphasises that the group did not inhabit a secluded or marginalised world.

Katherine's letter is important for what it suggests about the Astons' particular brand of royalism. 'My lord of Holland' is presumably Henry Rich, first Earl of Holland, who was General of the Horse in the first Bishops' War of 1639. Herbert may have been part of this force, though there is no corroborating evidence of this. Furthermore, the rest of the letter places Herbert in 'town', that is London, rather than on campaign. Both king and parliament vied to claim Holland for their cause in the early 1640s, but he ultimately remained in London when Charles departed in April 1642. He would switch sides several times over the next decade and was eventually executed in 1649 for plotting against the Long Parliament.[73] Barbara Donagan

[72] La Belle, 'A True Love's Knot,' 17.
[73] Malcolm Smuts, 'Religion, European Politics, and Henrietta Maria's Circle, 1625–41,' in Erin Griffey (ed.), *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 13–37; Smuts, 'Rich, Henry, first

has argued that through all his side-changing Holland 'believed to the end in the need for a "personal treaty" with the king'.[74] In the absence of further evidence, it is impossible to know in what capacity Herbert was working for the earl of Holland, but their connection is suggestive. These letters demonstrate that Walter and Herbert Aston were not secluded, disenfranchised recusants, but in fact navigated contemporary political upheaval by making cross-confessional alliances, and, more tentatively, seem to have been engaged in elements of a bipartisan peace project.

Written to and from the front, these letters imagine an enclosed private world and depict its rupture by the insistent intrusions of the public realm. This dynamic of withdrawal and exposure animates several of their poems. The domestic sphere became increasingly politicised in mid-seventeenth-century England and, as Elizabeth Scott-Baumann and Sarah Ross have shown, those genres, such as religious lyric, which have been identified as '"private" and personal' became in the context of the civil war 'highly politicised' languages.[75] The Tixall poets register this process and reflect on the collisions between apparently separate domains. A unique and anonymous poem in Constance's miscellany, 'Loue's Meritt', exemplifies this.[76] The speaker describes how love for 'Caelestina', possibly a pseudonym for Constance, produces 'Strange Alterations in my soule'. This 'passion pure' leads the lover to virtue:

> I feele a noble ualour stirr
> Within my ueins, to fight for her:
> And Arm's mee to Attempt and take
> Some faire Aduenturs for her sake (f. 32r).

The speaker borrows from romance discourse the conceit of being spurred to honourable deeds

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Earl of Holland (bap. 1590, d. 1649), Courtier,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 14 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/23484.

[74] Barbara Donagan, 'A Courtier's Progress: Greed and Consistency in the Life of the Earl of Holland,' *The Historical Journal* 19.2 (1976): 349.

[75] Sarah Ross and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (eds), *Women Poets of the English Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 15–16. See also Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[76] Huntington Library, HM 904, ff. 31v–32v. The poem is signed with a hatched cipher, but it is unclear whom this denotes. The cipher also appears at ff. 27v, 28v, and 31r.

by the inspiration of love. Yet, like Katherine's conflicted letter to Herbert, 'Loue's Meritt' contradicts itself by then imagining a very different relationship between the worlds of action and of affection:

> I trooble not my brains with newes
> Of scottish warrs, with turks or Jews:
> Only when I of battailes heare;
> I pittye captiue prisoners there:
> Nothinge is busines now to mee,
> Nor doe I ualue my Degree;
> What cloths I weare; or where I dwell,
> So Caelestina thinke them well (f. 32r).

The Bishops' Wars against Scotland are introduced through praeteritio, invoking them by claiming to ignore them. 'Turks or Jews' might refer to religious radicals and covenanters, replicating a pejorative comparison that appears frequently in the sort of satirical discourse Herbert was familiar with. These lines thus draw on the language of contemporary political invective even as the persona claims to be untroubled by such things. The reference to prisoners implies the stock image of the lover held 'captive' by the beloved and its analogy between prisoners of war and of desire. The homonym 'heare' creates a rhyming antithesis with 'there' enacting the poem's concern with the here and elsewhere, with the spheres of love and war, which seem to be separate and yet keep intruding upon one another. Over the course of the poem, the speaker morphs into a valiant knight, a prisoner, a distracted lover, and later a religious hermit: 'No Anchorite in carelesse dresse/ More silent sadness canne possesse/ Then I' (f. 32r). The poem's wit derives from how it plays with different personas and different models of how the realms and languages of love and politics relate to each other. It is an extended praeteritio, a self-consciously doomed attempt to write a poem insulated from politics at a moment of enveloping political crisis.

Even apparently personal occasional poems are inextricable from the period's cultural politics. One of the last poems in Herbert's miscellany, 'A Rurall Panegrigg on the Lady Southcots Wedding Day to the Tune of Gildding of the Deuil', celebrates the marriage of his

niece, Elizabeth Aston to Sir John Southcote in around 1656.[77] This pastoral ballad at first seems to validate claims for the Tixall group's insularity. The bride is praised for her cheese-making abilities – 'Good lord when she would make a cheese/ to see with what a pretty squeese/ she made it weepe' – and for how she

> speakes the language of ~~the~~ <our> fields
> & with the mayds discourse would keepe
> & talke of chicks and hens and sheepe
> & yet of parts so pregnant too
> shede speake and write as princes wooe.[78]

Elizabeth Aston is figured as both a plain-speaking dairy maid and an erudite princess. This celebration of a family wedding is in fact a rewriting of John Suckling's highly popular and widely imitated 'A Ballade Upon a Wedding'. Suckling begins

> I tell thee Dick, where I have been,
> Where I the rarest things have seen,
> Oh things beyond compare!
> Such sights again cannot be found
> In any place on English ground,
> Be it at wake, or fair.[79]

Herbert's ballad echoes this opening, but whereas Suckling emphasised the indescribable and unimaginable, Herbert applies this hyperbole to a particular place:

> Oh Roger heare me what I say
> hadst thou at Tixall bin this day
> thou hadst beheld the rarest glee
> that euer mortall eye did see (f. 50v).

The Tixall poem tailors the generally applicable tropes of Suckling's poem and its politically-charged language of 'rural mirth' to a family occasion.[80] The correction of '*the* fields' to '*our* fields' betrays how it toggles between the general and the particular, personalising wider forms

[77] This date is based on the post-nuptial settlement extant at Essex County Record Office, D/DP T312.
[78] Beinecke, Osborn b4, f. 51v. No other witnesses survive, but a skipped line, supplied in the margin suggests this is a copy.
[79] Thomas Clayton (ed.), *The Works of Sir John Suckling: The Non-Dramatic Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 79, ll. 1–3.
[80] Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 21.

to their own circumstances and making members of the coterie conform to cultural stereotypes and characters. Manuscript miscellany culture thrives on this kind of referential ambiguity; compilers routinely adapt and transform the contexts and meanings of the poems they transcribe.[81] This ballad uses these techniques to fashion the Tixall family as royalists and to recast the personal as political.

The Tixall writers frequently imagine their complex relationship to contemporary politics by turning to the literary modes of travesty and burlesque. In 1638, Edward Thimelby wrote to his sister Katherine, describing her as a lenient monarch and himself as her 'loyal subiect':

> Your command is that I write nothing but what affection dictates: if you impose such sweet burdens & easi taxes upon al your seruants they will al be commanders in obeying and I shal thinke myselfe a petty King in your dominion.[82]

Thimelby takes the conventional courtly and neo-platonic conceit of addressing women as sovereigns to literal extremes. He suggests that the 'sweet burdens' imposed by his sister-queen make her an ideal poetic mistress but a very poor monarch, whose subjects will soon rise above their station and become 'commanders in obeying'. Thimelby comically foregrounds the failure of analogy and the sharp differences between poetic monarch and actual ruler, playful rhetoric and worrying political reality. Two years later, on 26 October 1640, another brother, William Thimelby deployed a similar strategy in a letter from London to Katherine in Staffordshire: 'Deare Sister All this noyse of the Scots doth not so much affright me as your silence which would perswade mee that the peace is broken between us too'.[83] He suggests that to resolve the cooling of fraternal relations, they

> follow the times nearer and come to a Parliament, and then I doubt not but that things are not so farr out of order, between us, but they may quickly be reduc't. My onely grievance is […] the taking away an ancient priuiledge alwaies

[81] Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 135–208.
[82] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 161r.
[83] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 206r.

granted heretofore, your letters.[84]

Thimelby appropriates the language of contemporary politics and applies it to personal relationships, casting his sister as the monarch and himself as her parliamentary opponents. He nonchalantly dismisses 'all this noyse of the Scots' and his analogy implies that the (eventually Long) Parliament, that was set to open a week later, would soon resolve all grievances. Yet his postscript to the letter acknowledges the febrile situation in the capital: he claims to 'haue no newes that is ether certaine or not Commonly knowne', but reports the king's expected return from the Scottish Wars and the 'rude tumult' that 'tore up' the Court of High Commission a few days previously.[85] The Astons and Thimelbys evidently shared in the eager appetite for, and swift transmission of, news among men and women in the city and counties on the eve of the first civil war. Tracing the development of 'Cavalier' burlesque poetry from the 1630s to the 1640s, Timothy Raylor describes the 'chilling intrusion' of contemporary upheavals into 1640s comic poetry and claims that 'the overriding impression is one of order gone askew', as 'linguistic tropes prompt unexpected and undesired associations' and 'language itself keeps sliding out of control'.[86] For Raylor, royalist poetry, particularly burlesque, is a 'conservative' and consciously archaic form, attempting and failing to ignore the Revolution taking place around them. William Thimelby's letter might be characterised in similar terms. Parodically describing a personal tiff in the language of high politics conceals the anxieties that the post-script news report betrays. However, we should not underestimate the 'control', artifice, and utility of political travesty. These jesting letters demonstrate how the playful techniques of miscellany culture, prosopopoeia and impersonation, could be used to reflect and comment on contemporary politics and the developing crisis. These letters address the same problems as Katherine and Walter's graver epistles. Across comic and serious letters and poems, these

[84] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 206r.
[85] BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 206r. On the riot at Court of High Commission, see Cressy, *England on Edge*, 160.
[86] Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs, and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith, and the Order of the Fancy* (London: Associated University Presses, 1994), 160.

writers meditate upon the relationship between the individual and the state, the private sphere and the world of war and politics.

Rakes and recusants

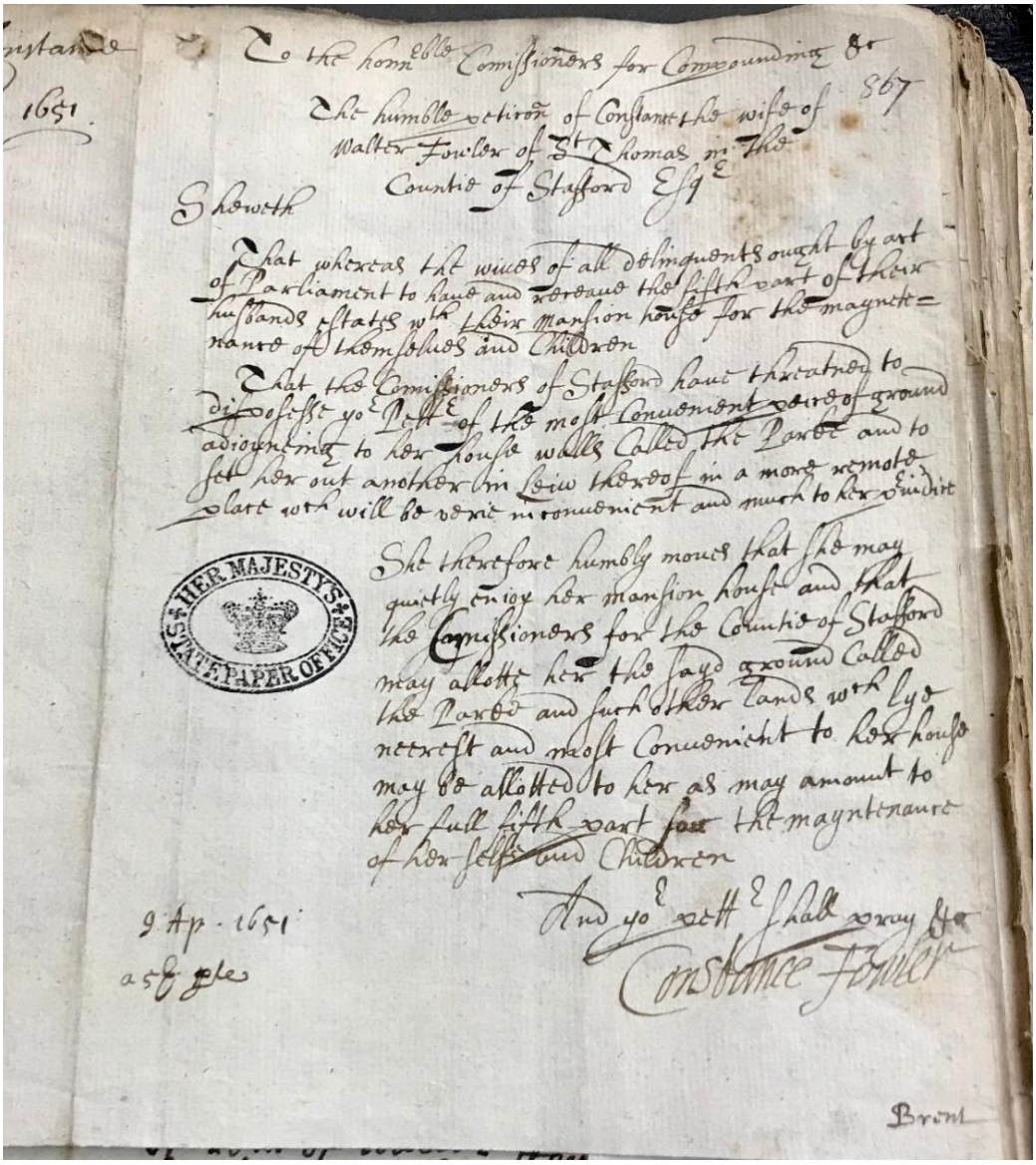
The satirical and erotic energy of Herbert's poetry collection stands, according to Helen Hackett, in stark contrast to the domestic piety of Constance's miscellany. The former, she claims, 'shows no interest in Herbert's family ties or local roots, instead strongly suggesting a young man aligning himself with the court and with London, fashioning himself as a slightly rakish man-about-town, and participating in "cavalier culture"'.[87] Hackett argues that by selecting only certain poems by Herbert and removing some of the bawdier imagery, Constance managed 'to "edit" Herbert, constructing him as a devoted, home-centred, and sister-worshipping brother rather than the dashing young blade of his own preferred self-image'.[88] This reading not only strictly differentiates the domestic and public realms, but also implicitly genders different kinds of writing. It also alienates the coterie's royalism from their recusancy. In fact, the women of the Tixall coterie engaged with both contemporary politics and 'Cavalier culture', responding wittily and creatively to rakish literary fashions. The whole coterie experimented with the different languages of libertinism, royalism, and Catholicism, reflecting on the similarities between them.

Far from being enmeshed in a self-contained world, Constance Aston Fowler twice intervened directly in political bureaucracy. In 1651 and 1652, Constance addressed petitions to the Committee for Compounding, appealing for the share of her husband's land owed to her (Figure 2). She cites current legislation, insisting that 'the wives of all delinquents ought by act of Parliament to haue and receavue the fifth part of their husbands estates with their mansion house for the maynetenance of themselues and Children'.[89] Constance both asserts her legal

[87] Hackett, 'Sisterhood and Female Friendship,' 134.
[88] Hackett, 'Sisterhood and Female Friendship,' 136.
[89] TNA, SP 23/85, f. 867r.

rights and appeals for pity, claiming that 'her selfe & her poore children […] must be left to a perishing condition if not relieuved by your Honners Iustice & mercie'.[90] Despite considerable scholarship on Constance, these petitions and the political agency they suggest have been ignored. They reveal that the Tixall women were engaged with the national crisis, and point to a continuity between the rhetoric of politics and of poetry. Voicing the absent supplicant, petitions are inherently prosopopoeic and the Tixall poets and compilers make use of this politically charged rhetorical figure across their miscellanies and letters.

Figure 2



[90] TNA, SP 23/85, f. 869r.

Several Tixall poems address the gender politics of 'Cavalier' culture using prosopopoeia. In another miscellany belonging to Herbert (now extant only in a nineteenth-century transcription), 'A New Remonstrance to His Malignant Mistresse' travesties the Grand Remonstrance, a list of grievances and accusations of a popish plot that was presented to the king in late 1641.[91] The poem's speaker is a parliamentarian, addressing his cruel beloved, a tyrannical absolutist:

> Since Beauty's such a tyrant growne
> In thee, I'l now discover,
> What grievances can ne'ere be borne
> By any freeborne lover.[92]

'A New Remonstrance' contrasts the hyperbolic, pseudo-religious language of courtly love with the idioms of parliamentary opposition:

> Revoake not back the lyfe you give,
> I'l die no doating martyr,
> But question thy prerogative,
> If thou repeale my charter.[93]

Stock figures of the life-giving beloved and the martyred lover are invoked only to be rejected. The emphasis is less on the addressee's tyranny than on the parliamentarian lover's refusal to conform to the tropes and regimens of conventional love poetry. In the final stanza, his stubbornness reaches a climax:

> Nor thinke thy force, or thy deceipt,
> Of art or arme can out me:
> Love has his Ferfaxes to beat,
> And Crumwells too to rowt thee.[94]

This mock-remonstrance closes with a stark shift from constitutional opposition to outright rebellion and from the principled language of rights and liberties to the threat of brute force,

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[91] *TP*, 54. The poem is also printed in Davidson (ed.), *Poetry and Revolution*, 339–340. On the 'Grand Remonstrance', see Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (London: Penguin, 2009), 169–170.
[92] *TP*, 54.
[93] *TP*, 54.
[94] *TP*, 56.

attributed with deep irony to 'Love'. Not only is the scorned, litigious suitor far from 'the doating martyr' of Petrarchan tradition, by the end he seems hardly in love at all. The references to Fairfax and Cromwell suggest that the poem was written once armed conflict had broken out, a while after the 1641 'Grand Remonstrance' it parodies. Courtly love is more than a comically incongruous discourse here; it allows the poem to reflect upon the different languages of political obligation. As Kevin Sharpe influentially argued 'love was the metaphor, the medium, through which political comment and criticism were articulated in Caroline England'.[95] 'A New Remonstrance' contrasts different conceptions of allegiance either as the subject's unconditional affection for the monarch or as a contractual arrangement, dependent on the sovereign's fulfilment of legal commitments and responsibilities. As Sharpe argues, much so-called 'Cavalier' Caroline poetry and iconography implies that 'true kingship depends upon reciprocal love. Monarchy is the marriage of ruler and ruled that conjoins authority and love'.[96] The 'New Remonstrance' recalls this rhetoric and dramatizes its destruction. The speaker's failure to produce decorous love poetry is consistent with their failure to be a devoted subject. Here the Caroline myth of Love's monarchy is reasserted by its opposite. At root, 'A New Remonstrance' implies that parliamentarians are treacherous lovers and cold-hearted subjects.

Love and sex continued to provide pervasive metaphors for political commentary in the 1640s, but in markedly new ways. James Turner has argued that women's involvement in the public sphere, through preaching, petitioning, or even defending besieged garrisons and houses, and the broader political innovations of these decades inspired a misogynistic satirical literature which depicts women as tyrants and usurpers; gendering parliament or the Commonwealth as female, Turner claims, or exaggerating and mocking female agency served to defuse the threat

[95] Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 39.
[96] Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, 142.

of the decade's novelties.[97] The Tixall poets were familiar with this rhetorical strategy: Walter Aston copied into his father's old commonplace book a text that Turner sees as representative of this phenomenon, the republican Henry Neville's satirical pamphlet *The Parliament of Ladies* (1647).[98] Yet the Tixall writers also frequently imagined how women might respond to the libels of misogynistic libertine verse. Katherine Aston composed a witty reply to a poem by William Habington, in which she scolds him for trying 'to perswade/ our frind to be unconstant made/ if that a womans Loue should fade'.[99] Katherine also contributed to her husband's apparently 'rakish' miscellany. As we have seen, Herbert's book includes the mock 'Humble Petition of the House of Commons'. This is in fact mostly written in Katherine's hand and Herbert is responsible for only one line:

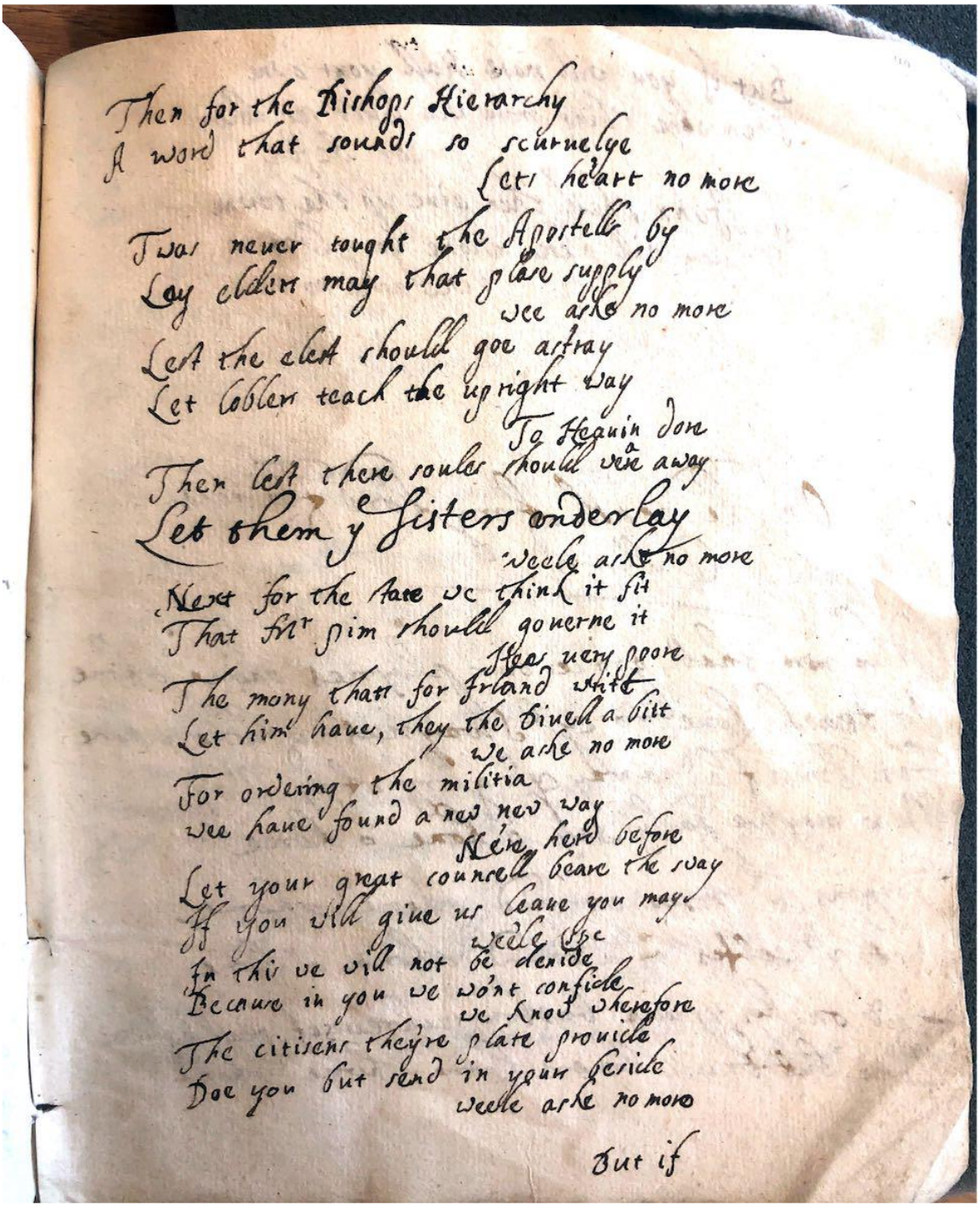
> Lest the elect should goe astray
> Let Coblers teach the upright way
> To Heavin dore;
> Then lest there soules should we<a>re away,
> <Let them the Sisters underlay> (f. 48r).

It may be that Katherine missed this line out by mistake, but plenty of space has been left for its addition (Figure 3). The word 'underlay' means both to re-sole and to lie beneath, while 'sisters' evokes the godly habit of calling each other brother and sister in Christ.[100] These lines depend upon the homonym, 'soul' and 'sole', and mock the supposedly inferior social status of Puritans, demeaned as cobblers who add new soles to their shoes in the hope of walking into heaven. But there might also be a bawdy pun on underlaying, invoking contemporary rumours of the 'wanton' habits of gathered Churches and sects. Perhaps Katherine thought the line inappropriate and let her husband complete it, or the couple's scribal collaboration might enact

[97] James Turner, *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture, 1630–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 96.
[98] Staffordshire County Record Office, MS D988, un-foliated; Walter's hand is identifiable by comparison with his letters in BL, Add. MS 36452, ff. 115r–119r. Turner, *Libertines and Radicals*, 99–101.
[99] 'The ansurs to these uerses Made by Mrs K T', Huntington Library, HM 904, f. 153v.
[100] 'underlay, *v.*' *OED*, accessed 17 July 2022, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/Entry/211765?rskey=b81vpb&result=2&isAdvanced=false.

the poem's joke, as Katherine's lines continue beneath Herbert's.

Figure 3



Both the men and women of the Tixall circle engaged with contemporary politics and its satirical representation in witty verse and raillery. In another anonymous and unique Tixall poem, 'To a Gentleman That Courted Several Ladies', the female speaker chides her

promiscuous former lover Coridon in political terms. She sardonically encourages him to 'court, when, where, or how' he likes, then 'on your honor looke, and there you'le see,/ A ruine greater than your victory'.[101] The poem adopts the paradoxes and accumulated pseudo-arguments of much fashionable poetry, but challenges the profligate sexuality this style often celebrated. It thus borrows the tropes of the discourse it attacks. The speaker contrasts established moral codes with the new ethos of libertinism:

> A general pitty is a vertue taught,
> But general love a crime was ever thought.
> Nature to man does but one hart allow,
> But they do multiply it to hundreds now.[102]

This poem responds to the arguments for 'general love' espoused by Thomas Carew and Suckling. It is a rejoinder to Carew's 'Incommunicabilitie of Love', which asks 'By what power was Love confined/ To one object? who can binde,/ Or fixe a limit to the free-borne minde?'[103] In 'To a Gentleman', rampant sexual freedom is likened to the contemporary proliferation of new political identities:

> And men contract such debts in love, that they
> Compounding, can't one of a hundred pay;
> Yet from our trust they do imperious grow,
> And think it glorious they so much can owe.
> They boast that none shall rule their harts alone,
> They'l have a commonwealth, and not a throne.
> Indeed, you all doe traiterous subjects prove,
> But you are excellent levellers in love:
> For least that jealousy grow from mistake,
> You now in common all your courtships make.[104]

The promiscuous lover is imagined as a compounding delinquent, a republican, a traitor, and a Leveller. The invective against broken 'trust' conflates the languages of financial, romantic, and political obligation. Here the poem's target seems to shift from libertine poets to political

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[101] *TP*, 263.
[102] *TP*, 263.
[103] Rhodes Dunlap (ed.), *The Poems of Thomas Carew with his Masque Coelum Britannicum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 62, ll. 1–3.
[104] *TP*, 265.

innovators. Since the wayward lover sees a non-monarchical commonwealth or the dissolution of private property as the means to his erotic ends, it is implied that republican and Leveller demands are similarly motivated by personal gratification. The attack is no longer limited to the addressee Coridon but denounces a tendency among 'you all'. It is difficult to distinguish the tenor and vehicle of the poem's organising metaphor; it is both sexual and political, and its satirical targets encompass parliamentarians, religious radicals, and royalist libertine poets. It lumps together groups at either end of the political spectrum, scorning them all as unfaithful and immoral. These satires on love and politics demonstrate that recusant literary communities were not only writing pious meditations, polemic, and lament. They also engaged in raillery and erotic comedy. While the female response poems purport to attack philandering male poets and might be seen as a censorious response to new mores, they also betray a fondness for the same poetic style used by their opponents, flaunting their wit and control of complex conceits.

The Tixall coterie's exposure to literary and court fashion shaped their writing, but so too did their faith. They read and imitated rakes and recusants alike, and it is this combination which produces some of their most distinctive poetry. Herbert Aston's 'While I here absent' mixes the languages and preoccupations of erotic and devotional verse to astonishing effect. Written in Spain during his father's 1635–1638 embassy and copied by Constance into her miscellany, the poem dramatizes the pain of being apart from his future wife Katherine Thimelby. It begins, 'Whilest I here absente languish out my time/ wher those blest eyes nere shone, accorsed clime'.[105] Herbert imagines his separation from the beloved as a living death and then embellishes this conceit in a series of dizzying paradoxes and hyperboles. He laments the sufferings 'Of this my exile' (f. 25v) and describes the anguish of desire as 'exquisitest torments', 'Loues sharpes't mischefe', and a 'constant, an insesant martirdome' (f. 26r). The mixing of the sacred and profane and the imagery of erotic martyrdom are pervasive in

[105] Huntington Library, HM 904, ff. 25v–26r.

seventeenth-century poetry throughout Europe, from Marino and Góngora to Donne and Carew. 'In the Person of a Lady to her Inconstant Servant' by Carew reminds the lover 'When on the Altar of my hand,/ […]/ Thy now revolted heart, did stand/ An humble Martyr'.[106] Yet such images surely meant more to the Catholic Herbert. Elsewhere in Constance's miscellany, a ballad copied by William Southern lists various saints killed for their faith and extols the 'Infinite martyres more/ whome penne cannot expresse' (f. 22r). Herbert invokes explicitly Catholic soteriology to scrutinise the painful pleasures of desire, worrying that since his torment is pleasurable it is not spiritually valuable:

> So my faire Heauin, while I contemplate thee,
> I loose all meret, loosing mesery,
> […]
> Greefes I reioyce in, paine for plesure take
> So I can sofer nothing for your sake (f. 26r).

His suffering, he fears, is too enjoyable to be meritorious. Jeremy Robbins describes how poetry academies in seventeenth-century Spain wrote verse debates on the paradoxes of love and hate, absence and presence, terming this 'the casuistry of love'.[107] Herbert may well have been familiar with this practice and Robbins' phrase perfectly captures how Herbert expresses his intense passion by scrupulously examining its spiritual merits and dangers.

Herbert's poem also owes much to the most influential early modern English Catholic poet, the Jesuit martyr Robert Southwell (1561–1595). Its abrupt, dislocated opening, 'whilest I here absente languish out my time' echoes that of Southwell's 'The Prodigall Child's Soul Wrack', which also appears in Constance's miscellany: 'Disankered from A blissfull shore/ And lancht into the maine of cares' (f. 22v). Herbert's depiction of being apart from the beloved also finds a parallel in Southwell's 'At Home in Heauen':

> Faire soule, how long shall veyles thy graces shroud?
> How long shall this exile with-hold thy right,
> When will thy sunne disperse this mortall cloud?

[106] *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, 40, ll. 1–4.
[107] Jeremy Robbins, *Love Poetry of the Literary Academies in the Reigns of Philip IV and Charles II* (London: Tamesis, 1997), 86–87.

> And giue thy gloryes scope to blaze their light.[108]

The Jesuit's poems uses images of exile, storms, and seafaring to liken English Catholic expatriation to human exile from heaven. Herbert similarly equates geographical with ontological separation, and, like Southwell, conducts an almost pathological self-scrutiny. Marvelling that he is still alive, surviving the pain of absence, Herbert's speaker worries that 'I sin against my loue/ Discredit all my sofrings' and asks 'who with comon reson can sopose'

> That separated from my soule and throwne
> From Heuin to Hell I liue to make it knowne.
> Loue tis prophane, unher'd of tiranye
> To worke a miracle to torture me (f. 25v).

'Soul' functions as both an epithet for the beloved and an image of how the experience of exile and estrangement fractures the self. Herbert thematises his poem's mixing of discordant registers here; his impossible living death – a trope both mystical and erotic – is depicted as a profane miracle, effecting not salvation but torture. Southwell was also preoccupied by the relationship between sacred and secular poetry. In the verse epistle to *Saint Peter's Complaint* (1595), he explains that

> Prophane conceits and fayning fits I flye,
> Such lawlesse stuffe doth lawlesse speeches fit
> […]
> It is the sweetest note that man can sing,
> When grace in vertues key tunes natures string.[109]

The presence of Southwell in the background of Herbert's poem is further suggested by the wider coterie context. Constance's selection includes Southwell's 'The Prodigall Childs Soule wracke' and 'Man to the Wound In Christs side' (f. 23v), in which the speaker addresses the salvific wound: 'Here must I liue, here must I Dye' (f. 24r). Both these poems and the verse epistle are among the thirty-two Southwell poems included in William Southern's 1650s

[108] Robert Southwell, *Saint Peters Complaint with Other Poems* (London, 1595), 63.
[109] Southwell, *Saint Peters Complaint with Other Poems*, A3r.

miscellany produced for another group of recusant families.[110] While Southwell was read widely across the confessional spectrum in the first half of the seventeenth century, Alison Shell argues that 'long after Southwell had fallen out of fashion in the literary mainstream', English Catholics 'quietly kept reading him, copying him and […] using him as a starting-point for prayer'.[111] Herbert combines this confessionally distinctive reading practice with a more fashionable and current style of love poetry. Whereas Southwell adapted secular tropes to religious ends, Herbert redeploys a devotional idiom for what is ostensibly a secular love poem. Their two 'exiles' are polar opposites. Southwell dramatizes the persecution of English Catholics, alienated at home or forced to flee abroad. By contrast, Herbert's poem is occasioned by an official embassy for the British monarch. The ironies and juxtapositions of 'Whilst I here absent', mixing Southwell and Carew, exile and diplomacy, casuistry and carnality, might be seen to reflect the paradoxical situation of mid-century Catholic loyalists, at once tacitly accepted into mainstream political and cultural life and officially persecuted. In his analysis of Walter Aston senior's diplomatic career, Alexander Samson points out that 'Aston's Catholicism was both a problem and an opportunity'.[112] It made him an ideal Spanish ambassador but left him subject to persecution by his employer. 'While I here absent' typifies the coterie's use of multiple overlapping and opposing voices and illustrates the continuities between different parts of their complex identities. Although their Catholicism does not define and dominate all their verse, it does inform how they adapted major modes and traditions, producing hybridised Catholic royalist, rakish recusant verse.

Catholic Cavaliers?

[110] Bodleian, Eng. poet. b. 5, pp. 15–16, vii. See Cedric C. Brown, 'William Smith, Vere Southerne', and 'Recusant Community and Jesuit Mission in Parliament Days: Bodleian MS Eng. poet. b. 5,' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 290–315.
[111] Alison Shell, 'Southwell's Influence: Imitations, Appropriations, Reactions,' in Vassiliki Markidou and Afroditi-Maria Panaghis (eds), *Precarious Identities: Studies in the Work of Fulke Greville and Robert Southwell* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 242.
[112] Samson, 'The Literary Glocal,' 616.

The Astons and Thimelbys not only read and imitated major royalist genres of anti-Puritan satire, burlesque, and libertine lyric, but they also rewrote particular poems. The most complex and evocative example of this is Edward Thimelby's 'To Mr Normington, at Piacenza, Upon Occasion of the Overflowes of Po and Tyber', a response to John Denham's *Coopers Hill* (1642). It relocates Denham's poem from England to Italy, enacting its alternative perspective on royalist poetry and politics. Thimelby was educated at St. Omers and the Venerable English College, Rome, between 1631 and 1639.[113] He remained in Rome for the next decade, living among English expatriate royalists, grand tourists, and Catholics, including Richard Crashaw who lodged at the college in the later 1640s and is mentioned repeatedly in Thimelby's poems.[114] During the 1650s, Thimelby became a secular priest and canon of St. Géry, Cambrai.[115] An archetypal English Catholic cosmopolitan, Thimelby also had a rakish side to him. The English College's official records describe his unruliness ('Disciplinae parum observans'), and his letters to his siblings and relatives are playful and provocative, sending ballads and sharing gossip about London gallants.[116] 'To Mr Normington, at Piacenza' survives in the nineteenth-century transcription of Herbert's lost miscellany.[117] Its addressee, Thomas Normington, was expelled from his fellowship at Pembroke College, Cambridge, for converting to Catholicism; he met Thimelby while studying at the English College in Rome, between 1639 and 1646. Before becoming a Benedictine monk of St. Gregory's, Douai in 1650, Normington stayed at the monastery at Piacenza in Northern Italy between 1648 and 1649, and

[113] Geoffrey Holt, *St. Omers and Bruges Colleges, 1593–1773: A Biographical Dictionary*, Catholic Record Society Series vol. 69 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1979), 160; Anthony Kenny (ed.), *The Responsa Scholarum of the English College, Rome: Part Two: 1622–1685*, Catholic Record Society Series vol. 55 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1963), 448–450.
[114] Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 230–232. Crashaw was at the English College from 1647 to 1649, financial records for his time there survive at AVCAU, Liber 313, f. 72v–73r and Liber 314, f. 21a–21b.
[115] Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, 232.
[116] Wilfrid Kelly (ed.), *Liber Ruber Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe: Annales Collegii Pars Prima, Nomina Alumnorum, A.D. 1631–1783*, Catholic Record Society Series vol. 40 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1943), 16. Thimelby gives a lively account of an evening with relatives at the Inns of Court in the later 1650s, BL, Add. MS 36452, f. 209r.
[117] *TP*, 78–82.

it is in this period that Thimelby's verse letter must have been written.[118] The poem uses the flooding of two rivers, the Po running through Piacenza and the Tiber in Rome, as the basis for a series of elaborate metaphors for poetic and political overreaching. Thimelby first imagines the coincidence of floods as a poetic competition, vying to compete with Normington – 'Why should not I with Tybers deluge flow/ As full as thou with Po' – then shifts into an extensive digression comparing the rising waters to different kinds of political upheaval.[119] Highly self-reflexive, 'To Mr Normington, at Piacenza' explores ideas of style and imitation, political metaphor and interpretation.

Written in rhyming couplets and varying lines of three, four, or five iambic feet, the poem is modelled after Renaissance approximations of the ancient Greek poet Pindar, whom Thimelby describes with the conventional epithet 'Dirce's Swan'.[120] As Stella Revard has demonstrated, Pindar enjoyed a gradual revival from the mid-fifteenth century onwards. Praised for his sublime and edifying poetry, he was identified as the 'exemplary poet-priest'.[121] Pindaric imitation and translation into Latin and Italian was in vogue in mid-seventeenth-century Rome. Pope Urban VIII, Maffeo Barberini, also a prolific poet, was hailed as the 'new Pindar' by Giovanni Ciampoli (1590–1643).[122] An imitator and translator of Pindar himself, Ciampoli's poems were printed posthumously in 1648 by Francesco Corbelletti, printer to the English College at Rome.[123] The Anglo-Roman Thimelby had both Italian and English Pindaric models close at hand, significantly in the verses of his friend 'our softe-pend Crashaw'.[124] The

[118] Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, 234.
[119] *TP*, 78.
[120] Stella Purce Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode, 1450–1700* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 32.
[121] Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*, 3.
[122] P. J. A. N. Rietbergen, *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome: Barberini Cultural Policies* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 108; Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*, 243.
[123] Giovanni Ciampoli, *Rime* (Rome, 1648), Early European Books Online, accessed 19 February 2022, https://www.proquest.com/books/rime-di-monsignor-giouanni-ciampoli-dedicate/docview/2090354145/se-2. This volume includes a poem addressed to George Conn, Scottish Catholic priest and papal agent to Charles I. Other texts printed by Corbelletti for the VEC feature in chapter two, see figure 4.
[124] *TP*, 40.

emergence of English vernacular Pindarics is generally credited to Abraham Cowley's 1656 volume *Pindarique Odes*, but, as Revard notes, Richard Crashaw probably 'first brought the irregular hymn-ode into English, employing for it those irregular stanzas that were later to be used by Cowley'.[125] Representing a neglected moment in the vernacular domestication of this European form, Thimelby draws on both established metrical techniques for rendering the Pindaric ode in English, and the imagery surrounding the ancient poet's reception:

> Shall you, Eridanus' new bird, out scan
> The wing of Dirces swan:
> From whos full pennes deep raptures gusht of owld,
> Lyke rivers downe hill rould:
> And I (when Tiber can not keepe
> His bed) in myne here sleepe?
> Wher still my muse consumes
> Her flagging veine in downy plumes:
> No, no, though hope could never raise my quill,
> Feare now gives wings to clime yon neboring hill.[126]

Thimelby fashions a new epithet for Normington with the Latin name for the river Po at Piacenza: 'Eridanus' new bird'. This passage is an amplification of a simile in Horace's Ode to Pindar:

> monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres
> quem super notas aluere ripas,
> fervet immensusque ruit profundo
> Pindarus ore
>
> Like a river rushing down a mountainside, swollen by rains above its banks, Pindar boils and surges immeasurably on with his deep booming voice.[127]

Horace both elevates and criticises Pindar here; the rest of the poem warns 'the novice poet about the dangers of imitating' the Greek bard.[128] Cowley's 1656 imitation of Horace's Ode renders this image as '*Pindars unnavigable Song*/ Like a swoln *Flood* from some steep

[125] Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*, 245.
[126] *TP*, 79.
[127] Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, trans. Niall Rudd, Loeb 33 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 222–225, ll. 5–8.
[128] Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*, 34.

Mountain pours along'.[129] Thimelby translates more faithfully but identifies himself less with Pindar than with the would-be imitator cautioned by Horace. He mocks his own poetic skill, claiming to climb the vatic hill only to escape the rising tide. Thimelby's self-deprecation is belied by his display of erudition and wit. This passage is dense with double entendres, riffing on the literal meanings of conventional figures used to describe poetic composition. The image of flowing rivers describes both the ostensible subject or occasion of the poem and the poem itself, the movement of its verses. The bed of the Tiber becomes that of the sleeping poet. The 'downy plumes' refer at once to the winged muse, the sleeping Thimelby's pillows, and then by association, the feathered quill in his hand. Using the same image to describe both its subject and its form, the poem explores the relationship between occasion and representation, and the shape that experience takes in its retelling.

In true Pindaric fashion, Thimelby's poem is markedly digressive.[130] In the third stanza, having ascended the hill he looks down on the floodplains and finds an allegory for his homeland's troubles. Thimelby describes how 'the tyrant water foaming roares/ Disdaining hills for shores;/ Each element his seate confounds'.[131] He personifies the elements who refuse to know their 'seat' or station:

> Thos streames, who, lesse, could yield
> Rich pasture to each gladsome field,
> Lyfe to each iolly swaine, now greater growne,
> And swolne more high, both feeld and shepard drowne.[132]

The sustained enjambment and irregular metre – each line increases by a foot – enacts the force of the swelling torrent, growing towards the climactic verb 'drowne'. The antithesis of 'lesse […] greater' emphasises that this is the disastrous consequence of disruptions to hierarchy and order. An overflowing river is a conventional metaphor for political unrest; it appears in

[129] Cowley, *Poems: Pindarique Odes* (London, 1656), 18.
[130] Revard, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*, 39–41.
[131] *TP*, 79.
[132] *TP*, 79–80.

Virgil's *Georgics* and Mantuan's *Eclogues* but became especially popular in the mid-seventeenth century across poems, speeches, and polemics by royalists and parliamentarians alike.[133] Thimelby may be responding to one particular use of the trope in John Denham's *Coopers Hill* (1642). Denham's poem ends with an extended simile comparing the emergent constitutional crisis to a flood:

> When a calme River rais'd with sudden raines,
> Or Snowes dissolv'd o'rflows th'adjoining Plaines,
> The Husbandmen with high rais'd bankes secure
> Their greedy hopes, and this he can endure.
> But if with Bays and Dammes they strive to force,
> His channell to a new, or narrow course,
> No longer then within his bankes he dwels,
> First to a Torrent, then a deluge swels:
> Stronger, and fiercer by restraint, he roares,
> And knowes no bound, but makes his powers his shores:
> Thus Kings by grasping more then they can hold,
> First made their Subjects by oppressions bold,
> And popular sway by forcing Kings to give
> More, then was fit for Subjects to receive,
> Ranne to the same extreame; and one excesse
> Made both, by stirring to be greater, lesse;
> Nor any way, but seeking to have more
> Makes either loose, what each possesst before.[134]

Denham's poem was first printed in 1642 but had begun circulating in manuscript at least a year before.[135] As in Thimelby's 'To Mr Normington, at Piacenza', the movement of Denham's verse enacts the swelling river it depicts: the first two closed couplets give way to an implausibly long sentence, marked by syntactic inversion, accumulated subclauses, and strained enjambment. The thematic and formal correspondence between Denham and

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[133] Virgil, *Georgics*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb 63 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), Book I, ll. 481–483. Mantuan, *The Eglogs of the Poet B. Mantuan Carmelitan, turned into English verse […] by George Turbervile* (London, 1567), 10r–10v. On the use of the figure to imagine arbitrary government and abuse of royal prerogative, see John M. Wallace, '*Coopers Hill*: The Manifesto of Parliamentary Royalism, 1641,' *ELH* 41.4 (1974): 523. On its broader use, see Rory Tanner, 'Political Authority, Discourse, and Tumult in the Revolutionary Writing of John Denham,' in Philip Major (ed.), *Sir John Denham (1614/1615–1669) Reassessed: The State's Poet* (London: Routledge, 2016), 120.

[134] These lines are taken from the 'A Text', printed in 1642, as edited in Brendan O Hehir (ed.), *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks: A Critical Edition of Sir John Denham's Coopers Hill* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 133–134, ll. 333–350. All further references will be to this edition and made by line number in the body of the text.

[135] O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 25–26.

Thimelby's poems is pronounced. Both look down from a hill, both employ the language of swelling, torrents, deluges, bounds and shores, and both use the antithesis 'greater, less' to describe the transgressive breaking of the bounds of social station and constitutional right.

The political meanings of Denham's closing metaphor and of the entirety of *Coopers Hill* have long been debated. The variant texts of the poem have made matters more complex. These final lines seem to criticise both king and subjects for striving for more power than is appropriate, trespassing on each other's prerogative and rights. Brendan O Hehir reads the river as the king and the metaphor as a 'prediction of a devastating royal reaction' to the popular unrest of the early 1640s.[136] Several critics have similarly seen the poem as a 'call for moderation on both sides', in which the notion of *concordia discors*, a balance of opposites, unifies the poem's disparate images and underpins its political philosophy.[137] However, the revised texts of the poem, printed in 1655 and 1668, conclude with the word 'shores' and excise the following lines applying the metaphor ('Thus kings') to royal mistakes.[138] In this version and its different historical context, the bursting banks refer to the radicalisation of the parliamentary opposition, leading to regicide and acephalous rule. On the basis of his highly unstable poem, or rather series of slightly different poems, Denham has been labelled a 'committed Royalist', an 'ultra-royalist', a 'parliamentarian royalist', a 'constitutional royalist', and a 'highly partisan' instigator of 'cultural warfare'.[139] While the precise variety of his royalism continues to be debated, few critics have questioned the presumption that a clear political identity can be extracted from the poem.

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[136] O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 133.
[137] Jay Russell Curlin, '"Is There No Temperate Region…?" *Coopers Hill* and the Call for Moderation,' in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (eds), *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 126; Wallace, '*Coopers Hill*,' 509; Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, 129.
[138] O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 162.
[139] O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 27; James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry, 1630–1660* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 57; Wallace, '*Coopers Hill*,' 494; Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, 74–75; Bruce Boeckel, 'Landscaping the Field of Discourse: Political Slant and Poetic Slope in Sir John Denham's "Coopers Hill,"' *Papers on Language and Literature* 34. 1 (1998): 90–91.

Reading *Coopers Hill* alongside Thimelby's response offers an alternative perspective on the relationship between poetry and politics. Thimelby's poem stages the different ways of interpreting the trope of bursting banks, which Denham worked through over consecutive redrafts. Richard Fanshawe also adopts politicised imagery of 'rebellious waters' breaking their banks in a 'cruel torrent' in his English translation of Guarini's tragicomedy *Il Pastor Fido* (1647).[140] However, he makes sure his allegory clearly denotes the populace. Thimelby, by contrast, offers multiple referents for the same image. Across four stanzas, he repeats the same image but applies it serially to a prince, 'a senate', 'an army', and 'a people'.[141] Each stanza opens by praising the political institution it describes, before narrating how it has been corrupted and become destructive. The river is first anthropomorphised as a ruler, 'one, borne to his friends and contrys good,/ That flowes in welth and blood', who in pursuit of further power and wealth 'Swells, rages, overflowes, depopulates,/ Confounds his owne, ruins his neighbors states'.[142] The paratactic sequence of verbs traces the progress of the royal flood from swelling to depopulating and foregrounds the unstoppable force of this violent inundation. After the raging river-king, the following stanza describes how the 'senate' 'Thrust into government,/ To curbe despotic power that might undoe,/ Is become tyrant too'.[143] This alludes to the parliament, imagined as a tyrannical 'usurpe[r]' that 'Even dares the Gods to reparation,/ And carves new currents to religion'.[144] The flood next morphs into

> An army theire, raised to protect the cause
> Of common welth and lawes,
> […]
> That, like a torrent overflown,
> Drove desolation.[145]

Finally, returning to the earlier images of the 'iolly swaines', Thimelby equates his amorphous

[140] Richard Fanshawe, *Il Pastor Fido* (London, 1647), 32.
[141] *TP*, 80–81.
[142] *TP*, 80.
[143] *TP*, 80.
[144] *TP*, 80–81.
[145] *TP*, 81.

river with ‘A people seated in a fayre aboad,/ Where milk and nectar flowd’, who

> pamperd bove ther hight,
> Kick downe the bankes of iust and right:
> And, blindly frantike, draw a bloody streame
> Of sacred purple on ther sonnes and them.[146]

Thimelby evokes the myth of the Caroline golden age, a pre-war world of milk and honey, which produced a luxurious and unwieldy populace. This royalist interpretation of events was widespread. In *Coopers Hill*, Denham insists that ‘Luxurie and wealth, like Warre and Peace,/ Are each the others ruine, and increase’ (ll. 37–38), and Clarendon memorably complains in the *History of the Rebellion* (composed 1646–1671) that ‘those kingdoms which we now lament were once looked on as the garden of the world […] But all these blessings could but enable, not compel us to be happy’.[147] Thimelby’s phrase the ‘bankes of iust and right’ further suggests a conventionally royalist perspective on the rebellious populace, who do not defend rights and liberties as they claim, but ‘kick [them] downe’. Throughout the poem, he cautions against excess and overreaching: ‘Alas! how rare a thing is moderate/ To an unwieldy state!’[148] Thimelby might be aligned with the allegedly moderate, constitutionalist Denham or with the commitment to peaceful resolution, suggested in his kinsmen Walter and Herbert’s correspondence. However, Thimelby’s poem is not a manifesto or political argument; instead, it accumulates different ways of interpreting both the flood and the civil wars and in doing so reflects on the mechanics of political allegory.

Displaying the various ways in which he can construe the flood, Thimelby stages the production of political rhetoric and interpretation in his poem. Much criticism of *Coopers Hill* has been concerned with how Denham discovers political meanings in the landscape. O Hehir describes it as a ‘hieroglyphical poem’, grounded in an understanding of the visible world as

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[146] *TP*, 81–82.
[147] Quoted in Davidson, *Poetry and Revolution*, li.
[148] *TP*, 80.

pregnant with divine meaning.[149] However, Denham does acknowledge the imaginative creativity involved in the art of landscape: 'Through untrac'd waies and airie paths I flie,/ More boundlesse in my fancie than my eie' (ll. 11–12). Here Denham identifies an inconsistency between imagination and reality, stopping short of solipsism. The word 'airy' appears twice more in *Coopers Hill* to describe the 'emptie, ayrie contemplations' of medieval Catholic monks and the imaginary nymphs at Runnymede whose 'airie shap/ All but a quicke Poëticke sight escape' (ll. 253–254). Denham uses the word to connote the fictitious, the fanciful, and that which bears a resemblance of the real, recalling Shakespeare's description of how

> as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.[150]

This crucial word points to the poem's ambiguous status as both an account of an actual landscape, the view from Cooper's Hill, and a fabricated work of mediation and interpretation. Thimelby's poem not only uses the same word to describe the 'ayry milles' the river runs through, but also develops this ambiguity further. Thimelby deploys the same georgic, allegorical strategy as Denham, finding emblematic truths in the landscape, and yet undermines the notion of a fixed latent meaning to be recovered by offering multiple competing readings of the river's overflow. He depicts the flooding as both an actual event and a metaphor for poetic composition. Whereas Denham implies the shaping role of fancy in his landscape only subtly, Thimelby's poem explicitly refers to its own status as representation and revels in the knotty relationship between literary forms and the objects they seek to represent.

Thimelby alludes to his imitation of *Coopers Hill*, as well as of Pindar and Horace. Denham begins his poem by conjuring his own Parnassus:

> And as Courts make not Kings, but Kings the Court;

[149] O Hehir, *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 256. See also Timothy Raylor, 'The Hunting of the Stag: Denham, Davenant, and a Royalist Dispute over Poetry,' in Major (ed.), *The State's Poet*, 160.
[150] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri, Arden 3 (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 5.1.14–17.

> So where the Muses, and their Troopes resort,
> *Pernassus* stands; if I can be to thee
> A Poet, thou *Pernassus* art to mee (ll. 5–9).

Denham turns Cooper's Hill into a new Parnassus, once again asserting the poet's power to transform the landscape. Thimelby evokes these lines at the opening of his poem. Ostensibly addressing Normington, he asks

> Why should not I with Tybers deluge flow
> As full as thou with Po;
> Can Alpes become Parnassus there,
> And Apenine not here?[151]

Thimelby implies that Normington has been writing poetry in Piacenza on the banks of the Po which runs from the Alps and seeks to match his friend's inspiring landscape with his own equivalent, the Tiber and its source in the Apennine mountains. Yet he does so by borrowing and multiplying Denham's conceit of the moveable Parnassus. Like many of the Tixall poems, 'To Mr Normington, at Piacenza' exploits ambiguous referents and tailors the conventional to the personal and vice versa. Yet its repurposing of Denham also suggests Thimelby's distinctive perspective on British politics and poetry. *Coopers Hill* grounds a series of myths about the nation's past in a markedly British landscape and celebrates the three nations unified in one 'sceptred isle' by Charles I, 'him/ Who has within that azure round confin'd/ These realms, which nature for their bound design'd' (ll. 130–132). By contrast, Thimelby traverses Rome, Piacenza, and Britain, and addresses a community of Catholic expatriates and recusants. He mixes English vernacular models with a European, Latin and Italian trend for Pindaric. When Cowley claimed, somewhat erroneously, to be rendering Pindarics in English for the first time in 1656, he compared the difficulty of translating the 'strange[ness]' of Pindar to the 'difference betwixt the *Religions* and *Customs* of our Countreys, and a thousand particularities of places, persons, and manners, which do but confusedly appear to our eyes at so great a

[151] *TP*, 78.

distance'.[152] Thimelby's rewriting of Denham in Pindaric form similarly draws upon the broad metaphorical potential of distance and perspective, though in more positive terms. His relocating of Denham's poem and use of a European literary form enact his distanced and ironic analysis of the civil wars and Revolution; watching from 'yon neboring hill' in Italy, Thimelby finds fault with all parties to the conflict: king, parliament, army, and people.

In the final stanza, Thimelby seems to retreat from politics and return to questions of style:

> But stay, faint Muse, thy overdaring flight,
> To this unseemely height:
> Though iustly thy deare Normington not feares
> Rash Phaetons late teares,
> Whos speculation him might moove
> To the waters there above,
> And lead him up to spy
> That other Padus in the sky:
> For thee ore seas to towre can get no fame,
> But that of Icarus his empty name.[153]

The poem ends with a slew of new allusions. Invoking the disastrous flights of Phaeton and Icarus, Thimelby predicts his own fall. He is expanding again on a hint from Horace's Ode to Pindar, in which the would-be Pindaric imitator is told that he 'relies on wings that have been waxed with Daedalus' skill, and is destined to give his name to a glassy sea'.[154] Thimelby claims that his poetic flight is similarly doomed, but contrasts it to Normington's apparently more successful ascent. The 'other Padus in the sky', to which Normington is destined, refers to the constellation Eridanus, which is also the Latin name for the river Po. Denham refers to Heaven's 'old *Eridanus*' when praising the Thames' 'purer streame' (ll. 220–221). However, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Phaethon's burning body, fallen to the earth, sizzles in the Po/Eridanus.[155] These tangled figures of rising and falling, height and depth partly enact the

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[152] Cowley, *Poems: Pindarique Odes*, Aaa2r.
[153] *TP*, 82.
[154] Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, 220–221, ll. 1–4.
[155] Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume 1*, trans. Frank Justus Miller and rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb 42 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), Book 2, ll. 323–324.

poem's mixture of the comic and the serious, but they also contrast the heavenly and the earthly. Not long after the poem was written, Normington became a Benedictine monk and took the name Leander; Thimelby may be alluding to this via the myth of Leander swimming the Hellespont to Hero in his closing reference to crossing 'ore seas to towre'. Thimelby suggests that whereas he can win no such fame, Normington is about to replace the earthly rivers of politics and poetry with the heavenly Eridanus. The final stanza sees the poem's different uses of the same metaphor collide; overreaching and drowning describe both political disorders and poetic ambitions. Thimelby may attempt to adopt a distanced, 'neutral' perspective on English politics and poetry by relocating Denham's scenario from the outskirts of London to an Italy populated by English Catholic exiles, yet in the final stanza, he falls like Icarus back down to his native earth. Whereas Normington turns to things heavenly, Thimelby remains enmeshed in the seas of rebellion and conflict. Thimelby's highly complex, allusive ode encapsulates the distance and proximity between the personal and the political, between English Catholics and the civil wars. A Catholic rewriting of Denham's *Coopers Hill*, it draws on multiple perspectives and sources to interrogate how political metaphors are made and interpreted.

Thimelby's ambivalent approach to his homeland is made explicit in another of his poems, 'To His Mistress, Upon Returne From Travells'. This mock verse letter describes an uncanny meeting with an old lover, a personification of England: 'Oh God! that I could thinke it true/ That you could possibly be you'.[156] England is both transformed beyond recognition and somehow familiar. She retains the same 'snare[s]' as she did at their last meeting: 'Thos eyes there wonted terror keepe,/ The self-same danger's in that lyppe;/ The pitt, the nett, the trapp, the hooke'.[157] These extraordinary images equate the tempting beauty of a mistress with the dangers facing a Catholic in England, accentuating the tensions and affinities between

[156] *TP*, 74.
[157] *TP*, 75.

rakish and recusant culture. Personal and political memory are similarly conflated:

> When I came home, and past the land
> Where once our favor'd oakes did stand,
> Whos naturall age, by course, survives
> The common reach of human lyfes;
> And could not spy one single tree.
> Markt with the names of thee and me;
> Was now to pluck a twigge afray'd,
> Where we so many garlands made:
> Cause all was chang'd in every place,
> I cry'd, and is this Englands face?[158]

These lines convey a vivid sense of disorientation. Thimelby remembers a lost bucolic fantasy and struggles to recover traces of his love in the landscape. This pastoral world has particularly royalist connotations, accentuated by the reference to the royal 'oakes', which survive beyond the 'common reach of human lyfes' just as the monarchy continues beyond the death of a single king. The apostrophic rhetorical questions – 'is this England', can this be you – are never answered and we do not know whether the poem was written before or after the Restoration. Instead, Thimelby evokes a sense of the simultaneous upheaval and continuity of this period. The poem resists the categories of either political allegory or love poem. It imagines the experience of meeting a long-lost lover in intricate detail whilst also intimating anxious memories and presentiments of political unrest. In this, it typifies the Tixall coterie's mixing of registers, voices, and discourses, and their distinctive combination of novelty and archaism.

Thimelby's defamiliarizing of England encapsulates the character of the Catholic royalist poetry analysed here. These families consistently ironize and invert the polarised discourse of the period and continuously reinvent themselves, adopting the voices of Laudian satirists, zealous Puritans, libertine lovers, honourable royalists, contemptuous neutrals, and peace-seeking pragmatists. Their writings are neither straightforwardly 'political' in any polemical

[158] *TP*, 75–76.

sense nor disengaged from the tumultuous world around them. Instead, their facility for ventriloquism allows the relationship between the private and the public, the personal and the political to be redrawn and reimagined from varying perspectives. Contrary to previous scholarship on the Tixall coterie, which has incorrectly assumed that the group was parochial and insulated from politics and contemporary literary culture, this chapter has demonstrated that the interaction between royalist politics, Catholic religion, and familial identity produced a distinctive and creative rewriting of many of the tropes and forms of mid-seventeenth-century poetry. It shows that 'Catholic writing' is not limited to lament or polemic and that recusant families read and wrote satire, love poetry, pastoral, and libertine verse. Rather than claiming to recover a supposedly authentic 'Catholic style' or univocal expression of their politics, this chapter elucidates the variety of voices and personae adopted across these virtuoso poems and letters. As we shall see, the literary culture of mid-seventeenth-century English Catholics is defined not by one common aesthetic, but by a range of different styles.

Chapter Two

Tyrant tragedies in 1640s Rome

Parliament attempted to ban public theatre in England from 1642 to 1660, but meanwhile in Europe English Catholic expatriates performed theatrically spectacular and politically incisive neo-Latin history plays. The English Catholic colleges, established in the late sixteenth century to educate lay Catholics and train priests, used drama as a pedagogical and polemical tool to prepare their students for the 'mission' of converting England.[1] Held to celebrate carnival, the end of the year, or the visit of a patron, performances were an elaborate assault on the senses, featuring music, dancing, and stage machinery.[2] In their subject matter and style, these plays conform to the trends of both global Jesuit theatrical culture and cross-confessional humanist pedagogical drama.[3] Yet they are also shaped by distinctively English Catholic preoccupations and idioms. The plots offer a range of historical analogies for the situation in post-Reformation England, dramatizing stories of heretical tyrants and pious martyrs, resistance and persecution, from scripture, Byzantium, and medieval Britain. These plays are, as Alison Shell puts it, 'among the most subversive texts ever written by Tudor and Stuart Englishmen'.[4] Several critics have examined how English vernacular drama survived after 1642 in the form of drollery and private performance, or, most significantly, on the printed page.[5] Scholars have also

[1] Alison Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama: The Writings and Career of Joseph Simons,' *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 13 (2001): 34. See also Howard B. Norland, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Britain,' in Jan Bloemendal and Howard Norland (eds), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 524, and William McCabe, *An Introduction to the Jesuit Theater: A Posthumous Work* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983).
[2] Alison Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama,' 37.
[3] Davidson, *Universal Baroque*, 50–51; Elizabeth Sandis, *Early Modern Drama at the Universities: Institutions, Intertexts, Individuals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).
[4] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 210.
[5] Dale Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642–1660* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995); Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic, 1649–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 1–38. More recent work identifies continuities between pre- and post-Restoration theatre: Janet Clare, 'Acts of Oblivion: Reframing Drama, 1649–65,' in Janet Clare (ed.), *From Republic to Restoration: Legacies and Departures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 147–167; and Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647–72* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

outlined how the rhetorical and generic devices of drama and political dialogue were frequently elided, arguing that English dramatic culture became increasingly politicised.[6] Yet this scholarship has neglected both the confessional dimension of the period's theatre and the performances at Catholic colleges. This chapter and the next seek to broaden our understanding of mid-seventeenth-century English theatre by analysing old plays revived for performance at the Venerable English College, Rome, in the 1640s, and new plays written for the college at Saint-Omer in the Spanish Netherlands in the 1650s.

Founded in 1579 by Cardinal William Allen (1532–1594), the Venerable English College, Rome (VEC) was central to the Catholic campaign against English Protestantism. The college trained priests for the English mission and provided higher education in theology and philosophy for lay 'convictors'; the majority of the teaching was administered by Jesuit professors at the nearby Collegio Romano, an engine-room of the Counter Reformation established by Ignatius of Loyola in 1551.[7] College plays were mostly performed in Latin, baroque Europe's lingua franca, for large and diverse audiences. They provide a vivid insight into the English Catholic missionary imagination and its relationship to the international Counter-Reformation movement.

Financial records indicate that at least seven plays were performed at the VEC between 1644 and 1649.[8] Three of these can be identified. A surviving printed programme reveals that in 1646 the college staged an anonymous play about Absalom's rebellion against David entitled *Davidis Lacrymae seu Impietas Absalonis*.[9] This may have been a reprised version of a 1622 St. Omers play on the same subject, *Ambitio Infaelix sive Absalon*, but no script for the VEC

[6] Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Elizabeth Sauer, *'Paper-Contestations' and Textual Communities in England, 1640–1675* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
[7] Michael Edwards, *The Venerable English College, Rome: A History* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2008).
[8] Suzanne Gossett, 'Drama in the English College, Rome, 1591–1660,' *ELR* 3.1 (1973): 92.
[9] *Davidis Lacrymae seu Impietas Absalonis ab Alumnis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe Tragice Exhibita* (Rome, 1646), Rome, Palazzo Corsini, 172.G.13(25).

production survives.[10] In 1645 and 1648, the college mounted productions of *Leo Armenus* and *Mercia*, old plays also written for St. Omers by the internationally-celebrated Jesuit playwright Joseph Simons (1594–1671). Simons spent much of his career teaching at the continental colleges and was rector of the VEC between 1647 and 1650. In the later 1660s, he was in London. After contributing to the fateful conversion to Catholicism of the Duke of York, later James II, Simons died in July 1671.[11] His five tragedies were printed repeatedly, performed in colleges throughout Europe, and adapted, translated, and imitated by both English and European writers.[12] Roman cardinals and English Protestants alike owned copies of Simons.[13] Considering his international reputation, it makes sense that the VEC revived two of his tragedies. Yet why did they choose these particular plays – *Leo Armenus*, a revenge tragedy set in the court of the iconoclast Byzantine emperor Leo V, and *Mercia*, a martyr play set in Anglo-Saxon Britain – among the five authored by Simons? Analysing the politics of revival, this chapter argues that these dramas of iconoclasm, resistance, and tyranny were presented to new audiences as up-to-date commentaries on the upheavals of the 1640s. It further investigates the college's response to contemporary politics by introducing a new work by Simons, unknown to scholarship till now: an oration to three young priests leaving the college for England in

[10] Dana Sutton, 'Introduction,' in *Ambitio Infaelix sive Absalon* (1622), trans. Dana Sutton, The Philological Museum, 12 July 2008, accessed 29 November 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/absalom/intro.html.
[11] Thompson Cooper and Alison Shell, 'Lobb, Emmanuel [alias Joseph Simons] (1594–1671), Jesuit and Playwright,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 14 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/25561.
[12] Joseph Simons, *Zeno, Tragoedia, Mercia, Tragoedia* (Rome, 1648), Bodleian, 8° C 537 Linc.; Simons, *Theoctistus* (Liege, 1653), Harvard, Houghton Library, EC65.SI575.653T; Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque* (Liege, 1656), Bodleian, Douce S 562; reprinted 1657, at Cologne in 1680 and 1697; performances of Simons' plays, or plays on the same subjects, occurred at St. Omers, Rome, Lucerne, Luxembourg, Hildesheim, Julich, see James A. Parente, Jr., 'Tyranny and Revolution on the Baroque Stage: The Dramas of Joseph Simons,' *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 32 (1983): 311, note 5. Simons' *Leo Armenus* inspired Andreas Gryphius' *Leo Armenius* (1650), *Mercia* was translated into Italian for performance at the Collegio Romano in 1664, and *Zeno* supplied a source for William Killigrew's *The Imperial Tragedy* (1669), see respectively: James A. Parente, 'Andreas Gryphius and Jesuit Theater,' *Daphnis* 13.3 (1984): 526–529; *Scenario del Leone Tragedia Latina da Recitarsi nel Seminario Romano nelle Correnti Vacanze di Carneuale* (Rome, 1646), Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Misc. 2236/22; and Shell, 'Byzantine Tragedy in Restoration England: Joseph Simons' *Zeno* and Sir William Killigrew's *The Imperial Tragedy*,' *Renaissance Studies* 30.4 (2016): 623–639.
[13] Bishop Thomas Barlow, a Calvinist, royalist, and fierce anti-Catholic, acquired a copy of the 1648 edition of Simons' *Zeno* and *Mercia* the year after it was printed, Bodleian, 8° C 537 Linc. Cardinal Francesco Barberini owned the same book, BAV, Stamp. Barb. GGG. V. 9.

1648. This speech commemorates the Elizabethan Jesuit Robert Persons (1546–1610) and portrays him as a scourge of tyrants and a modern Hercules. These two revivals and new oration reveal how mid-century Catholics situated themselves in continuity with longstanding recusant traditions.

Scholarship on Catholic college plays has tended to emphasise its pedagogical utility and celebration of martyrdom. Many of the alumni of the VEC, notably Robert Southwell, were considered martyrs, and their memorialisation was central to college's institutional self-representation. Though the early modern chapel was later destroyed, a series of engravings printed in 1584 reproduces its murals, which depicted gruesome martyrdoms from the early Church to Edmund Campion.[14] As Anne Dillon argues, the VEC 'was notorious throughout the city as the "seminary of the martyrs"'.[15] Alison Shell and Howard Norland have interpreted the college plays as another vivid part of this martyrological culture.[16] Shell argues that the students in Rome and St. Omers prepared for persecution by impersonating martyrs on the college stage and engaging in a form of 'role-playing, the act of conquering future circumstance by imaginative anticipation'.[17] She describes how 'Ambitious blueprints for youthful holiness were laid down in the autodidactic dramas'.[18] These plays were thus '*primarily* intended' to affect the student performers rather than the audience, Shell argues.[19] However, I present previously unknown performance records which suggest that some productions were not intra-mural pedagogical exercises, but functioned as transnational political commentary addressed, as we shall see, to a powerful audience.

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[14] Giovanni Battista Cavalieri, *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophea* (Rome, 1584), Bodleian, Antiq.c.I.5(1).
[15] Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2002), 171.
[16] Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama,' 35; Howard B. Norland, 'Political Martyrdom at the English College in Rome,' in Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith (eds), *Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque and Classicist Tragedy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 135–151. Shell, '"Furor Juvenilis": Post-Reformation English Catholicism and Exemplary Youthful Behaviour,' in Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation'*, 185.
[17] Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama,' 46.
[18] Shell, '"Furor Juvenilis,"' 185, 192–193.
[19] Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama,' 40, 38.

The audiences at the plays were large and cosmopolitan. In 1645, six Swiss Guards were paid to manage the entrance to the college during the production of *Leo Armenus*.[20] Prior to its re-founding as a seminary, a medieval English hostel had existed on the same site. The post-Reformation institution maintained its tradition of hospitality, welcoming English travellers of all confessions, even John Milton in the late 1630s.[21] The 1640s saw a shift in the number and nature of these visitors. Abandoning war-torn England, Catholics, royalists, political exiles, and grand tourists travelled across Europe, often passing through Rome or staying for extended periods.[22] The VEC's so-called 'Pilgrim Book' records the portion of its visitors who dined or lodged in the college. As well as prominent Catholic expatriates, such as Richard Crashaw, Kenelm Digby and Thomas Somerset, son of Henry First Marquess of Worcester, the college's diverse visitors included 'Thomas Hemmings, a barber, […] with his wife and little daughter', Edward and Philip, Princes of the Palatinate and nephews of the king, an ex-convict escaped from 'Moorish captivity', the royalist Colonel Thomas Platters, and the mercurial Robert Danvers, bastard nephew to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who was variously Catholic, Protestant, royalist, and parliamentarian.[23] The diarist John Evelyn visited twice and saw a play each time.[24] The English abroad sometimes even participated in college productions. The Catholic artist John Michael Wright, later employed, as we shall see, by the restored Charles II, painted the scenery for *Leo Armenus*.[25] The local Italian population also went to see the English students perform, as the survival of programmes for VEC performances

[20] Gossett, 'Drama in the English College,' 71.
[21] AVCAU, Liber 282, under October 1638.
[22] Chaney, *Evolution*, 230–232. On the diverse kinds of mid-seventeenth-century mobility, see Raylor, 'Exiles, Expatriates and Travellers,' 15–44.
[23] AVCAU, Liber 282, pp. 146, 136, 128, 130, 134, 128, 131, 133, 142, 126. Richard L. Greaves, 'Danvers [formerly Wright, Howard, Villiers], Robert, styled second Viscount Purbeck (1624–1674), Alleged Conspirator,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 14 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/7136.
[24] Unfortunately, the plays Evelyn saw are not identifiable, E. S. de Beer (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn, Volume 2: Kalendarium, 1620–1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 291, 388.
[25] Gossett, 'Drama in the English College,' 83.

in several major Roman libraries indicates.[26] Cardinals and tourists, English and Roman, and Protestant and Catholic, watched these plays together. If we place this diverse audience at the centre of our approach, we can appreciate how the VEC theatre intervened in transnational baroque culture and mediated between different national and confessional contexts.

This chapter explores the political dimension of the VEC's 1640s productions. It asks what it was about these plays that made them especially suited for addressing the seemingly unprecedented events of the decade. Scholars have often assumed that the tradition of militant Catholic resistance 'had largely disappeared by the mid-seventeenth century', when Catholics became increasingly and ardently royalist.[27] In fact, old texts and longstanding tropes of fierce opposition to the English Protestant state persisted and were reshaped. These productions gave voice to old ideas about tyranny and reapplied them to contemporary circumstances.

Much scholarship has focused on the parliamentarian and republican discourses of tyranny. Quentin Skinner has asserted the emergence of a neo-Roman theory of liberty at mid-century which drew on ancient writers, particularly Livy and Cicero filtered through Machiavelli; for the neo-Roman theorists, individual freedom was dependent upon a free state, while prerogative powers and even the possibility of constraint were tantamount to tyranny and servitude.[28] In response to the ubiquitous and often imprecise use of the term 'republican' by modern scholars, Blair Worden has lucidly emphasised that not all opposition to tyranny

[26] Copies of *Argomento d'Albano, Tragedia Latina che si Recita nel Collegio Inglese* (Rome, 1619), survive at BAV, Stamp.Cappon.IV.907(int.4) and Stamp.Chig.IV.2236, ff. 242–245, and at Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Misc. 2013/6; *Rappresentatione Tragica del Zenone Imperatore da Farsi nel Collegio Inglese di Roma* (Rome, 1634) at BAV, Loreto.IV.3(int.4), R.G.Miscell.B.60(int.9), Stamp.Barb.JJJ.VI.16(int.7), and at Rome, Palazzo Corsini, 172.I.10 (22); *Leone Armeno Da Rappresentarsi dagl'Alunni del Collegio Inglese di Roma* (Rome, 1645) at BAV, Stamp.Barb.JJJ.VII.51(22); *Davidis Lacrymae seu Impietas Absalonis ab Alumnis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe Tragice Exhibita* (Rome, 1646) at Rome, Palazzo Corsini, 172.G.13(25); and *Mercia Tragedia da Rapprentarsi dagl'Alunni Collegio Inglese* (Rome, 1648) at Rome, Palazzo Corsini, 171.F.7 (16).
[27] Highley, 'Henry VIII's Ghost in Cromwellian England,' in Walsham et al (eds), *Memory and the English Reformation*, 110–111; Glickman, *The English Catholic Community*, 49, 28; Gregory, *Catholics during the English Revolution*, 9, 192.
[28] Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9, 50–51.

constitutes republicanism, which opposes monarchy per se.[29] The VEC productions perpetuate a tradition of resistance, which emerged long before the mid-century crisis and was motivated by primarily religious commitments, a factor that plays little part in Skinner's and others' analyses. The longstanding language of tyranny was increasingly associated with Charles I's parliamentarian opponents and later with republicans; English Catholics, as this chapter will argue, responded carefully to these appropriations. The VEC revivals and Simons' oration adapt and reinterpret Catholic resistance theory, as the civil wars and regicide transformed the terms of the debate. Analysing the rhetoric of these plays, records of their performance, and textual revision, I argue that the VEC's 1640s theatrical culture is characterised by a complex mixture of loyalism and resistance that redefines both categories and prompts us to think again about the representation of liberty and tyranny in mid-seventeenth-century literature.

The return of persecution: Reviving *Leo Armenus*

On 14 February 1645, the students of the English College, Rome, staged a production of Joseph Simons' 1620s play *Leo Armenus*.[30] The play narrates the downfall of the ninth-century Byzantine emperor Leo V, the Armenian. Although no record of its first performance survives, manuscript witnesses indicate that it was first written and staged, like Simons' other plays, at St. Omers between 1624 and 1631.[31] *Leo Armenus* exists in two versions: the first, extant in three manuscripts of St. Omers drama, probably derives from the late 1620s or early 1630s, and the second was printed in Simons' complete plays in 1656.[32] Its most recent translator and

[29] Blair Worden, 'Liberty for Export: "Republicanism" in England, 1500–1800,' in Gaby Mahlberg and Dirk Wieman (eds), *European Contexts for English Republicanism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 14–15. See also Worden, 'English Republicanism,' in J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 443–475.

[30] The students were given time off lessons on account of the performance on this date, see AVCAU, Liber 320, unfoliated but organised by date.

[31] McCabe, *Introduction*, 88 note 22.

[32] Cambridge University Library, MS Ii vi 35, ff. 43r–78v; St. John's College, Cambridge, MS Aa.3, ff. 82r–114r; Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, ff. 71r–104v. In all three manuscripts, *Leo* is copied after Simons' *Zeno* which is dated 1631 in the Cambridge University Library manuscript, suggesting that *Leo* may have been written in the early 1630s.

editor, Dana Sutton, assumes that the tragedy performed in 1645 was the latter printed text.[33] In fact, a previously unknown printed programme for this performance, complete with synopsis and dedication, reveals that the earlier three-act manuscript version was used.[34] As we shall see, *Leo Armenus* was revised later in response to the execution of Charles I and the attendant shift in the connotations of tyrannicide. Reconstructing the 1645 production illustrates the continuing vitality of Catholic resistance and the extent to which the VEC drama functioned as transnational political commentary.

Leo Armenus narrates the fall of a tyrant. Closely modelled on Seneca, it depicts the emperor Leo as rapacious and fearful, and frequently deploys sententiae and stichomythic disputes about power, law, fate, and tyranny. The main source is Cardinal Caesar Baronius' *Annales Ecclesiastici* (1607), a major work of Counter-Reformation historiography which refuted the Lutheran ecclesiastical history of the *Magdeburg Centuries*.[35] In the first scene, Leo condemns six citizens to death for venerating religious images; the ghost of St. Tarasius, former Patriarch of Constantinople, then appears to him in a dream, warning that God will punish him for the persecution. The rest of *Leo Armenus* dramatizes how this providential revenge occurs. The emperor attempts to shore up his power by settling the succession on his evil son Sabatius, but this only enrages the general Michael Balbus. Balbus plots to murder Leo and seize power, but the plan is discovered by Sabatius and the bombastic 'Saracen' soldier Morocchus. After managing to escape from prison, Balbus and his conspirators disguise themselves as priests and murder Leo while he celebrates Christmas in the cathedral of Hagia Sophia. This dramatic finale is the stuff of English Protestant nightmares surrounding regicidal Jesuits; one disguised

[33] Dana Sutton, 'Introduction,' in Joseph Simons, *Leo Armenus*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, rev. 5 Nov. 2013, accessed 23 October 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/leo/.
[34] *Leone Armeno da Rappresentarsi dagl'Alunni del Collegio Inglese di Roma* (Rome, 1645). It survives at BAV, Stamp. Barb. JJJ. VII. 51(22). The programme's synopsis describes a three-act play in which Act 3 Scene 4 features the ghost of Tarasius. This conforms to the manuscript text of the play and differs from the printed version.
[35] Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, 'Cesare Baronio and the Roman Catholic Vision of the Early Church,' in Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan (eds), *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 52–71.

assassin asks ‘Cernis ut sacrum toga/ Imitata mystam deceat?’ [Do you think this robe imitating a holy priest suits me?].[36] The word ‘deceat’, meaning ‘it is fitting’ or appropriate, implies a debate about the competing claims of religious and political authority and the role of clerical power in civil government, which captivated post-Reformation England. In the revised text, printed in 1656, Simons accentuates the ambiguous moral status of the regicides, but in the version performed in 1645, there is no doubt that Leo’s death is divinely mandated. The prophetic Tarasius reappears in the final act and confirms God’s judgement on Leo: ‘Sanguis reposcit sanguinem. Horrendus vocat/ Iudex, tribunal vocat ineluctabile’ (f. 95r) [Blood demands blood, a terrible judge summons, an inexorable tribunal summons]. The 1645 production of *Leo Armenus* proclaims uncompromising Catholic resistance.

Why did the college select this play for revival in 1645? The Italian programme provides some clues (Figure 4). Twelve copies were printed on parchment to be distributed to cardinals and 300 on paper, for the rest of what must have been a sizeable audience over the course of the carnival season.[37] It includes an ostentatious dedication to Cardinal Camillo Pamphili, nephew of the newly elected Pope Innocent X. The Jesuit colleges throughout Europe regularly produced vernacular programmes or arguments to distribute at performances of their Latin plays. Scholars have often underestimated the significance of these documents, seeing them merely as a crib for non-Latinate audiences to follow the plot.[38] However, this programme constructs a series of topical analogies and intervenes in international politics and patronage relations. Composed in the vernacular, the dedication addresses political analysis to a large

[36] Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 98r. Unless otherwise stated, all further references will be to this manuscript and made in the body of the text. The translation is largely based on Dana Sutton’s translation of the printed text, but adapted and modified in places: Joseph Simons, *Leo Armenus*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, rev. 5 Nov. 2013, accessed 23 October 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/leo/.
[37] Gossett, ‘Drama in the English College,’ 72.
[38] Jan Bloemendal, ‘Similarities, Dissimilarities and Possible Relations between Early Modern Latin Drama and Drama in the Vernacular,’ in Philip Ford and Andrew Taylor (eds), *The Early Modern Cultures of Neo-Latin Drama* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 147; Shell, ‘Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama,’ 36, 38–39; Bruna Filippi has studied the numerous surviving periochae from Collegio Romano productions: *Il Teatro degli Argomenti: Gli Scenari Seicenteschi del Teatro Gesuitico Romano: Catalogo Analitico* (Roma: Institutum Historicum S.I, 2001).

Italian audience. The college expresses fear that they might be

> ripresi per far Tragedie sceniche in tempo, che la dolcissima patria proua vere Tragedie, bagnata più di sangue, che di lagrime.[39]
>
> reproved for making theatrical tragedies while the sweetest homeland proves a true tragedy, bathed more in blood than tears.

The dedication identifies the affective power of the play in its topical application. It displaces the audience's pity away from the dramatic fiction and onto contemporary England, the 'vere Tragedie'.

Figure 4


LEONE
ARMENO
DA RAPPRESENTARSI
Dagl' Alunni del Collegio Inglese
di Roma.
DEDICATO
ALL'EMIN.MO E REV.MO SIG.RE
IL SIG. CARDINAL
PANFILIO
In Roma, Appresso gl' Heredi del Corbelletti. MDCXLV.
Con licenza de' Superiori.

[39] *Leone Armeno*, A2r.

The anonymous writer invites Pamphili to see iconoclasm as the focal point of *Leo Armenus*:

> Aggiungiamo ancora non essere molto dissimile da i casi luttuosi dell'Inghilterra, questa Tragedia. Consideri l'Em. V. in essa Leone perfido Iconoclaste empio carnefice de i veri adoratori di Dio, e poi dall'Oriente riuolgasi al nostra Occidente, e non uno, ma più Leoni vedrà, che Iconoclasti iniquissimi tormentano, & uccidono quelli che adorando Vicario di Christo prestano & à lui, & à suoi santi il debito ossequio.[40]
>
> We add further that this tragedy is not so different from the doleful plight of England. Consider, your eminence, this Leo, treacherous iconoclast, heathen executioner of the true worshippers of God, and then turn back from the east to our west, and it may be seen that not one but many more Leos, most wicked iconoclasts, are tormenting and slaughtering those who, honouring the Vicar of Christ, render both to him [Christ] and to his saints due reverence.

The 1645 revival is here presented as a response to the new wave of anti-Catholic persecution in England. For the first time since 1628, seventeen priests were executed in England between 1641 and 1645.[41] Parliamentary ordinances of 1643 and 1644 instigated widespread iconoclasm.[42] The Queen's Chapel at Somerset House, where Counter-Reformation Catholicism had flourished, was ransacked and its Rubens altarpiece thrown into the Thames.[43] At Canterbury Cathedral, the medieval window depicting the college's patron Thomas Beckett was destroyed.[44] The VEC's previous revival of a play by Simons, *Zeno* in 1634, was dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew of the then Pope Urban VIII. In a climate of de facto

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[40] *Leone Armeno*, A2r–A2v.
[41] Michael Questier, *Catholics and Treason: Martyrology, Memory, and Politics in the Post-Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 504–523.
[42] 'August 1643: An Ordinance for the Utter Demolishing, Removing and Taking Away of All Monuments of Superstition or Idolatry,' in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 265–266. *BHO*, accessed 3 August 2022, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp265-266. 'May 1644: An Ordinance for the Further Demolishing of Monuments of Idolatry and Superstition,' in Firth and Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances*, 425–426. *BHO*, accessed 3 August 2022, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp425-426.
[43] Albert J. Loomie, 'The Destruction of Rubens's "Crucifixion" in the Queen's Chapel, Somerset House,' *The Burlington Magazine* 140.1147 (1998): 680–682.
[44] Keith Thomas, 'Art and Iconoclasm in Early Modern England,' in Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (eds), *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 19; Richard Culmer, *Cathedrall Newes from Canterbury* (London, 1644), 7, 21–22.

toleration for Catholics in England, the 1634 dedication makes no reference to persecution; instead, it describes the play as

> questo erudito trattenimento, che nella intermissione de' grauissimi studi può ò di questi la fatica, ò di altri nostri trauagli alleggerire la noia.[45]
>
> this learned entertainment, that in the interim between most serious studies can lighten the weariness of those or the boredom of our other travails.

The contrast between the 1634 and 1645 programmes demonstrates both the variety of purposes to which the college drama was put and the sense of urgent crisis which characterises the later production. At the 1645 carnival, the VEC used an old play to bring the dire state of affairs for English Catholics to the attention of the new pope.

This revival implies continuities between persecution in the 1620s and in the early 1640s and demonstrates the endurance of the language of Catholic resistance. The dedication defines tragedy and its effects in emphatically political terms. As Blair Hoxby has shown, seventeenth-century Jesuits expended much energy debating how ancient theories of tragedy could serve Counter-Reformation ends.[46] Among the most inventive contributions to this was the Collegio Romano professor Tarquinio Galluzzi's *Rinovazione dell'Antica Tragedia* (1633), dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini. Drawing on a pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Minos* and dismissing Aristotle's *Poetics*, Galluzzi argued that tragedy emerged in ancient Athens as a ritual celebration of Theseus' escape from the Minotaur and the city's liberation from the oppression of the conqueror King Minos.[47] For Galluzzi, the original purpose of tragedy was to engender a love of liberty and a hatred of tyranny: 'L'Amor della libertà, e l'odio contro alla tirannia par che dessero nascimento, e principio alla Tragedia'.[48] He claims that sacred

[45] *Rappresentatione Tragica del Zenone Imperatore da Farsi nel Collegio Inglese di Roma* (Rome, 1634), 5, BAV, Loreto.IV.3(int.4).
[46] Blair Hoxby, *What was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 200–257.
[47] Hoxby, *What was Tragedy*, 243–245; Tarquinio Galluzzi, *Rinovazione dell'Antica Tragedia* (Rome, 1633), 8–11, Bodleian, Byw. E 2.14.
[48] Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, 8.

tragedies have the same purpose of confirming the audience's faith and opposition to unjust heretical rulers.[49] The 1645 dedication encourages the audience to understand *Leo Armenus* in precisely this way.

Simons' *Leo Armenus* uses the classical idiom of tyranny for distinctively Roman Catholic purposes. It conforms to what Rebecca Bushnell has identified as a Platonic and Senecan tradition of depicting tyrants as 'terrifying machines of desire'.[50] Leo is beset by fear, uncontrollable rage, and insatiable lust for power; his personal licence symbolizes unjust government, violating both law and conscience. In the first act, Leo commands his courtiers to debate whether kings, wine, or truth, is more powerful. This dispute is modelled on a passage in 1 Esdras (3:1–5:6), an apocryphal book of the Old Testament, where the Persian King Darius asks his guards to discourse on the relative potency of wine, kings, women, and truth.[51] Simons endows this biblical set-piece with a topical currency, foregrounding questions of prerogative and resistance, and a dramatic tension, as the secret ambitions, rivalry, and flattery of the imperial courtiers motivate the debate. Championing kings, the evil Sabatius offers a hyperbolic panegyric for arbitrary government. He paints a terrifying vision of unlimited power in which 'quod libet regi licet' (f. 69r) [whatever is pleasing to a prince is lawful]. The paronomasia of 'libet/licet', repeated throughout the play (ff. 75v, 82v, 85r), is found in Seneca and Cicero among others and serves as a shorthand for the foundational conflict between will and right, prerogative and law.[52] It strikingly anticipates the terms in which the proponents of

[49] Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, 63; Hoxby, *What was Tragedy*, 245.
[50] Rebecca Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 32.
[51] 1 Esdras, titled 3 Ezra in the Vulgate, though widely read and commented upon among Church Fathers, was judged apocryphal by Jerome and the Council of Trent; it continued to be printed in early modern bibles, including the Douai-Rheims and King James translations, in smaller type or in separate apocrypha sections. See Alastair Hamilton, *The Apocryphal Apocalypse: The Reception of the Second Book of Esdras (4 Ezra) from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 20–21, and Sarah Japhet, '1 Esdras,' in Martin Goodman, John Barton, and John Muddiman (eds), *The Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 185–211.
[52] Seneca, *Troiades*, in *Tragedies*, trans. John Fitch, Loeb 62 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 202–203, ll. 335; for the widespread use of this wordplay in ancient texts, see Atze J. Keulen, *L. Annaeus Seneca Troades: Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 253.

the so-called neo-Roman theory of liberty would define tyranny; the republican Algernon Sidney proclaimed that 'if there be no other law in a kingdom than the will of a prince, there is no such thing as liberty'.[53] In 1645 the college identified *Leo Armenus*, with its meditation on tyranny and restraint, as freshly resonant for the early years of the English civil wars.

In the Book of Esdras, truth soon wins the disputation. By contrast, in the disillusioned world of *Leo Armenus*, no winner is declared. Balbus makes his contribution in the form of a masque later in the play. Supposedly a defence of the power of wine, Balbus' interlude is in fact a vivid display of the self-enslavement of tyrants and the occasion for his first attempt on Leo's life. This inset performance parallels the metatheatrical devices of much tyrant tragedy, notably Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (1629). Balbus acts the part of Alexander the Great. The printed text's stage directions describe him being worshipped as a god and venerated with incense by a group of Persians.[54] Balbus playing Alexander revels in this political idolatry. He exclaims 'Quod libet regi licet./ Iam regno terra Iupiter et orbis deus' (f. 85r) [Whatever is pleasing to a prince is lawful. I already rule as Jupiter on earth and as a god of the world]. The tableau was accompanied by music and dance, sumptuously visualising Sabatius' defence of absolutism from the opening scene: 'Sic orbe princeps regnat immenso deus' (f. 69r) [Thus, a prince rules as a God over the vast world]. But, just as Sabatius' claims are undermined by the representation of Leo as evil, fearful, and supremely undivine, in the masque Alexander's apotheosis is followed by a bacchanalian dance of drunkards. The mortal god is subject to his own base passions and unbridled appetite. Balbus' interlude holds a mirror up to the hubristic and blasphemous tyrant. Mixing classical and biblical sources, the 1645 production expresses the tradition of Catholic resistance through the idioms of baroque spectacle.

Although the revival of this old play implicitly identifies the iconoclasm and

[53] Algernon Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government* (London, 1698), III. 16, 317. See Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, 86–87.
[54] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 477.

persecution of the 1640s as a repetition of old outrages, the dedication also reinterprets aspects of the tragedy for altered circumstances. The reference to multiple Leos or lions – 'non uno, ma più Leoni' – shifts emphasis from a single tyrant to many parliamentarian persecutors. The description of turning back from the east to the west ('e poi dall'Oriente riuolgasi al nostra Occidente') amplifies the play's preoccupation with the *translatio imperii*, the connotations of which changed dramatically between its composition and revival in 1645. In the seventeenth century, Byzantium was known as the Eastern Roman Empire and understood as continuous with Rome, but its history was also increasingly mapped onto a narrative of decadence in which power and orthodoxy had gradually migrated to the west.[55] Simons exploits the uncanny proximity and distance of Eastern Rome. When the ghost of Tarasius first appears, descending possibly in a cloud machine, he is initially uncertain which side of the earth he is on. He asks

> Quas calco terras? Orbis occidui plagam,
> An quae renatum prima testatur diem?
> Haec illa gentis terra Caesareae ferax?
> Haec illa rerum domina, terrarum caput,
> Roma nova? Fallor. Squalet hic mundi situs.
> Habitata saevis regna Sauromatis premo.
> Hic ego sacratum pastor excolui gregem?
> O triste rerum specimen! Excessit fides,
> Proscripta virtus, nactus imperium furor
> Late triumphat (f. 70v).
>
> On what land do I tread? The region of the western world, or that which first bears witness to the reborn day? Is this the fruitful land of the Caesars' dynasty? Is this the world's mistress, the capital city of the earth, the new Rome? I am wrong, this part of the world is a wasteland. I am standing on realms inhabited by the savage Scythians. Here did I look after the holy flock as its shepherd? Oh, the sorry state of things! Trust has departed, virtue is proscribed, and fury, having gained sway, triumphs far and wide.

For Tarasius, the Eastern Empire under Leo has destroyed Rome's legacy, departing from it geographically and doctrinally. The series of rhetorical questions and oppositions establishes a binary between 'civilised' west and 'savage' east. The 'Sauromatae' refers to the Scythians an

[55] Przemysław Marciniak and Dion Smythe (eds), 'Introduction,' in *The Reception of Byzantium in European Culture Since 1500* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016).

ancient nomadic people who collaborated with the Goths to invade parts of the Roman Empire and in early modern writing are often identified with the contemporary Ottomans.[56] Here the term is used anachronistically to associate the iconoclast Eastern Roman emperor with the early modern inhabitants of Constantinople. The play mobilises stereotypes of the barbarous east throughout. Leo's henchman the 'Saracen' Morocchus conforms to representations of the 'Turk' as atheistic, bellicose, and mercilessly violent. In one scene, he spies on Balbus and the conspirators by hiding in a chest and blackening his face to appear as a spirit sent from the devil. When discovered, Morocchus easily convinces Balbus of his hellish origins (f. 81r). Racist associations of dark skin and the demonic are here articulated through metatheatrical comedy. The dumbshow of Persian idolatry similarly conjures a set of prejudices surrounding paganism and eastern abundance. Yet, despite the play's orientalist strategies, as the dedication reveals, Leo's regime also operates as an analogy for England. It primes the audience to hear Tarasius' lament for his unrecognizable homeland as a thinly veiled indictment of the English Church's departure from the Catholic Church, the 'Roma nova'. Like Thimelby's poem to the long-lost mistress, *Leo Armenus* ingeniously mixes the familiar and the strange to express English Catholics' alienation from their homeland.

When the play was composed in the late 1620s or early 1630s, this imagery would have evoked contemporary confessional debates over the legacy of the Eastern Church. Protestants of diverse kinds from Calvin and Tyndale to John Jewel saw Byzantine iconoclasm as evidence that Roman Catholic practices surrounding images were a pernicious innovation that had long been resisted. They accused Catholics of idolatry and consistently rejected the Second Council of Nicaea of 787 which had approved the veneration of images, a ruling affirmed at the Council

[56] Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 20–22; Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans: Turkish History in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 4, 6.

of Trent.[57] The Patriarch Tarasius presided at the Nicaean Council.[58] In the late 1620s and early 1630s Anglican divines, including Laud, Peter Heylyn, and Ephraim Pagitt, also frequently claimed succession from the Eastern Church and even attempted practical unification.[59] In its original context *Leo Armenus* responds to this by demonising the Eastern Romans, with whom the reformers identified.

By 1645, however, the language of barbarism had a new currency. Laudians, moderate English Protestants, and Catholics agreed that the iconoclasts defacing the Church of England were like barbaric and cruel infidels of the east. Puritans, they lamented, had outdone the 'barbarismes of *Goths and Vandals*', were 'utter destroyers of all civility', and 'Scythian slaves [who] must be ordered with whips'.[60] In his 1640s miscellany, William Southern similarly bemoans how England is now worse than the Ottoman Empire: 'Amongst the turkes & Saracens, is greater liberty of religion, the moores & Infidels restraine not Christian rites, with such severitie'.[61] If the 1620s play used the eastern past to demolish the arguments against images made by Protestants of all stripes, and to vilify attempts to align with the Eastern Churches, the 1645 production models a newly complex confessional landscape, revealing the shared grievances of English Catholics and some Protestants against a resurgent wave of iconoclasm.

The 1645 production must also be understood in relation to recent upheavals in Rome. A few months prior to the performance, papal authority and the fortunes of the college's patrons had faced a significant challenge. Pope Urban VIII (r. 1623–1644) and his nephew Cardinal Francesco Barberini were reliable supporters and patrons of English Catholics. Godfather to

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[57] Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 47–56.
[58] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 47.
[59] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 308–310, 378–380; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Church of England and the Greek Church in the Time of Charles I,' *Studies in Church History* 15 (1978): 213–240.
[60] Quoted in Thomas, 'Art and Iconoclasm,' 25. Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), 22–23. Miriam Jacobson, *Barbarous Antiquity: Reorienting the Past in the Poetry of Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 7 and *passim.*
[61] Trinity College, Dublin, MS 1194, p. 43.

Henrietta Maria, Urban had re-established diplomatic relations with England and, through a steady stream of gifts, letters, and agents, had sought to promote Catholic interests at the Stuart court.[62] In 1643, he authorised the beginning of the process of formally recognising recent English martyrs.[63] Francesco Barberini was Cardinal Protector of England and of the VEC. His surviving library and manuscripts include detailed correspondence and despatches from England, as well as the 1645 dedication and the 1648 edition of Simons' plays.[64] Ultimately, both Caroline tolerance in England and the Barberini era in Rome ended in disaster. At his death in summer 1644, Urban VIII and his nephews were deeply unpopular. A failed war against the Farnese family, repeated tax increases, and Urban's ostentatious nepotism attracted bitter criticism.[65] The pro-French foreign policy of the Barberini was opposed by Spanish factions at the papal court, notably the Pamphili family. During the 1644 conclave, Francesco and his brother Antonio tried to exclude the Pamphili candidate and failed.[66] In September, Giovanni Battista Pamphili became Pope Innocent X and immediately moved against his rivals, establishing an enquiry into the old pope's nephews and their suspected financial misconduct.[67] Eventually Francesco Barberini followed his brothers into exile in January 1646. Among the papers of the English Jesuit Province is a detailed narrative of the tumultuous 1644 conclave, which condemns as unjustified the 'mal talento verso la Casa Barberina' [great ill will against the house of Barberini].[68] Many former Barberini clients lost their preferments. Patrick Cary,

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[62] Rietbergen, *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome*, 178. Susan Madocks Lister, '"Trumperies Brought from Rome": Barberini Gifts to the Stuart Court,' 151–175, and Elizabeth Oy-Marva, 'Paintings and Hangings for a Catholic Queen: Giovan Francesco Romanelli and Francesco Barberini's Gifts to Henrietta Maria of England,' 177–193, in Elizabeth Cropper (ed.), *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy* (Milan: Nuova Alfa, 2000). Gordon Albion, *Charles I and the Court of Rome* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1935), 145.

[63] A contemporary copy of the relevant papal breve, 'Piis Dilecti Filii', survives among English Jesuit manuscript records, ABSJ, Anglia V, no. 12; Questier, *Catholics and Treason*, 518.

[64] BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 8620; Stamp. Barb. JJJ. VII. 51(22); Stamp. Barb. GGG. V. 9.

[65] A. D. Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy: From the Council of Trent to the French Revolution, 1564–1789* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 251–253.

[66] Toril Magnuson, *Rome in the Age of Bernini Vol. II* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1986), 1–8.

[67] Karin Wolfe, 'Protector and Protectorate: Cardinal Antonio Barberini's Art Diplomacy for the French Crown at the Papal Court,' in Jill Burke and Michael Bury (ed.), *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 116.

[68] ABSJ, Anglia VI, no. 101, f. 156r.

English poet, Anglo-Roman expatriate, and son of Elizabeth Cary, Viscountess Falkland, feared the outcome of their fall: 'This action has left us in a world of suspence every one curious to know the past, and politicke to prognosticate the future'.[69] At this inopportune moment in February 1645, Kenelm Digby departed from Henrietta Maria's court at Paris to travel to Rome and beg for Innocent X's support for the royalist cause, a delayed embassy that ultimately yielded nothing.[70] The performance of *Leo Armenus* in the same month sought to intervene in this tense moment of transition, when the status of English affairs at the Vatican was deeply uncertain.

The dedication appeals to the new pope's nephew Cardinal Camillo Pamphili for protection by insisting upon a long tradition of English fidelity to the papacy:

> [P]roteggendo noi sempre heredi di quelli che difensori della Fede furono tributarii di Pietro prima con l'oro, & adesso con il sangue, non sdegni, che sotto l'ali della sua Colomba innocente, coperti siamo da ogni furore Leonino.[71]
>
> Protecting us still the heirs of those who, defenders of the faith, paid tribute to Peter first with gold, and now with blood, do not scorn that, under the wings of the innocent dove, we may be protected from every leonine fury.

Figuring martyrdom as a new kind of tribute, the English students signal their allegiance to the papacy in almost hyperbolic terms. Here the dedication contrasts the play's leonine imagery, associated with its titular tyrant, to the iconography of the Pamphili crest, a white dove (Figure 4), and puns on the new pope's chosen name, Innocent. Addressing the new Cardinal-nephew was an astute move. It evinces a fear that, with the fall of the Barberini, English interests may no longer be represented at the papal court and that progress made in the recognition of English martyrs under Urban would be lost. These puns and allusions navigate the boundary between the play-world and the real-world. The dedication not only represents English problems to an international audience, but also responds to the shifting world of papal politics.

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[69] Quoted in Veronica Delany (ed.), *The Poems of Patrick Cary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), xxxvi.
[70] Vittorio Gabrieli, 'La Missione di Sir Kenelm Digby alla Corte di Innocenzo X, 1645–1648,' *English Miscellany* V (1954): 247–289.
[71] *Leone Armeno*, A2v.

The Roman audience had just witnessed one of the most acrimonious papal elections of the period.[72] Voluminous pasquinades and satires cast the late Pope Urban as a corrupt tyrant. Via an easy pun, the Barberini were compared to barbarians in the popular saying 'Quod non fecerunt barbari, fecerunt Barberini' [What the barbarians did not do, the Barberini have done].[73] The infamous street song 'Papa Gabella' [Taxation Pope] includes the lines

> Han fatto più danno
> Urbano e nepoti
> Che vandali e Gothi
> A Roma mia bella
> O Papa Gabella
>
> By Urban and his brother's sons
> More damage has been done
> Than by Vandal, Goth, or Hun
> To my beloved Rome.[74]

On the morning of Urban VIII's death, a crowd attempted to vandalise Bernini's statue of him at the Capitol (Figure 5).[75] Held back by guards, they rushed down the Capitoline Hill to the Collegio Romano and destroyed the bust of Urban in the college's courtyard.[76] It was here that the students of the VEC had their lessons each day. They must have been all too aware of the aggressive opposition to their patron. The 1645 dedication's profession of allegiance inevitably evokes the recent turmoil amidst which the Pamphili came to power. Might the tyrant Leo, who is reviled for unfair preferments and associated with barbarism, have reminded an unsympathetic audience member of Urban VIII? Such an identification would have been helpful to the college as they appealed to the new Pamphili regime for protection. *Leo Armenus*' representation of tyranny and the east was liable to divergent topical applications in this fraught

[72] Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 228–253.
[73] Sheila Barker, 'Pasquinades and Propaganda: The Reception of Urban VIII,' in Thomas Worcester and James Corkery (eds), *The Papacy Since 1500: From Italian Prince to Universal Pastor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 86
[74] Quoted and translated in Barker, 'Pasquinades and Propaganda,' 71.
[75] Karen J. Lloyd, 'Bernini and the Vacant See,' *The Burlington Magazine* 150.1269 (2008): 821–824.
[76] Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*, 234.

transnational context.

Figure 5



The relationship between these two contexts, English and Roman, is made explicit at the end of the dedication:

> [N]el giorno istesso, che il Santissimo Zio di V. Emin. fù posto à reggere il mondo nel Vaticano, due nobilissimi heroi dell'Inghilterra furono à morte condannati, & uccisi ancora, per difendere la di lui dignita suprema?[77]
>
> On the same day that the most holy uncle of your eminence [Pope Innocent X] was appointed to govern the world in the Vatican, two most noble heroes of England were condemned to death, and then killed for defending his supreme dignity.

This refers to the executions of the Jesuit Ralph Corby and the seminary priest John Duckett on 7 September 1644 at Tyburn, after parliamentarian soldiers had captured them from a royalist garrison near Durham.[78] They were charged with treason, as per the Elizabethan statute against priests ordained abroad returning to England.[79] Juxtaposing their martyrdoms with the papal 'coronation', the dedication emphasises Innocent X's global power and responsibilities.

Far from being an intramural, pedagogical exercise, the 1645 production of *Leo Armenus* was a baroque spectacle that sought to navigate the volatile and interconnected worlds of Civil-War England and Counter-Reformation Rome. It interpreted and reframed this old play as a highly relevant topical allegory, demonstrating both continuity and divergence across different generations of English Catholic writing. The events of 1649, we shall see, would precipitate a greater rupture in the traditions of Catholic resistance and Jesuit tyrant tragedy.

Christian warriors

The execution of Corby and Duckett was celebrated as a glorious martyrdom in several texts besides the 1645 dedication. Catholics at home and abroad imagined these two priests as heroes and warriors, using classical terminology. Susannah Monta has argued that Catholic martyrology was transformed during the civil wars. She describes how, on the scaffold, priests

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[77] *Leone Armeno*, A2v.
[78] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament* 52 (London, 22 July 1644): 411.
[79] Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, vol. III (London: Burns and Oates, 1878), 77.

declared their 'loyalty to the monarch and self-sacrificing fealty to a suffering nation' and thus promulgated 'new forms of loyalism made possible, ironically, by the fragmenting of their nation'.[80] Michael Questier has similarly noted the use of 'loyalist and royalist rhetoric' in 1640s speeches made before execution. He speculates that the description of the crowd's 'expressions of sympathy' towards a captured priest in one account may have been 'part of a royalist reaction in London'.[81] The revival of Simons' explosive tyrant tragedy in 1645 cautions us against a too easy equation of Catholicism and royalism and suggests that some aspects of Catholic resistance persisted. The texts commemorating Corby and Duckett's deaths employ a traditional language of heroic Catholic resistance.

Early modern Jesuit culture imagined feats of piety in terms of classical heroism. Jesuits and their supporters produced numerous Virgilian epics, of which just a small portion survives in the vast anthology *Parnassus Societatis Iesu* (1654).[82] On 29 May 1647, 'Benedetto di Virgilio, a wonderfull poeticall plauman of Apulia dyned' at the VEC and 'recyted certaine passages in his poeme of S. Ignatius', presumably his ten-book Italian epic on the life of the order's founder, *Ignatio Loiola: Poema Eroico* (1647).[83] The medieval trope of the *miles christianus* acquired a new currency among supporters of the militant Counter Reformation. Discussing the highly influential 'martial language and imagery, promoted especially by the Jesuits', Frederick McGinnes argues that in the seventeenth century 'what had at one time been mostly a metaphor now assumes a strikingly literal significance'.[84] Two surviving sermons delivered by VEC students before Urban VIII on St. Stephen's Day in 1641 and 1642 portray St. Stephen as both protomartyr and warrior of Christ, who inspires the seminarians 'ad

[80] Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, 221, 219.
[81] Questier, *Catholics and Treason*, 510–511.
[82] Paul Gwynne, 'Epic,' in Moul (ed.), *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*, 217–218.
[83] AVCAU, Liber 282, p. 149.
[84] Frederick J. McGinnes, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 119–120.

certissima pericula ad gloriosa certamina' [to most certain dangers, to glorious battles].[85] These metaphors forge a continuity between the Jesuits' humanist pedagogy and their Counter-Reformation offensive in Europe.

At their deaths, Corby and Duckett were apotheosised as conquering heroes. The lyrics for a 'Cantus de R. P. Rodulpho Corbaeo' survive in manuscript.[86] Featuring choruses and verses for 'voce sola', this piece was probably performed. The song addresses Corby crossing 'aurea […] limina caeli' [the golden threshold of heaven]: 'Succede Pugil', 'Laetare pugil' [arise, rejoice o champion].[87] The imperatives chart Corby's triumphant entry in real time and encourage the audience to imitate his sacrifice. It describes Christ as a 'Dux' [General], who 'Citat ad pugnam, citat ad palmam' [summons to the fight, summons to the palm]. These echoic alliterative phrases enact a repeated call to arms and to the eternal reward of the martyr's laurel.

The same rhetoric was deployed by Ambrose Corby, a professor at the Collegio Romano in *Certamen Triplex*, his narrative of the martyrdoms of his brother Ralph, John Duckett, and two other Jesuits, Henry Morse and Thomas Holland.[88] In the preface, Corby concedes that a full account of all those persecuted by parliament would require 'altera Iliade' [another Iliad], but his narration of three martyrdoms (Corby and Duckett are counted as one) does have Homeric pretensions. The martyrs are 'Christi nobilissimis Olympionicis' [most noble Olympians for Christ], 'Christi pugiles' [warriors of Christ], and 'fortissimis Christi athletis' [most brave athletes of Christ].[89] Ralph Corby is an archetypal stoic warrior, the opposite of Simons' Leo, exhibiting 'animi motus imperium tantum' [command over all motions of his mind] and 'corporis sui, tamquam fallacis mancipii sanctum & constans odium'

[85] AVCAU, Liber 281, not foliated, 1642 sermon.
[86] ABSJ, Anglia V, f. 42v.
[87] ABSJ, Anglia V, f. 42v.
[88] Peter Davidson, 'Perceptions of the British Isles among the Catholic Exiles: The Case of Robert Corbington SJ,' in David Worthington (ed.), *British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603–1688* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 318; Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, 217.
[89] Ambrose Corby, *Certamen Triplex a Tribus Societ. Iesu* (Antwerp, 1645), A3v, 67, 89, Bodleian, Crynes 20.

['a holy and constant hatred of his body, as of a deceitful servant'].[90] Yet though his narrative is suffused with martial and classical metaphors, Ambrose Corby takes pains to distinguish these holy warriors from violent soldiers. He complains that the two martyrs were committed to Newgate 'per insolens ludibrium' [with insolent mockery] and as though they were prisoners of war:

> Adest enim confestim, cum praeuio centurione, non minus quadraginta militum armata cohors, qui militari scilicet, sed ignominiosa pompa, resonantibus tympanis, ardente fomite, explosis identidem bombardis, innocentes hos & pacificos Christi Confessores, tanquam maleficos, tanquam turbulentos Regni proditores, tanquem in hostili exercitu (in quo nunquam fuerant) nuper captos, re autem vera in Catholice Religionis ac Sacerdotii odium […] ad carcerem & vincula traducerent.
>
> For there was ready with a captain at their head a troop of about forty armed soldiers, who in a military but a disgraceful procession, beating drums, burning brands, and firing guns, led these innocent and peaceful confessors of Christ to prison and chains, as if they were malefactors, as if traitors, as if disturbers of the peace of the kingdom, as if persons lately taken in the enemy's army (where they had never been), but in reality through hatred to the Catholic religion and priesthood.[91]

Corby presents this military capture as a charade ('ludibrium'). The series of hyperbolic antitheses, signalled by the anaphoric 'tanquam', between their 'innocence' and their purported crimes foregrounds competing interpretations of the punishment. The verb 'traducere' can mean to convict someone but also to expose to ridicule, suggesting that the priests are being led in triumph. While Monta and Questier suggest that representations of 1640s martyrs unite their Catholic faith and royalist politics in a display of loyalism, *Certamen Triplex* here puts politics and religion in tension, thus returning to a fundamental debate over the motivations of Catholic missionaries and the relation between civil and spiritual authority, which had raged since at least the death of Edmund Campion.[92] This passage also attempts to clarify metaphors

[90] Corby, *Certamen Triplex*, 52. Translated in *The Threefold Conflict* (London: Catholic Publishing and Bookselling Company, Ltd., 1858), 32.
[91] Corby, *Certamen Triplex*, 58–59. Trans. *The Threefold Conflict*, 37.
[92] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context,' *The Journal of Modern History* 72.3 (2000): 587–627.

and their meanings. Whereas the rest of the narrative uses explicitly martial language to describe its heroes, here Corby lampoons the ignominious and disingenuous display of military aggression. Barbara Donagan has argued that in 1640s England 'it became difficult to reconcile uplifting rhetoric with the popular stereotype of soldiers as the scum of the earth'.[93] Smith similarly notes that 'the Civil War had proved the decadence of aristocratic, martial, honour culture'.[94] Here Ambrose associates the army with uncontrolled fury and excess. The tricolon of participles 'resonantibus tympanis, ardente fomite, explosis identidem bombardis' imagines them striking, burning, firing. This volatile procession starkly contrasts with the self-restrained Christian stoic Ralph Corby.

Certamen Triplex attempts to distinguish between different kinds of soldier and thus to establish a delicate balance between the figurative and the literal, spiritual warfare and actual soldiers. As we shall see, from the 1640s onwards, prolonged exposure to the depredations of war and the increasing association of anti-tyrannical discourse with republicanism made this balance ever more difficult to maintain. The metaphors by which English Catholics had long lived were changing fast.

Senecan furor in 1648: royalist, republican, and Catholic

At the 1648 carnival, the VEC staged another play by Simons: the martyr tragedy *Mercia*, first performed at St. Omers in 1624.[95] Simons' *Mercia* narrates the conversion of the eponymous Anglo-Saxon kingdom to Christianity. Whilst hunting in the forest, the pagan king Ulferus' two sons, Ruffinus and Ulfadus, encounter the missionary priest Chad, who converts them. Inspired by their new faith, the brothers destroy an idol of Jove. King Ulferus is furious and begins a hunt for the perpetrators; when he eventually discovers that his two sons are responsible, he murders them offstage in Chad's woodland cottage, recalling the conventions

[93] Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642–1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18.
[94] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 233.
[95] *Mercia Tragedia da Rapprentarsi dagl'Alunni Collegio Inglese* (Rome, 1648), Rome, Palazzo Corsini, 171.F.7 (16).

of Greek drama and Seneca's *Medea* and *Hercules Furens*. The martyrs appear in glory above the stage and plead with Christ to have mercy on their father. Ulferus and his kingdom are reconciled to Christ and tragedy turns to sacred comedy. As Robert Miola and William McCabe point out, *Mercia* depends heavily on ancient tragic forms.[96] But the reception of the play and its classical allusions in the mid-seventeenth century have not been examined. Since the text of the 1624 version of *Mercia* does not survive, we cannot identify what, if anything, was new to the later performance in 1648 and to the text printed in Rome in the same year. The topically-charged classical rhetoric of 'furor', meaning madness, rage, unrestrained frenzy, dominates the play. What was it about this drama of rage and persecution that prompted the revival? The following section reads *Mercia* alongside contemporary political discourse and Jesuit iconography to illuminate this idiosyncratic repurposing of the tropes of ancient tyrant plays for martyr tragedy.

Mercia opens with a 'Genius Furoris' emerging from the earth to incite King Ulferus to rage. Its speech closely echoes the curses of the goddess Juno, which begin Seneca's *Hercules Furens*.[97] Simons reinterprets the pagan goddess as an allegorical personification of a destructive human passion, one common means of Christianising the pagan deities.[98] The 'Genius Furoris' describes himself through his dire effects in a series of swift alliterative images:

> Sanguine natantes domus:
> Iugula recisa: mersus in fibras mucro:
> Auulsa membris membra: lacerati sinus.[99]

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[96] McCabe, *Introduction*, 238–253; Robert Miola, 'Jesuit Drama in Early Modern England,' in Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay, and Richard Wilson (ed.), *Theatre and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 83.
[97] Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, in *Tragedies*, 54–55, ll. 75–92.
[98] Tobias Gregory, *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2–3.
[99] Joseph Simons, *Mercia, Tragoedia* (Rome, 1648), 111, Bodleian 8° C 537 Linc. All further references will be to this edition and made as page numbers in the body of the text. The translation is largely based on Dana Sutton's, but adapted and modified in places: Joseph Simons, *Mercia, sive Pietas Coronata*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, rev. 19 April 2021, accessed 23 October 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/mercia/.

> Houses drowned in blood, throats slashed, the sword plunged into entrails, limbs wrenched from limbs, breasts torn to pieces.

Fury is imagined as the engine of both violence and tyranny. We are told that 'Non lex Furorem frenat […] Vis est in armis' [Law cannot bridle rage, strength is in arms] and that 'Corda Regnantum lubens/ Ingredior hospes' (111) [I enter the hearts of kings as a welcome guest]. As in *Leo Armenus,* Simons mixes the language of unrestrained, animalistic fury with a more legalistic idiom of laws, limits, and statecraft. The Genius describes how 'purpureus Furor,/ Timoris expers, quo lubet telum iacit' (111) [princely rage, free from fear, hurls its shafts where it wants]. The adjective 'purpureus', literally purple-clad, denotes the pomp of power and evokes the blood-soaked tyrant.

The emphasis on their father's rage reinforces the two princes' heroism. When King Ulferus threatens to kill his son unless he recants his Christianity, Ulfadus responds:

> Imbellis animos prodit ignavos timor.
> Tu, si libebit, mitte quo Martis furor
> Agit phalanges, tela per et enses ferar (193).
>
> Cowardly fear reveals a base spirit. You, if you wish, may send me where the rage of Mars drives forth legions, and I will be born through spears and swords.

Like the stoic Corby in *Certamen Triplex*, Ulfadus is untouched by fear and base passions. The accumulation of perils, 'phalanges, tela […] enses', echoes the encircling arrows and thousands of falling weapons in Psalm 91 (Vulgate, 90). Ulfadus imagines a terrifying pagan afterlife, where 'Martis furor' rules, yet retains a Christian hope that he shall pass through the shadow of death unharmed. Simons stages a confrontation here between pagan and biblical imagery, enacting how Ulfadus' Christian stoicism resists tyrannical furor.

Royalists frequently charged parliamentarian rebels and soldiers with 'furor'. Discussing Abraham Cowley's abandoned attempt at an epic poem *The Civil Wars* (c.1644), Colin Burrow argues that 'while anger is associated with hell and rebellion, pity takes on increasingly Royalist colours […] Cavalier warriors become the pitifully moral reincarnations

of Virgil's imperial victims, killed by an uncontrolled and devilish *furor*'.[100] *Mercia*'s 'pitifully moral' martyrs might thus be seen to parallel an aspect of royalist self-representation, embodying honour and orthodoxy in contrast to the riotous rage of the parliamentarians. This is only half of the story, however. Commonwealth and republican writers also used Senecan 'furor' to attack tyranny and absolutism.

Two major defences of the regicide quote directly from *Hercules Furens*. John Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) begins its long series of examples and precedents for just tyrannicide with Seneca's depiction of 'Hercules the grand suppressor of Tyrants'; Milton argues that 'The Greeks and Romans, as thir prime Authors witness, held it not onely lawfull, but a glorious and Heroic deed, rewarded publicly with Statues and Garlands, to kill an infamous Tyrant at any time without trial'.[101] The Jesuit professor and theorist of tragedy Tarquinio Galluzzi had articulated a very similar mythology of ancient liberty and theatre and, as I have been suggesting, Simons' plays are shaped by this understanding of the power of drama to represent the evils of tyranny and the rights of resistance.[102] Milton and Simons would disagree about who was a tyrant, of course, and while the Jesuit restricts himself to theatrical tyrannicide, Milton takes his rhetoric into the realm of political action, admonishing his post-regicide readers with a Senecan aphorism: 'There can be slaine/ No sacrifice to God more acceptable/ Then an unjust and wicked King'.[103] In *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated* (1650), Marchamont Nedham similarly sought to inculcate a love of liberty in his readers. As Blair Worden observes, Nedham 'expounded the virtues of a free state or republic' and championed 'the wisdom of classical antiquity and especially of republican Rome'.[104]

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[100] Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 238.
[101] John Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in Neil Keeble and Nicholas McDowell (eds), *The Complete Works of John Milton, Vol. 6: Vernacular Regicide and Republican Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 162. See Smith's discussion of this and Milton's other responses to ancient tragedy, *Literature and Revolution*, 17–18.
[102] Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, 8–11; Hoxby, *What was Tragedy*, 243–245.
[103] Milton, *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, 162.
[104] Blair Worden, 'Milton and Marchamont Nedham,' in David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (eds), *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168.

Unlike Milton, Nedham denies the right of resistance, but in defending the Commonwealth also has recourse to Cicero and Seneca throughout the treatise. If the people 'close cordially in affection' towards the new regime, he argues, they will soon realise 'that there is no difference between king and tyrant and become as zealous as the ancient Romans were in defense of their freedom'.[105] Nedham concludes with a warning, also taken from *Hercules Furens*:

> Si aeterna semper odia mortales gerant,
> Nec caeptus unquam cedat ex animis furor,
> Sed Arma faelix teneat, infaelix paret;
> Nihil relinquent bella. Tum vastis ager
> Squallebit arvis, subdita tectis face
> Altus sepultas obruet gentes cinis.
> Pacem reduci velle, victori expedit,
> Victo necesse est.
>
> If mortals harbor eternal hatred forever, and rage once engendered never leaves their hearts, but the successful maintain arms and the unsuccessful prepare them—then war will leave nothing behind! The land will lie waste with its fields desolate, homes will be torched, and deep ash will overwhelm and bury the nations. To want peace restored is politic for the conqueror, and imperative for the conquered.[106]

Nedham co-opts Seneca for an explicitly republican argument that kings are tyrants by definition and uses his vision of violent chaos to make both a principled argument for the superiority of a free state and a pragmatic appeal for the need to submit to the victors and avert more bloodshed. The same Senecan images of eternal fury, a desolate landscape, and endless war echo throughout Simons' depiction of the psychology and effects of tyranny in both *Leo Armenus* and *Mercia*. In the mid-seventeenth century, the language of classical republicanism was rapidly transforming into a programme, and the ubiquitous Roman playwright was being commandeered for the profound reimagining of the English state.[107]

Mercia uses 'furor' differently to both royalists and republicans. At the opening the

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[105] Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated*, ed. Philip A. Knachel (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 127–128.
[106] Nedham, *Case of the Commonwealth*, 128; Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, in *Tragedies*, 76–77, ll. 362–369.
[107] The distinction is made in J. G. A. Pocock (ed.), 'Historical Introduction,' *The Political Works of James Harrington: Part One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 15.

Genius Furoris intones ‘Age, Furor, ultro totus in tuos patet/ Ulferus ignes’ (111–112) [Come Furor, Ulferus is wholly open to your fires]. Just before killing his sons, Ulferus exclaims: ‘Furor,/ Furor intus ardet’ (218) [Rage, rage burns within me]. Yet, at various points the play reconfigures this image to describe its redemptive opposite. After wavering in his resolve, one of the princes, Ruffinus, experiences a reconversion: ‘Quis ora feruor? Ossa quis subito calor/ Accendit?’ (155) [What’s this heat in my face? What warmth suddenly sets my bones afire?]. The chiasmus of ‘Quis ora […] ossa quis’, emphatic position of ‘accendit’ via enjambment, and visceral image of his heating bones render this a highly dramatic moment. It imagines religious conversion as a physical experience and provides the divine counterpart to the Genius’ hellish inspiration. Christian ‘fervor’ resists pagan ‘furor’, even as it parallels its imagery. This also prefigures the imagery surrounding the two princes’ climactic baptism. Chad announces ‘Delapsam aethere/ Agnosco flammam’ ‘I recognise that fire has come down from heaven’ (224–225). The first-person verb in emphatic position has a creed-like quality, yet its object is not a doctrine but ‘flammam’, an experience. Here Simons repurposes Dido’s description of her ardent love for Aeneas: ‘agnosco veteris vestigia flammae’ [‘I feel again a spark of that former flame’].[108] But he also echoes the symbolism of Pentecost, when the apostles receive flames on their heads and their evangelical mission. In both its structure and lexis, *Mercia* rewrites its classical inheritance. Just as the ferocious tyrant Ulferus is eventually converted, so too the play redeems the language of furor to describe the appropriate response to heretical rage, the inner fire of divine love. Seneca and Virgil’s pagan imagery is transformed to describe conversion to Christianity, a conversion which puts an end to persecution and redeems the tyrant Ulferus.

The student performers and their audience would have been intimately familiar with

[108] Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb 63 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), Book IV, l. 23.

this language. Chad's description of baptism as descending fire recalls the college's motto, 'Ignem veni mittere in terram', quoting Christ's words 'I came to cast fire on the earth: and what wil I, but that it be kindled? […] Thinke you that I came to giue peace on the earth? No, I tel you, but separation' (Luke 12:49–51). This Counter-Reformation tag was pervasive. It would later feature in Andrea Pozzo's trompe l'oeil ceiling for the nave of the Jesuit Church, Sant'Ignazio in Rome (Figure 6), and appeared in the altarpiece of the college chapel, the so-called 'Martyrs' Picture' (Figure 7).[109] Christ was seen to have predicted the divisions of post-Reformation Europe and to have sanctioned the militancy of the Counter-Reformation response. Here the language of the college stage closely parallels the rhetoric of the college's missionary enterprise. *Mercia* was a wholly appropriate choice of play for revival in these new circumstances. Providing a third approach to 'furor', neither royalist nor republican, it condemns tyranny and martial frenzy, and proposes the Counter Reformation as a solution to these contemporary ills.

Figure 6



[109] On the 'Martyrs' Picture', see Peter Davidson, 'Recusant Catholic Spaces in Early Modern England,' in Ronald Corthell et al (eds), *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, 23–27.

Figure 7



Remembering Robert Persons in 1648

Simons' most eloquent response to the tradition of Catholic resistance and its continuing vitality appears in a speech he delivered in 1648, which has been unknown to scholars till now. 'Oratio de Expeditione R. P. Personis in Angliam' commemorates the 1580 mission of Robert Persons, Jesuit polemicist and leader of the militant Catholic Reformation in England.[110] Simons narrates Persons' conversion at Oxford in the early 1570s and education in Rome, extols his virtue and learning, and describes in detail his voyage to Elizabethan England with Edmund Campion. Persons is depicted as a modern 'Hercules', the champion of the Christian res publica ('Xpianae reip. propugnatorem'), and the pioneer of English recusancy: 'Princeps ille deus ad erigendas Angliae ruinas informarat' (ff. 109r, 106r, 108v) [the leader God created to rebuild the ruins of England]. The oration concludes with an apostrophe directed, as a marginal note informs us, to contemporary missionaries: 'Ad sacerdotes, qui errant eodem die profecturi in Angliam quo habita est ista oratio' (f. 116r) [To the priests, who were setting out for England on the same day for whom this oration was given]. The only known manuscript witness survives in one of the late-seventeenth-century Catholic antiquarian Christopher Grene's compilations of the records and textual relics of post-Reformation Catholicism, which Liesbeth Corens has called a 'counter-archive'.[111] This autograph manuscript is signed by Simons but undated.[112] It was almost certainly delivered at the VEC, since this was the only institution Simons worked at from which priests went directly back to England. It can also with some confidence be dated to 18 April 1648 because this is the only date during Simons' tenure as rector of the VEC on which several priests set out together on the mission for England.[113] Crucially, it was also the anniversary of the day Robert Persons and Edmund Campion left

[110] AVCAU, Liber 1422, ff. 106r–118v.
[111] Corens, *Confessional Mobility*, 179.
[112] The hand and signature match Simons' signature on his 'responsa', the questionnaire filled out upon arrival at the VEC as a student, AVCAU, Scritture 24/17.
[113] Stephen White, John Anderton, and Thomas Middleton set out for England on 18 April 1648, see Kelly (ed.), *Liber Ruber*, nos. 792, 794, 799.

Rome for England in 1580.[114] Persons epitomises the late-sixteenth-century style of active Catholic resistance and incendiary polemic, which, as we have seen, several scholars believe had disappeared by the mid-seventeenth century. The discovery of Simons' speech reveals that in fact Persons continued to be celebrated and held up for imitation long after his death. It forces us to reconsider how Civil-War Catholics understood themselves, their community's past, and their nation's troubles. The baroque conceits and playful rhetoric used to advise the three departing priests shed new light on the relationship between the college's literary culture and missionary enterprise.

In accordance with prevalent Jesuit practice, Simons' principal model is Cicero, but the oration is also dense with allusions to Horace, Virgil, Livy, Lucan, Pythagoras, Democritus, Athenagoras, Herodotus, Homer and Plato, as well as more recent neo-Latin writers Justus Lipsius and Pierio Valeriano. Simons' repertoire of ancient texts are more than just aesthetic models; they inform his understanding of civic responsibility, courage, and persuasion, and underpin his advice to the students facing the immediate prospect of persecution. This erudite oration witnesses distinctively Catholic uses of the discourse of ancient heroism and classical republicanism.

Simons' oration heralds Persons as 'Imperator', the title given to Roman generals returning in triumph, and compares him to mythological heroes and ancient warriors. Playfully reflecting on his own metaphors, Simons both articulates a martial ethos and claims to reject it. After extensively comparing Persons to Hercules, Simons continues

> Parabatur demum expeditio, non qualis illa, versibus inclyta, quam ad praedandum vellus aureum, duce Iasone, suscepere Argonautae. Sed qualem, Imperatore Parsonio ad Xpi possessionem Mariae dotem repetendam Societas Iesu adornavit. Non classibus non armis, non militum clamore, ac tubarum sono munita; sed fide atque doctrina, sed fortitudine animi, sed pietate erga Deum instructa: non Persicis copiis, aut infinita hominum multitudine terribilis sed viris duntaxat duobus memorabilis (f. 109r).

[114] Gerard Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: A Scholarly Life* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 149.

> The expedition was prepared at last, not of that sort, famous in poetry, which the Argonauts undertook to rob the Golden Fleece with Jason the leader. But such as the Society of Jesus furnished with General Persons for restoring Mary's dowry to Christ. Fortified not with fleets, not with arms, not with shout of soldiers and sound of trumpets; but equipped with faith and doctrine, with strength of soul, with piety towards God. Not terrifying with Persian abundance, or with an infinite throng of men, but remarkable with only two men.

Accumulating antithetical clauses and anaphoric doublets 'non qualis' 'sed qualis', 'non […] sed', this carefully structured passage highlights the divergence between the ancient pagan and modern Catholic missions. The climactic 'viris duntaxat duobus', referring to the two missionaries, Persons and Campion, is almost bathetic, and forcibly demonstrates the contrast between these different kinds of hero. Paralleling concrete military provisions and abstract religious values suggests that post-Reformation missionary activity involves a new set of weapons. Yet despite rejecting the martial, Simons makes Persons' 'expeditio', an emphatically military word, more impressive by associating it with the pomp of war and the voyages of Jason and Hercules. The metonymies grow ever more specific from whole fleets to the soldiers' shouts vividly conjuring the atmosphere of battle. The rhetorical copia enacts the extravagant 'copiis' of the armies. This passage functions both as a dissimile and a praeteritio. Simons invokes these martial heroes not only to supersede them but to garner authority and grandeur. 'Imperator Parsonius' might be unlike Jason in most ways, but even introducing a possible parallel elevates him to a mythic status.

Whether the 1580 'expedition' was peaceful or aggressive was debated at the time and remains unresolved in historiography. Campion's 'brag' or 'Letter to the Privy Council' explains the mission's purpose and circulated widely after his arrival. He announces that by becoming a Jesuit he 'had taken upon me a special kind of warfare', that he came 'to crie alarme spiritual against foul vice and proud ignorance', and that he desires a 'combat' or disputation with the most learned Protestants. Yet he also insists that he 'never had mind, and am strictly forbidden by our Fathers that sent me, to deal in any respect with matter of State or Policy of

this realm'.[115] Before their departure from Rome, Persons and Campion had an audience with Pope Gregory XIII in which they discussed the 'complex issue of tyrannicide' and attempted (with little success) to gain clarity on the implementation of Pope Pius V's bull of excommunication against Elizabeth I, *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570). They especially wished to know if English Catholic subjects were still absolved from their obedience to the queen and whether they were permitted or even obliged to take up arms against her.[116] Thomas McCoog argues that whilst the mission may have been initially non-political, after the execution of Campion and implementation of severe recusancy laws, Persons 'abandoned his original approach of polite discussion and theological debate in favour of more political and military strategies'.[117] He was 'now willing to discuss more drastic proposals' for restoring Catholicism to England, even 'the overthrow of Elizabeth'.[118] Simons, writing with the benefit of hindsight, registers this ambivalence. His Persons is at once an innocent unarmed priest and a pugnacious Herculean warrior.

Simons' description of how closely the missionary Persons resembles an early modern soldier exemplifies the ambiguity of both this particular mission and the rhetoric of the Christian soldier in a period of bitter civil conflict. After hearing that news of his voyage has reached the court, Persons remains undeterred and in his renewed enthusiasm now assumes the appearance of a warrior:

> Classicum canit; arma corripit. Sclopettum cervici, ensem lateri accommodat. Veteranum militem dixisses Martis aestu, atque ardore victoriae nihil nisi bella, horrida bella anhelantem (f. 110r).
>
> He sounds the battle-cry; he takes up arms. He fits a musket to his neck and a sword to his side. You would have said that he was a veteran soldier striving for nothing but war, fearsome war, with the rage of Mars and the heat of victory.

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[115] Printed in A. C. Southern, *Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 1559–1582* (London: Sands & Co, 1950), 153–154.
[116] Thomas McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541–1588: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 134–135; Kilroy, *Edmund Campion*, 143–144.
[117] McCoog, *The Society of Jesus*, 156.
[118] McCoog, *The Society of Jesus*, 157.

Here Persons' spiritual weapons are replaced by a literal gun and sword. The enthusiastic call to arms and climactic Virgilian commonplace 'bella, horrida bella' destabilises the Christian-pagan peaceful-warlike dichotomy. The imagery of heat, rage and 'Martis aestu' recalls the tyrant Ulferus in *Mercia*. The figure of Persons the warrior is both an ironic disguise and genuinely threatening. When he arrives in England, 'Vix desilierat in littus, cum Elizabethae salutem apprecatus, strenue Sclopettum explodit' (f. 110r) [He had scarcely landed on the shore when, having prayed for the health of Elizabeth, he promptly fired his musket]. Other narratives of the 1580 mission refer to Persons' military disguise, but the violent greeting seems to be Simons' invention.[119] By comically juxtaposing Persons' prayer and firing weapon, Simons knowingly suggests the divergent interpretations of the mission and intimates the ambivalent mixture of loyalism and resistance in Catholic politics and culture.

When guards flock on hearing the explosion, Persons exerts himself to play the part of a soldier:

> [U]t fere milites assolent: Vultu minaci, inflammatis oculis; altero ad frontem sublato, altero ad mentum depresso supercilio; fluentibus buccis; totus, ut videbatur, ad severitatem compositus. Proiicit ampullas & sesquipedalia verba. Mox tanta de ratione castrensi, de usu bellorum, et more militari disseruit, ut exploratores simul stupore defixi, simul oratione deliniti, hominem sartum tectumque dimiserint (f. 110r–110v).
>
> As is wholly usual for soldiers, with threatening face, flaming eyes, one eyebrow raised to the forehead, and the other sunk down to the chin, and puffed out cheeks, he seemed constituted entirely for cruelty. He cast aside bombast and overly long words. Soon he discoursed so greatly about the order of the camp, about warcraft, and the conduct of a soldier, that the spies, at once fixed with amazement and captivated by the speech, sent the man forth safe and sound.

This hyperbolic caricature, with the intricate detail of squinted eyebrows and puffed out cheeks, exemplifies how soldiers could be altogether more terrifying and sinister than the rhetoric of

[119] McCoog, *The Society of Jesus*, 136; in a contemporary letter, printed later, Campion described the extravagance of Persons' disguise, 'tam picti, tam inani,' Henry More, *Historia Missionis Anglicanae Societatis Iesu* (Saint-Omer, 1660), 63.

the *miles christianus* implies. The quotation from Horace's *Ars Poetica* ('sesquipedalia verba') invokes the Roman poet's discussion of generic boundaries and literary decorum, which Persons both masters and flouts here by consummately performing as a solider and casting aside his priestly role.[120] Persons is literally mock-heroic, and the hyperbolic description is generically so. It aligns Persons with the trope of the *miles gloriosus* or vainglorious braggart. As Elizabeth Sandis has recently shown, this figure, drawn from the Roman comedy of Plautus, was highly popular in Latin drama at the English universities, where it was used to contrast scholars and soldiers, the realms of eloquence and action, ultimately presenting the former as a superior mode of political and civic life.[121] This character also appears repeatedly in plays written and performed at the exiled Catholic colleges. In both contexts, the comic figure is usually the subject of derision; as Sandis notes, 'Every claim any braggart soldier makes turns out to be nothing but words'.[122] In the oration, Simons adopts and inverts the trope to praise Persons' daring and rhetorical sprezzatura and to meditate on the contested nature of the mission – peaceful or martial, rhetorical or violent. The conceit echoes and parodies anti-Catholic tropes and accusations. Depicting Persons as both the *miles christianus* and the *miles gloriosus*, Simons confronts the ambivalence of what we might call the peaceful invasion of 1580 and emphasizes the distinctive qualities and ambiguities of Catholic resistance.

'Simulandi artem'

Simons' oration is not only about the fine line between war and prayer in the Counter-Reformation imagination; it also praises Persons for his malleable eloquence and ability to transform himself before different audiences. Tracing the various comments on eloquence and simulation throughout the speech allows us to better understand Simons' complex approach to rhetoric, theatre, and pretence. He claims that

[120] Horace, *Satires, Epistles, The Art of Poetry*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb 194 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 458–459.
[121] Sandis, *Early Modern Drama at the Universities*, 117–138.
[122] Sandis, *Early Modern Drama at the Universities*, 126.

> ut patriam inferorum imperio laceratam pristinae dignitati ac splendori restitueret, nullam simulandi artem […] fugiendam existimavit (f. 113r).
>
> in order to restore his homeland, mutilated by the power of hell, to its former dignity and splendour, he [Persons] esteemed that no art of pretending should be avoided.

The so-called 'Christian Grand Style' of neo-Latin preaching authorised the use of rhetoric to manipulate the emotions for moral ends: to move and to teach.[123] Yet, the phrase 'simulandi artem' connotes the invariably pejorative language of courtly, politic dissimulation. Simons' representation of Persons' rhetoric evokes not only the canons of decorum, but also the ancient Greek concept of *kairos*, which denotes both adapting to the times and choosing the opportune moment to speak and act.[124] Influential upon Machiavelli's notion of *occasione*, *kairos* 'carried connotations of moral flexibility, even moral relativism'.[125] Simons repeatedly uses potentially problematic language to describe Persons' shapeshifting abilities. When he participates in a series of disputations with English Protestants, the Jesuit

> suam naturam […] huc & illuc sic torquere, ut cum nobilibus graviter, cum sociis comiter, cum Pauperibus demisse versaretur (7v).
>
> Thus twisted his nature this way and that, so that he engaged gravely with nobility, courteously with allies, meekly with the poor.

This borrows directly from Cicero's description in *Pro Caelio* of how the notoriously corrupt Catiline dissimulated and adjusted his nature to influence people for his own evil ends.[126] Persons varies his 'nature' in order to evangelise across the social spectrum, but the way this adaptability is described unavoidably evokes fraudulent dissimulation. Later in the speech Simons emphasises that Persons vehemently opposed Church Papistry, the practice of outwardly conforming to the Established Church whilst holding Catholic beliefs. He relates

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[123] Deborah Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 8–9.
[124] Joanne Paul, 'The Use of *Kairos* in Renaissance Political Philosophy,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 67.1 (2014): 43–78.
[125] Paul, 'The Use of *Kairos*,' 44.
[126] 'huc et illuc torquere ac flectere, cum tristibus severe, cum remissis iucunde, cum senibus graviter,' Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, trans. R. Gardner, Loeb 447 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 420.

how a conformist Catholic defended the practice in a pamphlet,

> opusculo, integrum esse cuique defenderit, servire temporibus fidemque simulationis artificio tectam in haereticorum delubra, conciones, polluta sacra inferre (f. 115r).
>
> a little work, in which he alleged that it is blameless to be enslaved to the times and to bear faith concealed by the artifice of simulation into the shrines, gatherings, and defiled sanctuaries of heretics.

The phrase 'simulationis artificio' directly echoes Simons' praise for Persons' mastery of the 'simulandi artem'. In his plays, Simons frequently castigates such politic pretence. In *Mercia*, St. Chad demonizes the court as 'Gens foeta fuco, mille se fraudum modis/ Fingens, refingens, regis ut nutus monet' (114) [a brood teeming with dissimulation, shaping and reshaping itself with a thousand kinds of fraud as the royal nod dictates]. The villains, Morocchus and Sabatius, in *Leo Armenus* are both keen proponents of this culture of deceit.

How does Simons distinguish between virtuous and evil pretence? Comparing Persons to Ulysses, he claims

> huic est quod Poetarum Princeps Homerus, Ulyssem, quem informabat, omnibus virtutum notis insignem, ¨ανδρα¨πολυτροπον appellaverit (f. 112v).
>
> It is for this reason that Homer, the chief of poets, called Ulysses, whom he represented distinguished with all marks of the virtues, *andra polutropon*
> the man of many devices [literally, turnings].

Contemporaries were far from unanimous in identifying Ulysses' polytropic eloquence and ingenuity so positively. The plays staged at St. Omers in the 1650s refer to Ulysses incessantly; in every case he is invoked pejoratively to signify deceitfulness and cunning.[127] Even in *Mercia*, one of the princes accuses the wily pagan high priest of having 'cor Ulysses' (185) [the heart of Ulysses]. Yet Homer's hero could also represent the necessary adaptability and

[127] See for instance *Sanctus Eduardus* (1653), Magdalen College, Oxford, MS PR30/2/M1/1, ll. 525, 550; Francis Clarke, *Innocentia Purpurata seu Rosa Candida et Rubicunda*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, 3 October 2020, accessed 23 October 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/innocentia/, ll. 848, 1073, 1168; *Basilindus sive Ambitio Summum Gentis Humanae Malum*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, rev. 10 July 2008, accessed 23 October 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/basilindus/, ll. 158, 292–293, 326–327; *Fortunae Ludibrium sive Bellisarius*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, rev. 14 Jan. 2014, accessed 23 October 2022, https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/fortuna/, ll. 604–605.

kairotic agility of the effective preacher and disputant. In this Simons follows Erasmus. As Jessica Wolfe argues, Erasmus praises Odysseus' rhetorical ingenuity 'by associating him with the most accommodating of apostolic rhetoricians, Paul, a man, who according to Erasmus' *Paraphrase* on Acts 17:22 "knew how to become all things to all people, and how to accommodate his eloquence to the character of any listener"'.[128] Simons follows Erasmus' argument closely: not only does he emphasise Persons' ability to affect rich and poor, friends and enemies, but he goes on to cite the same adage, '*Polypi mentem obtine*' (f. 112v) [Adopt the outlook of the polyp], which Erasmus uses to depict Ulysses and St. Paul as exemplary (apostolic) orators.[129] That is, the pagan hero, the apostle, and the Elizabethan Jesuit all share the ability of the polyp or octopus to change colour depending on their surroundings. Simons emphasises Persons' shapeshifting abilities, which allow him both to preach effectively and to evade English Protestant authorities.

The art of simulation is also theatrical. For Simons, the adaptable missionary shares the same qualities as an actor. After praising Persons' virtue and ingenuity, Simons depicts him as a theatrical impresario:

> Parsonius […] nactus in Anglia Theatrum: actione, ac gestu pereleganti spectacula edebat, Daemonibus horribilia, admiranda hominibus Chara beatis mentibus atque illi ipsi rerum molitori Deo grata & ineunda (f. 113r).
>
> Persons obtained a theatre in England: he brought forth plays with polished movement and gesture, terrifying with demons, to the admiration of men, dear to blessed minds and welcome and acceptable to God himself, the founder of things.

There are two ways to interpret this. It can be taken literally and certainly the phrase 'nactus […] Theatrum' and details of demons, gestures, and noblemen seem to refer to an actual

[128] Jessica Wolfe, *Homer and the Question of Strife from Erasmus to Hobbes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 74. Quoting Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrase on Acts*, ed. John J. Bateman and trans. Robert D. Sider, Collected Works of Erasmus 50 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 108.
[129] Wolfe, *Homer and the Question of Strife*, 74–75. Citing Desiderius Erasmus, *Adages LI1 to IV100*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors and trans. Margaret Mann Phillips, Collected Works of Erasmus 31 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 133–135.

theatre. However, no corroborating evidence for this survives and it is surely unlikely that Persons would have occupied his time on the mission producing plays. Simons is more probably speaking metaphorically, imagining Persons' sermons and declamations in England as full-scale theatrical productions. Corby makes a similar comparison in *Certamen Triplex* to describe how the martyred missionaries survived and evangelized in England. Thomas Holland, executed in 1642, is described as 'in habitu formaque corporis variam in speciem effingendis mirus artifex' [wondrously skilled at disguising himself in his dress and appearance], and praised for his use of 'sanctae simulationis artificio' [the artifices of holy dissimulation].[130] Notably this is the same phrase Simons applies to Church Papistry. Corby and Duckett's martyrdom is their final performance at which, because they were allowed to wear their religious habits, they at last played themselves:

> [I]n apertum aliquando theatrum prodirent, Actum vitae extremum peracturi […] Prodierunt enim non iam alienae personae imitatores, sed actores suae.
>
> They set out into an open theatre, to perform the last act of their lives. For they came forth no longer the imitators of other characters but acting their own part.[131]

Here martyrdom is both the climax of a tragedy and the end of a performance, when the actors finally remove their masks.

These metaphors linking the exigencies of missionary life, the techniques of effective preaching, and theatrical performance provide a new way of understanding English Jesuit drama. Performing as tyrants, martyrs, heretics, or soldiers in these plays was morally beneficial not only because of the didactic content and epideixis of the plots. It also provided the students with a set of rhetorical techniques that could be redeployed in the theatre of England. The actors learnt to produce the effect of verisimilitude, of being 'all things to all men', which is indispensable to the apostolic preacher. On the college stage, students practised

[130] Corby, *Certamen Triplex*, 10–11. Adapted from the translation in *The Threefold Conflict*, 7.
[131] Corby, *Certamen Triplex*, 81–82. Adapted from the translation in *The Threefold Conflict*, 51–52.

the arts of transforming both their appearance and their audience's hearts.

Roman (Catholic) virtue

Persons' performance of ancient heroism reaches a climax at the end of Simons' oration. In an astonishing prosopopoeia, Persons is imagined speaking the words of Cato from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, or *De Bello Civili*, the post-Virgilian epic describing the civil wars between Julius Caesar and Pompey. This baroque ventriloquism is worth quoting in full:

> Ite fortunato sydere; ite caelo annuete, state in Parsoniis vestigiis, decertate pro Ecclesiae nomine; Pro Xpi possessione pro haereditate Mariae. Ite vocat Imperator Personius
>
> O quibus una salus placuit, mea castra sequutis
> Indomita cervice mori, componite mentes
> Ad magnum virtutis opus, verosque labores.
>
> Perarduum est, fateor; pericula multa, non nego. dimicationes assidua verissime dictum: sed neque illud minus vere.
>
> Serpens, sitis, ardor, arenae
> Dulcia virtuti (ff. 116r–116v).
>
> Go under an auspicious star, go with heaven's assent, follow the footsteps of Persons, fight in the name of the Church, for the property of Christ, for the dowry of Mary. Go General Persons calls: *O you who have chosen this one good, following my army to the death with necks unsubdued, compose your minds to a great feat of bravery and true hardships.* It is very difficult, I confess. Many dangers, I do not deny. Constant struggles, most truly spoken. But that not less truly: *Serpent, thirst, heat, desert are sweet to the brave man*.

In the lines taken from Lucan (italicised in my translation), the paradigmatic stoic warrior Cato the younger is urging on his army after the death of Pompey, as they prepare to cross the Libyan desert, oppose Caesar, and defend the senate.[132] In this extraordinary moment of literary appropriation, the perils of Protestant England become the dangers of the African desert. Nigel Smith describes this 'moving and horrifying' episode of the *Pharsalia* which 'makes final attrition take on cathartic proportions as the republic's citizen-soldiers disappear in a plague of snakes and corrosive desert winds'.[133] Simons' Lucanic imitation conforms to elements of Jesuit self-representation that we have seen so far but takes them to a new extreme. The entire

[132] Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*, trans. J. D. Duff, Loeb 220 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 532–535, Book IX, ll. 378–381, 402–403.
[133] Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 206.

oration develops the metaphor of the *miles christianus* into an extravagant baroque artifice that blurs the boundary between terrifying soldier and humble priest, appearances and realities.

There are several ways of interpreting Simons' use of Lucan. He may have been inspired by Persons' *A Treatise Tending to Mitigation* (1607), which begins with a quotation of the first lines of the *Pharsalia*:

> Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos
> Iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
> In sua victrici conversum viscera dextra.
>
> Of war I sing, war worse than civil, waged over the plains of Emathia, and of legality conferred on crime; I tell how an imperial people turned their victorious right hands against their own vitals.[134]

Written in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, Persons' polemic defended the papal deposing power and the practice of equivocation against the condemnation of one of James I's chaplains, Thomas Morton.[135] Persons finds in the opening of Lucan's epic an ambiguous analogy for post-Reformation England:

> [I]f heere we change but Thessalian fieldes into English land, and the Poets singing, into our weeping and wailing, all the rest agreeth most aptly, if our diuision be not more rufull and lamentable then that of the Romanes. For first our wars may truly be said to be plus quam ciuilia, more then ciuill, in that they are not only internall, but domesticall also, in such sorte, as no one Prouince, no one towne, no one village, no one howse or family is lightly to be found, where some parte or other of this warre and dissention vpon difference of Religion taketh not some holde.[136]

Decades later Persons' topical reading of Lucan and characterisation of the English Reformation as a civil war proved remarkably prescient. England's 'differences of Religion' had flared up into violent conflict. Simons' allusion thus implies both the contemporary

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[134] Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*, Book 1, ll. 1–3.
[135] See Victor Houliston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic, 1580–1610* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), 168–169.
[136] Robert Persons, *A Treatise Tending to Mitigation Towardes Catholicke-Subiectes in England* (Saint-Omer, 1607), 2. The comparison may have been suggested to Persons by the popular poem 'Upon a Conference in Religion', written by the serial convert and sometime-colleague of Persons, William Alabaster, since it quotes Lucan's opening to describe religious conflict between two brothers, William Alabaster, *Unpublished Works by William Alabaster (1568–1640)*, ed. Dana F. Sutton (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1997), 12–13, 84.

Catholic claim that the civil wars were the bloody outcome of the English Reformation, and an older idea that, for persecuted Catholics, England had been at war with itself since at least the accession of Elizabeth. Yet there is something not quite right about Persons' analogy. Throughout the *Treatise*, he emphasises the sufferings of innocent English Catholics and insists that they are not traitors. By contrast, the metaphor of a civil war suggests a struggle between two equal and opposite parties. Threatening while lamenting, Persons' comparison encapsulates the ambiguity of resistance and submission, opposition and loyalism, which Simons amplifies in his mock-heroic oration.

The *Pharsalia* also had a broader and more urgent significance. David Norbrook argues that Lucan was 'the central poet of the republican imagination'.[137] Norbrook traced a republican tradition, beginning with Thomas May's 1627 translation of the *Pharsalia* into English through to the creation of the English Republic in 1649 and beyond. His theory has received the same critiques as the notion of classical republicanism.[138] Edward Paleit argues that, although Lucan was 'often invoked by writers opposed to regal absolutism', many writers and readers treat the *Pharsalia* 'not as a work of political theory […] but as a poetically charged *narrative* of events and change' with which 'to give structure and expression' to their own 'political experience'.[139] Simons' Lucanic peroration exemplifies the phenomenon Paleit describes; it sets up a consciously outlandish parallel between the suffering of Cato's troops, struggling through Libya, and the difficulties facing English Catholic priests returning to England. However, the anti-tyrannical valence of Lucan is not irrelevant to Simons' oration. He uses the Senecan language of 'furor' to demonise Elizabeth I. When she learns that the two Jesuits, 'Patriae proditores' [traitors to the homeland], are approaching London, 'Fremere illico

[137] Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 24.
[138] Blair Worden, 'Review of *Writing the English Republic*,' *Times Literary Supplement* 5000 (29 January 1999): 5; Worden, 'Liberty for Export: "Republicanism" in England, 1500–1800,' 14–15.
[139] Edward Paleit, *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan's Bellum Ciuile, ca.1580–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19, 21.

regina; percelli proceres; aula universa furore, stomachoque debacchari' (f. 108v) [the queen roars at once, the nobles are terrified, the entire palace falls into a frenzy of rage and vexation]. The tyrant Elizabeth's great enemy, Persons, is compared not only to Cato, but also to several other explicitly republican heroes: Codrus, the last king of Athens, who following a prophecy from the oracle at Delphi killed himself to secure the safety of the city; Solon, whose legal reforms laid the foundation for Athenian democracy; and Lucius Junius Brutus, who overthrew Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome and, as Simons puts it, liberated the city from kingly tyranny ('regio dominatu liberaret') (f. 113r). Each classical figure is invoked ostensibly because they used pretence and disguise for the good of the homeland, but their notoriety as the engineers of ancient republics is unmistakeable. With Simons' Pharsalian conclusion, they form a republican leitmotif throughout the oration.

Persons was not a republican, but among the polemical strategies he adopted across his writings was a thoroughgoing defence of popular sovereignty and elective kingship in the influential succession tract *A Conference about the Next Succession* (1594/5). There Persons argued against James I's claim to the throne and subtly furthered the Spanish Infanta's by demonstrating that throughout history succession was not always, and often should not be, determined by heredity. As Paulina Kewes has argued, *A Conference* 'could be seen as an apology for kingless rule […] the idea that monarchy might be abandoned in favour of acephalous rule had never been voiced so blithely in English'.[140] Kewes has traced in detail the major influence that Persons' *Conference* had on mid-seventeenth-century radicals, who co-opted the Elizabethan text to defend their opposition to Charles I and ultimately the regicide.[141] Two months before Simons delivered his oration to the college students in April 1648, *A*

[140] Paulina Kewes, 'Translations of State: Ancient Rome and Late Elizabethan Political Thought,' *HLQ* 83.3 (2020): 481.
[141] Paulina Kewes, '"The Idol of State Innovators and Republicans": Robert Persons's *A Conference About the Next Succession* (1594/5) in Stuart England,' in Kewes and Andrew McRae (eds), *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 149–185.

Conference was reprinted in London under a new title and presented as a defence of parliament's action against Charles I and 'a theoretical justification of resistance predicated on the contractual dimension of kingship'.[142] The irony of this adaptation of a Jesuit text to a largely anti-Catholic cause was not lost on contemporaries; Presbyterians capitalised on their Independent opponents' use of a traitorous Jesuit's book.[143] Persons' theory of resistance was being co-opted and redeployed to further a political project wildly different to his own ambitions. In this context, Simons' speech may be an attempt to reclaim and reinterpret Persons and his purported republicanism. Simons restores his legacy for his missionary Catholic descendants and asserts that the true defenders of liberty are not English rebels against monarchy but Catholic opponents of the tyranny of heresy. In their principled opposition to the English Protestant state and their experience of the hardships of campaigning for genuine liberty, Simons implies, Catholic missionaries are the true representatives of neo-Roman virtue.

Lucan's epic also allows Simons to articulate a less triumphalist, though no less significant, aspect of English Catholic self-representation. David Quint argued that Lucan is the origin of an anti-Virgilian tradition of 'epics of the defeated'.[144] Simons' audience would have been well aware that Cato's campaign failed, Julius Caesar triumphed, and the Roman Empire came into being. Just as Cato urges on his men to fight to the death, Simons refers to the three departing priests' 'hoc unum […] iter' (f. 116v), single or one-way journey, implying that it would likely end in death. Reassessing Lucan's seventeenth-century reception, Emma Buckley and Edward Paleit emphasise the importance of defeat, but query the poem's association with a revolutionary republicanism. They claim that Lucan's poem was more often applied to English political events through 'an essentially lapsarian master-narrative which tells

[142] Kewes, 'The Idol of State Innovators and Republicans,' 159; *Severall Speeches Delivered at a Conference Concerning the Power of Parliament, to Proceed Against their King for Misgovernment* (London, 1648).
[143] Kewes, 'The Idol of State Innovators and Republicans,' 163.
[144] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 8.

of the collapse of an idealized political order of aristocratic virtue and liberty […] rather than any kind of revolutionary commitment to overturn existing traditions'.[145] This ambivalent political perspective, combining resistance with a conservative nostalgia, can also describe a dominant form of English Catholic political self-representation. Catholics frequently presented their desire for the wholesale conversion of England not as a radical proposal but as a restoration of order and ancient hierarchy, and their opposition to the Protestant monarch as an expression of patriotism. Lucan's epic of defeat provides a perfect means for voicing resistance to the tyrannical Protestant state, nostalgia for a lost Catholic England, and doomed optimism for what these stoic martyrs to religious liberty might achieve through their capture and execution.

Simons' speech demonstrates that the tradition of Catholic resistance did not disappear in the 1640s, and that its most vociferous advocate Robert Persons continued to be revered and emulated. In stark contrast to the Catholic royalist rhetoric emphasised by Susannah Monta and Michael Questier, Simons' oration imagines English Catholics as heroic warriors struggling against tyranny and heresy. The oration provides a new perspective on the potential meanings and applications of neo-Roman virtue in mid-seventeenth-century literature and demonstrates how English Catholic literary culture often uses widely familiar sources and models – Seneca, Cicero, and Lucan – to wholly unique ends.

Resistance after the regicide

In 1649, republican language was rapidly turning into a programme. As we have seen, Milton and Nedham invoked Seneca when defending the execution of Charles I and establishment of the Commonwealth. The prevailing metaphors of the VEC stage were acquiring a new set of connotations, and the writings of the Elizabethan Jesuit Robert Persons were being pressed into

[145] Emma Buckley and Edward Paleit (eds), 'Introduction,' in Thomas May, *Lucan's Pharsalia (1627)* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2020), 26.

the service of radical political reform. At some point between the 1645 production and the publication of his *Tragoediae Quinque* in 1656, Simons revised *Leo Armenus* in ways that complicate its representation of divinely mandated tyrannicide. He expands various speeches, removes the second entry of the Patriarch Tarasius, and substantially alters the characterisation of Leo's killer, Michael Balbus. The play's moral vision becomes blurred and the earlier version's representation of a persecutor punished by God is hedged with uncertainties and quandaries. These revisions illustrate how the regicide forced Catholic writers to reassess longstanding metaphors and tropes of resistance.

Simons' revisions to the play respond to the increasingly problematic connotations of martial imagery that I have traced throughout this chapter. In the 1656 text, the *miles gloriosus* Morocchus is given a new speech in which he instructs Leo's younger son, Basilius, on how to be a modern warrior:

> Nec tu tonantem, spectra nec superum time.
> Religio Martem nescit. Ignavos timor
> Etiam deorum gignit, et bellis procul
> Educat inertes. Miles haud aliud colat
> Quam tela numen.[146]
>
> Do not fear the thunderer, nor those idle visions of the gods above. Religion has nothing to do with Mars. Fear, even fear of the gods, makes men cowards and keeps them useless and far from battle. A soldier worships no God but his weapons.

The terrifying Saracen is heard spitting through harsh 't' and 's' alliteration. As the juxtaposition of 'tela numen' [weapons God] makes clear, Morocchus defines martial prowess as inimical to religious piety. He lists the arts of the expert soldier: perjury, blasphemy, plunder, arson, and rape.[147] Morocchus' guide to modern warfare vividly conjures the armies that had ravaged 1640s England, commandeering property and destroying villages, crops, and manors. It registers how valorising fictions and codes of honour were being flouted and damaged amid

[146] Joseph Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 485.
[147] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 485–486.

bitter conflict. Basilius asks his teacher, 'Istamne pressit Hector aut Aiax viam?/ Hoc iter Achilli?' [Did Hector or Ajax walk this path? Was this Achilles' way?], which Morocchus dismisses as irrelevant and 'prisca nimis' [too old-fashioned]: 'Nunc alia virtus' [Now virtue is something else].[148] The contemporary soldier is self-serving and amoral. Taking aim at the fearsome New Model Army, Simons implies that recent warfare has extinguished the memory of these heroes and compromised the language of the Christian 'pugil'. For Simons, the disorder and violence of the civil wars and Revolution are a consequence not of reading too much Latin and Greek, as Hobbes claimed, but of forgetting and travestying the more illustrious virtue of the ancient past.[149]

Simons' revisions to *Leo Armenus* are mostly aimed at differentiating his use of anti-tyrannical rhetoric from that of regicides and republicans. In the opening set-piece debate, he adds to the courtier Papias' defence of truth a discussion of limited monarchy and godly kingship. God, he claims, 'Reges amat,/ Qui iura Regum, iura populorum suis/ Discrevit oris' [who has marked out the rights of princes and the rights of the people with their own limits, loves kings].[150] The balanced syntax 'iura Regum, iura populorum' enacts Papias' ideal vision of a harmonious constitutional monarchy. He explains that a good king demands deference ('obsequium'), not servitude ('non servitutem'), and rules for his subjects' benefit.[151] Papias strays far from his role in the debate, but tempers the anti-tyrannical rhetoric by making a clear distinction between the institution of monarchy and particular evil kings.

The revised text renders Michael Balbus a far more ambivalent character. After learning that Leo has named Sabatius his successor, Balbus delivers a soliloquy in which he first decides to assassinate the emperor. In both texts he presents himself as the conduit of divine vengeance: 'Me, me nefasti vindicem capitis Deus/ Designat ultro' [God chose me, me as the avenger of

[148] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 486.
[149] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 143.
[150] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 443.
[151] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 443.

this impious man].[152] In both versions of the speech, Balbus addresses the night as 'furiarum sartrix' [mother of the furies]. Yet, whereas in the earlier text, the furies are in 'caelo' [heaven or the skies], in 1656 they are relocated to hell, 'Averni'.[153] The revised speech directly confronts the moral ambiguity of political murder. Balbus debates with himself:

> Molior vastum scelus,
> Regem peremptum. Quid tamen scelus voco
> Insigne facinus? Meditor immensum decus,
> Caesum tyrannum, dirutum populis iugum.[154]
>
> I am undertaking a huge crime, the murder of a king. Yet why am I calling this noble deed a crime? I am planning a great glory, the assassination of a tyrant, the removal of his yoke from the people.

Simons introduces the defining moral debate of 1649 that had intervened between the composition of this play and its printing. Balbus exposes and then seeks to smooth over his doubts through paradiastole, renaming and recategorizing the deed. His speech offers alternative interpretations of regicide as an unforgiveable crime or a glorious act of liberation. By foregrounding Balbus' rhetorical self-fashioning here, Simons aligns him with Marlovian avengers who manipulate providential rhetoric and appropriate a divine mandate for their own self-interest.[155] The 1656 text also repeatedly jettisons those moments where Balbus is most convincing about the virtue of his actions and the goodness of his motivations. During his trial, we no longer hear his dramatic apostrophe to Leo: 'Populi Tyranne, semper ingratus tuis/ Semper alienis saevus invisus Deo' [O tyrant of the people, ever ungrateful to your own, ever savage to others, hateful to God].[156] Balbus' justification of his plan to stab Leo during the masque is also cut significantly short:

> At mucro necem
> Si certus indat, vota, quo misi, volant,
> Foedum tyranni quatimus, excutimus iugum.[157]

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[152] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque,* 465; Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 79v.
[153] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque,* 464; Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 79r.
[154] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque,* 464.
[155] Parente makes a similar observation, 'Andreas Gryphius and Jesuit Theater,' 533.
[156] Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 91v.
[157] Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 80v.

> But if my trusty dagger deals death, then my prayers are flown where I sent them, we shatter and shake off the shameful yoke of the tyrant.

In the manuscript texts, the third line, with its highly patterned syntax and emphatically tautologous verbs, extols Balbus' patriotic pursuit of liberty. The more ambiguous post-regicide version of the play deletes this self-justification and ends Balbus' speech with 'volant', leaving the reader to decide the true destination to which his prayers and aspirations fly.[158] If the 1620s tragedy, revived in 1645, dramatized a clear conflict between a heretical tyrant and a hero of the people, after the regicide Simons subtly but significantly complicated this binary characterisation.

The 1656 text withdraws important components of the play's providential architecture. As we saw, in the manuscripts Tarasius appears again in the final act, along with the ghosts of the six martyred iconodules, and warns Leo that punishment is at hand: 'Sanguis reposcit sanguinem' [blood demands blood].[159] The phantom patriarch thus frames the tragedy, making clear that Leo's opening crime inevitably leads to his death; tyrannicide is providentially ordained and directed. The emperor admits in his final soliloquy that he is haunted through the world by a band of murdered Christians 'Ille Christiadum chorus/ Latum per orbem caesus' [That massacred chorus throughout the Christian world].[160] By contrast, in the later text, neither Tarasius nor these vengeful spectres reappear and Leo has a new speech, in which he conforms to a Senecan stereotype of the paranoid ruler, fearing usurpers, rebels, and the sounds of the screech owl and the rattling wind.[161] The supernatural apparition is thus replaced with a more disenchanted emphasis on the fictions of a disturbed mind. Instead of Tarasius' echoic warning that blood demands blood, Balbus' son, Theophilus – the only unequivocally good living character in the play – talks in his sleep and tells Leo to beware 'Quo rugiet atrox ore festivo

[158] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 467.
[159] Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 95r.
[160] Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 94v.
[161] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 498–500.

leo' [Where the fierce lion will roar with a festive mouth], a cryptic allusion to the emperor celebrating Christmas in the cathedral.[162] It is ambiguous whether the pious Theophilus is helping Leo or admonishing him. The earlier text's spectacle of divine intervention is removed; now, the focus is less on God directing events than on frail human characters navigating a dark and complex world alone.

Critics have disagreed about Michael Balbus. Shell describes him as 'the iconodule hero', William McCabe calls him 'the murderer' motivated by 'conspiracy for the throne', and James Parente sees him as 'merely an unwitting tool of God while he himself is pursuing his own questionable goals'.[163] Parente quotes Balbus' invocation to the furies of Avernus in the printed text as evidence that he is not 'praiseworthy' and argues that Simons is writing 'against the horrors of revolution'.[164] He further claims that Simons' 'tragedies on the follies of revolution' reflect a shift in 1620s Jesuit thinking away from 'the militancy of William Allen and Robert Persons' towards a 'newly formulated conservatism'.[165] Not only did Persons evidently remain an inspiring archetype, but Simons' overlooked revisions reveal that *Leo Armenus* is a dynamic witness to the uncertainties and changes of mind provoked by the events of 1649. The critical disagreement over Balbus and the play's moral vision emerges from an ambiguity in the printed text. After 1649, Simons tempered his providential fable and sought to soften his implicit defence of regicide, but the play's scathing critique of Leo and many instances of anti-tyrannical rhetoric do remain. The focus shifts from an assertion that persecutors will be punished to a murkier reflection on providence and the complex relationship between freedom and necessity, and between frail human agents and divine justice.[166] Was it

[162] Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 500.
[163] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 208; McCabe, *Introduction*, 155–156; Parente, 'Tyranny and Revolution,' 319–320.
[164] Parente, 'Tyranny and Revolution,' 318–319. See also Parente, 'Andreas Gryphius and Jesuit Theater,' 532–537.
[165] Parente, 'Tyranny and Revolution,' 323.
[166] For the broader significance of the relationship between freedom and grace in Jesuit tragedy, see Hoxby, *What was Tragedy?*, 251; and McCabe, *Introduction*, 144–156.

up to God alone to depose a tyrant or did the people have a responsibility to ensure godly rule? Could a murderer, motivated by personal gain, be an inadvertent instrument of a divine plan? While the first version of the play bears the subtitle 'Ludit in Humanis Diuina Potentia Rebus: Ultio Divina' [Divine Power Plays with Human Affairs: Divine Revenge], the printed text has the notably passive 'Impietas Punita' [Impiety Punished].[167] Simons' alterations to the text are preoccupied by problems of agency, responsibility, and the presence of God in the world.

Another English Catholic Latin poet, William Rowland, articulated an even more drastic response to the chilling uncertainties produced by the execution of Charles I:

> Postque cruentatas *Carolino sanguine* dextras
> Carnificum, oppressam Themidem, calcataque sceptra:
> Coepimus ambiguis agitari pectora scrupis
> An foret orbe Deus, cui sint mortalia curae,
> Fortuitíne hominum regerent commercia casus?[168]
>
> After the hands of the murderers were stained with Charles' blood, justice was oppressed, and royal authority trampled upon, we began to strike our breasts with wavering doubts, whether a God, concerned with mortals, was present in the world, or if random chance ruled the affairs of men?

These carefully structured lines, accumulating a tricolon of horrors before unleashing the despairing question, give form to a sense of chaos. The hesitant subjunctive verbs, 'foret' and 'sint', enact the poet's reluctance to say the unspeakable and articulate a deist or even atheist vision of the world. Neither this poem nor the 1656 *Leo Armenus* are straightforwardly royalist lament or polemic. Instead, they respond to the regicide with a series of anxious questions about where God was when England tore itself apart and killed its king.

The 1656 *Leo Armenus* not only reflects widespread uncertainties provoked by the regicide, but also a distinctively Catholic ambivalence over the execution of the Protestant monarch. It was at once an unspeakable crime committed by heretical rebels and the

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[167] Stonyhurst, MS B. VI. 25, f. 68r. Simons, *Tragoediae Quinque*, 437.
[168] William Rowland, 'In Laudem Operis et Auctoris,' in Thomas Bayly, *Traitté contre la Rebellion des Subiects envers leurs Roys* (Paris, 1653), ãã2r, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 8-J-405. Rowland and Bayly, Laudian clergy who converted to Catholicism in the 1640s, will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

providential outcome of the Protestant Reformation. The shifting interpretations of *Leo Armenus* across the late 1620s, 1645 and 1656 demonstrate the mixture of continuity and change in English Catholic literary culture. Resistance did not disappear completely, nor did Catholics and royalists become indistinguishable. Instead, the major tropes and forms which they had long used to voice opposition to English Protestantism were ironized or redirected, redeployed and reimagined.

This chapter has offered a new account of the nature and purposes of English Jesuit drama. More than a pedagogical exercise or rehearsal for martyrdom, this dramatic culture variously presented entertainment, lament, and transnational political commentary, adapted to shifting circumstances. The plays performed at the VEC in the 1640s enjoyed a large audience and responded in inventive and original ways to the civil wars in England and papal politics at Rome. Simons' tragedies and oration adopt common models (Seneca, Cicero, and Lucan) and discourses (martial virtue and tyranny) to articulate a distinctive English Catholic vision of politics. The transformation of contemporary literary and political discourse and the new connotations of the languages of tyranny and militarism forced the VEC to reassess the metaphors they had long used to represent themselves and their mission.

Simons reflects playfully on the porousness between resistance and loyalism and between military and spiritual combat in the Counter-Reformation imagination. He also consistently adopts and reinterprets the terms of anti-Catholic polemic. Accusations of treason, aggression, deceitfulness, and shape-shifting disguise are refigured to present the ideal Catholic missionary as a consummate performer, evading tyrants and winning hearts and souls. Simons thinks carefully about different kinds of pretence and impersonation across his writings; in doing so, he demonstrates how English Catholic identity is itself a rhetorical performance, directed by particular polemical and evangelical situations.

Chapter Three

Jesuit tragicomedy after the regicide

After the execution of Charles I and abolition of the monarchy, defeated royalists found a mode of political escapism and hopeful fantasy in tragicomedy. Old and new tragicomedies circulated widely in print and manuscript and were sometimes performed, either surreptitiously in England or among royalist communities in exile.[1] English Catholics were not immune to the consolations of the genre. In the 1650s, the English College at Saint-Omer in the Spanish Netherlands staged several Latin plays narrating medieval English history as tragicomedy. While the previous chapter examined the languages of resistance and tyranny in VEC productions of the 1640s, this chapter asks how post-regicide Jesuit plays adapted the tropes and assumptions of vernacular royalist drama and poetry. It argues that analysing these Roman Catholic tragicomedies forces us to revise our understanding of this major mid-century genre and provides a new insight into the nature and limits of Catholic royalism.

Founded in 1593, St. Omers was a school for the sons of English Catholics and educated younger students than the VEC.[2] Most surviving English Jesuit plays were first written and performed at St. Omers.[3] Composed by the schoolmasters, sometimes with the help of pupils, these texts are best understood as articulating a communal identity, rather than a single authorial voice. They emerge from an institutional pedagogical and religious culture, taking the practices of the schoolroom and the chapel into a public forum. As at the VEC, plays were performed to celebrate carnival and the end of the year or to entertain important patrons and visitors.[4] However, they also had a life on the page and mostly survive among manuscript miscellanies of plays, poems, and speeches, predominantly in Latin but with some English and

[1] Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 194. Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 337–367.
[2] McCabe, *Introduction*, 71. See also Hubert Chadwick, St. *Omers to Stonyhurst: A History of Two Centuries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1962).
[3] Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama,' 35.
[4] McCabe, *Introduction*, 37–46.

Italian texts.[5] Some of these manuscripts circulated among readers beyond the college walls.[6] St. Omers drama is in large part an expression of transnational Jesuit theatrical traditions, but this literary and ideological community also borrowed from, and in turn influenced, English vernacular models and traditions. As I discuss below, St. Omers playwrights adapted elements from Shakespeare's plays, and one college manuscript miscellany includes a previously unknown copy of Edmund Waller's encomium to Oliver Cromwell, *A Panegyrick to my Lord Protector*.

Politically-charged tragicomedies became highly popular in the mid-seventeenth century. In 1647, Richard Fanshawe published his translation of one influential model for the genre, Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* (1590). Fanshawe's dedication to the heir to the throne, Charles Prince of Wales, explains that this 'image of *a gasping State*' can be read as 'a *Lantskip* of these Kingdoms, (your *Royall Patrimony*) as well in the former flourishing, as the present distractions thereof'.[7] In the final act, the play's fictional kingdom is saved from disaster and restored to peace, and Fanshawe thus hopes that Britain might be 'yet speedily made a perfect *parallel* throughout'.[8] In the same year, the folio edition of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's plays, including their Guarini-influenced tragicomedies, was published by the bookseller and royalist taste-maker Humphrey Moseley, and one copy eventually found its way to St. Omers.[9] Fletcher's *A King and No King* (c.1611) became especially popular; an illegally attempted performance was broken up by London sheriffs in 1647 and a more successful one was staged at the court of Mary Stuart, Princess of Orange at the Hague in

[5] For instance, Bodleian, Rawl. poet. 215, and Stonyhurst, MS B. VII. 23. Vol. 1.
[6] One manuscript of poems and plays, written by students and masters of the college, came into the possession, probably in the late seventeenth century, of a Charles Bridges, who does not seem to have attended St. Omers himself, but added penmanship exercises, scribbled notes, and an unflattering cartoon of 'auld Racsher Going to worke' to the endpapers, Bodleian, Rawl. poet. 215, ff. 121r, 125r–127r. Another came into the hands of an 'Elizabeth Gerard,' Harvard, MS Lat. 32, f. iiir.
[7] Richard Fanshawe, *Il Pastor Fido: The Faithfull Shepherd* (London, 1647), A4r–A4v. See Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 197.
[8] Fanshawe, *Il Pastor Fido*, A4v.
[9] Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1647). The unmarked copy now survives at Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, Shelfmark: 2229.

1654.[10] The vogue for tragicomedy has received substantial attention. Lois Potter, Dale Randall, and Susan Wiseman all argue that the genre was predominantly royalist and that, by narrating the return of kings, peace, and normative hierarchies, tragicomedies functioned as political 'fantasy' and 'wish-fulfilment' amid the apparent hopelessness of the interregnum.[11] As Potter puts it, 'the very contrivance of tragicomedy, the complex unravellings of its dénouement, and its emphasis on the mysteriousness of the ways in which God moves, lent themselves to the expression of both the hopes and uncertainties of the royalists'.[12] More recent scholarship has largely reiterated this argument whilst focusing on how tragicomedy was used to articulate political-theological ideas of sovereignty, particularly surrounding the 'King's Two Bodies', or of the quasi-divine power of the royal pardon.[13] Many sacred dramas and martyr plays of the early modern period could be characterised as tragicomic since, as Bruna Filippi notes, the death of the hero becomes 'a sort of *happy ending*' via 'the providential reading of history that transforms momentary defeats into glorious sacrifices'.[14] At St. Omers, these two forms collide.

The plays performed at St. Omers in the 1650s mimic contemporary royalist tragicomedy but project a different set of hopes for the future and reflections on the past. Whereas much criticism has focused on the function of topical similes and parallels in mid-century tragicomedies, I show how these plays use dis-similes and opposites in creative and

[10] Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, 3–4; Zachary Lesser, 'Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher,' *ELH* 69.4 (2002): 947.
[11] Lois Potter, '"True Tragicomedies" of the Civil War and Commonwealth,' in Nancy Maguire (ed.), *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics* (New York: AMS Press, 1987), 210–211; Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 367; Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 190. See also Christopher Orchard, '"They Always Speak Things as They Would Have Them": Aspirational Royalist Politics in Henry Killigrew's *Pallantus and Eudora* (1653),' in Mark Houlahan and Aidan Norrie (eds), *New Directions in Early Modern English Drama: Edges, Spaces, Intersections* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2020), 237–257.
[12] Potter, '"True Tragicomedies,"' 204.
[13] James Loxley, 'Dramatis Personae: Royalism, Theatre, and the Political Ontology of the Person in post-Regicide Writing,' in Jason McElligott and David Smith (eds), *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 149–170; Bernadette Meyler, *Theaters of Pardoning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), 175–195.
[14] Bruna Filippi, 'The Orator's Performance: Gesture, Word, and Image in Theatre at the Collegio Romano,' in John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy (eds), *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 520.

provocative ways. Criticism of tragicomedy has also tended to define 'royalism' in secular and Anglocentric terms; the distinctive royalism of the St. Omers community is shaped by both their religious commitments and alternative understanding of English identity and authority. These Jesuit tragicomedies articulate a highly qualified and conditional form of royalism.

This chapter examines three plays written at St. Omers in the 1650s, which dramatize the lives of King Edward the Confessor (1003–1066), King Henry VI (1421–1471), and Thomas More (1478–1535). Whereas English vernacular tragicomedies are invariably set in fictional pastoral landscapes or interchangeable Mediterranean kingdoms, these plays depict a more familiar English world and combine tragicomic structure with the conventions of the history play.[15] Despite concentrating on England, they project a cosmopolitan conception of nationhood, grounded in a commitment to the papacy's supranational supremacy. As we will see, the historical periods and figures they dramatize were being appropriated and interpreted by different groups for competing purposes. Borrowing from a range of discourses and texts, including Elizabethan recusant polemic, Shakespeare's plays, and the 'King's Book' *Eikon Basilike* (1649), the St. Omers dramatists intervene in debates over the rights of English monarchs and the consequences of the Norman Conquest, the Wars of the Roses, and the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This chapter analyses how these plays appropriate and reimagine multiple political languages, represent alternative notions of Englishness, and identify medieval kings as both types and anti-types of the Stuart monarchs. Weighing the crimes and virtues of historical rulers, the St. Omers dramatists reflect obliquely on the contemporary struggle over Charles I's posthumous representation: was he a sacred martyr or a man of blood, punished by God? I offer a new account of the possibilities of tragicomedy and argue that mid-century theatrical genres were not always and exclusively tied to particular polarised identities. Reframing mid-century literary conventions and political debates from a

[15] Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 339.

transnational Jesuit perspective, these plays force us to reassess the full spectrum of mid-seventeenth-century English theatre and royalism.

Catholic kingship: Reclaiming Edward the Confessor

On 17 September 1653, St. Omers College staged a play about medieval England's most popular king: *Sanctus Eduardus Confessor sive Mites Terram Possidebunt* [Saint Edward the Confessor or the Meek Shall Inherit the Earth]. As we shall see, Edward the Confessor was celebrated by writers across the confessional and political spectrum for very different reasons. Two manuscript witnesses of *Sanctus Eduardus*, dating from the mid-1650s, are extant: one on its own and the other in a miscellany of devotional and historical Latin poems with another play, *Saint Tobias and the Angel*.[16] *Sanctus Eduardus* is anonymous, but likely to have been written by one of the college professors. It narrates events beginning in 1042 when the Danish occupation of England ends, and Edward returns from exile to assume the throne. It dramatizes how divine providence protects the saintly king from another Danish invasion and from the machinations of the ambitious Godwin, Earl of Wessex. Featuring prophesies, visions, and miracles, *Sanctus Eduardus* is a reenchanted history play, in which crisis is always averted. It exemplifies John Fletcher's Jacobean definition of a tragicomedy as a play that 'wants deaths, which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which is inough to make it no comedie'.[17] Fletcher characterises the genre in terms of deficiency, not quite a tragedy, and not fully a comedy. Mid-century tragicomic allegory capitalises on this sense of incompletion to bridge the world of politics and the world of the play; in Fanshawe's terms, the genre supplies optimistic '*parallels*' to be perfected and fulfilled in an ideal future.

[16] Magdalen College, Oxford, MS PR30/2/M1/1; Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Lat. 32. *Sanctus Eduardus* is transcribed and translated in Catherine Houlihan, 'Three Jesuit Plays: An Edition from Manuscripts and Translation of *Britanniae Primitiae*, *S. Eduardus Confessor* and *Innocentia Purpurata*' (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1967), 173–319. All further refences will be in the body of the text and refer to the Magdalen manuscript's foliation and line numbers, unless otherwise stated. The translation is based on Houlihan's, with some adjustments.

[17] John Fletcher, *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* (London, 1610), ¶v.

Unlike most interregnum tragicomedies, in which the restoration of legitimate power occurs at the end, *Sanctus Eduardus* proceeds from lament to triumph in the first scene. It opens with Bishop Brithwald bemoaning the condition of England under the Danes: 'Heu maesta rerum scena! […] Britonum infelix solum!' (f. 4r, ll. 1–2) [Alas what a wretched state of affairs, unhappy land of Britain!]. The word 'scena' [scene or stage] introduces the play's metatheatrical interest in its own analogies and allusions; Brithwald's theatrical ekphrasis clearly recalls Catholic depictions of contemporary Protestant England, echoing Tarasius' speech in the first act of Simons' *Leo Armenus*. Brithwald condemns the violence, iconoclasm, and injustice where 'Religio periit, quaerit externo lares/ sub sole pietas' (f. 4r, ll. 10–11) [Religion has perished, piety seeks a home under a foreign sun]. However, his soliloquy is interrupted by a vision of St. Peter who crowns Edward and proclaims that he will 'Danicum hic tollet iugum' (f. 4v, l. 35) [lift the Danish yoke]. An allegorical interlude, in which 'Iustitia' and 'Pax' descend to the earth, follows. This fantasy of the returning golden age is emphatically Roman Catholic. Peter speaks the language of papal iconography. He instructs Edward

> Nostraeque munus dexterae hoc sceptrum cape.
> Cui regna pandit Claviger Caeli, thronum
> Beatioris Imperi huic quondam dabit (f. 4v, ll. 37–39).
>
> Receive this sceptre as a gift from our hand. To the man to whom the key-bearer of heaven grants kingship, he will at some time grant the throne of a more blessed empire.

The 'Claviger Caeli' who 'grants kingship' alludes to the crucial scriptural passage used to defend the pope's supremacy in which Christ tells Peter that he will give him the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19). Edward's earthly kingship is imagined as a foretaste, or pale shadow, of heavenly dominion, and spiritual authority is presented as firmly superior to temporal power. Brithwald's vision features in the play's main source, Aelred of Rievaulx's thirteenth-century hagiography *Vita Sancti Edwardi*, which would have been available to the college via its recent printing in Jean Bolland's *Acta Sanctorum* (1643). The St. Omers

dramatist diverts from the *Vita* at this point to emphasise papal supremacy. Aelred's Peter extols Christ's power rather than his own: 'Domini […] est regnum, et ipse dominabitur in filiis hominum. Ipse transfert regna et mutat imperio' ['the Lord's is the kingdom, and he has dominion among the sons of men. He transfers kingdoms and alters empires'].[18] Rewriting this passage after the Reformation, the Jesuit playwright replaces Christ with Peter, his apparent representative on earth. *Sanctus Eduardus* opens with a spectacular display of papal authority and Roman Catholic ideas of kingship.

The play's depiction of Edward responds to both contemporary Protestant radicals and earlier Catholics. Late Elizabethan and early Stuart Catholics commemorated an illustrious Anglo-Saxon past in paintings, archaeology, and antiquarianism.[19] *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605) by the polemicist Richard Verstegan presented the Anglo-Saxons as the progenitors of England and its Church, which he claims was founded by St. Augustine of Canterbury on a mission from the pope in 597. As Donna B. Hamilton and Christopher Highley have demonstrated, Verstegan aimed to counteract Protestant arguments, made most famously by John Foxe and later by Archbishop James Ussher, that the Anglo-Saxons were cruel and barbarous and that the true English Church descended from the ancient Britons, without any Roman interference.[20] *Sanctus Eduardus*, like Simons' *Mercia*, is informed by Catholic Anglo-Saxonism, but it also reacts to more recent debates over the same historical period.

As the last Anglo-Saxon king before the Norman Conquest, Edward figured prominently in the common law tradition and defences of parliamentary sovereignty. He was

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[18] Aelred of Rievaulx, 'De. S. Eduardo Confessore: Vita Auctore Sancto Ealdredo' in *Acta Sanctorum Ianuarius*, ed. Ioannes Bollandus (Antwerp, 1643), 293, Bodleian, fol. BS. 295; Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Historical Works*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Press, 2005), 137.
[19] Peter Davidson, Mark Blundell, Dora Thornton, and Jane Stevenson, 'The Harkirk Graveyard and William Blundell "the Recusant" (1560–1638): A Reconsideration,' *British Catholic History* 34.1 (2018): 29–76; Peter Davidson, 'Opposing Elizabeth,' in Alessandra Petrina (ed.), *Queen and Country: The Relation between the Monarch and the People in the Development of the English Nation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 187–190.
[20] Donna B. Hamilton, 'Richard Verstegan's *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605): A Catholic Antiquarian Replies to John Foxe, Thomas Cooper, and Jean Bodin,' *Prose Studies* 22.1 (1999): 1–38; Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation*, 109–115.

claimed to have instituted a set of laws that defined the people's freedoms and the conditions and contract by which English kings must rule.[21] In the 1640s, a new and radical historiography emerged from these foundations. Levellers and some parliamentarians argued that the Conquest in 1066 was the disastrous watershed at which the monarchy had arrogated rights of conquest to itself and subjected the English people to tyranny, the so-called 'Norman Yoke'.[22] Presenting Edward the Confessor as the last defender of the liberties of the English, this narrative underpinned 'not only the movement for legal reform, but demands for sweeping constitutional change from the late 1640s'.[23] The anti-Normans were also staunchly anti-popish, and some argued that William the Conqueror was little more than a puppet for the corrupt papacy.[24] Ironically, these mid-century Protestant radicals turned to the Catholic Verstegan's *Restitution*, praising him as the only writer to attempt 'our vindication from this thraldom and disgrace' of Normanism, while either wilfully ignoring or misunderstanding the confessional and ecclesiological dimension of his history.[25] In this new polemical context, Verstegan became a weapon in the armoury of anti-popery, and contemporary Catholics had to change tactics. In 1651, the Catholic lawyer, polemicist and devotional writer, John Austin (discussed in detail in chapter five) pointed out that the Levellers' heroes, the medieval proponents of English liberty and Magna Carta, had all been Catholics:

> from whom have all those excellent customes and Statutes of this Nation descended upon us? is it possible we should derive all the ancient Priviledges of Parliament, and Liberties of the Subject, contained in *Magna Charta, &c* from the times their Religion governed the Land, and yet say now their Religion is inconsistent with the Government of the Land?[26]

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[21] Janelle Greenberg, *The Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution: St. Edward's 'Laws' in Early Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11.
[22] Christopher Hill, 'The Norman Yoke,' in *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), 50–122.
[23] David Como, *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 339.
[24] George Walker, *Anglo-Tyrannus, Or the Idea of a Norman Monarch* (London, 1650), 52.
[25] John Hare, St. *Edwards Ghost or Anti-Normanisme* (London, 1647), B1v–B2r.
[26] John Austin, alias William Birchley, *The Christian Moderator: or, Persecution for Religion Condemned* (London, 1651), 18.

Sanctus Eduardus gives theatrical expression to Austin's rhetorical questions. Yet, Austin was one of a number of English Catholics in the mid-seventeenth century who, inspired by French Gallicanism and in pursuit of toleration, began to propose models of English Catholicism with increasing independence from the papacy, as chapter five shall discuss. In contrast, *Sanctus Eduardus* reclaims Edward the Confessor as a standard-bearer for both emphatically English liberty and ultramontane *Roman* Catholicism, thus opposing both Levellers and English Gallicans.

When the Danes attempt to reinvade, the leader of Edward's army, Suard, Earl of Northumbria, delivers a patriotic speech, expressing a Catholic approach to national history:

> Servi indecoras Anglus horrescit notas.
> Iugum minatur Dacus; expertus iugum
> Nuper Britannus Danicum, incidi sinet
> Potius securi colla, quam iugo premi (f. 13v, ll. 391–4).
>
> An Englishman abhors the inglorious brand of slavery. The Dane threatens the yoke, but the Briton who has lately experienced the Danish yoke would rather let their necks be cut by the axe than pressed down by the yoke.

The highly patterned syntax of these lines creates a series of chiastic antitheses between the English and the oppressive Danes. They recall the anti-Normans' rhetoric of 'the *hereditary Libertie and Honour* of our Nation' and imagine the English as willing martyrs for freedom.[27] Yet the play also departs from these radicals by replacing the Norman with the Danish Yoke. In *St. Edwards Ghost or Anti-Normanisme* (1647), John Hare identifies the Danish invasion as far less significant than the Norman because they 'were our Consanguineans, our ancient Countrey-men, and Brethren, whose prevailing over us would have introduced scarce strange Lawes or Language'.[28] By contrast, *Sanctus Eduardus* characterises the Danes as cruel, impious, and foreign. Just as the Levellers associate the Normans with Catholicism, the play implicitly equates the Danes with the northern European reformers of later centuries. The

[27] Hare, *Edward's Ghost*, B1v.
[28] Hare, *Edward's Ghost*, 12.

phrase ‘Danicum iugum’ [Danish yoke], emphasised here with laboured repetition, occurs throughout the play (ll. 35, 196, 462) and implies an alternative theory of where the true threat to English liberty lies. Edward becomes a hero of both English liberty and Roman Catholicism.

As well as revising contemporary myths of the origins of national freedom, *Sanctus Eduardus* articulates a principled cosmopolitanism. The prologue and epilogue addressed to the new governor of Saint-Omer emphasise the survival of patriotism beyond the patria. The college is described as ‘Musarum exulum […] domicilium’ (f. 2r) [the home of the exiled muses], and the students as ‘Adolescentes hosce, has inquam, Haeresos vitiorumque […] incendio, ereptas reliquias’ (f. 3r) [these youths, these remnants, I say, snatched from the fire of heresy and vices]. The paratexts represent the students as sole guardians of English culture and piety, the only heirs to the England of St. Edward. However, this inheritance is not based on national identity. The prologue continues: ‘exhibebimus itaque Civitatis nostrae moderatori Angliae moderatorem optimum Eduardum Confessorem’ (ff. 2r–2v) [So let us show to the ruler of our city, the best ruler of England, Edward the Confessor]. The polyptoton of ‘moderatori/em’ equates the French governor of Saint-Omer with the medieval English king. ‘Civitatis nostrae’ ‘our city’ is syntactically contrasted to ‘Angliae’, notably lacking a possessive. Here, the students almost disown England. They commend Edward to the governor as a model to emulate, ‘Principem ad imitandum’, and a suitable patron saint, ‘Patronum […] Sanctissimum’ (f. 2v). Identifying the mythic embodiment of Anglo-Saxon freedom with the regional governor of a small town in the Habsburg Netherlands demonstrates the range of the college’s analogical and transnational imagination. This literary community is both English and cosmopolitan.

It is from this perspective of supranational and ultramontane Roman Catholicism that *Sanctus Eduardus* dissects the languages of Stuart royalism. Edward is repeatedly associated with Charles II. Both spent their youth in exile deprived of their thrones, an experience Edward

recalls at several points (f. 8r, ll. 194–8). The royalist clergyman Thomas Fuller made the same analogy in a poem celebrating the Restoration in 1660, which informs Charles that the Anglo-Saxon saint 'Was both Your Parallel and Predecessor,/ Exil'd He many years did live in France,/ (From low Foundations highest Roofs advance)'.[29] The Catholic playwright at St. Omers had pre-empted the royalist poet. Yet Catholic expatriates commonly use a patriotic language of exile to describe themselves. Christopher Highley has argued that Protestant royalist writers represented the Stuart exile in terms that had long been associated with English Catholics.[30] In these unprecedented circumstances, the hero of an English Jesuit play self-consciously evokes both Catholic exiles and their Protestant monarch.

In the first act, Edward delivers a soliloquy describing his life so far through the extended metaphor of a book:

> Orbum parente prima frons natum docet,
> Caedemque fratrum perfido scriptam stylo
> Rubente pingit litera, et pulsos lare
> Narrat Nepotes. Paginam in mediam, et thronum
> Tyrannus una barbarus salit meum.
> Ora recumbit ultima Eduardus Puer,
> Natale iussus vertere in cunis solum.
> Regnare decuit; hostis in patria vetat
> Spirare (f. 6r, ll. 93–101).
>
> The first page tells of a son deprived of a father, depicts the murder of brothers written with a perfidious pen in red letters, and narrates how kinsmen were driven from their home. The barbarian tyrant leaps into the middle of the page and onto my throne at the same time. The boy Edward, compelled while still in the cradle to go into exile, lies on the farthest shore. Kingship was his due, but the enemy prevented him from living in his native country.

The tautologous 'Natale […] cunis' [new-born cradle] heightens the pathos, while the hyperbaton separating 'Ora […] ultima' and 'solum' enacts the distance between the exile and the homeland. 'Hostis' [enemy] carries connotations of foreignness and the syntax creates an antithesis: 'strangers in the patria'. Here the invading Danes recall contemporary enemies

[29] Quoted in Christopher Highley, 'Charles II and the Meanings of Exile,' in Kewes and McRae (eds), *Stuart Succession Literature*, 77.
[30] Highley, 'Charles II and the Meanings of Exile,' 80.

within, destroying England and exiling the king. The image of Edward's brother King Alfred Ætheling's murder, written in red letters, 'rubente […] litera', suggests both blood and the rubric of martyrology. Edward ends the speech by imagining his restoration as a turn of the page: 'Iam laeta rebus pagina afflictis modum/ Positura surgat' (f. 6r, ll. 103–104) [Now let these wretched matters be cast aside and, in this way, a joyful page begin]. The accumulation of metaphors imagining Edward's life as a codex evoke the ubiquitous 'King's Book', *Eikon Basilike* (1649), which contemporary royalist elegies frequently identified not just as a monument but a simulacrum, through which the late King Charles lived on.[31] Describing himself in the third person with a series of textual metaphors, Edward draws attention to his own status as a literary artefact. This conceit highlights the friction between a life lived and a life retold, experience and representation. Staging the writing of character, the speech invites the audience to think carefully about the processes by which historical events and figures are represented and interpreted.

As the play's subtitle, 'the Meek Shall Inherit the Earth', suggests, *Sanctus Eduardus* praises its hero's humility and gentleness. This also resembles the posthumous representation of Charles I as meek and remarkable for his 'humanity and vulnerability'.[32] Edward ends his autobiographical speech with the dictum, 'Mitibus Regnum datur;/ Mites triumphos, gloriam, palmas ferent' (f. 6v, ll. 114–115) [To the meek shall be given kingship. The meek shall carry off triumphs, glory, palms of victory]. Godwin, Earl of Wessex, overhears this and then offers his own contrasting soliloquy. Presented as the polar opposite to the meek king, Godwin reinterprets Edward's metaphors:

> Volumen istud regiis cusum licet
> Typis, amice lector, haud mendis vacat.
> Errata prudens corrige,
> […]

[31] Wilcher, *Writing of Royalism*, 296–297.
[32] Alice Dailey, *The English Martyr from Reformation to Revolution* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 231. See also Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).

> Sic sic legendum: fortibus regnum datur.
> Vafri triumphos, gloriam, palmas ferent (f. 6v, ll. 116–118, 121–122).
>
> Though that book may have been printed with royal type, my dear reader, it contains mistakes; wisely correct the errors. Thus, it should read: kingship will be granted to the strong. Cunning men will gain triumphs, glory, palms of victory!

The repetition and inversion of Edward's aphorism, replacing 'Mitibus' with 'fortibus', emphasises the epideictic contrast between virtuous Edward and impious Godwin. Godwin phrases his paradiastole and opposition to Edward in the language of a printed errata list, inviting the reader to 'corrigere' the text. A similar contrast between virtuous humility and effective but immoral force was central to the apology for Charles I in *Eikon Basilike*; Charles' persona claims 'What I want in the hands of Force and Power, I have in the wings of Faith and Prayer'.[33] Yet, *Sanctus Eduardus* does not straightforwardly make its protagonist a type of Charles I or II. Instead, its self-conscious textual metaphors draw attention to contested processes of reading and interpretation.

Eikon Basilike resonates again later in the play during the Danes' attempted invasion. While Suard riles up the army and musters troops, Edward turns to prayer:

> Spes vegeta in altum nititur, et alias opes,
> Alia reposcit arma; iungamus preces
> Lachrymosque (f. 14v, ll. 430–431).
>
> Lively hope flies to heaven and demands other help and other arms: let us join prayers and tears.

This approach proves successful; the praying Edward receives a vision or second-sight of the Danish king drowning and the infant Christ blessing England. In Aelred's *Vita Edwardi*, the English are unaware that the Danes are preparing to invade until this apparition so that the emphasis is on Edward's prophetic power.[34] The version of events in *Sanctus Eduardus* presents prayer as Edward's response to a military threat, an 'alia arma' or alternative, more

[33] Gauden and Charles I, *Eikon Basilike*, 47.
[34] Aelred, 'De. S. Eduardo Confessore: Vita,' 295.

effective, form of combat that precipitates the triumphant vision. It is also highly dramatic, employing a split stage between the meditating Edward and the spectacle of the triumphant Christ, played out in his mind's eye. In *Eikon Basilike,* Charles claims that after parliament had seized his weapons and forces

> my chiefest arms left me were those only which the ancient Christians were wont to use against their persecutors – prayers and tears. These may serve a good man's turn, if not to conquer as a soldier, yet to suffer as a martyr.[35]

Charles and the St. Omers playwright quote the same proverbial phrase, 'preces et lachrimae sunt arma Ecclesiae' [prayers and tears are the arms of the Church]. Yet whereas Charles was defeated, Edward triumphs. The characterisation of Edward draws close to the Stuart 'martyr' only to diverge emphatically from him. The play constructs multiple contradictory analogies and parallels, inviting the audience to measure Charles I and his son against their more illustrious royal predecessor.

Sanctus Eduardus is characterised by the mixing of royalist and Roman Catholic discourses. A sustained image pattern running throughout the play likens Edward's restoration to the end of a storm, winter, or night. The king celebrates his return with an allegorical ekphrasis:

> Post hyemis imbres laxat Arctoo gelu
> Constricta Phoebus arva iaculatus faces
> Propiore curru; quaeque congesta nive
> Rigebat olim, nunc micat tellus rosis (f. 6r, ll. 85–88).
>
> After the storms of winter, Phoebus, casting the beams from his chariot closer, frees the fields, bound by northern frost, and the earth, which was once frozen with thick snow, now shines with roses.

Lamenting the winter of the interregnum whilst retaining a 'patient expectation' that it would thaw and summer return was a common strategy of 1650s poetry and tragicomedies by writers across the confessional spectrum.[36] Fanshawe's *Il Pastor Fido* weaves together the sorrows of

[35] Gauden and Charles I, *Eikon Basilike*, 47.
[36] Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 179, 185–186. See also Randall, *Winter Fruit*, xi and *passim*, and Wilcher, *Writing of Royalism*, 308, 337–338.

ageing, winter, and political distraction:

> Earth her winter-coat may cast,
> And renew her beauty past;
> But, our winter come, in vain
> We sollicite spring again:
> And when our furrows snow shall cover,
> Love may return, but never Lover.[37]

The topical purchase of this image pattern was recognised at St. Omers; it appears in several Latin poems, copied out alongside *Sanctus Eduardus* in one of its manuscript witnesses, which pray to the Virgin Mary and St. Edward for an end to England's troubles.[38] One such poem, 'Ad Sanctum Eduardum ut Compositis Intestinis Tumultibus Felicitati Pristinae Angliam Restituat' [To Saint Edward that after Intestine Strife has been Laid to Rest, He Might Restore England to its Original Happiness], apostrophises the royal saint 'Reuise gentem Rex pie turbidam/ Tuamque curam' [O pious king, return your attention to this troubled people] and likens him to the recurring spring, 'Ut pervicaces post hyemis minas/ Gratum serenas ver repetit vices' [as after the obstinate threats of winter, the beloved spring returns in happy succession].[39] The speaker prays that Edward restore life to the kingdom:

> Vt casta laetis denuo cum rosis
> Felice surgant lilia germine
> Herbisque fragrantique messe
> Angligenum decorentur hortis.[40]
>
> So that spotless lilies may grow again with joyful blooms from a fruitful seed, and be honoured by herbs and a fragrant harvest in the gardens of the English.

These poems further accentuate the topicality of the play's representation of Edward as an exiled and restored monarch. However, they also demonstrate the very different ends to which St. Omers writers put apparently 'royalist' rhetoric.

These poems fantasise about the restoration of more than just the English monarchy.

[37] Fanshawe, *Il Pastor Fido*, 101.
[38] Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 32, ff. 41r, 45v–48r.
[39] Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 32, ff. 45v–46r.
[40] Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 32, f. 46r.

One lyric, 'Somnium Vatis quo Cernere Sibi Videtur Sanctum Eduarum Angliae Gubernacula Capessentem' [The Dream of the Prophet in which He Seemed to Discern that Saint Edward of England would take the Helm of State], imagines 'Redux […] Eduardus' descending to England to dispense justice and destroy impiety.[41] It concludes with an allegory of a 'quadriga' [four-horse chariot] returning to English fields and bearing 'Exulque dudum relligio et fides/ virtusque auorum paxque' [Religion and faith and the virtue of our forefathers and peace lately exiled].[42] The return of the king brings back the pre-Reformation faith. In *Sanctus Eduardus,* the language of the 'Cavalier Winter' is set alongside emphatically Roman Catholic rhetoric. Edward decides to celebrate the end of Danish occupation and the return of his crown with a pilgrimage to Rome:

> Promissa surgant germina, et pios ferat
> Mens grata flores. Nixa septeno iugo
> Salvete Romae moenia, O Salve Petri
> Veneranda sedes (f. 8v, ll. 209–211).
>
> Let the promised shoots sprout, and let a grateful mind bring forth pious flowers.
> Hail walls of Rome built on seven hills! Hail venerable seat of Peter!

In this context, the imagery of new life and seasonal change acquires a different significance. At St. Omers, a genre and rhetoric predominantly used for the expression of the hopes of defeated royalists is repurposed to express the old dream of the reconversion of England to Rome.

As *Sanctus Eduardus* progresses, its experiments in allusion and analogy become ever more imaginative. Godwin, in an attempt to destabilize Edward's regime, decides to accuse the king's innocent chief supporter Leofric of plotting regicide. Absent from Aelred's *Vita,* this conspiracy seems to be the playwright's timely invention. Godwin and his followers excitedly predict the outcome of their plan and extol Godwin as sovereign over land and sea: 'frustra

[41] Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 32, f. 46v.
[42] Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 32, f. 48r.

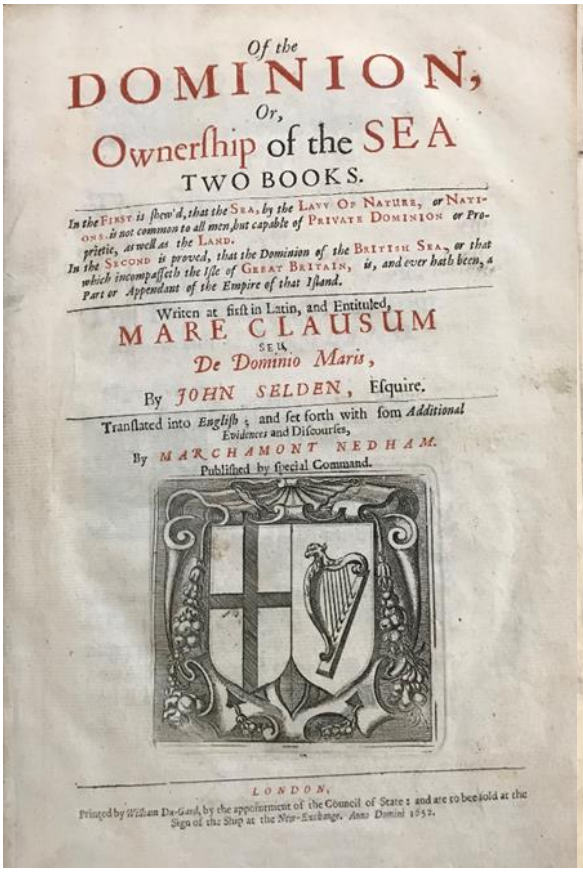
Britannos Nerei cingunt vada;/ Herois huius flamma Neptunum domat' (f. 24r, ll. 762–763) [In vain do the waters of Nereus encircle Britain; the flame of this Hero conquers Neptune]. Godwin's henchman Marvoldus identifies him with the north wind, the usual adversary in meteorological royalist allegories:

> Qui tumida sulcat marmora, ut salvis queat
> Portum subire carbasis, Zephyri cupit
> Pennis volare Nauta; sed melius tuam
> Meamque reddet littori optato ratem
> Nostri futurus Arbiter Caurus maris (f. 24v, ll. 767–771).
>
> The sailor, who ploughs the swelling seas, wishes to fly on the wings of Zephyrus so that he can reach the harbour in safety, but Caurus, the future commander of our sea, is better able to bring your ship and mine to the desired shore.

This invocation is counter-intuitive: for these sailors of ambition, Caurus the harsh north-west wind, bearer of clouds and cold, is preferable to gentle Zephyrus. It suggests the rebels' inversion of the proper order of things. Given that Godwin's plot is exclusively land-based, the sea imagery appears out of place. It makes better sense if we read it as an allusion to the emerging iconography of the Commonwealth. With the 1651 Navigation Act and success against the Dutch in February 1653, parliament increasingly identified England as a major sea-power. A year before the play was performed, Marchamont Nedham's translation of John Selden's *Mare Clausum, Of the Dominion or Ownership of the Sea* (1652) was printed by 'special command' in London with the arms of the Commonwealth and a frontispiece depicting Neptune astride the ocean (Figure 8).[43] The imagery of winter and roaring waves implicitly identifies the would-be usurper Godwin with the Commonwealth.

Figure 8

[43] Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 293–295; David Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire,' *The Historical Journal* 35.3 (1992): 533–535.



Of the
DOMINION,
Or,
Ownerſhip of the SEA
TWO BOOKS.

In the FIRST is ſhew'd, that the SEA, by the LAW OF NATURE, or NATIONS, is not common to all men, but capable of PRIVATE DOMINION or Propriety, as well as the LAND.
In the SECOND is proved, that the Dominion of the BRITISH SEA, or that which incompaſſeth the Iſle of GREAT BRITAIN, is, and ever hath been, a Part or Appendant of the Empire of that Iſland.

Written at firſt in Latin, and Entituled,
MARE CLAUSUM
SEU
De Dominio Maris,
By JOHN SELDEN, Eſquire.

Tranſlated into Engliſh; and ſet forth with ſom Additional Evidences and Diſcourſes,
By MARCHAMONT NEDHAM.
Publiſhed by ſpecial Command.

LONDON,
Printed by William Da-Gard, by the appointment of the Council of State: and are to be ſold at the Sign of the Slup at the New-Exchange. Anno Domini 1652.



Godwin's maritime triumphalism is swiftly undercut in the next scene. At a banquet, Edward accuses Godwin of having murdered his brother the short-lived King Alfred Ætheling. The earl protests his innocence with swaggering impiety:

> Bucceam hanc, Princeps, vides?
> Sic Rector illam summus illaesum sinat
> Transire guttur, faucium et pandat viam,
> Diro ut vacantem crimine hanc dextram videt (f. 26r, ll. 841–844).
>
> Prince, do you see this morsel? If the heavenly king allows it to pass through my throat without mishap and lets it open a passageway through my gullet, it proves my righthand innocent of this terrible crime.

Godwin promptly chokes and dies. This swift and bathetic death scene contrasts with the play's more elaborate heavenly visions, but like them it emphasises the inexorable hand of providence: Godwin is finally punished for an act of regicide, which occurs long before the play begins. There is considerable emphasis on Godwin's arrogant confidence that his plot will succeed. We are told that he and his conspirators talk 'quasi re peracta' (f. 23v, margin) [as if the matter was already accomplished], and after his death, he is placed in a chariot that had

been prematurely prepared for his victory: 'Tollunt Godwini cadaver in currum, cui inscriptus erat titulus *Godwinus Triumphans*' (f. 27r, margin) [They raise the corpse of Godwin on to the chariot on which the title *Godwin Triumphant* was already written]. By associating the defeated Godwin with the currently victorious Commonwealth, *Sanctus Eduardus* seems to express hope that Charles I's killers would eventually get their providential comeuppance however certain and self-assured their present triumph might seem.

Sanctus Eduardus ostensibly follows the same pattern as royalist tragicomedies which, as Dale Randall puts it, 'implicitly and continuously insinuate that, whatever threats or losses come our way, a happy ending is possible'.[44] However, the interpretation of the requisite conditions of that possibility in *Sanctus Eduardus* is controversial. Edward ends the play thanking God for his protection: 'Rector O Regum Deus,/ Adoro mundi fraena moderantem manum' (f. 29v, ll. 986–7) [O God the ruler of kings, I adore your hand which guides the reins of the world]. He displaces all glory onto God:

> Non Dace, letho mucro te noster dedit;
> Godwine nec te messuit chalybs; sibi
> Uterque mucro, lictor, et laqueus fuit.
> Qui mite Regi pectus, hic Regi dedit
> Pacem, triumphos, gloriam, palmas, Deus (f. 30r, ll. 996–1000).
>
> Dane, our sword did not send you to death, nor did our steel cut you down Godwin. Each of you was sword, executioner, and noose for himself. God who gave a gentle heart to the king, hereupon gave the king peace, triumphs, glory, and victory.

Edward refuses to claim responsibility for England's deliverance. In tragicomedies from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) to *The Just General* (1652) by the royalist major, Cosmo Manuche, God-like monarchs often effect the final resolution: 'Princes, as the Embassadors/ From heaven are bound to right the wrong'd'.[45] By contrast, Edward emphasises that it was not him but God. Whilst Edward's virtue and humility gain him divine protection,

[44] Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 367.
[45] Cosmo Manuche, *The Just General: A Tragi:Comedy* (London, 1652), 65. On Manuche and the use of the *deus ex machina* to theorise sovereignty, see Meyler, *Theaters of Pardoning*, 175–195.

the impiety of Godwin and the Danes ensures their downfall. The providentialism of *Sanctus Eduardus* illuminates not only the rise but also the fall of kings. The repetition and deictic of 'Regi […] hic Regi' resists application or extrapolation and highlights the gap between this King Edward and the contemporary Stuart monarchs. In one chapter of *Eikon Basilike,* Charles responds directly to the question of why God had allowed his anointed to be defeated: 'When Providence gave me or denied me victory, my desire was neither to boast of my power nor to charge God foolishly, Who I believed at last would make all things to work together for my good'.[46] Charles refuses to interpret his particular wins and losses as expressions of God's favour or condemnation, whilst retaining hope that eventually he would triumph. By contrast, *Sanctus Eduardus* vividly presents victory in battle as a sign of Christ's blessing and asserts the unquestionable legibility of a providential design in history.

Dis-similes are as important as topical parallels for political commentary in *Sanctus Eduardus*. From the opening scene's vision of Peter onwards, the play tempers its royalist analogy with an emphasis on Edward's obedience to the papacy. It insinuates that, unlike the Catholic Edward, Charles I and Charles II had failed to secure the 'Pacem, triumphos, gloriam, palmas' which are given to divinely favoured kings, and that they are partly culpable for England's troubles. The play's fantasy of royal restoration is a conditional one. It endorses one contemporary Catholic argument, voiced especially in circles surrounding Henrietta Maria, that the surest way to achieve a restoration was the conversion of Charles II and armed assistance from the papacy.[47] *Sanctus Eduardus*' highly qualified royalist fantasy articulates an uncompromising English Roman Catholicism.

Indirection and ambiguity characterize many Catholic responses to the regicide, notably

[46] Gauden and Charles I, *Eikon Basilike*, 120
[47] Williams, 'Between King, Faith and Reason,' 1089; Alistair Malcolm, 'Pretending to Be Catholic? Sir Henry Bennet, the Alliance with Spain and Stuart Dalliance with Rome, 1656–62,' in Robin Eagles and Coleman A. Dennehy (eds), *Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington, and his World: Restoration Court, Politics and Diplomacy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 31–51.

The Royal Charter Granted unto Kings by God (1649) by the Catholic convert Thomas Bayly (see chapter four). At first glance, this work seems staunchly royalist. It attacks the regicide and argues that kings are sacred to God and answerable only to him. William Marshall, who was also responsible for the iconic royalist image of *Eikon Basilike*, engraved the frontispiece (Figure 9). Bayly was imprisoned by the Council of State 'for writing a seditious and treasonable book'.[48] And yet, the implications of Bayly's supposedly absolutist argument are less than flattering to the Stuarts. He intimates that since only God can unmake kings, the death of Charles I may have been a providential punishment: 'they that make, may un-make, what thou buildest thy self, thou may'st lawfully pull down; thou may'st *diruere, edificare, mutare quadrata rotundis*'.[49] Contemporary readers sensed the disingenuity. One anti-Catholic polemic attacks Bayly's ambivalent allegiances using the same Horatian tag: 'as an unskilful fickle builder, *diruit, aedificat,* what he rears with one hand, he puls down with the other'.[50] In the 1650s, Bayly entered the pay of Cromwell's spymaster John Thurloe.[51] The St. Omers dramatists and performers may not have switched allegiances so dramatically, but they too articulate a highly qualified royalism and use the language of divine right and appeal to the hand of providence in order to query rather than mythologise Stuart authority.

Figure 9

[48] TNA, SP 25/63/2, f. 220r.
[49] Thomas Bayly, *The Royal Charter Granted unto Kings, by God himself: and Collected out of his Holy Word, in Both Testaments* (London, 1649), 5. In *Epistles* I.I.97–100, Horace describes how when 'mea cum pugnat sententia secum' [my judgement struggles with itself], 'diruit, aedificat, mutat quadrata rotundis' [it pulls down, builds up, and changes square to round], *Satires, Epistles, Art of Poetry*, 258–259. Kevin Killeen notes the similarity between Bayly's argument that Charles I had already been deposed and thus un-kinged before the regicide, and Milton's in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, though he does not elaborate upon the questions this raises for Bayly's royalism, *The Political Bible in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 169–170.
[50] *Legenda Lignea: With an Answer to Mr. Birchleys Moderator* (London, 1653, i.e 1652), 166.
[51] Thomas Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 3: December 1654–August 1655* (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 154.



Human tragedy and divine comedy

The St. Omers dramatization of the Wars of the Roses, *Innocentia Purpurata seu Rosa Candida et Rubicunda* [Royal (or blood-soaked) Innocence or the White Rose and the Red], exemplifies the college's creative and idiosyncratic engagement with English vernacular literary culture and political debate. This history play narrates a short episode from England's dynastic wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster.[52] It was composed by the college's professor of

[52] Stonyhurst, MS B. VII. 23. Vol. 1, ff. 2–34. The play is transcribed and translated in Houlihan, 'Three Jesuit Plays,' 320–470, and in Francis Clarke, *Innocentia Purpurata seu Rosa Candida et Rubicunda*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, 3 October 2020, accessed 23 October 2022,

Humanities Fr. Francis Clarke sometime between 1651 and 1656 and was possibly performed in 1654 since no record of that year's play survives.[53] *Innocentia Purpurata* depicts the second time Henry VI was deposed by Edward IV (Duke of York) and his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III), concluding with Henry's death in 1471. As Martin Wiggins has established, Clarke draws heavily on Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part 3,* as well as *King John*, *Hamlet*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*.[54] Shakespeare's plays were often read and performed at English Catholic expatriate colleges across the early modern period.[55] A first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, once belonging to St. Omers and with the text of *Henry IV, Part I* marked up for performance, was recently discovered, though ongoing research suggests it may not have reached the college until the eighteenth century.[56] Focusing on the print market, Eoin Price and Heidi Craig have claimed that Shakespearean drama was largely absent from mid-seventeenth-century literary culture.[57] The St. Omers theatre provides a significant and illuminating exception to this narrative. Clarke's *Innocentia Purpurata* appropriates Shakespeare for the Counter-Reformation stage, reimagines medieval history in light of England's more recent civil wars, and offers a distinctive English Catholic variation on royalist tragicomedy.

Innocentia Purpurata portrays Henry VI as a saintly king, devoted to peace and his people, who has found himself unwillingly embroiled in war. At his first appearance, he recalls English victories in France, but laments that 'Patriaeque nunc in viscera retorsit furor' (l. 101)

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https://philological.cal.bham.ac.uk/innocentia/. All further references will be to the line numbers in Sutton's edition. The translation is indebted to both Houlihan and Sutton's work.

[53] Martin Wiggins, 'Shakespeare Jesuited: The Plagiarisms of "Pater Clarcus,"' *The Seventeenth Century* 20.1 (2005): 17.

[54] Wiggins, 'Shakespeare Jesuited,' 4–15.

[55] Cummings, 'Shakespeare and the Inquisition,' 306–322; Jean-Christophe Mayer, *Shakespeare's Early Readers: A Cultural History from 1590 to 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 31–32.

[56] Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, inv. 2227. Jean-Christophe Mayer argued that the copy was at St. Omers in the mid-seventeenth century, 'The Saint-Omer First Folio: Perspectives on a New Shakespearean Discovery,' *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 87 (Spring 2015): 8–20; this has been convincingly challenged by Line Cottegnies and Rémy Cordonnier, 'New Discoveries about the Saint-Omer Folio: The Signification of the PS Stamp,' *Etudes Epistémè* 29 (2016), accessed 24 November 2022, http://journals.openedition.org/episteme/1089.

[57] Heidi C. Craig, 'Missing Shakespeare, 1642–1660,' *ELR* 49.1 (2019): 116–144; Eoin Price, 'War without Shakespeare: Reading Shakespearian Absence, 1642–49,' *Shakespeare Survey* 72 (2019): 75–85.

[Now their rage is turned against the bowels of the homeland]. The word 'viscera', which means innards or entrails, pictures the body politic tearing itself apart. Echoing the opening image of Lucan's *Pharsalia,* this metaphor figures civil war as collective suicide. Rather than focusing on how to defeat his enemies, Henry worries that violence is polluting the kingdom and implores his council to bring about peace. He describes how

> Populi immerentis sydera fatigat cruor,
> Proceresque principemque facinoris reos
> Abominandi clamat, et iustam poli
> In me meosque irritat ultoris manum (ll. 103–106).
>
> The blood of innocent people vexes the heavens, accuses the nobility and the ruler of abominable crimes, and provokes the just hand of the divine avenger against me and mine.

The tricolon of increasingly insistent verbs – 'fatigat', 'clamat', 'irritat' – anthropomorphises the unrevenged blood, as it bombards heaven for justice. God is here described with the astrological euphemisms, 'sydera' and 'poli', which provide a sense of scale and heighten the terror of the image. Henry both accuses and reprieves himself in these lines; his sense of guilt motivates his desire for peace.

From its title onwards, *Innocentia Purpurata* (Blood-soaked or royal innocence) is full of sanguinary imagery associating power with violence. In another of his characteristically exclamatory and emblematic speeches, Henry bemoans

> Heu quam cruenta purpurant reges toga,
> Quot sceptra mortes, quot coronatum caput
> Stymulos atroces luce gemmarum tegit! (ll. 315–317).
>
> Alas what bloodied robes adorn kings! How many deaths does royalty require, how many cruel torments does the head crowned with the splendour of gems conceal!

Clarke echoes a familiar Shakespearean conceit of the throne floating in bloodshed; during the rest of Henry's speech, the crimson pomp of royalty becomes confused with the red wounds of its necessary victims: 'picta cocco vanitas' (l. 321) [vanity painted with scarlet]. Reinterpreting the red of the Lancastrian rose, Henry betrays a mind, like Macbeth's, riven with guilt.

Contemporaries were preoccupied by the scripturally derived notion of bloodguilt: the idea that anyone who shed innocent blood was polluted, hateful to God, and must be punished. Attacking Charles I in these terms became an important justification for the wars and eventually the regicide.[58] Clarke's image pattern poses an inflammatory question: was the saintly medieval King Henry VI a 'man of blood' who deserved to die? As we shall see, a clear answer is delayed to the final scenes of this tragicomic history play.

What makes Clarke's Henry a good man also makes him a fairly poor ruler. He considers giving the crown away to his enemies with dramatic repetition – 'Rapiat has rapiat notas/ Plantageneta, regium invadat thronum' (ll. 323–324) [Let the Plantagenet snatch away these symbols, let him seize the royal throne] – but the exasperated earl of Warwick, the so-called 'King-maker', orders him to 'Mitte faemineos metus' (l. 329) [dismiss these womanish fears]. Henry's scorn for the trappings of kingship fortifies him during his imprisonment. He idealises the rural life in which, unlike kings, 'sub vili casa/ Securus almos ordinat Pastor dies' (ll. 1074–1075) [the shepherd, in his poor cottage, orders his happy days free from care], and prefers his cell in the Tower of London to the palace: 'Beatiores carcere in caeco mihi/ Fluxere luces; aurea quam sub trabe' (ll. 1077–1078) [the days have flowed past more happily for me in this dark prison than under golden roof-beams]. Clarke is here echoing Shakespeare's Henry VI, who is similarly at home in pastoral exile:

> Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
> To shepherds looking on their silly sheep
> Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
> To Kings that fear their subjects' treachery?[59]

Shakespeare and the Jesuit dramatist draw on a common repertoire of both Senecan tropes and late medieval devotional traditions surrounding Henry VI and other 'saintly rulers, characterized by an unspectacular gentleness and charity' whose 'appeal as patron saints lay in

[58] Patricia Crawford, '"Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood,"' *Journal of British Studies* 16.2 (1977): 41–61.
[59] William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI, Part 3*, ed. John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen, Arden 3 (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 2.5.42–45.

their tenderness and approachability'.[60] However, this characterisation implies the prioritising of individual piety over political efficacy, which was an increasingly contested aspect of debates over both the regicide and Charles I's reign.

In the late 1630s and early 1640s, several histories of the Wars of the Roses appeared. Among them was the English Catholic alumnus of St. Omers, William Habington's *Historie of Edward the Fourth* (1640).[61] Habington opens with a dedication urging Charles I to 'draw your sword', and act decisively against the emerging threats to the crown.[62] Unequivocally condemning all forms of popular election and usurpation, Habington rejects Henry VI's Lancastrian claim to the throne since it derives from Bolingbroke's deposition of Richard II. Habington admits Henry's virtues, but distinguishes between the prince and the private man:

> For however the world was assured of his piety, there was much question of his government. So that he might be term'd a just man, but an unjust King. Since his title to the Crowne was unjust; for though it came by descent to him, yet was it but a continued usurpation.[63]

Habington's condemnation of rebellion and commitment to absolute monarchical power force him to identify the archetypal saintly king as unjust. The problem of how to distinguish between the royal office and the individual person would dominate political discussion of the next two decades. After the regicide, while some royalists celebrated the 'martyred' King Charles I for his personal piety, others criticised his disastrous decisions. As Anthony Milton argues, the Arminian clergyman and antiquarian Peter Heylyn responded to *Eikon Basilike* by condemning the way in which 'Charles put his own search for virtue before his duties as king'. Heylyn thus 'attacked the whole shift in Royalist writing towards an emphasis on Charles' personal

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[60] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 170.
[61] John Trussell, *A Continuation of the Collection of the History of England* (London, 1636); Giovanni Francesco Biondi, *An History of the Civill Warres of England, betweene the Two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke* (London, 1641); William Habington, *The Historie of Edward the Fourth, King of England* (London, 1640).
[62] Habington, *Historie of Edward the Fourth*, A2r–A2v.
[63] Habington, *Historie of Edward the Fourth*, 106.

qualities'.[64] From one perspective, Clarke's positive characterisation of Henry VI's gentleness and passivity seems to endorse Stuart hagiography, which favoured the personal over the political and reclaimed Charles I as a saintly victim of circumstances. However, as we shall see, *Innocentia Purpurata* ultimately provides a novel retort to the mythology of the royal martyr.

Clarke's preoccupation with the clash between war and peace, the bellicose Warwick and the placid Henry, is also expressed in the entire play's mixing of tragedy and comedy. In Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part 3*, Warwick initially favours Edward of York but withdraws his support when Edward abandons a strategically advantageous marriage proposal in favour of the widow Elizabeth Woodville (3.3.256–265). No such character remains in Clarke's all-male version. Instead, Edward infuriates his followers with his affection for, and misplaced trust in, Boldus, a vainglorious soldier. As we saw in the previous chapter, the *miles gloriosus* is a stock figure in early modern Latin drama, used to compare scholarly eloquence and martial action.[65] Yet Wiggins has demonstrated that Clarke's Boldus is closely modelled on Shakespeare's Parolles from *All's Well That Ends Well* (first printed in the Folio of 1623).[66] Whereas Simons uses the braggart soldier to reflect on different kinds of resistance, Clarke's Shakespearean Boldus figures the mixing of different dramatic genres, comic and tragic, and the opposed conceptions of history they imply.

Boldus rashly pledges to assassinate the earl of Warwick. Anticipating his failure, the other Yorkist soldiers plot to expose his affectations and test his loyalty in a mock-ambush. Before they spring upon him disguised as marauding Danes, Boldus reflects on his mistakes and considers letting his mask slip:

> Quare personam Hectoris per ampullas et sesquipedalia susceptam, hic ego, sub noctis silentio, quiete et pacifice deponam (ll. 399–400).

[64] Anthony Milton, '"Vailing his Crown": Royalist Criticism of Charles I's Kingship in the 1650s,' in McElligott and Smith (eds), *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum*, 97, 99.
[65] Sandis, *Early Modern Drama at the Universities*, 117–138.
[66] Wiggins, 'Shakespeare Jesuited,' 11–14.

> In the silence of the night, might I quietly and peacefully cast aside the disguise of Hector, maintained by bombast and boasting.

Boldus' predicament is described as a problem of literary decorum. The phrase 'ampullas et sesquipedalia' (bombast and foot-and-a-half long words) is taken from a passage in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, describing the idioms appropriate to different genres – 'versibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt' [the matter of comedy refuses to be set forth in tragic verses] – and the moments when tragedians set aside bombast to move their audience to pity.[67] Considering abandoning his sesquipedalian rhetoric thus indicates both that Boldus wants to cease his impersonation and that he is angling for our sympathy here. As he contemplates his perilous mission, the self-conscious braggart realises that his disguise may have gone too far. He has crossed the boundaries between genres and between fiction and reality:

> Nae ego per Bacchi sanguinem impudens fui, qui hoc periculosae plenum opus aleae in me suscepi (ll. 404–405).
>
> O truly I was made brazen with the juice of Bacchus, when I took on this task full of possibilities of danger.

The phrase 'periculosae plenum opus aleae' also belongs to Horace. It appears in the 'Ode to Pollio' describing Pollio's writing of a history of the Roman civil wars between Caesar and Pompey as a highly sensitive task fraught with pitfalls.[68] In a series of elaborate transferred epithets, Horace compares the perils of Pollio's literary endeavour to those of the war he seeks to record.[69] The ode is also generically unstable. Commentators have noted how Horace imports into the lyric tropes and rhetoric associated with tragedy to describe civil conflict.[70] After shifting into a lament on the misery of war, he checks himself: 'sed ne relictis, Musa procax, iocis' ['But steady, my impertinent Muse! Stick to frivolity'].[71] Clarke borrows from

[67] Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, 458–459, ll. 97, 89.
[68] Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, 96, l. 6.
[69] Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, 96, ll. 7–8, 17–20.
[70] Horace, *Odes Book II*, ed. Stephen Harrison, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 44–46.
[71] Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, 98–99, l. 37.

Horace not only the tag ‘periculosae plenum opus’, but also his preoccupation with the knotty relationships between genre, history, and representation. Boldus’ pugnacious boasts are imagined in the Horatian literary-critical terminology of straying from comedy to tragedy, the jocular to the heroic.

Like the *miles gloriosus* narratives of Plautus and Shakespeare, Clarke’s Boldus plot does have a sinister edge. He is captured by the disguised Yorkists, who pretend to be cruel Danes and speak a nonsense language borrowed from Shakespeare’s *All’s Well That Ends Well*.[72] Brought blindfolded before Edward, Boldus gives in to interrogation immediately. He reports on the behaviour of Edward and his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester in deeply unflattering ways. Ironically, while revealing his cowardice and hypocrisy, he tells the truth, describing Richard as ‘nequitiae farraginem’ (l. 786) [a ragbag of wickedness] ambitious for power. Like Simons in the oration on Persons, Clarke meditates on different forms of good and bad impersonation and the paradoxical way in which truth can sometimes only be conveyed through fiction. Despite unknowingly insulting the king and his family to his face, Boldus manages to escape punishment. He finds in his pocket a scrap of paper bearing Richard’s handwriting that outlines the plan for the ambush, and claims he was aware of the trick all along and had been play-acting in turn:

> totam hanc doli machinam a Richardo architecto excogitatam, ingenii me beneficio quasi vota, ad regis animum recreandum conversam esse (ll. 865–867).
>
> With the help of my wit as promised, this entire scheme of deception, devised by the crafty Richard, was transformed into an entertainment for the king.

The vagaries of court life are imagined as the discordant transitions of a play uncertain of its genre. Boldus claims to have been only playing a role (‘sustinendae personae’) in a most elegant play (‘O fabulam lepidissimam!’). While the king’s brother Clarence complains ‘Quid

[72] Wiggins, ‘Shakespeare Jesuited,’ 12.

hic mimo impudentius?' [What is more impudent than this farcical actor?] (ll. 850, 853, 858). Whereas Shakespeare's Parolles is dismissed from the court, Clarke's Boldus is forgiven and returns to comic form.[73] Partly, Boldus enacts the triumph of wit and words over the brute force of the soldiers in a similar way to the university plays analysed by Sandis.[74] But his subplot also constitutes a self-contained tragicomedy within the tragicomic history play. Alleviating the more serious political narrative, this entertaining diversion enacts Clarke's generic code-switching. Like the textual metaphors in *Sanctus Eduardus*, Boldus' narrative and Clarke's metatheatrical language, drawn from Horace, reflect creatively on the volatile relationship between genre and history, the ideals of fiction and the realities of experience. The *miles gloriosus* can be read as an emblem not just for this play's generic mixture, but for the dichotomies of English Jesuit drama and allegiance more broadly. Wielding rhetorical weapons and characterised by an ambiguous combination of aggression and gentleness, the mock-heroic soldier resembles the Jesuit dramatist writing polemical entertainments that blur the boundaries between resistance and loyalty.

Innocentia Purpurata sets up the possibility of a royal restoration and tragicomic ending. Clarke magnifies a brief incident, not mentioned by Shakespeare, when having taken the crown, Edward IV attempted to return it to Henry VI. Clarke invents a motivation for this in the form of a visit from the ghost of Edward's father, Richard of York. As Wiggins notes, this scene recalls the choreography of the ghost scene in *Hamlet*.[75] However, unlike its Shakespearean and Senecan forebears, this ghost does not command revenge, but repentance. He warns his son that he now regrets the first deposition of Henry VI:

> Immanitatem sceleris! Oh serus dolor!
> *Rerum aestimator, nate, quam dispar eris,*
> *Cum luce supera cassus in similem mei*
> *Abieris Umbram.* Regio i solio suum

[73] William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, ed. Susan Snyder, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 4.3.333–343.
[74] Sandis, *Early Modern Drama at the Universities*, 117–138.
[75] Wiggins, 'Shakespeare Jesuited,' 9.

> Repone rursum pondus (ll. 1057–1061).
>
> The enormity of the crime! Oh grief too late! *Oh what a different judge of things you will be, my son, when, fallen from the upper light you become a ghost like me.* Go! Restore him to his royal throne again.

Richard claims to have lost sight of the 'supera luce' and ominously threatens Edward with a similar fate. Although he repented 'serus' [too late], Edward still has time. Jesuits often narrated ghostly apparitions appearing from purgatory to warn their descendants against sin, especially Church Papistry.[76] But Richard does not scare his son with descriptions of perdition; instead, he alludes to an ambiguous 'aestimator […] dispar' [different assessment/ judge]. His prediction is more unsettling in its vagueness. Richard breaks off with an echoing warning: 'Retrahor ad poenas, vale./ Memor, memor –' (ll. 1064–1065) [I am being dragged back to punishment, farewell. Remember, remember]. The scene's rhetoric and stage-business contrast upper and lower realms, the ghostly and the living. It vividly enacts antithetical perspectives. The italicised lines are underlined in the manuscript and repeated by Edward after the ghost departs. Emphasised on page and stage, the disjunction between heavenly and earthly value systems is pivotal to the play's climax.

Edward is convinced by the ghost's warning and attempts to restore Henry to the throne, but the deposed king dies too soon. Richard arrives at the prison and tries to murder Henry while he prays before a crucifix. However, an angel descends and prevents the attempted assassination, 'Cohibe furorem' (l. 1186) [restrain your fury]. In a moment of bathos, the world-weary Henry is ungrateful to his angelic protector: 'Ah! Coepta peragat. Cur mori prohibes virum,/ Cui vita mors est, unus in votis Deus?' (ll. 1187–1188) [Ah, let him finish what he has begun! Why do you forbid death to a man for whom life is death, for whom God is his only desire?]. The antithesis 'vita mors' foregrounds Henry's mystical contempt for the

[76] Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 242–245.

world. He soon achieves his desired quietus when the angel stupefies Richard, allowing Henry to die most peacefully 'placidissime' (ll. 1199 SD). Given Jesuit dramatists' usual enthusiasm for climactic martyrdoms, why does Clarke contradict the story of Henry's murder at Richard's hands, found for instance in Shakespeare's play (5.6.55–60)? Crucially, Clarke's version of events protects Henry from the associations of violent death with providential punishment.[77] As we have seen, the pervasive imagery of blood staining the crown and polluting the nation in *Innocentia Purpurata* alludes to this emotionally and politically powerful concept of 'bloodguilt'. Yet in the final scene's departure from the historical record, Clarke makes clear that Henry VI is no 'man of blood'. Clarke takes pains to emphasise the peacefulness of the king's death. As the scene's argument makes clear, Henry dies as he lived, embracing 'mortem vitae mansuetissimae congruentem' [a death fitting to his most gentle way of life]. The Lancastrian king's remarkable piety and love of peace ensure that he is spared the horror of murder. By refusing to make a martyr of Henry, Clarke also refuses to make Henry a type of Charles I. Clarke's counter-factual narrative diverts from royalist martyrology and casts aspersions on the Stuart king's bloody death. Like *Sanctus Eduardus*, *Innocentia Purpurata* ultimately presents England's pre-Reformation monarch-saint not as a parallel, but an opposite to Charles I.

Innocentia Purpurata does not hold out hope for the royal cause by bringing about the restoration desired by the ghost of Edward's father. Refusing to figure Henry VI as Charles I or his successor, Clarke dismisses topical preoccupations in favour of the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. The final scene features a tableau of England's saintly kings and another descending angel, who curses Edward and predicts Richard of Gloucester's reign of terror:

> I, nunc Tyranne, stemma purpureum mete.
> Detrahe beatum capite stelligero decus.
> Rumpere furore, pectus invidia crepet.

[77] On early modern England's fascination with spectacles of providential punishment, see Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter two.

> Tenet astra rex Henricus, aeternum iubar
> Vertice triumphabundus excelso gerit (ll. 1231–1235).
>
> Go now tyrant, cut down the royal stock. Drag the sacred crown from his star-decorated head. Explode with fury, let your breast heave with envy. King Henry holds the stars; triumphantly he wears this everlasting light on his lofty head.

This minister of vengeance artfully suggests the disparity between heavenly and earthly perspectives. The empty vanities of temporal kingship, scorned by Henry earlier in the play, are here replaced by eternal jewels. The apotheosised Henry 'Tenet astra', holds entire constellations and wears 'aeternum iubar' [everlasting radiance]. There is no mention of Bosworth Field and Richard III's eventual downfall; instead, the angel vividly acknowledges the villain's apparent triumph and, with a series of scornful imperatives – 'I', 'Detrahe', 'Rumpere' – urges on the fledgling tyrant. The final lines of the play offer no consolation: 'Scelera pensabit scelus/ Vulnus reposcet vulnera, cruorem cruor./ Suamque Genitor victimam et natus suam' (ll. 1249–1251) [Crime will lead to more crime, wounds call for wounds, blood for blood, and father and son will be each other's victims]. The tricolon of echoic polyptoton enacts the self-sustaining cycle of bloody revenge. It echoes Tarasius' vengeful threats in *Leo Armenus*, which Simons expurgated from the post-regicide printed edition of his play. This stark ending inverts generic expectations. It drastically rewrites Shakespeare's conclusion to *3 Henry VI* in which Edward promises permanent peace (with heavy irony, given his brother Richard III's reign): 'Farewell sour annoy,/ For here I hope begins our lasting joy' (5.7.45–46). The Jesuit dramatist replaces this limited human vision with the larger scope of the angel's dire predictions. Yet this is not a rejection of tragicomedy. The tragic and the comic are held in suspension, and earthly and heavenly perspectives placed in juxtaposition. Privileging Henry VI's piety, the play does not redeem or mitigate his political failings. Instead, it disdains the world of politics altogether. For Clarke, true tragicomedy emerges from the attitude of 'contemptus mundi'.

Catholic royalists or radical exiles?

Tragicomic allegory is double-edged; it identifies both the blessed and the damned. If the topical implications of this are implicit in *Sanctus Eduardus* and *Innocentia Purpurata*, they are transparent in the most modern history play produced at St. Omers in the 1650s, *Morus sive Morum Integritas Suo Sanguine Purpurata* [More, or the Integrity of Virtue, Adorned with its own Blood]. No record of performance survives, but the text of this short prose play exists in the same collection of 1650s plays and poems as *Innocentia Purpurata*.[78] *Morus* depicts Sir Thomas More's fall from grace and execution in 1535 after refusing to support Henry VIII's divorce. This was a popular subject for Jesuit drama throughout Europe.[79] The manuscript cites the play's source as Nicholas Sander's *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*, a libellous secret history, brought to the press posthumously in 1585, by William Allen, Robert Persons, and Edward Rishton, and again in a revised version in 1586.[80] Sander's polemical account of the English Reformation or 'schism' claimed that Anne Boleyn was in fact Henry's daughter, that Elizabeth I was the monstrous product of this incestuous union, and that Henry's tyrannical reign had cursed England for generations afterwards.[81] Freddy Cristóbal Domínguez has shown how Sander's claims played a central role in the arguments for armed resistance against Elizabeth's government in the years leading up to the Spanish Armada.[82] Yet the history's style ensured its survival far beyond its initial propagandistic context. Sander's lurid narrative spread across Europe and spawned translations, reprints, histories, polemic, and

[78] Stonyhurst, MS B. VII. 23 Vol. 1, ff. 85v–99v. *Morus*, trans. Dana F. Sutton, The Philological Museum, rev. 16 May 2008, accessed 23 October 2022. http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/morus/. There are no line numbers. All further references to the play are to Sutton's edition and made by scene number. The translation is largely Sutton's with some modifications.
[79] Another earlier play on the subject, *Thomas Morus* survives at AVCAU, Liber 321, ff. 2r–38r. On the wider European Jesuit dramatization of More, see Friedrich K. Unterweg, 'Thomas More in Dutch Drama,' *Moreana* 25.97 (1988): 24–27.
[80] Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 257.
[81] Nicholas Sander, *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani* (Cologne, 1585), Bodleian, Crynes 478.
[82] Freddy Cristóbal Domínguez, *Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books During the Reign of Philip II* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), 21, 36.

baroque dramas.[83] Nearly eighty years later, Peter Heylyn was still fuming about this 'pestilent and seditious book'.[84] The college's dramatic adaptation of Sander's vituperative onslaught against the Tudor monarchy reveals that the language of Catholic resistance did not fall into disuse in the 1650s but persisted and was reimagined. In its controversial source and inventive use of tragicomic structure, *Morus* indicates the complex interaction between Catholic royalism and resistance in this volatile period.

Morus emphasises the conflict between spiritual and temporal authority. Frustrated by More's refusal to support the divorce and take the Oath of Supremacy, Henry VIII dismisses his reservations as 'anilibus religionibus ac scrupulis' (Scene 2) [old woman's religious doubts and scruples]. This gendered slur reduces moral principles to cowardly hesitation. Henry perseveres with desperate rhetoric 'Unam duntaxat vocem absque te deposco' [I am only asking for one word from you]. The play dramatizes the difficulty of choosing between the dictates of conscience and the demands of a sovereign. More's moral fortitude wins out. He chooses 'Christi Iesu coeli terrarumque domini fulgentissimos gloriae radios' [the very bright rays of the glory of Jesus Christ, Lord of heaven and earth] and rejects the 'sordida […] principum terrenorum studia' [sordid strivings of earthly sovereigns] (Scene 4). Placing religious faith before obedience to royal authority, the play reaffirms the justifications for English Catholic resistance.

Morus accentuates the tragicomic affordances of martyrdom. Thomas More was often represented as a man of wit and humour, expert in humanist word games and still making jokes as he ascended the scaffold.[85] The Catholic polemicist Thomas Stapleton's hagiography *Vita Thomae Mori* (1588), another source for the play, devotes an entire chapter to More's 'Acute

[83] Christopher Highley, '"A Pestilent and Seditious Book": Nicholas Sander's *Schismatis Anglicani* and Catholic Histories of the Reformation,' in Paulina Kewes (ed.), *The Uses of History in Early Modern England* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006), 147–167, 153.
[84] Highley, 'A Pestilent and Seditious Book,' 147.
[85] Anne Lake Prescott, 'Afterlives,' in George M. Logan (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 266–268.

& facete dicta' [sharp and humorous words].[86] *Morus* capitalises on the dramatic potential of this tradition and depicts More repeatedly punning and joking, while his execution draws nearer. His jailer, with a pun on the Latin 'mos, moris' meaning habit or manner, describes him as 'pro more pie iuxta ac lepide' (Scene 3) [both pious and witty as is his way]. After voicing a conventional Christian truism that the world itself is 'non aliud […] nisi carcer' [nothing but a prison] from which all will be brought to eternal trial, More quips that he is pleased to find his actual prison in the Tower 'aliorum carcer minor' [smaller than others] since 'e malis, ut nosti, minimum semper est eligendum' [as you know, we must always chose the lesser evil] (Scene 3). More's jokes do not simply display his learning, they also reveal his ironic, sanguine perspective on earthly life, which might be seen as a more positive equivalent to Henry VI's apathy. These quips model the animating juxtapositions of sacred tragicomedy.

In the final scene, *Morus* turns tragicomic structure to spectacularly subversive ends. The 'Angliae Genius' [spirit of England] appears to Henry VIII and shows him Thomas More and his other victim, Cardinal John Fisher, in glory. Two angels extol the martyrs as 'patriae maxima decora' [the great glory of the nation] and 'Malleus ingens hostibus impiis,/ Pacis lumina, fulmina belli' [a mighty hammer for impious enemies, the lights of peace and the lightning of war] (Scene 6). This providentially comic ending, which vindicates More's jokey optimism, is matched by its tragic opposite. A vengeful angel descends and curses Henry's lineage, represented in a dumbshow of subsequent Tudor monarchs. The accusations are taken straight from Sander's Elizabethan polemic. Though the Stuart dynasty is not mentioned, the angel's comprehensive vision of future disaster encompasses the present moment:

> Tum denique perque tot saecula miserorum hominum millia tuo exemplo tuorumque assectorum ductu, persuasu, coactu e illustris suae ecclesiae othodoxae gremio avulsa atque in sempiternas inferorum flammas praecipitata (Scene 6).

[86] Thomas Stapleton, *Tres Thomae seu de S. Thomae Apostoli Rebus Gestis, de S. Thomae Archiepiscopo Cantuariensi & Martyre, D. Thomae Mori Angliae Quondam Cancellarii Vita* (Douai, 1588), 257–272, Bodleian, Lawn f.294.

> And finally, the thousands of wretched men through so many ages who by your example and by the guidance, persuasion and compulsion of your followers have been torn from the bosom of their noble orthodox Church and hurled into the undying flames of the underworld.

The angel's frightening invective depicts the Henrician Reformation's eternal consequences. It implies that the civil wars and regicide were divine retribution for the English schism. In *De Origine*, Sander describes Henry on his death, unable to move following years of gluttony and overcome with regret: 'Omnia (inquit) perdidimus' [we, he said, have squandered everything].[87] In *Morus,* Henry is struck less by self-pity than horror at the angel's predictions, crying out 'Periimus, aeternum periimus' [we are lost, eternally lost].

The belief that Henry VIII's reign had brought God's punishment upon England was not unique to Catholics, but shared by some contemporary royalist episcopalians.[88] The antiquary Henry Spelman's posthumously published *History and Fate of Sacrilege* traced how 'Desolation presently followed this Dissolution' and argued that divine retribution was visited on those who had destroyed England's monasteries.[89] In *Coopers Hill*, Denham condemns Henry's hypocrisy and mourns the blot on the nation's character: 'Who sees these dismal heaps, but would demand/ What barbarous Invader sackt the land?'[90] However, these criticisms tend to focus on 'the shame/ Of sacrilege' and to distinguish Henry's Tudor descendants from the Stuarts who, as Spelman emphasises, 'had no hand in the like depredation of the Monasteries and Churches' in Scotland.[91] By contrast, *Morus* presents the break from Rome as the primal sin, and its penalty as indiscriminate and far-reaching. *Morus*, like Simons' oration on Persons, exemplifies the continuing vitality of the Elizabethan tradition of Catholic resistance. And yet, as starkly different as it may seem from royalist tragicomedy, it uses the same techniques of blending the tragic and the comic and dramatizing a fantasy of supposed political and

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[87] Sander, *De Origine*, 105.
[88] Milton, *England's Second Reformation*, 400; Highley, 'Henry VIII's Ghost,' 106–107.
[89] Henry Spelman, *The History and Fate of Sacrilege* (London, 1698), 186.
[90] Denham added these lines to the 1655 revised text, O Hehir (ed.), *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 148, ll. 125–126.
[91] O Hehir (ed.), *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks*, 146, ll. 149–150; Spelman, *History and Fate of Sacrilege*, 192.

providential justice to find triumph in defeat.

At the same time as producing hugely controversial plays, St. Omers' students and masters were reading and copying popular contemporary English literature. *Morus* appears in a manuscript miscellany, compiled at St. Omers in the 1650s, which includes fashionable English miscellany pieces, such as imitations of Horace by Henry Wotton, a version of William Strode's ubiquitous 'Cloris Walking Alone', and an extract from Joshua Sylvester's 1604 translation of the Huguenot Guillaume Du Bartas' *Divine Weeks*.[92] Intriguingly, there also appears a previously unknown copy of Edmund Waller's *A Panegyrick to my Lord Protector*.[93] This small miscellany reveals the college's engagement with vernacular literary culture and suggests shared aesthetic values across the confessional spectrum. But it also poses the question of how Waller's contentious poem to Cromwell might have struck its Jesuit copier.

Commemorating the installation of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector in December 1653, Waller's *Panegyric* was first printed in 1655.[94] It marks the ex-royalist poet's accommodation to the new regime and won him Cromwell's favour. He received a letter of thanks and a position on the Council of Trade a few months later.[95] The poem celebrates the coming of peace to a divided world: 'While with a strong, and yet a gentle Hand,/ You bridle Faction, and our Hearts command' (ll. 1–2). Scholars from Warren Chernaik in 1968 onwards have read Waller's poem as an 'argument' for supporting Cromwell as the best guarantor of future stability, either in Augustan imperial or conservatively monarchical terms.[96] According

[92] Stonyhurst, MS B. VII. 23. Vol. 1, ff. 123vr–124r, 127r, 137v–138r, 128r–134r. Isaac Walton (ed.), *Reliquiae Wottonianae* (London, 1651), 531, 533–534. On Strode, see Adam Smyth, '"Art Reflexive": The Poetry, Sermons, and Drama of William Strode (1601?–1645),' *Studies in Philology* 103.4 (2006): 436. Susan Snyder (ed.), *The Divine Weeks and Works of Guillaume de Saluste Sieur du Bartas, Vol. 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 274.
[93] Stonyhurst, MS B. VII. 23. Vol. 1, ff. 134–137v.
[94] Edmund Waller, *A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector* (London, 1655). The St. Omers copy agrees with this printing. All further references will be to the printed text and made as line numbers.
[95] Timothy Raylor, 'Waller's Machiavellian Cromwell: The Imperial Argument of *A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector*,' *RES* 56.225 (2005): 386.
[96] Warren Chernaik, *The Poetry of Limitation: A Study of Edmund Waller* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 151–171; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 299–309; Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing*

to Edward Holberton, Waller 'portrays Cromwell as a truly Augustan figure who can bring different social groups together'.[97] Would Waller's English Catholic readers have recognised themselves as one such 'social group'? Certainly, Waller extols near universal values of peace, unity, and stability. Yet, examining his representation of Cromwell's power in the context of expatriate Jesuit readers reveals the limits to Waller's fiction of universality.

A Panegyrick draws extensively on the watery imagery of the Protectorate's naval strength, comparing Cromwell to Neptune whose 'Power extends as farr as Winds can blowe,/ Or swelling Sayles upon the Globe may goe' (ll. 19–20). Cromwell has commanded the seas and 'restored' England as the 'Seat of Empire' (ll. 14–15). Timothy Raylor, drawing on his discovery of Waller's annotated copy of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, in which Waller drafted some verses praising Cromwell, argues that *A Panegyrick* celebrates not an Augustan peace, but 'a well-ordered state in the full vigour of imperial growth' and that its imperialism is Machiavellian in origin.[98] The depiction of empire has since become central to discussions of the poem. Niall Allsopp analyses how Waller draws on a Hobbesian language of sovereignty to underscore Cromwell's 'imperial and judicial power'.[99] Stephen Deng detects a tension between imperial expansion by trade or war, firmly situating the poem in debates surrounding the Rump Parliament and Cromwell's foreign policies.[100] In the context of St. Omers, the poem's imperial language reads differently. Waller proclaims:

> Whether this portion of the World were rent
> By the rude Ocean from the Continent,
> Or thus Created, it was sure design'd
> To be the Sacred Refuge of Mankind.
> Hither th'oppressed shall henceforth resort,

Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait and Print, 1645–1661 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 102–106.

[97] Edward Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate: Culture, Politics, and Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 99.

[98] Raylor, 'Waller's Machiavellian Cromwell,' 408; Timothy Raylor, 'Reading Machiavelli; Writing Cromwell: Edmund Waller's Copy of *The Prince* and its Draft Verses towards *A Panegyrick to my Lord Protector*,' *Turnbull Library Record* 35 (2002): 9–32.

[99] Allsopp, *Poetry and Sovereignty*, 146.

[100] Stephen Deng, '"We Plough the Deep, and Reap What Others Sow": Waller's *Panegyrick* and the Empire of Trade,' in Philip Major (ed.), *Edmund Waller (1606–1687): New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 128–148.

> Justice to crave, and Succour at your Court;
> And then your Highness, not for ours alone,
> But for the World's Protector shall be known: (ll. 25–32).

The hyperbolic imagery makes clear that Cromwell has secured the highest possible authority: imperial dominion. The Virgilian commonplace of Britain entirely cut off from the rest of the world, 'penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos', is deployed here in a way that recalls the sixteenth-century language of insular English nationhood. In particular, the association of imperialism with insularity and depiction of Britain as the world's final recourse for protection hark back to the 'Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome' (1533), the founding document of the Henrician Reformation that first declared England an empire and 'rent' it 'from the continent'.[101] This same language of insularity is used in *Morus* to describes the break from Rome. Thomas Cromwell tells Henry:

> Nihil tibi, o rex, deliberatius esse certo scio quam crudelissimam Romani praesidis tyrannidem e finibus imperii tui penitus exterminare (Scene 2).
>
> I know for sure, your majesty, that nothing is more important to you than entirely banishing the cruel tyranny of the Bishop of Rome from the borders of your realm.

The play's argument similarly describes the Oath of Supremacy in terms of territory and jurisdiction: 'pontificis maximi auctoritas vero vicario obrogatur, in Angliae regem intra regni sui fines transfertur' [it arrogated the authority of the pope as God's true vicar and transferred it to the king of England within the boundaries of his realm]. Constitutionally and rhetorically, Oliver Cromwell's imperial authority, described in *A Panegyrick*, depends upon the events depicted in *Morus*. Reading *A Panegyrick* from the perspective of those still lamenting the Act of Supremacy accentuates its debts to the rhetoric of post-Reformation English nationhood.

Though several contemporary attacks on Waller's poem by exiled royalists and disappointed republicans survive, the St. Omers copy of *A Panegyrick* lacks marginalia or

[101] Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 4.

commentary.[102] It appears next to both deeply controversial Latin plays and anodyne English verse miscellany favourites. We cannot know precisely what its Jesuit readers made of it. However, Waller's vision of English national sovereignty is antithetical to the college's representations of nationhood and supranational papal authority. *Morus* and *Sanctus Eduardus* defend papal supremacy, and the latter's prologue to the governor of Saint-Omer identifies the college students as cosmopolitans, embracing both the universal Roman Church and a version of Englishness. If, as Holberton claims, Waller's Cromwell is 'a unifying, moderate Augustus, in whom the hopes of all but radicals can be invested', then should St. Omers be counted among those radicals?[103] The presence of Waller's poem in this Catholic miscellany challenges some of the assumptions about both polarisation and consensus which have been deployed in criticism on the *Panegyric*. Drawing on royalist and Cromwellian rhetoric and finding fault with both, the St. Omers plays exemplify the ambivalent perspective of mid-century Catholics. Neither wholly radical nor royalist, this literary culture forces us to reassess the sometimes narrow national, confessional, linguistic, and discursive contexts and polarities in which mid-century English literature has hitherto been read.

Laughter or lament: Refiguring civil war

The St. Omers plays comment repeatedly on their own representational strategies and topicality, projecting multiple theories of the function and politics of tragicomedy. Characters frequently reflect self-consciously on different ways they can be interpreted, and comedy jostles with tragedy throughout. *Sanctus Eduardus* includes a comic interlude presented by a bathetically anthropomorphised 'Daemon' in the royal treasury. After describing his friendship with the would-be usurper earl Godwin, who lent him a 'nocturnum pileum' (f. 12r) [nightcap] when he was ill, the demon introduces a troop of dancing boys:

> Quam hic cernitis, mihi pubes ista in disciplinam tradita est. An non aequum

[102] David Norbrook, 'Lucy Hutchinson versus Edmund Waller: An Unpublished Reply to Waller's *A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector*,' *The Seventeenth Century* 11.1 (1996): 61–86.
[103] Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate*, 87.

> censetis, cum in ludo litterario tam sit assidua, ut iuventuti huic Acheronticae, ludendi hodie facultas detur? In gratiam Hospitum, et ut Magistrum vestrum sanum et salvum recipiatis, terram una mecum liberius pulsate (f. 12v).
>
> This band of youths you see here, has been handed over to me for training. Don't you think it fair, since they are so diligent at their literary tasks, that these lads from Hell should be given a chance to play today? To please the visitors, and to make your master hale and hearty again, stamp the floor freely with me.

Here the college stage provides recreation for the students and light entertainment for guests. By recasting the pupils as dancing 'lads from hell', the Satyr-like devil seems to parody the high-minded didacticism of the rest of the play. The interlude disrupts the fiction of the play-world to comment on the schoolboys' hard work. However, in the following scene, Edward, having observed the dance in the treasury, interprets it as a cautionary spectacle of the evils of avarice, and refuses to take the money touched by the cavorting devils. The play thus supplies two ways, comic and serious, of interpreting the interlude, and leaves the audience to decide if the devils' dance is innocuous entertainment or sinister allegory? Like the mixed registers of Horace's 'Ode to Pollio' and Boldus' generic identity crisis in *Innocentia Purpurata*, the interlude reflects the multiple purposes and representational strategies of the college drama as a whole.

This dual purpose is given complex treatment in the shockingly irreverent St. Omers playlet *Dissidium Figuristicum: Civilis Contentio Nomen Inter Pronomen* [Figurative Discord: Civil War between Noun and Pronoun], copied into the same miscellany as *Innocentia Purpurata* and *Morus*.[104] Intricately self-reflexive, this short prose play explores how contemporary politics could be 'figured'. The pedagogical genre of the *Bellum Grammaticale*, in which different parts of speech are personified and contend with each other in ways that illustrate their origins or function, was pioneered by early sixteenth-century humanists and remained popular in schools and universities throughout early modern Europe.[105] *Dissidium*

[104] Stonyhurst, MS B. VII. 23. Vol. 1, f. 226r–234v.
[105] Sandis, *Early Modern Drama at the Universities*, 80–81; Tommi Alho, Aleksi Mäkilähde, and Elizabeth Sandis, 'Grammar War Plays in Early Modern England: From Entertainment to Pedagogy,' *Renaissance Drama*

Figuristicum is a previously unknown and innovative take on this genre. The playlet's dense punning on the terms of Latin grammar render it difficult to translate both the humour and the 'literal' sense. Departing from generic conventions, it includes two non-grammatical personifications: 'Heu' (Lament) and 'Ha' (Laughter). The two exclamations offer alternative perspectives seemingly on the contest between the figures of speech, but implicitly on the recent civil wars. Heu mourns the loss of thousands in number, gender, and case ('tot nominum millia, qua numerorum, qua generum, qua casuum suorum iactura') and complains

> Illa, illa nostra, quae ab omni hactenus […] bello immunis, per immensa prope saeculorum spatia effloruit resp. Figuristica, civilibus nunc armis distrahitur, laceratur, conficitur (f. 231v).
>
> Here, here our figurative republic, so far immune from every war, flourished for a boundless space of almost ages, now is being torn asunder, mutilated, consumed by civil wars.

This recalls both the conventional appeal to England's pre-war golden age and the visceral imagery of the depredations of civil conflict. Ha's response is startling:

> Quis hanc ciuium nostrorum, mutuis se vulneribus conficientium, insaniam perpendens, tenere risum diutius poterit? Ha, ha, he etc (f. 231v).
>
> Who pondering the frenzy of our citizens, murdering themselves with mutual wounds, could hold back a laugh for long? Ha, ha, he etc.

Whilst Heu maintains the play's conceit and responds to the death of grammatical figures with appropriate sorrow, Ha recognises its figurativeness and gets the joke.

This playlet's vertiginous combination of the figurative and the literal, the humorous and the tragic, presents in miniature the strange fusions that characterise the dramatic culture of 1650s St. Omers. Ha presumably voices the perspective of the knowing reader or audience member, who appreciates the grammatical wit. Yet the play's reference to contemporary conflict is unmistakeable, such that laughter seems deeply inappropriate. This apparently

48 (2021): 235–271; Erik Butler, *The Bellum Grammaticale and the Rise of European Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

esoteric academic satire raises troubling questions about the reach of the college community's empathy. Ha tacitly identifies the civil wars as an object of scorn and asserts the college's distance from them. It is similar to the way *Sanctus Eduardus* and *Innocentia Purpurata* raise possible parallels between the Stuarts and saintly medieval kings before swiftly disrupting them. The refusal to 'figure' recent history speaks eloquently to the college's complex relation to the British conflict and its literary culture. To expatriate Catholics, the civil wars and Revolution might seem a futile squabble between equally blameworthy parties, whose schism and heresy had ensured their own destruction. Comedy enters these tragedies not simply as monarchical or divine solutions to political disorder, but also as derisive laughter at the myopic foolishness of heretics and politicos.

English Jesuit theatre was a continuously evolving form that responded creatively to vernacular literary and polemical trends. These plays appropriate and re-imagine tragicomedy in ways that challenge critical consensus surrounding the genre's royalist meanings in the mid-seventeenth century. *Sanctus Eduardus* stages a conditional fantasy of restoration and endorses only those kings who are obedient to the papacy. The extraordinarily bleak ending of *Innocentia Purpurata* retains the tragedy in tragicomedy in order to sharply distinguish the heavenly from the earthly, eternal salvation from the world of political fantasy and desire. *Morus* depicts the awful consequences of disobedience to God and the bishop of Rome in its closing vision of providential justice. These plays might uphold a general reverence for monarchy, but they also exploit the connections between tragicomedy and ideas of providence to cast the Stuarts in a deeply unfavourable light, pointedly asking what the defeat of the royalist cause and the violence of Charles I's death indicated about God's attitude to the post-Reformation British monarchy. Their half-analogies and incomplete parallels reflect the Catholic argument that all Charles II was lacking in his pursuit of restoration was Roman Catholic faith and the support

of the papacy.[106] When Henrietta Maria's chaplains in Paris attempted to convert Charles' brother, the young duke of Gloucester in 1654, they reportedly told him that the king's 'restitution was desperate to impossibility by any other meanes then that of Catholiques'.[107] These distinctively English Roman Catholic tragicomedies reflect a deeply qualified and contingent commitment to the royalist cause. Combining the longstanding traditions of Catholic resistance, exemplified by Sander, Stapleton, Verstegan, and Persons, with a respect for sacred kingship and hatred of Cromwell, they illustrate that Catholic allegiance is often far more complex than the resistance-loyalism binary would imply. This drama represents nationhood and sovereignty in confessionally distinctive ways and reflects self-consciously on literary strategies of political commentary and allusion.

Like many of the authors analysed in this thesis so far, these dramatists adopt a plethora of other voices. Drawing upon, inverting, and even parodying dominant literary trends associated with royalism, the Commonwealth, and anti-Norman Levellers, these writers use familiar rhetorical resources to construct a Roman Catholic perspective on England's crisis. They thus challenge the critical narrative that mid-century literary forms became sharply polarised and tied to stable political identities. At once English and cosmopolitan, these baroque tragicomedies on the rise and fall of kings prompt us to reconsider the horizons and possibilities of the drama of the English Revolution.

[106] Williams, 'Between King, Faith and Reason,' 1063–1099; Malcolm, 'Pretending to Be Catholic?' 31–51.
[107] Bodleian, Clarendon MS 49, f. 169r.

Chapter Four

Richard Crashaw among the converts

In 1652, a polemical pamphlet printed in London listed no fewer than fifty-three recent converts to Catholicism or 'Revolters to Rome'.[1] These 'slippery Saints' were courtiers, controversialists, royalist officers, nobility, and former Laudian clergymen who, amid the crises of the monarchy and Established Church, abandoned both their homeland and their faith. Among them was one of the most influential devotional poets of the century, Richard Crashaw.[2] Born in 1613 to the fiercely anti-Catholic cleric and controversialist William Crashaw, the poet matriculated at Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1631, and became a fellow of Peterhouse in 1636.[3] An enthusiastic proponent of Laudian reforms, Crashaw was ejected from his Cambridge fellowship in 1643. Having fled to Europe, he converted to Roman Catholicism around 1645, and, after spells in Leiden, Paris, and Rome, died at the shrine of the Holy House of Loreto, Italy, in 1649. His sensuous, baroque poetry has proved difficult to categorize; critics have variously identified his style as Roman Catholic, Laudian, High Church Anglican, radical enthusiast, and even irenic or ecumenical. Yet despite this long-running debate, Crashaw's poetry has never been read alongside the voluminous writings of his fellow Laudian converts to Roman Catholicism in the 1640s. This chapter situates his poetry in the context of the debates over confessional difference and change that raged among English exiles in interregnum Paris. Having established that the Tixall coterie and the two colleges, communities defined to a great extent by their Catholicism, adopted a range of different voices and styles in their writings, this chapter directly confronts the question of an ostensibly Catholic literary style. It argues that mid-century Catholic converts and their opponents meditated on

[1] *Legenda Lignea*, 171.
[2] *Legenda Lignea*, A7v.
[3] Thomas Healy, 'Crashaw, Richard (1612/13–1648), poet,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/6622.

the relationship between the confessions and between faith and style in ways that can help us look again at both Crashaw and the aesthetics of post-Reformation religious poetry.

The chronologies of Crashaw's poetic and religious careers are complex. The impact of Laudian culture in Cambridge is evident in his first collection of verse printed in 1634, a series of Latin epigrams paraphrasing and elaborating on scripture.[4] These poems have their origin in the institutional practices of Pembroke College, where Crashaw's scholarship stipulated that he must compose Greek and Latin poems based on the relevant bible reading for every Sunday and Feast Day in the Church's year.[5] Yet they are also substantially indebted to Jesuit Latin epigrammatists and exhibit the visceral imagery, dizzying paradox, and elaborate ornament which have come to be seen as the hallmark of Crashaw's style.[6] He continued to compose English and Latin devotional and secular poetry, which circulated in manuscript in the 1630s.[7] In 1646, after Crashaw had left England, the royalist publisher Humphrey Moseley produced an edition of his poems, *Steps to the Temple*.[8] It includes English versions of the Pembroke epigrams, a translation of the first book of Marino's 'Sospetto di Erode', *The Massacre of the Innocents* (1632), and devotional poems to St. Teresa, Mary Magdalen, and the Virgin Mary. Earlier manuscript witnesses suggest that the poems printed in 1646, for all their baroque conceits and elaborately sensuous devotion, were written while Crashaw remained a minister of the Church of England.[9] Two years later, Moseley brought out a second edition of *Steps to the Temple*, with modified texts of earlier poems and several entirely new

[4] Richard Crashaw, *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber* (Cambridge, 1634).
[5] Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939), 22–23.
[6] On the influence of Jesuit Latin writers on seventeenth-century English poets, see Moul, *A Literary History of Latin & English Poetry*, 223–270.
[7] Bodleian, Tanner MS 466 includes two copies of Crashaw's translation of book one of Marino's *Le Strage de Gli Innocenti*, dated 15th (f. 154r) and 25th (f. 164r) November 1637. In different hands and bound together later, these manuscript separates suggest systematic manuscript circulation of Crashaw's verse in late 1630s Cambridge.
[8] Richard Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple: Sacred Poems, with Other Delights of the Muses* (London, 1646).
[9] Bodleian, Tanner MSS 465 and 466, see L. C. Martin (ed.), *The English, Latin, and Greek Poems of Richard Crashaw* 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), lix–lxxiii.

works.[10] Since many of these new poems do not survive among 1630s manuscripts, they may have been written in the 1640s and after Crashaw's conversion. Finally, in 1652 a posthumous edition of Crashaw's poetry was produced at Paris by his friend and fellow English Catholic exile Thomas Carre, entitled *Carmen Deo Nostro*.[11] Several poems are revised, almost all are given new titles, and the collection is illustrated by a series of engravings and emblems. It begins with one entirely new poem, the verse epistle encouraging Susan Feilding, the Countess of Denbigh, to convert to Catholicism. This final edition framed Crashaw's poetry as distinctively Roman Catholic and contributed to the religious debates occurring in Paris between English episcopalians, Catholics, and converts wavering between the two.[12] The style and preoccupations of the poetry in these three editions remained largely consistent, but their paratextual materials sought to claim the poet for opposing religious and political agendas.

Literary critics disagree about the religious affinities of Crashaw's verse. An earlier generation of scholars claimed that Crashaw's poetry was characteristically Roman Catholic.[13] Pointing to his borrowings from Jesuit Latin epigrams, Marino, St. Francis de Sales, St. John of the Cross, and most importantly St. Teresa of Avila, these critics identified the apparent excess and ornament of his style with baroque Catholicism. In opposition to this Roman Crashaw, others have claimed him as a conformist Laudian by demonstrating that writers across the confessional spectrum deployed similar sources and tropes.[14] L. C. Martin, Thomas

[10] Richard Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple, Sacred Poems, with Other Delights of the Muses. Second Edition* (London, 1648).
[11] Richard Crashaw, *Carmen Deo Nostro, Sacred Poems, Augmented* (Paris, 1652).
[12] I follow historians' use of the term episcopalian to refer to mid-seventeenth-century English Protestants who remained committed to episcopacy and the Established Church. See Milton, *Second Reformation*, 10 and *passim*; Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, 'Episcopalian Identity, 1640–1662,' in Anthony Milton (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity c.1520–1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 457–482.
[13] Mario Praz, 'The Flaming Heart: Richard Crashaw and the Baroque,' in *The Flaming Heart: Essays on Crashaw, Machiavelli, and Other Studies in the Relations between Italian and English Literature from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot* (New York: Norton, 1958), 204–263; R. V. Young, *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Maureen Sabine, *Feminine Engendered Faith: The Poetry of John Donne and Richard Crashaw* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992).
[14] Joseph R. Teller, 'Why Crashaw was not Catholic: The Passion and Popular Protestant Devotion,' *ELR* 43.2 (2013): 239–267.

Healy, and Graham Parry insist that there is nothing in Crashaw's writing 'to demonstrate that it was not written by one who lived and died a High Anglican'.[15] Certainly, the sensibility and style identified as markedly Crashavian or Roman Catholic shares much with both Donne and Herbert. Nor was Crashaw unique in his enthusiastic praise for St. Teresa, the Spanish Catholic mystic and founder of the reformed order of Discalced Carmelites; in 1638, his friend and colleague at Peterhouse, Joseph Beaumont, who remained in the Church of England throughout his life, delivered an oration enthusing about how Teresa's 'pen, wet with divine dew, dripped I know not what sweeter than sweetness itself, and bathed the whole heaven […] O how much may you expire with sweetness in her words!'[16] However, if proponents of a Roman Catholic Crashaw overemphasise the final years of the poet's life, arguments for an 'Anglican' Crashaw are limited by an almost exclusive focus on the 1630s. They neglect the discursive, religious, and political context of the following decade, when all of Crashaw's English poetry was printed and some of his most important poems were likely first composed.

In recent years, yet another Crashaw has emerged. Paying attention to religious change, innovation, and flux in the 1630s and 1640s, some critics read the confessional ambiguities of his poetry as evidence of an irenic or ecumenist attitude to post-Reformation debates. Gary Kuchar detects 'a certain theological generosity, one that can contain both Laudian and Catholic readings'; Richard Rambuss finds 'aspirations to a more universalist Christianity'; and Molly Murray argues that his poems focus on 'feminine spiritual experience' in ways that 'challenge or disrupt confessional boundaries'.[17] These critics capture the way Crashaw's verse

[15] Thomas F. Healy, *Richard Crashaw* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 4; Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 144; Martin (ed.), *Poems of Richard Crashaw*, xxii.
[16] A. O. Reesink, 'Joseph Beaumont's Unpublished Oration, Peterhouse, Cambridge, 1638,' *LIAS* 24 (1997): 197–211; Alexander Wong '"Dainty Martyrdom" And "Hot Devotion" in the Verse of Joseph Beaumont (1616–1699),' *Religion & Literature* 44.2 (2012): 10–11.
[17] Gary Kuchar, 'A Greek in the Temple: Pseudo-Dionysius and Negative Theology in Richard Crashaw's "Hymn in the Glorious Epiphany,"' *Studies in Philology* 108.2 (2011): 296; Richard Rambuss, 'Crashaw's Style,' in Lowell Gallagher (ed.), *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 144; Murray, *The Poetics of Conversion*, 106.

forces us to rethink strict polarities of religious identity and style. But, as we shall see, in the 1640s Crashaw's fellow converts to Catholicism identified cross-confessional resemblance and hybridity not as a means of reconciliation, but as a problem to be solved and a state of indecision that put the soul in grievous danger.

Examining how other Laudians turned Roman Catholics responded to the problem of cross-confessional resemblance can help us reconsider the relationship between Crashaw's seemingly consistent poetic style and his changing faith. Molly Murray has also read Crashaw alongside other conversion manuals, but she concentrates on texts from the 1630s and their depiction of gender, rather than on the theological and polemical preoccupations of Crashaw's later contemporaries.[18] This chapter examines the writings of three converts in circles surrounding the exiled court of Henrietta Maria in Paris during the 1640s: Thomas Bayly, Hugh Cressy, and Thomas Vane. The satirical list of 'Revolters to Rome' viciously mocks all three men and claims that 'Crawshaw can rail as satyrically and bitterly at true Religion in Verse, as others of his grain and complexion can in Prose, and loose discourses'.[19] These 'loose discourses', the polemical and autobiographical writings of his fellow Catholic converts, provide a new context for understanding Crashaw and particularly the final volume of his poetry, *Carmen Deo Nostro* published in Paris, one of the most maligned, misunderstood, and important volumes of mid-seventeenth-century English poetry.[20] Rather than searching for direct influence or imitation, I argue that we can better appreciate how Crashaw's poems reflect upon conversion and contemporary ecclesiological debates when we understand how his close contemporaries conceived of, and represented, religious change. The first half of this chapter analyses the representation of the process of converting and the nature of the true Church in these widely read narratives; I then return to Crashaw's poetry, arguing that it combines the

[18] Murray, *The Poetics of Conversion*, 106–115.
[19] *Legenda Lignea*, 171, 152–155, 157–162, 163–168.
[20] Healy, *Richard Crashaw*, 5–7.

poetic and the polemical, devotion and controversy, and enacts the difficult experience of choosing between true and false Churches. This chapter thus provides both a fresh way of reading Crashaw and a new approach to the complex relationship between confessional identity and literary style in post-Reformation literature.

Crashaw's contemporaries

As Alison Shell notes, critics have long tended to exaggerate Crashaw's 'uniqueness', and in the process to 'abnormalize much of medieval spirituality together with whole tracts of mainstream Counter-Reformation devotional culture'.[21] In fact, Crashaw followed the same well-trodden path as several contemporaries, to whom he has never been compared in any detail.

After graduating from Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1620, Thomas Vane was made deacon and priest of Peterborough in 1621 and chaplain-extraordinary to Charles I in 1626.[22] Vane converted early in the 1640s and published *A Lost Sheep Returned Home* at Paris in 1645. This narrative was reprinted four times and translated into French in 1665.[23] Vane spent the rest of his life producing polemical and devotional works for the English expatriate community in Paris. Hugh Cressy (in religion, Serenus) was an Oxford graduate who became a prebendary of Windsor and member of the 'Great Tew Circle' surrounding Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, in the 1630s, a group of moderate Protestant writers and theologians committed to the application of reason to questions of faith.[24] Cressy left England in 1644, renounced his Protestantism

[21] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 100.
[22] Michael Mullett, 'Vane [Fane], Thomas (b. 1599/1600), Church of England Clergyman and Roman Catholic Convert,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/28087.
[23] Thomas Vane, *A Lost Sheepe Returned Home; or The Motives of the Conversion to the Catholique Faith of Thomas Vane* (Paris, 1645); reprinted in 1648, 1649, 1665, and 1666; Thomas Vane, *La Brebis Esgarée Retournée au Bercail, ou les Motifs de la Conversion à la Foy Catholique de Thomas Vane* (Paris, 1665), Leeds, Brotherton Library, Anglo-French 3 1665 VAN.
[24] Patricia C. Brückmann, 'Cressy, Hugh Paulinus [name in religion Serenus] (1605–1674), Benedictine Monk,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/6676; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Great Tew Circle,' in *Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans: Seventeenth-Century Essays* (London: Seeker & Warburg, 1987), 188; Sarah

before the Inquisition at Rome in 1646, and became a Benedictine monk in 1648. Alongside works of mysticism, polemic, and a vast ecclesiastical history, he wrote a defence of his conversion entitled *Exomologesis*, published at Paris in 1647 and again in revised form in 1653.[25] Finally, the mercurial Thomas Bayly, son of Lewis Bayly, the popular devotional writer and Bishop of Bangor, was a canon of Wells Cathedral from 1638. We do not know when exactly he converted.[26] He was present at Raglan Castle, home of the Catholic Henry Somerset, Marquess of Worcester, while it was under siege in 1646.[27] Briefly imprisoned for writing an attack on the regicide in 1649, Bayly spent the 1650s in Paris and Rome, where he served as an ineffectual and short-lived spy for the Protectorate.[28] Bayly did not announce his conversion until 1654, when *An End to Controversie* was printed at Douai, yet this conversion narrative reproduces several arguments Bayly had made previously in works purportedly written while he remained a royalist episcopalian.[29] His chameleon career cannot be described fully here, but it indicates the frequently ambiguous and indirect ways that religious commitments were represented and refracted in print.

These conversion narratives were read with interest and sometimes anger by

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Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 70–74.

[25] Serenus Cressy, *Exomologesis, or, A Faithfull Narration of the Occasion and Motives of the Conversion unto Catholique Unity of Hugh-Paulin de Cressy* (Paris, 1647); Cressy, *Exomologesis* (Paris, 1653). His other works include 'Treatise of the Passion' (1648), Ampleforth Abbey MS 45a; *Sancta Sophia, or, Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation* (Douai, 1657); *The Church-History of Brittany from the Beginning of Christianity to the Norman Conquest* (Rouen, 1668); *Fanaticism Fanatically imputed to the Catholick Church by Doctour Stillingfleet* (1672).

[26] Thompson Cooper and Stephen Wright, 'Bayly, Thomas (d. c.1657), Church of England Clergyman and Roman Catholic Controversialist,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/1767.

[27] Bayly published a probably fictional account of religious debates held between Charles I and the Marquess of Worcester at Raglan, *Certamen Religiosum, or, A Conference between His Late Majestie Charles King of England, and Henry, Late Marquess and Earl of Worcester, Concerning Religion* (London, 1649). Contemporaries recognised it as a work of thinly veiled Catholic propaganda: *Reliquae Sacrae Carolinae, or, The Works of […] King Charls the I* (Hague, 1650), ¶8v; Christopher Cartwright, *Certamen Religiosum […] Together with a Vindication of the Protestant Cause* (London, 1651); Hamon L'Estrange, *An Answer to the Marques of Worcester's Last Paper to the late King* (London, 1651).

[28] Bayly, *The Royal Charter* (1649); *State Papers of John Thurloe*, III, 635; IV, 59, 92, 172, 200, 232–233, 310.

[29] Thomas Bayly, *An End to Controversie between the Romane Catholique, and the Protestant Religions* (Douai, 1654); For instance, see *Certamen*, 40 and *End*, 17; *Certamen*, 59 and *End*, 44; *Certamen*, 91 and *End*, 57; *Certamen*, 124, and *End*, 64; *Certamen*, 198–199 and *End*, 198.

contemporaries across the confessional spectrum. Private correspondence and notebooks of various exiled royalists and episcopalians refer to them repeatedly.[30] The clergyman Henry Hammond instructed the future Archbishop of Canterbury Gilbert Sheldon to 'cull out the chief testimonies produced by Mr. Cressy, Dr Vane, Dr Bayly […] and render punctual answer to them'.[31] These narratives are generically hybrid, mixing fierce polemic with emotive life-writing. There has been much recent criticism on the genre of conversion narratives, yet in taking a cross-confessional and cross-temporal approach scholars have sometimes ignored the extent to which these texts were shaped by the particular polemical context in, and for, which they were written.[32] Early modern life-writing, meanwhile, as Adam Smyth has shown, tends not to represent 'a subjectivity founded on difference and individuality' prized by modernity, but to construct identity 'through a process of alignment with other figures, narratives, and events; through a pursuit of parallels; through an interest in sameness, not difference'.[33] These three conversion narratives exemplify this process, conforming to set patterns and polemical strategies in order to navigate the unprecedented circumstances of these tumultuous decades.

While their emphases differ, the central argument of all three narratives is that the civil wars and destruction of the Church of England had thrown their authors into a state of doubt. Each convert articulates his profound shock at the collapse of ecclesiastical and royal authority and the proliferation of new sects and heresies. This leads them to reassess their beliefs and seek new forms of authority and certainty. They argue that it is now manifest that England's

[30] Bodleian, Clarendon MS 29, f. 45r; Durham University Library, Cosin Letter Book 1A, Nos. 40–52; the annotated copy of Vane's *A Lost Sheepe* (1645), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D-22157. Expelled fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, Tristram Sugge, copied extensively from Bayly's *An End* and *Certamen Religiosum* and from Cressy's *Exomologesis*, see Milton, *Second Reformation*, 318.
[31] Quoted in Robert S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: The Influence of the Laudians, 1649–1662* (London: Dacre Press, 1951), 36.
[32] Abigail Shinn, *Conversion Narratives in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Lieke Stelling and Todd M. Richardson (eds), *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
[33] Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5–6. See also Alan Stewart, *The Oxford History of Life-Writing, Volume 2: Early Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 9.

Church was being punished for schism and that the Church of Rome was the one true and continually visible Church.

The Visible Church

All these narratives are dominated by the fundamental question: how could the true Church be identified? Since at least the late Elizabethan period, Catholics had attempted to organise doctrinal and theological disputes into this single point of ecclesiology, invariably asking 'where was your Church before Luther?'[34] By the 1640s, major shifts in English Protestant ecclesiology had transformed the terms of this debate. Under Archbishop Laud, earlier Protestant conceptions of the Church as an invisible company of the elect, which had suffered throughout history under various persecutions and captivities, were largely abandoned.[35] Instead, anti-Calvinist and Laudian clergymen, notably Bishop Richard Montagu, argued that the true Church was marked by continuous 'institutional visibility' since the time of Christ.[36] Rather than appealing to 'purity of doctrine' as earlier reformers had done, they insisted upon apostolic succession and continual visibility.[37] The transformation of the fabric and liturgical practice of English churches was part of this new emphasis. Yet in the 1640s, the Laudian reforms were drastically overturned. Widespread iconoclasm undid the renovations of the previous decade, Laudian clergy were ejected from their livings, the prayerbook and episcopacy were abolished, and Archbishop Laud was executed in 1644.[38] Mid-century Catholic polemicists and converts capitalised on the Laudian innovations of the 1620s and 1630s. They agreed that continuous visibility was an essential mark of the true Church but claimed that the pre-war Church of England was now nowhere to be seen.[39] They concentrate

[34] Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23–27.
[35] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 157–158.
[36] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 305; Kenneth Fincham, and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547–c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 126–127.
[37] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 305.
[38] Fiona McCall, *Baal's Priests: The Loyalist Clergy and the English Revolution* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).
[39] In reality, as several historians have demonstrated, the episcopalian Church of England and prayerbook worship survived in different ways. See Judith Maltby, 'Suffering and Surviving: The Civil Wars, the

on institutional authority, rather than on the pope himself. Influenced by French Gallican ideas, Cressy in particular privileges the accumulated tradition and teachings of councils, doctors, and fathers of the Church over the doctrine of papal infallibility.[40] They combine a historical approach to ecclesiology with an emphasis on the true Church as a supernatural entity.

Bayly compares the foundering episcopal Church of England to a sinking ship without a reliable pilot:

> if a storm arise, and the Ship (wherein I am) begins to be covered with the Waves, and the Passengers begin to cry, Master save us or we perish, and there be none to rebuke those winds and Seas, but the Vessel sinks, you shall never make me beleeve that Christ was there.[41]

Bayly's analogy and its empirical approach to the providential exemplifies a common strategy of these convert-polemicists to present the disappearance of the English Church as self-evident.

Vane, Cressy, and Bayly all insist that the visibility of the Counter-Reformation Church is evidence of its providential role and supernatural status, and that it was established by Christ as infallible and perpetual. Vane concludes his narrative 'look upon the *Roman Catholique Church*, and you shall see a thing so complete and perfect in all her dimensions, as if it had been (as indeed it was) moulded on a heavenly frame'.[42] Cressy strikes a more personal note: 'I found my selfe in inward safety and repose in the midst of *that Citty sett upon an Hill whose builder and maker is God,* whose *foundations are emerauds and Saphirs*'.[43] Like Vane, Bayly uses a deictic imperative: 'Behold *Romana, looking forth upon you as the morning; Fair as the*

Commonwealth, and the Formation of "Anglicanism", 1642–1660,' in Maltby and Durston (eds), *Religion in Revolutionary England*, 158–180; Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, 'Vital Statistics: Episcopal Ordination and Ordinands in England, 1646–60,' *English Historical Review* 126.519 (2011): 319–344.

[40] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 155, 501–502. See also Sarah Mortimer, 'Exile, Apostasy and Anglicanism in the English Revolution,' in Major (ed.), *Literatures of Exile*, 94–95; Gabriel Glickman, 'Christian Reunion, the Anglo-French Alliance and the English Catholic Imagination, 1660–72,' *English Historical Review* 128.531 (2013): 263–291, and Paul Seaward, 'The View from the Devil's Mountain: Clarendon, Cressy, and Hobbes, and the Past, Present and Future of the Church of England,' in Clare (ed.), *From Republic to Restoration*, 206–225.

[41] Bayly, *An End*, 4.

[42] Vane, *A Lost Sheepe*, 268.

[43] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 569.

moon; Cleare as the sun'.[44] These three moments refer to long traditions of exegesis, paraphrasing the Song of Songs (1:8–11, 6:10), the Gospels (Matthew 5:15) and Revelation (21:19), in which the Church is figured as a glorious city, a beautiful woman, and the rising dawn. The frontispiece to Bayly's *An End to Controversie* presents this tradition in pictorial form (Figure 10). The female figure is based primarily on the woman in Revelation, clothed by the sun, standing on the moon, and crowned with twelve stars, who was interpreted as an allegory of the Church. She is surrounded by scriptural proof texts, emerging from the mouths of angels and describing the qualities of the triumphant visible Church. The image presents these prophecies, metaphors, and allegories as apostrophes praising the woman and turns a long debate over ecclesiology and exegesis into a personal embodied encounter. There is more than a passing resemblance between this figure and the Virgin Mary, especially because of the scriptural tags, 'Non est macula Eph. 5.24' and 'Tota formosa Cant. 4. 7', accolades used in the fourth-century Marian hymn 'Tota Pulchra Es', praising the Virgin's perfect beauty and freedom from the stain of original sin. Bayly's image blurs the devotional and the ecclesiological. It also exemplifies the tendency in these texts and the wider debate to extrapolate and embroider scriptural metaphors. Accumulating images and analogies for the theological concept of 'visibility', these narratives equate the identification of the true Church with an experience of beauty and enlightenment.

The wealth of biblical metaphors for the Church allows these writers to redescribe points of ecclesiological doctrine as vivid religious experiences. Greater critical attention has been paid to radical and antinomian spiritual autobiographies of this period, which dramatize a tension between individual experience and ecclesiastical structures and forms.[45] Michael

[44] Bayly, *An End*, 394.
[45] Kathleen Lynch, *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5–6. Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); David Parry, *The Rhetoric of Conversion in English Puritan Writing from Perkins to Milton* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).

Figure 10


AN ENDE TO CONTROVERSIE
Dic Ecclesiæ
1 Tim: 3. 15.
Columna veritatis
Quæ est Ecclesia
et Sponsa Christi
Omnis lingua
insurgentem
contra te in
judicium
condemnabis.
Isay. 54. 17.
Jehova tibi erit lucē
perpetuæ. Isay 60.
Lux perpetua
Isay. 60. 19.
Tota formosa.
Cant. 4. 7.
Non occidet amplius
Sol tuus: et Luna
tua non minuet
se. Isay. 60. 20.
Mulier amicta Sole, sub
cujus pedibus erat
Luna, et in capite
Corona Stellarum
duodecim. Apo 12.1
Ro: Vaughan sculp

Questier's influential work on late Elizabethan and early Stuart conversion similarly asserted two distinct kinds of conversion, either an inward reformation of life or the changing of ecclesiastical affiliation.[46] No such distinction exists for these Catholic converts. Cressy repeatedly envisages his conversion as an act of yielding his soul into the hands not of God, but of his personified Church. He describes himself 'acknowledging this authority, and suffering my selfe to be taken out of my owne handes to be conducted by *her* that Christ had appointed for that office'.[47] Later he 'see[s] my soule taken out of mine owne handes, and placed under the conduct of *her* whome Christ had appointed to be my guide and conductresse'.[48] Cressy's 'conductress' is the true Church, the bride of Christ. Both these moments of conversion are marked not by a turn inwards, but by relinquishing the self. They represent a form of 'ecstasy', literally to be beside or beyond the self.[49] Critics and historians often identify mysticism and ecstasy as inherently opposed to ecclesiastical structures and institutional forms.[50] Yet for Cressy conforming to God's Church on earth is the occasion for an ecstatic vision of his own soul conducted out of his hands. Sharply distinguishing himself from contemporary enthusiasts and antinomians, Cressy mixes the languages of conformity and ecstasy.

Noel Sugimura has detected a similar rhetoric in Crashaw's poetry, which, she argues, advocates 'a poetics of ecstasy within an institutional framework'.[51] She demonstrates how Crashaw distinguishes between ecstasy, which is associated with Laudian and Catholic authority, and enthusiasm, identified with radical Puritan individualism. Crashaw thus celebrates individual ecstatic experiences, which occur within the confines and community of

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[46] Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion*, 62.
[47] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 258–259.
[48] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 378.
[49] *OED*, 'ecstasy, *n.*, sense 1,' *OED*, accessed 24 November 2022, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/Entry/59423?rskey=Mwh7x1&result=1&isAdvanced=false.
[50] Liam Temple, *Mysticism in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019), 16, 30, 77.
[51] Noel Sugimura, '"Divine Annihilations": Richard Crashaw's Religious Politics and the Poetics of Ecstasy,' *Modern Philology* 112.4 (2015): 617.

the Church, and expresses a religious politics committed to ritual, ceremony, and hierarchy. Focusing on the 1630s, Sugimura concludes that Crashaw's anti-Puritan understanding of ecstasy evinces 'a religious sensibility that gradually collapsed the confessional differences between Laudian High Church theology and Catholicism'.[52] Turning to the 1640s, I argue that these converts insist that since the Church and its ceremonies are the conduit of divine grace, one true Church must be found. Closely associating the experience of grace with ecclesiastical authority produces not the basis for reconciliation, but an even more strenuous effort to distinguish between true and false Churches.

Bayly offers the most elaborate and imaginative literary response to the doctrine of visibility and the search for the divine in the world in his prose romance *Herba Parietis* (1650) (see Figure 15), written while he was imprisoned in Newgate for publishing the ambivalent *Royal Charter*. *Herba Parietis* follows Honoria and Bertaldo, fictional niece and nephew of the Roman Emperor Honorius, as they flee from the sack of Rome in 410 and go to Carthage.[53] Honoria immediately falls in love with the Carthaginian Prince Lorenzo, but wars, court intrigues, abduction, enslavement, the various errands of the Genius Amynda, and a hellish bargain with a sorcerer prevent them from beginning married life. The plot is eventually resolved when all the characters have proven their merit through 'good works' of chivalry and daring, and can now be married in a 'sacred temple', where 'heavenly choristers' sing an 'Anthem' composed of familiar images for reconciling with the Church: 'Thus at last the lost Sheep's found/ Thus Humility is crown'd'.[54] Bayly's extraordinary description of this temple turns his picaresque romance into an allegory of conversion:

> a place that was all *light* & had no *windows*, such a *light* as receiv'd its *lustre* from the *flames* of *hearts* and *melting soules burning* in the *fire of love*, which

[52] Sugimura, 'Richard Crashaw's Religious Politics,' 618.
[53] The romance receives brief mention in Paul Salzman, *English Prose Fiction 1558–1700: A Critical History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 288–289; and Amelia Zurcher, *Seventeenth-Century English Romance: Allegory, Ethics, and Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 127–128.
[54] Bayly, *Herba Parietis or, The Wall-Flower: As it Grew out of the Stone-Chamber Belonging to the Metropolitan Prison of London, called Newgate* (London, 1650), 130.

> were *upon & under* the *Altar,* whose *Quire* was *pav'd* with *precious Stones,* where *Diamonds* were set in *Characters,* whereby Letters of Light were so compos'd that every foot that gave a step made impression upon Eternity. In the midst of which temple there was a *sea* of *blisse,* and *Angels* moving upon the face of the *water,* whose *oares* were *wings* and *boates* ubiquities, and every *stroake* that *plash'd* upon those *waters* of *life* gave both life and musick.[55]

Bayly draws on scriptural, devotional, and mystical traditions to present the Church's beauty as both physically visible and impossible to imagine. The architectural details of the Church – windows, altar, and quire – contrast with the oceans and ubiquities contained within it. The image of angels moving on the face of the water recalls both the moment of creation in Genesis 1:2 when the spirit of God moves on the face of the formless deep, and John 5:4, when the pool of Bethesda is 'stirred' by angels before it miraculously heals the blind and lame. Combining these allusions, Bayly's 'sea of bliss' (or baptismal font) figures the immanence of God in both his creation and his miracle-working Church. Paradoxically, the temple is 'all light' but has no windows. Its brightness comes instead from the flaming hearts of believers, 'the baroque symbol *par excellence*'.[56] The conceit emphasises that the Church is a corporation of individual believers, and elides personal faith and ecclesiastical structures. In *An End to Controversy,* Bayly notes that 'The word Church, is often mentioned in holy Scripture by figures, and Synecdoches', such as 'the *material fabrick,* where the *continent* is taken for the thing *contained,* as the *cup* is taken for the *wine*'.[57] The conclusion to *Herba Parietis* uses this figure, but spectacularly blurs the 'container' and the 'thing contained'. The temple impossibly houses the universe; stepping on its ornate flooring makes impression on eternity. The mystical tropes – the 'fire of love' and brightness in darkness – hold the visible and invisible in suspension. Blending mysticism and ecclesiology, Bayly theorises a heavenly beauty which is immanent in the Church and, like faith, exceeds the senses and human reason.

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[55] Bayly, *Herba Parietis*, 129.
[56] Davidson, *Universal Baroque*, 166. Bayly's description here may be informed by the 'Temple of Venus' in the allegorical dream vision narrative first printed in 1499, Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: The Strife of Love in a Dream*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 219–220.
[57] Bayly, *An End*, 136.

These narratives capitalise on the contemporary crisis to insist that the only visible Church was the Roman Catholic one. They elaborate upon the notion of visibility and reenvisage religious controversy and ecclesiological debate in terms of aesthetic appreciation and spiritual encounters with the divine.

True and false Churches

These experiential metaphors present conversion to Catholicism as an obvious and inevitable choice. But episcopalian royalists in exile continued to make almost symmetrical claims for their own Church. As Anthony Milton has recently argued, the problematic 'question of what and where the Church of England truly was' elicited a range of responses, or, as he puts it, a 'swirling cauldron of unregulated new and old ideas and forms'.[58] Episcopalians attempted to defend the continuing visibility of their suffering Church through the public celebration of the Prayerbook liturgy, wherever possible.[59] John Cosin, Crashaw's former Master at Peterhouse and chaplain to the English in Paris, struggled to sustain Church of England worship in the face of a severe lack of funds and repeated attempts by French courtiers and some of Henrietta Maria's ministers to have it banned; he complained in 1651 that 'the weekely taske that I must live on will kill me, as it had already made me as leane as Lent'.[60] In June 1651, when John Evelyn attended a service at the chapel of Sir Richard Browne, Charles II's resident in Paris, he witnessed the exiled Bishop of Galloway Thomas Sydserf ordain two new clergymen. Seated in a chair 'cover'd with purple darmask, and a canopy of the same', the bishop tasked the ordinands with 'supplying the wants of the Church of England, lyeing under the persecution and calamity then tending to a total desolation, and the reproaches of the Roman Church, and

[58] Milton, *Second Reformation*, 395, 436.
[59] Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*, 59. See also Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 274–304; Christopher Haigh, 'Where was the Church of England, 1646–1660?' *The Historical Journal* 62.1 (2019): 137.
[60] Bodleian, Clarendon MS 58, ff. 170r–171r, 271r; George Ornsby (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Cosin, D. D. Lord Bishop of Durham Part 1* (London: Blackwood & Sons, 1869), 280.

other enemys'.[61] Cosin preached on John 20:21, in which Christ appears to the apostles after the resurrection and sends them on their mission: 'as my Father hath sent me, I also doe send you'.[62] The service and Evelyn's account of it lay claim to both apostolic succession and institutional visibility for the ailing episcopal Church of England.

Amid the competing claims of both Catholics and anti-Calvinist episcopalians, the language of appearance and adornment became a useful polemical tool for distinguishing between the true Church and its false imitation. The exiled Laudian Richard Watson recalled that an English Benedictine in Flanders had asked him whether he liked 'the decency of their Churches, and solemnity of their Service'. Watson retorts that he 'observed little more in substance, then what he might have formerly seen, if he had pleased, in our King's Chappell, St. *Pauls London*, and St. *Peter's Westminster*'. The Benedictine 'sarcastically replied, That in Archbishop *Laud's* time, indeed […] your Church washed and beautified her face a little; but, for all that, more intrinsically she was a very slut'.[63] This misogynistic slur invokes contrasting scriptural images of the Church, the beautiful woman of the Song of Songs, and the Whore of Babylon, the Church of Anti-Christ in Revelation. Watson's anecdote uses the lexis of 'substance' and the 'intrinsic' to contrast true and false forms of beauty. The same rhetoric appears in Théophile Brachet de la Milletière's appeal to Charles II to convert, printed in 1651. A Huguenot convert to Catholicism and protégé of Cardinal Mazarin, Milletière insisted that England's troubles had demonstrated God's fury with the heretical Protestant nation.[64] He suggests that the deceptive beauty and virtues of the Church of England under Laud had distracted the young Charles II from the truth:

> How should you have been able to have discovered, under this fair shew of

[61] *Correspondence of John Cosin*, 282–283. On Browne's chapel, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 288.
[62] *The Correspondence of John Cosin*, 282.
[63] Richard Watson, *A Fuller answer to Elimas the Sorcerer* (London, 1683), 7. Cited in Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*, 59.
[64] Mark Williams, 'The Devotional Landscape of the Royalist Exile, 1649–1660,' *Journal of British Studies* 53.4 (2014): 920–925; and Milton, *Second Reformation*, 320.

> Reformation, whereof she hath taken the Title, under this splendid lustre which she hath put upon her face, of Knowledge and Eloquence, the gifts whereof shine in her Doctors and Ministers […] Should you have been able to have discovered, I say, that under this appearance of Piety she had disavow'd her strength.[65]

Despite acknowledging the pre-war English Church's virtue, learning, and piety, Milletière dismisses these as the distractions of a painted face in similar terms to Watson's sarcastic Benedictine. He presents the contemporary breakdown of political and religious authority as a solution to the confusing resemblance. God had 'at present let' Charles see 'in the works of horrour and confusion' that the Church was not only without strength, but had caused the wars and its own destruction 'by the consequences of her Fundamental Maxims'.[66] The English Revolution had reversed the misleading Laudian makeover and laid the truth bare.

Another English expatriate and Catholic convert, William Rowland (1610–1659) adapted these image patterns of appearance and deception in his Latin poems. Rowland has been entirely overlooked by modern scholars, but his prodigious poetic output offers an invaluable insight into the literary and polemical culture of the English exiles in Paris and into the mid-century phenomenon of conversion more generally.[67] Educated at Exeter College, Oxford, he became curate of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the 1630s.[68] He fled to Paris and converted to Catholicism around 1641.[69] In pursuit of patronage and employment, Rowland wrote panegyric, encomia and occasional verse for a range of European ecclesiastical and royal

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[65] Théophile Brachet de la Milletière, *La Victoire de la Vérité pour la Paix de l'Église* (Paris, 1651), 57–58, Bodleian, 8° M 3 Th.BS; translated in John Bramhall, *The Victory of Truth* (Hague, 1653), 31–32.
[66] Bramhall, *The Victory of Truth*, 32.
[67] Christopher Highley briefly discusses a work by 'Guil. Palingenii Rolandi', but does not recognise this is how Rowland styled himself in most of his Latin publications, 'Henry VIII's Ghost,' 108. Rowland's adopted name Palingenius seems to be a reference to the widely popular late medieval neo-Latin poet Palingenius, whose *Zodiacus Vitae* (c.1535) inspired, as Moul has recently argued, much non-classical epic and didactic and allegorical poetry, including by Milton and Cowley, Moul, *A Literary History of Latin & English Poetry*, 447–496.
[68] Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis, or An Exact History of All the Writers and Bishops who have had their Education in the University of Oxford*, ed. Philip Bliss, vol. III (London: Rivington, 1817), col. 486. Joseph Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History: or, Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics, from the Breach with Rome, in 1534, to the Present Time* vol. 5 (London: Burns & Oates, 1885), 451.
[69] *Legenda Lignea*, 172.

patrons, but English confessional debates remain a constant preoccupation.[70] He composed poems addressed to Vane, Cressy, and Bayly congratulating them on their conversions.[71] In a viciously satirical poem addressed to John Cosin, supposedly as a New Year's gift in January 1647, Rowland puts the imagery of deceitful appearances to humorous and acerbic use.[72] Entitled 'Ianus Bifrons' [Two-faced Janus], the poem is accompanied by an emblem of a head with two faces, one of a distinguished old man and the other of an attractive young woman (Figure 11).

Figure 11



Rowland's poem leaves little room for ambiguity over the emblem:

> Quid notat? Haereticum: qui dum nova dogmata cudit,
> Et canit abducto somnia vana gregi,
> Nilque docere novum se venditat, omnia prisca;
> Fingit Apostolicam se revocasse fidem:
> Posterior iuvenes vultus tegit, extima forma
> Mentitur tremulum fronte rigente senem.[73]
>
> What does it signify? The Heretic, who while he forges new doctrines and sings empty nonsense to the abducted flock, insists that he teaches nothing new, everything ancient. He imagines that he recalls the apostolic faith. The back conceals the youthful face, the outward appearance feigns a trembling old man with a hardened brow.

[70] Personalised sammelbands, gathering Rowland's various works addressed to different patrons, survive at Houghton Library, Harvard, EC65.R7963.657E, and BL, 837.g.31.
[71] William Rowland, *Poemata ad Illustrissimum Ecclesiae Principem Leonorium* (Paris, 1650), 17–19, BL, 837.h.6.(6.), and *Poematum Miscellaneorum Pars Altera* (Paris, 1654), 25–28, BL, 837.g.31.
[72] William Rowland, *Poematum Liber II Continens Poemata Miscellanea de Tempore Conscripta* (Paris, 1650), Pars II, 6–8, BL, 837.h.6.(6.).
[73] Rowland, *Poematum Liber II*, Pars II, 7.

Rowland satirises the claims of Laudians and episcopalians to have revived an ancient catholic tradition and depends on the old recusant boasts about the antiquity of Rome and the novelty of the Reformation. Yet the organising motif of appearance and reality, registered in the accumulated antitheses and lexis of adornment and fabrication ('cudit', 'fingit', 'tegit', 'extima forma'), demonstrates the impact of more recent ecclesiological debates. Whereas Milletière imagines Laud's Church as disguising itself as a beautiful lady, Rowland reverses the image and depicts the true face of the young English Church hidden behind a façade of age and wisdom. A similar strategy was used to attack Laudian adornments from a very different perspective in a Latin poem by Peter Smart (1569–1652), Calvinist and sometime prebend of Durham Cathedral where he had clashed with the then bishop, John Cosin; Smart's poem depicts the English Church as an ugly old woman monstrously disguising herself as a youthful bride preparing to wed the anti-Christ.[74] By contrast, the episcopalian royalist Peter du Moulin's poetic lament for the Church, *Ecclesiae Gemitus* (1649), describes the bride of Christ 'Extorris, exul, improbae tyrannidis/ Opima nuper praeda, nunc ludibrium' ['Now banished, exiled, recently the rich prey/ Of a wicked tyranny, now a laughing-stock'].[75] Rowland responded to Moulin's book and allegorical poetics in a short poem which insists that the Laudian Church was not a wounded matriarch, but a viper, a rebellious child who had attacked her Roman mother and was now receiving her just deserts:

> Quae materna recens exedit viscera serpens
> […]
> Conqueriturque nefas & inani sydera planctu
> Verberat, acsi insons talia passa foret.[76]
>
> The viper who lately devoured the mother's womb, laments the crime and strikes the stars with mad plaints, as if it suffered such things innocently.

[74] Peter Smart, *Septuagenarii Senis Itinerantis Cantus Epithalamicus* (London, 1643); Moul, *A Literary History of Latin & English Poetry*, 476–478.
[75] Peter du Moulin, *Ecclesiae Gemitus sub Anabaptistica Tyrannide* (London, 1649), 2. Moul translates and comments on these lines, *A Literary History of Latin & English Poetry*, 479–482.
[76] William Rowland, 'De Libello quodam nuper edito, cui titulus, *Ecclesiae (Protestanticae) Gemitus sub Anabaptistica Tyrannide*,' *Poemata ad Illustrissimum Ecclesiae Principem*, 20.

Variations on the same allegory and associated images were adopted by writers across the confessional spectrum to comment on the difference between truth and falsehood and on the aesthetics of ecclesiology.

Rowland's 'Ianus Bifrons' negotiates the apparent similarities between Laudianism and Roman Catholicism. It accuses Cosin, or 'Pater Ianus', of having almost converted in the 1630s and of now reneging on his former sympathies:

> Quem toties Romae quodam dare brachia vidit
> Anglia, nec latum discrepuisse pedem
> […]
> Mutasti vultus, Romanaque sacra reclamas.[77]
>
> Whom England saw often embracing Rome to some degree, nor disagreeing by a foot's breadth, now you change your face and cry out against the Roman Church.

By framing this accusation indirectly as what 'England saw', Rowland invokes Puritan invective against the popish English Church; Cosin had been among those 'Prelates and Priests' whom Prynne accused of seeking 'to introduce and establish their Popish Doctrines, Ceremonies, Superstititions, in the Church of *England*'.[78] Yet Rowland's vague modifier 'quodam' and litotes of 'nec latum discrepuisse pedem' render uncertain how far he endorses these accusations of Cosin's Caroline popery. In another poem printed in 1650, Rowland refers to Cosin as a costumier ('nugiuendis') and 'Doctor […] Amphibius'.[79] A marginal note explains that just as amphibious creatures live both on land and in the sea, so too

> Decanus noster modo cum Catholicis in omnibus sentire, modo toto coelo discrepare, imo & hostili eos odio videtur insectari.[80]
>
> our Dean is seen at one time to agree with Catholics in all things, at another to disagree with the whole heaven, and further to persecute them with hostile hatred.

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[77] Rowland, *Poematum Liber II*, Pars II, 7.
[78] Prynne, *The Popish Royall Favourite*, 56.
[79] Rowland, 'Paramytheticon ad Eundem contra Importunas cuiusdam Pseudoepiscopi Derensis, & Doctorculi Cuseni quondam Decani Petriburgensis Maledicentias,' *Poemata ad Illustrissimum Ecclesiae Principem*, 20.
[80] Rowland, 'Paramytheticon,' 20.

Rowland's poem throws the accusations of inconstancy levelled at converts back at their opponents. It both acknowledges confessional similarities and seeks to mitigate them by presenting the resemblance as superficial. For Rowland, confessional similarity is not a cause for celebration or ecumenical reconciliation. He condemns former Laudians for supposedly abandoning their gradual progression towards Rome and attacks their Church's likeness to Catholicism as a cunning pretence and demonic trick.

Earlier in the 1640s, Rowland had adopted a more hesitant approach to the question of relations between the Churches. In 1642, two years after his conversion, he republished a heroic panegyric to William Laud that he had first addressed to the archbishop as a new year's gift in 1638.[81] Re-dedicated to France's Catholic bishops and clergy in 1642, this publication may be seen as an unscrupulous bid for patronage in the difficult circumstances of his arrival in Paris. Rowland's dedication ruminates on the problems of confessional change, resemblance, and difference. He admits the seeming absurdity of recycling old tributes:

> Me scilicet cum, Dei misericordia, Catholicae Ecclesiae nomen dederim, opusculum vobis haud Catholicum: (vtputà à Ministro Angliae, biennio ante suam conversionem, in gratiam hominis schismatici lucubratum) veris ac genuinis Episcopis, nonnisi Episcopi larvam personamque: florentissimis Ecclesiae proceribus, misellum huius temporis & deridiculum fortunae ludibrium exhibere aggredi.[82]
>
> Namely that when, by the mercy of God, I have joined the ranks of the Catholic Church, I should set out to display this little work to you which is not at all Catholic (but a lucubration in honour of a schismatic written by a minister of England two years before his conversion); to display to true and authentic bishops, only the mask and persona of a bishop: to the most distinguished leaders of the Church, a wretch of the time and ridiculous plaything of fortune.

The ironic antitheses between an actual bishop and an episcopal mask, an illustrious leader and a laughingstock are a rhetorical amplification of the image pattern of appearances and reality, used to assert the difference between the true and false Churches. The word 'lucubration',

[81] William Rowland, *Strena Illustrissimo Olim ac Celeberrimo Archiepiscopo Cantuariensi, Heroico Poemata Adornata* (Paris, 1642), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, YC-3803 and RES M-YC-922 (10).
[82] Rowland, *Strena*, 2.

literally meaning work done by night, is generally used to describe hard work and careful labour; here, however, it implies that the poem was produced while Rowland remained amid the darkness of heresy. Yet the phrase 'haud Catholicum' [not at all Catholic] is problematic. Rowland goes on to list Laud's esteem for the Church Fathers, respect for the Church of Rome, opposition to Calvinist theology, and restoration of England's churches, schools, and colleges as evidence of 'what and how much he', like the amphibious Cosin, 'suffered for (I speak approximately) the Catholic cause' ['quae & quanta passus sit, pro causa (prope dixerim) Catholica'].[83] The adverbial 'prope' [near or thereabouts] is made to bear the weight of a foundational debate of the post-Reformation period over the meaning of the word Catholic.[84] The same issue exercised one hostile reader of Vane's *A Lost Sheep*, who scribbled next to Vane's claim that 'the Church of Rome […] is the true Church', the emendation: 'a, not the'.[85] Rowland acknowledges and dismisses this idea that the Church of Rome and the Church of England could both be particular Churches within the universal catholic Church. He goes on to describe how the accusations against Laud of popery ('*Papismi* reus'), if true, would be wholly to his credit ('vere reus, vt sic dignus').[86] This struggle over the meanings of Catholicism and popery represents a more positive expression of his later claim that the Laudians had been gradually progressing towards Rome in the 1630s. Ultimately, the dedication offers the panegyric as a cautionary tale, urging the French clergy to stop the 'fatal virus of Calvinism' from contaminating their lands, as it had done in England.[87] This republication invites its new dedicatees to read the panegyric counter-intuitively, replacing praise with blame, celebration with commiseration. Reframing a poem written while he was a Protestant clergyman as a defence of Roman Catholicism, Rowland presents conversion as a

[83] Rowland, *Strena*, 2.
[84] See especially Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*.
[85] Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D-22157, 84.
[86] Rowland, *Strena*, 2.
[87] Rowland, *Strena*, 2.

process of reinterpretation and re-definition; as we shall see, this offers a highly illuminating parallel to Crashaw's complex publication history.

In several poems, Rowland asserts the confessional boundary by presenting the English Church as a whore and the Roman Church as the true mother. In a poem congratulating Thomas Bayly on his conversion, Rowland portrays Bayly drinking life-giving milk from the 'alma parens *Ecclesia*' [nourishing mother Church]. He describes how this female allegorical figure used to weep when she saw the unconverted Bayly and

> Sugere cum tenero nutricis lacte venenum,
> Haereticisque plagis laqueari & vana doceri
> Dogmata sub purae pietatis tegmine sensit.[88]
>
> She noticed [you] suck venom with the soft milk of the wetnurse, trapped by the heretics' snares, and taught empty doctrines under an innocent covering of piety.

In this misogynistic fantasy, Rowland elaborates upon the apocalyptic tradition, depicting the true Church of Revelation as a breast-feeding mother and the Whore of Babylon as her poor impersonation, spreading poison. Yet, even as he seeks to assert clear difference, Rowland's poetry acknowledges the source of confusion between them. The word 'nutricis', meaning nurse or wet-nurse, is not pejorative in itself. Rowland uses it here to suggest that the English Church is a substitute or imitation. A starker variation of the same idea appears in 'Ianus Bifrons', which refers to the English Church as 'Meretrix noverca' [step-dame whore], contrasted to the true and spotless mother.[89] In the poem to Bayly, the gentler word 'nutricis' and the intertwined word order 'tenero nutricis lacte venenum', enacting the mixture of milk and venom, represent a confusing combination of good and bad. Meditating on similarity and difference and the attraction and repulsion of good and evil, Rowland recognises the ample poetic potential of contemporary ecclesiological debate, a potential realised more fully by

[88] This poem was printed as a preface to the French translation of Bayly's *The Royal Charter*, Thomas Bayly, *Traitté contre la Rebellion des Subiects envers leurs Roys* (Paris, 1653), ãã2v. The poem was reprinted the following year in *Poematum Miscellaneorum Pars Altera*, 25–28.
[89] Rowland, 'Paramytheticon,' 19.

Crashaw.

This scripturally derived Madonna-Whore complex is not unique to either Rowland, Catholics or the 1640s. The figure of the Whore of Babylon had long been used in anti-Catholic discourse and Rowland's co-option of it to demonise the Church of England is a pointed inversion. English episcopalians also continued to use the language of deceitful appearances and adornment to tackle the problem of confessional resemblance. Edward Chisenhale's *Catholike History*, a polemical response to Vane's *A Lost Sheep* printed in 1653, claims that Vane's promise to show his readers the path to salvation is a deception: 'The Frontispiece of that Book invites every Christian soul to take up its lodging within that Tabernacle, which being further riffled into, it proves a painted Sepulchre. The fairest Apples are not always the soundest at the heart'.[90] Contrasting outward show and inward truth, a fair tabernacle and a rotten tomb, Chisenhale recalls longstanding tropes of anti-Catholic polemic. Alison Shell has demonstrated the prevalence of imagery of disguise and concealment in the rhetoric of Jacobean anti-popery.[91] Building on Peter Lake's influential analysis of how anti-popery offered a series of binary oppositions through which English Protestants identified themselves, Shell argues that 'Catholicism could be seen as the intaglio of the true church, with the true church defining itself in the process of establishing an other. Dualism is crucial to any understanding of anti-popery'.[92] By the 1640s, the Laudian revolution had blurred these binaries and replaced them with a spectrum of subtler differences and a conflict over the meaning of the term Catholic. The frontispiece to Chisenhale's *Catholike History* illustrates the new confusions of England's confessional landscape (Figure 12). It depicts two church buildings, highly similar in appearance, but one is marked 'Veritas' and the other 'Vanitas'. The author, dressed in the fashionable garb of a Cavalier, presents his book to the former, while

[90] Edward Chisenhale, *Catholike History […] Occasioned by a Book by T. Vane, intituled, The Lost Sheep Returned Home* (London, 1653), 3.
[91] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 23–55.
[92] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 26. Lake, 'Anti-Popery.'

Figure 12



Heere to the Church, one of her yougeſt Sonnes,
Proſtrate preſents theſe Lucubrations,
Hee Feares not her harſh Cenſure for hee knowes,
mothers are kind and ſhee the beſt of thoſe
Her Benediction, if ſhee pleaſe to give
T'will make the Authour and his Lynes to Live,
Then though Rome Curſe, t'ſhall never trouble him:

the latter is flanked by a group of stony-faced Roman clerics complete with improbably large croziers and hats. These figures and textual annotations mark out the true bride of Christ and her false imitation. In the 1640s, polemicists and converts recognised the troubling proximity of the English and Roman Churches but sought, in different ways, to reassert the boundary.

Vane, Cressy, and Bayly variously approach the problem of visible resemblance. Bayly admits an outward resemblance but dismisses its inward significance. He remembers that the Laudian Church 'was the glory of the Protestant Cause (between whom (outwardly) and the *Roman* Church there was no other difference but that the Tapers upon their Altars, wanted light, their Alters, Priests: and their Ceremonies, purpose:)'.[93] Bayly remedies the confusing likeness by insisting that English worship had been mere outward show, their priests cut off from apostolic tradition and their liturgy lacking sacramental efficacy.

Vane sees confessional ambiguity as itself a form of deception: 'many there are I feare, who although they bee in beliefe and iudgement Catholiques, yet in outward profession are Protestants'.[94] He presents this hybridity as dissimulation or Nicodemism, motivated by worldly desires and fears of persecution, 'the priuat instigations of flesh and blood'.[95] These fence sitters are likened to worthless currency: 'Whose faith like bullion though it bee good mettall in it selfe, yet wanting the stampe of Catholique communion and obedience, is not currant in the Kingdome of heauen, nor will serue in their iourney to defray them thither'.[96] Vane recalls the classical tradition of the obol paid to cross the river Styx and insists that, in order to reach heaven, it is necessary to conform inwardly and outwardly to the Roman Catholic Church. His image gives expression to the Catholic doctrine of 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus', no salvation outside the Church, but it also implies that conversion may not alter an individual's fundamental beliefs, their 'good metal', but only (though no less importantly) label and stamp

[93] Bayly, *An End*, 6.
[94] Vane, *A Lost Sheepe*, 238.
[95] Vane, *A Lost Sheepe*, 238
[96] Vane, *A Lost Sheepe*, 238.

that faith as conforming to a particular Church. Strikingly, Vane does not depict conversion as an internal spiritual process here, but an act of stamping and defining. As we shall see, this inversion of usual hierarchies of inward and outward, surface and depth, and alternative way of imagining conversion are central to understanding Crashaw's approach to the same problem.

Cressy also presents conversion as a form of re-description. He recounts how he was gradually drawn towards the Roman Church by

> the more neare and faire a prospect I had of *the beauty of Holinesse*, my prejudices and obiections against that Church, in which onely such a iewell was to be found, diminished, till in the end I could not free my self from partiality, at least so farre as to wish that Trueth might not be found separate from so heavenly a Companion.[97]

By the 1630s, the phrase 'the beauty of holiness', a quotation from Psalm 96:9 'O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness', had become firmly associated with the Laudian renovations to the Church of England.[98] Here Cressy reapplies it to Rome. The transferred epithet or catachresis enacts the strange familiarity of the Roman Church's devotional culture which comforts the exiled Cressy. Yet ultimately, Cressy denies the similarity by insisting that the 'jewel' of holy beauty was now found only in the Roman Catholic Church. The same terminology used to define and praise the Laudian Church of the 1630s is repurposed for a defence of Catholicism as the one true Church.

Like Vane, Cressy presents conversion as an act of conforming and 'stamping', but he also registers the difficulty of this process in the revisions to his narrative. The first version, published in 1647, repeatedly praises those who 'endeavoured to lessen the number of differences between Christians'.[99] These irenic thinkers include Hugo Grotius, George Cassander, Franciscus Santa Clara, and the circle surrounding Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, which Cressy had been part of in the 1630s, particularly William Chillingworth, whom Cressy

[97] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 105–106.
[98] Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 166. The biblical quotation is taken from the King James Version.
[99] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 81

praises for his 'extraordinary sublime witt and iudgement'.[100] However, as his narrative progresses, Cressy denounces what he calls 'the suspicious moderatenesse' of these writers.[101] In the revised text of 1653, all praise for Chillingworth and other irenic thinkers is excised and Cressy insists that 'in Religion we cannot stand by and look on, we must absolutely engage on one side'.[102] Confessional ambiguity or hybridity is condemned as a liability in the pursuit of salvation. Mixing life-writing and polemic, Cressy dramatizes the uneasy relationship between ties of personal affection and the demands of orthodoxy. His revisions exemplify the difficulty and necessity of conforming to confessional distinctions; they present conversion as an act of side-taking and self-definition.

Fusing ecclesiology and aesthetics, these mid-century converts reflect imaginatively on the concept of visibility and the problem of resemblance between the Roman and English Churches; they emphasise the importance of interpretation and redescription to reassert the boundary between true heavenly beauty and its misleading imitation. They approach questions of confessional and ecclesiological difference in terms of rhetoric, representation, and the recognition of true beauty, inviting us to re-read the poetry of their more famous fellow convert Richard Crashaw in a new way.

'Fixing' Crashaw

For these mid-century Catholic writers, conversion is not a radical transformation but a process of conforming and defining. This can help us reframe the critical debate over what impact Crashaw's changing faith did or did not have on his writing.

Crashaw's poetry exemplifies the extent to which similar rhetorical styles were shared

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[100] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 363–364, 141. Cressy's phrase, 'suspicious moderateness', provides the title for a recent intellectual biography of Santa Clara, Anne Ashley Davenport, *Suspicious Moderate: The Life and Writings of Francis à Sancta Clara (1598-1680)* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017). See also, Trevor-Roper, 'The Great Tew Circle,' 166–230; Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*; and Thomas Clancy, 'Ecumenism and Irenics in 17th-Century English Catholic Apologetics,' *Theological Studies* 58.1 (1997): 85–89.

[101] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 363–364.

[102] Cressy, *Exomologesis* (1653), 519.

by writers and believers across the confessional spectrum.[103] One of his earliest printed poems in English, 'Upon the Ensuing Treatises of Mr Shelford', uses the familiar set of tropes and figures for imagining the Church as a beautiful woman: 'Rise then, immortall maid! *Religion* rise!/ Put on thy selfe in thine owne looks: t'our eyes/ Be what thy beauties, not our blots, have made thee' (ll. 1–3).[104] It was first printed as a prefatory poem to the Laudian Robert Shelford's 1635 defence of the importance of beauty in religious worship.[105] There the poem reads as a panegyric for the Laudian programme of beautification. Crashaw describes the restoration of Lady Religion's natural beauty, damaged by the excesses of earlier Protestant reformers. He concludes by praising a Church no longer defined by oppositions: 'In summe, no longer shall our people hope,/ To be true Protestant, 's but to hate the Pope' (ll. 67–68). When the poem was reprinted in the 1646 and 1648 editions of *Steps to the Temple*, it was retitled more generically as 'On a Treatise of Charity', and these final lines were excised. Now, ten years after its first publication, when hatred of the pope had dramatically reasserted itself and the new ecclesiastical 'beauties' had been blotted out by iconoclasts and reformers, the poem's referent seems to shift:

> No longer shall our Churches frighted stones
> Lie scatter'd like the burnt and martyr'd bones
> Of dead Devotion; nor faint marbles weep
> In their sad ruines; nor Religion keep
> A melancholy mansion in those cold
> Urns. Like Gods Sanctuaries they lookt of old:
> Now seem they Temples consecrate to *none*,
> Or to a *new* God *Desolation* (ll. 31–38).

The personification of frightened stones and weeping marble elide the Church as community of believers and as physical structure, yet the dehumanising comparison between burnt body-

[103] These similarities were primarily between Laudians and Roman Catholics, but Nicholas McDowell detects 'similarities of thought and expression' between Crashaw, the New Model Army preacher John Saltmarsh, and the Ranter Abiezer Coppe, 'The Beauty of Holiness and the Poetics of Antinomianism,' 31–50.
[104] Unless stated otherwise, all references to Crashaw's poetry will be to the line numbers given in L. C. Martin (ed.), *The English, Latin, and Greek Poems of Richard Crashaw* 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).
[105] Robert Shelford, *Five Pious and Learned Discourses* (Cambridge, 1635).

parts and inanimate stones resists the image. The vivid Lady Religion of the opening reappears here in the 'melancholy mansion' of the grave. By the 1640s, the lines describing the new God of desolation and the weeping Church recall contemporary laments, such as Du Moulin's *Ecclesiae Gemitus*, for the fading episcopal Church under Puritan persecution. The poem inhabits an ambiguous temporal perspective; initially Crashaw seems to be gazing at the Church of the 1630s, celebrating its new beauty with the tricolon of negative phrases, invoking what it 'no longer' is. But the ensuing simile takes the past tense, locating 'God's sanctuaries' in a long-lost England. The emphatic 'Now' of the next line identifies the present moment as desolate. The temporal confusions of these lines partly reflect the ambiguity of Laudianism's conservative innovation, insisting that its reforms and novelties are in fact restorations and returns. Yet, read in light of the dramatic changes between its printings and their contexts, this poem becomes an eloquent record of the convoluted reversals and repetitions of the Long Reformation. Without the closing reference to anti-popery and 'our people', the 1646 and 1648 texts of the poem can even be read as an attack on the entire English Protestant Reformation. It demonstrates how Crashaw's poetry enables divergent re-readings and reconversions.

The closest thing we have to a conversion narrative by Crashaw is a highly equivocal passage in his only surviving letter. Written from Leiden in 1644 to his friend Joseph Beaumont back in Cambridge, Crashaw laments his departure from England and expresses profound uncertainty.[106] Asking 'what must I doe? What must I bee?', he locates himself on the cusp of conversion:

> I assure you or rather confes to you, for though t'will pleas you better perhaps tis more a fault I fear, a defect at least a disproportion of my weak soul to severer courses, I am not at present purposed for fixing. Nay I am so wretched that I am sometimes even carefull for some meanes whereby to maintaine my trauells so as to keep me up from a necessity of engagement whethersoeuer I goe.[107]

[106] Elsie Elizabeth Duncan-Jones, 'Who was the Recipient of Crashaw's Leyden Letter?' in John R. Roberts (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 174–179.
[107] Printed in Martin, *Poems of Richard Crashaw*, xxxi.

'Fixing' might mean taking up permanent residence or employment, especially given that Crashaw complains of being ill-suited to Leiden: 'either not scholler enough or not Pagan enough for this place'.[108] But it also implies religious conversion, which his 'weak soul' is delaying, and which is unlikely to 'please' his Protestant addressee. The accumulation of qualifying and prevaricating sub-clauses enacts Crashaw's delay. Offering alternative ways of describing the same thing (assure or confess, please or fear), Crashaw's refusal to commit in diction mirrors his wavering in matters of religion. This private, manuscript letter strikingly anticipates the imagery of the conversion narratives printed in the 1640s and the preoccupations of modern scholars with the ambiguity and contingency of religious identity. Kimberly Johnson criticizes the 'urge among modern readers to fix early modern poets within coherent defined doctrinal positions'.[109] However, Crashaw's letter, like the narratives written by his fellow converts, demonstrates that the impulse to fix and assert confessional boundaries is not an anachronistic simplification. Religious flux and uncertainty were represented as a temporary state of anxiety, which the individual must escape through the difficult but necessary process of conforming or fixing to one faith.

The idea of fixing or, in Vane's words, 'stamping' provides a new way of thinking about the problematic textual history of Crashaw's poetry. *Carmen Deo Nostro*, published posthumously in 1652 by Thomas Carre, Crashaw's friend and fellow Catholic exile, has often been maligned by scholars.[110] Richard Rambuss calls it 'essentially a Catholic repackaging of verse that was for the most part written while its author still belonged, however much in its Laudian vanguard, to the Church of England'.[111] For Rambuss, the consistently Laudian Crashaw is dressed up as a Roman Catholic by the untrustworthy Thomas Carre. The image of

[108] Printed in Martin, *Poems of Richard Crashaw*, xxxi.
[109] Kimberly Johnson, *Made Flesh: Sacrament and Poetics in Post-Reformation England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 3.
[110] Healy, *Richard Crashaw*, 5–7.
[111] Richard Rambuss (ed.), 'Introduction,' in *The English Poems of Richard Crashaw* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), lvii.

'repackaging' implies a hierarchical opposition between the text and its printed paratexts, essence and form, religious belief and superficial style; but, as we have seen, the aesthetic approach to ecclesiology in contemporary polemic surrounding conversion unsettles these binaries. Rambuss also argues that those critics who emphasise the Catholicism of Crashaw's verse erroneously depict 'Crashaw as being a Catholic even before he himself decided to become one'.[112] Though Rambuss identifies this as a logical fallacy, Cressy described his conversion in almost identical terms:

> I perceived that in the depth and center of my spirit, I was really, though unknown to my self, a *very Catholike,* before I was a *Catholique:* For all the necessary declared doctrines of *Catholike Religion,* (as they are expressed in the language of the Church) I found I had never rejected.[113]

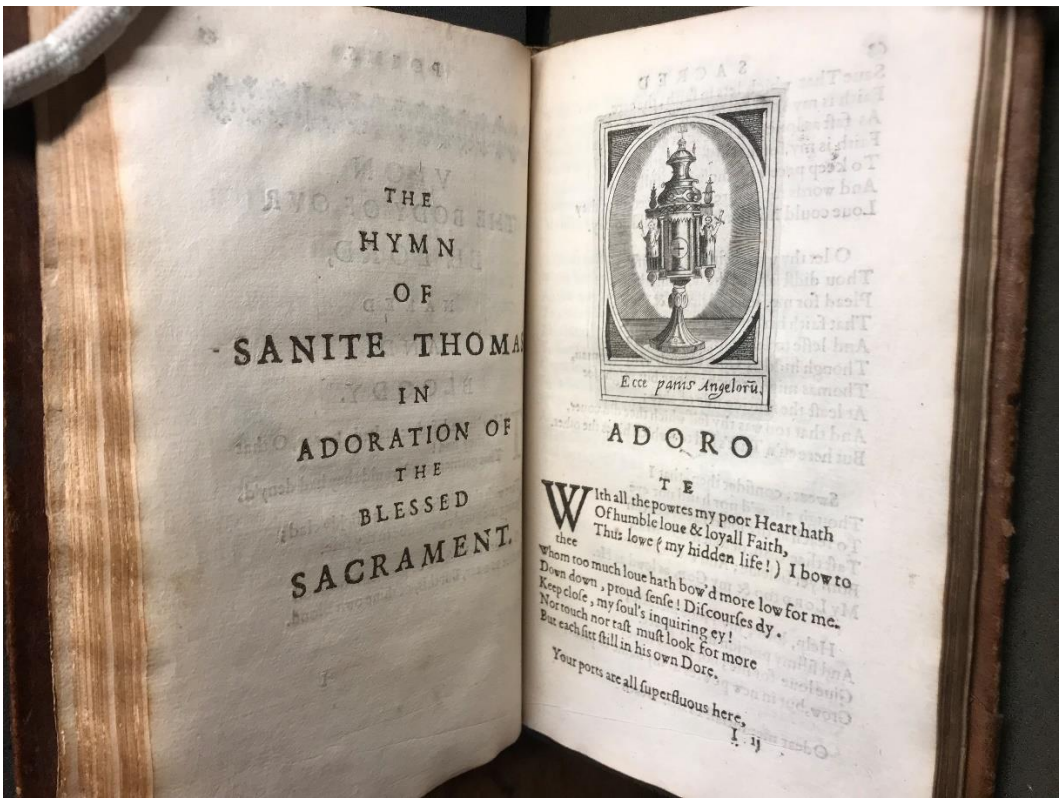
The peculiar experience of converting from Laudianism to Roman Catholicism involves not drastic transformation, but a process of recognizing and re-defining pre-existing beliefs and sensibilities.

Carmen Deo Nostro is an exercise in stamping and defining. Numerous poems are renamed and reframed to accentuate their Roman Catholic liturgical flavour. The poem entitled 'Upon our B. Saviours Passion' in Humphrey Moseley's 1648 edition becomes in 1652 'The Office of the Holy Crosse' and is printed with a liturgical rubric including antiphons, versicles, and responses, for each of the monastic hours of prayer.[114] The 1648 'A Hymne to Our Saviour by the Faithfull Receiver of the Sacrament' becomes 'The Hymn of Sainte Thomas In Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament' and is accompanied by an engraving of a monstrance, used in Roman Catholic worship to display the consecrated host (Figure 13).[115] This retitling shifts the poem's addressee from 'Our Saviour' to the eucharist itself and emphasises its indebtedness to the twelfth-century hymn, *Lauda Sion,* by Catholic theologian and scholastic

[112] Rambuss, 'Introduction,' xix.
[113] Cressy, *Exomologesis* (1653), 481.
[114] Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple* (1648), 11; Crashaw, *Carmen Deo Nostro*, 31.
[115] Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple* (1648), 74; Crashaw, *Carmen Deo Nostro*, 67.

St. Thomas Aquinas. Poems addressed to George Herbert and Lancelot Andrewes and those in praise of the Book of Common Prayer are excised. Just as Cressy redefined the 'beauty of holiness' as an attribute only of the Roman Church, the paratextual architecture of *Carmen Deo Nostro* recategorizes Crashaw's poems and imagery as distinctively Roman Catholic.

Figure 13



Carmen Deo Nostro, the only work of English poetry published in mid-century Paris, was part of a polemical print campaign. Aside from editing poetry, Thomas Carre advocated for Roman Catholicism in diverse genres: translations, histories, and meditations.[116] In 1646, Carre and Vane produced an account of various written and spoken religious disputations with John Cosin which repeatedly dismisses Cosin's arguments as 'specious', attractive but misleading.[117] Even if Carre's edition exploits Crashaw's poetry for propagandistic purposes,

[116] Thomas Carre, *Thomas of Kempis his Soliloquies Translated out of Latine* (Paris, 1653); Thomas Carre, *Pietas Parisiensis, or, A Short Description of the Pietie and Charitie Comonly Exercised in Paris* (Paris, 1666).
[117] Thomas Carre, *Occasionall Discourses […] Had with Doctor Cosens. As also, An Answer to a Libell Written by the said Doctor Cosens […] By Thomas Vane* (Paris, 1646), 68, 95, 121.

this does not mean, as critics often imply, that he mis-reads or distorts Crashaw. The 'repackaging' of his pre-conversion poetry with the stamp of Roman Catholicism enacts the idea of conversion as conformity, expressed in Vane and Cressy's narratives. Crucially, Carre's editorial procedure is warranted by Crashaw's poetry.

Crashaw represents conversion as a process of fixing in 'To the Countess of Denbigh', a verse letter urging Susan Feilding, Countess of Denbigh, one of Henrietta Maria's ladies-in-waiting, to convert. Composed around 1646 and first printed in *Carmen Deo Nostro*, the poem's subtitle discloses its aim of 'Persuading Her to Resolution in Religion, and to Render Herself without Further Delay into the Communion of the Catholic Church'.[118] Both Crashaw and the countess were dead by the time the poem was printed, but as many readers would have been aware, she had become a Catholic, one of many conversions which caused scandal and celebration among the divided Parisian exiles.[119] Crashaw opens with an apostrophe:

> What heau'n-intreated HEART is This?
> Stands trembling at the gate of blisse;
> Holds fast the door, yet dares not venture
> Fairly to open it, and enter.
> Whose DEFINITION is a doubt
> Twixt life & death, twixt in & out (ll. 1–6).

Crashaw implores Denbigh to stop procrastinating and define herself as a Roman Catholic. These lines establish a tension between the countess' vacillation and the static binary of 'in or out'. Crashaw compares conversion to giving birth, a frozen lake thawing, a meteor becoming a star, a flower unfolding, and a person submitting to death; these images of changing physical states all involve a shift from fluctuation to permanence or stability. Written nearly ten years after his letter from Leiden, Crashaw warns the countess against making the same mistake he had: 'And of a meteor make a starr/ O fix this fair INDEFINITE' (ll. 30–31). Aside from its usual sense, 'to define' also connotes making an end, marking a limit, or in ecclesiastical

[118] Crashaw, *Carmen Deo Nostro*, ā3v.
[119] Cecilia Denbigh, *Royalist Father and Roundhead Son, Being the Memoirs of the First and Second Earls of Denbigh, 1600–1675* (London: Methuen, 1915), 286–288.

contexts to settle or determine a doctrine. Crashaw combines these senses – by defining herself, the countess will settle controversy, bring her doubts to an end, and fix her trembling heart.

Denbigh's conversion is portrayed as at once a triumph and a defeat:

> To saue your life, kill your delay.
> It is loue's seege; and sure to be
> Your triumph, though his victory.
> […]
> Yeild quickly. Lest perhaps you proue
> Death's prey, before the prize of loue.
> This Fort of your fair selfe, if't be not won,
> He is repulst indeed; but you'are vndone (ll. 58–60, 65–68).

Crashaw accumulates paradoxes: the countess must save herself by killing and will triumph through her opponent's victory. Whereas the 'undoing' of love poetry is caused by giving into the lover's unholy advances, Crashaw's countess will be 'undone' if she fails to yield to her divine lover. In her imaginative reading of this poem's sexual imagery, Molly Murray suggests that by depicting the countess as at once active and passive, agent and victim, the often gendered discourse of spiritual advice (male advisor to passive female follower) is made androgynous; Crashaw, she claims, 'proposes that conversion bestows the ability to "wind" across erotic and gendered thresholds' and associates it with 'a generative hybridity'.[120] But the blurring of win and loss is far from unique to Crashaw. It occurs frequently in contemporary conversion writing. Milletière's letter urging Charles II to convert, printed the previous year, describes the English Revolution as a salutary injury, a blow dealt by God, which had revealed the truth about the English Reformation: 'la playe, de qui le sentiment est vostre enseignement' ['a wound, the feeling whereof is to be your instruction'].[121] Crashaw employs the same image: 'O Dart of love! arrow of light!/ O happy you, if it hit right' (ll. 49–50). Critics tend to emphasise how Crashaw's pervasive imagery of amorous wounding and life-giving deaths draws on Marinist tropes and Counter-Reformation devotion more broadly, yet it also parallels

[120] Murray, *Poetics of Conversion*, 125.
[121] Milletière, *La Victoire de la Vérité*, 14; Bramhall, *Victory of Truth*, 10.

the iconography and polemical discourse of mid-century Catholic conversion. Crashaw insists that the countess must mark herself as a Roman Catholic or risk eternal undoing. Rather than celebrating ambiguity or hybridity, the poem implements the doctrine that salvation was impossible outside the Church.[122] Just as Cressy reluctantly resolves to 'absolutely engage on one side', Crashaw acknowledges the difficulty and necessity of clear definitions. 'To the Countess of Denbigh' opens *Carmen Deo Nostro* and, by introducing the image patterns of wounding, melting, and yielding that recur throughout the book, invites the reader to see the entire volume through the lens of conversion. The paratextual apparatus of *Carmen Deo Nostro* is not mere repackaging but follows Crashaw's advice to the countess: it fixes and defines him as a Roman Catholic poet.

Carmen Deo Nostro uses Crashaw's individual voice as a synecdoche for Roman Catholicism. The revised titles, illustrations and prefatory verses accentuate the liturgical rather than lyrical character of the verse. Once again, Carre's intervention takes its cue from the poetry. Crashaw repeatedly harmonises personal faith and institutional religious structures. 'The Flaming Heart', first printed in 1648 and in an expanded version in 1652, combines the practices of lyric and ritual. Applying Petrarchan and Marinist conceits of love's dart to the experience of reading St. Teresa's autobiography, the poem repeats the familiar trope of triumphant defeat:

> For in Love's field was never found.
> A nobler weapon than a WOUND.
> Loue's passiues are his activ'st part.
> The wounded is the wounding heart (ll. 71–74).

The echoic alliteration and final polyptoton highlight the mystical paradox. Here Crashaw develops the image of a sacred injury to suggest that conversion is a self-replicating process: Teresa's wounds wound others and converts produce more conversions. The conclusion to the

[122] Sugimura similarly interprets the poem's threat of undoing as an expression of the Catholic emphasis on 'salvation through the Church', 'Richard Crashaw's Religious Politics,' 632–633.

revised text of the poem combines the hyperbole of erotic poetry with the communal rubric of a litany:

> By all thy brim-fill'd Bowles of fierce desire
> By thy last Morning's draught of liquid fire;
> By the full kingdome of that finall kisse
> That seiz'd thy parting Soul, & seal'd thee his;
> By all the heau'ns thou hast in him
> (Fair sister of the SERAPHIM!)
> By all of HIM we haue in THEE;
> Leaue nothing of my SELF in me.
> Let me so read thy life, that I
> Vnto all life of mine may dy (ll. 99–108).

Louis Martz described these lines as 'the richest fiery shower of Baroque imagery to be found anywhere in Crashaw's poetry'.[123] Yet even as these lines seem distinctively Crashavian, they are also a prayer for self-annihilation, abandoning his own life in favour of St. Teresa's. The poem is both about an exceptional individual, Teresa, and the dissolution of selfhood in the encounter with the divine. The anaphora and accumulation of epithets approximate the litanies used in both Roman Catholic and Church of England liturgy, which list honorific apostrophes to Christ or, in the former case, various saints. The images Crashaw prays 'by', the brimming bowl of desire, the kingdom of a kiss, spectacularly blur the abstract and the concrete, and the sacramental and erotic. They attempt to visualise the impossible: liquid fire and a heaven 'in him'. The repetitious structures of liturgical discourse give form to the straining metaphors for religious ecstasy. Crashaw vividly imagines sacrament and ritual as the attempt to organise and voice the ineffable and idiosyncratic experience of God's love. This revised poem exemplifies how the whole of *Carmen Deo Nostro* fuses the lyric 'I' with the corporate voice of the Church, personal religious experience with ecclesiastical structures. As Sugimura notes, these lines demonstrate Crashaw's union of individual ecstatic experience and ecclesiastical authority.[124] They echo the rhetoric of ecstatic conformity, a hallmark of mid-seventeenth-century Catholic

[123] Louis L. Martz, *The Wit of Love: Donne, Carew, Crashaw, Marvell* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 130.
[124] Sugimura, 'Richard Crashaw's Religious Politics,' 640–641.

conversion writing.

Critics have been wrong to dismiss *Carmen Deo Nostro*. It responds sensitively and creatively to imagery and suggestions within Crashaw's poems and demonstrates how his supposedly idiosyncratic verse contributed to a wider conversation about conversion and religious identity taking place in the print culture of mid-seventeenth-century Paris.

Sensing the Church

From Praz's early study of the baroque Crashaw to more recent work concerned with his depiction of homoeroticism and androgyny, critics have routinely identified sensuousness and even sensuality as a defining characteristic of Crashaw's poems.[125] This imagery has been read variously as an expression of particular theological doctrines, particularly the eucharist and the incarnation, or of a Laudian commitment to ceremony and sacrament.[126] Yet, as Kimberly Johnson observes, critics often mistake Crashaw's 'anxious fixation on the body for enthusiasm'.[127] She argues that Crashaw is in fact often troubled by the bodily and models the sense-defying mystery of the eucharist in his use of irreducibly corporeal imagery that refuses to be neatly subsumed by allegorical or sacramental interpretation.[128] Reading Crashaw alongside contemporary conversion writing suggests that this dialectic between the sensuous and the spiritual, the physically knowable and the ineffable, might be more than a response to a single doctrine, and rather an extended meditation on the fundamental task of finding God in creation; a task that was, for both English episcopalians and Roman Catholics, bound up with the search for the true Church which mediates divine grace to the world.

'On Hope', written in dialogue with Abraham Cowley possibly at the royal court at

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[125] Praz, 'The Flaming Heart,' 204; Parry, *Glory, Laud, and Honour*, 142; Rambuss, 'Introduction,' lxiv–lxv.
[126] Sophie Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 127–153; Gary Kuchar, *Divine Subjection: The Rhetoric of Sacramental Devotion in Early Modern England* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 97–98; R. V. Young, *Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 156; Nandra Perry, '"'Tis Heav'n She Speakes": Lady Religion, Saint Teresa, and the Politics of Ceremony in the Poetry of Richard Crashaw,' *Religion & Literature* 38.2 (2006): 1–23; Sugimura, 'Richard Crashaw's Religious Politics,' 634.
[127] Johnson, *Made Flesh*, 129.
[128] Johnson, *Made Flesh*, 120–121.

Oxford around 1643 if not later in Paris, and reprinted in *Carmen Deo Nostro*, illustrates the centrality of the senses to Crashaw's understanding of the divine.[129] He considers hope to be virtuous faith in God's goodness and promise of salvation, not mere optimism in the face of outrageous fortune. Accumulating paradoxical epithets and apostrophes, the poem addresses hope as 'fair fallacy by thee/ We are not WHERE nor What we be./ But WHAT & Where we would be' (ll. 37–39). The use of 'fallacy' as a positive term of affection suggests the insufficiency of human logic and the extraordinary power of hope to transport the reader to heaven. Crashaw's concatenation of sensuous images threatens to overwhelm the reader:

> Thy golden, growing, head neuer hangs down
> Till in the lappe of loues full noone
> It falls; and dyes! O no, it melts away
> As does the dawn into the day.
> As lumpes of sugar loose themselves; and twine
> Their supple essence with the soul of wine (ll. 25–30).

Whereas Cowley insists that hope always ends in disappointment, Crashaw claims that it only seems to disappear and actually brings transition and fulfilment, like the vanishing night and dissolving sugar. These lines toggle between upward and downward movements: the upright head falls into a lap, the dawn rises, the sugar lump sinks and then twines up again. This supposedly philosophical poem on an abstract phenomenon typifies Crashaw's sensory imagination, but it also flickers between the visible and the invisible. Hope is both vividly material here and elusive in its continually mutating state. The simile of dissolving sugar lumps at first appeals to sight (the fading dawn), until the next line compounds the image with the puzzling description of the lump's 'supple essence'. This near antithesis combines the physical 'supple' with the immaterial 'essence'. The word choice may have been suggested by George Herbert in 'Love Unknown', distinguishing ordinary wine from that endowed with a divine

[129] Thomas O Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth, and J. Robert King (eds), *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley: Vol. 2* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 224.

presence:

> while many drunk bare wine,
> A friend did steal into my cup for good,
> Ev'n taken inwardly, and most divine
> To supple hardnesses.[130]

This possible echo suggests a submerged allusion to the eucharist in Crashaw's poem on hope. Characteristically, Crashaw replaces Herbert's 'hardnesses' with the intangible 'essence', but like Herbert he embraces the paradox that the divine is both manifest in the world and beyond human imagination. In the final couplet, Crashaw declares: 'True Hope's a glorious hunter and her chase,/ The God of nature in the fields of grace' (ll. 49–50). The inversion and chiasmus blur the boundaries between the earthly (nature's fields) and the divine (the God of grace). Crashaw's poetry continually attempts to bridge the visible and the ineffable. It is shaped by the 'fair fallacy' that the divine is both immanent in the beauty of creation and impossible to comprehend.

The notion of God's immanence in the created world is pervasive in early modern literature and Christian theology. Crashaw mixes this ultimate mystery with the terminology of ecclesiological debate. Since the Church is understood to be the conduit of divine grace to the world, the hunt for true grace in the fields of nature is also the search for the true Church. 'To the Name Above Every Name, the Name of Jesus: A Hymn', first published in 1648 and possibly written after Crashaw's conversion, undertakes these twinned endeavours. The name of Jesus is never used in the poem; instead Crashaw accumulates different images to describe and praise it. The hymn bespeaks both Ignatian spirituality (with its devotion to the name and iconography of the Christogram) and one of the most controversial Laudian novelties. A contemporary account of the religious practices of the English episcopalian exiles in Paris complains:

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[130] George Herbert, 'Love Unknown,' in Helen Wilcox (ed.), *The English Poems of George Herbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 454, ll. 42–45.

> [T]hey continue the Innovations that were practised by many of our Clergy; as, Bowing at the Name of Jesus towards the Altar, &c. which I know giveth offence to the good French Protestants, who to me did often condemn those Innovations for Romish Superstitions: doubtless, they would do our Church, and our Religion more credit there, if they did use less Ceremony.[131]

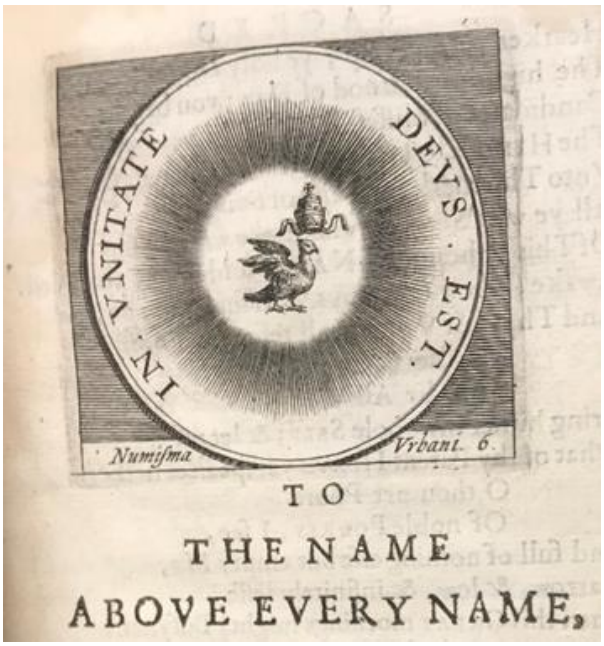
Crashaw's poem thus meditates on a controversial point of convergence between the Roman and English Churches.

The poem primarily addresses the name of Jesus, but its apostrophes might also be directed towards the true Church. Among various epithets, the name becomes the dawn, a place of arrival, and home: 'in the wealthy Brest/ Of This vnbounded NAME build your warm Nest' (ll. 11–12). All these images were used by contemporary converts to describe the Church.[132] Carre illustrates the poem with an engraving which endorses this analogy (Figure 14). It depicts a sunburst which contains not the usual Christogram, IHS, that we might expect, but the insignia of Pope Urban VI, with his motto 'In Vnitate Deus Est'.[133] Urban VI became pope in 1378, but his authority was immediately challenged by a group of cardinals who elected another candidate and instigated the Western Schism, when there were two rival claimants to the papacy in Rome and Avignon.[134] In Carre's composite image, the space usually occupied by the mark of Christ is filled by the icon of his Church. Like other conversion writings published in Paris at the same time, particularly Cressy's *Exomologesis*, *Carmen Deo Nostro* implies that Christ and his Church are indistinguishable, but the reference to the Schism also signals Crashaw's interest in division and competing claims to legitimacy.

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[131] Samuel Brett, *A Narrative of the Proceedings of a Great Councel of Jews, Assembled in the Plain of Ageda in Hungaria* (London, 1655), 1. On the origins of the practice, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 134.
[132] Vane compares the Church to 'the nest of the Halcyon', *A Lost Sheepe*, 38, and Bayly, like Rowland, repeatedly compares it to breasts, *An End*, 44, 82, 398.
[133] Rambuss (ed.), *The English Poems of Richard Crashaw*, 381.
[134] Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism, 1378–1417: Performing Legitimacy, Performing Unity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 1–2.

Figure 14



As he calls on the entirety of creation to praise the name, Crashaw repeats his favoured metaphor for conversion:

> O may you fix
> For euer here, & mix
> Your selues into the long
> And euerlasting series of a deathless SONG (ll. 82–86).

The sustained enjambment, following the caesura after 'here', and tautology of 'long/ and everlasting' enacts the deathless song. These lines are animated by a tension between fixity and fluctuation, the constancy of the worshipper and the movement of their unending harmony. The Church is characterised here by its eternal hymn of praise to God. Yet Crashaw is self-conscious about human attempts to approximate the heavenly chorus:

> May it be no wrong
> Blest Heauns, to you, & your Superiour song,
> That we, dark Sons of Dust & Sorrow,
> A while Dare borrow
> The Name of Your Delights & our Desires,
> And fit it to so farr inferior LYRES (ll. 97–102).

Christ's name becomes a song or string fitted to the shepherds' lyres, while Crashaw expresses anxiety about appropriate forms of human worship. The parallel doublets 'Dust & Sorrow' and

'Delights and Our Desires' enact the divergence between human and divine perspectives. Even the invocation to mankind to join him is riven with some uncertainty: 'Come; and come strong,/ To the conspiracy of our Spatious song' (ll. 70–71). The word 'conspiracy' is used in its archaic sense of a union or collaboration, literally a breathing together, but it also connotes plots and evil machinations.[135] In this sense, the line ironically imagines the 'dark Sons of Dust & Sorrow' ambitiously conspiring to be something more through their song. The ambiguous adjective 'spatious' is a crux of this poem and several others by Crashaw, as we shall see. Here it can be read as 'spacious' indicating the breadth of this universal song and the diversity it encompasses. Yet, given the pejorative connotations of 'conspiracy', it might also be seen as a variant spelling of the equivocal word 'specious', meaning either beautiful, pleasing to the eye, or of pretexts and pretences. The same word is used by Carre to attack Cosin's misleading arguments, and by Cressy to describe the 'specious and alluring qualities' of the Roman Church.[136] Its Latin root 'speciosus' is the term Augustine uses to describe ideal divine beauty, dimly seen in the fallen world.[137] Recurring in contemporary conversion writing and central to the Augustinian account of transcendent beauty, the ambiguous word 'specious' captures the theological and aesthetic conundrum over the status of the visible, which animates Crashaw's verse.

In the Hymn to the Name of Jesus, Crashaw prays that he not only worship aright, but also discern the true beauty which comes from God:

> O fill our senses, And take from vs
> All force of so Prophane a Fallacy
> To think ought sweet but that which smells of Thee (ll. 170–172).

The word 'fallacy' is here associated with the misinterpretations and misidentifications of

[135] 'Conspiracy, *n.*,' sense 3, *OED*, accessed 17 December 2022, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/Entry/39766?redirectedFrom=conspiracy.
[136] Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 106.
[137] Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 2.

worldly vision. The notion of the smell of Christ is transgressive in its emphasis on the corporeal. Whereas the rest of the poem turns the incarnate son into an intangible name, continually mutating into different similes and epithets, it is uncertain here whether we are to imagine the smell of Jesus the man or, more impossibly, of God. R. V. Young has noted that Crashaw's images of fragrance, particularly incense, resonate with a preoccupation of St. Teresa, for whom 'fragrance symbolises the praises of God which issue from the soul'.[138] Similarly, Sophie Read suggests that the recurring imagery of sweetness may recall a twelfth-century hymn by Bernard of Clairvaux, used on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, that praises Christ as 'super mel et omnia', better than honey and all things.[139] Nevertheless, these sources and traditions should not be used to circumvent or explain away the immediate shock of Crashaw's verse. Asking the reader to imagine what Christ does and does not smell like, these lines are an exemplary instance of Crashaw blurring the sensory and the inconceivable, stimulating and confounding the imagination.

Crashaw finds a solution to the problems of divine and man-made worship and of true and false sweetness by deferring to ecclesiastical authority:

> Fair, flow'ry Name; In none but Thee
> And Thy Nectareall Fragrancy,
> Hourly there meetes
> An vniuersall SYNOD of All sweets;
> By whom it is defined Thus
> That no Perfume
> For euer shall presume
> To passe for Odoriferous,
> But such alone whose sacred Pedigree
> Can prove it Self some kin (sweet name) to Thee (ll. 173–182).

This imagined universal synod decides between different fragrances, between the truly odoriferous with a 'sacred pedigree', and its presumptuous imitations. The 'sacred pedigree' evokes the concept of apostolic succession, a major point of debate between the Churches. The

[138] Young, *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*, 90.
[139] Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination*, 132.

indirect construction and word ‘thus’ in emphatic position mimics the technical language of ecclesiastical pronouncements that ‘define’ particular doctrines and controversies. The prosody of the imagined synod’s decree – a sequence of iambic dimeter, trimeter, and tetrameter lines – builds to the climactic polysyllabic ‘odoriferous’. This crescendo is almost bathetic in the strange juxtaposition of formal ecclesiastical language and the imagery of fragrant sensory delights. Crashaw fuses religious experience and ecclesiastical authority. ‘In the Name’ is a highly imaginative response to contemporary ecclesiological discourse: the difficulty of deciding between different visible Churches becomes the search for what truly smells of Christ.

Crashaw’s poetry is full of twinned opposites, seeming pairs that turn out to be contraries, and that model the difficulty of identifying what is and is not the property of Christ. The clearest instance of this is found in ‘Prayer. An Ode, which was Praefixed to a Little Prayer-Book Given to a Young Gentle-Woman’ (1648 and 1652), a revision of the 1646 poem, ‘On a Prayer Booke Sent to Mrs. M. R’.[140] ‘Prayer’ choreographs an encounter between female reader and holy text in erotic terms, merging the languages of profane love and religious devotion. If she avoids distractions, the addressee is promised ‘To have her God become her lover’ (l. 124). The prayerbook is ‘love’s great artillery’ which insinuates itself into the woman’s ‘white bosom’, and there sets up a ‘snowy fortresse of defence’ (ll. 15–18). The poem juxtaposes the sacred and profane, the spiritual and the physical, the everlasting and the temporary. Substituting the book with ever more elaborate metaphors, Crashaw plays with the relationship between the material object and its significance. He begins

> Lo here a little volume, but great Book!
> A nest of new-born sweets;
> Whose natiue fires disdaining
> To ly thus folded, & complaining
> Of these ignoble sheets,
> Affect more comly bands
> (Fair one) from thy kind hands

[140] Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple* (1646), 74–78; *Steps to the Temple* (1648), 78–82; *Carmen Deo Nostro*, 108–112.

And confidently look
To find the rest
Of a rich binding in your BREST (ll. 1–10).

Crashaw's favourite images of sweets and nests render the prayer book a metaphor for the appeal and comfort of truth. The half-antithesis between 'little' and 'great' implies a tension between quantitative and qualitative values, the physical and the symbolic. 'Bands' refers to an ornate binding, possibly being made by the woman, but also anticipates the poem's marital imagery, which compares the book to Christ and the reader to his bride. The faithful reader binds the book and God to her heart. The book as material object and as abstract store of knowledge are in harmony here, but they also come into conflict. The phrase 'native fires' suggests the ardency of the devotional text, yet its literal sense conjures an image of the paper, the 'ignoble sheets', being burnt up by their content. Like the 'Dust & Sorrow' in the Hymn to the Name, these lines express unease and even shame at employing ignoble physical artefacts to praise the godhead. Bayly's analysis of the metonyms used to describe the true Church via its physical fabric is useful here; the container is spectacularly exceeded, if not destroyed, by the thing contained.

'Prayer' also responds to the problem of distinguishing between true beauty and false appearances. The speaker warns the gentlewoman not to be out when her divine lover comes home, not

To gadde abroad
Among the gay mates of the god of flyes;
To take her pleasure & to play
And keep the deuill's holyday;
To dance ith' sunshine of some smiling
But beguiling
Spheares of sweet & sugred Lyes,
Some slippery Pair
Of false, perhaps as fair,
Flattering but forswearing eyes (ll. 50–59).

Crashaw imagines the corruptive potential of sensuality in terms of wandering off, 'gadd[ing] abroad'. This physical metaphor is suggested by the etymological root of the word distraction:

'distrahere' 'to drag asunder, to separate'.[141] The sustained alliteration and enjambment lend a musical quality to these lines. Accumulating epithets and tautologies (take pleasure and play, sweet and sugared), the speaker prolongs and revels in these beguiling diversions. The structure of the first five lines, organised by a series of anaphoric infinitives (to gadde, to take, to keep, to dance), disintegrates in the onslaught of internal rhymes, sibilant alliteration, and contradictory epithets in apposition. The passage enacts the temptation Crashaw is warning against. It recalls the pervasive mid-seventeenth-century language of 'common mirth' and holiday games.[142] But if Crashaw seems to side with Puritan opponents of the traditional pastimes here, his objection is not to mirth per se. The merrymaking in 'Prayer' is sinful because it is deceptive. Invoking Beelzebub, the god of flies, indicates how impermanent and superficial these diversions are. The suspended rhyme 'flyes […] lies' emphasises that these confections are illusory and, like summer flies, will not last.

Despite the condemnation, Crashaw's poem admits how appealing sinful practices can seem. The flattering eyes are, after all, 'perhaps as fair' as Christ's. The entire poem enacts this confusing resemblance. It uses the same lexis of 'sweets' and amorous pleasures to describe both the 'devil's holiday' and its exact opposite, the prayerbook. The book is 'a sacred store/ Of hidden sweets' and 'pretious sweets' (ll. 63–64, 94). The same verse form describes the bliss of dallying with both Beelzebub and Christ:

> She shall haue power
> To rifle & deflour
> The rich & roseall spring of those rare sweets
> Which with a swelling bosome there she meets
> Boundles & infinite
> Bottomles treasures
> Of pure inebriating pleasures (ll. 111–120).

The rhyme scheme, alliteration, and accumulated epithets recall the earlier description of the

[141] 'distract, *v.*,' *OED*, accessed 17 December 2022, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/Entry/55719?rskey=7KCOj4&result=3&isAdvanced=false.
[142] Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*.

devil's holiday. The aggressive verbs 'rifle and deflour' suggest the intensity of these pleasures and their affinities with illicit, violent sexuality. The final line's 'pure' can be read adverbially as an intensifier of 'inebriating' or as another adjective creating an antithesis; this spiritual-sexual ecstasy is both pure and intoxicating. Rhetorically, the 'rare sweets' of God and of the devil's holiday differ only in duration – the former will last eternally. By asserting similarities between the diabolical and the divine, Crashaw recalls the ecclesiological problem of visibility, of distinguishing between true beauty and its distracting imitation.

William Rowland's descriptions of milk and venom intermingling and of mothers and stepdames attempt in miniature the poetic strategy Crashaw accomplishes more spectacularly here. In the 1648 *Steps to the Temple*, 'Prayer' is followed by a new poem 'To the Same Party Councel Concerning her Choise', which comments explicitly on the experience of mistaken identity. It extends the conceit of the former poem and counsels the addressee on how to choose between Christ and the distractions of the fallen world, between rival 'suters that besiege your Maiden brest' (l. 3). Molly Murray also argues that 'Councel' echoes the 'contemporary genre of advice for converting ladies'.[143] Whereas Murray explores the gendered representation of agency, I contend that this poem replicates the tropes of deception and confusion used in contemporary ecclesiological debate. The speaker dismisses the falsity of worldly spouses:

> Say, gentle soul, what can you find
> But painted shapes,
> Peacocks & Apes,
> Illustrious flyes,
> Guilded dunghills, glorious Lyes,
> Goodly surmises
> And deep disguises,
> Oathes of water, words of wind? (ll. 10–17).

The lexis and sustained rhyme across iambic dimeter lines resonates with the description of the devil's holiday in 'Prayer'. Although 'Councel' seems to distinguish sharply between true and

[143] Murray, *Poetics of Conversion*, 115–117.

false lovers, it also adapts profane rhetoric to religious seduction. Crashaw comments on this strategy of persuasion. He explains that the misleading resemblances between worldly and holy pleasures are part of Christ's 'high stratagem to win your heart':

> It was his heavenly art
> Kindly to crosse you
> In your mistaken love,
> That, at the next remove
> Thence he might tosse you
> And strike your troubled heart
> Home to himself; to hide it in his brest
> The bright ambrosiall nest,
> Of love, of life, & everlasting rest.
> Happy Mystake! (ll. 45–54).

The woman is disappointed with 'mistaken love' for lesser things, so that she can be abruptly returned home to her lord, whose breast, nest, and rest are all familiar images for the Church. The sustained enjambment builds momentum before the emphatic caesura 'home to himself'. Divine providence turns mistakes and misrecognitions into triumphs. The sweetness of the devil's holiday is remembered and superseded in the true ambrosia of Christ. From one perspective, these related poems are a highly effective instance of the baroque fusing of the sacred and profane, and these lines comment self-consciously on that technique of using the erotic as a gateway to the spiritual. But the print context of *Carmen Deo Nostro* also allows them to be read in terms of ecclesiological discussions of how to distinguish between different kinds of true and false beauty. It suggests how the experience of converting from the Laudian to the Roman Church could be seen as a process of re-reading, of being kindly crossed, and happily mistaken, and exemplifies how ecclesiological debate could form the basis for highly creative devotional verse.

Crashaw's epiphany

Crashaw offers his most eloquent meditation on conversion in 'In the Glorious Epiphany of our Lord God'. First printed in 1648, the poem incorporates many of the principal concerns and image-patterns of mid-seventeenth-century Catholic conversion writing. It conflates the

languages of religious experience and ecclesiastical authority and likens the process of finding God and his true Church to (re)interpreting the beauty of the visible world.

The Epiphany Hymn is both a dialogue between the three kings and a hymn in their honour. Its central conceit is a punning antithesis between the earth's sun and the son of God. Contrasting light and darkness, blindness and illumination, Crashaw declares his indebtedness to the 'right-eyed Areopagite' (l. 192), the mystic and neo-platonic theologian Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who argued that God can only be known by what he is not. The poem's engagement with apophatic or negative theology has been central to most readings of it.[144] Gary Kuchar asserts that, rather than retreating from sensory experience, 'negative theology dialectically transcends but does not 'reject' the book of creation'.[145] He emphasises the importance of Pseudo-Dionysian thought to the conception of the Church as a hierarchical, supernatural community, and argues that 'by alluding to Pseudo-Dionysius in the context of a liturgical celebration of Epiphany, Crashaw, in effect, endorses the absolutist view that Church hierarchies and ceremonies are guaranteed by the emanationist dimensions of Dionysius' thought'.[146] After demonstrating that Church of England divines, notably Richard Hooker, adopted this ecclesiological use of mystical theology, Kuchar claims that Crashaw's poem is not confessionally specific and 'should not be read as celebrating something as vague as "conversion"'.[147] In fact, the precise context of mid-century Catholic conversion narratives illuminates the poem in new ways. I argue that by responding poetically to the issues of resemblance and opposition which preoccupied contemporary Catholic converts, the Epiphany Hymn dramatizes the search for God both within and beyond the created word.

When the magi reach the new-born Christ, at the poem's opening, they celebrate their

[144] Rambuss (ed.), *The English Poems of Richard Crashaw*, 386; Young, *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*, 105.
[145] Kuchar, 'A Greek in the Temple,' 289.
[146] Kuchar, 'A Greek in the Temple,' 275.
[147] Kuchar, 'A Greek in the Temple,' 274.

discovery by rejecting their old guide the sun: ‘From him we flee/ From HIM, whom by a more illustrious ly,/ The blindnes of the world did call the eye’ (ll. 43–45). The half antithesis of ‘blindness […] eye’ condemns humanity’s erroneous perception. Crashaw puns on ‘illustrious’, equating the brightness of the sun with worldly notions of the distinguished or eminent. This allows ‘HIM’ to refer momentarily to the deceitful King Herod. But the image is also geographical: the magi flee from the sun because they are travelling from the east where it rises. The incarnation is presented as a *translatio imperii*, marking the end of the pagan world and its culture of sun worship:

> Farewell, the world’s false light.
> Farewell, the white
> Ægypt! a long farewell to thee
> Bright IDOL; black IDOLATRY.
> The dire face of inferior DARKNES, kis’t
> And courted in the pompous mask of a more specious mist (ll. 48–53).

With repeated farewells, they reject the dark idolatry of sensory experience. ‘Specious’ is wholly pejorative here, it describes sunlight not as an illumination but a mist leading the traveller astray. The kings’ rejection of the world’s light figures the incarnation as a triumph over nature. The polyptoton of ‘idol […] idolatry’ projects the act of pagan worship onto the sun itself. The magi continue with a long and vicious attack on paganism and polytheism, condemning the ‘cheap Egyptian deities’ and enumerating the falling idols. They denounce ancient myths of shape-shifting gods ravishing humans: ‘Nor with peruerse loves & Religious RAPES/ Reuenge thy Bountyes in their beauteous shapes’ (ll. 106–107). Crashaw’s other poems use similar metaphors far more positively. He frequently figures congress between the human and divine in sexual terms. The addressee of ‘Prayer’ is promised ‘To have her God become her lover’. The Epiphany Hymn’s rather different representation of the relation between divine and fleshly love evinces Crashaw’s interest, across his poems, in uncanny similarities and the problem of differentiating between things that seem the same but are in fact opposed.

Crashaw invokes a long tradition of believing that the pagan oracles had fallen silent after Christ's birth.[148] The same idea appears, as several scholars have noted, in John Milton's 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity'.[149] However, unlike Milton's omniscient speaker, Crashaw voices the attack on idolatry through the magi. They deem the object of worship, the sun, partly culpable: 'Farewell, farewell/ The proud and misplac't gates of hell,/ Pertch't, in the morning's way' (ll. 54–56). However, after their tirade, the magi have second thoughts. Previous critics have not noticed this dramatic turning point in the poem. The chorus reveals that the sun is far from complicit in this idolatry: 'Alas with how much heauyer shade/ The shamefac't lamp hung down his head' (ll. 118–119). This 'heavier shade' outdoes the kings' righteous anger, who now change their minds and acquit the sun. They claim that the sun actively participates in the revelation of Christ by eclipsing himself at the crucifixion. He

> that has so long
> By the love-sick world bin made
> Not so much their sun as SHADE,
> Weary of this Glorious wrong
> From them and from himself shall flee
> For shelter to the shadow of thy TREE (ll. 135–140).

Their previous accusations against the 'Bright Idol' are redirected towards his misguided worshippers who, by misinterpreting the sun, have denatured him, made him more shade than light. The magi moderate their stark rejection of the visible world, and their antitheses are replaced by paradox as the sun flees to shadow.

In the Epiphany Hymn, Crashaw turns a set of conventional rhetorical and mystical tropes surrounding light and darkness into a meditation on the ecclesiological problem of resemblance. The magi envisage the crucifixion as a final confrontation between Son and sun:

> That dark Day's clear doom shall define
> Whose is the Master FIRE, which sun should shine.
> That sable Iudgement-seat shall by new lawes
> Decide & settle the Great cause

[148] Revard, *Pindar & the Renaissance Hymn-Ode*, 249–250.
[149] Young, *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*, 3, and Nicholas McDowell, *Poet of Revolution: The Making of John Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 175.

Of controverted light,
And natur's wrongs rejoyce to do thee Right (ll. 144–149).

The 'dark Day's clear doom' is the sun's eclipse, which illuminates Christ's light, the master fire. The intertwined paradoxes of dark brightness and clear obscurity juxtapose the metaphorical and the literal, the spiritual and the material, capturing the mystery of how divine meaning inhabits the visible world. This is another instance of mistaken identity. Crashaw merges a description of mystical darkness with the ecclesiastical diction of 'define', 'Decide & settle'. The collocation 'controverted light' draws together theological debate and the experience of beauty in a similar manner to the 'Synod of All sweets' in the Hymn to the Name of Jesus. Managing to invoke both religious controversy and a sublime encounter with God in the same lines and even the same phrase, Crashaw challenges the scholarly tendency to see polemic and changes in ecclesiastical affiliation as distinct from, and less than, the inner experience of faith and conversion. The contrast between the visible and invisible collapses in this passage: the earth's eclipsed star becomes the 'sable judgement-seat' of God, and creator and creation conspire in divine revelation. Like the 'happy mistake' at the end of 'Councel' which drives the addressee home to Christ's breast, here a fault in nature puts things right and reveals the proper object of human worship.

Crashaw makes much of the ironic paradox that the sun which the magi turn away from ultimately directs them to Christ. He describes them, and implicitly all post-incarnation humanity, as 'The happy conuerts now of him/ Whom they compell'd before to be their sin' (ll. 177–178). Humanity is held solely responsible for the former sin of 'bright idolatry'. Paradoxically, however, they convert back to 'him', that is, the sun as the son. Like the word 'controverted', 'convert' carries a kinetic sense of turning around. This is the only use of the word convert in Crashaw's work. Significantly, it is used to convey a reorientation towards the beauty of the world. The magi no longer zealously condemn the sun but reinterpret it. For Crashaw, conversion is intimately connected to the discovery of the numinous within the

visible and to the transformation of former mistakes into eventual enlightenment.

> It was their Weaknes woo'd his beauty;
> But it shall be
> Their wisdome now, as well as duty,
> T'injoy his Blott; & as a large black letter
> Vse it to spell Thy beautyes better;
> And make the night it self their torch to thee (ll. 184–189).

The beauty of the sun is no longer rejected as specious but becomes fundamental to finding the beauty of its creator. The implied antitheses, a legible blot and a torch made of night, encapsulate the mystical dialectic between the visible and the invisible which allows the physical world to participate in the discovery of the unknowable God. The attraction to the sun's beauty which motivated their sinful sun-worship is not wholly abandoned but repurposed as they turn to the true beauties of God. Like Cressy's realisation that he was a Catholic before he was a Catholic, Crashaw presents conversion as a moment of recognition and redescription.

Crashaw's model of conversion in the Epiphany hymn is illuminating. After converting he did not dispense with the 'beauty of holiness' or the broad aesthetics of his earlier poetry. Instead, like the magi, he reinterprets beauty and uses the same figures to signify new meanings. We should not be surprised to find that Laudian and Catholic writers often seem to be very similar; contemporaries were aware of the resemblance and strived variously to re-assert, fix, or bridge their differences. For Crashaw, as for Vane, Cressy, and Bayly, conversion is an act of re-interpretation, of looking again and spelling beauty better.

In a passage from the *City of God*, cited by Cressy to explain why providence allows defects and abuses in individual members of the indefectible Church, Augustine explains that

> God would never create any man, much less any angel, if he already knew that he was destined to be evil, were he not equally aware how he was to turn them to account in the interest of the good and thereby add lustre to the succession of the ages as if it were an exquisite poem enhanced by what might be called antitheses. Antitheses, as they are termed, are among the most elegant ornaments of style […] just as beauty of language is achieved by a contrast of opposites in this way, the beauty of the course of this world is built up by a kind of rhetoric, not of words but of things, which employs this contrast of

opposites.[150]

Not only is God's providence immanent in the beauty of the world for Augustine, but the problem of evil is resolved in the 'exquisite poem' of providential history. Augustine's God can make human wickedness an instrument of goodness and beauty. This Augustinian chiaroscuro perfectly captures how Crashaw's poetry, with its insistent paradox and antithesis, conceives of conversion. Crashaw transforms profane love, sensory delight, rural pastimes, and the 'bright idol' of the sun into the basis for true faith. He does not leave behind the strategies and preoccupations of his earlier pre-conversion poetry but rereads and reframes them. Former sins, mistakes, and mis-readings are reinterpreted to produce 'happy converts' and 'exquisite poems'. Crashaw's poetry has proved difficult to place on the confessional spectrum not because he evades theological debate or espouses an unorthodox hybridity, but because his poetry records a long and complex process of converting, fixing, and redefining.

Crashaw's reinterpretations

One of Crashaw's most characteristic image patterns, the shocking mixture of different bodily fluids, has been at the centre of long-running debates over rhetorical and confessional style and decorum. In one of the Peterhouse Latin epigrams, rendered in English as 'Luke 11. Blessed be the Paps which Thou hast Sucked', Crashaw famously compares the milk flowing from Mary's breast to the blood from Christ's wound: 'Hee'l have his Teat e're long (a bloody one)/ The Mother then must suck the Son' (ll. 3–4). Another epigram, 'Upon the Infant Martyrs' massacred by Herod, prescribes the same mixture: 'To see both blended in one flood/ The Mothers Milke, the Childrens blood' (ll. 1–2). At the other end of his career in 'Sancta Maria Dolorum', first printed in the 1648 *Steps to the Temple*, Crashaw once again imagined the love between human mother and divine son in terms of a mystical exchange of bodily fluids: 'While

[150] Augustine, *City of God, Volume 3: Books 8–11*, trans. David S. Wiesen, Loeb 413 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 11.18.495–497; Cressy, *Exomologesis*, 367.

with a faithfull, mutuall, floud/ Her eyes bleed TEARES, his wounds weep BLOOD' (ll. 9–10). This image-pattern has become notoriously Crashavian, provoking the prurient distaste of earlier critics and the enthusiasm of recent scholars interested in questions of gender, sexuality, and embodiment.[151] Whereas William Empson detected 'a wide variety of sexual perversions' lurking in the second couplet of 'Blessed be the Paps' and pondered that 'what is accepted as intelligible poetry may be considered as an association of opposites such as would interest the psycho-analyst', others have anxiously sought to normalise and contextualise these tropes within longstanding devotional traditions.[152] A more immediate context suggests that Crashaw was wholly aware of the transgressive potential of this imagery. The poet's father, the clergyman and anti-Catholic polemicist William Crashaw produced a pamphlet entitled *The Iesuites Gospell* (1610, reprinted 1621), in which he attacks Roman Catholic superstition and devotion to the Virgin Mary by turning to poetry; he reprints a Latin poem addressed to Mary by the Jesuit Carolus Scribanius which meditates on Christ's blood and Mary's milk: 'O Lady, of thy brest I begge a taste./ But if mine eyes vpon the wounds do glide,/ Then (Iesu) I had rather sucke thy side'.[153] The affinities with Richard Crashaw's poetry are pronounced. Crashaw senior translated Scribanius into English and appended a seventy-page commentary attacking his heresies and excesses. He expresses his visceral revulsion at 'this heinous blasphemy' of the idolatrous Jesuit, who 'doubted whether were better, the *bloud* of God, or the *Milke* of a creature (the diuell himselfe neuer doubted hereof)'.[154] This extraordinary work

[151] Johnson, *Made Flesh*, 119–124; Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 37–38.
[152] William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, second edition, third printing (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 250, 246. See also George Walton Williams' defensive headnote to 'Blessed be the Paps,' *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw* (New York: Anchor books, 1970), 14; Eugene R. Cunnar, 'Opening the Religious Lyric: Crashaw's Ritual, Liminal, and Visual Wounds,' in John R. Roberts (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century English Religious Lyric* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 249; Teller, 'Why Crashaw was not Catholic,' 239–267.
[153] William Crashaw, *The Iesuites Gospel* (London, 1610), 7; Sophie Read notes the echo between Crashaw senior and junior in her discussion of taste and revulsion, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination*, 134–135. Kuchar sees the polemic as 'an attempt to repress the power of the maternal within the Christian economy of salvation,' *Divine Subjection*, 96.
[154] Crashaw, *The Iesuites Gospel*, 39–40.

of prejudicial literary criticism misreads the poem as a statement of doctrine and polices the confessional and theological meanings of literary style. However, it also evinces the poem's imaginative and rhetorical power; the line-by-line animadversion envisages the lyric poem happening in real time, while the Protestant reader cannot but look on in rapt horror. It must have caused no small embarrassment to the anti-Calvinist Crashaw junior, who had hoped in 1635 that 'to be true Protestant' might mean more than just 'to hate the Pope', when his father's fiercely anti-Catholic tract was posthumously reprinted in 1642 as *The Bespotted Iesuite* and again in 1643 as *Loyola's Disloyalty; or The Iesuites Open Rebellion against God and his Church*, fuelling the print agitation and 'popish plot' hysteria that led to civil war.[155] Richard Crashaw's imagery of blood, milk, and tears is neither the revolting perversion of a uniquely distorted mind, nor a wholly neutral deployment of 'normal' Counter-Reformation rhetoric. Instead, it can be seen as an act of youthful rebellion and reinterpretation, taking what his father had condemned as idolatrous and redefining it as orthodox Church of England devotion. Just as his father's work was recategorized in a far more divisive and explicitly political way in the early 1640s, so too Crashaw's image patterns were associated in *Carmen Deo Nostro* with the Catholic Counter-Reformation tradition from which they initially derived. One of Crashaw's most infamous tropes emerged from, and still provokes, a series of confessionally-charged re-appropriations and re-definitions.

This chapter has sought to locate the supposedly idiosyncratic Richard Crashaw among the number of other mid-seventeenth-century writers who had also been ministers of the Laudian Church of England and converted to Roman Catholicism. In doing so, it demonstrates that recent claims that Crashaw's poetry celebrates hybridity, confessional ambiguity, or

[155] William Crashaw, *The Bespotted Iesuite: Whose Gospell is Full of Blasphemy against the Blood of Christ* (London, 1641 i.e. 1642); William Crashaw, *Loyola's Disloyalty; or The Iesuites Open Rebellion against God and his Church* (London, 1643).

ecumenism are anachronistic and ignore the more complex dynamic of fixing and reinterpreting which characterises his poetry. I argue that the languages and preoccupations of polemic and devotion, ecclesiology and ecstasy, though often treated as wholly distinct, are inextricable for both Crashaw and his fellow converts and that the interaction between these discourses produces some of his most striking verse. The long critical debate over the religious investments of Crashaw's poetry has underestimated the extent to which confessional difference and resemblance was also a concern for contemporaries and one, as I demonstrate, to which Crashaw responds in lively and ingenious ways.

This chapter not only reassesses the meanings of conversion and of the contested term 'Catholic' in the 1640s, but it also suggests a new approach to the vexed relationship between confessional identity and literary style. Rather than asserting that certain styles and tropes are exclusive to different religious beliefs or placing poetry in a separate sphere transcending polemic and religious debate, this chapter proposes that literary style comes to indicate religious identity through a series of contested and contingent acts of interpretation. Attending to the dynamic rhetorical and hermeneutic strategies through which confessional identity was imagined by both writers *and* readers will allow us to move beyond narratives of polarisation and generate a more complex and integrated understanding of the diverse literary culture of post-Reformation England.

Chapter Five

Voices of toleration in revolutionary England

On 13 October 1647, as parliament gathered to debate the religious settlement, a crowd of radicals, seekers, rationalists, and Roman Catholics gathered in Westminster Hall to make their bid for toleration. Reporting this unholy alliance to the Vatican, a Roman news-writer complained that the English Catholics had nothing in common with these sects and condemned the absurdity of pleading with heretics to tolerate 'a certain faith, revealed and received through all ages since the coming of Jesus Christ'.[1] Despite Rome's disapproval, throughout the 1640s and 1650s English Catholics collaborated with unlikely partners, experimented with new rhetorical and political strategies, and refashioned their communal identity in pursuit of toleration. Historians have studied the efforts of certain individuals, notably Thomas White, alias Blacklo, and John Austin, and have tended to emphasise their idiosyncrasy.[2] Yet literary scholars have ignored the more wide-ranging Catholic discourse of toleration. Analysing pamphlets, petitions, dialogues, poems, and operatic entertainments, this chapter argues that for many English Catholics the Revolution was a moment of opportunity to rethink their identity and their future.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians credited the Reformation and English Revolution with the emergence of toleration and secular liberalism.[3] This teleological narrative found no place for English Catholicism, identified with popery and arbitrary

[1] 'Li Cattolici, ancor che non habbiano niente di commune con questi settarii, giudicorono niente dimeno l'opportunità essere à proposito, e molto avvantaggiosa di domandare per il meno una tolleranza per quelli, che professano una religione detterminata, riuelata, e ricevuta per tutto li secoli dopo, la vernuta di Giesu Christo,' TNA, PRO 31/9/46, f. 132. See also Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War Vol. III* (London: Longmans & Co, 1905), 376.
[2] Stefania Tutino, 'The Catholic Church and the English Civil War: The Case of Thomas White,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58.2 (2007): 232–255; Eilish Gregory, 'John Austin and the Catholic Response to the English Commonwealth,' *The Seventeenth Century* 36.4 (2021): 597–621.
[3] J. C. Davis, 'Religion and the Struggle for Freedom in the English Revolution,' *The Historical Journal* 35.3 (1992): 507.

government. As Arthur Marotti notes, these historians dismissed 'Catholic tolerationist thinking […] as a ruse to set up the conditions for a Catholic restoration in England'.[4] While post-revisionist historiography has largely dismantled this Whig narrative and stressed the deep-rooted intolerance of the post-Reformation period, it has also extended the suspicion described by Marotti to all sides.[5] Alexandra Walsham maintains that '[t]oleration was largely, though not solely, the slogan and creed of minorities who found themselves on the receiving end of judicial coercion and popular violence, one which they felt little sense of ideological contradiction or discomfort about discarding when they in turn took political control'.[6] This disenchanted historiography replaces principle with pragmatism and implies that arguments against persecution did not challenge confessional conflict, but rather were produced by it. Pleas for toleration, they maintain, reaffirmed boundaries between what was and was not beyond the pale, the barely tolerable and the manifestly intolerable.[7] The largely neglected array of mid-seventeenth-century Catholic arguments for toleration complicate this narrative. Co-opting a range of different personae and discourses and reflecting on the similarities and differences between rival confessions, they transgress and reimagine confessional boundaries.

As we have seen, Catholic royalism was far more ambivalent and conditional than has sometimes been assumed; this chapter demonstrates that some Catholics' understanding of their religion and the interests of their community led them to abandon the royal cause altogether and articulate new theories of allegiance and obligation. It argues that during the 1640s certain Catholics drew upon the rhetorical styles and political commitments of

[4] Arthur Marotti, 'The Intolerability of English Catholicism,' in Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (eds), *Writing and Religion in England, 1558–1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 59.
[5] Blair Worden, 'Toleration and the Protectorate,' in *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 64; Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 2.
[6] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 236.
[7] Norah Carlin comments on this tendency in 'Toleration for Catholics in the Puritan Revolution,' in Ole Peter Grell and Robert W. Scribner (eds), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 216.

Independents and Levellers. Analysing the poetry and polemic of John Rivers, a priest imprisoned alongside Leveller leaders, I explore how certain Catholics forged alliances across religious and political boundaries and reinvented the terms in which Catholic toleration was demanded and defended. I then discuss Thomas White, alias Blacklo and his followers, who saw the Cromwellian Protectorate as a moment of opportunity for England's Catholics. These so-called Blackloists drew upon Hobbesian notions of contractual government and de facto sovereignty to justify their allegiance to the new regime and to request toleration from it. Finally, turning to the poetry of Richard Flecknoe and Andrew Marvell demonstrates that the Blackloists' ideas were part of a wider revolution in the English Catholic political imagination.

So far, this thesis has demonstrated the wide range of genres and forms in which Catholics wrote and has thus sought to reshape our understanding of the relationship between confessional identity and literary style. This final chapter focuses on the different kinds of polemical and rhetorical disguise through which Catholic writers pursued their religious and political agenda while seemingly denying their Catholic identity. These texts exemplify what Sharon Achinstein has identified in Milton's poetry as 'a *procedural* principle of toleration', a dialogic suffering of different perspectives.[8] They implement what Teresa Bejan, borrowing from Roger Williams, the radical tolerationist and founder of Rhode Island, terms 'mere civility', an 'unapologetically cacophonous and evangelical approach to toleration'.[9] Mixing personae and discourses, these Catholic writers embrace a tolerant cacophony, undermining the distinction between their own voices and those of their apparent opponents. Characterised by the scoping out of possibilities and the testing of alternative identities, these texts represent a decisive moment at which English Catholics participated in the ferment of revolution and reimagined their community and its future.

[8] Sharon Achinstein, 'Toleration in Milton's Epics: A Chimera?' in Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (eds), *Milton and Toleration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 225.
[9] Teresa Bejan, *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 12.

‘The true Independent’: Catholics and Levellers

During the summer of 1647, as Presbyterians and Independents were debating the political and religious settlement, a group of English Catholics led by the Jesuit Henry More and Thomas Lord Brudenell began negotiating with the leaders of the New Model Army in order to secure a limited form of toleration.[10] The same problems which had divided Catholics forty years earlier during the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance controversy resurfaced as discussions foundered on the issues of papal deposing power and the conflict between civil and religious obedience. The Army insisted that Catholics must subscribe to three propositions, stipulating that the pope had no authority to absolve individuals from civil obedience, to licence violence against supposed heretics, or to permit subjects to equivocate and break oaths.[11] The Catholic negotiators were happy to submit to these clauses because they reasoned that having gained toleration the papal deposing power and related tactics of resistance would become obsolete. However, just as Pope Paul V had forbidden Catholics from swearing the Oath in 1606, Pope Innocent X condemned the 1647 propositions. One of the negotiators, Henry More, was punished by his superiors for betraying the Jesuits’ reputation for unswerving papalism.[12] Historians see these negotiations as an isolated episode that arose from the shifting conditions of the 1640s and had little effect on either the majority of England’s Catholics or the subsequent course of political events.[13] However, recent work by Michael Questier has recognised the pervasiveness of this alliance against Presbyterians, what he calls ‘a kind of “my enemy’s-enemy-is-my-friend” relationship between Catholic separatists and Independency’.[14] These historiographical developments allow us to consider a broader range of texts as part of this

[10] Thomas Clancy, ‘The Jesuits and the Independents: 1647,’ *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 40 (1971): 76. See also Christopher P. Gillett, ‘Probabilism, Pluralism, and Papalism: Jesuit Allegiance Politics in the British Atlantic and Continental Europe, 1644–50,’ in James Kelly and Hannah Thomas (eds), *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c.1580–1789: ‘The World is our House’?* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 235–260.
[11] Clancy, ‘The Jesuits and the Independents,’ 76.
[12] Clancy, ‘The Jesuits and the Independents,’ 84–85.
[13] Clancy, ‘The Jesuits and the Independents,’ 86; Tutino, ‘The Case of Thomas White,’ 240.
[14] Questier, *Catholics and Treason*, 524.

same intellectual and political phenomenon. Catholics, I argue, frequently pursued their own aims by making common rhetorical cause with the Independents and particularly the Levellers.

The Independents, generally associated with the Army, opposed Presbyterianism and a coercive state Church, arguing instead that individual congregations should govern themselves. Though the majority did not propose extending these freedoms to Catholics, the Levellers, a group of radicals who came to prominence in the late 1640s, led by John Lilburne, Richard Overton, and William Walwyn, advocated a programme of extensive reforms based on the inalienable rights of the individual, which included toleration for English Catholics.[15] This convergence of interests and the widespread use of prosopopoeia and ventriloquism in contemporary print culture have meant that scholars continue to debate whether certain texts were authored by a Catholic or a Leveller. An anonymous pamphlet, printed twice in 1641 with two different title-pages, *The Humble Petition of the Brownists* or *A New Petition of the Papists*, exemplifies this.[16] Some scholars attribute it to the future Leveller leader, William Walwyn, others to an anonymous Catholic assuming a Leveller persona.[17] Nicholas McDowell combines the two interpretations and suggests that it is the work of Walwyn disguising himself as a Catholic: 'Walwyn daringly (if anonymously) assumed the persona of those considered to personify blasphemy and irreligion in seventeenth-century England – the Catholic […] in an attempt to engage with and subvert the stereotypical depictions of their depravity used to bolster arguments against toleration'.[18] The tract offers a comprehensive list of the differing

[15] Rachel Foxley, *The Levellers: Radical Political Thought in the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 1.
[16] William Walwyn, *A New Petition of the Papists* (1641), in Jack R. McMichael and Barbara Taft (eds), *The Writings of William Walwyn* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 57.
[17] It is attributed to Walwyn in Marotti, 'The Intolerability of English Catholicism,' 63, and McMichael and Taft (eds), *Writings of William Walwyn*, 55–56. Norah Carlin rejects this, 'Toleration for Catholics,' 221 n.22. It is attributed to a Catholic in: W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England Vol. IV: Attainment of the Theory and Accommodations in Thought and Institutions (1640–1660)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 439–443; Anthony J. Brown, 'Anglo-Irish Gallicanism, c.1635–c.1685' (PhD Diss., University of Cambridge, 2004), 133 n.101; and Gregory, 'John Austin,' 601.
[18] Nicholas McDowell, *The English Radical Imagination: Culture, Religion, and Revolution, 1630–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 78.

beliefs of the 'Brownists', 'Puritans', 'Socinians', 'Arminians', 'Papists', 'Adamites', and 'Family of Love', concluding each with the exhortation: 'let them alone'.[19] Its argument and elusive authorship demonstrate that calls for toleration were not always tied exclusively to particular minority interests.

This same cross-partisan approach to toleration characterises another ambiguous pamphlet that appeared at the other end of the decade: *No Papist Nor Presbyterian: But the Modest Desires and Proposalls of Some Well-Affected and Free-Born People* (1649). It defends a series of demands, especially for Catholic toleration, on the grounds of the 'Immunities and Priviledges as of right belong unto us' as 'Free-borne People of this Land'.[20] Don Wolfe argues that this was written by 'a Leveller or Leveller sympathiser' but deems it just 'barely possible' that a 'Catholic apologist' wrote it.[21] Yet Wolfe underestimates this possibility. Catholic polemicists had long used fictitious personae to argue their case – Robert Persons' incendiary *A Conference About the Next Succession* (1594) claims the supposedly impartial perspectives of two lawyers. As we have seen in previous chapters, mid-seventeenth-century Catholics also frequently imitated, appropriated, and parodied the voices of royalists, republicans, and Puritan zealots in plays, satirical poems, and polemic. These Catholic-Leveller pamphlets take things further, however; their sustained prosopopoeia undermines the distinctions between different religiopolitical positions and styles in ways that have continued to perplex historians. These texts enact their arguments by refusing to adopt a clear oppositional perspective, forging a new kind of non-Catholic Catholic polemic.

One pamphlet which adopts the voice of an Independent, but which we know for certain was penned by a Catholic, is the priest, poet, and prisoner John Rivers' *Ka Mee and I'le Kathee, or, A Dialogue wherein is showne the Indecency and Unreasonablenesse of Persecuting and*

[19] McMichael & Taft (eds), *Writings of William Walwyn*, 57–58.
[20] *No Papist Nor Presbyterian*, in Don M. Wolfe (ed.), *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution* (London: Cass, 1967), 307.
[21] Wolfe (ed.), *Leveller Manifestoes*, 305.

Afflicting Tender Consciences for Differences in Matters of Religion (1649). Though printed anonymously, one copy of *Ka Mee* bears a contemporary manuscript attribution to Rivers and internal echoes between it and other works known to be by him confirm this identification.[22] Sometimes known by the aliases John or Augustine Abbot, Rivers matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1604, converted to Catholicism at St. Omers in 1609, and, after a brief stint as a Jesuit missionary, became a secular priest around 1621.[23] He was one of seven Catholics sentenced to death for treason in 1641 but granted a stay of execution by Charles I – a decisive moment in the escalating fears of a popish plot which led to civil war.[24] Rivers spent the rest of his life languishing in Newgate Prison and died around 1650; he describes this mixed blessing in a letter sent from prison to Cardinal Francesco Barberini in September 1643: 'vt (quod misericordiae genus est) non occidunt cito, sed tarde et misere mori compellunt' [they do not kill us quickly (which is a kind of mercy), but force us to die slowly and wretchedly].[25] Rivers' first poem, *Jesus Praefigured*, a premature celebration of Charles I's proposed marriage to the Spanish Infanta, was printed in 1623.[26] While in prison, he produced two further poems: *The Sad Condition of a Distracted Kingdome Expressed, in a Fable of Philo the Jew* (1645) and *Devout Rhapsodies* (1647). In *The Sad Condition*, Rivers asks 'Who sayes who's faulty? He or they?', praising both 'The King/ A God on Earth, a consecrated thing' and the parliament, '*Iethro's* Elders' chosen 'to cure the sick/ Condition of the Body Politick'.[27] *Ka Mee* makes the same scriptural comparison, alluding to Jethro's advice that Moses share the burden of government with 'men that are wise, and doe feare God, in whom there is truth'

[22] Downside Abbey Library, F64_Shelf_C_1648–1652, A1r; D. M. Rogers, 'John Rivers (1588–?1650),' *Bibliographical Studies, 1534–1829* 1 (1951): 31.
[23] Rogers, 'John Rivers,' 22–33.
[24] *Seven Iesuits Condemned* (London, 1641); *A Coppy of the Prisoners Judgment Condemned to Dy From Nugate On Mundaie the 13 of Decemb: 1641* (London, 1641). Questier, *Catholics and Treason*, 508–509.
[25] BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 8620, f. 99v.
[26] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 142–144.
[27] John Rivers, *The Sad Condition of a Distracted Kingdome, Expressed, in a Fable of Philo the Jew* (London, 1645), 8. See Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 166.

(Exodus 18:21).[28] Far from being straightforwardly royalist, Rivers refuses to favour either side in the war. He exhibits a questioning and sceptical approach to the conflict, balancing the claims and faults of different parties, and thus exemplifies the ambivalence of mid-century Catholic allegiance. Rivers' pamphlet is usually granted little more than a passing footnote in current scholarship, but his imaginative engagement with alternative voices and arguments instances the breadth and literary creativity of Catholic tolerationist writing. Before turning to Rivers' poetry, I will analyse how his dialogue *Ka Mee and I'le Kathee* blends and balances Catholic and Leveller perspectives.

Ka Mee narrates a dialogue between Major Elder and Captain Freeman, representing the Presbyterians and the Independents respectively. In the course of their conversation, Captain Freeman adopts several different arguments for toleration: that it will ensure 'peace and plenty', that violent persecution is 'barbarous and inhumane', and that compulsory conformity forces people to commit the 'pernicious and damnable' sin of acting against their conscience.[29] The character Freeman depends mostly on Leveller texts and arguments, imitating both their anti-Presbyterian rhetoric and dialogic, comic style. The radicals Rivers impersonates may have been personally known to him. During his lengthy tenure, he was joined at Newgate by Richard Overton from August 1646 to September 1647, and at various different times by John Lilburne, whose conception of liberty, D. Alan Orr suggests, was significantly shaped by his time behind bars.[30] Jerome de Groot argues that a 'sense of community within the prison population' during the 1640s cut across 'the formation of political identity', and depicts Newgate as a hive of literary and political activity, from which emanated

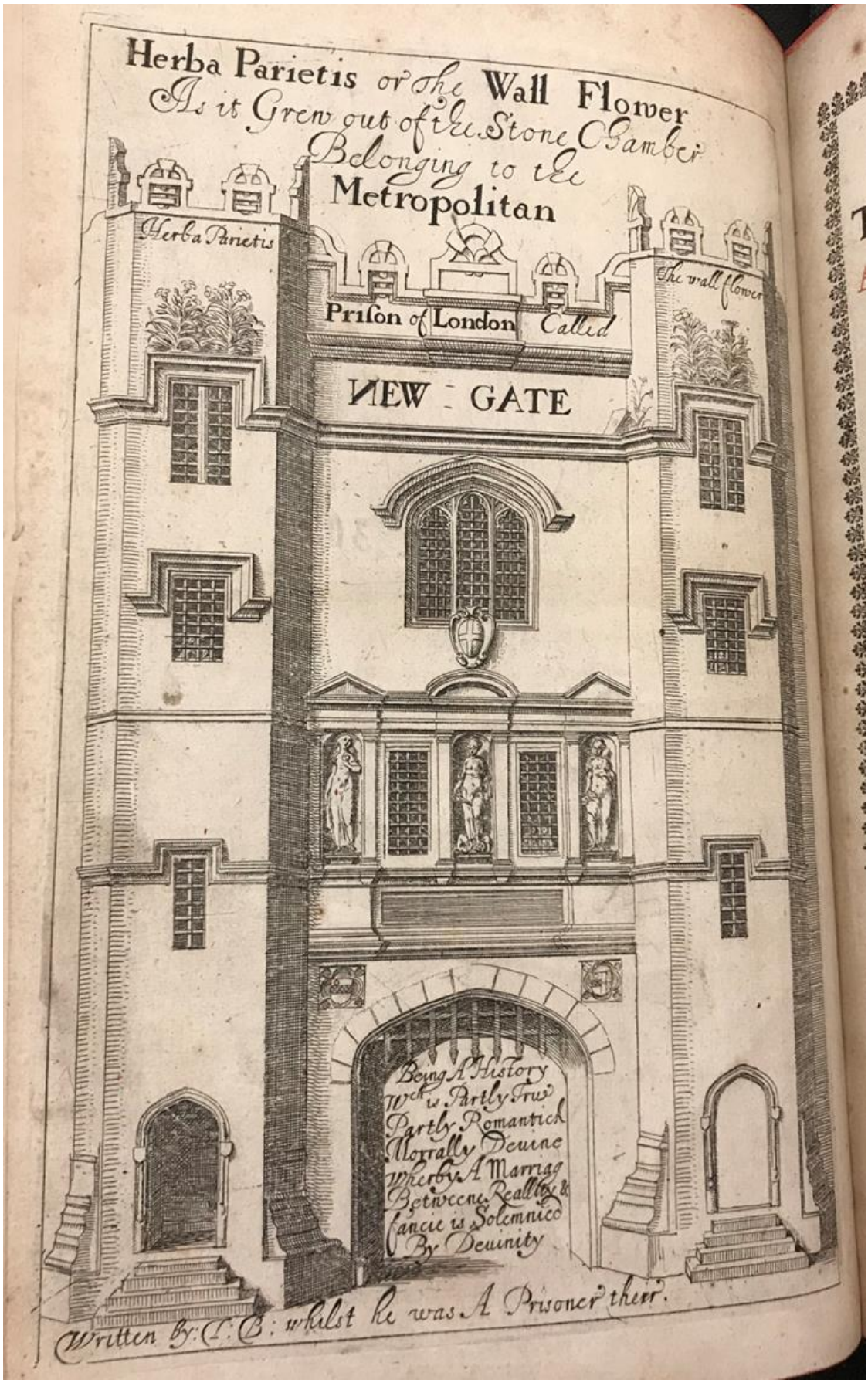
[28] John Rivers, *Ka Mee and I'le Kathee, or, A Dialogue* (London, 1649), 3.
[29] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 4, 9, 13.
[30] B. J. Gibbons, 'Overton, Richard (fl. 1640–1663), Leveller and Pamphleteer,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/20974. Andrew Sharp, 'Lilburne, John (1615?–1657), Leveller,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/16654. D. Alan Orr, 'Law, Liberty, and the English Civil War: John Lilburne's Prison Experience, the Levellers and Freedom,' in Michael J. Braddick and David L. Smith (eds.), *The Experience of Revolution in Stuart Britain and Ireland: Essays for John Morrill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 154–171.

epic poems, almanacs, Ranter sermons, and Lilburne's 'dissenting media circus'.[31] As we have seen, Ralph Corby and John Duckett were brought triumphantly to Newgate before their execution in 1644, and it was here that Thomas Bayly composed his romance *Herba Parietis*, the frontispiece of which depicts the prison's gatehouse (Figure 15). Whereas it used to be argued that the Levellers influenced the army and population through personal networks and interactions, recent work has emphasised their use of print to reach wider and more diverse audiences.[32] In the noisy world of mid-seventeenth-century print culture, voices and identities were readily appropriated and reimagined. The Levellers themselves, as Rachel Foxley convincingly argues, drew upon the 'complicated meld of different ways of thinking and talking about politics', present in contemporary London.[33] Rivers' poems and pamphlet emerge from and participate in the heteroglossia of the cacophonous prison and revolutionary metropolis.

In *Ka Mee and I'le Kathee,* Captain Freeman quotes from the Leveller *Petition of 11th September 1648*, praising its demands for yearly election of representatives, a limit to the length of a parliament's sitting, and, most importantly, 'That matters of Religion be exempted from all compulsive, and restrictive power of any Authority whatsoever'.[34] This petition gained widespread support from members of the New Model Army, who identified it as 'a rallying cry' against the Presbyterians and for the execution of the king.[35] *Ka Mee* also includes considerable anti-Presbyterian rhetoric. Captain Freeman laments: 'Have wee fought all this while, ventured and lost our lives, conquered our Enemies, put downe Popery, and Prelacy, and all this to set up foppery, and Presbytery?'[36] The first-person plural and accumulated verbs project a single cause united in the pursuit of freedom. The parallel

[31] Jerome de Groot, 'Prison Writing, Writing Prison during the 1640s and 1650s,' *HLQ* 72.2 (2009): 197–198.
[32] Foxley, *The Levellers*, 4.
[33] Foxley, *The Levellers*, 14–15.
[34] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 2–3.
[35] Foxley, *The Levellers*, 161.
[36] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 2.

Figure 15


Herba Parietis or The Wall Flower
As it Grew out of the Stone Chamber
Belonging to the
Metropolitan
Herba Parietis
The wall flower
Prison of London Called
NEW GATE
Being A History
Wch is Partly True
Partly Romantick
Morrally Devine
Whereby A Marriag
Between Reall Love &
fancie is Solemnized
By Devinity
Written By: C: B: whilst he was A Prisoner there.

alliterative phrasing of 'Popery and Prelacy' and 'foppery and Presbytery' emphasise the argument also made frequently by the Levellers that one persecuting power, the Laudian clergy, was merely being replaced with another, the Presbyterians. In his allegorical satire, *The Arraignment of Mr Persecution* (1645), Overton presents Persecution as a shapeshifting fugitive who repeatedly transforms himself and his apparel from 'Mr. *Spanish-Inquisition*', to 'Mr. *High-Commission*', then 'a zealous *Covenanter* in the godly shape of a *Presbyter*' who 'in the twinkling of an eye jumpt out of *Scotland* into *England,* and turn'd a reverend *Synodian*'.[37] Rivers borrows both the comparison of Presbyterians with Prelates and the railing, jesting style epitomised by Overton. Dehumanising the Presbyterians, Freeman asks, 'dare these fisking Hounds that the other day clapt their tailes betwixt their legs, returne unto their former vomit?'[38] As Nigel Smith suggests, Leveller writing is made up of multiple 'styles' and, particularly in the case of Overton, fused 'a popular festive mode' with 'ecclesiastical discourse'.[39] Rivers' title *Ka Mee and I'le Kathee* is a colloquialism, denoting 'mutual help, service, flattery'.[40] It converts the much-invoked scriptural principle of doing unto others as you would wish done to you, into a demotic idiom. Combining historical, legalistic, and jesting registers, Rivers' impersonation is less of a particular voice than of a jangling variety of different ones.

Rivers' dialogue adds Catholic commitments to this Leveller mixture. His most persistent argumentative thread states that persecution is untenable and illogical 'where no one religion is long in fashion'.[41] Captain Freeman recounts the numerous reversals of religious policy from the Henrician Reformation onwards and asks: 'is it not then lamentable, that our

[37] Richard Overton, *The Araignement of Mr. Persecution* (London, 1645), 1.
[38] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 2.
[39] Nigel Smith, 'Richard Overton's Marpriest Tracts: Towards a History of Leveller Style,' in Thomas Corns (ed.), *The Literature of Controversy: Polemical Strategy from Milton to Junius* (London: Cass, 1987), 39–40.
[40] 'ka, *v.*', *OED*, accessed 28 November 2022, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/Entry/102295?rskey=o1pPoC&result=3&isAdvanced=false.
[41] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, A1r.

English Nation must still keepe their consciences prepared to embrace and professe what Religion the Parliament will put upon them?'[42] Contemporaries frequently observed this phenomenon. The Catholic or Leveller author of *No Papist Nor Presbyterian* (1649) wryly comments that 'what is the case of others today, may be ours to-morrow, according to the ebb or flow of fortune'.[43] In Overton's *Arraignement*, '*Mr Gods-Vengence*' complains that Persecution '*Stigmatizeth some, and sometimes maketh such (so Stigmatized) when the wind turnes, to Stigmatize their friends*'.[44] The sustained polyptoton highlights the symmetrical acts of violence, driven by the cynical whims of changing regimes. Though contemporaries across the spectrum made similar points, Rivers accentuates the particular relevance of this argument to the Catholic community. He reports how a recusant, examined at the Sessions of Newgate in 1647, had claimed that since Church of England worship was 'now condemned as damnable and superstitious', 'the Parliament had done the Recusants much right in manifesting to the world why they lost their goods, were imprisoned, and suffered death'.[45] Capitalising on the ironic role-reversals of the Long Reformation, Rivers' anecdote implies that the parliament has now vindicated recusant objections to Church of England worship. As we have seen, mid-century Catholic writers often depicted the English Reformation as vacillating, inconsistent, and ultimately disastrous. Yet whereas this polemical historiography was specifically aimed at Protestant reformers, Rivers' Captain Freeman attacks persecution of all kinds whether by Henry VIII, the Westminster Assembly, or the Catholic Mary I and her 'odious' Bishops, whom, Freeman claims, 'many moderate men of the Catholick Party' criticise.[46] Associating themselves with Protestant non-conformists was an unprecedented strategy in English Catholic writing. Rivers' dialogue blurs the distinctions between Leveller and Catholic rhetoric,

[42] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 23.
[43] Wolfe (ed.), *Leveller Manifestoes*, 308–309.
[44] Overton, *The Araignement of Mr. Persecution*, 10.
[45] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 11.
[46] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 5.

rendering it unclear how ironic his assumed persona really is.

To claim that the victims of persecution have changed repeatedly in England is an argument less against the violence itself, than against the wisdom and authority of the indecisive persecutor. These accusations of inconsistency are part of a wider argument concerning the limits of temporal authority. Rivers' character Freeman offers an elaborate analogy for the limited vision of temporal powers:

> Nor may wee expect new Law givers, or new Revelations in substantiall points of beliefe and divine worship. Wherefore as if because at some times of the day, namely morning and evening, my body casts a larger shadow then at other houres of the same day, to wit about noone (without the least contraction or extension of my stature & dimensions) I should be esteemed a foole or a madman, if looking on my shadow I would either glory in my height at one time, or be dejected feeling my selfe represented a Dwarfe at another.[47]

The epithet 'substantial' refers to fundamentals of faith as opposed to 'things indifferent' or adiaphora. Via a pun on substance, it also forms the basis of Rivers' image of unchanging religious truth as a substantive body and the shifting misinterpretations of temporal government as shadows. This platonic motif emphasises the insufficiency of human knowledge and suggests that to rely on temporal law and government to dispense and even alter the fundamentals of divine revelation is to mistake the shadow for the reality. As we shall see, Levellers also argued that civil government should not interfere in spiritual matters, which were beyond its remit and capacity. However, Freeman's speech most clearly echoes Catholic attacks on the Reformation. Here Rivers' mask nearly slips and exposes his Roman Catholicism.

Towards the end of the pamphlet, Rivers addresses the problem of impersonation directly. He distinguishes 'the true Independent' from Atheists, Jews, and the 'scumme of all Sects [who] assume to themselves the title of Independents, that under that shadow and name

[47] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 10.

they may shelter their God denying Doctrines, and soule destroying Principles'.[48] By contrast, a '*true Independent'* is

> *a terrestriall Angel, divinely spirited, who in this multiplicity of Religions, with much care, labour, and devout invocation of the onely Independents aide, makes an inquiry which is the true Church, in which the believers may be saved, out of which inevitable ruine is to be feared; nor does he in this search depend on his owne abilities, but rely on the testimonies of sacred Scriptures, is helped with the consent of learned Fathers, and holy Doctours: Having found that conspicuous City on the Mount, he incorporates himselfe a Member of the same, firmely resolving, that neither love of life, or feare of death, no tribulation, no persecution shall make him forsake his union with that body, nor separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.*[49]

Elsewhere, Rivers maintains the paradox of corruptible body and immortal soul, but here the image of the 'terrestrial angel' suggests how the 'true independent' elevates their human nature in their search for the divine. Nicholas McDowell argues that Overton's 'insistence on the spiritualization of flesh' counteracted 'Calvinist notions of depravity and impotence' and underpinned his 'egalitarian politics'.[50] Rivers similarly unites politics and ontology, defending toleration on the grounds of humanity's dignity and innate yearning for salvation. Yet this definition of the 'true Independent' is confessionally specific. The fear of 'ruin' outside the one 'true Church' and emphasis on a tripartite rule of faith – scripture, tradition, and Church teaching – are distinctively Roman Catholic. The scriptural image of the conspicuous Church as a city on a hilltop (Matthew 5:15) implies the same commitment to institutional visibility as that held by the Catholic converts in Paris. The description of how no fears or tribulations will tempt the 'Independent' or 'separate him from the love of God' also conforms to key elements of English Catholic self-representation. It references another key bible passage: 'Who then shal separate vs from the charitie of Christ? tribulation? or distresse? or famine? or nakednes? or danger?' (Romans 8:35). This exhortation was used to console Catholics facing persecution and emblazoned the Elizabethan recusant Sir Thomas Tresham's triangular lodge at Rushton

[48] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 20 *sic* 28.
[49] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 21 *sic* 29.
[50] McDowell, *The English Radical Imagination*, 59–60.

Hall.[51] Rivers' distinction between true and false Independents thematises the rhetorical strategy of the entire dialogue: he is not 'assuming' the title of an Independent, Rivers insists. Rather, this angelic identity has been wrongfully appropriated by sectarians.

We need to avoid employing the morally charged terminology of early twentieth-century historians, who warned against the 'high but unscrupulous skill' of Catholic tolerationist writings and advised treating them 'with care and scepticism'.[52] Despite his attempt to define the true Independent, the distinctions between different identities and voices break down in Rivers' dialogue. He does not stigmatise the Independent voice he adopts, but approvingly incorporates many of their concerns and strategies, emphasising inalienable rights and praising the exercise of individual liberty. Going beyond satirical or polemical prosopopoeia, Rivers produces a hybridised Catholic-Leveller approach to toleration. This dialogue demonstrates the enthusiastic participation of English Catholics in revolutionary discourses and the creative interaction between different styles or 'languages', which have been mistakenly identified as exclusive to particular religious and political groups.

Prison poetry and religious liberty

Like *Ka Mee*, Rivers' poetry blurs the boundaries between different commitments and identities. In *The Sad Condition of a Distracted Kingdome* (1645) and *Devout Rhapsodies* (1647), he conceives of liberty in terms that combine Leveller, royalist, and Catholic ideas. The Levellers' and especially John Lilburne's notions of freedom have often been associated with an emergent secularism.[53] However, Rachel Foxley has recently challenged this by demonstrating that their political thought was interdependent with their religious beliefs.[54] Rivers' mixing of Leveller and Catholic discourses, and his poetry's meditation on license and

[51] Davidson, 'Recusant Catholic Spaces,' 33.
[52] W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration*, 373–374.
[53] Michael Braddick, *The Common Freedom of the People: John Lilburne & the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 291–292. See also John Rees, *The Leveller Revolution: Radical Political Organisation in England, 1640–1650* (London: Verso, 2017).
[54] Foxley, *The Levellers*, 120–121.

liberty, further reveal how religious and seemingly secular conceptions of freedom could be mutually reinforcing.

Miscellaneous in their interests and digressive in structure, Rivers' poems are difficult to categorise. *The Sad Condition* is ostensibly a poetic amplification of a story told by the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria in *On Planting*. God asks his angels if anything is lacking in creation, to which one responds that an angel should be appointed to trumpet God's praise eternally; consequently, 'the entire race of muses and hymnists came forth'.[55] Starting from this story, Rivers weaves together reflections on the perfection of creation, the distorting power of sin, Satan's responsibility for the civil wars, and the difference between liberty and licence. *Devout Rhapsodies* is even more encyclopaedic.[56] In the first book, a series of nine poems or 'Sermones' describe the nature of God, angels, and humans with frequent digressions. The fifth and sixth 'Sermo' adopt epic tropes to narrate the war in heaven and the fall in ways that, Richard Jordan argues, anticipate Milton's *Paradise Lost*.[57] The extremely rare second book adds four further 'sermones' which recount the nature of humanity and Adam's knowledge before the fall, the invention of language, the status of the Church, and the relationship between the soul and the body.[58] Each 'Sermo' is dedicated to two or three English Catholics, usually nobility or gentry. Drawing on ancient and modern historians, philosophers, and theologians, and the more demotic world of seventeenth-century pamphlet culture, the discursive form and diverse interests of Rivers' book attempt to track vast terrains of theology and philosophy. Amidst this intellectual and imaginative roaming through history

[55] Philo of Alexandria, *On Planting*, edited and translated by Albert C. Geljon and David T. Runia (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 65; Rivers' version of the story told in 'The Argument' is slightly different, *The Sad Condition*, B1r.
[56] John Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: in which, is Treated, of the Excellencie of Divine Scriptures. Also, of God, His Attributes. Plurality of Persons. Absolute Monarchie. Angels, Good, Bad, their Power. How the Bad Fell. Tempt Man. Man, his Fall. Beatitude* (London, 1647).
[57] Richard D. Jordan, 'John Abbot's 1647 "Paradise Lost,"' *Milton Quarterly* 20.2 (1986): 48–51.
[58] Rogers and Jordan both acknowledged the alleged existence of the second book, but were unable to locate a copy: Rogers, 'John Rivers,' 30–31, and Jordan, 'John Abbot's 1647 "Paradise Lost,"' 51 n.1. The only copy which I have consulted containing the second book is Huntington Library, 448805. Though bound with the first book, it has its own foliation and collation, suggesting it was printed separately.

and the cosmos, Rivers returns repeatedly and poignantly to images of imprisonment and to his own confinement in Newgate. These poems both describe and are animated by the tension between freedom and constraint.

Across his writings Rivers protests the conditions of his imprisonment in 'a comfortlesse, and chargeable Goale [*sic*]' where his books and 'householdstuffe' are frequently 'plundered'.[59] Such complaints are a longstanding feature of English Catholic martyrology, lament, and polemic. However, Rivers varies this tradition by appealing to an emergent discourse of individual rights and civil liberties. The preface to *Devout Rhapsodies* lists all the principles violated by his cruel imprisonment: 'contrary to the Lawes of God', 'contrary to the lawes of this Realme', 'contrary to the honour of this Nation', and finally,

> contrary to all our hopes and expectations of the subjects rights, and liberties, the vindication and assertion whereof have by so many Vows, Covenants and declarations, been promised, sworne and avowed.[60]

Here, the imprisoned recusant sounds strikingly similar both to his later persona Captain Freeman and to 'Free-born John' Lilburne. Railing against the abuses of the judicial system and the violations of the liberty of the subject was central to Lilburne's self-fashioning and the Leveller political programme.[61] Rivers' adoption of his fellow prisoner's rhetoric suggests that it was perfectly consistent with a religious vision of the world.

Throughout his poems Rivers reiterates the idea shared with many early modern writers that true freedom was to follow God's law.[62] Relatedly, he condemns certain forms of liberty as in fact transgressive license. In his narrative of the fall, he explains how Eve is persuaded to eat the apple by the belief that God is unjustly limiting her freedom: 'Who gives the world to

[59] John Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, A2v–A3r. The same complaints are made in *Ka Mee*, 8.
[60] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, A2v.
[61] Foxley, *The Levellers*, 10. See for instance Richard Overton, *The Commoners Complaint: Or, A Dreadful Warning from Newgate, to the Commons of England* (London, 1647).
[62] Davis, 'Religion and the Struggle for Freedom,' 518–519; Braddick, *The Common Freedom of the People*, 292.

roame in, and excludes/ But the least corner, all his gifts deludes,/ And pens you in a prison'.[63] The fallen angels are compared to the inhabitants of seventeenth-century Newgate: 'Behold the Gallies, and a Prison view,/ And they shall fully represent to you/ What's done in Hell'.[64] Yet, alongside this pessimistic view of human nature and desire, Rivers also expresses a more positive understanding of liberty. At the opening of *The Sad Condition*, Rivers defines human life in terms of confinement and independence:

> Mans noble mind
> Within this house compos'd of clay confined,
> Although it can ith'twinkling of an eye
> On wings of swift imagination flie,
> Thorough the Vniverse, transcend the skie
> And comment even on Gods immensities;
> Yet is a Captive and close prisoner,
> (Our mixed Elements the Goalers [*sic*] are)
> And only death can grant a full discharge,
> And with his warrant the thrald soul inlarge.[65]

The enjambment and accumulation of hypotactic subclauses in the first five lines enact man's striving after 'God's immensities' and contrast markedly to the polysyndeton and restriction of the unit of sense to each line in the second half of this passage. Rivers' neo-platonic antitheses of body and soul, captivity and liberty, reflect humanity's paradoxical status as mortal creature with an immortal soul, capable of reaching up to the unreachable God. Towards the end of the second book of *Devout Rhapsodies*, Rivers reasserts the innate spiritual freedom of mankind. He claims that 'You may confine the body, but their mindes/ (Like natures chiefest miracles, the windes/ And dreames) though in a cage shut up are free'.[66] The second-person apostrophe lends a note of defiance, imagining the body as an unjust jailer against whom the free soul rebels. The comparison with winds and dreams depicts the mind as immaterial, yet irresistibly powerful, a 'mirac[ulous]' paradox. Rivers continues: 'Our soule's heroic in its essence, and/

[63] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, 37.
[64] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, 32.
[65] Rivers, *The Sad Condition*, 5.
[66] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Secundus*, 36.

Swaies ore the fire, the ayre, the sea, the land'.[67] The conventional neo-platonic idea of the limitations of human embodiment here becomes a vehicle for a political assertion of humanity's inborn freedom.

Rivers' description of liberty shares much with contemporary prison writing. As de Groot notes, prison writing often emphasised 'the value of constraint for contemplation and repose'.[68] Richard Lovelace, whose poems were printed by the same man, Thomas Harper, as Rivers', famously consoles himself in 'To Althea, from Prison':

> Stone Walls do not a Prison make,
> Nor I'ron bars a Cage;
> […]
> If I have freedom in my Love,
> And in my soul am free,
> Angels alone that sore above,
> Injoy such Liberty.[69]

Employing the same contrasts and spatial imagery as Rivers, Lovelace celebrates the imagination in flight. His prison poems fuse Christian stoicism with the languages of love, mirth, and swaggering eloquence.[70] Yet Rivers' poetic celebrations of human imagination and 'mans noble mind' not only echo royalist libertine-influenced lyric, but also anticipate the arguments of Captain Freeman in *Ka Mee*. Freeman denounces persecution as inhumane since 'the minde of man is noble, and like a generous and high couraged horse, that will goe better guided by a snaffle, then curbed by a bit'.[71] Similarly, his definition of the 'true Independent' maintains humanity's distinction from beasts, able to suffer 'nobly' and strive after the truth: a 'terrestrial angel, divinely spirited'. Religious coercion is defined as an insult to the intellectual and spiritual capabilities of humankind.

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[67] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Secundus*, 36.
[68] De Groot, 'Prison Writing, Writing Prison,' 204.
[69] Cyril Hackett Wilkinson (ed.), *The Poems of Richard Lovelace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 79. Thomas Harper appears on the imprint of both Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies* and Richard Lovelace, *Lucasta: Epodes, Odes, Sonnets, Songs &c* (London, 1649).
[70] Raymond A. Anselment, '"Stone Walls" and "I'ron Bars": Richard Lovelace and the Conventions of Seventeenth-Century Prison Literature,' *Renaissance and Reformation* 17.1 (1993): 15–34.
[71] Rivers, *Ka Mee*, 23.

The creative interaction between Leveller, royalist, and Catholic ideas in Rivers' conception of toleration and freedom is especially apparent in his emphasis on the importance of the privacy of the mind. In *The Sad Condition* he describes

> How *Momus* had desir'd a looking glasse
> Should in the brest of man be plac't, to show
> What were his inward thoughts, that all might know
> Whose ends were crooked, whose pretensions right,
> Discern the just man from the Hypocrite.
> A fond request, and contrary to that,
> Which when man formed was God leveld at.
> For he created Men with libertie
> In will, and action, and if all should see
> What are the deep designes at which they aime,
> Both action, and invention, would be lame.[72]

Classical and Renaissance writers variously depict Momus, the god of satire and mockery, as a contumelious disruptor of civility or as a bulwark against tyranny.[73] Thomas Carew invokes him in the masque *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) as a persecutor of difference: 'Hypercritic of Manners, Protonotary of Abuses, Arch-Informer, Dilator-General, Universal Calumniator, Eternal Plaintiff'.[74] He is associated with the endless categorisation of people into stigmatised sects and partisan positions in contemporary satire. Resisting this divisive epideixis, Rivers dismisses Momus' call for transparency and identifies secrecy as a prerequisite for liberty. Here he articulates the reasoning behind the obscure and disguised characters in contemporary tolerationist pamphlets which pursue religious liberty by concealing their authors' 'deep designs' and defying categorisation and prejudicial labelling. This also resonates with a longstanding concern of recusant writers with protecting 'inward thoughts' from public scrutiny. Robert Southwell exhorted his Catholic readers to preserve their faith privately and to 'lodge' Christ 'in the secrets of thy heart'.[75] The infamous Jesuit theory of equivocation and

[72] Rivers, *The Sad Condition*, 2–3.
[73] See Joseph Navitsky, 'Epithet and Esteem: The Reception of Momus in Early Modern English Culture,' *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 27.4 (2020): 531–553.
[74] Thomas Carew, '*Coelum Britannicum* (1634),' in David Lindley (ed.), *Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments, 1605–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 169, ll. 123–126.
[75] Robert Southwell, *Marie Magdalens Funeral Teares* (London, 1591), 62v.

mental reservation – that under interrogation a Catholic could justifiably reserve some words silently in their mind so that what they did utter did not expose the whole truth – presents the inviolability of the mind as the final defence against persecution.[76] This Catholic tradition coalesced with 1640s radicalism, when Lilburne protested successfully against the '*ex officio* oath' and insisted on the right not to self-incriminate in ways that would inform the United States' Fifth Amendment right to remain silent.[77] Combining the preoccupations of royalist lyric, recusant mentality, and Leveller protests, Rivers produces a language of liberty that bridges religious conceptions of man, made in God's image, with an emphasis on human autonomy and legal rights.

Just as Rivers' notion of freedom is marked by a dualistic tension between clay and spirit, the terrestrial and the angelic, his approach to toleration in the poems is also organised around a dialectic between the human and divine. Blair Worden identifies in seventeenth-century toleration discourse a 'process by which the Protestant God changes his character. He becomes a friendly monitor rather than an awesome dictator, a God in whom mercy is more conspicuous than justice'.[78] While Worden points to an analogy between God and the good magistrate, Rivers entered into the debate by establishing a contrast. Demystifying the dominant tropes of royalist political theology, Rivers sharply differentiates earthly and heavenly kingship:

> Kings are compel'd to imploy their subjects hands,
> As usefull instruments of their commands:
> They cannot live without 'em, nor are Kings,
> Unlesse the subject necessary things;

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[76] Ronald Corthell, '"The Secrecy of Man": Recusant Discourse and the Elizabethan Subject,' *ELR* 19.3 (1989): 272. Among much scholarship on equivocation, see especially Stefania Tutino, 'Nothing But the Truth? Hermeneutics and Morality in the Doctrines of Equivocation and Mental Reservation in Early Modern Europe,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 64.1 (2011): 115–155, and Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 153–185.

[77] Braddick, *Common Freedom of the People*, 46; John Lilburne, *Liberty Vindicated Against Slavery* (London, 1646), 28–29. See also *A Coppy of a Letter Sent by Lieu. Col. John Lilburne to Mr. Wollaston Keeper of Newgate* (London, 1646).

[78] Worden, 'Toleration and the Protectorate,' 90. See also J. C. Davis, 'Religion and the Struggle for Freedom,' 520, 527, and John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 13–14.

> Supply for life, and state, whence come their treasures,
> But from the subjects purse? Even to their pleasures
> The subject must contribute, nor the field,
> Nor River without Subjects pleasure yeild
> […]
> If he rule wisely the best Monarck heares,
> More with his subjects, then with his owne eares:[79]

The image of the people supplying the necessary stuff of life is a metaphor for a contractual theory of government in which the sovereign depends on their subjects. While the rhymed couplets initially suggest harmonious order, Rivers' frequently ambiguous lexis and syntax imply the fragility of this arrangement. The semi-colon may be a compositor's error but, given the inverted syntax, it allows the line to be briefly misread as 'necessary thinks'. '[S]ubjects pleasure yield' can either mean that by cultivating the land the people yield pleasure for the king or that the prosperity of the kingdom is at the subject's pleasure. The corporeal imagery of the king ruling via the people's hands and ears anticipates the famous frontispiece to Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) but offers an alternative interpretation of this conceit. For Rivers, earthly kings and the people are mutually dependent. His depiction of God's kingdom could not be more different. He claims

> No such dependant Monarchie in Heaven,
> Where nothing by the subject can be given,
> That was not Gods before.[80]

Rivers' God, unlike his king, is marked by a limitless bounty and perfect self-sufficiency. Like the imagery of light and shadow in *Ka Mee*, *Devout Rhapsodies* foregrounds the difference between temporal and spiritual authority, upon which pleas for toleration frequently depended. His insistence on what the subject can and cannot give to God or the king closely follows Leveller arguments against forcing conscience. The first Leveller *Agreement of the People* (1647) declares that the right to follow one's conscience cannot be given up:

> matters of Religion, and the wayes of Gods Worship, are not at all intrusted by

[79] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, 52.
[80] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, 53.

> us to any humane power, because therein wee cannot remit or exceed a tittle of what our Consciences dictate to be the mind of God, without wilfull sinne.[81]

During the Whitehall debates over the readmission of the Jews to England in December 1648, the Leveller John Wildman similarly argued that 'matters of religion or the worshippe of God are nott a thinge trustable, soe that either a restrictive or a compulsive power should make a man to sin'.[82] Ultimately, the Levellers argued that, because the individual could not relinquish authority over their own conscience to anyone and because political power was granted by the people, all persecution was inherently unjust.[83] Or as Lilburne put it in 1645:

> it is the incommunicable Prerogative of Jesus Christ alone to be King of his Saints, and Law-giver to his Church and people, and to raigne in the soules and consciences of his chosen ones, it being too high a throne for all the creatures in the world to raigne in.[84]

Like Rivers', Lilburne's claim operates by dis-simile applying the language of monarchical prerogatives to Christ even as he seeks to distinguish the rule of God from the rule of the civil magistrate.

Even if he articulates the same ideas and uses the same rhetoric as writers with very different confessional commitments, Rivers gives no indication that he is not unswervingly confident in the exclusive rightness of his own religious beliefs. In this also he was not alone. Insistently citing the parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24–30), seventeenth-century tolerationists were not sceptics but firm believers in the power of God to ultimately differentiate truth from error, the good wheat from weeds at the harvest of judgement day.[85] Rivers' two poems and dialogue all close with visions of peaceful harmony when God's truth will finally emerge and unite his people. In *Devout Rhapsodies*, God descends to separate the

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[81] *An Agreement of the People for a Firme and Present Peace* (London, 1647), 4.
[82] C. H. Firth (ed.), *The Clarke Papers: Selections from the Papers of William Clarke* vol. II (London: Printed for the Camden Society, 1894), 120.
[83] Foxley, *The Levellers*, 137–138. See also Ted Vallance, 'Political Thought,' in Michael Braddick (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 438.
[84] John Lilburne, *A Copie of a Letter, Written by John Lilburne Leut. Collonell. To Mr. William Prinne Esq* (London, 1645), 5.
[85] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 239, Carlin, 'Toleration for Catholics,' 219. See for instance Overton, *The Araignement of Mr. Persecution*, 4, 11.

sheep from the goats; but until then, needy kings ought not to usurp God's power and intervene in matters of conscience. Rivers describes how at the end of time the flux of the universe will resolve into harmony and stability:

> This glorious sight so wondrously shall scare,
> The Sun, the Moone, and every lesser Star,
> That all the glittering Tapers, which cause day
> And night, amaz'd perpetually shall stay
> In the same Zenith; no more shoot their beames,
> By winding motions of their Orbed Temes.
> Hoping (although such hopes will be in vaine,)
> They shall behold the selfe same show againe.[86]

Here Rivers betrays an affection for the scale of human history. He locates the beauty of the universe – its glittering tapers and winding motions – in its temporal state of fluctuation and instability which the end of time will scare into stillness. Eternity is spent vainly hoping to see the mutable created world again. Even as he describes the day of judgement, Rivers admits the attractions of the secular in its etymological sense of 'saecularis', the temporal, finite, or worldly.[87] Throughout his poetry, Rivers' emphasis on God's just law and man's sinfulness is matched by a celebration of human creativity and multiplicity. His writing demonstrates how Leveller rhetoric and preoccupations could be made compatible with a Catholic perspective. He adapts longstanding motifs and traditions of recusant writing and improvises new discourses of the liberty of the subject and the nobility and inviolability of the mind; discourses which have often been associated with the emergence of secular humanism, but which here subsist with a fundamentally religious conception of freedom and human life.

Christian Moderation

In the early 1650s, the Catholic lawyer John Austin employed the same strategy of impersonating Independents. But he also began to articulate a non-papal vision of Catholicism that would come to dominate Catholic pleas to Cromwell for toleration. Austin's series of three

[86] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, 79.
[87] Martin Hagglund, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 2020), 6.

pamphlets *The Christian Moderator* was published between 1651 and 1653 under the pseudonym William Birchley.[88] Not everyone was convinced by his persona. In a pamphlet condemning the relaxation of censorship, a group of Presbyterian printers correctly identified *The Christian Moderator* and several other books as having been published under a false imprint and accused the disguised author of '*Putting* a painted Gloss upon the foul face of Popery, to make it appear otherwise then it is'.[89] A counter response signed by Independent and Army leaders maintained that the accusation was made only because 'Birchley' 'equally rejects the *Episcopall Bondage*, and *Presbyterian Slavery*, & holds forth an absolute incoertion in matters of inward beleef, which these men love not to hear of, nor of any Christian Moderation'.[90] Evidently, some contemporaries were persuaded by Austin's performance and by the alliance he constructs between Catholic and Independent interests. These differing interpretations are motivated by a distinction between traitorous papists and obedient Catholics, Roman and English Catholicisms. While Austin's arguments have received the attention of historians, his use of personae and prosopopoeia has yet to be analysed closely.[91] It provides further evidence of the creative ways in which post-Reformation confessional identity could be represented and reimagined.

Whereas Rivers' Catholic agenda is submerged throughout *Ka Mee*, Austin introduces an explicitly Catholic perspective through the use of various interlocutors. After describing the nature of tender consciences, Austin turns from polemic to narrative and imagines a response to what he has just argued. He claims that 'a worthy friend of mine came to honour me with the civility of a visit', who informs him

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[88] William Birchley, *The Christian Moderator: or, Persecution for Religion Condemned* (London, 1651); *The Christian Moderator, Second Part* (London, 1652); *The Christian Moderator. Third Part* (London, 1653).
[89] *A Beacon set on Fire: or The Humble Information of Certain Stationers, Citizens of London, to the Parliament and Commonwealth of England* (London, 1652), 13.
[90] *The Beacons Quenched: or The Humble Information of Divers Officers of the Army, and Other Wel-Affected Persons* (London, 1652), 12–13; Thomas Clancy, 'The Beacon Controversy, 1652-1657,' *Recusant History* 9.2 (1967): 63–74.
[91] Jeffrey R. Collins, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Blackloist Conspiracy of 1649,' *The Historical Journal* 45.2 (2002): 328–330; Gregory, 'John Austin,' 597–621; Questier, *Martyrs and Treason*, 528–532.

> that the measures I had cut out for tender Consciences, would fit the *Papists* as well as if they had been made for them, For who live more peaceably with their neighbours, (sayes he) who deal more justly with all men then they? who are more constant in their Religion, and more scrupulous in the observances of their Law, then they? who suffer for their faith, more then they; nay, at this time, who besides them?[92]

Austin employs a metaphor of character-writing as the making of garments, thematising his strategy of clothing and veiling himself in a rhetorical disguise. The argumentative perspective is further obfuscated by the mixture of reported speech and free indirect style, as the series of rhetorical questions shifts from a description of how the 'worthy friend' interpreted Birchley's writing to a direct appeal to the reader on behalf of Catholics. It closely resembles Rivers' strategy when describing the 'true Independent'. They attempt to evade the charge of partisanship and self-interest not only by adopting personae, but also by making arguments and definitions on the basis of principles which apparently by accident turn out to apply perfectly to the case for Catholic toleration.

Austin's dialogic style also performs a 'procedural toleration'. The narrator's 'worthy friend' introduces him to a 'moderate and discreet Papist' who recounts his community's sufferings: 'To this deplorable condition *(said he almost weeping)* are the English Catholiques now reduced'.[93] The figure of the 'moderate' recalls old techniques of indirection used in Catholic polemic. The notorious attack on Elizabeth's government, *Leicesters Commonwealth*, which circulated in manuscript in the 1580s, was printed in 1584, and reprinted in 1641, exploits the fiction of 'a moderate Papist' character at various points.[94] Yet whereas it ultimately turns to vicious libel, Austin uses personae in a more sincere attempt to forge alliances and identify common cause across ideological gulfs.[95] He moves into epistolary form

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[92] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 8.
[93] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 9–10.
[94] *Leycesters Common-wealth* (London, 1641), 17. D. C. Peck (ed.), *Leicester's Commonwealth: The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge (1584) and Related Documents* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985).
[95] Questier points out that the third pamphlet in Austin's series uses a range of arguments 'recognizably from the puritan tradition,' *Catholics and Treason*, 528, n.180.

and depicts Birchley and his new 'papist' acquaintance corresponding about the two chief objections to tolerating Catholics: that they are idolatrous and that they 'are inconsistent with Civil Government'.[96] The papist rejects the latter charge by insisting that apart from 'a few discontented and desperate spirits' Catholics are bound by their religion to obedience and respect for government, unlike European Calvinists.[97] Birchley (Austin's Protestant persona) is entirely convinced by this and even contributes his own supporting argument. He returns to the three propositions disavowing papal deposing power that were suggested during the 1647 negotiations with the New Model Army but rejected by Rome: 'I had the fortune some few years since to meet with a paper that clearly answered all my difficulties'.[98] For Austin, limiting papal power was a price worth paying for toleration. Birchley also answers the accusation of idolatry with a quotation from Hobbes' *Leviathan* stating that it is not idolatrous to 'set apart' certain places and images as holy.[99] It has frequently been noted that this is the first printed reference to Hobbes' book.[100] However, it is rarely mentioned that Austin's papist character immediately matches Birchley's reference with his own proof text: 'to requite my civility, [he] immediately shewed me the words of the *Councel of Trent*, which he said differed nothing at all from Mr *Hobs*, and very little from me'.[101] Mixing Hobbes and Trent through the 'civility' of a peaceable cross-confessional debate exemplifies the dialogic strategies of Austin's pamphlets. Whereas prosopopoeia usually functions in satire and polemic to differentiate and stigmatise opposing identities, in Independent-Catholic writing on toleration, it is part of an attempt to draw analogies between, and find common ground across, competing political and religious positions.

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[96] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 15.
[97] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 16.
[98] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 17.
[99] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 12–13.
[100] Gregory, 'John Austin,' 598; Mark Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes,' in Burns and Goldie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought*, 613; Collins, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Blackloist Conspiracy,' 328.
[101] Birchley, *The Christian Moderator*, 12–13.

Austin's pursuit of toleration was not restricted to fictional characters and invented dialogues but extended into the realm of political action. Scholars have not previously noted that his name appears on a manuscript petition, read in parliament on 30 June 1652.[102] This petition asks for relief for Catholics from sequestration, 'the weight whereof hath sunk them so ruinously lowe' and requests 'the permission of cleering their Religion from whatsoever may be inconsistent with Government'.[103] Austin and his fellow petitioners justify their demands in the context of sweeping constitutional innovation:

> now the wisdom of the Parliament applying it self to establish the People of this Common Wealth in a quiet and settled condition your Petitioners take upp an humble confidence, that they alone shall not be excluded from so vniversall a benefit.[104]

They not only present themselves as obedient subjects, but crucially request that Catholics not be excluded from the universal peace and freedom promised by this moment of revolutionary regime change. This argument mirrors the strategy of the prosopopoeic pamphlets. They all situate Catholic concerns and demands in a wider cross-confessional context and demand that they be included in the 'universal benefit' of the Revolution. The twenty-five signatories to this petition include John Thimelby and William Pearsall (the friend of John Bradshaw), both members of the Tixall coterie discussed in chapter one, and Robert Brudenell, son of the leader of the 1647 negotiations. Brudenell, along with William Lord Powis and William Habington, not only signed the 1652 petition, but were also among the dedicatees of Rivers' *Devout Rhapsodies*.[105] A funerary monument indicates that Austin was also a close friend of Constance Aston's husband, Walter Fowler.[106] Historians have often assumed that mid-century Catholics

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[102] Bodleian, Nalson MS 22, f. 388r. See also 'House of Commons Journal Volume 7: 30 June 1652,' in *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 7, 1651–1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), 147. *BHO*, accessed 18 September 2022, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol7/p147.
[103] Bodleian, Nalson MS 22, f. 388r.
[104] Bodleian, Nalson MS 22, f. 388r.
[105] Rivers, *Devout Rhapsodies: Liber Primus*, 55, 7, 35.
[106] Alison Shell, 'Seraphic Discourse, Mystical Bodies: John Austin's Original Psalms,' in Sara S. Poor and Nigel Smith (eds), *Mysticism and Reform, 1400–1750* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 228.

were overwhelmingly royalist and that enthusiasm for the Commonwealth was confined to a few peculiar individuals. However, these petitions and pamphlets demonstrate that new ideas about toleration and Catholic allegiance circulated widely and had a profound effect on the ways confessional identity was negotiated and represented.

Thomas White and the Catholic Cromwellians

The extent of anti-Catholic persecution during the Cromwellian Protectorate is open to debate. Though Catholics were excluded from the 1650 Toleration Act, the repeal of the recusancy laws dismantled the chief mechanism of persecution and only two priests were executed in the 1650s, far fewer than the previous decade. Some prominent Catholics, notably Sir Kenelm Digby, were on friendly personal terms with their new ruler. Blair Worden and John Coffey argue that Cromwell's domestic and international policy, as well as his own ambiguous religious convictions, motivated the Protectorate's 'leniency' and 'mildness' towards Catholics.[107] By contrast, Questier maintains a stricter set of definitions and suggests that the 1650s were not 'tolerant in the true sense of the word. Catholics were harassed this way and that'.[108] Albert Loomie denies the existence of even de facto toleration, citing the 'draconian penalty' of the sequestration system, by which two thirds of a Catholic's estate could be seized if they refused to swear the Oath of Abjuration.[109] As Eilish Gregory's recent study of the sequestration process and anti-Catholic legislation demonstrates, persecution periodically slackened and intensified throughout the 1650s.[110] Catholics frequently managed to negotiate their fines, by compounding, submitting to the Oath, or making complex property arrangements with the help of lawyers and sympathetic Protestants.[111] Contemporary Catholics also

[107] Worden, 'Toleration and the Protectorate,' 74; Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England*, 149, 158.
[108] Questier, *Catholics and Treason*, 537.
[109] Albert J. Loomie, 'Oliver Cromwell's Policy toward the English Catholics: The Appraisal by Diplomats, 1654–1658,' *The Catholic Historical Review* 90.1 (2004): 31.
[110] Gregory, *Catholics during the English Revolution, 1642–1660*.
[111] Gregory, *Catholics during the English Revolution*, 116, 138, and passim.

disagreed about their fortunes under the new regime. As we have seen, while royalist Catholics saw Cromwell as a heretical usurper and vested their hopes in a Stuart restoration, others thought the sporadically tolerant Protectorate was full of promise. Rather than assessing the veracity of either interpretation of the new regime, this section explores how Catholic supporters of Cromwell developed a distinctive understanding of the relationship between religious and political allegiance and forged a new approach to their confessional and national identity.

Most prominent among Cromwell's Catholic advocates were the controversial faction known as the Blackloists, a group of priests and philosophers who were committed to reconciling reason and faith. The Blackloists take their name from the secular priest Thomas White, alias Blacklo, who led the group alongside the polymath, natural philosopher, and privateer Sir Kenelm Digby, and the expatriate Sorbonne theologian Henry Holden. These innovative thinkers converged in Paris in the 1640s, where they participated in the intellectual circles surrounding Marin Mersenne, Pierre Gassendi, and Thomas Hobbes, who composed a manuscript reply to one of White's earliest treatises, *De Mundo* (1642).[112] Promoting a reason-based theology, they rejected papal infallibility and grounded the rule of faith in demonstrable tradition and Church councils. The Blackloists favoured a Gallican model for the English Catholic Church. Bemoaning the failure of the 1647 negotiations, they proposed that English Catholics be governed by six bishops appointed by parliament, who would acknowledge the pope as spiritual head of the Church but only follow his instructions with the approval of the civil authority.[113] The Blackloists went beyond situational or pragmatic appeals for an end to

[112] Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists*, 6; Collins, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Blackloist Conspiracy,' 305–331; Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, ed. Harold Jones (London: Bradford University Press, 1976).
[113] Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists*, 45, 49; Simon Johnson, '"Papists of the New Model": The English Mission and the Shadow of Blacklow,' in Morton and Lewycky (eds), *Getting Along?*, 214; Robert Pugh, *Blacklo's Cabal* (Douai, 1680), 34. As Questier points out, these arguments take to their 'absolute limit' the proposals and tendencies favoured by the loyalist 'appellant' clergy during the Archpriest Controversy earlier in the century, *Catholics and Treason*, 526.

persecution; they synthesised diverse theological and intellectual interests to envision a new kind of future for England's Catholics.

White laid out his political and constitutional programme in *The Grounds of Obedience and Government* (1655). This treatise defends a contractual theory of sovereignty, a de facto model of allegiance, and the right to depose an unjust governor in particular circumstances. Provoking the anger of Catholic and Protestant royalists alike, *The Grounds* was readily identifiable as an argument for obeying and supporting the Protectorate. Charles II complained about White's book and the way 'some Catholiques in England expresse more then an ordinary zeale for Cromwell'.[114] Mark Goldie emphasises White's ultimate goal, calling the *Grounds* 'a veiled address to Cromwell for toleration for sober and unjesuited Catholics'.[115] Despite significant attention from intellectual and political historians, White's rhetoric has not been analysed in detail. The 'veiling' of his treatise, published under his own name, is very different to Rivers' and Austin's personae. Impersonal and theoretical throughout, White insists: 'I play therefore the pure philosopher. I deliver the abstract notions onley'.[116] Elsewhere White expressed impatience with polemical disguise. In a draft reply to a pamphlet written by the Jesuit John Lewger in the voice of an imaginary sectarian named Josiah Webb, White advises his 'Zealous friend',

> when another time you shall please to put on a *Vizard* gett it made of *paste-board*, or some other more solid stuff, & not of *net-work* or *Tinsell* that will give passage to your visage through it. For I believe there is no bodye who reads your books, but if he be judicious may see a *Jesuite* peep thorough the mask of *Josiah Webb*.[117]

Imagining rhetorical style in an emphatically material language of disguise, White conjures an amusingly pathetic image of the Jesuit peeping through his paltry mask. In his own writing, White affects a transparency and commitment to universal principles and 'abstract notions'.

[114] Bodleian, Clarendon MS 58, f. 141.
[115] Goldie, 'Reception of Hobbes,' 614.
[116] Thomas White, *The Grounds of Obedience and Government* (London, 1655), A3v–A4r.
[117] Bodleian, Gough Norfolk MS 15, f. 237r.

Yet though he may not dress himself in a 'paste-board vizard' or Leveller garb, he does co-opt various different religiopolitical idiolects.

White's tract is heavily indebted to Thomas Hobbes.[118] Like *Leviathan, The Grounds* insists that a commonwealth is formed when the people consent to be governed.[119] Furthermore, White agrees with Hobbes that resistance is justifiable in only the rarest of circumstances, namely when the sovereign can no longer ensure the safety of the people, the commonwealth is dissolved, and its former sovereign becomes a private person.[120] The application of this argument to the Stuarts and interregnum royalism is unmistakeable. White repeatedly insists that 'a Magistrate actually dispossessed hath no right to be restored, nor the Subject any obligation to seek to restore, but oppose him'.[121] In a rare flash of passionate rhetoric, he seems to scorn 1650s royalist aspirations: 'if Princes lose their pretences by the force of Nature, it is ridiculous for private men to build hopes, upon rotten titles of ages long passed, upon weake maxims of Law'.[122] Hobbes provides White with a theory of sovereignty with which to justify Cromwell's authority and redirect Catholic loyalism. He was not alone in this. Niall Allsopp has shown how former royalist poets, Davenant, Cowley, and Waller, who supported Cromwell in the 1650s, made substantial use of Hobbes to reimagine and represent sovereignty and allegiance.[123] Having lived in Paris for much of the preceding decade, White knew many of these fellow travellers. According to Anthony Wood, Hobbes and White remained close friends and met regularly, but 'seldom parted in cool blood: for they would wrangle, squabble and scold about philosophical matters like young sophisters'.[124] White's

[118] Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists*, 74; Goldie, 'Reception of Hobbes,' 609; Collins, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Blackloist Conspiracy,' 326–327; B. C. Southgate, '"That Damned Booke": *The Grounds of Obedience and Government* (1655), and the Downfall of Thomas White,' *Recusant History* 17.2 (1984): 245–246.
[119] White, *The Grounds*, 44–45; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 114 (17.13).
[120] White, *The Grounds*, 132, 147–148; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 147 (21.21). See Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists*, 72–73.
[121] White, *The Grounds*, 147, 134–157.
[122] White, *The Grounds*, 181.
[123] Allsopp, *Poetry and Sovereignty in the English Revolution*.
[124] Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, vol. III, col. 1258.

Grounds seems to emerge from the push and pull of these friendly, if heated, debates.

Though White finds in Hobbes the tools to justify loyalty to the Protectorate, he also departs from his friend's philosophy in order to pursue a Catholic agenda. The entire tract enacts Catholic obedience to the new regime and refutes the suspicions of anti-popery by insisting that religious faith produces good subjects. Whereas Hobbes famously depicts spiritual allegiance as antagonistic to civil government, setting up 'another kingdom, as it were a kingdom of fairies, in the dark', White argues that religion serves 'to rivet in and fixe the naturall inclination which wee have to Truth and Fidelity'.[125] Similarly, in opposition to Hobbes' claim that political society emerges from the instinct of self-preservation, bringing peace to the state of war, White sees innate goodness as the foundation of the social contract: 'Pleasure therefore and Love is the first combiner of men into Society'.[126] What allows subjects to give consent to be governed is their divinely-granted free will and rationality.[127] As Jon Parkin has argued, White exemplifies the 'combination of critique and adaptation' which characterises the reception of *Leviathan* in the mid-1650s, by replacing Hobbes' emphasis on individualistic self-interest with a neo-Aristotelian notion of the common good.[128] For White, it is the pursuit of this good which both motivates people to combine and contract into society and dictates the sovereign's conduct. As well as defending the Cromwellian Protectorate, *The Grounds* outlines a new theory of Catholic loyalism.

White weaves an implicit argument against persecution through the treatise. He insists that obedience cannot involve the renouncing of the will, since to do so would be to deny 'our rationality, and that by which we are the image of God'.[129] Acting rationally, subjects cannot

[125] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 217 (29.15); White, *The Grounds*, 34.
[126] White, *The Grounds*, 43.
[127] Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists*, 67.
[128] Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 138–140; Tutino, *Thomas White and the Blackloists*, 67.
[129] White, *The Grounds*, 25.

submit to that which is against their own interest, since 'it is against nature for any to submit his will so farre as to renounce eternall blisse'.[130] However, after stating the unnatural irrationality of forsaking 'eternal bliss', he applies the same principle to rejecting temporal well-being: 'The like I conceive of a subjection to be killed or maimed causelessely and without desert, or even tormented, nay, or so penuriously abused as to have no content in life'.[131] This echoes the Leveller argument that the people cannot transmit to the sovereign the power to force their consciences, rendering persecution inherently unjust. White appeals to the law of 'nature, whose universall aimes are, to be well, either in the next or in this present life'.[132] There is a glaring problem here, one which had divided the post-Reformation Catholic community for decades: what should you do if there seemed to be a choice between happiness in heaven or on earth? Was it rational or necessary for Catholics to submit to persecution, torture, and execution in hope of salvation? In short, how could the demands of the secular and spiritual realms be reconciled?

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes also asserts that 'no man can transfer, or lay down, his right to save himself from death, wounds, and imprisonment'.[133] However, he does not make the analogy with eternal security. Indeed, Hobbes contradicts the Catholic conception of natural law articulated by White. He criticises thinkers who 'will not have the law of nature, to be those rules which conduce to the preservation of man's life on earth; but to the attaining of an eternal felicity after death' and associates them with violent radicals and resistance theorists.[134] This is part of his attack on those who place the spiritual over the temporal, religious over civil allegiance – dichotomies that trouble White's Catholic-Hobbesian theory.

After declaring the twofold 'universal aims' of nature to be well in this life or the next,

[130] White, *The Grounds*, 54.
[131] White, *The Grounds*, 54.
[132] White, *The Grounds*, 56.
[133] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 93 (14.29).
[134] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 98 (15.8).

White continues

> Neither doth it scare me to cast my eyes upon so many holy men and women, as have put themselves voluntarily, upon penurious and painful lives. For I can easily answer, that they had not displeasing lives, enjoying the fruit of contemplation, and the sweetnesse of conscience in expecting a great reward for what they did.[135]

The strange verb 'scare me' implies the fearfulness of the holy men and women's heroism but also registers the potential problem to his theory. White primarily refers to those who live in poverty and contemplation rather than martyrs, for whom the dictates of conscience are hardly sweet. Throughout *The Grounds* those who violently sacrifice themselves and their will are claimed to deface God's image and 'unman us and be-beast our whole nature'.[136] As often as he attacks tyranny, White identifies subjection as a failure of the subject. He instances the self-castration of Origen, who 'exsected his virility, thinking to please God' but was 'excommunicated for the fact', and the Syrian Christian ascetic Simon Stylites who 'chained himself upon a hill' until he was 'taught that such impotency was fit for beasts, not men'; both prove 'that, to renounce any natural faculty or the legitimate and fitting use of it, under pretence of pleasing God, is a folly, not a vertue'.[137] Associating renunciation of the will with beastliness, White problematises the logic of suffering for God.

Similar imagery linking submission of the will to folly and animality occurs throughout the private letters of the Blackloists, collected and published by their Jesuit opponent Robert Pugh in 1680. They accuse 'our *foolish English Catholicks*' of being complicit in their own subjection by slavishly submitting to papal tyranny.[138] Kenelm Digby attacks 'the folly of our *English Catholicks,* who will depend so contemptibly vpon this wicked interessed [papal] court', but hopes that Innocent X's failings are 'so gross that everybody beginneth to be weaned

[135] White, *The Grounds*, 55
[136] White, *The Grounds*, 62, 25–26.
[137] White, *The Grounds*, 24–25.
[138] Pugh, *Blacklo's Cabal*, 30.

from this Childishnesse'.[139] Henry Holden is especially lurid in his rebuke of his own community and anticipates White's dehumanising metaphors; English Catholics, he claims, 'will neuer dare go to the *close stool* without a *Breue* from *Rome*' and foolishly appeal 'for his *Holinesse Bulls* to beget *English Calues*'.[140] The priest and poet Richard Flecknoe used similar imagery in a less negative way, referring to 'a plesant saying of *K. Iames,* That the *Papist* was his *honest Ass,* on whom he might impose what burthen and load he pleased, and hee'd grunt and grunt, but patiently bear it still'.[141] With their emphasis on nobility, masculine virtue, and reason, the Blackloists decry this sentimental glorification of persecution. In the same terms that White criticises self-sacrifice, his followers blame English recusants for being irrationally submissive to what they deem the excessive powers of the papacy. *The Grounds* may deal in 'abstract notions', but its rhetoric and emphasis on the difference between rational consent and irrational submission travesties the longstanding Catholic and especially Jesuit discourse of martyrdom and pious suffering. Putting a limit to papal power was intended not only to demonstrate the unquestionable obedience of English Catholics, but also to eliminate the English government's key defence of persecution, that Catholics were only executed for treasonously following a foreign power. Questier argues that 'the Blackloist tendency in contemporary Catholicism was definitely not cutting itself off from its community's martyrological tradition'.[142] Yet this claim is based on his reading of Austin's *Christian Moderator* series, which is far less innovative and radical than *The Grounds*. White's critique of the logic of self-sacrifice attempts to reimagine English Catholicism and its relationship to the state and the papacy.

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[139] Pugh, *Blacklo's Cabal*, 67.
[140] Pugh, *Blacklo's Cabal*, 26.
[141] Richard Flecknoe, *Animadversions on a Petition Delivered to the Honourable House of Parliament by Several of the Godly Party in the County of Salop* (London, 1653), 22. Flecknoe repeats the same anecdote in 'Of your English Papist Ass,' *A Collection of the Choicest Epigrams and Characters of Richard Flecknoe* (London, 1673), 42.
[142] Questier, *Catholics and Treason*, 531–532.

White's characterisation of humanity's rationality, freedom, and nobility draws on gendered and aristocratic notions of neo-Roman virtue.[143] He insists that the original contract between subject and prince is 'maintained by manlinesse which is the onely or chiefe strength of a promise'.[144] This directly contradicts Hobbes' more pessimistic belief that the only guarantor of social bonds is fear, since 'nothing is more easily broken than a man's word'.[145] Similarly, whereas Hobbes infamously claimed that the life of man in the state of war was 'brutish' and that its anarchy must be constrained by entering into political society, White depicts humanity as bestial only when it falls short of its nature and inclination to the good.[146] For White, political society is not a fragile defence against chaos but an instrument in pursuit of goodness. In manuscript outlines and fragments composed with Digby, White identifies the centrality of virtue to a strong and godly state. They assert that 'no man can haue the fidelity and obedience due to such gouernment as is fitting for a good common-weale-man; without vertue'.[147] Eliding moral and political values, the good man is equated with the loyal subject to the new Commonwealth, expressed in its contemporary jargon.[148] In *The Grounds*, White concedes one form of sacrifice which is both virtuous and rational. He acknowledges that there is a necessary 'debt in the subject, of hazarding life and limbs' for the sake of the commonwealth.[149] He attempts to find a rational and moral underpinning for this necessity. 'Fame' is dismissed as 'slender recompence' and even the appeal to the common good, White warns, is 'meere deceit and flattery of words' when manipulative princes reinterpret it to be

[143] On the use of similar language and ideas by proponents of the neo-Roman theory of liberty, see Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, 95–96. For instance, Nedham, *Case of the Commonwealth*, 112–113.
[144] White, *The Grounds*, 63–64.
[145] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 88 (14.7).
[146] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 84 (13.9).
[147] BL, Add. MS 41846, ff. 178r–179v.
[148] On the anti-monarchical connotations of 'commonwealth', see Glenn Burgess, 'Tyrants, Absolute Kings, Arbitrary Rulers and the Commonwealth of England: Some Reflections on Seventeenth-Century English Political Vocabulary,' in Cesare Cuttica and Glenn Burgess (eds), *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2012), 151.
[149] White, *The Grounds*, 67.

'their own proper good'.[150] Ultimately, the only

> solid reason why men ought to bee valiant, is the hope of reward hereafter for doeing good to our neighbour here, and the commonwealth being our nearest and greatest neighbour, as including our friends, parents, acquaintance, and all of mankind that our knowledge reacheth to, to performe service to it is certainly the greatest act of charity towards our neighbour.[151]

The only martyrs whom White celebrates die for the commonwealth. He envisions a future in which English Catholic virtue might derive not from opposition to, but unstinting support for, the state. The epigraph on the title page of *The Grounds*, 'Salus populi, suprema lex esto' emblematises its concern with the relationship between the temporal and eternal. Taken from Cicero and usually translated as 'Let the good of the people be the supreme law', this classical tag was ubiquitous and divisive. It was appropriated for the self-justifications of both tyrants and rebels, and evoked contradictory conceptions of government, suggesting the extrajudicial prerogatives of absolutist rulers or a republican principle of the people's rights.[152] For White, 'salus' denotes both earthly and heavenly wellbeing. Countering Hobbes' emphasis on the conflict between the spiritual and the civil, White ultimately insists that the pursuit of the eternal produces obedient subjects and valiant patriots. White's apparently abstract philosophy proposes a new form of English Catholic anti-royalist loyalism.

Blackloist poetry

This self-conscious reimagining of what it meant to be an English Catholic is illustrated in poems written much later in the century by White's friend and follower, the priest, polemicist, and philosopher John Sergeant (1623–1707). Sergeant's contributions to philosophy and controversy have received substantial attention.[153] New archival evidence, presented here,

[150] White, *The Grounds*, 72–73.
[151] White, *The Grounds*, 75–76.
[152] For a detailed discussion of the different uses of the term, see Kathryn Murphy, 'The Physician's Religion and *salus populi*: The Manuscript Circulation and Print Publication of *Religio Medici*,' *Studies in Philology* 111.4 (2014): 859–866; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 222–224.
[153] Dorothea Gilead-Krook, *John Sergeant and his Circle: A Study of Three Seventeenth-Century English Aristotelians* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Beverley Southgate, 'Sergeant, John (1623–1707), Roman Catholic

reveals that he was also a poet and that, contrary to what scholars have previously known, Blackloist thinking did inspire imaginative literature.[154] Sergeant contributed prefatory verses to the third edition of Kenelm Digby's natural philosophical work the *Two Treatises*.[155] 'To Sr Kenelme Digby On his Two Incomparable Treatises of Philosophy' praises Digby as the Aristotle to White's Plato, '*That Great Soul,* which fathoms th'*Universe*'.[156] While the poem is preoccupied by the Blackloists' scientific, rather than political, innovations, it is marked by a general atmosphere of revolutionary change and enlightenment: '*These sparks you kindled at his greater fire,*/ And round about in thorow-light papers hurl'd,/ Will shortly enlighten and enflame a World'.[157] We can also identify Sergeant as the author of a short pamphlet containing two poems printed in 1695: *Virtue and Science. Pindarick Poems*.[158] The poems 'To Virtue, His Soul's Mistress' and 'To Science Virtue's Handmaid' are dedicated to two sisters Anne Duchess of Richmond and Lenox (1671–1722), and Frances Countess of Newburgh (1677–1735/6), members of an old Catholic family and the great-grand-daughters of Thomas Lord Brudenell, leader of the Catholic negotiations with the New Model Army in 1647. Though the printed text is only attributed to 'J. S.' whom the Short Title Catalogue identifies as James Shute, a manuscript copy of the poem 'To Science' survives among the papers of the Catholic Belson family, where it is signed 'Jo: Sergeant'.[159] It is accompanied by various petitions and proposals relating to Catholic toleration, including a later seventeenth-century copy of a

Controversialist and Philosopher,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/25095.

[154] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 166; Francis Young briefly discusses an allegorical prose romance by Sergeant, *An Historical Romance of the Wars between the mighty Giant Gallieno, and the great Knight Nausonious* (Dublin, 1694), but in the context of Jacobitism rather than Blackloism, *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553–1829* (London: Routledge, 2013), 167–168.

[155] Kenelm Digby, *Of Bodies and of Mans Soul: To Discover the Immortality of Reasonable Souls: with Two Discourses of the Powder of Sympathy, and, of the Vegetation of Plants* (London, 1669), *3v–*4r. A manuscript copy survives in a contemporary Oxford verse miscellany, Bodleian, Rawl. poet. 65, f. 77.

[156] Digby, *Of Bodies and of Mans Soul*, *3v.

[157] Digby, *Of Bodies and of Mans Soul*, *4r.

[158] J. S., *Virtue and Science. Pindarick Poems* (London, 1695).

[159] Oxfordshire History Centre, F1/4/MS/77, f. 4. This and the next reference are to xerox copies of documents extant among the Belson family papers at the Berkshire County Record Office.

memorandum on the 1647 proposals and a lengthy disavowal of the pope's supremacy in temporal affairs.[160] The poems' dedicatees, manuscript context, concerns and image patterns support the attribution to Sergeant and thus allow us to read *Virtue and Science* as a poetic response to Blackloist Catholicism.

Sergeant's poem combines the tropes of love poetry and devotional verse with the structure of philosophical poetry, accumulating concrete images for abstract concepts. The 'Pindarick' verse form and dense notes are modelled after Cowley's *Pindarique Odes.*[161] The lexis and imagery meanwhile are strongly indebted to Crashaw and his distinctive mixture of the sensuous and the unimaginable; using phrases like 'every *Sweet* of the Arabian Nest' and the 'pure *Meridian* Light', Sergeant directly echoes collocations found in Crashaw's poems.[162] Sergeant addresses Virtue: 'Come, and come Glorious, as thou woul'st be seen/ By thy Dread Lord, when at his Session's Day/ He shall the Palsy'd World in Flames survey'.[163] The repeated imperative recalls Crashaw's apostrophes in the 'Hymn to the Name of Jesus', 'Come, and come strong', and the description of an embodied encounter between the soul and her 'dread Lord' evokes 'Prayer' and the sacred erotics of many poems by Crashaw. Sergeant mixes a commitment to reason and empirical knowledge with the devoutly sexual language, which we tend to associate with enthusiasm and mysticism. In 'To Science, Virtue's Handmaid', reason is treated to apotheosising apostrophe:

> Thou art that Bright
> *Reserve* of Light
> For the *Wise* Church, when grown
> From *Unripe Nonage* to her *Manly Noon*.
> Her Youth's *School-Master,* dark *Credulity,*
> Too weak to govern mankind now a *Child* no longer
> But fit for th' *University,*
> Will her dear Charge to Thee *in Part* resign
> And those *Soul-binding* Charms of thine,

[160] Oxfordshire History Centre, F1/4/MS/26 and F1/4/MS/45.
[161] Cowley, *Poems: Pindarique Odes*.
[162] Sergeant, *Virtue and Science*, 3. See Crashaw, 'The Office of the Holy Crosse,' ll. 245–246, 'Vpon the Death of Mr. Herrys,' ll. 13–14, and 'In the Glorious Epiphanie', ll. 15–17.
[163] Sergeant, *Virtue and Science*, 3. Crashaw, 'Hymn to the Name of Jesus,' ll. 70–71.

To govern such a *Free-born* Subject *stronger*.[164]

Sergeant praises post-Tridentine Catholicism as a mature Church free of medieval superstition, but his metaphors also imply some reservations about the Roman papacy's authority. The personification resembles Digby's earlier claim that England's Catholics must put away the childishness of subservience to the corrupt Vatican. Disparaging the credulous Church, Sergeant suggests that if it resigns part of its power to reason, its government will be strengthened. Sergeant gives poetic expression to the Blackloists' rational faith, transferring the 'soul-binding charms' of devotional and love poetry to the new mistress Science. While active political Blackloism had largely disappeared by the later seventeenth century, Sergeant's politicised imagery insists that the Church temper its authority with the dictates of reason, and celebrates human freedom and rationality, coming to maturity. Sergeant's poem enacts the transformation it describes by applying old forms to new ideas. Redeploying the tropes of ecstatic religious and devotional verse to praise not the Church, lover, or Lady Religion, but Mistress Science, Sergeant repurposes Crashaw for a new age. The poem provides another example of the way in which Crashaw's style could be reinterpreted to express wholly different understandings of faith and identity. It demonstrates the imaginative and literary energies of the Blackloist movement, reshaping the multiple styles of English Catholicism.

Tolerating Flecknoe

White's reconceptualization of Catholic loyalism also finds a poetic equivalent in the works of Richard Flecknoe, the Catholic priest and poet, usually remembered as the butt of satirical poems by Andrew Marvell and John Dryden. Though critics frequently describe him as royalist, in the 1650s he wrote in vigorous support of Cromwell.[165] Rather than attempting to defend Flecknoe's maligned literary qualities, this final section suggests that his poems do

[164] Sergeant, *Virtue and Science*, 17.
[165] L. E. Semler, 'The Caroline Grotesque in Verse: Robert Herrick, Richard Flecknoe and John Taylor,' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 44 (2014): 137.

reveal the wide-ranging impact of Catholic tolerationist writing and the inventive ways in which English Catholic imaginative literature and self-representation changed in the tumultuous middle decades of the seventeenth century.

In 1654 Flecknoe published *Love's Dominion*, a play dedicated to the Protector's daughter, Lady Elizabeth Claypole. It was not performed until after the Restoration, but its pastoral setting, preoccupation with the ideals of neo-platonic love, and use of masque conventions exemplify how 1650s drama combined the forms of 1630s 'Cavalier' culture with new influences gained during time in Italy and France.[166] Flecknoe offered his play 'as a Pattern for the Reformed Stage', echoing the attempts by Davenant among others to forge a new kind of operatic drama for the Protectorate.[167] His vision for a reformed theatre, teaching by delighting, is largely modelled on Horace and Sidney, but it also recalls the contentious language of toleration and applies, he claims, to both the 'stage' and 'the Pulpit'.[168] In the preface to *Love's Dominion,* he criticises those who 'enforce men to serve *God* spight of *Humanity*, and shake us into *Religion* with fear and trembling, not remembring that we are oftner invited to it (in the *Holy Scripture*) with rejoicing and jubilation'.[169] Flecknoe associates undelightful poetry with intolerance. Tolerationist writers frequently argued that forcing conscience produced a worthless pretence of faith and favoured a gentler approach to converting and reforming individuals.[170] Flecknoe praises the new non-monarchical sovereign, who harmonizes difference, and insists that God 'commands us to obey our Superiours, without

[166] Clare, 'Acts of Oblivion,' 147–167; Katrin Beushausen, *Theatre and the English Public from Reformation to Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 250, 255; Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate*, 146, 143–162.
[167] James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and Obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* by Sir William Davenant,' *The Seventeenth Century* 6.2 (1991): 205–250; Janet Clare, 'Acts of Oblivion'; Andrew R. Walking, *Masque and Opera in England, 1656–1688* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2017), 144–146.
[168] Richard Flecknoe, *Love's Dominion: A Dramatique Piece Full of Excellent Moralitie Written as a Pattern for the Reformed Stage* (London, 1654), A5v.
[169] Flecknoe, *Love's Dominion*, A5r–A5v.
[170] Carlin, 'Toleration for Catholics,' 219–222. Rivers and Austin both make versions of this argument.

exceptions'.[171] While the neo-platonic tropes of *Love's Dominion* are indebted to the culture of the Caroline court, they are repurposed here to extol Cromwell as a virtuous unifying force: 'What virtuous Love is, mark me well,/ 'Tis a just temper of our Souls,/ All vitious extreams controls'.[172] For Flecknoe tempering extremes is a general principle of toleration and a particular quality of the new Protector; the play's combination of apparently discordant forms and commitments enacts this rule of moderation.

Flecknoe repeatedly refashioned his style and allegiances in pursuit of patronage. Agreeing with his contemporary detractors, Paul Hammond dismisses 'Flecknoe's cornucopia of sycophantic doggerel'.[173] His career is more than a straightforward history of sycophancy, however; the transformation of his writing and commitments in the later 1650s illuminates the flexibility of English Catholic identity at an unprecedented moment of change. In 1659, Flecknoe printed two works praising the Protectorate: an early English attempt at opera extoling the Commonwealth's naval strength, *The Marriage of Oceanus and Brittania* [*sic*], and a eulogistic biography, *The Idea of His Highness Oliver Late Lord Protector*. Never performed, *The Marriage* imagines a series of masque entries, songs, and dances narrating how the 'King of the Seas' woos the 'Queen of Isles' and wins her with offerings and tribute. Flecknoe's depiction of the emergent imperial nation, as Susan Wiseman notes, resembles 'the City entertainments and lord mayors' shows of the 1650s'.[174] By embracing the mythos of the Protectorate, Flecknoe radically departs from Catholic conceptions of English nationhood and history, such as those articulated in *Sanctus Eduardus*. He even celebrates the defeat of the Spanish Armada, depicted by means of a dance of the four winds, 'winged, with swoln Garments and vizards, white plumes of Herons feathers as puffed from their mouths'.[175] The

[171] Flecknoe, *Love's Dominion*, A5v–A6r.
[172] Flecknoe, *Love's Dominion*, 15.
[173] Paul Hammond, *The Making of Restoration Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 174.
[174] Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 135.
[175] Richard Flecknoe, *The Marriage of Oceanus and Brittania* (London, 1659), 27.

standard assertion of the peculiarly elect nation follows:

> Happy, happy those who are
> Heavens peculiar Love and care;
> With whom the Skies, and Seas, and Winds
> Against their Enemies combine![176]

This rhetoric, as we saw in the discussion of Waller's *A Panegyric to my Lord Protector*, is generally associated with an English Protestant understanding of national sovereignty and imperial dominion. That Flecknoe adopts it when celebrating the defeat of the Armada underscores all that the anti-papal strain in English Catholicism and the community's Gallican moment in the 1650s had made possible.

Flecknoe recalls and inverts commonplaces of Catholic literary culture. In the first 'entry', Oceanus bemoans his unrequited love for Britain and is accompanied by a chorus of sympathetic rocks who lament:

> Flow flow our tears amain,
> For who when Oceanus weeps,
> Who all liquid Treasure keeps,
> Can from liquid tears refrain?[177]

The poetry of tears was often closely associated with Roman Catholicism and conversion.[178] Recusant poets frequently link imagery of weeping with the sea and exile, as in Southwell's 'A Vale of Teares', where the sound of water over rocks becomes a 'fearefull quire': 'sett here my soule mayn streames of teares aflote'.[179] Flecknoe also made use of this confessionally-charged mode in a shorter poem in his printed collection *Miscellania* (1653), which describes friendship as

> The Haven where we certain Refuge find:
> When on the worlds tempestuous waves w'are tost;
> And made the tennis Balls of Seas and wind.
> […] in this vale of Tears and miserye.[180]

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[176] Flecknoe, *The Marriage*, 27–28.
[177] Flecknoe, *The Marriage*, 5.
[178] Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 57.
[179] Peter Davidson and Anne Sweeny (eds), *The Collected Poems of St. Robert Southwell, SJ* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007), 36–38, ll. 17, 61.
[180] Richard Flecknoe, *Miscellania or Poems of All Sorts* (London, 1653), 130–131.

The Marriage of Oceanus and Brittania reinterprets these related image patterns, making the sea not a figure of inconstancy and separation, but the symbol and source of Britain's imperial strength and national unity.

Whereas the St. Omers plays, *Morus* and *Sanctus Eduardus*, prefer a cosmopolitan perspective and attack the Protectorate's nostalgic language of insular English nationhood, Flecknoe fully embraces it. British Catholics did play an important role as merchants and cultural go-betweens in both continental trade and the emerging empire.[181] In the final scene of *The Marriage*, allegorical personifications of Africa, Europe, America, and India appear offering their luxurious bounty to the Queen of the Isles. In contrast to the iconic frontispiece of the Jesuit Daniello Bartoli's *Historia della Compagnia di Gesu* (1659) (Figure 16) which depicts these four figures coming under the sway of Ignatius and transnational ultramontane Roman Catholicism, Flecknoe imagines Britain conquering the world as an elect imperial nation:

> Now all the world is pervious made;
> And so immense is her command,
> *Brittania* dos extend her trade,
> Where ever there is Sea, or Land.[182]

Flecknoe may simply be saying what he thinks his would-be patrons want to hear, yet *The Marriage* demonstrates how the shifts in the discourse of Catholic loyalism and increasingly vocal challenges to the role of the papacy made alternative visions of Catholic Englishness possible. In a letter discussing the need to exclude Rome from the 1647 negotiations, Kenelm Digby quipped that 'this prodigall Pope can find none [no money] to employ vpon the *penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*'.[183] Rather than lamenting England's break from papal Europe, these mid-century Catholics identify such a rupture as the only means to defend their loyalty

[181] Giada Pizzoni, *British Catholic Merchants in the Commercial Age, 1670–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
[182] Flecknoe, *The Marriage*, 34.
[183] Pugh, *Blacklo's Cabal*, 70.

and secure toleration. Dispensing with many of the tropes and commitments that had long been associated with Catholic writing, Flecknoe envisages a strikingly different form of communal identity, privileging national over transnational confessional identity.

Figure 16



Flecknoe's adulatory biography *The Idea of His Highness Oliver, Late Lord Protector* narrates how Cromwell pieced the divided nation back together. Once again, Flecknoe commandeers old forms for new ideological purposes. Several scholars have demonstrated how 1650s poets frequently praised Cromwell's non-monarchical regime by redeploying the terms of kingly rule or, as Allsopp has argued more recently, by emphasising 'the unitary and indivisible nature of sovereignty'.[184] Flecknoe exemplifies this strategy. He criticises the parliament and aristocracy for 'conspiring against the king', which he terms 'a kind of *original sin* in the Nobility, whose stain will never out of their posterity', and praises Cromwell as a single sovereign, 'proclaimed their *Protector* and Governour, not to leave the Commonwealth as monstrous now without a head, as 'thad been with so many heads before'.[185] For Flecknoe, Cromwell is a builder of consensus and uniter of a fractured, hydra-like commonwealth. Finding 'the Body and Frame oth' State all shatter'd in pieces', he manages 'to recollect all those scatter'd pieces, and compose them all into one intire body and frame […] a masterpiece as none but so great a Master could ever have perform'd'.[186] The metaphorical body politic becomes an inanimate object, not a substitute for the ruler but a distinct artefact which he works upon. This borrows the imagery of Andrew Marvell's 'The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector', first printed in January 1655. Marvell compares Cromwell to King David rebuilding the Temple and to the mythological ruler of Thebes, Amphion, who raised his city's walls by the power of his music; under the Protector's guiding hand 'The commonwealth then first together came,/ And each one entered in the willing frame' (ll. 75–76).[187] In a series of elaborate metaphors, Marvell imagines Cromwell

[184] Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 131–132; Allsopp, *Poetry and Sovereignty*, 146–147; Steven N. Zwicker, '"He Seems a King by Long Succession Born": The Problem of Cromwellian Accession and Succession,' in Kewes and McRae (eds), *Stuart Succession Literature*, 60–74.
[185] Richard Flecknoe, *The Idea of His Highness Oliver, late Lord Protector* (London, 1659), 33, 39.
[186] Flecknoe, *Idea*, 53.
[187] Nigel Smith (ed.), *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, rev. ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2007), 289, ll. 95–96. All further references to Marvell's poetry will be to the line numbers used in this edition.

as an exemplary political architect who balances opposing forces:

> While the resistance of opposed minds,
> The fabric as with arches stronger binds
> Which on the basis of a senate free,
> Knit by the roof's protecting weight agree (ll. 95–96).

Marvell's Amphion imagery has been much discussed. For Warren Chernaik, it expresses 'the principle of *concordia discors*' and the poem celebrates mixed government and 'the liberal principle of division of power'.[188] Steven Zwicker sees the poet-prince Amphion as a figure for the relationship between polemic and poetry and characterises the 'First Anniversary' as 'an experiment in civic style'.[189] In a thickly contextualised reading, Philip Connell suggests that Cromwell's architecture here is ecclesiastical and that the poem is, in opposition to Milton, a defence of the national Established Church under Cromwell.[190] Flecknoe's adaptation of this Amphionic imagery further indicates its important connection to the problematic relationship between religious and civil authority, individual consciences and public institutions. Flecknoe describes Cromwellian toleration as a balancing act, which functions by

> nowhere intrenching on their Liberties, but where they intrench'd on the priveledges of Government, allowing them their dear liberty (or licence rather) of their tongues, & for their chiefest darling of all, their liberty to erre in their opinions; he permitted them to follow and imbrace what sect they pleas'd, so they all concur'd in obedience to Civil Government.[191]

Even though Flecknoe's enthusiasm for Cromwell seems to have been motivated by his relative leniency towards Catholics, here he deprecates toleration as a necessary evil (at least when extended to sectaries and radicals). The polyptoton of 'intrenching […] intrenched' and balanced syntax articulates the same view of toleration summed up in River's idiom 'Ka Mee

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[188] Warren Chernaik, *The Poet's Time: Politics and Religion in the Work of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 54–55.
[189] Steven N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649–1689* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 76–77.
[190] Philip Connell, 'Marvell, Milton and the Protectoral Church Settlement,' *RES* 62.256 (2011): 572–578. See also Philip Connell, *Secular Chains: Poetry and the Politics of Religion from Milton to Pope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 34–37.
[191] Flecknoe, *Idea*, 59.

and I'le Kaa thee'. But it also relies on a sharp distinction between the spheres of conscience and civil allegiance. Ironically, this division allows Flecknoe to use a religious, though non-confessional, language throughout the biography, praising Cromwell as a kind of civic saint. He presents *The Idea* as a posthumous apotheosis: 'Great men, like Great Saints, must die ere they are Canoniz'd'.[192] It is tempting to assume that only Flecknoe, a chameleon in pursuit of patronage, could have attempted the canonisation of Oliver Cromwell. Yet his attempt is the product of the wide-ranging and innovative discourse of Catholic toleration which both sharply distinguished religious and political obligations and found new ways of considering the boundaries and possibilities of English Catholic identity. Flecknoe performs the split between private conscience and public allegiance by almost entirely suppressing any mention of his own faith. Despite being, for all the wrong reasons, one of the best-known Catholic poets of the mid-seventeenth century, Flecknoe's Catholicism is almost entirely absent from his poetry.

Though Flecknoe attempts to evade confessional categories and stereotypes, they govern the representation of him in Marvell's 'Flecknoe, an English Priest at Rome'. This may be a work of vicious satire, but it also reflects wittily and self-consciously on the rhetorical construction of confessional identity. The poem dramatizes an actual meeting, which seems to have occurred when Marvell was in Rome in late 1647, and deploys a series of mind-bending puns and *reductiones ad absurdum* on the terms of religious polemic.[193] Marvell perceives Flecknoe through the polarised lens of confessional conflict. The speaker describes listening to his verse as a form of martyrdom:

> But I, who now imagined my self brought
> To my last trial, in a serious thought
> Calmed the disorders of my youthful breast,
> And to my martyrdom prepared rest,
> […]
> Till the tyrant, weary to persecute,
> Left off, and tried t'allure me with his lute (ll. 23–26, 35–36).

[192] Flecknoe, *Idea*, B2r.
[193] P. H. Burdon, 'Andrew Marvell and Richard Flecknoe in Rome,' *Notes and Queries* 217 (1972): 16–18.

While Flecknoe imagines instructive and pleasing poetry as an instrument of tolerant evangelism in the preface to *Love's Dominion*, Marvell dismisses his poetry as persecution. These lines enlist a series of confessional stereotypes but invert them, making the Catholic priest-poet the tyrannical persecutor and the English Protestant auditor a Catholic martyr. One of several explanations for the opprobrium heaped on Flecknoe was his apparent plagiarism.[194] Marvell responds by seizing the rhetoric of Catholic martyrology and devotion and levelling it back at the priest. These parodic conversions recur throughout the poem. Convincing Flecknoe to stop reciting and break his Lenten fast over dinner, the speaker is 'happy at once to make him Protestant,/ And silent' (ll. 56–57). At the conclusion, Marvell himself turns Catholic:

> I, finding myself free,
> As one 'scaped strangely from captivity,
> Have made the chance be painted; and go now
> To hang it in St. Peter's for a vow (ll. 167–170).

These final couplets make a Christianising allusion to the end of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha, in which the speaker hangs up a votive tablet in thanksgiving for having escaped the near 'shipwreck' of a dangerous love affair:

> Me in my vow'd
> Picture the sacred wall declares t'have hung
> My dank and dropping weeds
> To the stern God of Sea.[195]

The echo implies a similarity between Roman Catholic devotion and pagan idolatry. However, it might also be read as an ironic reference to the phenomenon of English exiles and travellers in Europe converting after supposedly miraculous recoveries from illness. Thomas Keightley, kinsman of John Evelyn and friend of Edward Thimelby, was converted to Catholicism in this

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[194] Richard L. Oden (ed.), *Dryden and Shadwell: The Literary Controversy and 'Mac Flecknoe' (1668–1679)* (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), ix.

[195] Smith, *Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 174, n.168; I quote here from Milton's translation, 'The Fifth Ode of Horace, Lib. 1,' in Barbara Kiefer Lewalski and Estelle Haan (eds), *The Complete Works of John Milton, Vol. 3: The Shorter Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 247, ll. 13–16.

manner in late 1640s Rome.[196] However, here Marvell makes a votive offering in the Vatican not for being delivered from illness into the hands of the Catholic Church, but for having escaped her and her persuasive ministers. Marvell's poem bends and exaggerates the divisive rhetoric of confessional satire and polemic.

Impersonation and ventriloquism, techniques regularly used by Catholic tolerationist writers, operate differently in Marvell's poem. Jonathan Koch has recently compared 'Flecknoe' to contemporary toleration discourse, suggesting that its depiction of a cross-confessional dinner party is analogous to 'those meals in civil-war England where people from multiple confessions were obliged to eat together despite their differences'.[197] We might compare it to Hobbes and White's conversations, wrangling and riling each other up, or to Rivers brushing shoulders with Lilburne and Overton in the cells of Newgate. Yet depicting a speaker who suffers the martyrdom of Flecknoe's verse out of sheer politeness, Marvell's poem does not exactly endorse the wholesome effects of civility. Koch overestimates Marvell's magnanimity when he claims that the satire 'shares a set of affective moves with toleration: mocking and representing language and gesture allows the poet to draw close to, to contrive a surprising intimacy with, even to occupy, the convictions and practices of others'.[198] As we have seen throughout this thesis, occupying the subject-position of another person was as frequently used to stigmatise and revile as it was to find common cause or exercise empathy.

Marvell reflects self-consciously on this process and on the way characters and identities are made. He describes Flecknoe dressing his impossibly slim frame for dinner:

> He therefore circumscribes himself in rhymes;
> And swaddled in's own papers seven times.
> Wears a close jacket of poetic buff,
> With which he doth his third dimension stuff (ll. 69–72).

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[196] E. S. de Beer (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn, Volume 3: Kalendarium, 1650–1672* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 634; Edward Thimelby addressed a poem to Keightley, *TP*, 17.
[197] Jonathan Koch, '"No Empty Place for Complementing Doubt": The Spaces of Religious Toleration in Andrew Marvell's "Flecknoe,"' *RES* 71.301 (2020): 704.
[198] Koch, 'The Spaces of Religious Toleration,' 688.

Marvell imagines Flecknoe as a textual artefact, seeking three-dimensional personhood only through writing. Buff seems primarily to refer to the 'buff coat' worn by early modern soldiers and thus might cast Flecknoe as a *miles gloriosus*. But the word also carried various idiomatic uses: to stutter, or in a Scottish expression 'to say neither buff nor baff', that is, to say nothing, or finally and ironically here, to be 'in the buff' or naked.[199] The phrase 'poetic buff' is meaningfully nonsensical. Flecknoe's recitation of these empty verses is highly exposing:

> Of all his poems there he stands ungirt
> Save only two foul copies for his shirt
> Yet these he promises as soon as clean.
> But how I loathed to see my neighbour glean
> Those papers, which he pillèd from within
> Like white flakes rising from a leper's skin! (ll. 129–134).

Attempting to 'allure' him with his lute and slowly undressing over dinner, Marvell's Flecknoe is a parodic version of a prevalent anti-Catholic trope of the proselytising priest as seducer.[200] Invoking the untouchable leper and implying the sinister aims of Flecknoe's performance, Marvell depicts a bizarre dinner party that is far from a model of tolerant civility. More metaphorically, if Flecknoe is constituted by his writing, he disintegrates as he performs. Marvell's conceit echoes White's image of the Jesuit hiding behind a tinsel vizard. Both lampoon their opponent's elaborate textual disguises, yet whereas White's Jesuit peeps through his mask, Flecknoe's 'poetic buff' is only an illusion of substance, behind which there is nothing: 'This *basso relievo* of a man' (l. 63). He lacks the necessary depth not only for Marvell to attempt occupying his perspective, but even for him to qualify as a person at all. 'Flecknoe' is a reminder of the persistence of intense anti-popery among writers like Marvell who supported tolerating most other groups. Although it might not be a model of toleration, the poem does reflect self-consciously on the literary and rhetorical techniques through which confessional identity was constructed and interpreted. It demonstrates that impersonation and

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[199] 'buff, *n*. 2, sense II. 2. a.', 'buff, *v*. 1,' 'buff, *int*, and *n*. 4', 'buff *n*. 2. sense II. 3', *OED*, accessed 24 November 2022, https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2446/view/Entry/24292?rskey=t4i4QG&result=2.
[200] Murray, *Poetics of Conversion*, 110. See for instance *Legenda Lignea*, 117, 128.

prosopopoeia, the techniques of textual disguise, could function both to sympathise and to revile, find common cause or assert insurmountable difference. Marvell asserts an inextricable connection between his target's religion and his writings and imprisons Flecknoe within the terms of stereotyped confessional identity, while his own persona comically switches between different religious categories. Marvell's 'Flecknoe' dramatizes a struggle over the representation and interpretation of confessional style.

The hopes of mid-seventeenth-century Catholic tolerationists were disappointed. After the Restoration, Charles II never secured the toleration he had promised; anti-Catholic persecution returned with a vengeance in the Popish Plot; and the 1689 Toleration Act explicitly excluded Catholics. Rivers died in prison around 1650; Austin abandoned politics and turned to devotional writing;[201] White was condemned by the Vatican and, like Flecknoe, came to be reviled by subsequent generations. However, their writings demonstrate that English Catholics fully participated in England's revolutionary moment, whether by borrowing the language of Leveller liberty or reconciling Hobbesian statecraft with Catholic theology. In doing so, they envisaged an entirely new kind of identity for themselves. They improvised a celebratory discourse of human freedom and rationality which, rather than pointing inevitably towards secular modernity, emerged from a religious worldview. Contrary to post-revisionist accounts of toleration discourse, these texts sought to make common cause across confessional boundaries and challenged the fixity of religious and political identities and voices. These writers pursue a confessional agenda by denying their confessional identity. They use both ironic caricatures and supposedly neutral, moderate poses. They show that the confessionalisation of literary style was simultaneously a tool of persecutory stigmatisation and a mode of resistance, a technique of reductive satire and of positive identity-formation, adapted to altering circumstances.

[201] Shell, 'Seraphic Discourse, Mystical Bodies,' 220–240.

Conclusion

After Charles II's return in 1660, English Catholics wilfully forgot the many and various identities they had assumed throughout the 1640s and 1650s. In paintings, petitions, secret histories, and poems, they established a myth of unflinching Stuart loyalism. The wars and Revolution shaped the politics and culture of the late-seventeenth century, which Jonathan Scott has described as 'a period uniquely under the shadow of its past'.[1] Literary critics have illuminated the rhetorical strategies through which that traumatic past was remembered, identified its echoes in Restoration drama and poetry, and argued that religious communities and political groups, notably Dissenters, were sustained by partisan versions of the previous decades.[2] Yet, lacking a full account of mid-century Catholic literary culture thus far, scholars have not appreciated the creative recasting and even misremembering which underpinned post-Restoration Catholic memories of the Revolution. By way of conclusion, I shall briefly suggest how Catholic literary culture was transformed once again after 1660 and indicate how the insights generated by this study provide new possibilities for re-evaluating Catholic writing from Dryden to Pope.

Declarations of Catholic loyalty and appeals to the new monarch began appearing immediately in 1660. These texts repurpose the oppositional discourses of exile and suffering to argue that Catholics and royalists had shared the same trials and to profess profound loyalty to Charles II.[3] Catholics contributed much to the crafting of the new regime's dominant

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[1] Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26; Edward Legon, *Revolution Remembered: Seditious Memories after the British Civil Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Tim Harris, 'The Legacy of the English Civil War: Rethinking the Revolution,' *The European Legacy* 5.4 (2000): 501–514; Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Penguin, 2001).

[2] Paulina Kewes, 'Acts of Remembrance, Acts of Oblivion: Rhetoric, Law, and National Memory in Early Restoration England,' in Lorna Clymer (ed.), *Ritual, Routine, and Regime: Repetition in Early Modern British and European Cultures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 103–131; Janet Clare (ed.), *From Republic to Restoration: Legacies and Departures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018); Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[3] Gregory, *Catholics during the English Revolution*, 185–186. The Aston family papers include a list of Catholics who fought for the king and a petition for clemency in return, datable to 1684, BL, Add. MS 36452,

symbolism.

Figure 17



ff. 191r–193v. Other similar appeals were made by Kenelm Digby, BL, Add. MS 41846, ff. 76r–78v, and John Caryll, BL, Add. MS 28252, ff. 140v–148v.

One of Charles II's first artistic commissions went to the British Catholic painter John Michael Wright, whom we last met designing the scenery for *Leo Armenus* in 1645. His allegorical ceiling for the royal bedchamber at Whitehall, 'Astraea returns to the Earth' (1660), represents the new king's survival and return as a providential apotheosis (Figure 17). Beneath an enthroned goddess of Justice, a gigantic angel falls towards the viewer, bearing the Ovidian slogan 'Terras Astraea Revisit'. This inscription and the painting's chiaroscuro echo Dryden's *Astraea Redux* (1660): 'struck with rayes of prosp'rous fortune blind/ We light alone in dark afflictions find'.[4] The dazzling sun and astrological allusions evoke the story of a star rising at noon on Charles' birthday in 1630, celebrated in Dryden, Cowley, and Waller's Restoration odes.[5] Wright also depicts the royal oak, in which Charles hid after the Battle of Worcester, being carried into heaven by a troop of putti. The oak was one of the most ubiquitous emblems of the restored monarchy.[6] But, it was also especially significant to Catholics, who insistently reminded Charles II that a group of recusants and priests had led him to his arboreal refuge in 1651. Furthermore, the painting bears the influence of Wright's experiences in exile, resembling the baroque ceilings of Pietro da Cortona and Andrea Saachi, especially the latter's 'Allegory of Divine Wisdom' at the Palazzo Barberini.[7] An implicitly Catholic version of events had found its way into the royal bedchamber.

The Catholic antiquary Thomas Blount also identified the flight from Worcester as central to the argument for toleration in what became one of the most popular literary depictions of the restored king: *Boscobel: Or The History of His Sacred Majesties Most Miraculous Preservation After the Battle of Worcester* (1660). A narrative of Charles' dramatic escape, it

[4] John Dryden, *Astraea Redux: A Poem on the Happy Restoration & Return of his Sacred Majesty Charles the Second* (London, 1660), 8.
[5] Sara Stevenson and Duncan Thomson, *John Michael Wright: The King's Painter* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1982), 67. Dryden, *Astraea Redux*, 14; Abraham Cowley, *Ode, Upon the Blessed Restoration and Returne of His Sacred Majestie, Charls the Second* (London, 1660), 1; Edmund Waller, 'To the King, Upon his Majesties Happy Return,' in Davidson (ed.), *Poetry and Revolution*, ll. 1–6.
[6] Tabitha Barber (ed.), 'Restoration,' in *British Baroque: Power and Illusion* (London: Tate Publishing, 2020), 20. See for instance 'Quercus Boscobollensis', Bodleian, MS Ballard 50, ff. 34r–35r.
[7] Stevenson and Thomson, *John Michael Wright*, 67.

went through four editions before 1680 and continued to be reprinted throughout the eighteenth century.[8] *Boscobel* presents itself as a 'true history' but employs the tropes of romance, and predictably won the favour of its royal hero who ordered Blount to 'continue and perfect it'.[9] Whilst commanding a general popularity, this flattering portrait of the Cavalier king also served a controversial partisan agenda. At the conclusion, Blount lists the members of the Catholic Giffard and Penderel families who hid Charles in the former monastic priory White Ladies, the recusant house Moseley Hall, and the surrounding Boscobel woods.[10] He asks 'whether it were not indeed a *Miracle*' that these men and women 'were for the most part, of that Religion, which has long suffer'd under an imputation (laid on them by some mistaken Zelots) of disloyalty to their Soveraign'.[11] Blount smooths over the complexity of the previous two decades and depicts Charles' rescuers as a synecdoche for all Catholics. Downplaying confessional commitments for most of the narrative, Blount repurposes the techniques of masking and obscuring that we have seen in the writings of Herbert Aston, Thomas Bayly, John Rivers, John Austin, and Richard Flecknoe. Whereas those earlier texts' personae and prosopopoeia imply the ambiguities and instabilities of Catholic identity and allegiance, Blount uses the same strategy to make Catholics and royalists indistinguishable. His heroic romance makes an indirect case for tolerating Catholics.

Historians and literary scholars have given credence to the narrative of staunch Catholic royalism. Gabriel Glickman argues that English Catholics 'invested' much 'intellectual capital in the English royalist tradition' and in 1660 'could place a coherent demonstration of loyalty at the heart of their case, recalling the groundswell of royalist action throughout the years of

[8] Dorothy Turner, 'Royalism, Romance, and History in *Boscobel: Or, the History of His Sacred Majesties Most Miraculous Preservation*,' *Prose Studies* 22.1 (1999): 60–61.
[9] Dorothy Turner, 'Royalism, Romance, and History,' 61.
[10] Thomas Blount, *Boscobel: or The History of His Sacred Majesties Most Miraculous Preservation After the Battle of Worcester 3 Sept. 1651* (London, 1660), A3v–A4r.
[11] Blount, *Boscobel*, D7v–D8r.

Civil War'.[12] However, as we have seen, the reality was far more complex. Even, the story of Boscobel had not always been interpreted so positively. Around the same time that he entered the pay of Cromwell's spy-master John Thurloe in the mid-1650s, the convert Thomas Bayly produced an iconoclastic depiction of Charles fleeing the Battle of Worcester:

> inclos'd alive within a growing coffin: thence forced to take sanctuary even in the very holes, that were dug by Catholikes, to hide their Priests, from the persecution of his ancestors, and predecessors: as if the revengeful hand of an incensed Deity, had pressed down his neck, into those *subterranian* receptacles, to make him sensible of the fault for which he was punished.[13]

The royal oak becomes a 'growing coffin', a symbol not of escape but of inevitable destruction and providential retribution. Whereas Blount's *Boscobel* avoids the awkward fact that Charles hid in a priest hole, Bayly revels in it. He imagines a vengeful *digitus dei* playing whac-a-mole with the would-be king, pressing the royal successor into the hiding places of those his predecessors had persecuted. Bayly is an extreme example, but his diametrically different take on this iconic moment exemplifies the ambivalent allegiances of mid-seventeenth-century Catholics and their unique perspective on this period. Read against their qualified and conditional writings of the 1640s and 1650s, the post-Restoration myth of Catholic loyalism is seen to be just that, a myth which turned the vagaries of history into the stability of icon and symbol.

After Catholics were accused of starting the Fire of London in 1666, Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemaine, who had recently converted to Catholicism, published a catalogue of those Catholics who had died or suffered fighting for the king. Castlemaine insists upon 'how synonimous (under the late Rebellion) was the word Papist and Cavaleer'.[14] Accusations of popery levelled against Charles I are here reclaimed as a badge of honour. Like many contemporary Catholics, Castlemaine pursues a confessional agenda by seeking to efface all

[12] Glickman, *The English Catholic Community*, 49, 28.
[13] Bayly, *An End*, 25.
[14] Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemaine, *To All the Royalists that Suffered for His Majesty, and to the Rest of the Good People of England: The Humble Apology of the English Catholicks* (London, 1666), 3.

that had been distinctive about mid-seventeenth-century Catholicism, and its literary and political culture. Catholic writing, as we have seen, was far more than a subspecies of royalist literature. These texts frequently professed a conditional allegiance to Charles I, and implied that the civil wars and regicide were a providential punishment for the Reformation. The letters and poetry miscellanies of the Astons and Thimelbys evince sympathies across the political spectrum and their various satirical personae occupy an ironized and detached perspective on the realm of political action and obligation. The St. Omers plays constitute a Catholic reinterpretation of royalist tragicomedy, questioning the central claims of Stuart hagiography. Neglected for so long, the literary and intellectual cultures of mid-seventeenth-century English Catholicism not only betray the significant omissions of post-Restoration Catholic writing, but also demonstrate the wide variety of political identities and literary forms encompassed by the misleadingly monolithic terms royalist or Cavalier.

Castlemaine's *Humble Apology* provoked an immediate adverse reaction and an illuminating debate over the meanings of literary style. *The Late Apology in behalf of the Papists Re-Printed and Answered in behalf of the Royallists* (1667) by the episcopalian royalist and fierce anti-Catholic William Lloyd attempted to separate out the two groups.[15] Lloyd rails against the papal deposing power, makes the familiar claim that the regicides and rebels had borrowed the 'tools' of Jesuit resistance theorists, and refers repeatedly to Austin's *Christian Moderator* as a telling example of Catholics treacherously supporting the Commonwealth.[16] Associating Castlemaine with recusant conspirators against Elizabeth I, Lloyd depicts Catholics as inherently traitorous. Crucially, he argues that Catholics can invariably be identified by the way they write, which he calls the 'Roman Style'.[17] Castlemaine, we are told,

[15] Michael Mullett, 'Lloyd, William (1627–1717), Bishop of Worcester,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 17 October 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/16860.
[16] William Lloyd, *The Late Apology in behalf of the Papists Re-Printed and Answered in behalf of the Royallists* (London, 1667), 3–4, 12, 14.
[17] Lloyd, *The Late Apology […] Answered*, 2.

typifies this style in his opening lament:

> nothing can equal the infinitie of those [tears] we have shed, but the Cause, viz. to see our dearest friends forsake us; we hope it will not offend you if (after we have a little op't our eyes) we sigh out our complaints to you.[18]

Lloyd takes aim at this rhetoric of infinite tears, accusing Castlemaine of writing 'very extravagantly': 'you Jesuites', he complains, 'love to be Hyperbolical, whether ranting or whining; as if that Religion which obliges you to damn all other Christians, had likewise forbidden you to speak like other Men'.[19] Here Lloyd elides religious belief and literary form, finding a parallel to the doctrine of 'extra Ecclesiam nulla salus' in an allegedly exclusive popish idiolect. Never mind that Castlemaine was not a Jesuit but a layman, and that he was attempting to forge a cross-confessional alliance of sympathy, memory, and obedience, Lloyd discovers here that elusive thing, the existence of which this thesis has sought to reconsider, an English Catholic literary style.

Lloyd was not alone in associating the hyperbolic rhetoric of tears with Catholicism. Whilst acknowledging its pre-Reformation origins and use by writers across the confessional spectrum, Shell argues that 'tears-poetry' was 'highly visible within Counter-Reformation poetics, and repentant devotional weeping was strongly and overtly associated with both Catholicism and conversion'.[20] Modern scholarship has tended to see the recovery and identification of distinctive styles and voices as an emancipatory act, a way of righting the historical wrongs and unequal hierarchies of the literary canon. However, Lloyd's accusations suggest that, for contemporaries, strictly defining a 'Roman style' could also be a tool for excluding and othering. Fixing and denouncing a Catholic voice, Lloyd seeks to deny the blurring of boundaries, forms, and identities which this thesis has revealed.

The post-Restoration avowals of heroic suffering and loyalty are one more turn in the

[18] Castlemaine, *The Humble Apology*, 1.
[19] Lloyd, *The Late Apology […] Answered*, 2.
[20] Shell, , *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination*, 57. Especially influential in this regard was Robert Bellarmine's *De Gemitu Columbae sive de Bono Lacrymarum* (Rome, 1617).

mercurial and diverse literary culture of post-Reformation English Catholicism that continued to adapt to the often-hostile circumstances of subsequent decades. The centrality of anti-Catholicism to national politics in the second half of the seventeenth century has been a major focus of historiography.[21] Suspicions of Charles II's own confessional commitments and his repeated attempts to moderate anti-Catholic legislation drove many of the period's conflicts.[22] Yet the less well-known Catholic writing of the mid-seventeenth century can help us reassess the religious politics of the later decades, revealing the deep roots of post-Restoration English Catholic and Jacobite culture.

Several figures discussed in the previous chapters played important roles in the ensuing crises and triumphs: the convert Hugh Cressy participated in pamphlet debates over faith and reason, and, as Gabriel Glickman has argued in detail, contributed to the intellectual and theological underpinnings of the secret Treaty of Dover (1670), in which Charles II promised to convert in exchange for King Louis XIV's support; Joseph Simons helped James II convert to Catholicism around 1669; and members of the next generation of the Aston family were imprisoned for suspected involvement in the fictitious Popish Plot of 1678–81.[23] The experiences of British travellers and exiles during the wars and interregnum shaped post-Restoration culture. The polemical battles waged by and against the converts in Paris did not end in 1660 or with the 1662 Act of Uniformity; as the episcopal Church of England recovered itself, Catholics waded back into the same debates over fanaticism, reason, and conformity.[24] The continuity and transformation of Catholic politics and literature before and after the

[21] John Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London: Penguin, 1974); John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660–1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Raymond Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion, and Literature, 1660–1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[22] Ronald Hutton, 'The Religion of Charles II,' in Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Stuart Court & Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 228–246.
[23] Gabriel Glickman, 'Christian Reunion, the Anglo-French Alliance and the English Catholic Imagination, 1660–72,' 263–291; Shell, 'Lobb, Emmanuel [alias Joseph Simons]'; Kenyon, *The Popish Plot,* 157–159.
[24] For instance, Serenus Cressy, *Fanaticism Fanatically Imputed to the Catholick Church by Doctour Stillingfleet* (Douai, 1672). See Temple, *Mysticism in Early Modern England*, 109–138, and Fincham and Taylor, 'Episcopalian Identity, 1640–1662,' 477–481.

Restoration is a promising area for further enquiry.

One spectacular example of the far-reaching legacies of mid-century Catholic writing is found in the celebrations surrounding James II's accession in 1685. Castlemaine was sent as ambassador to Rome, re-instating a pre-Reformation practice. John Michael Wright accompanied the embassy and produced a narrative of its various entries and celebrations, complete with a series of baroque engravings, that was first published in Italian at Rome and then translated for a London print market.[25] Wright's narrative proclaims a triumph for British Catholicism that would prove short-lived, but his imagery and rhetorical strategies perpetuate several features of the Catholic writing of the 1640s and 1650s. Just as many mid-century Catholics had argued that the Revolution was the bloody outcome of the Reformation, Wright implies that James' accession marked the ultimate victory over Protestantism. In one engraving (Figure 18), an adorned royal coat of arms includes the figure of Britannia trampling a roundhead in whose 'right hand, was a drawn Sword, and on his Helmet, a plume of Orange-tauny Feathers; The first Colours at Edge-hill, against King Charles the First'.[26] Next to her, Hercules representing Prudence 'depress'd a groveling Figure, holding in the one hand, a Protestant-Flail, and in the other, a Scroul, with the word *Rebellio*, in like Letters of Gold'.[27] The 'Protestant-Flail', allegedly invented by the anti-Catholic agitator and poet Stephen College, was a weapon carried by anxious Protestants during the Popish Plot years.[28] Wright's allusive image elides the anti-popery of the 1640s and the 1670s and equates reformation with rebellion.

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[25] Giovanni Michele Writ, *Raggvaglio della Solenne Comparsa, Fatta in Roma […] dall' Illvstrissimo, et Eccellentissimo Signor Conte di Castelmaine Ambasciadore Straordinario* (Rome, 1687), Getty Research Institute Library, DA452.W95 1687, accessed 20 February 2023, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=gri.ark:/13960/t74t73s7t&view=1up&seq=2. John Michael Wright, *An Account of his Excellence Roger Earl of Castlemaine's Embassy* (London, 1688).
[26] Wright, *Castlemaine's Embassy*, 27.
[27] Wright, *Castlemaine's Embassy*, 28.
[28] Gary S. De Krey, 'College [Colledge], Stephen (c.1635–1681), Poet and Political Activist,' *ODNB* (2004), accessed 8 December 2022, https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5906.

Figure 18



In another device, *Britannia* is portrayed on bended knee paying homage to the personification of the Roman Church.[29] The meanings of these Catholic allegories are

[29] Wright, *Castlemaine's Embassy*, 25.

unmistakeable, and they are also formally indebted to the cultures of baroque Catholicism, notably the emblem tradition practised especially, as Wright makes clear, by the Jesuits.[30] Reading this interpretation of James II's accession, published in London in 1688, goes some way to explaining the anxieties that led to his deposition in the same year.

Deploying the tropes of ultramontane cosmopolitanism, exemplified by the St. Omers plays, Wright concludes with Nahum Tate's English translation of an Italian poem celebrating the end of Britain's purported Protestant isolation:

> Do we (says she) as *Maro* sung, still find
> The hardy *Britains* from the World dis-joyn'd.
> The *Brittish* Empire with the *Roman* meets,
> One splendid Pomp unites their distant Streets.[31]

Finally deactivating the Virgilian commonplace, this Anglo-Italian poem celebrates Britain's reunification with Europe and an end to the rebellious Reformation. It transports the cosmopolitan imagery used by Catholic expatriates back to the homeland. Wright's book projected a deeply controversial vision for Britain's future, recklessly exaggerating James II's ostensibly more cautious religious policy.[32] As has been suggested throughout this thesis, Catholic representations of British history challenge conventional periodisation. Repeatedly identifying the wars as the outcome of the Reformation and drawing parallels with earlier generations, mid-century Catholics situate the supposedly unprecedented 1640s and 1650s in the broader history of the Long Reformation. Citing Lucan via Persons, Simons imagines an ongoing English religious civil war beginning at least under Elizabeth I and thus problematises the assertions of novelty and exceptionalism which predominate in scholarly discussions of the 1640s. Crashaw's serially reprinted poem on Shelford's *Treatises*, praising and then lamenting

[30] At the Collegio Romano, the ambassador was entertained with a series of allegorical emblems which Wright describes in detail, *Castlemaine's Embassy*, 80–87. On Jesuit emblem culture, see Davidson, *Universal Baroque*, 166–171.
[31] Wright, *Castlemaine's Embassy*, 116.
[32] Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 195–196.

the state of Lady Religion, characterises seventeenth-century religious life by its continuous discontinuity, an unrelenting series of political, and aesthetic, upheavals. Wright's narrative presents 1685 as the victorious end of two centuries of crisis and struggle.

If Wright's account of the embassy registers the transformation of oppositional Catholic rhetoric into wholly loyalist iconography, James' deposition and the accession of William III in 1688 reversed this process once more. Stuart loyalism became the preserve of the dissident Jacobite movement.[33] While scholars often separate early modern Catholic culture into two sharply opposed traditions of loyalism and resistance and claim that Catholic resistance had largely disappeared by the 1640s, this thesis instead illuminates a spectrum of different forms of opposition to, and accommodation with, successive regimes. Elizabethan theories of resistance and the writings of Robert Southwell, Robert Persons, and Nicholas Sander retained a powerful literary and political influence. Loyalism and resistance were not fixed opposites, but liable to radical redefinition throughout the seventeenth century.

Acknowledging the distinctive qualities of mid-century Catholic royalism can help us reassess Stuart loyalism as it developed into the eighteenth century. Murray Pittock argues that Dryden used the same tropes and rhetoric both to celebrate the Restoration in 1660 and to defend the Jacobite cause after the bloodless revolution of 1688.[34] Several scholars have examined the impact of Dryden's conversion in 1685 on his poetry and his later engagement with Jacobitism.[35] But little attention has been paid to how, if at all, Dryden responded to his Catholic predecessors of the 1640s and 1650s. What impact might distinctively Catholic forms of mid-century loyalism have had on Dryden and the Jacobites? The contingency of Catholics'

[33] Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99.
[34] Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 97, 99.
[35] Murray, *Poetics of Conversion*, 138–172; Steven N. Zwicker, *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry: The Art of Disguise* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). For a fascinating recent study of Dryden's interest in faith and reason, see John West, *Dryden and Enthusiasm: Literature, Religion, and Politics in Restoration England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

civil-war allegiances complicates the notion of a single tradition of Catholic royalism from Charles I to James II.

These questions might also be usefully brought to bear on readings of Alexander Pope and his Catholicism which features only intermittently in critical discussion.[36] Adopting a similar community-based approach as this study, Joseph Hone has recently revealed the important influence of a network of Jacobite and Catholic poets and conspirators on Pope during his youth. Hone argues that after the death of Queen Anne and the end of the Stuart period Pope 'comprehensively distanced himself from all forms of political life' and transformed himself 'from a topical author to a neutral, literary author'.[37] Relatedly, in his account of the positive representation of Catholic characters in literature of the long eighteenth century, Geremy Carnes claims that Catholic authors, like Dryden and Pope, 'usually sought to keep their religion from figuring conspicuously in their writings'.[38] The various strategies which mid-century Catholics found for navigating the intersections between politics, religion, and literary style can illuminate the vexed relationship between Pope's Catholicism and his poetry. Hone's collocation, 'neutral, literary author' evokes narratives of the emergence of literature as a distinct sphere and of the rise of civility, but this authorial pose is also continuous with some aspects of earlier Catholic writing. The eschewal of outright statements of confessional commitment is unique neither to Pope, nor the polite eighteenth century. It is, as we have seen, one among multiple techniques used throughout the post-Reformation period for navigating the complex relationship between confessional identity and literary style.

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Mid-seventeenth-century Catholic writers constantly disguise and transform themselves, adopting a large repertoire of voices and modes with which to meditate on politics, religion,

[36] Peter Davidson, 'Pope's Recusancy,' *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 63–76.
[37] Joseph Hone, *Alexander Pope in the Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 192.
[38] Geremy Carnes, *The Papist Represented: Literature and the English Catholic Community, 1688–1791* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2017), 2.

and identity. Rather than entirely negating the category of English Catholic literature, this thesis demonstrates the various and complex ways in which literary forms and religiopolitical commitments interact in the writings of this period. It analyses how Catholic authors use prosopopoeia and personae, analogies and ironic allegories, paradiastole and allusion to interrogate and reconfigure the political meanings of particular genres and forms.

In contrast to Lloyd's assertion of a 'Roman style' that was as easy to identify as it was to dismiss, these writers produced eloquent and creative interventions in all of the major genres of the period and constitute a literary culture that is defined by its variety. The Laudian transformation of the Church and its reversal in the 1640s fractured and confused England's religious landscape. Both confessional identity and style became a spectrum not a binary. Anxious attempts to re-impose a Protestant-Catholic dualism on seventeenth-century texts continued whether by Lloyd in 1660 or by Herbert Grierson contrasting George Herbert and Crashaw in 1921.[39] Freeing Catholic writing from restrictive and often pejorative stereotypes alerts us to the more complex ways in which they contributed to many of the most familiar literary genres of early modern Europe. This is not to say that confessional distinctions did not matter, or that they pertained only to a cynical realm of polemic. Rather, this thesis argues that we should not see 'Catholic' as a self-explanatory determinant of a literary text, but instead ask how particular texts and forms construct and articulate versions of Catholicism. The same can be said of other post-Reformation beliefs and identities; literary style only comes to indicate confessional identity through creative and contingent acts of rhetoric and interpretation.

The literary history of the 1640s and 1650s reads differently with the English Catholic writing put back in. Catholic authors exerted significant influence on literary trends. Like Southwell's before him, Crashaw's poetry was imitated and parodied by writers of all

[39] Herbert Grierson, *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), xlvi. On the ideological and anti-Catholic motivations of Grierson's term 'metaphysical poetry', see Davidson, *Universal Baroque*, 55.

confessional and artistic persuasions, from Milton and Marvell to the army preacher John Saltmarsh. These neglected texts also transform our understanding of the period's major genres. The assumption that satire works to polarise and clearly demarcate different identities is unsettled by Herbert Aston's uneasy adoption of multiple different personae. While classicising tyrant tragedy and optimistic tragicomedy have been mapped onto republican and royalist politics, Jesuit writers undermine such categories, adapting both these forms for transnational political commentary and confessional historiography. My discussion of the St. Omers plays disrupts scholarly consensus surrounding the mid-century reception of Shakespeare and medieval history, particularly of the Norman Conquest. Analysing the rhetoric of Catholic conversion narratives allows us to revisit scholarly distinctions between the genres of polemic and devotion. Assumptions about Overton's pamphlets, Davenant's operatic entertainments, and Hobbes' political philosophy are also revised when we learn how Catholics eagerly drew upon these genres to further their own arguments for toleration and religious liberty.

Canonical writers can also be understood better when we attend to their less familiar Catholic contemporaries. As we have seen, Edward Thimelby's rewriting of the flood image from John Denham's *Coopers Hill* offers new ways of interpreting this important metaphor, the politics of Denham's poem, and the reception of Pindar. The discovery of a copy of Waller's *A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector* in a Jesuit miscellany challenges critical orthodoxies surrounding contemporary responses to the poem and highlights the Reformation origins of its much-debated language of imperium. Marvell recognised the shape-shifting dialogism of Catholic writing in his satire on Flecknoe, and practises something similar in his imitation of Crashaw's tears poetry. Read alongside the polyvocal writing of Bayly, Rivers, and Herbert Aston, the chameleon Marvell appears less idiosyncratic, than representative of the period's literature.

This thesis opens up several avenues for further research. With this map of mid-seventeenth-century Catholic writing, we can begin to re-examine more precisely how Milton, Marvell, and other canonical authors engaged imaginatively with Catholicism and its literature. My analysis of expatriate Catholic institutions and networks might pave the way for reconsidering multi-confessional exilic writing; in future work, I hope to examine Davenant and Cowley's relationship to the Parisian converts and polemicists, and the large circles of English men and women in Rome, who may have been exposed to the English college. My broader argument that religiopolitical commitments are ascribed to literary style through historically and ideologically specific acts of rhetoric and interpretation might form the basis for further discussions about the full range of early modern religious identities, and the history of post-Reformation culture, conflict, and coexistence.

Reading English Catholic literary culture of the 1640s and 1650s challenges a simple narrative of the polarisation and politicisation of literature. It offers alternative ways of understanding the meanings and possibilities of a range of forms: satire, love lyric, Pindaric ode, tyrant tragedy, tragicomedy, devotional poetry, spiritual autobiography, and political dialogue. It is also, on its own terms, a thriving and deeply imaginative literature, responding in novel and complex ways to the contemporary crisis of authority and certainty. It fully deserves the long overdue attention of historians and literary critics.

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