Forensic reconstruction of the face of Richard III
Richard's remains were reinterred in a new tomb in Leicester Cathedral 26 March 2015
A royal burial service was held presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury

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RMMRA invites papers and panel proposals for its 2017 conference at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, June 22–24, 2017. The conference theme is “Reformations during the Middle Ages and Renaissance,” in honor of the 500th anniversary of the publication of Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses. The Program Committee invites proposals that consider the idea of reform, broadly conceived, during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Proposals are not limited to religious reform during the medieval and Renaissance periods, but also may investigate various aspects of history and historiography of the periods as well as changes in literary culture, style, patronage, criticism, and subjects. The Program Committee encourages proposals from scholars and students working in relevant fields, theology, history, literature, theatre, music, and the visual arts. Papers and panel proposals addressing the conference theme will receive special consideration, and proposals in any area of medieval and Renaissance studies are welcome.

Graduate student presenters are eligible to compete for the Michael T. and Phyllis J. Walton Graduate Travel Award to help defray expenses associated with travel to the conference. RMMRA also awards two annual prizes: the Allen DuPont Breck Award for the best paper at the conference presented by a junior scholar, and the Delno C. West Award for the best paper at the conference presented by a senior scholar (at the rank of Associate Professor or higher). For additional information on the RMMRA, please visit http://www.rmmra.org

Direct paper and panel proposals to the Program Committee via email to RMMRA President-Elect Ginger Smoak (ginger.smoak@utah.edu).

Proposals are due by March 15, 2017. Proposals must include:

• Name of presenter
• Participant category (faculty/graduate student/independent scholar) and institutional affiliation
• One-page CV (in case of panel proposal, include one for each participant)
• Preferred mailing and email address (in case of panel proposal, indicate a contact person)
• An abstract of the proposed paper/panel (250 words)
• Audiovisual requirements and any other specific requests

The Program Committee will notify participants if their proposals have been accepted by April 5, 2017.

Please note that all presenters at the conference must be active members of RMMRA who have paid their annual dues of $25 by the time of the conference.
Quidditas

Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association
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Quidditas, the annual, online journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association invites submissions from all aspects of medieval and Renaissance or early modern disciplines: literature, history, art, music, philosophy, religion, languages, rhetoric, Islamic and New World cultures, global regions and comparative and interdisciplinary studies. Articles appearing in Quidditas are abstracted and indexed in MLA, Historical Abstracts, Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index, America: History and Life, EBSCOhost, and Oxbridge Standard Periodical Directory. Ex Libris has designated Quidditas as a peer-reviewed journal in SFX Knowledgebase. Our online format enables publishing extensive illustrations. Since there is no subscription fee, the journal is easily available from any computer. Authors will be informed about the disposition of manuscripts within three months of receipt.

Quidditas features a “Notes” section for shorter articles pertaining to factual research, bibliographical and/or archival matters, corrections and suggestions, pedagogy and other matters pertaining to the research and teaching of medieval and Renaissance disciplines. Our “Reviews” section seeks longer Review of Literature essays and short “Texts and Teaching” reviews of individual textbooks and other published materials that instructors have found especially valuable in teaching courses in medieval and Renaissance disciplines.

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Please submit your article, note, or review electronically in MS Word (.doc or .docx) to the appropriate editor below. Use The Chicago Manual of Style (16th ed.). The author’s name must not appear within the text. All articles and Notes and Reviews must include a short abstract (200 words maximum) before the main text, and a bibliography of works cited at the end. A cover letter including the author’s name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and the title of the manuscript must accompany all submissions.

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First and subsequent footnotes—Nirenberg, Communities of Violence, 22-24.

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The Allen D. Breck Award is given in honor of Professor Allen D. Breck (1914-2000), a founder of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. As Professor of History at the University of Denver, he also served for 20 years as department chair. As Professor Emeritus he became the historian of the University of Denver, writing *From the Rockies to the World—The History of the University of Denver*. His specialties included medieval and church history, particularly John Wyclif. He also taught Anglican studies at the Hiff School of Theology, and wrote, edited, or contributed to histories of Jews, Methodists, and Episcopalians in Colorado and books on medieval philosophy, the lives of western leaders, and the relationships between science, history, and philosophy. In addition to his involvement with RMMRA, he was a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and belonged to the Medieval Academy of America, the Western History Association, and the Western Social Science Association.

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

This year’s recipient is Samantha Dressel, doctoral candidate in English at the University of Rochester.
“Like to my soft sex”:
Female Revenge and Violence in *The Fatal Contract*

Samantha Dressel
Chapman University

*The* Fatal Contract by William Heminge is not a good play. Its critical afterlife is essentially non-existent, with Fredson Thayer Bowers being one of the only critics to discuss it, criticizing its lack of “inspiration” and “ethical spirit.”¹ I argue however, that the play is both inventive and moral, despite its many derivative aspects and narrative foibles. I suggest a new reading of the play as deeply innovative in terms of gender and revenge. Bowers criticizes the play’s morality because of the ultimate exoneration of Chrotilda, the central revengeress. The play can be reinterpreted and partially redeemed by understanding Chrotilda’s extreme violence as a uniquely female revenge. In her quest to avenge her own rape, Chrotilda sets up her plot such to teach her rapist of his evil, rather than seeking maximum pain regardless of understanding. She constructs herself as asexual in her guise of Eunuch, removing the villainous link between female sex and violence, enabling her to act outside of the boundaries of female propriety. Because of her didactic revenge, her rapist fully understands his own evil, revealing a strong moral intentionality behind the admittedly chaotic dénouement, along with an opportunity for blameless female agency.

In the canon of Renaissance revenge drama, the central protagonist is almost exclusively male, and across the literary world of the English Renaissance, violent women are maligned. Linda Woodbridge notes that, “When women did commit violence, it called forth a rhetoric of exceptionality and unnaturalness and provoked a special horror that owed much to its being an infringement on male prerogative.”² This infringement on male prerogative also tied female violence to similarly gendered crimes such as outspokenness and voracious sexuality, all accepted or even lauded qualities in the male, but maligned in the female.

Into this milieu of gendered traits, I introduce a different type of heroine: that of William Heminge’s 1633-34 play, *The Fa-

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² Woodbridge, “Introduction,” xii.
tal Contract. It cannot be denied that The Fatal Contract is not a great play. Perhaps it is not even a good play. It is certainly a derivative play: Joseph Quincy Adams Jr. devotes the space of his article to a line-by-line comparison between it and Hamlet, as well as noting other major Shakespearean devices, metaphors, and turns of phrase throughout. Fredson Thayer Bowers, one of the play’s only other critical respondents, decries it as decadent with empty convention and meaningless gore. He suggests that the ending presents a “total confounding of all ethical judgment,” given Chrotilda’s forgiveness by the state following her revenge. The play certainly has other flaws: the writing is inelegant as well as borrowing heavily from Shakespeare, and many revenge subplots pile on top of Chrotilda’s central revenge to create a tangle of often-conflicting motives and plot points. However, modern scholars must look beyond these structural flaws and Bowers’ invectives. This paper will contest Bowers’ statement that the play reveals the degree to which, “the older ethical spirit is nonexistent,” and instead suggest that The Fatal Contract presents revenge as a possible and even laudable female script in response to rape. The Fatal Contract tests the ethical limits of revenge rather than ignoring them by reimagining the revenge plot in a uniquely feminine form.

First, I will provide a brief synopsis, given that the play is so unknown as to be excluded from the modern critical discourse, saving for the two texts noted above and Carol Morley’s edition of Heminge’s work. The French Queen Fredigond murders her hus-

3 See Morely, The Plays and Poems of William Heminge, 265, for support of this dating.

4 Given Adams’s exhaustive treatment of play’s indebtedness to Hamlet, Othello, and other more canonical texts, it falls outside the scope of this paper to locate the Shakespearean roots of The Fatal Contract in this way.

5 Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 242.

6 Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 247.

7 In order to remain brief, this synopsis will omit a number of the play’s prolific revenge plots. Bowers takes nearly two pages to describe each of the separate machinations, dividing the action into seven distinct subplots (236-38).

8 As Morley notes, Heminge’s text involves, “A contrived rewriting of history on a massive scale.” Heminge draws from A General History of France for the premises of his plot, involving the historical Merovingian Queen Fredigund. However, he greatly exaggerates his characters and allows for an overthrow of the tyrannical line at the end, causing the play to fit more closely with the genre of the tragedy of blood than with the chronicle history. Morely, The Plays and Poems of William Heminge, 268-69.
band in order to marry her lover Landrey and elevate him to the throne. She also plots to murder her sons, Clotair and Clovis, so that their own claims will not stand in the way of Landrey’s kingship and eventual heirs. Meanwhile, Clotair attempts to rape and then wed Aphelia, Clovis’s secret betrothed. Clovis, thought dead, joins a rebellion against Fredigond’s and Clotair’s rule. All of these plots are enabled by the Eunuch, a shadowy figure at the heart of, and therefore also opposed to, everyone’s plots. When the Eunuch helps Clotair discover Fredigond and Landrey in flagrante delicto, Clotair demands that they be imprisoned. The Eunuch carries out this sentence and starves them, so that when he provides them with a poisoned feast, they fall upon it. Behind a curtain, Fredigond and Landrey are forced to watch the unfolding events while under the influence of the slow-acting poison. Clotair then demands Aphelia’s torture after the Eunuch had planted a letter asserting that she too had an affair with Landrey. After the Eunuch brands Aphelia’s breast, he then reveals the now-dead bodies of Landrey and Fredigond, and informs Clotair that all of this was done in pursuit of revenge against Clotair’s family. He also notes, as an additional psychological burden, that Aphelia was innocent after all. The Eunuch is in a position to kill Clotair, but when he begs for his life, the Eunuch begs for his own death instead. Finally, the Eunuch reveals that he is in fact a she, Chrotilda, returned to take revenge on Clotair who raped her, and against his family, who persecuted her family, the House of Duminain, both of which events occurred before the play began. Clotair recognizes his wrongdoing, despite having already dealt Chrotilda’s death-blow. Finally, Aphelia dies of her wounds, and Clotair of grief and regret; Clovis is left to inherit the throne.

This paper will examine the gender dynamics of Chrotilda’s chosen disguise of the Eunuch, and the ways in which she asserts for herself a uniquely female form of revenge. In pursuit of this goal, I examine two major issues in the play. First of all, I will look at the ways in which Chrotilda divorces sexuality from violence in her guise as the Eunuch, consciously decoupling the two features by which Renaissance villainesses are traditionally condemned. Then,
I will suggest that Chrotilda’s form of revenge follows a uniquely-female trajectory, marking itself as distinct from masculine revenge and therefore an acceptable portrayal of female agency for the Renaissance stage. Finally, I explore how these two female-coded types of action inflect other characters’ judgment of Chrotilda’s actions as a response to rape, and their representations of her narrative.

Throughout the play, Chrotilda is presented almost entirely in the persona of the Eunuch: an asexual disguise. Not only does this identity lack sexual features, but also acts without sensuality, defying other more erotic portrayals of castrates such as Viola in Twelfth Night. Chrotilda specifically constructs herself in opposition to such portrayals, with the Eunuch resisting all sexualization. This contrast is heightened by the construction of the lascivious queen Fredigond as Chrotilda’s foil. Fredigond is cast in the mold of Titus Andronicus’s Tamora: a sexually-voracious queen who puts her love affairs ahead of the affairs of state, and will kill to keep her plots intact – the proverbially-evil woman who is outspoken, sexual, and violent. Early in the play Fredigond gloats about one of her machinations and kisses the Eunuch. However, she finds her would-be partner closed off: “Fie, what a January lip thou hast/A pair of Icicles, sure thou hast brought/A pair of cast lips of the chaste Diana’s.” This incident sharply contrasts the two characters: the Eunuch is allied with frigidity and chastity in opposition to the too-hot and adulterous Fredigond. Chrotilda’s coldness therefore transforms a man’s pitiable impotence (or intersex appeal) into a woman’s asexual armor.

Fredigond is involved in violent plots as

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9 Stephen Orgel discusses the erotic potential of the castrate, noting that he was both a potentially erotic object in the celibate world of the Catholic church, and eroticized for men by existing in the same un-masculine category as women and boys. Orgel, Impersonations, 55, 103.


11 Chrotilda’s characterization is in the mode of Middleton and Dekker’s Moll Cutpurse (The Roaring Girl), whose cross-dressing likewise serves to neuter her. As Coppélia Kahn suggests, the disguise Moll assumes is, “A male subject whom none can enter – a man who is psychologically and sexually an impregnable fortress.” Kahn, Whores and Wives, 257. While the Eunuch’s identity as wholly-male is questionable, it is clear that the disguise gives Chrotilda the same impregnability, quite literally, as Moll.
well, and because of her blatant and aberrant sexuality, she is doubly condemned. Chrotilda’s asexual façade insures that she is not similarly stained.

There is one moment in the play at which Chrotilda does act like other staged eunuchs such as Shakespeare’s Mardian in *Antony and Cleopatra*, frustrated with her supposed castration, and seeming to violate the framework I have suggested:

> Oh were I but a man as others are,  
> As kind and open-handed nature made me,  
> With Organs apt and fit for woman’s service…  
> Till I had met Chrotilda, whom by force  
> I’d make to mingle with these sooty limbs,  
> Till I had got on her one like to me.12

Her description borders on the pornographic, playing on the tropes of prior plays, as when Ferdinand imagines his sister, Duchess of Malfi, “Happily with some strong-thighed bargeman,”13 and the racialized fears evoked in *Titus Andronicus* when Tamora’s adulterous baby is born black.14

Despite this graphic description, the moment becomes absurd as a sincere expression of sexual desire given the context of the Eunuch’s character. Even though the audience does not realize that the Eunuch is threatening self-rape, the threat rings hollow: immediately following, Fredigond is able to “unclasp my soul to thee” (I.ii. 65). Chrotilda has modulated her speech to match the brutal and subversively sexual world of Fredigond and her court. By speaking to Fredigond in the only terms she understands, the Eunuch can gain

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13 Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, II.v. 42.
14 Heminge pays very little attention to Eunuch’s apparent blackness, outside of the mention of her “sooty limbs,” and accordingly, this description has little importance for my analysis of her costume. However, there is certainly fruitful future work to be done, looking at the character’s performative blackness rather than her performative gender. This analysis would certainly look at the ways in which the Eunuch’s race plays into the generally malignant and stereotypical actions of her role as the Eunuch, making her like Titus’s Aaron or Barabas from Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, an outsider figure whose alienation seems to be cause enough for hateful actions against all characters in the hegemonic group.
her trust. Even to an audience member ignorant to her disguise, it is quickly clear that the Eunuch is trying to become ingratiated with every major player at court, and shifts her identity accordingly so that they might communicate. Furthermore, Chrotilda’s icy refusal of Fredigond’s sexual advances, discussed above, follow quickly after this apparent display of sexual voracity.

Chrotilda’s disguise as the Eunuch parallels her rape, by choice and by necessity. Female desire is erased through rape: the raped tragic heroine is traditionally removed from the world of sexual exchange, and her genitalia is elided, leaving death as her only option. Chrotilda’s metaphorical neutering suggests that her disguise is the perfect symbol for her status; a eunuch is a man whose procreative power has been removed and whose desires are impotent, and a raped woman is one whose womb can never be chastely fruitful. Chrotilda further supports this figurative hysterectomy with her apparent lack of desire: her disinterest throughout the play towards both sex and romance suggests that a belief in her own nullified sexuality matches constraints imposed by the rape. This asexuality is vital for Chrotilda’s revenge plot, because it severs the assumed link between female violence and voracious sexuality. Thus, Chrotilda’s uncomfortable liminality of gender, created by her rape, perversely enables her to act outside her social limitations and regain her agency. From this desexualized position, Chrotilda is able to create an entirely new script with which to respond to her rape: she can be a violent revenger while retaining purity and validation for her actions, because she is constantly and carefully enacting her chastity.

Heminge further supports his vision of a chaste Chrotilda by eliding the rape scene itself. Often, a Renaissance woman’s trauma serves as dramatic spectacle, either through a chase scene or a later display of her suffering body. For example, in *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia’s raped and maimed body is immediately displayed while Marcus describes it in long blazon. In *The Fatal Contract*, however, Chrotilda’s suffering body is never an object of the male gaze in
this way, the rape having occurred before the play opens. This separates Chrotilda further from contemporary rape portrayals as well as any hint of sexualization. This is not to say that Heminge is above such sadistic titillation more generally: Aphelia is collateral damage in Chrotilda’s revenge plot, and she instead serves as the suffering female tableau. Heminge is therefore not trying to avoid displaying the female body in pain, but he completely displaces the trope from Chrotilda. Thus, Chrotilda avoids the objectifying categories traditionally assigned to a rape victim, those of sex object or weak female. Chrotilda manages to skirt Scylla and Charybdis – she’s neither a whore nor a suffering spectacle, neither blamable for her violence, nor a meek victim.

On the one hand, this elision of spectacle is useful, as it continues to divorce Chrotilda from sexualized stereotypes. However, it also hides the initial crime even further, making the act of convincing the audience of its severity even more difficult. As Jocelyn Catty notes, the effects of rape are “hidden within the recesses of [the victim’s] body.”15 This means that “the rape situation, … both necessitates and circumscribes female utterance: legitimizes and silences it.”16 Women are expected to create a counter-narrative to rape to save their honor from their abusers, but at the same time, this puts them in the maligned position of the outspoken unruly woman. Chrotilda finds revenge as a way out of this bind, as it will enable her to define herself apart from the tropes of both weak woman and sex symbol. Revenge gives her a means of self-definition.

Now, I examine Chrotilda’s revenge as a uniquely female action before turning to the dénouement of the play to see how these gendered elements work together to create an ethic of revenge for Chrotilda. Revenge tragedy provides a particularly fruitful ground for exploring women’s gendered transgressions because the genre itself already questions gendered identities. Eileen Allman insightfully argues that maleness is questioned in the revenge genre be-

15 Catty, Writing Rape, Writing Women, 22.
16 Catty, Writing Rape, Writing Women, 3.
cause the male revenger begins in a position of social submission. In her formulation, “When a man is defeated by another man, he is both unmanned and feminized; that is, he is stripped of cultural signs of dominance and forced to assume those of submission.”

Essentially, men subject to a tyrant’s abuses are forced into a feminine position; a voiceless position. Allman’s allowance for female agency in revenge is through passive resistance, as is revealed in the suffering heroines such as the Duchess of Malfi. Women who deal more actively in revenge are left out of the critical conversation – as Shepherd notes, when they do exist, it is in a subordinated position from which they can, “Get away with” unaccustomed violence – generally as minor revengers who participate in a male-led plot.

Responding to a dearth of active revengeresses in the canon, modern critics generally do not make allowances for them in theories of Renaissance revenge. These more passive models fall short when Chrotilda is considered; however, Chrotilda does not allow her persona to fit comfortably into a male model either.

In order to read Chrotilda’s revenge as uniquely female, I expand Jennifer Low’s conception of permissible female violence into the revenge genre. Low suggests that women in drama could threaten or enter into duels, but only in a didactic manner.

Rather

17 Allman, Jacobean Revenge Tragedy, 19-20.

18 Shepherd, Amazons, 112. Examples of this type include Titus Andronicus’s Lavinia, and Bel-Imperia from Thomas Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy.

19 One notable exception to this trend is Alison Findlay, who suggests that female violence must only be read as reinforcing patriarchal power: “The use of violence by female revengers, even to redress the wrongs suffered by the sex, is deeply problematic from a feminist point of view since it often reproduces masculine models of oppression and possibly even the dominant values of patriarchy.” Findlay, A Feminist Perspective, 72. I find this view highly problematic, because it leaves no possibility for an active female engagement in revenge – to her, revenge is entirely the provenance of men (though, admittedly, a condemnable action). My suggestion that didactic revenge is a uniquely female form opens up a nuance which I find lacking in Findlay’s view, distinguishing a heroine’s revenge from a villainess’s vindictive violence, and allowing a heroine agency in spite of patriarchal control.

20 Simon Shepherd proposes a similar acceptable type of specifically-feminine violence that may be used by warrior women or folk heroines to reinforce traditional gender roles and “sort out for us the proper man from the braggart,” allowing the woman to resume her proper status when the man has learned a more positive form of masculinity. Shepherd, Amazons, 71.
than pursuing violence or revenge, their goal must be to teach a lesson about correct action.\textsuperscript{21} In particular, she suggests that the female duelist must view violence, “As a possibility for rehabilitation rather than as an opportunity for punishment.”\textsuperscript{22} Low excludes revengers from her assessment, assuming that revenge’s only goal is violence for its own sake.\textsuperscript{23} I assert, however, that this is exactly where feminine revenge can differ from its masculine counterpart. Rather than rooting revenge in the complete debasement of her foe as men do, a woman must seek his admission of guilt. This type of revenge violence takes the comic tradition of rehabilitative gender violation and turns it into something darker, but still didactic.

When Chrotilda reveals her identity at the close of the play, she seeks this type of instructive vengeance. Before this point, she has murdered the evil queen Fredigond and Fredigond’s lover, and displayed their bodies to her rapist Clotair. She has also mutilated Clotair’s object of affection, Aphelia. She ultimately finds, problematically for a modern audience, that she cannot kill her rapist because of his kingly status. Instead, she taunts him with her prior evil deeds until he deals her death blow. At this point, with nothing left to lose, she finally answers Clotair’s questioning as to her motives. When she names herself to him and her brother Dumain as, “Chrotilda and a woman,” she brings Clotair to a position of introspection as he recognizes his guilt.\textsuperscript{24} Suddenly, Clotair is faced with an existential crisis, with Chrotilda’s revelation of her identity leading him to doubt his own: “What am I?/What strange and uncouth thing?”\textsuperscript{25} Clotair becomes alien to himself, not even a person anymore, but an inanimate “what,” a “thing.” At this moment, Clotair appears to recognize the enormity of his crimes; this recognition scene happens publicly and directly because of Chrotilda, demonstrating the effi-

\textsuperscript{21} Low, “Women are Wordes,” 271.
\textsuperscript{22} Low, “Women are Wordes,” 278.
\textsuperscript{23} Low, “Women are Wordes,” 277.
\textsuperscript{24} Heminge, \textit{The Fatal Contract}, V.ii. 430.
\textsuperscript{25} Heminge, \textit{The Fatal Contract}, V.ii. 434-35.
cacy of her didactic form of revenge. She tells him that he is “a ravisher,” but Clotair’s understanding of his crimes seems to go deeper than her explanation. He has heard the charges, understood them well enough to rearticulate his crimes, and judges himself guilty:

Shall Clotair live…
O ravisher and murtherer of his friend,
There’s no way left to rid me but my sword,
Of all these ills at once. Oh wronged Chrotilda.

This statement is remarkable, because the revenge victim himself recognizes the rightness of revenge, and says that he must finish the job that the dying revengeress was unable to do. In his self-recrimination, he also helps to rearticulate Chrotilda’s story.

In contrast to his earlier cruelty, Clotair can suddenly read Chrotilda’s body correctly, unlike her own brother Dumain who still does not understand the connection between the evil Eunuch and his sister. Once Chrotilda has died of her wounds, Clotair is able to clarify events. He explains to Dumain that, “Here lies thy ravish’t sister slain/By me the ravisher.” When Clotair admits this, he rewrites the scripts for them both: Chrotilda becomes the spectacle who has suffered, while he is the persecutor. In Clotair’s formulation, Chrotilda becomes counterpoint to herself, existing as both violent revenger and suffering victim. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this scene, however, is that Clotair’s rewriting of Chrotilda’s identity does not efface her status as a revenger, but instead reaffirms it. He re-authors her as victim, but in doing so, validates the logic of her revenge, allowing Chrotilda to inhabit the roles of victim and rightful revenger simultaneously. When he does so, Clotair demonstrates that he has learned his lesson: he sees the wronged woman in both her agony and her strength, and he understands that he himself put her there through his distinctly un-kingly behavior. Apparently, Chrotilda’s didactic approach has worked, as Clotair both confirms and productively expands upon Chrotilda’s narrative of abuse.

Chrotilda had to die over the course of the play because of her actions as both a woman and a revenger, yet her actions are validated by others who hail her as a heroine after her death. Perhaps the best praise she could hope for arises from her brother, who lauds her actions as manly in the way he was not:

My sister’s in mine eies, this brave revenge
Should have been mine, and not thy act Chrotilda
Away salt rhume, Chrotilda laughs at thee,
Her spirit is more manly.

Despite it being his own prerogative that was usurped, Dumain sees Chrotilda’s masculine actions as valiant. Rather than reading Chrotilda as an unwontedly violent woman, he sees her as the man he should have been. This accords with Low’s model, in which feminine violence is a vehicle for correcting male action. Dumain even chastises himself for having the emotional female response of tears. It seems as though Dumain does feel his masculinity challenged by Chrotilda, seeing himself feminized in comparison. However, he recognizes that chastisement as necessary. He reads her death as the feminist pamphleteers, such as the author of *Haec-Vir*, hoped their messages would be read: “What could we poore weake women do lesse… then to gather up those garments you have proudly cast away, and therewith to cloath both our bodies and our mindes.” If men acted out their proper roles as men, women would not have to act manly to compensate for their failings. Dumain recognizes that Chrotilda was fulfilling a void in masculinity which he had enabled through his inaction in the realm of revenge.

29 Many critics have noted that violent women, rape victims in tragedies, and revengers all must die by convention. For example, David Nicol’s paper “‘My little what shall I call thee’” notes of rape victims that death is a traditional articulation of innocence, 178. Nicol likewise notes the necessity for violent women to be contained by death, 190. Harry Keyishian in *The Shapes of Revenge* (7-8) highlights the commonplace of the revenger’s death.


31 Low, “Women are Wordes,” 271.

32 *Haec-Vir*, C2v.
Aphelia also responds positively to Chrotilda’s revenge, though it was Chrotilda’s machinations that cast suspicion upon Aphelia’s virtue, and it was Chrotilda herself who executed Clotair’s order to brand Aphelia. Despite these circumstances, Aphelia sees them as two equal sufferers: “Mine injuries and hers are so near kin.”

Aphelia reads both of their stories as narratives of male tyranny. Chrotilda was raped, and Aphelia was taken from her fiancé and then branded because of male lust and jealousy. Both suffered injuries at the hands of the patriarchy, though Aphelia conforms to the fully-feminine register of suffering lament, rather than carrying out vengeance. Aphelia’s judgment gives audience members another chance to sympathize with Chrotilda; she represents a traditional chaste victim, yet still affirms Chrotilda’s actions, thereby licensing the audience to do the same. Aphelia then dies of her burns in true martyr fashion, which brings Clotair to a point of even greater despair, teaching Clotair of his wrongs in a more traditionally-acceptable way.

When Aphelia dies, Clotair also does not blame Chrotilda, despite her part in causing that death. Instead, he says, “My love is fatall, and too well thou know’st/The deadly proof in fair Chrotilda’s death.” This statement suggests that Clotair has correctly interpreted Chrotilda’s revenge and death in two key ways. First of all, he once again shows that he has learned about and accepted his own tyranny and poisonous nature. He is fully aware that he deserves the revenge, and that his own terrible actions, rather than Chrotilda’s machinations, killed both women. Secondly, he sees Chrotilda as fully-woman in her death, labeling her both as “fair,” and more importantly, as joined with Aphelia in the larger set of women he has murdered. Because her revenge is framed with feminine gestures,

33 Heminge, The Fatal Contract V.ii. 470.
34 Like Aspatia in Beaumont and Fletcher’s The Maid’s Tragedy, Aphelia’s death serves as a didactic reminder. Neither of these women actually enacts violence of their own, though Aspatia threatens it, in a way that Low’s model recognizes as legitimized.
Chrotilda can be seen as an innocent rape victim, rather than a too-subversive revenger at the conclusion of the play.

Clotair’s final comment on Chrotilda’s revenge is upon his own death. He calls upon his own heart to break, and apparently, it follows its prince’s command.\(^\text{36}\) Clotair speaks a final eulogy for himself on his deathbed:

\begin{verbatim}
Touch sparingly this story, do not read
Too harsh a comment on this loathed deed,
Lest you inforce posterity to blast
My name and Memory with endlesse curses;
Call me an honorable murtherer,
And finish there as I do.\(^\text{37}\)
\end{verbatim}

Besides revealing Heminge’s indebtedness to (plagiarism of) \textit{Othello},\(^\text{38}\) this speech finalizes the degree to which Clotair realizes his tyranny. Chrotilda’s teaching has hit true: Clotair has realized that death is the only option left to him, and he recognizes that history has no reason to paint him as anything but evil. Clotair attempts to save his reputation at this last point: perhaps his repentance allows him to be labeled an honorable murderer, though his honor only followed after his murderousness found correction. His ability to call himself a murderer at all reveals the extent of his understanding.

Finally, Clotair’s brother Clovis is left on stage, inheriting the kingship, passing judgment on what has gone before, and ultimately erasing Chrotilda’s violent agency. His reading of the situation is benevolent, but problematic. He determines that Chrotilda should be buried in honor, but he also compares her situation to that of Aphelia, tortured to death as collateral damage during Chrotilda’s plot. Aphelia plays the traditional role of the suffering female tableau, a model of female heroism which directly opposes Chrotilda’s agential violence. However, Clovis demands that, “These/that for [Clotair’s] love on either hand lie slain,/They shall lie bur-

\(^{36}\) Heminge, \textit{The Fatal Contract}, V.ii. 500.


\(^{38}\) Shakespeare, \textit{Othello}, V.ii. 291-92: “An honourable murderer, if you will,/For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.”
ied in one Monument,” (V.ii. 536-38). In one sense, this justice is kind to Chrotilda, suggesting that she is so little at fault as to be Aphelia’s mirror. She appears to be fully forgiven for her part in the revenge. However, Clovis also suggests that Chrotilda was slain “for [Clotair’s] love” – an odd statement describing someone who performed multiple murders in order to gain revenge on her rapist. While she ultimately seems to have forgiven Clotair, Chrotilda also continued to teach him of his wrongs even after her death to the point of driving him to his own. In saying that she died for Clotair’s love, Clovis essentially erases the narrative of rape and revenge that Chrotilda went to such great lengths to publicize.

Catty suggests that, “Rape is both a sexual (and usually social) destruction of the woman and a figurative silencing. … It figures the denial of autonomy which disables and disempowers female authorship.” She further notes that the ambiguities surrounding the crime of rape can invalidate the woman’s traumatic experience in it. In the final moments of the play, this sort of double-silencing has been performed on Chrotilda. Rape originally silenced her, and I propose that her revenge plot be read as an elaborate plan to regain a sense of agency. By judging her as a complete innocent, a silent sufferer who can be Aphelia’s mirror, however, Clovis causes the second silencing, as he overwrites Chrotilda’s autobiographical narrative and denies her original trauma by suggesting that she loved Clotair, as well as overwriting her later violence by refusing to judge her revenge as such. Chrotilda’s revengeress identity is elided in a way it was not by Clotair: while Clotair did cast her as his victim, his acceptance of the villain’s role reinforces the sense that he understood and respected her actions as revenger. Clovis overlooks this possibility entirely; while he is politically generous to Chrotilda in labeling her innocent, he also seems to lack any understanding of her trauma.

40 Catty, Writing Rape, Writing Women, 4.
41 Catty, Writing Rape, Writing Women, 115.
42 Such a return of agency through revenge is frequent trope of the genre, as Keyishian argues.
In seeming complicity with Clovis, Bowers thus suggests that, “Finally, Chrotilda, as evil and villainous a revenger as ever trod the stage, is considered a noble heroine.”\textsuperscript{43} But, is she truly meant to be seen as a villainous revenger? I argue that Chrotilda’s adherence to a female mode of revenge, didactic rather than vindictive, allows for the moral clarity that Bowers denies, as does her care to avoid the oversexualization and outspokenness that define villainesses such as her enemy Fredigond. While Chrotilda’s revenge does very much participate in the gore tradition which surrounds revenge tragedy, she performs her gory and horrific actions with the specific goal of instructing her rapist in his crimes. She writes herself as neither villainous nor villainess. In this effort, she is highly successful, and through that success, the play presents revenge as a potential script for women to cope with the trauma of rape.

When Chrotilda cannot kill Clotair, she blames it on “A woman’s weakness,”\textsuperscript{44} “Like to my soft sex,” all she can do is die.\textsuperscript{45} The \textit{Fatal Contract} describes a much stronger woman than this, however. Chrotilda is not a passive victim – it is revenge which she takes, “Like to my soft sex,” teaching her oppressor of his wrongs so coherently that he can carry forth her story.\textsuperscript{46} Other forces may silence that narrative, but Chrotilda manages to convey her pain and perform deeds generally outside of a woman’s abilities without taking blame for them. She finds strength in her revenge, along with a unique means of self-expression. A woman’s weakness does not prevent her revenge, but instead constrains it such that it might be performed on the Renaissance stage. Through Chrotilda’s strength, a modern scholarly audience can find new relevance in this play and the way in which it explores female agency, particularly in the way that revenge enables a woman’s voice to scream out her trauma without blame.

\textsuperscript{43} Bowers, \textit{Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy}, 241.
\textsuperscript{44} Heminge, \textit{The Fatal Contract}, V.ii. 455.
\textsuperscript{45} Heminge, \textit{The Fatal Contract}, V.ii. 63.
\textsuperscript{46} Heminge, \textit{The Fatal Contract}, V.ii. 63.
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Bibliography


Prophecy is the driving force of Thomas Malory’s Le Morte Darthur. The Morte emerged from a tradition of prophecy that existed long before its creation, and which continued into the early modern period. Prophecy influenced both political and religious spheres, as well as medieval cultural perceptions of time. English culture absorbed the Morte’s prophetic elements and used them to either bolster later uses of prophecy or to defame them. Using the Morte as a starting point, this examination draws on elements from various sources: Greek, Christian, and Welsh folklore, Geoffrey of Monmouth and contemporaries of Thomas Malory. Also part of this analysis are the Tudors, their rivals, and their enemies, all of whom drew on Arthurian-style prophecy in their bids to consolidate power, and the Church, who demonized those prophecies that threatened the established order. Elements of prophecy existed in the cultural belief systems of medieval England long before Thomas Malory wrote his masterwork, and they continued for centuries afterward. By tracing the use of Arthurian prophecy, this literary history argues that these concepts frequently spilled from the literary realm into the everyday beliefs of people, and as such was often used as a tool by authority figures.

Thomas Malory’s Le Morte Darthur is an intricate mix of legend and medieval culture, and supernatural events tend to allow this text to function as a narrative. Magic facilitates the first major event in the narrative: Arthur’s conception.1 Magic potions, prayers, illusions, magical objects, and prophecy all help to move the action forward. Of all of the instances of the supernatural in the Morte, prophecy most often drives the plot and structures the narrative, but its significance is not exclusively literary.2 Such uses of prophecy situate the Morte in a tradition of prophecy that existed long before the work’s creation. After the repopularization of the Arthurian genre into the Early Modern Period, English culture absorbed the Morte’s prophetic elements and used them both to bolster later uses.

1 Malory, Le Morte Darthur, 5.

2 Dobin, Merlin’s Disciples, 18.
of prophecy, and to defame them; in this way, the concept of prophecy influenced both the political and religious spheres, as well as medieval cultural perceptions of time itself.

Numerous times in Le Morte Darthur, prophecy explicitly reveals events, and this thrusts the characters into action, structuring the narrative and adding literary appeal. For instance, the prophecy foretelling Arthur’s birth (“The first nyght that ye [Uther] shal lye by Igrayne ye shal gete a child on her”),3 both tells the reader what is to come, and indicates to Uther, Arthur’s father, that his sexual conquest of Igrayne is fated, therefore unavoidable, encouraging the prophecy to fulfillment and driving the narrative. What exactly Uther thinks of this prophecy’s validity, however, is unclear, as Malory does not reveal his inner monologue, only his actions; Uther’s response to Merlin’s request that he be delivered the child is simply “I wylle wel…as thow wilt have it.”4 Likewise, when Arthur pulls “the swerd by the handels,” “lightly and fiersly” out of the anvil, although he does so out of necessity for a sword, there is a prophecy written upon it: “whoso pulleh oute this swerd of this stone and anvyld is rightwys Kynge borne of all Englonde,”5 making the emergence of a new king fated, even though Arthur seems an unlikely choice. This prophecy lends legitimacy to Arthur’s reign, briskly driving the plot onward from the introductory phase of Arthur’s childhood. The positioning of these prophecies, either near the beginning of the narrative or just before the event in question, serve to remind the reader (and sometimes the characters) of the coming action,6 ultimately compelling them forward.

In this way, Malory uses prophecy not to teach lessons or dole out divine punishment, but to structure the narrative. When Ar-

3 Malory, Le Morte Darthur, 5.
4 Malory, Le Morte Darthur, 5.
5 Malory, Le Morte Darthur, 8-9.
thur begets Mordred, which is another fated event (“Youre owne son, begotyn of youre syster, that shall be the destruccion of all thys realme”), Merlin does mention that “God ys displesed,” but Jane Bliss notes that Malory downplays God’s wrath compared to French sources (e.g. *Mort Artu*), especially in the final battle. Corrine Sanders also suggests, “cold destiny rather than kind providence governs the battlefield” at the end of the *Morte*, although others, such as Marilyn Corrie, feel human error drives Malory’s ending. Malory’s intentions are as ambiguous as a historical chronicle reflecting real events might be, to the point where Mark Lambert refers to Malory as a historian, not a moralist. Malory’s historian tendencies also shine through when he establishes several events and prophecies in the *Morte*, but does not tie them into the narrative as a modern reader of fiction might expect. Sir Pellynore’s death is prophesied, but Malory leaves the climax of his demise out of the *Morte*. Additionally, although it is not a prophecy, Jane Bliss suggests that Malory introduces Arthur’s illegitimate son Borre as though he is going to be an important character, but then all but ignores him. In this way, Malory’s narrative is often reminiscent of a historical chronicle, not a morality play or similar artifice.

Furthermore, some of these prophecies seem to be guiding, not damming. As Rachel Kapelle explains in her research, there are two types of prophecy in the *Morte*, “categorical,” or immutable and “contingent,” or changeable, which often seem to be in conflict with each other. The categorical sort (e.g. “that Launcelot scholde

7 Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, 37; 30; 32.
8 Bliss, “Prophecy in the *Morte Darthur*,” 5.
10 Corrie, “‘God may well fordo desteny,’” 708.
14 Kapelle, “Merlin’s Prophecies, Malory’s Lacunae,” 64.
love hir [Gwenyver], and sche hym agayne,” or that “a lybarde of kinges blood [Launcelot] …shall engendir a lyon [Galahad]…whyche…shall passe all other knightes”\textsuperscript{15} give structure and foreshadowing to the narrative.\textsuperscript{16} The reader knows what to expect based on these prophetic hints. However, in contrast to categorical prophecies, contingent prophecies seem to offer an alternative route, and suspense, to an otherwise predictable narrative. Such contingent prophecies are ambiguous; for instance, when Pellynore declares that “God may well fordo destiny” upon hearing that he has doomed himself for letting his daughter commit suicide,\textsuperscript{17} Malory is presenting an alternative perspective, in which Pellynore can (or believes that he can) overcome his fate.\textsuperscript{18}

The best example of this tension is again the prophecy that Mordred will slay Arthur; from the very first book this is explicitly a categorical prophecy, but in Arthur’s prophetic dream just before the last battle, the ghost of Gawain warns him that if he fights Mordred before Launcelot’s return “doute ye nat ye shall be slayne.”\textsuperscript{19} The warning creates, at the very last moment, a hope that perhaps Arthur can change his fate, if he waits for Launcelot. This mix of prophecies, mutable and immutable, complete and incomplete, and significant and insignificant, “involve[s] the reader in the same historical world as the narrative,”\textsuperscript{20} which creates an unpredictable progression that is far more realistic than the standard morality tale.

Prophecy serves also to control either the characters in the text or the ideas of the readers of said text, and it is often unclear how aware the characters are of this, or if they have any power to prevent it. Rachel Kapelle, joined by Elizabeth Edwards, both argue that often characters in the \textit{Morte} do not deny their fate as Pellynore

\textsuperscript{15} Malory, \textit{Le Morte Darthur}, 62; 463.
\textsuperscript{16} Saunders, \textit{Magic and the Supernatural}, 236.
\textsuperscript{17} Malory, \textit{Le Morte Darthur}, 77.
\textsuperscript{18} Corrie, “God may well fordo desteny,” 704.
\textsuperscript{19} Malory, \textit{Le Morte Darthur}, 684.
\textsuperscript{20} Batt, \textit{Malory’s Morte Darthur}, 19.
does, but refuse or are unable to acknowledge it at all.\textsuperscript{21} In particular, categorical (inevitable) prophecies are incompatible “with the paradigmatic behavioral codes Malory’s characters follow”\textsuperscript{22} This is why, when Launcelot reads his own fate on a tombstone, he gives no reaction, why Arthur attempts to drown the infant Mordred and “all the children that were borne in May Day,” and why Arthur is confused that Merlin does not just avoid the witch Nimue, who is fated cause him great and prolonged misfortune.\textsuperscript{23} Arthur’s reactions are realistic for a character in his position, one who has no notion of being guided by larger forces, but Merlin, who serves a prophetic function throughout the narrative, is different; he is, in the words of modern fiction writer T. H. White, “born at the wrong end of time,” forced to “live backwards from in front,”\textsuperscript{24} and thus is able to understand these larger forces.

Arthur’s failure to understand prophecy is also reflective of its ambiguous nature. Kapelle points out that it is abnormal that Arthur never realizes he cannot escape his fate,\textsuperscript{25} as other famous characters, such as Macbeth or Oedipus do, but this only makes it clear that Malory’s aim was not to use prophecy to such an effect. Malory’s tendency resembles older Arthurian Welsh tales. In “How Culhwch Won Olwen,” for example, a hag tells the queen that “[the king] shall have an heir...by you [the queen], since he hasn’t had one by anyone else.”\textsuperscript{26} This prophecy is then never mentioned again, and seems only to form expectation in the reader’s mind and to structure the narrative. This “amnesia,” as Elizabeth Edwards calls

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{22} Kapelle, “Merlin’s Prophecies, Malory’s Lacunae,” 60.
\bibitem{23} Arthur tells Merlin “syn ye knowe of youre evil adventure [with Nimue], purvey for hit, and put hit away by youre crauftes, that mysseadvnture;” Malory, \textit{Le Morte Darthur}, 463; 39; 78.
\bibitem{24} White, \textit{The Sword in the Stone}, 37.
\bibitem{25} Kapelle, “Merlin’s Prophecies, Malory’s Lacunae,” 58-9.
\bibitem{26} Davies, “How Culhwch Won Olwen,” 180.
\end{thebibliography}
it,\textsuperscript{27} is more characteristic of the realm of legend than of fiction. After all, Merlin’s prophecies, as Geoffrey of Monmouth records in his twelfth century \textit{The History of the Kings of Britain},\textsuperscript{28} feature prominently in centuries of ostensibly non-fiction interpretations of prophecy, along with those of Joachim of Fiore, the ancient Greek Sybils and others, as reputable sources of prophecy.\textsuperscript{29}

Prophecies such as Monmouth’s, St. Cyril’s, Hildegarde’s, St. Brigit’s, and others,\textsuperscript{30} were all means of controlling the ideas of real people in the pre-modern world. This easily predates Arthurian legend and the Christian era entirely; countless prophecies pervade ancient Greek tales, and are key features of the Old Testament,\textsuperscript{31} to give only the most obvious examples. Relevant authorities, religious and political, often used prophecy as a form of control. Returning to the prophecies professed in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s work, scholars like Julia Crick have noted that, especially in pre-modernity, prophecies of this kind did nothing to discredit an author or idea, but in fact enhanced their authority and boosted the work’s popularity.\textsuperscript{32} Put simply, prophecy fit believably into the worldview of premodern audiences. Whether prophecies came to pass was of secondary importance, and this could rarely be proven either way. As Francis Bacon notes in his \textit{The Advancement of Learning}, interpretation must always fall short; the best prophecies are ambiguous by design.\textsuperscript{33} Bacon treats prophecy as just another sort of history: “It is no more than a species of history; divine history having this prerogative over human, that the narration may precede, as well as succeed the fact.”\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{27} Edwards, “Amnesia and Remembrance,” 134.
\textsuperscript{28} Monmouth, \textit{The Kings of Britain}, 131–42.
\textsuperscript{29} Reeves, \textit{The Influence of Prophecy}, 96.
\textsuperscript{30} Reeves, \textit{The Influence of Prophecy}, 335.
\textsuperscript{31} Grimm, “Sir Thomas Malory’s Narrative of Faith,” 18.
\textsuperscript{32} Crick, “Geoffrey of Monmouth.” 357; 360.
\textsuperscript{33} Dobin, \textit{Merlin’s Disciples}, 79.
\textsuperscript{34} Bacon, \textit{The Advancement of Learning}, ch. 1.
Persuasive prophecy is useful in lending authority and legitimacy to a party or cause, and so, because of its popular appeal in medieval and early modern England, Arthurian prophecy often became a key talking point of real political struggles.

Such trends were common by Malory’s lifetime, and it is not surprising that his use of prophecy resembles the writings of his contemporaries. There are many similarities when comparing Malory’s use of prophecy (and fortune) to that of his contemporaries, such as Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, and John Lydgate. For instance, Chaucer’s depiction of Fortune in _Troilus and Criseyde_ structures the narrative, and he is ambiguous in his mixing of Christian and Greek worldviews. No doubt, this influenced readers’ notions of their own fates. Comparable is Malory’s apparent exemption of “Lancelot from culpability for his fate,” which is distinctly pre-Christian in attitude. It is Gower and Lydgate who write off fate as intrinsically linked to one’s morality in alignment with a Christian worldview. The _Morte’s_ characters and prophetic themes thus became popular and embedded in English culture, especially by the fifteenth century, reflecting the cultural values of that age and of previous ages. Despite being fictional, all of these works involved prophecy and were as influential as anything claiming to be real or legitimate was. These writers gave authorities the foundations upon which they could persuade the people of their legitimacy.

The publishing of the _Morte_ in 1485 facilitated the repopularization of the Arthurian genre, and just as Monmouth’s prophecies of Merlin had been doing for centuries, Arthurian prophecies became a part of political use of prophecy in the non-fictional realm.

35 Corrie, “Fortune and the Sinner,” 207.
36 Corrie, “God may well fordo desteny,” 700.
37 Corrie, “God may well fordo desteny,” 713.
38 Corrie, “Fortune and the Sinner,” 208.
40 Crofts, _Malory’s Contemporary Audience_, 1.
Most notably, the Tudor family fabricated and utilized prophecies that linked them to King Arthur’s lineage. Henry VII named his first son and heir apparent Arthur. As he had only recently won the throne after the War of the Roses (1455 - 1487), this was an attempt by Henry VII to strengthen his family’s ties to the throne, if only in name. After all, Arthur was prophesied to one day take the throne again, and he had originally gained his own legitimacy through prophecy. Likewise, however, did Henry VII’s rival, Edward IV, also use Arthurian prophecy to stake his claim. He too named his illegitimate son Arthur (Plantagenet), but to no avail; the House of York ultimately cemented its authority. After Henry VII’s son Arthur died young, his brother took the throne as Henry VIII, and he too tried to establish himself as prophetically linked to King Arthur. He commissioned an elaborate round table like that of Arthurian legend, with his own portrait in the place of King Arthur, and that table remains in Winchester Castle to this day.

Into the seventeenth century, Arthurian and Merlinian prophecies circulated. These prophecies affected the political and religious landscape for better or for worse. The so-called prophet Ursula Shipton predicted the marriage of Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, the dissolution of the monasteries, Mary Tudor’s bloody reign, Elizabeth I’s victory against the Spanish Armada, the death of Cardinal Wolsey, and the 1666 London Fire. Her link to Arthurian tradition was that she “never had a Father of human race, but was begot [by] some wanton ariel Daemon.” This parallels Merlin’s genesis, as

41 Stein, *The Death of Merlin*, 131.
46 Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, viii.
according to Robert Boron, Merlin, too, was the offspring of a devil and a nun, which is the reason for his ability to “know things done and said and past.”

This recycling of the legendary circumstances Merlin’s birth gave Shipton’s prophecies legitimacy and authority, even though she probably never existed. Prophets were common during this period, and many were contemporary to Mother Shipton: Thomas of Erceldoune in Scotland, Nostradamus in France, and Dr. John Dee in England, who was an adviser to Queen Elizabeth.

During the reign of Henry VIII, there even circulated an anonymous prophecy about a ‘childe with a chaplet,’ reminiscent of King Arthur, and who Henry VIII claimed was a reference to himself. Even if this did not begin as a tactful piece of propaganda, created to bolster Henry VIII’s legitimacy, it was appropriated as such after the fact.

Often, however, such uses of prophecy could backfire. Just as some prophetic interpretations supported authority, others threatened the status quo. Those involved with such interpretations often faced harsh persecution from the authorities, religious as well as political, often facing execution for both treason and sorcery. Thomas Howard, the fourth Duke of Norfolk, was put to death for treason, but his specific crime was interpreting sections of Monmouth’s Merlin prophecy to mean that Mary Stuart, not Queen Elizabeth, was rightful ruler of England. Likewise, John Hale, vicar of Isleworth, and John Dobson, vicar of Mustone, both also suffered death for preaching similarly treasonous prophecies against Henry VIII during his reign.

By the Early Modern period, sorcery was inextricable from prophecy. This comes as no surprise. Returning to the reason-


ing for Merlin’s abilities, his father was a devil, so his prophecies were intended to “trick” humans into learning about the demonic, but as his mother was a nun, God favored him as well, and “willed that he should know things contrary to those he knew from the other side [divine things].” Thus, according to Boron, Merlin was simultaneously divine and demonic, and depending on the perspective of those in authority positions, prophetic interpretations, too, could be demonic just as easily as they could be divine.

Early Modern religious and philosophical thinkers such as Heinrich Kramer (c. 1430 – 1505) and William Covell (1588 - 1613) added authority to the argument that contemporary divination was always evil. Kramer published the *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1486, and claimed divination was done “through the explicit and intentional invocation of evil spirits.” Infamous medieval inquisitor, Bernard Gui, also shared this view, and for centuries afterward, even across oceans, these beliefs drove the witch hunts of the early modern period. Covell, in a pamphlet against the use of prophecy in state affairs (*Polimanteia*), further explains that because God only enabled divine prophecy in ancient times, and as “Satan inter-mingleth himself in the midst of affayres publique ... hee giueth by dreames, to the imitation of diuine dreames,” Satan is the origin of all non-biblical prophecy. Of course, such categorical arguments were generally only used against dissenters by those in power. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I in fact outlawed ‘false prophecy’ during their reigns, but they simultaneously supported prophecies they wanted to be true. Such ideas persisted for centuries, culminating in witch hunts and inquisitional *auto-de-fes* alike. Countless people were

58 Bailey, “From Sorcery to Witchcraft,” 970.
burned or hanged for trying to predict the ‘wrong’ future.

The political and religious reaches of prophecy, thus, were profound. Just as important, however, was the influence that the concept of prophecy had on cultural perceptions of time. The Christian worldview within which Malory was writing, as well as the roman-ticised pre-Christian world that preceded and in many ways permeated the Middle Ages, are both present elements in the Morte, and other contemporary writings as well, as Marilyn Corrie has noted in Chaucer. These worldviews of time are manifest in both linear and cyclical patterns exemplified by the many prophecies and the echoes of those prophecies throughout texts, and it is not surprising that scholars often compare the prophecies and structure of the Morte to those of the Bible, which also contains both cyclical and linear patterns. Kevin Grimm explicitly calls the Morte a “narrative of faith” for “its blend of Christian and chivalric values” when trying to describe the Morte’s genre, and Brettler further argues that the Old Testament contains repetitions, instances where history seems to repeat and be cyclical, and also a linear structure supported by prophecies and the potential fulfillment of those prophecies in the New Testament. Reflecting these patterns are the real life cultural belief in circular and linear patterns, such as cycles in alchemy, and millennialism, as followers of Joachim, and countless other linear end-of-days prophecies throughout the centuries into the present day illustrate.

As for the Morte itself, it seems to present both options. Malory himself appears to enter into, or at least to entertain, the debate on whether Arthur is truly dead at the end of the Morte, as

61 Bliss, “Prophecy in the Morte Darthur,” 12-3.
62 Corrie, “God may well fordo desteny,” 691; Corrie, “Fortune and the Sinner,” 209.
63 Bliss, “Prophecy in the Morte Darthur,” 2.
65 Stein, The Death of Merlin, 139-40.
66 Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy, 435.
he presents both alternatives ambiguously. Arthur is both taken off to Avylyon by Morgan le Fay, Nimue, and other magical female characters, certain to “com agayne,” and yet he has a grave, and, as Malory writes it, Launcelot later buries Guenever in Arthur’s tomb: “besyde my lord Kyng Arthur he shal berye me.” Scholars such as Edward Donald Kennedy have even astutely noted that, much like his literary forbears, Malory himself incorporates prophecy at the end of the Morte that can be interpreted as predicting real world events, benefiting either the House of Lancaster or the House of York. Kennedy stresses that it unlikely that Malory truly believed in the literal nature of such a prophecy: of the phrase “he [Arthur] changed the lyff” he offers that this was a common euphemism for death during Malory’s lifetime, and of Malory’s epitaphic prophecy “Rex quondam Rexque futurus,” he claims Helen Cooper’s translation—“king once, king to be”—is far more realistic than T. H. White’s whimsical “once and future king.” However, whether Malory himself believed what he wrote or meant to convey ambiguity is largely inconsequential, as his writing and the reception of it nonetheless mirrors closely, if not exactly, the cultural landscape of the early modern era; prophecies about the return of the king circulated in spite of the alleged discovery of Arthur’s grave in Glastonbury in 1191. Both of these conflicting realities simultaneously undercut and highlight the legend of Arthur through their very ambiguity.

So, in the same way that prophecy is a driving force of the action in the Morte, the Morte’s use and revival of Arthurian prophecy also drove and influenced the politics, religion, and worldviews

68 Malory, Le Morte Darthur, 689.
69 Malory, Le Morte Darthur, 694.
70 Kennedy, “Malory and Political Prophecy,” 47; 56.
71 Kennedy, “Malory and Political Prophecy,” 52; 54.
72 Sweeney, “Divine Love or Loving Divinely,” 74.
of the society from which it emanated, and for centuries afterward this trend continued. Malory’s structure, similar to that of a legend or a chronicle, resonated with a certain authenticity and realism in the minds of his contemporary audience, especially when coupled with the inherent legitimacy generally lent to prophecies in the premodern world. Prophecies have been present for millennia in literature, from ancient Greek texts, to the Bible, and throughout the Middle Ages into the Modern era; societies absorbed these prophetic Arthurian themes and concepts familiar to the populace. Authorities then recycled, manipulated and reused aspects of these prophecies as a means of control. Prophecy functions not only as a convenient means of narrative structure and foreshadowing for literature. It also structures the political landscape, belief systems and worldviews of the people consuming it, either through the artifice of literature, or the ostensible reality of the court seer.

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What Happened to the Grandsons and Great-grandsons of the House of York?

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Josephine Tey, in her famous murder mystery centering on Richard III, The Daughter of Time, asserts that Richard was not a murderous tyrant determined to eliminate any challengers to his throne; rather it was the aim of Henry VII and Henry VIII to eliminate most of the male descendants of Richard Duke of York. Do the fates of those male descendants actually demonstrate that such was the policy of the first two Tudor monarchs?

Shakespeare’s Richard III portrays a king diabolically evil and hideous to see. A hunchback, with a withered arm and a limp, Richard schemes to gain the throne of England, murdering anyone in his way, including his own brother George duke of Clarence and his young nephews, the sons of Edward IV, “the princes in The Tower.” In Shakespeare’s own day his play and its depiction of Richard became so pervasive that a seventeenth-century tour guide at the site of the Battle of Bosworth cried out: “A horse! a horse! he Burbage cry’ded”—confusing the world of play with the actual events, and King Richard with Richard Burbage, the actor famed for his portrayal of the king.

Shakespeare’s version still is the popular perception of King Richard III. However, Shakespeare did not create the character out of whole cloth. He simply combined accounts of Richard and the Wars of the Roses from various Tudor sources. Those sources treated the Wars as brought about by the ambition of Richard’s father, Richard duke of York to seize the throne from the Lancastrian King Henry VI. The Tudors, according to Tudor propaganda, brought an end to 30 years of civil war between the Houses of York and Lancaster, merging the two families through Henry VII’s marriage to Elizabeth of York, the eldest daughter of the Yorkist King Edward IV, the son of Duke Richard.²

Nonetheless, as early as the seventeenth century Richard III had his defenders. He was rehabilitated in 1619 by Sir George Buck,

2 For Tudor historians and historiography see Fussner, Tudor History and the Historians and Levy, Tudor Historical Thought.
Master of the Revels under James I. In the following century Horace Walpole, Whig politician and antiquarian, defended Richard in his *Historic Doubts* (1766), and in the twentieth century Richard was defended by the historian Clements Markham (1906), and the American scholar Paul Murray Kendall. Richard’s “cause” drew enough “fans” to create branches of the Richard III Society in the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia. Most of the extensive historical fiction dealing with Richard III also is sympathetic. The many news stories detailing the discovery of Richard’s remains beneath a parking lot in Leicester in 2012, and the royal funeral accompanying his reinternment in Leicester Cathedral on 26 March 2015 reveal the widespread interest still surrounding Richard III.

No doubt Josephine Tey’s *The Daughter of Time* has something to do with the growth of the Richard III Society, as well as more sympathetic depictions of Richard III. Her famous murder mystery, centered on a hospital-bound Scotland Yard Inspector Grant investigating the character of Richard III, has brought the issue to a far larger audience than those who read history books. The genre of “murder mystery” allows her to use Inspector Grants’ research and conclusions to put forth Markham’s arguments exonerating Richard from several of his supposed murders (including the princes in The Tower). Tey also points out the tendency of historians to favor “winners,” in this case the Tudors. Pointing out that historians have criticized Richard for killing those threatening his reign, she notes that those same historians praise the Tudors for similar actions. Tey quotes from a school history book: “It was the settled and considered policy of the Tudors to rid themselves of all rivals to the throne, more especially those heirs of York who remained alive on the succession of Henry VII. In this they were successful, although it was left to Henry VIII to get rid of the last of them.” Since Tey has argued so successfully to rehabilitate Richard III, has she

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5 Tey, *The Daughter of Time*, 185-86.
perhaps overly blackened the reputations of Henry VII and Henry VIII? Do the fates of male descendants of Richard Duke of York actually demonstrate that such was the policy of the first two Tudor monarchs?

Eight (perhaps ten) grandsons of Richard Duke of York were alive in 1485 when Richard III was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field and Henry VII Tudor became king of England. Two grandsons were the illegitimate sons of Edward IV, Arthur Plantagenet, and of Richard III, John of Gloucester. A third grandson was the young Edward earl of Warwick, the legitimate son of George duke of Clarence, brother of Richard and Edward IV. The five remaining grandsons were John, Edmund, Richard, Humphrey, and William de la Pole, the sons of Richard of York’s daughter Elizabeth.

“Perhaps ten” refers to the mystery surrounding “the princes in The Tower,” Edward IV’s legitimate sons, thirteen-year-old Edward prince of Wales and his ten-year-old brother Richard duke of York. The two were lodged in The Tower in June 1483, and bastardized by an act of parliament, which bestowed the crown on their uncle, Richard III. After the summer of 1483, there are no recorded sightings of the princes. Most scholars assume they probably were killed by order of Richard III. A few, like Clements Markham, from whom Tey takes much of her information, believe they survived into the reign of Henry VII. Markham opines that it was Henry who dispatched the princes because once he had seen to the repeal of the parliamentary act of 1483 bastardizing the children of Edward IV (to legitimize his intended bride Edward’s daughter Elizabeth) their continued existence would be a dire threat to his title. S. B. Chrimes surmises that if still alive after Bosworth, the princes would not have survived long.

Within the first five years of Henry’s reign he faced two pretenders—Lambert Simnel, who claimed to be the earl of Warwick

6 See Ross, Richard III, 96-104.

7 Markham, Richard III, 169, 236-37, 254, 269-70; Chrimes, Henry VII, 72.
(the ten-year-old son of the duke of Clarence), and Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be Richard duke of Your, the youngest son of Edward IV. Both youths gained some support from Edward IV’s sister, Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, and the kings of France and Scotland, the duke of Brittany, and the Emperor Maximillian. Though Henry’s court “historian” Bernard André seems to dismiss these two pretenders as of no threat to Henry’s reign, the fact that almost one-fourth of André’s unfinished Life of Henry VII is devoted to these two episodes indicates that Henry took these threats seriously.8

In 1487 the ten-year-old (probably) Simnel was crowned king of England in Dublin and landed in England with an army comprised of discontented Irish and English nobles, led by John de la Pole earl of Lincoln, and 2000 German mercenaries. The army was defeated at Stoke by Henry’s forces; the earl of Lincoln was killed in battle; Simnel was captured and set to work as a spit-turner in Henry’s kitchens, later becoming one of Henry’s falconers.9

Perkin Warbeck put forth his claim to be Richard duke of York in 1491. Though he never was able to put together a force as large as Simnel’s, he was received in the courts of Burgundy, France, and Scotland as “Richard IV.” The king of Scotland arranged his marriage to one of his own kinswomen. Even Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain—staunch supporters of Henry VII, having betrothed their daughter Catherine to Henry’s heir Prince Arthur—heded their bets by referring to Perkin as the “so-called Duke of York.” Perkin’s story was that his older brother Edward (V) had been killed, but that because of Perkin’s tender age he was spared and spirited across the Channel to Flanders. He seemed to know intimate details about the court of Edward IV, and according to some resembled his purported father. André writes that Perkin was “brought up in England by Edward (Brampton), a former Jew, later baptized by King Edward IV.” That upbringing in Edward’s court, so André wrote, is where Perkin learned “everything about the times of Edward the Fourth,” and “the names of all the king’s close friends and servants” and “details about places, times and individuals.”10

8 Hobbins, Bernard André, xxxvii, xxxviii; Chrimes, Henry VII, 69-73.

9 See Gordon Smith, “Lambert Simnel and the King from Dublin,” The Ricardian, X (1996), 498-536 argues that the person crowned in Dublin actually was Edward IV’s oldest son, Edward V, who was killed at Stoke, and Simnel was substituted for him to make claims for the legitimacy of the “King from Dublin” look ludicrous.

10 Hobbins, Bernard André, 60, 61.
André’s description of Perkin’s origins does not appear in the version of Perkin’s origins that became the “official” story line after he was captured in 1497. In that narrative, before he was hanged, Perking confessed that he was born to a Flemish family, and later was taught English, (twice, once on the Continent and again in Ireland), and details of Edward’s court by those using him as a pretender.11 Probably André’s version of Perkin being raised in Edward’s court was seen as dangerous, suggesting to disgruntled Yorkists that he might actually be Richard of York. Sir William Stanley, brother to Thomas Earl of Derby, who was stepfather to Henry, was executed in 1495 for treason, purportedly for saying that if Perkin were Richard of York he would not raise his hand against him.12 Besides, Henry’s aim was to make Perkin’s claim look totally ludicrous. (It is interesting no pretender claimed to be Richard of York’s elder brother Edward V. It seems that it was generally accepted that he was dead.)

Historians generally accept that Simnel was an imposter, since Henry VII held the young Earl of Warwick in The Tower and produced him to prove the imposture. Some, however, suggest that Perkin Warbeck really was what he claimed to be—Edward IV’s younger son, Richard duke of York. Sir Thomas More’s History of Richard III notes that after he first appeared many high and low-born in England believed Perkin’s story.13 In 1619, in his History of Richard the Third, not only did Sir George Buck believe the two princes survived into the reign of Henry VII, he asserted Perkin Warbeck was Richard of York.14 Buck’s great-grandfather, Sir John Buck, was executed by Henry after the Battle of Bosworth for fighting for Richard III, and the Buck family had close ties to the Howard dukes of Norfolk.15 As such Buck may have had what we call “inside

11 Hobbins, Bernard André, 60, 61. Wroe, The Perfect Prince, 361-420. For a briefer account of these pretenders see Chrimes, Henry VII, 69-93.
12 Chrimes, Henry VII, 85.
14 Buck, Richard the Third, xii-xiii, 139-40, 159-61.
information” about matters at the Tudor courts. Horace Walpole’s *Historic Doubts* (1768) argues that Perkin truly was Richard, noting that among several other inconsistencies in Henry’s “official” version, the absurdity that Perkin had to be taught English twice.\(^{16}\) D. M. Kleyn’s *Richard of England* (1990) asserts Perkin was Richard of York. Anne Wroe’s recent *The Perfect Prince* (2003) exhaustively examines most of the sources, English and Continental, for the Warbeck episode. From that examination Wroe concludes it seems impossible to determine conclusively whether he was, or was not, Richard of York.\(^{17}\)

Nonetheless, given the disappearance of the princes in The Tower, after Richard’s death at Bosworth in 1485, the only legitimate paternal descendant of the House of York was ten-year-old Edward earl of Warwick, the son of George duke of Clarence. In June 1485, as rumors of Henry Tudor’s invasion surfaced, Richard III had sent Warwick (and possibly Richard’s own bastard son John, and Edward’s bastard son Arthur) north to Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire.\(^{18}\) After his victory at Bosworth, Henry Tudor immediately took steps to secure young Warwick’s person. He was brought back to London kept in what we might call “protective custody” in The Tower.

It is probable that Henry also secured the persons of Richard’s and Edward’s bastard sons. Information about John of Gloucester and Arthur Plantagenet is sparse; even their respective ages in 1485 are uncertain. Based on a few items concerning them in sources, “guesstimates” put John’s and Arthur’s ages somewhere between 15 and 20. Their whereabouts before and after 1485 also are uncertain, but most likely after Bosworth both were kept in or


\(^{17}\) D. M. Kleyn, *Richard of England* (Oxford: Kensal Press, 1990), *passim*. Anne Wroe, *The Perfect Prince* (Random House, 2003), *passim*. Though he does not claim that Warbeck was Richard of York, David Baldwin’s *The Lost Prince*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2007), *passim* also demonstrates how more recent histories suggest the possible survival of young Richard of York into the Tudor era. Baldwin explores the possibility that a bricklayer called Richard Plantagenet, who was buried in 1550 at Eastwell, Kent, *could* have been Richard of York. In particular Baldwin stresses the relative silence in English sources about the fates of the sons of Edward IV.

\(^{18}\) Kendall, *Richard III*, 400.
near Henry’s court. John received a pension of £20 per annum in 1486. In 1501 Arthur officially became a member of the household of Queen Elizabeth of York, Arthur’s half-sister. In 1509 he was named a squire of the bodyguard of the young prince of Wales, Henry. Despite their age differences, Arthur became a close friend of Henry. In 1523 he was created viscount Lisle.  

The maternally descended grandsons of Richard of York were the five de la Pole brothers, sons of Richard of York’s daughter Elizabeth and John de la Pole (Sr.), earl of Suffolk. Most were youths: Edmund, aged 14, Humphrey, aged 11, William, aged 7, and Richard, aged 5. Only John (Jr.), earl of Lincoln, aged 24, was an adult in 1485. He may have been named Richard’s heir after the death of Richard’s legitimate son Edward in 1484. Lincoln was part of Richard’s army at Bosworth, and survived the battle, though Henry’s proclamation lists him as a casualty. He made his peace with Henry. Lincoln is listed in Henry’s coronation procession, and present at a Privy Council meeting in February 1487.

Henry may have been practicing the old adage: “keep your friends close and your enemies closer,” but in these first two years of his reign he seems to have had no intentions to kill off the male descendants of Richard of York. In fact, the first fatality amongst those descendants might be viewed as “self-inflicted.” By March 1487 Lincoln had become deeply involved in the Lambert Simnel conspiracy. As noted above, Lincoln was killed at the Battle of Stoke. Hence his death was only indirectly at Henry’s hands, and only after he had risen up on open rebellion. The pretender Simnel, was treated leniently. There were no wholesale executions of rebels, and Irish lords who supported Simnel were pardoned after making oaths of allegiance to Henry. Nor did Henry take any measures against the rest of the de la Pole brothers. In fact, Henry made Edmund, the


20 Kendall, Richard III, 349-50; Penn, Winter King, 22.

21 “Proclamation of Henry Tudor, 22-3 August 1485;” 3; Ross, Richard III, 225; Chrimes, Henry VII, 51, 59, 76. DNB, 1st ed., v. XLY, 399-400.
eldest surviving brother, a knight of the Garter in 1496, and earl of Suffolk in 1498.\textsuperscript{22}

In 1490 Henry faced yet another “pretender” whom history calls Perkin Warbeck. As mentioned above, probably we will never know if he were Richard of York, the legitimate younger son of Edward IV. We do know that he was a political and diplomatic embarrassment to Henry. Crowned heads of Europe at one time or another recognized Perkin’s claim to be rightful king of England. His two attempts to overthrow Henry by force of arms, 1495 and 1497, failed, and he and his wife were captured in the 1497. Both were taken to Henry’s court in London. As with the Simnel supporters, the Cornishmen who supported Warbeck were treated fairly leniently. Ringleaders were executed, but most were sent home after paying stiff fines. Irish lords who had voiced support for Warbeck were given a general pardon.

According to Henry’s historians, in 1499 after about 18 months in “house arrest” at Henry’s court, Perkin tried to escape, and in July was imprisoned in The Tower near the quarters of the earl of Warwick. In August, again according to Henry’s historians, the two prisoners entered into a plot to escape The Tower. As a result, both were accused of treason and executed in November. What seems to have been the chief motive in disposing of Warwick and Perkin was pressure from Ferdinand and Isabella. The Spanish monarchs refused to send their daughter to England until Henry could assure them that there would be no more threats to his rule.\textsuperscript{23} The deaths of Warwick and Perkin seems to have satified them; in 1501 Catherine of Aragon was sent to England to marry Prince Arthur.

Before 1499 Henry also may have disposed of John of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of Richard III. Some sources suggest some sort of correspondence between John and some Irish lords. If true, given Henry’s experiences with Ireland and Simnel and Perkin, he certainly might have taken action against this Yorkist grandson.

\textsuperscript{22} Chrimes, \textit{Henry VII}, 69-79; Penn, \textit{Winter King}, 22-24; \textit{DNB}, 1\textsuperscript{st} ed., v. XLVI, 21-22.

John disappears in the sources after 1491. Sir George Buck writes that Henry imprisoned him and put to him death. Nonetheless, it was the executions of Warwick and Perkin that led the Spanish ambassador, Rodrigo De Puebla, to assure Ferdinand and Isabella that now there was "not a drop of doubtful royal blood" in England.

Puebla may have spoken too soon. In August 1499 Edmund de la Pole, grandson of Richard of York through his mother Elizabeth, and younger brother of John earl of Lincoln (killed at Stoke) fled to Flanders. He was coaxed back by Henry VII, but in 1501 again fled to the Continent along with his brother Richard, seeking support from Maxmilian of Austria for his claim to the English throne. Henry certainly viewed this as a serious challenge to his reign and dynasty. In 1502 he committed the last de la Pole brother still in England, William, to The Tower, where he remained until his death in 1539. He paid Maxmilian £10,000 on condition of Maxmilian’s promise not to support the claims of any English rebels, and in 1504 Henry nullified most restrictions on the Hanseatic League’s trade in England. Most likely this was to prevent the Hanse from giving Edmund any support. Henry finally did get possession of Edmund. Since 1504 Edmund had been in the Low Countries. In 1506 Edmund was surrendered to Henry, upon receiving Henry’s promise that he would not be executed. Edmund was committed to The Tower; he still remained there at Henry’s death in 1509.

One side-event of the de la Pole defection was the execution in 1502 of Sir James Tyrell, the captain of Calais. Tyrell was executed for treason, for allowing Edmund and Richard de la Pole to shelter in Calais on their way to Austria. It seems, Henry informed some at court that before his execution, Tyrell also confessed to murdering the princes in The Tower under orders from Richard III. Obviously Henry sought to quash any further thought that a legitimate son of Edward IV still survived.

25 Penn, Winter King, 39.
28 Chrimes, Henry VII, 93.
Henry VII does not seem to have been excessively bloodthirsty. He did not execute Lambert Simnel; indeed Simnel was taken into the king’s household and ended up in the respectable position of king’s falconer. Perkin Warbeck also was not summarily executed. After “confessing” he was not Richard of York he was housed at court for the next 18 months. Edmund and William de la Pole were imprisoned in The Tower, but not executed. Their elder brother, John, died fighting against Henry at Stoke, but he and his younger brothers actually received favor at Henry’s court until they turned against him.

Thus Henry’s personal role in the deaths of Yorkist descendants during his reign totals only one, Edward earl of Warwick (or perhaps two if Perkin Warbeck were Richard of York), and at most five (if Henry ordered the deaths of the princes in The Tower and John of Gloucester). He was lenient with the supporters of Simnel and Perkin. To be sure, a few ringleaders were executed, and hefty fines levied on commoners who rose up in their favor, but Henry meted out no punishments like the “superfluous cruelty,” as A. F. Pollard puts it, inflicted by Henry VIII upon those involved in the so-called Pilgrimage of Grace. Given these facts it seems it was not “the settled and considered policy” of Henry VII to extinguish the heirs of the House of York.

However, the second part of Tey’s quotation, “it was left to Henry VIII to get rid of the last of them,” does have merit. Henry VIII does seem to have been “proactive” in eliminating his York-descended cousins. It was Henry VIII who oversaw the demise of the de la Poles, grandsons of Richard of York by his daughter Elizabeth. On 30 April 1513 Edmund, who had been in The Tower since 1506, was executed, apparently without trial. Hall’s Chronicles suggests that Edmund’s execution was a piece of deathbed advice Henry VII gave his son. Yet if so, why did Henry VIII wait four years to carry out his father’s advice? Two other reasons seem more likely. The first is that Edmund’s brother, Richard de la Pole, was fighting with

the French, then at war with England.\textsuperscript{30} Perhaps more significant was that Henry’s queen was pregnant. This was her third pregnancy; in 1510 she gave birth to a stillborn daughter, and in 1511 she gave birth to a son, but he died within a month. Unlike his father, who had a strapping young heir in the person of the future Henry VIII and two healthy daughters, the now reigning Henry VIII had no heirs of his body.\textsuperscript{31}

Technically that made Edmund de la Pole Henry’s presumptive heir. During his time on the Continent, Edmund already had claimed his right to the throne was superior to that of Henry VII (and by implication superior to that of Henry VIII). And, since Henry was planning to campaign personally in France, leaving his pregnant queen as regent,\textsuperscript{32} he may well have believed that it was risky to leave Edmund alive. Edmund’s only issue was a daughter who was a nun. William de la Pole, who had been imprisoned in 1502, was not killed, but remained in custody until he died in 1539. Humphrey de la Pole, died in 1513; Richard de la Pole died on the Continent in 1525, fighting in the army of King Francis I at the Battle of Pavia. Humphrey, Richard, and William had issue.\textsuperscript{33} Their deaths took care of all the legitimate grandsons of Richard of York.

In 1521 Henry executed Edward Stafford duke of Buckingham. Stafford does not appear to have plotted against the king, but he was the descendant of Thomas of Woodstock, youngest son of Edward III. At that time Henry’s only legitimate heir was his daughter Mary, just three years old, and Queen Catherine’s last pregnancy in 1518 had ended in a daughter who lived only a few days after birth. Perhaps it was Henry’s lack of legitimate heirs, especially males, that led Henry to think that Buckingham might be plotting to seize the throne. Even in Henry VII’s time Buckingham’s lineage had some “saying that he was a noble man and woldbe a ryll ruler.” Whatever

\textsuperscript{30} DNB, 1\textsuperscript{st} ed., v. XLVI, 21-23.
\textsuperscript{31} Starkey, Six Wives, 119-23.
\textsuperscript{32} Starkey, Six Wives, 137.
\textsuperscript{33} DNB, 1\textsuperscript{st} ed., v. XLVI, 22, 23, 46; Starkey, Six Wives, 160.
Henry’s reasons, Buckingham’s death certainly served to give young Princess Mary a safer position as heir presumptive.

Yet there still remained legitimate great-grandsons of Richard of York. There were Henry’s three Pole cousins (not to be confused with the de la Poles), the sons of Margaret Pole, countess of Salisbury who was the daughter of George duke of Clarence, and Henry’s Courtenay cousin, Henry marquess of Exeter, son of Edward IV’s daughter Catherine.

Between 1538 and 1541 Henry dispatched most of the great-grandsons of Richard of York. One, Reginald Pole, was a cleric, and out of reach, having lived on the Continent since 1531. Reginald broke with Henry over “The King’s Great Matter,” opposing Henry’s break with Rome and marriage to Anne Boleyn. His mother and brothers also, privately, opposed the break. Henry was incensed when Reginald was made cardinal in 1538. Shortly after, Reginald’s brothers in England—Sir Geoffrey and Henry baron Montague—were arrested, along with Henry’s eleven year-old son and Geoffrey’s nine year-old son. Geoffrey was pardoned and released sometime soon after his brother Henry was executed in 1538, but Henry’s young son remained in The Tower until his death in 1542 (rumored to have been starved to death), and Geoffrey’s son also remained in The Tower until he was released in 1552.  

Hoping to lure Reginald back to England, in 1540 Henry arrested his seventy year-old mother Margaret countess of Salisbury. Failing to achieve that goal, Henry in revenge had his mother beheaded in 1541. Fearing now for his own life, Geoffrey Pole fled to the Continent. Like his brother Reginald, Geoffrey remained there until the reign of Queen Mary.  

At the same time Henry moved against his Yorkist Courtenay cousin, descended from Catherine, the youngest daughter of

35 DNB, 1st ed., v. XLVI, 19, 24-26, 29, 36-49.
Edward IV. Henry marquess of Exeter and his son Edward were arrested and housed in The Tower. The marquess was accused of plotting an uprising from Cornwall and Devon to restore the “Old Religion.” Henry Courtenay, like Henry Pole, was executed in 1538; his young son Edward remained confined to The Tower until the accession of Queen Mary.36 Even Henry’s old friend, Arthur Plantagenet (Edward IV’s illegitimate son) was arrested in 1540 on suspicion of treason, and sent to The Tower. He died there in 1542.37 By then Henry had eliminated almost all male descendants of the House of York save himself and his son Prince Edward.

What may have precipitated this rapid roundup and elimination of the male descendants of Duke Richard of York in 1538? The years 1536 and 1537 were tumultuous ones for Henry VIII. In May 1536 his marriage to Anne Boleyn was annulled, and Anne was executed for treason on 19 May; adultery and incest were purported to be her treasonable acts. Those actions bastardized his three-year-old daughter Elizabeth, leaving Henry now with three offspring, all of them royal, but all of them also bastards—the Ladies Mary and Elizabeth, and Henry Fitzroy duke of Richmond. Fitzroy, however, died in July 1536,38 leaving only Henry’s two bastardized daughters as his potential successors. Henry hoped that his new wife, Jane Seymour, would present him with a legitimate, male heir.39

These events were court intrigues. A much more serious challenge to Henry was the widespread unrest in the North. In October of 1536, armed bands from Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Durham, Cumberland, Northumberland, and Westmorland comprised of commons, gentry, and even some lords advanced south. The movement came to be dubbed the “Pilgrimage of Grace.” This was grass-roots reaction to Henry’s religious reforms, especially the dissolution of the monasteries. By 1536 “unintended consequences” of that dissolution had surfaced. Traditionally, monasteries had been one of the

36 DNB, 1st ed., v. XII, 335-36; Pollard, Henry VIII, 300.
37 DNB, 2nd ed., v. IV, 1261-65.
38 Murphy, The Bastard Prince, 174.
chief sources of poor relief. Their dissolution coincided with two years of famine, in effect removing what we today would call the “safety-net” for the poor. The “pilgrims” demanded the restoration of the monasteries, and the removal of the king’s ministers Cromwell and Audley, and of bishops Cramner, Saxton, and Helsey—all were active in promoting Protestant reforms. The movement was so large and strong that Henry needed to “negotiate” to gain time to raise troops and defuse the situation. He invited one of the movement’s leaders, Robert Aske, to the court’s Christmas celebrations, and pretended to act upon the “pilgrims’” demands. Most of the “pilgrims” were assuaged, but some doubted the king’s sincerity, and renewed armed rebellion in February 1537. Henry now had his excuse to move against the largely disbanded “pilgrims.” Their leaders were seized and executed, as were many of the commons. Henry’s forces brutally mopped up most of the resistance by May, but in the autumn new rumors surfaced about plans for uprisings in Cornwall and other counties in the southwest.  

The bright spot for Henry was the birth of a healthy son on 12 October 1537, who was christened Edward three days later. Along with official proclamations in October announcing the birth of Henry’s legitimate, male heir, Henry also seems to have used entertainers to advertise the status of the infant Prince Edward just as he had done for Princess Mary, as had his grandfather, Edward IV, and his father done for their heirs. The Records of Early English Drama reveal appearances in the provinces of the infant Prince Edward’s minstrels almost immediately after his birth. His mother Jane Seymour, however, died 9 days after the christening. For some time after her death Henry seemed uninterested in a hurried search for a new queen. 

Taken together these events offer probable reasons for Henry’s taking action against the male descendants of the House of York. His

40 Starkey, Six Wives, 602-08; Pollard, Henry VIII, 128-29. Also see: Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, 397; Fideler, “Poverty, Policy and Providence,” 205-08.

41 Forse, “Advertising Status,” 69-75.

42 Starkey, Six Wives, 605-08, 611.
Pole cousins were known to be Catholic adherents. One, Reginald Pole, was a cardinal of the Church and out of reach on the Continent. Yet, his mother and brothers in England maintained communications with him. Though his cousin Henry Courtenay, marquess of Exeter, supported Henry’s break with Rome and annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon,\(^43\) Courtenay’s wife Gertrude kept in contact with Catherine of Aragon until her death in 1536, and with the Nun of Kent, Elizabeth Barton, who purported to have divine revelations condemning Henry’s break with Rome and his religious reforms. She was executed for treason in 1534.

Furthermore, rumors from Cornwall suggested there were demands that Henry name Henry Courtenay as his successor.\(^44\) Henry had just put down a serious rebellion now termed “The Pilgrimage of Grace,” when rumors arose of another such uprising in the southwest. Because of their connections to traditional Catholicism, Henry may have thought that his Pole and Courtenay cousins might become the foci of an attempt to depose him. The birth of his son Edward in November 1537 probably spurred Henry in 1538 to remove potential threats to himself and his heir. The genealogy below shows that Cecily Neville, whose mother Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt, gave the progeny of Richard of York a claim to the Beaufort-Lancastrian claim to the throne as good, or better, than that of the Tudors. Ironically, Richard III, a great-grandson of John of Gaunt, actually had a better Beaufort-Lancastrian claim to the English throne than did Gaunt’s great great-grandson Henry VII. Given the interest in geneology and its use to assert “legitimacy,” Henry VIII no doubt knew that fact.

\(^43\) Pollard, *Henry VIII*, 244.

Descent of the House of Lancaster: Beaufort Descendants of John of Gaunt

Edward III

John of Gaunt = Katherine Swynford (mistress)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Beauford I</th>
<th>Joan Beaufort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Beaufort II</td>
<td>Cecily Neville = Richard of York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Beaufort = Edmund Tudor</td>
<td>Edward IV, Richard III, Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VII Tudor</td>
<td>The Princes, Edward Warwick, de la Poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VIII Tudor</td>
<td>The Poles, the Courtenays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Was it then “the settled and considered policy of the Tudors to rid themselves of all rivals to the throne, especially those heirs of York who remained alive on the succession of Henry VII?” As detailed above, such does not seem to be a policy of Henry VII. Yet, given the fragility of Henry VIII’s line—one legitimate son and two illegitimate (by Church of England law) daughters—it seems logical that Henry VIII would seek to eliminate potential challengers. Yet his actions do not look like “considered and settled policy,” instead Henry seems to eliminated Yorkist grandsons and great-grandsons only when he perceived serious threats to himself and to his dynasty.

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Bibliography


This essay examines twenty-two editions of little-studied small Mid-Tudor chronicles that were published by printers at Canterbury and London. They demonstrate the important role of printers in historical scholarship and offer a significantly different perspective on English history than the better-known, larger contemporary works of Robert Fabyan, Edward Hall, and Thomas Cooper. The chronicles also shed light on the readership of historical works by non-elite readers who presumably could not afford larger and more expensive chronicles. The short chronicles present a simplified view of the past, avoid propagating the well-known Tudor myths including the tyranny of Richard III, and demonstrate a clear preference for recent history. Although overlooked in most accounts of Early Modern historiography, the small Mid-Tudor chronicles are clearly part of the historical culture of the era.

The mid-Tudor period witnessed the publication of a remarkable number of small English chronicles that have received little attention from historians. The smallest of these were entitled *A Cronicle of Yeres, from the begynning of the World, wherin ye shall fynd the names of all the kinges of England...* published in ten editions by London printers between 1540 and 1552. A second series of somewhat longer chronicles, *A Breuiat Cronicle, contaynyng all the kynes... from Brute to this daye...*, appeared between 1552 and 1561. The three earliest editions of this title were printed at Canterbury by John Mychell while the latter eight were the work of two London printers. The chronicles--printed in octavo--are significant because they are the work of printers. Furthermore, they shed light on the readership of historical works by those who presumably could not afford the larger contemporary chronicles of Robert Fabyan, Edward Hall, and Thomas Cooper. Although the short chronicles lack...
serious historical insight, the publication of over 20 editions in only two decades reveals a substantial popular interest in national history.\footnote{See Appendix for chronicles cited in this study.} Moreover, study of the small chronicles clearly shows that non-elite readers of the mid-Tudor era received a very different portrayal of major historical events including the Norman Conquest, Magna Carta, the deposition of Richard III, and the Reformation from those of later generations.

Recent studies of early modern historiography and historical culture have emphasized the late sixteenth and seventeen centuries and neglected the mid-Tudor decades. While these studies have ventured into popular historical culture, most scholarship has privileged the elite culture of the educated upper classes.\footnote{Woolf, \textit{The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture 1500-1700}; Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}; Thomas, \textit{The Perception of the Past in Early Modern England}.} It has been argued that a growing reading public of non-elite readers increased the demand for books,\footnote{Bennett, \textit{English Books and Readers}, 1475-1557, 54f.} but David Cressy has written, “We simply do not know the market for popular print in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period” and added that a relatively small number of book buyers could absorb output of the London press.\footnote{Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}, 47.} Furthermore, he concluded that there was no steady reduction of illiteracy among men in the early modern period although literacy among tradesmen and craftsmen rose.\footnote{Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}, 142, 149.} According to Daniel Woolf, the market for Tudor chronicles peaked at mid-century and was at the whim of a market that was glutted by the end of the sixteenth century.\footnote{Woolf, \textit{Reading History in the Early Modern England}, 21.}

Mid-Tudor printers might not have agreed with modern scholarship as one edition after another of the small chronicles came forth from their presses. The nine printers who compiled the chronicles did not specialize in historical works with the exception of Thomas
Marshe who printed numerous editions of the chronicles of John Stow. The earliest editions of *A Cronicle of Yeres* were produced by John Byddell or Salisbury, a London printer and bookseller, who worked as an assistant to Wynkyn de Worde. Byddell published the first edition of William Marshall’s *Primer* in 1534 containing portions of the Bible in English and many other religious and theological titles. By 1544 he had printed fifty titles and was succeeded by Edward Whitchurch who also printed Bibles and religious works and became a partner of Richard Grafton. In 1542 Whitchurch printed an edition of the chronicle for John Judson, the same date as the last of Byddell’s editions. Thomas Petyt and William Myddleton published editions in 1543, and Myddleton produced another edition in 1544. Myddleton was primarily a printer of law books; at his death in 1547, his widow, Elizabeth, was remarried to another printer, William Powell, who took over his business. Powell published three editions of the *Cronicle of Yeres* in 1549, 1550, and 1552. The last edition of the chronicle which appeared in 1557 was the work of William Copland, an original member of the Stationers’ Company, who printed extensively in the 1540s and 1550s. It is noteworthy that five of these printers fell afoul of the law for printing illegal books. Byddell, Whitchurch, Myddleton, and Petyt were summoned to appear before the Privy Council on 8 April 1543 and imprisoned for a fortnight. Upon release they were required to pay a fine and to list all books sold and purchased. William Copland was brought before the Privy Council in March 1556 charged with printing the *Recantation* of Thomas Cranmer. John Cawood, Royal printer to Mary, ordered all copies of Copland’s work to be burned.


Blayney, *Stationers Company* I, 285, 360-379; Clair, 59-60, 65. Judson was a senior member of the Stationers’ Company on its incorporation in 1557 and later served as warden and master dying in 1589.

Tanner, ODNB.

*Acts of the Privy Council* (1542-1547), I, 107, 117, 125; Blayney, I, 548.

Although these printers had legal problems, it does not appear that they arose from printing the *Cronicle of Yeres*.

John Mychell, who printed the first three editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle* at Canterbury, is perhaps the best known printer of the short chronicles.\(^{13}\) He began printing in London but was working at Canterbury by 1535, becoming a freeman of the city two years later.\(^{14}\) The first two Canterbury editions appeared during the reign of Edward VI while the third was printed in 1554. Subsequent editions were the work of two London printers. John Kynge, an original member of the Company of Stationers, printed six editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle* during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth. He probably died at the end of 1561, for in that year Thomas Marshe “had license to print *The Cronacle in viii.*, which he bought of John Kynge’s wife.”\(^{15}\) During the reign of Mary, Marshe printed a variety of Catholic works\(^{16}\) and then produced editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle* in 1556 and 1561, the latter being the last in the series. He also published the chronicles of John Stow as well as numerous other important works until 1587. In 1575 and 1581 Marshe was a Warden of the Stationers’ Company.

The printers made no claims of originality and borrowed freely from one another and from larger works often without attribution. On the title page of the 1542 edition of *A Cronicle of Yeres*, John Byddell simply stated that his work was “newly augmented and corrected.” John Mychell’s title page explained that his chronicle was “gathered oute of dyuers chronycles.” His text, however, includes citations of specific authors including Robert Fabyan, Jean Froissart, Edward Hall, Thomas Lanquet, and William Patten. Mychell praised the learning of Eusebius and Bede and mentioned “a littell shorte Cronicle, notinge many thinges worthy of memory, whiche boke I haue by my poore laboure somwhat augmented.” The

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13 Sessions, *John Mychell: Canterbury’s First Printer*, ODNB.
16 ESTC.
reference was almost certainly to the earlier work of John Byddell.

At the beginning of each edition of the Breuiat Cronicle, Mychell offered an eloquent dedication to Sir Anthony Aucher in praise of history stating that without a knowledge of history “we walk in darkenes and lyue lyke chyldren. But Histories and Croni-
cles faithfully written set before our face as presently to loke vpon all ages, all tymes, all chaunges, all states, and all doynges, eu-
then the beginnyninge of the world to our owne time, yea, without
that we knowe of no world before our beinge.” The other printers,
on the other hand, offered no introductions to their work.

Published in octavos, each edition of the Cronicle of Yeres is about 30 folios in length while the various editions of the Breuiat Cronicle consist of over 100 folios. In comparison The Chronicle of Fabyan (1542) includes 490 numbered pages while Edward Hall’s The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies… (1548) extends to over 600 folios. An Epitome of Chronicles…STC 15218 produced by Thomas Cooper in 1560 contains 377 leaves. Although the cost of the small chronicles was significantly lower than the larger ones, the actual price is difficult to determine. Most of the short chron-
icles begin with a listing of the four law terms, an item that would have been useful to lawyers or persons engaged in litigation. The chronicles conclude with a compilation of traveling distances from major towns in England and Wales to London. Following are two examples: “Here foloweth the Waye from Douer to London” and “Here foloweth the way from saint Buryen [St. Buryan] in Cor-

17 Sir Anthony Aucher, a Kentish gentleman and JP, was Marshal of Calais. He was killed at the siege in 1558. See J. D. Alsop, ODNB.

18 There are three exceptions: Byddell (1539) was duodecimo; Powell (1549) and Cop-


20 The law terms are included in all editions of Mychell; Byddell STC 9985.5, 9986; Kynge STC 9970.5, 9971, 9973, 9975; Petyt, Myddleton, and Powell STC 9988.3, 9989; Whichurch, incomplete text; Copland; Marshe, both eds.
newall to London.”  The wide geographical focus perhaps represented a marketing effort to sell chronicles though the whole country and assist persons traveling to London. Although few persons living in London or Canterbury traveled with any frequency outside their region to the far corners of the land, those tradesmen, itinerants, and adventurers who did might have found the travel data as useful as the historical narrative. Edward Whitchurch’s edition of the *Cronicle of Yeres* (1542) was the first of the small chronicles to include travel information. John Mychell omitted travel data from the first edition of the *Breuiat Cronicle* [STC 9968] noting “Here I shoulde haue put in the notable waies from certaine cities to Lon
don, but some of them be not marked truely wherefore I left them out till such tyme as I haue more knowledge in these waies.”21 The two later editions included this information as did all but one of the London editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle*.22

Without exception the small chronicles are structured around the annual election of mayors and sheriffs of London. This characteristic is particularly emphasized in Wylyam Powell’s edition of 1549 which carries page titles stating that it is a chronicle of mayors and sheriffs.23 The listing of mayors and sheriffs begins in 1399; in fact, the history of the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V in the *Cronicle of Yeres* is little more than a listing of these officials. Beginning with the reign of Henry VI, there is a gradual increase in the number of other historical events as the chronicle proceeds to the reign of Henry VIII. Both versions emphasize the period following the accession of Henry VIII in 1509.

*Cronicle of Yeres*

Each edition of the *Cronicle of Yeres* begins with the Creation followed by the arrival of Brute at Totnes and the subsequent founding of New Troy or London. The chronicles move from the

21   Mychell STC 9968, fol. L8r.
22   No travel data in Kynge STC 9970.5.
23   Powell STC 9988.3.
Incarnation of Christ to William I with nothing on Roman rule or the Anglo-Saxon period. The various editions merely list the kings who reigned before Henry IV giving the length of the reign and place of burial. For the earlier period important topics such as the Norman Conquest, the murder of Thomas Becket, Magna Carta, the Black Death, and the Hundred Years’ War are omitted. From 1399, however, the chronicles include “many notable actes done in and sith the reigne of king Henry the fourth.”

The account of the Lancastrian kings declines to affirm the heroism of Henry V and only mentions individual battles of the Wars of the Roses without comment on the succession question. The first Yorkist monarch, Edward IV, is noted as a “noble king” whose son, Edward V, was “shamefully murthered” by command of his uncle, Richard, duke of Gloucester. Richard III’s reign is treated superficially with no further evidence of the vilification characteristic of Sir Thomas More and other 16th century writers. Similarly, the *Cronicle of Yeres* offers nothing significant about the reign of Henry VII with respect to the foundation of the new Tudor dynasty, and there is no discussion of Henry’s claim to throne. The account of the first Tudor is actually somewhat shorter than those of Henry VI and Edward IV. Therefore, the mid-Tudor reader of the chronicle who had no other sources of information was wholly unaware that he was living in a new era under a king who differed significantly from his Lancastrian and Yorkist predecessors.

The various editions of the *Cronicle of Yeres* give substantially more space to the reign of Henry VIII than any previous monarch; hence recent history is clearly privileged. In John Byddell’s edition of 1540, for example, 15 of a total of 48 pages is given over

24 Byddell STC 9986, Whitchurch 9996.5, Petyt (1543) 9987, Powell 9988.3 and 9989, Myddleton 9988 and Copland. Byddell STC 9985.5, the shortest edition, begins with the reign of Henry IV and lists no kings before 1399.

25 Byddell STC 9985.5, Powell 9988.3, Whitchurch, Middleton 9987.5, Copland.

26 Byddell STC 9986.

to the first 31 years of Henry’s reign. The 1542 edition devotes 23 of 60 pages to the reign, which is over one-third of the text. The emphasis on contemporary history continues in later editions. Thom Petyt’s edition of 1544, for example, devoted 22 of 64 pages of the chronicle to the period following the accession of Henry VIII, while Powell’s edition of 1552 devoted 24 of 44 pages of the chronicle text to the period since 1509.

Each edition of the *Chronicle of Yeres* presents the reign of Henry VIII as a series of disconnected events in the same way that earlier reigns were narrated. However, the narrative was extended chronologically as later editions were printed. This practice would suggest that mid-Tudor readers wanted chronicles that included the most recent events. For the period following 1529, each edition details the religious changes that separated England from the see of Rome and created a national church. The chronicles also include entries dealing with war and military operations in Scotland and France and well as an extensive listing of executions. John Byddell’s edition of 1542 provides a basic outline of the Henrician Reformation that was followed by the other printers. While he offered no overall assessment of the religious changes of the 1530s, his narrative leaves little doubt that he was sympathetic to government policy.

Byddell together with Whitchurch, Myddleton, Petyt, and Powell state that Henry VIII was divorced from Queen Catherine by “due process of the law” and that Sir Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher were executed for denying the royal supremacy. These printers also declared that “the byshop of Rome with al his false vsurped power” was abolished. Further evidence of the printers’ approval of government policy is suggested by the entry that Bibles were placed in every parish church so that the people could read and hear the word of God. Entries in the chronicles concerning leg-

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28. Byddell STC 9986, fol. D2r.; Whitchurch, fol. C6v. omits “false”; Petyt, fol. D2r.; Myddleton 9988, fol. B8r.; Powell 9989, fol. B6r. Copland 9989.5 states that the king was divorced from his lawful wife and the bishop of Rome “with all his power” was abolished, fol. D4r.

islation against the “enormities” of the clergy, the abolition of holy
days, removal of images from churches, and the dissolution of the
monasteries give additional support to the printers’ attitude. On the
other hand, Thomas Cromwell, “late before created Erle of Essex,”
was not associated with the Henrician religious reforms, and it was
only noted that he was “beheaded at the Towre hyll for treason.”

All editions of the *Cronicle of Yeres* except for those of Wyl-
lyam Powell and William Copland end before the death of Henry
VIII. Powell offered a detailed account of the protracted French
war that occupied the last years of the king’s reign. He extolled the
conquest of Boulogne exclaiming “what laude and prayse” should
be given to the king and head of the church. Powell also celebrated
the English invasion of Scotland in 1544 with a two column list-
ing of towns destroyed. At the king’s death Powell and Copland
praised him saying that the people lived a joyful and peaceful life
“reduced from the errour of idolatry,” but Copland omitted the refer-
ence to “error”.

Powell began the reign of Edward VI rejoicing at the acces-
sion of “our most gracious soueraynge Lorde...” and then described
the events of the coronation. Powell, whose last edition ends 25
February 1552, expressed sympathy for the Edwardian religious re-
forms and stated that the marriage of priests was lawful by the “laws


31 Account of war with France is the same as Mychell STC 9970. There is more detail on
war in Scotland [1542-3] than Mychell including lists of towns destroyed by the English.

1544—the king is head of church as in Mychell 9968 and 9969; there is a similar occur-
rence in reference to Henry VIII when peace treaty was made in June 1546. Longer ac-
count of fighting on 9 Oct. than Mychell 9970. Copland’s account is similar but omits the
reference to the king as head of the church.

33 Powell STC 9989, fol. B8v.-Clr.

34 Powell, fol. C4r. His account of the king’s death is the same as Mychell 9970. Copland
omits “reduced from error” from the phrase.
of God.” Moreover, Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was “justly” deprived of his bishopric for “manifest contempste and con- 

sequently disobedience or rather rebellion” against Edward VI, while Copland’s edition published during the reign of Mary omits the latter quotation. On the other hand, neither edition mentioned the Book of Common Prayer of 1549. Moreover, neither edition offered a thorough account of the rebellions of 1549. The ‘rising’ in Devon and Cornwall was “domage to them and other” while the revolt in Norfolk and Suffolk was referred to as an “insurrection.”

After the rebellions were subdued, Powell and Copland wrote that Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector, was committed to the Tower “to the great lamentation of many,” but only Powell said that his release was greeted “with great rejoicing of people.” Powell, however, incorrectly located Somerset’s first imprisonment before the outbreak of the 1549 rebellions. Somerset’s second fall and subsequent execution in 1552 for conspiring against “certain privy councilors” were recorded without emotion. Copland’s edition, which ends 28 August 1557, is the only version of the Cronicle of Yeres that contains a complete account of the reign of Edward VI and extends into the reign of Mary. For the death of Edward VI and failed attempt of the Duke of Northumberland to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne, Copland closely followed John Mychell’s third edition of the Breuiat Cronicle saying that Northumberland failed because his attempt was “not of God.” Copland’s carefully constructed narrative of Mary’s reign refers to the restoration of religious processions at St. Paul’s “after the old custom” and the Latin service by Parliament. The Marian influence is apparent in his account of the persecution of heretics who are referred to as “sacramentarians” who suffered “death by fire.” Although the printers of Cronicle of Yeres tell essentially the same story, the

35 Powell, fol. C5v.
36 Powell, fol. C6v.; Copland, fol. F5r.
37 Powell, fol. C5v.
38 Powell STC 9989, fol. C6v.; also Copland 9989.5.
39 Copland, fol. H3v.
numerous variations clearly indicate that individual printers did far more than merely extend the most recent text. Their meticulous variations may reflect subtleties of religious outlook, access to different sources, or perhaps merely stylistic idiosyncrasies.

**Breuiat Cronicle**

John Mychell, who printed the first three editions of the larger *Breuiat Cronicle* at Canterbury, not only cited authorities used in his chronicles but also revised his own work. The various editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle*, unlike the shorter *Cronicle of Yeres*, list the rulers of Britain since Brute as well as Roman rulers and the Anglo-Saxon kings. They also include short accounts of all English kings from William I forward. In his list of rulers following Brute, Mychell cited the chronicles of Fabyan, Jean Froissart, and Thomas Lanquet, an account that was based on Geoffrey of Monmouth, but did not include references either to the editions or folios used. Mychell also revised his own work as he moved from the first edition to the last. Throughout his chronicle Mychell drew heavily on John Byddell’s work, often verbatim although the name of the earlier printer is never mentioned. The London printers, John Kynge and Thomas Marshe, basically reproduced John Mychell’s work for the period before 1399 with minor variations. There is no indication that they used any sources other than those cited by Mychell.

For the early period the *Breuiat Cronicle* broke new ground with short accounts of each monarch whereas the printers of the *Cronicle of Yeres* only listed reigning kings prior to 1399. William I was remembered for his for his “greate cruelnes towarde the Englyshmen, chargyng them alwayes with greate exactions, by meanes whereof he caused dyuers to flee out of the land.”

40 Mychell STC 9970, fol. A3r. The three editions of Mychell offer essentially the same account of the period down to 1399. Marshe 9976 has same account of William I and II; also Kynge 9970.5, 9973, and 9975.
England, whiche of longe time were corrupted” and “vsed the lawes of sainct Edwarde.” Anti-Semitism first appeared in the *Breuiat Cronicle* during the reigns of Stephen and Henry II when Jews allegedly crucified children at Easter. Henry II, like Henry I, was a noble man who was

muche fortunate in warres, and greatlye enlarged hys kyngdome. But dyuers wryters, whiche more dyd fauoure the doynges of Thomas Becket then the trute, wryte that in his latter days he was vnfortunat, but by his great manhood and pollycy ... hys good will was to reforme in his tyme the clargie, but as then God had not apoynted it.

The chronicle proceeded to denounce the “Romyshe Bishop” for his role in the Becket affair. The anticlerical tone continued into the reign of Richard I when auricular confession was “invented” and the laity was forbidden to receive communion in both kinds. A rather factual account of Richard’s military feats explained why “thys man for hys valiantnesse and corage was called Cure delion.” King John, on the other hand, was condemned for his “cowardnes and slothful negligence [of] the singnory of Englande,” but Magna Carta was not mentioned until it was confirmed under Henry III.

41 Mychell, fol. A7v. Kynge 9971 omits sentence about Henry I’s favoring the bishop of Rome. Marshe 9972 and 9976 made the same omission. He also substituted “concubines” for “wives” when Anselm forbade clerical marriage.

42 Mychell STC 9970, fol. B3v.; B6v.; 9970.5 [1554—John Kynge] fol. B1v., B6r. 9975 same. In the first year of Richard I, Mychell noted that Jews in London were robbed and killed, but the offenders escaped punishment, fol. B7v.

43 Mychell, fol. B4r. Kynge 9970.5 and 9975 have the same account.

44 Kynge STC 9971 [1556] also refers to bishop of Rome. The 1556 edition [9972] of Marshe, on the other hand, refers to Becket as “St. Thomas” and uses the word “pope”. He also omitted the sentence stating that the pope wanted all kings at their “beck….” fol. B4r.


46 Mychell STC 9970, fols. B7r., C2r.

47 Marshe STC 9976 has essentially the same accounts of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, Richard I and John as John Mychell. Mychell said that John died of the flux, but added that some writers say that John was poisoned by a monk, a comment suggesting that he consulted several sources, C3v. Powell, Byddell, and Kynge 9970.5 say simply that he was poisoned.
The printers of the *Breuiat Cronicle* offered a factual account of the long reign of Henry III and expressed no strong views either about the king or his opponents. The first reference to a parliament occurs during this reign, but there is no suggestion that this institution was of any great importance or that it would be greater in the future. A surprisingly short narrative of the reign of Edward I followed that dwelt mainly on his military accomplishments. The chronicle noted that the king’s son was imprisoned by his father after committing “dyvers ryots.” Despite Edward’s military achievements, the chronicle offered neither praise nor a eulogy at his death. For Edward II, however, there was no restraint as he was severely condemned as a man “vnstedfast of maners and disposed too lyghtnes,” who “haunted amonge vlayynes and vile persones” and “gaue hym selfe to the appetyte and pleasur of the body.” According to the chroniclers, an outbreak of plague “mended not the kynge of hys yl lyuynge.” The portrait of Edward II was the most hostile of any English king including Richard III.

Edward III, in contrast to his father, was highly praised for his “excellent modestie and temperaunce” and “integryte” in the longest narrative of any king before 1399. The *Breuiat Cronicle* added that “in feates of armes he was very expert” and praised the king’s military victories at Crecy [1346], Calais, and Poitiers [1356]. Edward’s son, Prince Edward, “grewe to a noble and famous man and was in his dayes counted the floure off Chyualry throughoute all the worlde.” The king was elected emperor in 1348 but refused “consideringe the trouble and vnquietnesse of the bishop of
The Breuiat Cronicle described the Black Death as a “greate derth throughout all the worlde” in which “famyn and pestilence reygned.” In its account of deaths in Italy, Paris, and London, the chronicle cited Fabyan’s work.\footnote{Kynge 9970.5 [1554], fol. D8v., but the 1560 edition [9975] omits the reference to bishop of Rome.}

Under Henry III’s successor, Richard II, “the commons of Englaunde arose” in Kent and Essex and killed the Archbishop of Canterbury. The rebels “vsed them selfes very prouedlye and vn-reuerentlye against the kynge.” By the “manhode and wysedome of Wylyam Waulworth,” mayor of London, the mob was defeated, and Jack Straw slain.\footnote{Mychell STC 9970, fol. E5r.}

When Bolingbroke came to England in 1399, “the commons gathered in so great multitude” and “forsoke their prince.” In the opinion of the Breuiat Cronicle, Richard II “was worthelye deposed for his demerytes and mysgouernynge off the common weale.”\footnote{Mychell STC 9970, fol. E7v., Marshe 9976, Kynge 9970.5 fol. E7v. and 9975 same.} For the period down to 1399 the principal differences between the Mychell editions and the London editions of the Breuiat Cronicle, published during the reign of Mary have to do with references to the pope either as the bishop of Rome or the Pope-}\n
ish bishop.

The narrative of the reign of Henry IV offered little insight into the Lancastrian usurpation while Henry V’s victory over the French at Agincourt was achieved “by the only prouision of God” not the king’s military brilliance, because the king’s army had only 2000 horsemen and 12,000 “fote men of al sortes.”\footnote{Mychell STC 9970, fol. D8r., Kynge, 9970.5, Marshe, 9976. There are other references to Fabyan for the reign of Edward III.} Although Henry’s military achievements are mentioned, the chronicle gives no indication that his reign was in any way more glorious than his predecessor’s. As the young Henry VI grew to maturity, the French war
turned against the English. The French were inspired by Joan of Arc, who was characterized by the Breuiat Cronicle as “the wytc’h” and a “stout ramp.”57 The term “variance” was used by the chronicles to describe the conflict that led to the loss of Normandy and later to the opening of civil war between the “lordes off England.” in which the Yorkists defeated the Lancastrians.58 The narrative of the reign of Henry VI includes three specific references to the chronicle of Edward Hall which suggest that the printers consulted an authority in addition to the sources regularly used in composing the Breuiat Cronicle.59 In what can only be described as an intriguing digression, the chronicle departs from the stories of kings, war, and court politics to mention the invention of the “science of printing” by Johann Fust (c. 1400-1466) at Mainz, Germany.60

The chronicle offers a detailed but generally non-partisan view of the conflict leading to the Yorkist victory of Edward IV, who was “crowned with great triumph.”61 It noted that after his defeat, Henry VI was “not well stablyshed in his wyt” and that while “there be dyuers sayinges” about his death, “commonly it is sayd” that Richard, Duke of Gloucester killed him with a dagger.62 Although the chronicle also implicated Richard in the death of his predecessor, Edward V, all editions had little interest in the reign of Richard III itself and dismissed him as a monarch of little importance.

The Breuiat Cronicle attached no significance to Henry VII as the founder of the Tudor dynasty, and John Mychell’s last edition covered the reign in only eight pages. Each edition of the chronicle looked ahead and recorded the birth of the king’s second son at

57 Mychell, fol. G1v.
58 Mychell, fol. F8r.
60 Mychell, fol. H3r.; Kynge 9971, fol. H5r., 9975, fol. H5r; Marshe (1561).
61 Mychell, fol. H6r. The London editions have essentially the same account of the reign of Edward IV as John Mychell.
Greenwich as the birth of Henry VIII. The defeat of the Cornish rebels in 1497 was dismissed in a single sentence: “This yeare the xviii. day of June was Blacketh felde.” Henry VII’s death was recorded without comment whereas Edward IV was hailed as a “noble kynge” at his death. Mychell’s editions and the London editions carry virtually the same story of the reign with the exception that Thomas Marshe’s edition of 1556 [STC 9972] curiously omits a reference to the marriage and subsequent death of Prince Arthur. The narrative of Henry VII’s reign was little different from earlier rulers, and the chronicle did not in any way associate a king who had died as recently as 1509 with the contemporary period.

The Breuiat Cronicle, like the Cronicle of Yeres, allocates more space to the reign of Henry VIII than to any other monarch and offers a narrative that is more factual than interpretive. It showed little interest in the career of Cardinal Wolsey and merely noted than he was deposed in 1529. Mychell’s three editions reflect the religious environment in which they were printed; for example, the Edwardian editions speak of the “false usurped power” of the Pope while the last edition, published after the accession of Mary, simply omitted this phrase. In the Edwardian editions, Henry VIII was “by due process of law divorced from Lady Katherine, his brother’s wife,” but the Marian edition says that the king was divorced from his “lawfull wife” and that the divorce itself was unlawful. The break with Rome and establishment of Church of England are not dramatized; Mychell simply stated that the Bishop of Rome with all

63 Mychell, fol. I8r.; Marshe (1561) same.
64 Mychell, fol. K1r.; Marshe (1561) same.
65 Marshe STC 9976 (1561), however, includes marriage and death.
66 Space allocated to reign by John Mychell is 20 pages, more than any other ruler. For example, the 241 years from 1066-1307 received only 22 pages.
67 Mychell STC 9970, fol. L.1r.
68 Mychell STC 9968, fol. L2r.
69 Mychell STC 9968, fol. L5r., 9969, L1v.
his power was “abolished quite oute of the Realme.”\textsuperscript{70} The publica-
tion of the authorized English Bible was apparently more important. “Goddes worde set at liberty” was the phrase in the margin of My-
chell’s last edition followed by “In this yeare the vi. of May there
was a proclamation that the Bible should be had in euer paryshe
churche within this realme, reade for all sortes of people to reade
and heare goddes worde at conuenyent times.”\textsuperscript{71} Little interest is
shown in the king’s six queens, or Henrician political leaders such as
Sir Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell, or rebellions which were
characterized as a “folyshe commocion.”\textsuperscript{72}

Each of Mychell’s editions praised the king for his conquest
of Boulogne. This triumph “woulde have comforted all true Eng-
lishe mens hartes to haue hard, and sene the victorye and conquest
that was had by our mooste dread soueraygne . . . for the whiche
honoure, prayse and glorye be gyuen to almighty god, grace and
victorye from god the father for euer. Amen.”\textsuperscript{73} The two early edi-
tions also said that the defeated French should “pray dayly for the
prosperous reigne” of the king who had shown them such mercy
and favor, but the last edition curiously deleted this phrase. Each
of Mychell’s three editions closes with an effusive eulogy for Henry
VIII “under whome we his people of Englande lyued longe a ioyful
and a peasable lyfe reduced from the errour of Idolatry to the true
knowledge of God and his worde.”\textsuperscript{74}

The London editions printed by John Kynge and Thomas
Marshe were published during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth
and, like Mychell’s editions, presented images of the reign of Henry
VIII that were edited to reflect the religious policies of the period

\textsuperscript{70} Mychell STC 9970, fol. L2r.

\textsuperscript{71} Injunctions authorizing the Bible were issued in name of the king in 1538, but dates in
the chronicles vary from 1541 to 1542.

\textsuperscript{72} Mychell STC 9970, fol. L3r.

\textsuperscript{73} Mychell STC 9968, fol. K6r., 9969, fol. M2v., 9970, M2r.

\textsuperscript{74} Mychell STC 9968, fol. L2v., 9969, 9970, M6r.
in which they appeared. Kynge’s editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle*, with the exception of the 1560 edition [STC 9975], present a Marian perspective on Henry VIII’s reign. For the period from the king’s accession to 1530, Kynge’s Marian editions offer virtually the same narrative as Mychell. These editions state that Henry VIII was divorced from his lawful wife because the bishop of Rome would not consent to an unlawful divorce. The Marian editions however differ in their evaluation of his reign. The earliest edition (1554) accepts the judgment of Mychell that the English people lived a joyful life reduced from the error of idolatry to the true knowledge of God while the 1556 version states rather awkwardly that the people were only reduced from “the error.” Kynge printed two Elizabethan editions in 1559 and 1560, respectively. The 1559 edition, like the Marian editions, spoke of the king’s unlawful divorce while the 1560 edition says only the he was divorced from his wife. This edition also replaces “pope” with “bishop of Rome,” but at the death of Henry VIII the 1560 edition rather inconsistently concludes that the English were merely “reduced from the error to true knowledge of God.”

Thomas Marshe produced two editions, one in the reign of Mary and one in the reign of Elizabeth. Like Kynge, Marshe followed the overall format of Mychell but added a number of variations. The earlier edition follows Kynge with regard to the divorce of Henry VIII, but the 1561 edition states that the king “of long time” had not kept company with the queen because his marriage was in “contouersie.” It was determined by “diuers universities and learned men by great labor” to be against “the law of God.” At the king’s death the Marian edition was content to say that he “liued

75 Kynge STC 9970.5, fol. L5r., 9971, fol. L5r.
77 Kynge STC 9973, fol L5r., 9975 fol. L4r.
78 Kynge STC 9973, fol. N2v. adds “ idolatry.”
79 Marshe STC 9976, fol. K5v.; not in 1556 ed.
longe a joysfull and a peaseable life,” while the Elizabethan version added that the English people were “reduced from the errore to the true knowelde of God.”

80 STC 9976, fol. M1v.

81 Mychell STC 9968 ends 13 January 1552; STC 9969 ends 25 February 1552.

82 The second and third editions—STC 9969 and 9970—rectify this defect and also cite Patten, *The Expedicion into Scotla[n]de*....


Only the first two editions of the *Breuiat Cronicle* printed by John Mychell offer a contemporary account of the reign of Edward VI. Mychell’s third edition, two editions by John Kynge, and one edition by Thomas Marshe were published during the reign of Mary, while three editions, two by Kynge and one by Marshe were Elizabethan. Mychell’s Edwardian editions, which appeared only five years after the accession of the new king, show the problems of writing contemporary history. These editions give a detailed account of the coronation suggesting that the Canterbury printer may have been an eye-witness in London, but the appointment of the Duke of Somerset as lord protector is omitted, and his first fall from power is incorrectly placed before the outbreak of the rebellions in 1549. The first edition omits the invasion of Scotland in 1547, and both editions offer only superficial coverage of the rebellions of 1549 and do not mention the appearance of the first *Book of Common Prayer*. The Canterbury printer might also be charged with excessive local coverage considering his accounts of the minor commotion in Kent, a murder at Faversham, and a flood at Sandwich all of which are included in the London editions.

Unfortunately, the perspective offered by editions printed after the king’s death in 1553 resulted in little revision with the exception of alterations reflecting religious change. The Marian and Elizabethan editions offer nothing to enlarge an understanding of the rise and fall of Protector Somerset, and the treatment of the rebellions of 1549 remains inadequate. Furthermore, none of the editions
communicates the magnitude of religious change resulting from the Edwardian Reformation. Each edition relates that Communion was to be received in both kinds, that images were “put down” in all churches, that clerical marriage became lawful, and, like the Edwardian versions, each ignores the prayer book.\footnote{Mychell STC 9968 and 9969 state that clerical marriage was lawful “by the lawes of God.” Mychell 9970, Kynge [1554] 9970.5, 9975 [1560], Marshe 9972, 9976 state that it was lawful by parliament.}

While the Edwardian editions condemn Stephen Gardner for his “manifest contempt” and “rebellion against the king’s majesty,” the Marian as well as the Elizabethan versions deleted this verbal attack.\footnote{Mychell STC 9968, 9969.} The Marian editions said that Nicholas Ridley and John Po- net usurped the bishoprics of London and Winchester, respectively, whereas the Edwardian editions declined to name these Protestant reformers. The Elizabethan editions amended “usurped” to read merely “had”.\footnote{Kynge STC 9973, 9975, Marshe STC 9976.} One area where the various editions of the \textit{Breuiat Cronicle} were unanimous was the total condemnation of the Duke of Northumberland, who failed to place Lady Jane on the throne at Edward’s death because his attempt was “not of God” and “almoste all the common people fell from hym.”\footnote{Mychell STC 9970, fol. N4v., Marshe 9972, 9976.}

Only two editions of the \textit{Breuiat Cronicle} cover the entire reign of Mary, one printed by John Kynge [9975] and another by Thomas Marshe [9976].\footnote{Despite its publication date, Kynge’s edition of 1559 has incomplete coverage of Mary’s reign and nothing on the reign of Elizabeth. The last entry is dated 28 August 1557: St. Quintins taken.} A careful examination of all editions dealing with the reign reveals that the printers were highly sensitive to contemporary religious and political events and made meticulous revisions that reflect the date of publication. In a short but enthusiastic account of the queen’s coronation most editions proclaimed that multitudes came, and the like had not been seen before.\footnote{STC 9970, 9970.5, 9972, 9976.}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\item Mychell STC 9968 and 9969 state that clerical marriage was lawful “by the lawes of God.” Mychell 9970, Kynge [1554] 9970.5, 9975 [1560], Marshe 9972, 9976 state that it was lawful by parliament.
\item Mychell STC 9968, 9969.
\item Kynge STC 9973, 9975, Marshe STC 9976.
\item Mychell STC 9970, fol. N4v., Marshe 9972, 9976.
\item STC 9970, 9970.5, 9972, 9976.
\end{thebibliography}
Kynge wrote rather awkwardly and with obvious restraint in the edition of 1560 that “much people oute of all partes of the realme” came to the coronation. The various editions were unanimous in their distaste for the discredited Duke of Northumberland who was executed for treason after exhorting the people to return to the Catholic faith.

Each edition reveals considerable interest in Queen Mary’s religious policy. First of all, parliament repealed the Edwardian reforms, acts that were “thought not necessary.” Deposed bishops were restored to their sees, and the Latin was re-established “by authority of parliament.” Reginald Pole, the papal legate, returned to England and was honorably received as he reunited England with the see of Rome. Subsequently, Pole was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury. Only the Elizabethan edition of 1561 printed by Thomas Marshe expressed anything approaching outrage over the burning of heretics. He wrote, “All this yeare [1558] ceased not the persecution for religion.” Other editions simply stated that the heretics were either “brent” or “suffered death by fire” and studiously avoided the word “persecution.”

If space allocation is a guide, the most important event of Mary’s reign was not the Great Persecution, but Wyatt’s rebellion. Mychell’s 1554 edition of the Breuiat Cronicle is of particular importance as it provoked John Proctor to write a book that attacked Mychell and came to be regarded as the most important contem-

90 STC 9975, fol. O2r.
91 STC 9970, fol. N5v. Also 9970.5, 9972, 9975, 9976.
92 STC 9971 fol. P1r. Also 9975, 9976.
93 STC 9971 fol. P1v. Also 9975, 9976.
94 Marshe STC 9976, fol. N2v.
95 STC 9971, 9972, 9975. Cf. the April 1559 edition of Fabyan’s chronicle, [STC 10664], pp. 563-4, which offers more details than the short chronicles, but is equally restrained and non-partisan. An English edition of John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments did not appear until 1563.
96 Mychell’s account in the 1554 edition covers six pages. For a modern account of the rebellion see Loades, The Wyatt Rebellion.
porary work on the rebellion. Proctor wrote that he wanted to refute Mychell’s argument that few were free from Wyatt’s conspiracy in Kent. According to Proctor, many were “faythfull and worthy subiects,” but their deeds “either of hast or purpose were omitted.” This criticism is puzzling as Mychell strongly emphasized the loyalty of the people of Canterbury. Mychell’s account was understandably focused on Kent where Wyatt and his associates “began a rebellion at Maidstone.” Mychell and the other printers of the Marian editions agreed that the rebellion had multiple causes. They argued that Wyatt and his allies pretended to defend the realm from the Spaniards, intended to maintain their heresies, and also sought to destroy Queen Mary. Thus, the contemporary printers, unlike later historians, saw a combination of political and religious forces at work in addition to a threat of foreign domination. On the other hand, the two Elizabethan editions agreed that the rebels only wanted to defend England from Spaniards and other strangers, who wanted to rule and “implant their nacion among vs to our hurte.” The chronicles recognized that the Kentish rebels joined with the “commotion” in Devon but offered no information about it other than that they “confederated” with the Duke of Suffolk.

The principal aspect of the rebellion where the various editions differed was with respect to what occurred in London. According to Mychell, Wyatt came to Southwark on Candlemas eve [1 February] but found the drawbridge “plucked vp against hym.” Then Lord William Howard joined with the mayor for the defense of London “because of the Londoners vntrustines.” Kynge’s London edition of 1554 adds that the Queen met previously at Guildhall

99 Mychell STC 9970, fol. N6v.; other editions followed Mychell.
100 Mychell STC 9970, plus 9970.5, 9971, and 9972.
102 Mychell STC 9970, fol. N7v.
and made an oration to the mayor and citizens asking them to assist her against the rebels but significantly omits the reference to the untrustworthiness of Londoners.\textsuperscript{103} Neither of the two editions that cover the whole reign offered a eulogy for Queen Mary and simply stated that she “departed oute of thyse worlde.”\textsuperscript{104}

The last four editions of the \textit{Breuiat Cronycle} were printed during the reign of Elizabeth, but only two include information about the new reign.\textsuperscript{105} John Kynge’s edition of 1560 contains only one folio on the reign and ends 8 April 1559 with the peace settlement with France. Thomas Marshe’s edition the following year ends abruptly with an account of the burning of the steeple at St. Paul’s on 4 June 1561. It describes the accession of Elizabeth and her coronation but is curiously silent on the religious settlement of 1559 although there is a reference to the Queen as Defender of the Faith.\textsuperscript{106} Whether these fragmentary narratives were intended to be a prelude to a later edition must remain a matter of speculation.

This study demonstrates the important role of printers in chronicle scholarship as the short chronicles were produced by no fewer than nine different printers.\textsuperscript{107} The dedication of John Mychell to Sir Anthony Aucher cited above offers valuable insight into the historical thinking of one printer, but none of the London printers included similar introductory material that might shed light on their views. Mychell cited other chronicles but not John Byddell whose work was his most important source. The London printers freely reproduced earlier editions of Mychell and other printers without attribution but made numerous revisions from the reign of Henry VIII

\textsuperscript{103} STC 9970.5, fol. O4r.; other minor variations. The Elizabethan editions, STC 9975 and 9976, which were also the work of London printers, follow STC 9970.5.

\textsuperscript{104} STC 9975 fol. P5v.; 9976 fol. O2v.

\textsuperscript{105} Kynge STC 9973[1559] has nothing on the reign. No copies of STC 9974 are listed. Accounts of the reign may be found in Kynge 9975 and Marsh 9976.

\textsuperscript{106} This edition consists of only three pages and jumps from the peace settlement to the fire with no entries for the year 1560.

\textsuperscript{107} See also Beer, “John Kyngston and Fabyan’s Chronicle (1559),” 199-207.
forward. One must assume that they were practical businessmen, who had only limited contact with the higher culture of their day, but they made a major contribution to the popularization of English history among non-elite readers.

The publication of twenty-two editions over a short period of time is a clear indication that there was a substantial demand for small chronicles and that the printers found them to be a profitable undertaking. Small English chronicles were not attractive to humanistic scholars or aristocratic book collectors and, according to Margaret Spufford, very little evidence survives about the libraries of the “common sort” for the mid-Tudor period.108 Buyers of small chronicles were presumably attracted by their low price and were prepared to accept the superficiality that accompanied their brevity. It must be assumed that readers of the short chronicles were content with fragmentary tales of kings and queens, battles, and other great events and had no sympathy for popular revolts or their leaders. Insight into the popular mind may be found in the introduction of a contemporary, Walter Lynne, to The Three Books of Cronicles [1550]. He wrote that this somewhat larger work contained “all that is nedefull to be knowen concernynge thynges done in tymes passed” and added with obvious condescension that most English did not understand other languages.109 The simplification of the past found in the short chronicles clearly pointed the way for the future evolution of popular history.

The chronicles promoted the national history among readers of the lower classes and provide an early example of the popular preference for recent history as the chronicles give the greatest attention to the period beginning with the reign of Henry VIII. The small chronicles did little to propagate Tudor myths such as the villainy of Richard III and were carefully revised to assure religious conformity. Unlike Hall’s chronicle, these chronicles did not celebrate the “union of the two noble and illustre famelies” of Lancaster


109 Carion, The thre bokes of Cronicles, fol. 2r.
and York and exalt Henry VII. A preference for contemporary history is indicated by the frequent new editions that were regularly extended and updated. The learned minority clearly preferred reading classical works in Latin, but a growing population of readers pointed the way toward a preference for the English language. The subsequent publication of short chronicles or abridgements by John Stow and Richard Grafton suggests that there was a market for this type of historical writing that extended into the early seventeenth century. As during the mid-Tudor period, non-elite readers were prepared to purchase shorter chronicles that were less expensive and less informative in preference to more comprehensive works that were readily available. The short chronicles are clearly part of the historiography of early modern England and as such contribute to the historical culture of the era.

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Appendix

A cronicle of yeres

John Byddell
1539 ed. Not in STC. Typographia 1, 511 lists A short Cronycle. duodecimo.
STC 9985.5 [1540] octavo
9986 1542 octavo

Edward Whitchurch for John Judson
9986.5 [1542] octavo


111 The full title of the 1540 edition is A short cronycle, wherin is mencioned all the names of all the kings of England of the mayers, and shiriffes of the cytie of London; and of diuers and many notable actes and thinges done, in, and sith the time of kige [sic] Henry ye fourth.
Thomas Petyt
  9987 [1543] octavo

William Myddleton
  9987.5 1543 octavo
  9988 1544 octavo

Wylliam Powell
  9988.3 1549 sextodecimo
  9988.5 1550 octavo
  9989 1552 octavo

William Copland (d. 1569)
  9989.5 [1557] sextodecimo

*A breuiat cronicle*

John Mychell printed three editions at Canterbury.
  *STC* 9968 [1552] octavo
  9969 [1552] octavo
  9970 [1554] octavo; Kent Archaeological Society, ebook 2013,
  ed. B. L. Beer.

London editions

John Kynge
  9970.5 [1554] octavo
  9971 1556 [1555 in *STC*] octavo
  ESTC [1557] octavo; Bibliotheque Mazarine, Paris
  9973 [1559] octavo
  9974 [1559] Copy of *STC* 9976: ‘imp L. copy of 9976’ octavo
  No copies listed in *STC*.

  9975 [1560] octavo

Thomas Marshe
  9972 1556 octavo
  9975 [1561] octavo

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Beer, B. L., “John Kyngston and Fabyan’s Chronicle (1559),” The Library, 7th series, 14:2 (June 2013), 199-207.


Engraving by John Bydell, 1535
“Truth being led out of darkness by Time”
Master William’s Hamnet:
A New Theory on Shakespeare’s Sonnets

Juan Daniel Millán

Mexico City

This essay suggests the Fair Youth in Shakespeare’s Sonnets is Shakespeare’s son, Hamnet, to whom he later dedicated the cycle. Nevertheless, the larger claims of the essay are independent of the biographical details of Shakespeare’s life, and even independent of the particular ordering of the Sonnets as they have come down to us.

Introduction to the Sonnets

The 154 Sonnets were published in 1609. It has not been determined exactly when they were written. The Sonnets are love poems, apparently written first to a man, then to a woman, neither of whom is ever named. The Sonnets were published with this dedication:

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGGETTER . OF .

THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .


AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .

PROMISED .

BY .

OVR . EVER–LIVING . POET .

WISHETH .

THE . WELL–WISHING .

ADVENTVRER . IN .

SETTING .

FORTH .

T . T .

1 All Sonnets are cited from The Riverside Shakespeare.
We do not know if Shakespeare wrote this dedication, or if the publisher, Thomas Thorpe, did. We do not know if W. H. is the same person who inspired the Sonnets or someone else. Therefore, who is this Master W. H.?

**Current Theories on the Sonnets**

The Sonnets are unique in that many of them are directed to a man. From the time the Sonnets were published, they were largely ignored. As Hallet Smith argues in her introductory essay to the Sonnets, in the Riverside Shakespeare, from 1640 till 1780 these sonnets were edited so that the addressee would appear as a woman, rather than a man.\(^2\) The question about Shakespeare’s addressee in these poems could thus only emerge at the end of the eighteenth century, when the Sonnets were published in their original form.

Assuming the Fair Youth described in the poem is the same man to whom the Sonnets are directed, the men most often proposed by critics as being W. H. are: Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton; and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. Both were important patrons of poets, quite possibly Shakespeare’s, the former at the beginning of his career, the latter towards the end of it. Both Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece are dedicated to Henry Wriothesley\(^3\). At age 17, in 1590, Wriothesley was urged to marry but declined. He married Elizabeth Vernon in 1598. If Henry Wriothesley were to be the Fair Youth the Sonnets would have begun at an early point of the 1590’s. Yet W. H. cannot be Wriothesley since his initials are backwards. William Herbert’s\(^4\) name does coincide with the initials. In 1623 the editors dedicated to him the First Folio (Shakespeare’s works reunited for the first time in a single book.) William Herbert moved to London in 1598, at the age of 18; he had an illegitimate son in 1601; and married Mary Talbot in 1604. If William Herbert were to be the Fair Youth the Sonnets would have been written towards the end of the 1590’s, a less likely date. However, both were noblemen and could not have been addressed as “Master”, a title that would correspond to an inferior social class. They would have been called “Lord.”

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2 Smith, Riverside, 1747-48.
W. H. could be a printer’s error; it should say W. S. or W. Sh., referring to William Shakespeare, a theory proposed by Bernard Russell and Jonathan Bate. 5 “William Himself” could be another way of writing it. Another theory suggests W. H. refers to William Halt, a printer and colleague of Thomas Thorpe, in which case the dedication was not written by Shakespeare. Other names mentioned are: William Holme, another colleague of Thorpe; William Harvey, the stepfather of William Herbert; William Haughton, a contemporary playwright; William Hart, Shakespeare’s nephew and male heir, who at the time of the publication was barely 9 years old, therefore rendering him unlikely; William Hatchiffe of Lincolnshire; and even “Who He”, that is to say, a deliberately enigmatic name. 6 In the short story “The Portrait of Mr. W.H.”, Oscar Wilde argued that W. H. meant Willie Hughes, a seductive young actor who played female roles in Shakespeare’s plays (there is no evidence for the existence of such person). Conclusion: in no case can one affirm definitively that this or that person fulfills the requirements to be W. H., or the Fair Youth, much less who might be the Dark Lady, whom many later sonnets mention.

What do all these theories have in common, and why are they wrong? No one doubts that there was a man to whom Shakespeare wrote the Sonnets, and to whom he perhaps dedicated them afterwards. While Russell suggests W. H. could be Shakespeare, he is referring to the dedication; he does not question the content of the poems. There was a man with whom Shakespeare was clearly in love, whether or not we can identify him. The trivial, melodramatic story of the Sonnets, following this interpretation, is that the author is in love with another man, he feels jealousy towards him, and finally blames a woman for taking him away. The problem is why, at the beginning, is it imperative to ask a man to have children, when that would require a woman and not the author himself? Why does the Dark Lady acquire more importance than the Fair Youth, who at the end almost completely disappears?

A New Theory on the Sonnets

Our first conjecture is that the Fair Youth and W. H. is the same person. Besides plot and dedication, the third element to consider is the composition date. We have three facts regarding the composition of the Sonnets:

5 Bate, Genius, 61-2. Also see Foster, “Master W. H.,” 53.

1. On September of 1598, Francis Meres registered and published a book entitled *Palladis Tamia: Wit’s Treasury*, in which he includes the catalogue of Shakespeare’s plays: his comedies, tragedies and poems. Francis Meres mentions Shakespeare’s “sugared sonnets”, which are only shared among his “private friends.” “The witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous & honey-tongued Shakespeare, witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugared sonnets among his private friends, &c.”

2. Sonnet 104 indicates Shakespeare has been working on this cycle for 3 years. This is the only hint provided in the *Sonnets*.

   Three winters cold
   Have from the forests shook three summers’ pride,
   Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn’d
   In process of the seasons have I seen,
   Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn’d,
   Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green (3-8).

3. In 1599, Sonnets 138 and 144 appeared in an anthology entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim*, published by William Jaggard, along with other poems, badly attributed to Shakespeare or of authorship unknown (*Riverside*, 1787-78). From these facts, we infer two things: a) composition of the *Sonnets* took three years (perhaps three years and a few months), as mentioned in Sonnet 104; b) by 1599 Shakespeare had written Sonnets 104, 138 and 144, therefore probably all of the *Sonnets*.

   Shakespeare not only meditates on time (Sonnet 12 makes reference to the hours of the day, Sonnet 60 to the minutes in each hour), but also knows exactly how long has he been working on the cycle (as Sonnet 104 indicates), a rare feature given that he worked interspersed by long lapses, constantly expressing doubts about his *Sonnets*. One would suppose a work of this nature would be very difficult to date, unless a specific event was his reference point.

7 The full text of *The Passionate Pilgrim* can be found online at [https://archive.org/stream/passionatepilgri00shakrich/passionatepilgri00shakrich_divu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/passionatepilgri00shakrich/passionatepilgri00shakrich_divu.txt)

8 *Riverside*, 1787-78.
Sonnet 104 marks three years. The Sonnets may have been finished by 1599; therefore, a three-year period between 1596 and 1599 must be when the Sonnets were written. Among many probable dates, the one that seems most probable is the one from mid-1596 to the end of 1599. Hamnet, Shakespeare’s only son, was buried on August 11th of 1596: that is the date in which the Sonnets started.

Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway (already pregnant) obtained a marriage license in 1582. He was 18 years old, she was 26. Anne gave birth to Susana in 1583, then to twins Judith and Hamnet in 1585. At that point Shakespeare disappears from all records. He may have left Stratford at the time the twins were born. His name appears again in 1592 in Green’s attack of Shakespeare, who is now living in London and has become a playwright. When Hamnet dies at the age of eleven, Shakespeare regrets not having lived with him. He will write a great poem to his memory.

The first thing we have to realize is that the sonnet, a form to which many poets dedicated their best efforts, suited Shakespeare perfectly: there is a pun between “sonnet” and “son.” Shakespeare wrote “son” in the following way: “sonne” (as can be seen in his will.) The first page of the work says “SHAKESPEARES SONNETS.” It was a provocation to blatantly evidence the author’s name and not the addressee’s, as was the custom in the day, but what the title really means is: “SHAKESPEARES SONNE.” If the words were reversed (“Sonnets, by Shakespeare”), the meaning of the title would not have been evident. The identity of the addressee is revealed by the title itself, Shakespeare’s son.

W. H.
William’s Hamnet.
SHAKESPEARES SONNE(TS).

Shakespeare, in various documents, most importantly in the First Folio, is called “Master William Shakespeare.”

Let us analyze the content of the Sonnets to be sure that it coincides with the dedication. In Sonnets 1 to 17 it is either God or

9 The biographical information in this paragraph comes from Harry Levin’s General Introduction to The Riverside Shakespeare (see especially Riverside, 4).

10 See Riverside, 59, where a facsimile of the second page of the First Folio demonstrates that Shakespeare could be referred to as “Mr. William Shakespeare.”
Shakespeare’s soul (his kindest essence) who is speaking through Shakespeare. It is a mysterious voice that externally implies Shakespeare is talking to himself. The subject of his conversation is Hamnet. Shakespeare is writing as if he had a mirror in front of him. The narrator admits to being a poet at work. “Pity the world, or else this glutton be, / To eat the world’s due, by the grave and thee” (1.13-14): start writing, for Hamnet’s sake and for your own. “When forty winters shall besiege thy brow” (2.1): Shakespeare was 32 years old at the time. If you do not write this poem, your son “Will be a totter’d weed of small worth held” (2.4). “Thou art thy mother’s glass and she in thee / Calls back the lovely April of her prime” (3.9-10): Shakespeare was born in April. Look at your deep sunken face in the mirror. You have to create a new face; you have to repair it. The word “repair” (also used in Sonnet 10) indicates an initial collapse. The poem departs from a breakdown.

Shakespeare writes this in the summer of 1596. Do not shut yourself up in your tomb (implying there’s another tomb more important than his.) Prepare yourself for winter. If you capture Hamnet’s essence, he will live:

never-resting time leads summer on

To hideous winter

[...]

But flowers distill’d, though they with winter meet,

Leese but their show, their substance still lives sweet (5.5-14).

In Sonnet 6 Shakespeare says “Make sweet some vial” (3) for your child’s memory. He is concerned he is misusing his son but “That use is not forbidden usury, / Which happies those that pay the willing loan” (5-6). Shakespeare at the start envisioned many sonnets: “Ten times thy self were happier than thou art, / If ten of thine ten times refigured thee” (9-10). “Be not self-will’d” (13).

Shakespeare accuses himself of not loving anyone: “Grant, if thou wilt, thou art belov’d of many, / But that thou none lov’st is most evident” (10.3-4).
It is now autumn: “When lofty trees I see barren of leaves, [...] And summer’s green all girded up in sheaves” (12.5-7). Do something for your son, “You had a father, let your son say so” (13.14). Sonnet 14 says he could not foresee the plague, that is, his son’s loss.

In Sonnet 16 Shakespeare declares he could have other sons, women are available and he is enjoying prosperous times, it would be a way of recreating Hamnet. But Shakespeare can only recreate him by writing; he is not interested in any son other than Hamnet.

Shakespeare sees at all times the corpse of his son before him. He thinks someone will find out, hidden amidst his praises, those human remains:  

Who will believe my verse in time to come
If it were fill’d with your most high deserts?
Though yet heaven knows it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts. (17.1-4.)

Shakespeare has to write how much he loved Hamnet, he has to describe his beauty, his purity, but Shakespeare realizes that a mere description will not concede him life; the description will not hide the image of a carcass. For his son to live in the Sonnets he has to be alive in Shakespeare’s imagination. Shakespeare has to revive him. “But were some child of yours alive that time, / You should live twice, in it, and in my rhyme” (17.13-14).

In Sonnet 18, Shakespeare has stopped talking to himself; he speaks to his son as if he were alive. The way to start is by comparing him to the day he died, assuring him he is more beautiful: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” (1). His son has acquired life, he shall be eternal. “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee” (13-14).

Sonnet 20 is crucial to identify Hamnet: being a boy, his features are feminine, but he has a certain purity that women do not have. His son is astonished by everything; he attracts both men and women (being loved by both Shakespeare and his mother.) Nature planned to give Shakespeare a daughter (Judith, Hamnet’s twin sis-
ter), but then it surprised him by giving him a boy. His son delighted his mother; Shakespeare also wants to demonstrate his love to him.

*A woman’s face with Nature’s own hand painted*

*Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;*

*A woman’s gentle heart, but not acquainted*

*With shifting change as is false women’s fashion;*

*An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling, Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;*

*A man in hue all hues in his controlling, Which steals men’s eyes and women’s souls amazeth. And for a woman wert thou first created, Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting, And by addition me of thee defeated, By adding one thing to my purpose nothing. But since she prick’d thee out for women’s pleasure, Mine be thy love, and thy love’s use their treasure. (1-14).*

In Sonnet 21, Shakespeare says these poems are not striving to impress a woman: they are addressed to Hamnet. The love he has for him is that of a child, that is to say, Shakespeare is identifying with him completely: “believe me, my love is as fair / As any mother’s child” (10-11). Shakespeare will take care of Hamnet’s memory:

*my heart, Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me: How can I then be elder than thou art? [...] Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary As tender nurse her babe from faring ill (22.6-12).*
In Sonnet 23, Shakespeare has been unable to name his son; it hurts him too much. If he acknowledges he has died, everyone else would know. Shakespeare does not want that to be known: “So I, for fear of trust, forget to say / The perfect ceremony of love’s rite” (5-6). His son has to remain anonymous. His love will be a secret between them: “O, learn to read what silent love had writ” (13).

Every time Shakespeare mentions the sun he is referring to his son. “Sun” and “son”, being homophonous, were often spelled “sonne.” “Sun”, “son” and “sonnet” are all related words referring to Hamnet: “windows to my breast, wherethrough the sun delights to peep” (24.11-12).

Hamnet is the window through which Shakespeare sees within his own heart. The problem is that Shakespeare describes the son that his eyes see, but he did not know his son’s heart. That is his disgrace, his sadness: “They draw but what they see, know not the heart” (24.14).

In Sonnet 27 (as well as Sonnets 43 and 61) Shakespeare tells us how he writes to Hamnet at night. His son, appearing in his father’s imagination, proves death is not so terrible. But Shakespeare cannot find peace before him:

_Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed_
_The dear repose for limbs with travel tired_
_But then begins a journey in my head_
_To work my mind, when body’s work’s expired_
_For then my thoughts (from far where I abide_
[Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,_
[…]
_Lo thus by day my limbs, by night my mind_
_For thee, and for myself, no quiet find (1-14).

His remorse intensifies: “day doth daily draw my sorrows longer, / And night doth nightly make grief’s length seem stronger” (28.13-14).
In Sonnet 31, Shakespeare for the first time suggests his son, Hamnet, is dead.

*How many a holy and obsequious tear*

*Hath dear religious love stol’n from mine eye,*

*As interest of the dead, which now appear*

*But things remov’d that hidden in thee lie!*

*Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,*

*Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,*

*Who all their parts of me to thee did give:*

*That due of many now is thine alone.*

*Their images I lov’d I view in thee,*

*And thou (all they) hast all the all of me*  

(5-14).

His son was a sun covered by cloud before its time:

*Even so my sun one early morn did shine*

*With all-triumphant splendor on my brow,*

*But out, alack, he was but one hour mine,*

*The region cloud hath mask’d him from me now*  

(33.9-12).

In Sonnet 34, Shakespeare pictures his son as the day. Hamnet tries to comfort him but Shakespeare no longer has him. Shakespeare tenderly scolds him:

*Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,*

*And make me travel forth without my cloak,*

*To let base clouds o’ertake me in my way,*

*Hiding thy brav’ry in their rotten smoke?*

[…]

*Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss*  

(1-10).
In Sonnet 35, Shakespeare asks his son not to worry about having died; Shakespeare forgives him that mischief.

Shakespeare, in Sonnet 36, confesses he and his son have to be apart. This is the first time he declares the decision of never revealing Hamnet’s name.

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:

[...]

I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honor me,
Unless thou take that honor from thy name (1-12).

In Sonnet 38, Shakespeare insists his son is alive and therefore inspires him. Shakespeare has set out to deceive the reader.

How can my Muse want subject to invent
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument... (1-3).

Hamnet and Shakespeare must live apart so that honor is bestowed only to Hamnet, not to him.

O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is’t but mine own when I praise thee?
Even for this, let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one.
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee which thou deserv’st alone (39.1-8).
In Sonnets 41 and 42, Shakespeare reveals Hamnet and Anne loved each other. Because Shakespeare and his son are identical, it is a relief for Shakespeare to know his wife loves him as well.

Shakespeare says how much he wants to see his son alive, what distance he could jump in order to do so. Shakespeare, made of earth and water, cannot travel to where Hamnet is, made of air and fire (notice the separate reigns which they inhabit, life and death.) These two elements tell Shakespeare his son is healthy, no longer sick. It is important to emphasize how much Hamnet’s health concerns Shakespeare, knowing he died of the plague.

In Sonnet 48, Shakespeare fears someone will steal his sonnets; they are circulating among his friends: “Thou best of dearest, and mine only care, / Art left the prey of every vulgar thief” (7-8).

In spite of his paternal adoration, Shakespeare knows Hamnet could blame him for expressing it now when he is dead, rather than while he was alive. Shakespeare acknowledges his fault, and accepts his son has no reasons to love him back: “To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws, / Since why to love I can allege no cause” (49.13-15). Shakespeare says “My grief lies onward and my joy behind” (50.14).

Sonnet 52 indicates that a year has passed since his son died. He is writing this in August of 1597: “seldom coming in the long year set, / Like stones of worth they thinly placed are” (6-7).

In Sonnet 53, Hamnet is much more than Adonis, Shakespeare’s representation of himself a few years back: “Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit / Is poorly imitated after you” (5-6).

In Sonnet 54 Shakespeare describes the flowers that disappear in the autumn. The theater company in which Shakespeare acted was forced on a provincial tour from the beginning of 1597 until October of that year, as the result of a prohibition against playing in London. The previous sonnets would have been written during this tour; that is why so many images of travel, distance and loneliness appear. In Sonnet 56, Shakespeare asks Hamnet to keep on inspiring him, for he has returned to his familiar environment in London.

In Sonnet 59 Shakespeare acknowledges his poems are not going well, “The second burthen [the Sonnets] of a former child” [Hamnet] (4). Shakespeare compares the Sonnets to what other poets have written. His poems are not deteriorating because of lack of inspiration; it is Shakespeare who must make more of an effort.
In Sonnet 61, Hamnet’s image possesses Shakespeare; he begins to be terrified of him. “Will” is a pun meaning “intention”, “William”, but also Hamnet’s testament before he died, thereby conveying the funeral sense of the poem. “Is it thy will thy image should keep open / My heavy eyelids to the weary night?” (1-2). Shakespeare sometimes cannot find the words for the next sonnet. Hamnet is his inspiration, and Shakespeare must wait for him to come. He is his son’s slave. Yet: “His beauty shall in these black lines be seen, / And they shall live, and he in them still green” (63.13-14). Many flowers have been born, taking their beauty from Shakespeare’s son.

In Sonnet 69, Shakespeare acknowledges that his Sonnets have received praises from the public. Since, by our chronology, he is writing this in September of 1598, he is referring to the commentary his friend Francis Meres published that year, mentioning his “sugared sonnets”. Shakespeare has taken a moment to contemplate his unfinished work. While alive Hamnet was not only beautiful: his beauty shall in these black lines be seen, and they shall live, and he in them still green. Yet his beauty is superficial as well. Hamnet is not only Shakespeare’s wonder and inspiration, he is also his torment. The commentary implies Shakespeare’s poetry is dead. None of his friends understood it evoked a corpse. Shakespeare concedes they are right, saying Hamnet is in fact dead, calling the critics worms that devour the beautiful corpse of his child. However, emphasizing the earth in which Hamnet lies, Shakespeare accepts that the Sonnets, up until this point, have been unremarkable. Shakespeare is to blame:

Those parts of thee that the world’s eye doth view

[...]

Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown’d,

But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,

In other accents do this praise confound

[...]

(although their eyes were kind)

To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:

But why thy odor matcheth not thy show,

The soil is this, that thou dost common grow (1-14).
In Sonnet 72, Shakespeare realizes that he does not deserve to be loved back:

O, lest the world should task you to recite
What merit liv’d in me that you should love
After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart:
O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.

For I am sham’d by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth

Sonnet 73 refers to the autumn of 1598. In Sonnet 75, Shakespeare does not know whether to share his son with the world.

Shakespeare shows his frustration in Sonnet 76. His style does not change, although “you and love are still my argument” (10). The worst thing is that every word is on the verge of revealing Hamnet’s identity. Shakespeare is starting to consider new methods. “For as the sun [his son] is daily new and old, / So is my love still telling what is told” (13-14).

Shakespeare recognizes, in Sonnet 80, that there is a rival poet who is better than him. Who is that rival poet? In the first place, why is Shakespeare reading other author’s works? The golden age of Elizabethan poetry is reaching a high-point in 1598. The amount of sonnet cycles being published is overwhelming (though the trend will soon fade away.) Marlowe, who was stabbed in the eye, inspired
Sonnet 74. Marlowe’s last poem, Hero and Leander, was completed in 1598 by Chapman, who is emerging as a confident poet. At any moment a masterpiece will emerge that will put Shakespeare’s Sonnets to shame. Edmund Spenser died at the beginning of 1599. Perhaps Shakespeare feels he cannot catch up with all that is happening on the scene and wants to compare his Sonnets to what others have done, having spent two years at work. In respect to playwriting, Shakespeare’s theater has been torn down and is being rebuilt elsewhere. From late 1597 until 1599 Shakespeare is anxious, knowing the new building will stage his works. He has invested in that. Now is the time to become a better playwright; towards that end is this literary instruction aimed.

We suppose the rival is Philip Sidney. This particular sequence was written at the end of 1598; the year the entire works of Sidney were published in a single volume. The Sonnets could have been influenced by The Defence of Poesy, and Astrophel and Stella.

The Defence of Poesy was published in 1595 and was re-published again in the edition of 1598. Sidney says poetry has “the power to move the human will and thus to motivate its own reproduction” (just as the Sonnets constitute Shakespeare’s son.) Sidney responds to the accusations against poetry, and at the end says:

I conjure you all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, [...] to believe that there are many mysteries contained in poetry, which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused [...] to believe [poets] when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses.

But if [...] you be born [...] that you cannot hear the planet-like music of poetry, if you have such earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry: then [...] much curse I must send you in the behalf of all poets, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favor, for lacking skill of a sonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an epitaph.

Addressing the curse of The Defence of Poesy, the dedication of the Sonnets is in fact a funerary inscription over Hamnet’s corpse. The Sonnets are the tomb in which he lies.
Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I (once gone) to all the world must die;
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men’s eyes shall lie;
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o’er-read

Astrophel and Stella was first published in 1591. Stella means “star”; Astrophel, “he who loves the star.” One cannot reach the other. The same relationship exists between Shakespeare and Hamnet, for one is alive and the other is dead. The 1598 edition of Astrophel and Stella was novel in many aspects, especially one: Stella’s real identity was revealed. This may have inspired Shakespeare to reveal his own identity, something he had not done until this point; he might have planned not to do so at the start.

Shakespeare says to Hamnet: “O how I faint when I of you do write, / Knowing a better spirit doth use your name” (80.1-2). Maybe he implies Philip Sidney employed the sonnet better than him, or that Stella is better suited to the name “star” than Hamnet is to “sun”. The rival poet is called a spirit, thus he appears to be dead. Shakespeare, in Sonnet 108, calls Hamnet “my true spirit” (2), indicating he is dead.

In Sonnet 83 Shakespeare criticizes other mediocre poets (it is both impossible and irrelevant to determine who they are), and simultaneously reveals his own deceitfulness when he says “When others would give life and bring a tomb” (12). Shakespeare says “There lives more life in one of your fair eyes / Than both your poets [Shakespeare and Sidney] can in praise devise” (13-14).

In Sonnet 87, Shakespeare decides to abandon these writings, for there is nothing more to say about his child. Hamnet’s love is impossible: “Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing” (1).
In Sonnet 88, Shakespeare explains he can only demonstrate his love by creating a theatre play in which both disappear, instead of praising Hamnet dully:

Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults conceal’d, wherein I am attainted,
That thou in losing me shall win much glory.
And I by this will be a gainer too,
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me (6-12).

In Sonnet 87, Shakespeare says farewell to his son. He has already declared how beautiful he is, he can say no more nor less. Shakespeare has been writing the Sonnets for two and a half years. Shakespeare has to quit this poem for it recounts Shakespeare’s role as a bad father. It is undeniable: his son hates him.

Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against myself I’ll vow debate,
For I must ne’er love him whom thou dost hate (89.10-14).

Shakespeare enrages his son, telling him “Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now” (90.1). This way Shakespeare feels they are communicating.

Sonnets 97, “How like a winter hath my absence been / From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!” (1-2), and 98, “From you have I been absent in the spring” (1), were written in the summer of 1599, after long interruptions, and they imply that Shakespeare has been working on his plays.

Shakespeare realizes how badly he has treated his son’s memory:
O, blame me not, if I no more can write!

Look in your glass, and there appears a face

That overgoes my blunt invention quite,

Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.

Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,

To mar the subject that before was well? (103.5-10).

Sonnet 104 says “Ere you were born was beauty’s summer dead” (14). Shakespeare recalls that he started this cycle right after Hamnet died. Sonnet 104 marks the exact chronology of the poem: three summers have passed, three winters have passed, three springs have passed, three Aprils and Junes have passed. Shakespeare wrote this in August, 1599: he will very soon finish the work.

1596. Summer: death of Hamnet, the poem begins.

   Autumn.

   Winter.

1597. Spring (April.)

   Summer.

   Autumn.

   Winter.

1598. Spring (April.)

   Summer.

   Autumn.

   Winter.

1599. Spring (April.)

   Summer: in August he writes Sonnet 104, saying:3 years have passed.
Autumn: here the poem could have finished.

Winter: at the latest, the poem finished here.

In Sonnet 108 Shakespeare acknowledges Hamnet is dead.

What’s new to speak, what now to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy, but yet like prayers divine,
I must each day say o’er the very same,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.
[...

Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead (3-14).
O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem’d my flame to qualify,
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love; if I have rang’d,
Like him that travels, I return again,
[...

Never believe, though in my nature reign’d
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain’d,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose, in it thou art my all (1-14).
Sonnet 110 states another farewell:

Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there,  
And made myself a motley to the view,  
Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,  
Made old offenses of affections new;  
Most true it is that I have look'd on truth  
Askaunce and strangely: but by all above,  
These blenches gave my heart another youth,  
And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.  
Now all is done, have what shall have no end,  
Mine appetite I never more will grind  
On newer proof, to try an older friend,  
A god in love, to whom I am confin'd.  
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,  
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast (1-14).  

The original poem, the one meant to Hamnet, seems to end around here. It could have ended in Sonnet eighty, ninety, one hundred and something. Shakespeare makes it unclear whether he is addressing Hamnet or the Dark Lady; he may have intended to have both readings available. Certainly Sonnets 111 to 154 are all meant to the Dark Lady. The tone has changed; the funerary sense has entirely vanished. Perhaps Shakespeare addressed his female lover many Sonnets ago and we have not realized it until now. Shakespeare achieved his task: to reveal Hamnet died without anyone noticing it. If he bluntly proclaimed it he would forever be blamed as the unloving father of a pitiful creature, not a wondrous one. Shakespeare barely knew his son. He could not find an ending for the poem. He decided the best way to address Hamnet’s death was to abandon the Sonnets and write for him The Phoenix and the Turtle (Shakespeare’s last poem, published in 1601), the real ending of the Sonnets. The Phoenix is Shakespeare, the Turtledove is Hamnet:
Love and Constancy is dead,
Phoenix and the Turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.
So they loved as love in twain
Had the essence but in one,
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

[...]
Either was the other’s mine.
Property was thus appalled,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature’s double name
Neither two nor one was called.
Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded.

[...]
Death is now the Phoenix’ nest;
And the Turtle’s loyal breast
To eternity doth rest.
Leaving no posterity (22-59).

What seems to have happened is Shakespeare merged two different projects into one. The first project concerned Hamnet’s death. The second project described a female lover; this second section was written perhaps before Hamnet died, we are not certain; it does not belong to the three year period established in Sonnet 104.
The exact moment in which one section ends and the other begins cannot be determined. It seems Shakespeare merged both projects so that the transition is practically unnoticeable. Why did Shakespeare decide to include this love affair at the end of Hamnet’s poem?

First of all, we must consider Shakespeare’s two previous poems. In *Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593, Anne Hathaway is Venus, Shakespeare is Adonis. Venus loves Adonis and wants to be loved by him; Adonis asks not to be loved and asserts he does not love her. Venus is a mature, lustful, aggressive, and devious woman. Adonis is a thoughtful, melancholic young man: “Measure my strangeness with my unripe years; Before I know myself, seek not to know me” (524-525). In the poem it is clear who’s innocent and who’s perverse. Shakespeare writes “glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth” (548). Since this is a reflection of their relationship, written years after their separation, we suppose there was an infidelity on her part which Shakespeare wished he had foreseen; therefore he later explains her character in that manner.

*The Rape of Lucrece*, published in 1594, is a reversal of *Venus and Adonis*. Now Lucrece is pure and Tarquin is evil. Shakespeare becomes the executioner and not the victim. He is referring to the tormented life he was following as a bachelor, perhaps realizing *Venus and Adonis* was unjust to Anne in that he, too, was an insatiable creature, a passionate monster. He wrote *The Rape of Lucrece* simultaneously to *A Lover’s Complaint*. Both share the same poetic structure; both seem to lay the guilt on him rather than on her. Both these poems seem to deal with love affairs in general, not a particular person such as the Dark Lady.

Afterwards he may have tried his hand at sonnets. In *The Passionate Pilgrim* there are a few Sonnets in which Venus and Adonis are the main characters, written at the same time or soon after *Venus and Adonis*, around 1593 or 1594. Sonnet 4 says:

*Sweet Cytherea, sitting in a brook*  
*With young Adonis, lovely, fresh, and green,*  
*Did court the lad with many a lovely look,*  

[...]  
*She told him stories to delight his [ear];*  
*She show’d him favors to allure his eye;*  
*To win his heart she touch’d him here and there*  

[...]

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But whether unripe years did want conceit,

[...]

The tender nibbler would not touch the bait,

But smile and jest at every gentle offer.

Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward:

He rose and ran away, ah, fool too froward! (1-14).

Sonnet 9 says:

Anon Adonis comes with horn and hounds;

She, silly queen, with more than love’s good will,

Forbade the boy he should not pass those grounds.

“Once,” quoth she, “did I see a fair sweet youth

Here in these brakes deep-wounded with a boar;

Deep in the thigh, a spectacle of ruth?

See, in my thigh,” quoth she, “here was the sore.”

She showed hers, he saw more wounds than one,

And blushing fled, and left her all alone (6-14).

In 1595, because of The Defense of Poetry, Shakespeare could have read and been influenced by Astrophil and Stella. The Dark Lady sequence, which he presumably wrote between 1595 and mid-1596, imitate the dark, abstract nature of Sidney’s work. Sonnet 127 is not the beginning of a sequence, but rather a climactic point that, in the Sonnets, could have started at least from Sonnet 111, if not many Sonnets before that. The Dark Lady appears to have been Shakespeare’s mistress. The sequence, from what can be inferred, develops in the following way: Shakespeare swears to a woman she is virtuous; she thinks virtue is nothing and urges Shakespeare to think of her as cruel; Shakespeare does not agree to it and feels hated by her; he then becomes vile so as to please her; she turns into some sort of goddess because of the influence she exerts over him; Shakespeare reveals his own feelings of power and majestic self-praise so as to be equal to her (Sonnet 135 and 136); Anne Hathaway finds out of his love affair and forgives him (Sonnet 145); Shakespeare’s mistress ignores, hurts, and abandons him; he feels betrayed but cannot stop loving her (Sonnet 153 and 154).
There are three possible reasons why Shakespeare decided to add the Sonnets concerning the Dark Lady at the end, even though she was entirely unrelated to Hamnet:

1) To confuse the reader into believing the whole cycle described a romantic triangle, thereby maintaining Hamnet’s identity a secret. For that aim he edited and merged his Sonnets together in such a way that the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady seem not only alive but to have known each other.

2) The only thing Hamnet wanted to know, according to Shakespeare, is not how much the author loved him, or how beautiful he thought he was, but why did he abandon his family, why did he never invite his wife and children to London to live with him? Perhaps Shakespeare, by adding the Dark Lady’s Sonnets, is explaining to Hamnet he had a passionate love affair in London that impeded that invitation.

3) Perhaps Shakespeare realized that, when writing the previous Dark Lady’s Sonnets, there were some elements that by chance or doom coincided with Hamnet’s death, and also coincided with the elegy he later wrote to him. These elements may appear to have some prophetic quality that, when Hamnet died, surprised and made Shakespeare think that the Sonnets he had written until that point and Hamnet’s death were somehow related. For example: In Sonnets 111, 118, 119, 147, to say a few, Shakespeare constantly mentions –his love affair in mind– he is in a sickly state, feverous, infected, ill, drinking draughts of vinegar or poison which were commonly taken to avoid the plague, exactly as later happened to Hamnet. The Dark Lady seems to evoke Death, the plague itself, irresistible to all mortals, cruel, lustful, and mad. Shakespeare on some occasions imagines a child that he could have later identified with Hamnet. Shakespeare may have felt that Hamnet’s poem not only resembled the Dark Lady’s poem, but was in some fateful way caused by it. One lacked an ending, the other lacked a beginning, yet both share an unnerving mood: “So shall thou feed on Death, that feeds on men, / And Death once dead, there’s no more dying then” (146.13-14).

In any case, what ties Hamnet and the Dark Lady is the guilt Shakespeare may have felt towards them. One and the other impeded Shakespeare to fully love either of them. Only Shakespeare understood the connection between Hamnet and the Dark Lady; for him it was the right choice to, after writing the poem or before its publication, merge them together.
Conclusion

The Fair Youth is Hamnet. Shakespeare did not want the Dark Lady’s identity to be known. Who is the person to whom the Sonnets are dedicated to? Only to Hamnet. How does one write a dedication to Hamnet? a) These Sonnets are dedicated to Hamnet. b) These Sonnets are dedicated to Hamnet, William Shakespeare’s son. c) These Sonnets are dedicated to Hamnet, Master William Shakespeare’s son. d) These Sonnets are dedicated to Master William’s Hamnet. The dedication is, in fact, an epitaph, a message inscribed onto a tomb:

TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGGETTER. OF.
THESE. INSVING. SONNETS.
MASTER. WILLIAM’S. HAMNET. ALL. HAPPINESSE.
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR. EVER–LIVING. POET.
WISHETH.
THE. WELL–WISHING.
ADVENTVRER. IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.
THOMAS. THORPE.

Juan Daniel Millán (1988–2016) was primarily a painter, but also an author focused on philosophy and fiction. Millán’s paintings have been exhibited in Mexico City and New York City, as well as published in Studio Visit Magazine. His artwork can be seen at juandanielmillan.tumblr.com. The University of Hawaii published his article entitled “Contemporary art understood as a postontological realization” (www.huichawaii.org/assets/calhoun%2cjuan---contemporary-art-understood-as-a-postontological-realization.pdf). In 2016 The University of Arts and Sciences of Chiapas published his book entitled “Sol entre nubes” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8wzEpw4NZ8). Sadly, Juan Millán died on 16 June 2016, slipping from the rocks into a waterfall he was painting (Las Brisas, Cascadas Las Nubes, in Chiapas, Mexico).
Bibliography


The Reception of Tacitus’ *Germania* by the German Humanists: from Provence to Empire

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It is well known he German Humanists (1490-1540) used Tacitus’ *Germania* to advance their notion of the German nation in response to Italian criticism. But less attention has been given to the German nature of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (1509). I argue that Humanists after Conrad Celtis (Bebel, Wimpheling, Cochlaeus, Brant, Irenicus, Franck, Hutten) emphasized the Germanness of the empire by reinterpreting the traditional Translation of Empire, the Germanic migrations out of Germania after Constantine, and the designation of a new national purpose (the protection and expansion of the Church and the faith). They grafted the new views of the nation with the fifth world empire, Germany as the descendent of Roman-era Germania, and the contemporary Holy Roman Empire.

“Now that the Senate has declared France an empire, what title should I adopt? Emperor of France? No, since Louis XVI was the King of France and imagined the country to be his private property. Simply ‘emperor’? But how is this different from the emperors of Russia and the Habsburg Empire? Roman Emperor? But the capital is Paris not Rome. Admittedly Roman symbols abound, with triumphal arches, allusions to Julius Caesar, imperial eagles, titles. When I visit the Rhine departments in September I will stop by Aachen and seek the advice of my ancestor, Charlemagne.”

And so Napoleon set out for Aachen to find out what his prototypical sovereign thought his title should be. After ten days at the holy site he found the answer: Emperor of the French. It was the perfect solution; it preserved a bond with the French people, while allowing for future expansion beyond France. The *Moniteur* expounded on this connection with the Emperor of the Romans. Indeed Napoleon as the Second Charlemagne used his (fake) regalia
during his coronation in Notre Dame on December 2, 1804. As it happened, the relationship between the (French) empire and the (French) nation would bedevil Napoleon, just as it did throughout the history of the Holy Roman Empire.

Napoleon must have known that the semi-official name of the Habsburg empire was the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. But he probably did not know why this awkward title was originally adopted. Although the empire had many names in the later Middle Ages, the German Humanists emphasized both nation and empire, making the imbalance between them even more evident. They searched the Roman and Greek classics in their promotion of the German past. With the virtual exclusion of the pope in the emperor’s coronation (not even required after 1509), Europe was left with only one claimant to universal authority, at least in temporal matters. Like Napoleon, the emperors attempted to reconcile their nationalism with the traditional universalism. If Napoleon had to harmonize Republican sensibilities with imperial aspirations, the German Humanists at the time of Emperor Maximilian I (1486-1519) felt compelled to make the German nation the effective equivalent of the Holy Roman Empire.

While the German patria had been a commonplace since the time of Frederick Barbarossa, the German Lands as a nation was relatively rare. Common names for the German Lands were Alemannia, Teutonica, Tutschland, Deutschland, Germania, etc. While Germany was sometimes referred to as a nation, so too were the larger units which were included in the whole, such as that of the Swabians, originally one of the stem duchies. Technically the nation referred to a grouping, as in the nations of a medieval university, but it could be quite elastic in meaning. In the late fifteenth century many German Humanists decided it was time to modernize the idea of nation in a way that would meet the criticisms of the Italian Humanists.

2 A typical example is Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516) who often refers to the “German nation” in his historical genealogies of Maximilian I. See Ridé, L' image du Germain, vol. 1, 285-90.
3 See Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, vol. 1, Chap. 4 (The Reich and the German Nation), 50-66; Garber, “Vom universalen,” 16-37 at 24-32; Scales, The Shaping of German Identity, Chap. 6; Hirschi, The Origins of Nationalism, Chap. 7, esp. 167-79.
4 The Italian who angered the Germans most was Giannantonio Campano. See Freher and Struve, eds., Rerum Germanicarum, 292-300; Kelley, “Tacitus Noster,” Chap. 8, 152-67; Nonn, “Heiliges Römisches Reich,” 129-42.
In what sense was the empire “German”? How could the hereditary possessions of the emperor be part of the German nation? The German Humanists discovered the solution to resolve the ambiguous relationship between nation and empire in the *Germania* of Tacitus.5

It is argued here that the German Humanists after 1490 turned ancient Germania into a German empire, which, they claimed, had a continuous history since the early Roman empire. They made the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation at once German and imperial. The German Humanists used Tacitus’ *Germania* to construct a Germany as a Roman-era German empire, but with its own separate origins and a distinct destiny.5 They continued to refer to the new Germany as the Roman empire, as the Holy Roman Empire was sometimes called. Yet the essence of the modern empire was German. They wanted it both ways.

The current empire was fully imperial yet fully German. They imagined the contemporary empire as somehow German based, with its historical connection with Roman Germania Magna. Actually Upper and Lower Germany were considered Roman provinces, even though both straddled the Rhine. If Caesar Augustus really did think of Germania Magna as a province, that did not make it so. It was Quinctillius Varus’s task to turn it into a functional province, but the disaster at the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE put an end to that. The fiction that the Rhine divided Gaul from Germania was invented by Julius Caesar.7 By giving this vast unconquered territory a name—Germania—it somehow *mirabile dictu* became a geographical and ethnographical entity. The Renaissance Humanists simply transformed this place called Germany into the heartland of an equally fictitious “empire,” which was both German (*deutsch*) and Germanic (*germanisch*).


The interest in Tacitus did not begin with the Germans but with the Italians.\textsuperscript{8} Italian Humanists scurried about Europe looking for classical manuscripts, especially those about \textit{Italia}. When Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini came across a copy of Tacitus’ \textit{Germania} in 1455, he used it to plead with the emperor Frederick III and the German princes to launch a crusade against the Turks, who had just taken Constantinople.\textsuperscript{9} While he praised the learning, piety, and material progress of modern Germans, he attributed these advances to the Catholic Church and not to the barbarous Germans of old.

The Great Debate had begun. Offended by this backhanded praise, the Germans had to reply. How can Tacitus be utilized to demonstrate the equality of Germans and today’s Italians? Can the \textit{Germania} of Tacitus’ day be shown to be on a par with Rome, or at least possessing some redeeming qualities or accomplishments? If, as they claim, contemporary Italians are the direct descendants of the ancient Romans, are modern Germans the direct descendants of the ancient Germans? Are modern and ancient Germans really so barbarous as the Italian Humanists say? But whenever the Germans tried to counter the Italians, the latter cut them short with the embarrassing question: where are your sources? Where are the German writers and their histories of Germany for the past 1500 years? We Italians are enjoying a re-birth; you Germans were never born! In response, the German Humanists mounted a fourfold defense:

\textsuperscript{8} See Krebs, \textit{Most Dangerous Book}, Chap. 2; Schellhase, \textit{Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought}, Chap. 1 (Italians), 2 (Celtis & Hutten), 3 (Germans); Krebs, \textit{Negotiatio Germaniae}, Chap. 3, 111-90.

\textsuperscript{9} See Krebs, \textit{Negotiatio Germaniae}, 127-56.
1) They searched classical texts for references to Germany and its people.

2) They constructed a compendium of Germany modeled on the *Italia Illustrata* (1474) of Flavio Biondo.

3) They collected vernacular writings from the Middle Ages about anything German.¹⁰

4) They created a positive image of the German aboriginals and linked it to contemporary *Germanen*, who would have to be portrayed as direct descendants of the ancient *Germani*. The histories of Germany and the Holy Roman Empire must be shown to be intertwined.

The German Humanists were also spurred on by the widespread resentment of papal appointments and Curial taxes in Germany.¹¹ The Italian Humanists presented the primitive Germans as uncouth, beer-guzzling idol worshipers, who sat around gambling and slugging each other.¹² The only thing they were good at was fighting in battle. At first the German Humanists simply ignored these negative characteristics in Tacitus’ book, or tried to turn them into virtues.¹³

¹⁰ See Walshe, *Medieval German Literature*, Bk 3, Chap. 6; Borchardt, *German Antiquity*, Chap. 2.


¹² See Krebs, *Negotiatio*, 111-90. The Italian and German Humanists rarely questioned the historical accuracy of Tacitus. While such adulation of the classical texts may seem naive by modern standards, such was the general Renaissance attitude toward the ancients.

¹³ In particular the notion that the Germans’ rustic life, mocked by G. Campano, was actually natural virtue, untainted by civilization. Tacitus himself suggests such a comparison. See Conrad Celtis in Forster, *Selections from Conrad Celtis*, 52: “Ita nos Italicus luxus corrupit et saeve…, ut plane sanctius et beatius fuisset nos agere rudi illa et silvestri vita, dum inter continentiae fines vivebamus, quam tot gulae et luxus instrumenta, quibus nihil umquam satis est, invexisse peregrinosque mores induisse.” Many of the patriotic notions of the later German Humanists appear in Celtis’ *Oratio* (Forster, 36-65). The major components of the patriotic vision of the German Humanists—imperium, natio, Germanie, patria, studium, virtus, translatio—are contained in Celtis’ speech. But these words are scattered randomly in this discourse and not assembled into a coherent pattern. Celtis does not develop these ideas in his other writings. Perhaps he had an implicit concept of a German empire, but that’s about all. Too often modern historians point to the common elements of the patriotic sentiments in the writings of Bebel, Wimpheling, Franck, Prickheimer, Brant, Irenicus, and Aventinus, without sufficient acknowledgment of their differences. But as I contend here, these authors go beyond the offhand allusions to nation and empire in the Oration of Celtis. Celtis challenged his followers to demonstrate how the empire of Maximilian I was a continuation of the “empire” of the Germans at the time of the Julio-Claudians.
Their lack of laws, cities, institutions, and buildings were actually expressions of their pristine goodness and natural simplicity. The first noble savages, if you will. The Humanists gathered classical allusions to place-names for cities, regions, and tribes, and *mutatis mutandis* associated them with modern equivalents. Thus the Roman Suevi became the contemporary Swabians. The name Suevi was itself interchangeable with the Alemanni, later a name for the Germans. The Roman Helvetii became the Switzer, Schwyz, or Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft.

But modern scholarship on the reception of Tacitus sometimes does not give enough attention to the external circumstances at the time of Emperor Maximilian I. The Humanists sharply criticize the German princes for pursuing their own interests, and not rallying to the emperor and the empire. It is imperative to unify the empire as a prelude for an assault on the infidel who is threatening Italy, Hungary, and the Balkans. The wars after 1490 involving Switzerland, Venice, Swabia, and the Netherlands could dismember the empire of the German Nation. Heinrich Bebel (1472-1518) wrote a series of tracts (1500-10) imploing the “German” Swiss to remain within the Holy Roman Empire and join in the coming crusade. He reminds the Swiss that they have an obligation to defend the emperor, empire, Christian faith and doctrine, pope, and their own libertas. Maximilian also needs the Swiss against the French in Italy. Bebel chastises the German princes for not assisting the emperor in suppressing the “rebellious” Venetians. While most German Humanists did...
not share Maximilian’s enthusiasm for his Habsburg ancestry and his imperialist fantasies, they offered much mutual support, as can be seen in their presence in imperial cities and courts, even if no Humanist can be found in the emperor’s inner circle of advisors; numerous Humanists were in Innsbruck and Vienna.

The center of Humanist studies, however, was not in the courts, but in the universities, where they gathered to form solidarities and pursue common interests. Most of the prominent Humanists were from the edges of the empire, such as Alsace. Somehow these scholars balanced their loyalty to their town or region, the German nation, and the Holy Roman Empire. Their corner of the empire was a microcosm of the greatness of the whole.

The Arch-Humanist Conrad Celtis (1459-1508) set the pattern for patriotic Humanism. In his inaugural address at the Bavarian University of Ingolstadt in 1492 he exhorts his audience to put the new learning at the service of the nation. German students should sift the ancient and medieval sources for information about Germany. To underscore the centrality of Tacitus he soon afterwards prepared an edition of the Germania. Celtis’ electrifying speech at Ingolstadt focused on the Germans’ common qualities. His main theme is that the Germans constitute a single Volk, itself divided into tribes. The first Germans, as “our Tacitus” assures us, were indigenous. Indeed they were the world’s only unmixed ethnic group, then or since.

16 See Overfield, “Germany,” Chap. 6, 92-122 at 104-07.
17 Celtis’ Oration is in Forster, Selections from Conrad Celtis, 96-111. See Krebs, Negotiatio, 190-210; Flood, “Conrad Celtis,” 27-41; Ridé, L’image, vol. 1, 212-15; Spitz, Conrad Celtis, Chap. 10 (Patriot).
18 Although Celtis’ projected Germania illustrata, modeled after Biondo’s Italia illustrata, was never finished, many Humanists contributed to it. See Ridé, L’image, vol. 1, Chap. 4, 215-29; Joachimsen, Geschichtsauffassung und Geschichtsschreibung in Deutschland unter dem Einfluss des Humanismus, Chap. 6 (Germania illustrata).
19 See Müller, Die ‘Germania generalis’ des Conrad Celtis, Pt2, 303-66; Tacitus, Germania, Bk 1, part 2 (Germanos indigenas); Bk 1, par 4; Rives, trans., Tacitus: Germania, section 9, 66-74; Ridé, L’image, vol. 1, 228-59; Joachimsen, “Tacitus in deutschen Humanismus,” 697-717 at 706-07 (Celtis); Silver, “Germanic Patriotism,” 38-68 at 40-9.
They comprised a distinct geographical area, bounded by the Danube and the Rhine, an area approximately the size of the German nation of c.1500. The Germanen or Deutschen are the direct descendants of the Germani of which Tacitus writes so eloquently.

Needless to say, no historian in the twentieth-first century would concur with the assumptions of Celtis and the other Humanists. The residents of Germania Magna did not of course call themselves Germani or Deutschen or any other common name. They were Cherusci or Chatti and the like. Modern historians and archeologists emphasize the diversity of the peoples east of the Rhine, an area Rome never conquered.20 The German Humanists by contrast hold up Tacitus’ little book uncritically as literal fact.21 We modern Germans should look to our ancestors as our role models, especially in their practice of loyalty, freedom, and military prowess. As Tacitus and other Roman and Greek ethnographers testify, the Germans can trace their origins back to Noah, Tuisco, Hercules, and Adam, who spoke German. German-speakers escaped the Tower of Babel before God had confused the languages of the earth. Some ancient writers and Humanists included Alexander and the Trojans22 among the predecessors of the Germans but emphatically not the French. The Humanists had no qualms about incorporating medieval myths into their accounts of the historical Germans.

Clearly the superior culture of modern Germans was not the result of post-Roman conversion to Catholicism, as say the Italian Humanists. Rather, their outstanding achievements are the outcome of their exceptional virtue and talent. Did nota German inventor gunpowder? The printing press? Who can match the artistic genius of Albrecht

20 See Pohl, Die Germanen, Chap. 3.

21 The bibliography is immense. See, e.g., Joachimsen, “Humanism and the Development of the German Mind,” 162-224. The critical Beatus Rhenanus is a notable exception.

22 The German Humanists’ treatment of the Trojan origin of the Germans is complex and often ambiguous. They were unsure how to reconcile Trojan ancestors with the German indigenous culture. They often rejected the French claim to Trojan origins, while allowing the Přemyslid and Habsburg dynasties to make similar claims. See Scales, Shaping of German Identity, 295-96, 316-17, 478; Borchardt, German Antiquity, 32, 46, 56-67, 191; Tanner, The Last Descendant of Aeneas, 98-115.
Dürer? What Italian city can rival the beauty of Nürnberg or Frankfurt? What French cathedral can surpass Cologne or Strasbourg? Who, save the Swiss, can stand up to the German imperial knights? Our great accomplishments followed naturally from the superiority of German moral character. No other empire has produced kings as distinguished as the Ottonians and the Staufer. Everyone knows that German virtue, now and in Roman times, vastly exceeds that of the decadent and effeminate Italians, the descendants of the pleasure-seeking and power-mad Romans.

Tacitus’ *Germania* was what the Humanists were waiting for. At last here was proof that the progenitors of the Germans were community-minded, fearless warriors, and “natural.” Unlike the ambitious sons of Romulus, they fought for honor (*Ehre*) alone. Blessed with autochthony they escaped the so-called civilized values of the oppressive Romans. The Humanists readily accepted Tacitus’ description of the Germans as “unformed” (*informii*), but insist that their historical formation was due to their inherent qualities, and not the result of the Christian faith brought by papal Rome. The key to German uniqueness is their indigenous character.

The Germans inhabit an area the Romans called *Germania*, now after 1500 more commonly referred to as Deutschland. The Humanists took their cue from Aeneas Sylvius, who described Germany in the wider context of Europe. German geographers made detailed maps


24 See Cochlaeus, *Brevis Germanie*, Chap. 4, 74-93. “Norinberga centrum Europe simul atque Germanie” (p. 74). Cochlaeus’ tribute to Nuremberg should not be taken as simply local patriotism. His praise of his home region serves as praises of Germany as a whole. Wimpheling’s attachment to his native Alsace serves much the same purpose.


of Germania, which were integrated with descriptions of regions, towns, plants, rivers, mountains, and climate. John Cochlaeus and Jacob Wimpheling extol German writers, artists, inventors, and architects. As good Humanists, they frequently cite ancient geographers, such as Ptolemy and Strabo. They display a strong attachment to their locality when discussing Germany. In his survey of Germania Sebastian Brant focuses on his home Strasbourg. Another Alsatian, Jacob Wimpheling, likewise places Strasbourg in the center of his treatment of Germany. Felix Fabri does much the same to his beloved Ulm in Swabia, described in detail. Numerous other examples could be cited. For the German geographers and topographers, ancient and modern Germany was a geographical entity, with physical boundaries, however imprecise and unstable, making it separate from the Roman empire.

Part of their motivation for making these historical ties with place names, past and present, was to counter the Italian Humanists, such as Flavio Biondo, who lamented the loss of Italy’s names of regions and towns. The early German Humanists were exasperated by the Italians’ needling of the Germans for having so few of their

27 See Samuel-Scheyder, Johannes Cochlaeus, Chap. 2; for Cochlaeus’ idea of the borders of Germany, see 265-66; genius of the Germans, 266-68. For Cochlaeus and Tacitus’ Germania, see Langosch, “Zur Germania des Johannes Cochlaeus,” 373-84, esp. 374-79.

28 Epitome rerum Germanicarum Iacobi Wimphelingi (1562), Chaps. 64-7.


30 See in particular his Germaniae Jacobi Wimpheling: ad Rempublicam Argentinensem (Strassburg, 1501); trans. Ernst Martin, Germania von Jacob Wimpheling, 82-5.

31 Fabri, Descriptio Sueviae, partially edited in Escher, Quellen zur Schweizer Geschichte, 107-229. As with many German geographers, Fabri adopts Aeneas Sylvius’ Europe as his literary model.

32 See Gerald Strauss, Sixteenth-Century Germany, Chap. 4; Helmrath, “Probleme und Formen,” 333-92 at 383-91. For the ties to Aeneas Sylvius, Biondo, and Celtis, see Ch. 1.

33 See Strauss, Sixteenth-Century Germany, Chap. 2. Biondo’s integration of famous figures, classical literature and history, medieval history, topography and geography was a methodology quickly adopted by German Humanists, in part because it allowed them to avoid having to justify the relative lack of German sources. Biondo’s portrayal of Italy—which was politically divided—inspired Germans to depict their own country as diverse yet somehow one. See Castner, Flavio Biondo’s Italia Illustrata, 2 vols.
own historical writings, and the relative neglect of Germany in the classical sources. They gleefully point to Aeneas Sylvius’ *Germania* as evidence of the feasibility of their approach to the study of pre-modern Germany.

But in view of the immense variety—political, topographical, geographical, cultural, linguistic—of Germany, ancient and modern, can Germany be called a “nation”? Much of the modern historiography of this question of nationhood in the German Humanists emphasizes the characteristics which the Humanist writings have in common, starting with Conrad Celtis. It is generally accepted that the Humanists often refer to the Holy Roman Empire, or at least the German-speaking core, as a nation. (Even during the Protestant Reformation both the Catholic south and the Protestant north continue to speak of the German nation, and criticize each other for disrupting its unity.) It is generally accepted that the late medieval idea of the common allegiance to the emperor constitutes a major ingredient of the German nation, in addition to its basis in language and culture.

There was not, to be sure, a consensus about what made up the physical boundaries of the German Lands, although it is significant that the Humanists devote an inordinate amount of attention to this subject. The Roman term Germania was still widely used, now even more so because of its association with Tacitus and other Roman sources. But after 1500 the word slowly gives way to Deutschland, with its more patriotic and linguistic connotations.

It was not unusual during the period of Maximilian’s interminable Reichstags (27!) to raise money for the entire empire (with its extended Habsburg possessions), which was somehow considered the German *natio*. In this sense we can designate the German Humanists as patriots or even nationalists. But the limitation of this empire-as-nation paradigm is that the idea of the Germanness of the nation could understate the German character of the *imperium*. The Holy Roman Empire, after all, has traditionally, since at least the eleventh century, been associated with the universalist side of the
Habsburg empire, with its origins, however tenuous, in the ancient Roman empire. This generalization, however, oversimplifies both the *translatio imperii* and the meaning (as understood by the German Humanists) of the German migrations out of *Germania Magna*.

In point of fact the Humanists’ interpretations sometimes distinguish between the nation and the empire insofar as both are German. The process of the German character of the *imperium* underwent three stages in their writing:

1) Germany is a distinct area, inhabited by people who speak German as their first language. The Humanists’ obsession with geography began immediately after Conrad Celtis, who expressed some interest in it. Many of the older names for Germany continued on into the fifteenth century, such as Germania, Alemmania, Teutonia, Saxony (as the original German tribe), Duitsland, and many others in the languages of Europe. The empire was often referred as a *regnum*, even if other kingdoms, marches, and duchies fell within the German Lands. The Humanists are keen to indicate the continuity between Roman Greater Germany and the contemporary German nation. The gradual evolution of a German nucleus accelerated in the early fourteenth century, as in the works of Lupold of Bebenberg, who was widely read in the late fifteenth century.\(^{34}\)

Celtis assures his German audience that “our nation”\(^{35}\) of Germany was the equal of the Roman empire in the virtue of its peoples. Ancient Germany had clear boundaries and its own language.

\(^{34}\) See Klippel, *Die Aufnahme der Schriften Lupolds von Bebenburg im deutschen Humanismus*. Not available in USA, but the University will loan a microfilm. The reason for Lupold’s appeal to the Humanists was his idea that Germany formed the basis of the empire that also included the “additions” of Italy and Burgundy, a then radical notion which angered more traditional universalists such as William of Ockham. See Lupold von Bebenburg, *De iuribus regni et imperii*, 28, 32, 40-6, 50-68, 96-100, 202-04, 226-28, 256-62. Lupold’s Fatherland (patrie Germanie, 278) might have surprised his readers in 1340 when it was written, but the patria was a commonplace in German Humanism.

\(^{35}\) Forster, *Selections from Conrad Celtis*, 46, line 42: pudeat, nationi nostrae iugum.
And the peoples of the east who are so unfortunate to have been “separated from the body of Germany,”\textsuperscript{36} still admire our culture and language. So too the Franks to the west appreciate and enjoy something of the virtue and culture of the Germans. Only in the south, that is, Italy, do the former Romans remain mired in luxury and comfort, content only to seek commercial ventures. The Germans are the “last survivors of the Roman empire.”\textsuperscript{37} Celtis implies that the current geographical area is only a part of the original Germany at the time of and shortly after the Romans. He implores modern Germans to restore Germany’s “broken territories.”\textsuperscript{38} Yet Celtis never unequivocally equates the modern Holy Roman Empire with the nation of Germany.

Although Celtis at times comes close to a concept of the contemporary empire as German, his view of the Translation of Empire is essentially medieval. “Our empire” almost always means the present Holy Roman Empire. Charlemagne transferred the Roman empire to the Germans, who are the heirs of \textit{Romanitas}. To be sure, modern Germans are at least the equal, and in many things superior, to the Romans and their present day descendants in Italy. The Arch-Humanist’s veneration of all things classical will not allow him to go further. The Roman empire may have been translated to the Germans, but the Roman empire to the south and west remains independent of the Holy Roman Empire. In some vague sense Celtis’ nation of Germany exists within the empire of Maximilian I. If pressed, Celtis would probably admit that the Roman empire was the greatest of the previous world empires, but the current Holy Roman Empire has far surpassed its barbarous origins and is well poised to exceed the ancient Roman \textit{imperium} in its achievements.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Conrad Celtis}, 46, line 44: quasi a corpore Germaniae nostrae separatae vivunt.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Conrad Celtis}, 46, line 49: Germanos, Romani reliquias imperii.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Conrad Celtis}, 46, line 42.
For our purposes, the most important element in Celtis’ pre-
imperial conception of ancient Germania is his mention of the tribes who left Germania Magna after the time of Constantine.\textsuperscript{39} The image of Germans migrating out of ancient Germany, if only implied, became a commonplace for the Humanists after Celtis. The Arch-Humanist was unable to conceive these pre-Carolingian migrations as an empire because of his acceptance of the received tradition of the \textit{translatio imperii} from the Greeks (Byzantines) to the Franks at the time of Charlemagne (or Otto I or other claimants).\textsuperscript{40} The medieval views of the Translation were in fact undergoing changes in the German Humanists.\textsuperscript{41} For Celtis the Translation had primarily cultural not political implications, for it put the burden on modern Germans to utilize and even surpass the literature of the ancients.\textsuperscript{42}

For all Celtis’ patriotism, we should be careful not to read history backwards and project the later views of Humanists such as Bebel and Cochlaeus into his exhortation to take up pens in the service of the nation. (One wonders whether the early German Humanists were more interested in the \textit{translatio studii}, arrogantly claimed by the French since the thirteenth century, than the \textit{translatio imperii}, which even the French had grudgingly acceded to the Germans since at least the time of King St Louis.) Celtis’ Oration is more of a rough sketch than a finished portrait. It is a staccato of ideas about Germany and its future; a series of discussion points, not a battle plan. Negatively he responded to the insults of his Italian counterparts. Positively he prodded Maximilian and the princes to restore—and outdo—the Holy Roman Empire to its pristine glory.

\textsuperscript{39} Conrad Celtis, 42-47.
\textsuperscript{40} Conrad Celtis, 42-43.
\textsuperscript{42} Conrad Celtis, 42-43. Entirely different is the political emphasis put on the \textit{translatio imperii} by Bebel, Wimpheling, Irenicus, Franck, and others. In the present article I limit my examples to just a few of the leading Humanists to illustrate the theme of empire. Many examples could be taken from other German Humanists during 1500-40.
2) Germany is a *nation*. The concept of the nation was widespread in the German later Middle Ages, and was referred to in a variety of ways. The language-rooted word could suggest a place where Germans or German subgroups, such as Saxons or Swabians, resided. Germany could be thought of as a collection of nations, or as a single nation.\(^43\) Going back at least to the Ottonians there was always an intuition that some kind of cultural bond united the traditional stem duchies, a sentiment which was strongly felt in the early fourteenth century. For the Humanists the term nation was fast becoming a geographical concept in addition to being an ethnic one.

3) While there is nothing unusual about the Humanists’ appeal to *natio* as a synonym for Germany or even implicitly the Holy Roman Empire, the very frequency of the allusions to the idea is striking. Nor was it unusual to tie loyalty to the emperor as an expression of devotion to the German nation. Probably some Humanists at the court of Maximilian approved the new title of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation adopted by the Diet of Cologne in 1512 (first used in 1474; the Holy Roman Empire first appears in 1254). The use of the German Nation would be consistent with their (we assume) support of the reform proposals of the Diet of Worms in 1495\(^44\), at least those that the emperor

\(^43\) See above, notes 1 and 5; Schröcker, *Die Deutsche Nation*, Chap. 4; Münkler, “Tacitus’ Bedeutung für das Nationalbewusstsein der Deutschen und der Niederländer,” 71-77.

\(^44\) On the Worms Diet and the German nation see Schmidt, *Geschichte des alten Reiches*. Chaps. 1, 2; Wiesflecker, *Maximilian I*, 255-79 and Kaiser Maximilian*, vol. 2, Pt 3; Brady, *German Historie*, Pt 1, Chap. 7. The bibliography on the Worms Diet is large.
himself favored. His aim was to obtain funds for his Italian wars—occasioned by the French invasion of 1494—without agreeing to share power with the German princes. What was unusual about the Humanists’ summons of the nation was their emphasis on the obligation to serve their Fatherland—*patria* is often used by the Humanists—not merely by their humanistic studies but by military action and financial assistance. For Bebel, Germans should don military uniforms as well as (figuratively) togas, as Petrarch was wont to do.45 The *patria* is on the battlefield as well as in the library.

Needless to say, the Humanists did not have any concept of a country called Germany within the empire; the nation state would have to wait until the nineteenth century. But even during the Lutheran Reformation the term nation became intertwined with the empire itself, just as the German Lands could be quite flexible in the late Middle Ages.

The main significance of the second stage of the German Humanists’ heightened patriotism, however, was the movement towards a common purpose: *the defense of the Christian faith*. The nation is the rallying cry to mount an empire-wide crusade to oust the infidel from Europe, especially in Hungary. The Humanists often make historical allusions to the mission of the German nation to protect Christendom and the church, including the Roman church. They utilize the standard chronicles—especially Godfrey of Viterbo, Jordanes, Sigebert of Gembloux, Martin of Troppau (Opava), Otto of Freising—to emphasize the traditional German resistance to the threat from the east. (The preference for historical chronicles over legal texts dates mainly from the early fourteenth century.) The

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German crusade would unify the empire and restore the venerable mission of all Germans. While this commitment to the Christian enterprise is barely noticeable in Celtis, it is paramount in Bebel, Wimpheling, Irenicus, Cochlaeus, Hutten, and others.

The third phase of the Humanists’ patriotic fervor is their notion of a German empire. If the idea of the German empire is implicit in Celtis and a fortiori in Bebel, it is explicit in Jacob Wimpheling (1450-1528). A native of Alsace he stressed the centrality of the

46 Bebel, “Oratio,” paras. 42-9, 50-7; “Quod imperator Romanorum” in Patriotische Schriften, 172-79, and “Ad Bernenses,” 150-69 (our sacred empire of Germany will become more united as a result of the coming crusade; 150). Germany and the nation are our “mother;” see Mertens, “Bebelius ...patriam Sueviam...restuit,” 145-73 at 148; Grimm, “Bebel,” 685-6. While there are many on-demand editions with the Oratio 1504 ed.–along with other works of Bebel–the Zinsmaier ed. uses modern typeset. The Very Christian Emperor Maximilian is the latest of German emperors who defended the faith and the Roman church. The exceptional virtue of the Germans is acknowledged by the Translation and by the title of their emperor. The kingdom of the eastern Franks became the German empire and nation. See “Imperator Romanorum iure,” ed. Schardius, Rerum Germanicarum, vol. 1, 116-17.

47 Wimpheling, Epitome rerum Germanicarum (1562), Chaps. 61-3, 66-8. His model city, Strasbourg (he was actually from Schlettstadt), testifies to the Christian faith of Germans. See his Germania, 80-180 at 146-50 with facing German. See Martin, Germania von Jacob Wimpheling with appendix on Wimpheling’s sources, 87-93. Both Germania (1501) and Epitome (1505) are fiercely patriotic, with a focus on his native Alsace.

48 No people has ever surpassed the Christian faith of the Germans. Franciscus Irenicus, Germaniae exegeseos (1518) (digitized Google Books), Bk 2, Chaps. 10-12, 30r-31; this faith is associated with the king’s triple crown and the Translation of Empire; Bk 3, Chaps. 36-8, 68r-69r. See Ridé, L’image, vol. 1, 352-58.

49 Langosch, Johannes Cochlaeus, Chap. 3, par. 1, 62; Chap. 7, par. 25, 134; against heresy; Chap. 6, pars. 6 and 10, 112-14.

50 Hutten made extensive pleas to Maximilian and the princes to defend Germany and Christian Europe from the infidel. He often refers to the empire as both Germania and nation. See, e.g., Böcking, Ulrichi Hutteni Opera 5, 176-82 at 176.

51 Maximilian is the latest in the succession of emperors starting from Julius Caesar. They have been either Latin, Greek, or German, but never French. The empire was translated to the Germans, in the person of Charlemagne who was German, born in Ingelheim or Lüttich; Germania (ed. Borries), Bk 1, 98: “Legatur catalogus Romanorum regum, nempe aut Latinos aut Graecos aut Germanos in eo inveniemus, sed Gallum heminem, nisi et idem ortu et origine paternoque sanguine fuerit Germanus.” The eastern part of the empire is Germania; 100. The Roman empire was translated from the Greeks to the Germans in the person of Charlemagne, “in Germanos translatum est imperium et primum in Caroli Magni personam, Carolus ergo Magnus Germanus fuit,” 102; Martin, Germania, 39-43. Charlemagne is of German descent and rules the regions of Saxony, Bavaria, and Austria down to today; 108.
Translation of Empire to Charlemagne,\textsuperscript{52} who rules the regions of Saxony, Bavaria, and Austria down to today.\textsuperscript{53} The Germany of the eastern Franks (Frankish Germans) traces its origins back to Tacitus. Following Irenicus and the medieval tradition, Wimpheling acknowledges Pope Gregory V’s gift of the principle of election at the time of Otto III. The German electors effectively make the emperor of the Germans (the actual title was king of the Romans, adopted at Frankfort), although he received the title emperor of the Romans at the time of the translation of empire to Charlemagne.\textsuperscript{54} The core of the empire was always Germany, a distinct nation.\textsuperscript{55} Wimpheling insists that Alsace was always part of Germania. The implication of this discussion of Translation and Ottonian Germany is to assure his readers that Maximilian’s wars in Italy are not “foreign wars,” as say the German princes, but part of the normal course of German history going back to Charlemagne and the Ottonians.

\textsuperscript{52} The empire was translated from the Greeks to the Germans in the person of Charlemagne, a German. Wimpheling: \textit{Germania}, Bk 1, 98: Also 102. The eastern part of the empire is Germania; 100.


\textsuperscript{54} Wempheling, \textit{Epitome}, Chaps. 10, 20, 21. This jumbled account of the translatio imperii, the papal gift of princely election, the continued expansion of the empire after Charlemagne, and the uniquely German institution of the election of the emperor is not always easy to follow. But the point is clear: the king or emperor of the Romans is also the emperor of the Germans who rules in Germania. Charlemagne’s Germany goes back to Roman-era Germania but now absorbs the title of the Roman emperor. “Solis Germanis licere Principem eliger, qui Caesar et Romanorum Rex appellatus, ... Neque hanc electionis authoritatem ab Electoribus deinceps Romanus Pontifex admire potest. Quis enim dedit Populo Romano Imperatoris eligendi potestatem, nisi ius divinum et naturale?” (Chap. 20, 18r); the Roman people here means the German princes. With the Ottonians the German nucleus predominates in the empire, which is now uniquely German by the new institution of the election by the princes, who represent all of Germany. Today Maximilian (\textit{Epitome}, Chap. 10, 10v) continues to rule the German empire in the tradition of Charlemagne and as a Christian imperium.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Epitome}, Chap. 7, 9r (nationem Germanicam), Chap. 22, 20r (ad nationem Germanicarum).
Franciscus Irenicus (1494-1553)\textsuperscript{56} makes Charlemagne the king and emperor of Germany and the Germans. The Roman empire was translated to the Germany of the Germans. Johannes Aventinus (1477-1534)\textsuperscript{57} was closely tied to the court of the William IV, Duke of Bavaria, who commissioned him to write his Annals of Bavaria. This seven-volume work is an outstanding example of how regional history and German patriotism were integrated. The work often depicts how emperor and pope worked in unison for the Christian good. A devout but unconventional Catholic, Aventinus rendered the German empire a continuation of German kings and emperors throughout history, extending back to Noah and Tuitsch, as listed in his *Chronik*, his condensed German version of the Annals. Germania is the latest in the series of world empires, and the greatest.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56} The pope transferred the imperium to the German Charlemagne, who rules Germania; Irenicus, *Germania* (1518), Bk 3, Chap. 19, 64v. The empire passed to Charlemagne and the Germans because they merited it by their exceptional virtue; Chap. 21, 66r. Charlemagne subdued all of Germany; Chap 32, 66v. Germany, eastern Francia which was not part of the Roman empire, consists of Saxony, Bavaria, Swabia, and Thuringia; 66v. “Germania tota Caroli Magni ipse Francie orientalis nomen accepit;” 66v. The empire was translated to the existing imperium which is called Germania. After Charlemagne Germania expanded in all directions. Christ gave the German emperors the temporal sword to rule the empire. “Nunc de imperii dilatione nostrae erit oratio, ut agnoscamus quanta Germani possideant, omnes autem provinciae imperio subiciunter;” 67v. Otto I and Rudolf of Habsburg continued to expand into Burgundy and Austria; 68r. The emperor rules the Christian empire as is evidenced by his triple crowning at Aachen, Milan, and Rome; 66v. Irenicus affirms that Charlemagne and his successors rule the German empire. The popes have acknowledged that the Germans deserve their empire by reason of their exemplary virtue; 68v. Leo crowned Charlemagne at the request of the Roman people. After the translation of the empire to the Germans, the rulers are now called kings of the Germans. Irenicus seems to suggest that the kings are also emperors of the Germans after they are elected by the German princes, beginning with Otto III; 69r. (The late medieval procedure of the princely election of the king of the Romans to be followed by the crowning at Cologne and the papal coronation as emperor in Rome was not clarified until the 13th C.) There is no modern edition of Irenicus’ *Germania* that I know of. Many reproductions online and on-demand digitized.

\textsuperscript{57} Johannes Aventinus recounts the history of Germany from the perspective of Bavaria. The Germans conquered the Roman empire and gradually developed their own distinct culture and language. As the latest imperium in the history of world empires, Germania is far superior to its Roman predecessor. See Strauss, *Historian in an Age of Crisis*, 102-55.

\textsuperscript{58} Aventinus’ Annals run to 1460 (published 1554, 1580, 1881-86). His works available in Bayerische Landesbibliothek Online. See Leidinger, “Aventinus,” 469-70.
The Bavarian Sebastian Franck (1499-1553)\(^59\) emphasizes the Germanness of Charlemagne, which ipso facto makes the empire German. After the Translation of the empire to the Germans, the rulers are now called kings of the Germans, and emperors of the Germans after they are elected by the German princes, beginning with Otto III.\(^60\)

For Irenicus the pope transferred the imperium to the German Charlemagne, who ruled Germany.\(^61\) The empire passed to Charlemagne and the Germans because they merited it by their exceptional virtue.\(^62\) Charlemagne subdued all of Germany, which was eastern Francia and outside the Roman empire.\(^63\)

Modern scholars often dismiss the German Humanists’ portrayal of a “Germanic” takeover over much of Europe following

\(^{59}\) Although a Lutheran sympathizer, Sebastian Franck usually thinks of Germany as the entire empire. Yet his Chronicle of Germany (1538) was often seen as overtly Lutheran. He views the translatio imperii as the empire passing to the Germans in Germany (Deutschen in Germaniam); Germaniae Chronicon, 81r. After Charlemagne the empire of the Germans continued to expand. Charlemagne and his empire were German. He extended the empire into Italy, Hungary, Gaul, Austria, Burgundy, and beyond; 81v-86v. Aventinus cites extensively from Lupold, Godfrey of Viterbo, Irenicus, Wimpheling, and Otto of Freising.

\(^{60}\) Chronicle of Germany, 69r. The idea that the German King of the Romans is elected by German princes becomes a mark of German identity quickly after 1300. That German Humanists would seize upon this tradition indicates that for them the empire was German. See Scales, Shaping of German Identity, 272-78.

\(^{61}\) Irenicus, Germania (1518), Bk 3, Chap. 19, 64v. He was born in Ettlingen in Swabia, part of the ancient Roman Germania Superior. On the surface his Germania is little more than a compendium of narrative sources, both ancient (Tacitus, Strabo, etc.) and medieval (especially Otto of Freising, Lupold, Martin of Troppau, Godfrey of Viterbo, Sigebert of Gembloux). A better title would be: “A History of the West since the Romans from a German perspective.” No part of Europe has been untouched by the Germans!

\(^{62}\) Irenicus, Germania, 3.19.66v.

\(^{63}\) Irenicus, Germania, 3.32.66v. Germany consists of Saxony, Bavaria, Swabia, and Thuringia (66v). “Germania tota Caroli Magi ipse Francie orientalis nomen accepit;” 66v. The empire was translated to Germany. After Charlemagne Germany expanded in all directions. Christ gave the German emperors the temporal sword to rule the empire; 67v. Otto I and Rudolf of Habsburg continued to expand into Burgundy and Austria; 68r. The emperor rules the Christian empire, and his successors rule the German empire. The popes have recognized that the Germans deserve their empire by their superior virtue; 68v. Leo crowned Charlemagne at the request of the Roman people–implying that the Roman empire passed to the German empire.
Constantine as fanciful boasting, a support for Habsburg claims to certain territories (such as the Burgundian inheritance and Milan), an allusion to Germany’s glorious past, a historical argument for their claims to universal empire (giving it *de iure* jurisdiction over France) and universal reach to protect the Christian church and faith, and an increase in their reputation for *furor teutonicus*. And historians often assume that the expansion of Germany as an “empire” began with Charlemagne (or the Ottonians, depending on the German author). No Humanist advocated a return to the alleged “conquest” of the Roman empire by the German tribes.

While the general truth of this conventional view of the Humanists’ perception of the Germanic migrations (or invasions, depending on one’s viewpoint) cannot be denied, it omits a deeper dimension: the German authors did not see contemporary *Deutschen* as simply and entirely the heirs of the Roman empire. The key to the German Humanists’ vision of the German empire is the direct continuation of the original Germans down to modern times. Their originality was to draw the inference of this direct descent for the history of the German *imperium*. Germania Magna was an empire and has always been an empire! Does this mean the Roman empire was never transferred to the Germans? No, it simply means that the translation(s) was more an acknowledgment than a legal transfer.

64 See Irenicus, *Germania*, Bk 3, Chaps. 1-33; Bebel, *Oratio*, pars. 1-50, 26-56, and *Germani sunt indigenae*, 66–85; Celtis, *Oratio*, 42-57; Wempheling, *Epitome*, Chaps. 7-18, and *Germania*, Bk 1; Willibald Prickheimer (1470-1530) describes the many tribes that left “our Germany” and entered the Roman empire. He traces the names of the regions and cities that continue down to his day; Pirckheimer, *Germaniae ex varis scriptores brevis explicatio*, ed. Schardius, *Rerum Germanicarum*, vol. 1, 81-94. Perhaps no Habsburg emperor has ever surpassed Maximilian I in his visual and literary propaganda promoting his Roman, Trojan, German, Habsburg, Christian, and classical ancestry in his claims to Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, Christendom, and indeed the world! See Silver, *Marketing Maximilian*.

The Humanists see the Translation more in moral than in legal terms. They exploit the ambiguity inherent in the classical word *imperium*, which can mean authority, command, or governance, in addition to the more general sense of a land empire, the meaning widely used since the late first century. In short, the German empire was and is an *alternative* Roman empire! Germania may have been the inheritor of the Roman empire, as Celtis had said, but it was much more!

In his oration (1501) before Maximilian I at the court in Innsbruck, Heinrich Bebel (1472-1518) bragged that the German tribes left Germany in multiple waves and “conquered”—having never been conquered themselves—the Roman empire. The Lombards, Vandals, Angles, Saxons, Franks, Goths, and others easily overran the self-indulgent Romans. In some instances the names of the tribes were changed, but sometimes they remained the same. The German occupation was an empire in everything but the name. (Of course they had no written language to express their self-perception.) Thus the transfer of the empire to the Germans in 800 or 962 was less a genuine transfer than a recognition of the German areas which were held by the *Germani* long before the coronation of Charlemagne. The crowning and anointing were actually the divine acknowledgment of a *fait accompli*. The German emperors themselves stood in a direct line of the Roman emperors dating back to Julius Caesar. The Humanists’ flexible rendition of what constitutes “German” or Germanic permits the inclusion of King Arthur, King Theodoric, and Godfrey of Bouillon (prototype crusader) among the ancestors.

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66 See Richardson, *The Language of Empire*, Chap. 4.

67 Bebel, *Oratio*, pars 18-40, 26-49. Germani sunt indigenae, 66-85. The *Oratio* is also contained in online CAMINA, which uses modern typeface and contains Bebel’s *Sequentia*, the political writings (in the Bl group, e2b-ala-e2a). Also in digitalized Google Haithi Trust, and several Books on Demand.

68 Bebel, *Oratio*, 42-63;
of the Habsburg emperors.\textsuperscript{69} For the Germanic emperors after Constantine the Christian mission is predominant.\textsuperscript{70} It goes without saying that the pope does not confer constitutional power of any kind on German kings or emperors.

But is not this quaint notion of a German hegemony in Europe somewhat far-fetched? Who could possibly believe in c. 1500 that France, Italy, Spain, and England were parts of the Holy Roman Empire? Bebel’s purpose in constructing this Germanic empire is partly rhetorical, partly political. It is rhetorical because it is a reply to those Italian Humanists who like to contrast the “disappearance” (and unrecorded) of Roman-era Germany with the clearly documented continuance of Italy and its classical culture down to modern times. (Many of the German Humanists who made the obligatory trek—like French painters in the seventeenth century—to Italy were angered by this Italian mockery of the supposed boors north of the Alps.) Biondo wrote his \textit{Italia Illustrata} to remind his countrymen of their splendid past, and to chastise the barbarians (read: Germans) for destroying much of Roman civilization. With the barbarians, “the cultivation of literature came to a standstill.”\textsuperscript{71} He is proud that the Italians have continued to extend the march of Roman culture to present Italy. You have it backwards, retorts Bebel! We conquered you! Your decrepit empire ended with Pope Leo’s translation of the Roman empire to the Germans, who in fact never lost their “empire!” Nay, the Germans expanded their empire into large parts of Europe. Biondo’s \textit{Italia Illustrata} and Celtis’ projected \textit{Germania Illustrata} had a common purpose: to stimulate

\textsuperscript{69} Visitors to Maximilian’s cenotaph in the Hofkirche Innsbruck might be surprised to see Arthur and Theodoric among his ancestors. Theodoric had a venerable tradition as the “German” who conquered the Roman empire. The medieval legend of Dietrich von Bern was easily blended with this historical background. Theodoric anticipated the Translation to Charlemagne. See Cochlaeus, \textit{Brevis Germanie}, Bk 2, par 7, 54; Irenicus, \textit{Germania}, Bk 3, 59r-60v (chart); Borchardt, \textit{German Antiquity}, 133, 145, 156, 187.

\textsuperscript{70} Maximilian is the prototype Christian sovereign whose mission is to defend the faith everywhere. This special task derives from the translatio to Charlemagne and the Germans. Papal approval of this act is indicated by the papal approbation. The faith of the Germans merited this honor. See Bebel, “Quod imperator Romanorum,” \textit{Patriotische}, 172-79, and note 45 above.

\textsuperscript{71} Strauss, \textit{Manifestations of Discontent}, 18.
patriotic passion. Bebel realized that the imperial claim to universal sovereignty would not have seemed so bizarre, since such assertions go back at least to the Staufer kings.

Bebel is a fierce critic of those German princes who refuse to aid Maximilian in his wars against Venice, Milan, the Low Countries, and Switzerland. Indeed in 1501 when Bebel gave his speech at Innsbruck, the emperor had just lost the Swiss cantons in the Swabian War. Bebel reminds the Swiss that they are “Germans” and their historic place is in the empire. They must assist the imperator in the imminent offensive against the Turks. While Bebel probably viewed the Burgundian possessions as a lost cause, he was vehement in his calls for imperial intervention in northern Italy. In sum, Bebel envisions the current empire as the latter day Germania, which evolved separately from the ancient Roman empire. (Bebel seems unsure if the latter continues in some sense in the Byzantine empire.) Classical culture remains one of humankind’s treasures. But the renowned Roman culture is about to be surpassed by the fast-evolving civilization of the Germans. (The Humanists anticipated Edward Gibbon’s contrast between the lethargic Romans and the vigorous Germans.) Bebel went beyond Tacitus’ Germania in his praise of the Germans, even to the point of producing a vast collection of German proverbs which illustrated the folk-wisdom (and oral side of German traditions) of their ancestors.

Thus Bebel exceeds Celtis’ notion of an indigenous Germania with its virtuous inhabitants by infusing the far-flung “empire” with a common purpose: the defense of Christendom. It is imperative to restore the integrity of the German nucleus of the Holy Roman Empire and the authority of the emperor. The empire continues to assert its claims outside the German nation in Hungary, Poland, and the Habsburg hereditary possessions.


73 See Cohortatio ad Helvetios pro oboedientia imperii, Zinsmaier, Patriotische, 148-69; Epitome laudum Suevorum atque principis nostri Udalrici (on the Swiss Wars), Patriotische, 88-135; Ad Bernenses Thuricenses ceterasque civitates imperiales apud Helvetios, CAMENA online, 115-29.

74 See Bebel’s statement of purpose in W. Suringar, ed. Heinrich Bebel’s Proverbia Germanica (Leiden: Brill, 1879; many reprints), 3-7. Even German peasants have good sense (proverb 383). Many kings have been heroes (proverb 386: calleat historias, regumque heroica gesta).
Franciscus Irenicus, renowned for his polemical exchange with Lutherans, is more explicit about the German empire. The Roman emperors proceed in a line from Julius Caesar to Maximilian I. Going beyond the migration theories of Bebel, Irenicus would have the Germani leaving ancient Germania in large numbers and settling in virtually every region of Europe. They owed almost nothing to ancient Rome. Quite the contrary, they brought virtue and culture to the waning Roman empire. Without denying the immense contribution of Roman and Greek literature, Irenicus rewrites the history of Europe as the Germanization of the West, with the Holy Roman Empire (usually called simply the imperium) at its center.

The empire of Charlemagne is unequivocally German, and has remained so, even with the acquisitions of later territories, such as Austria. More precisely, the pope by divine grace acknowledged the higher virtue of the Germans by crowning Charlemagne emperor. Afterwards the eastern half of the empire, previously Germania Magna, was widely accepted as the heart of the German empire. The key to Irenicus’ radical vision of German history lies in his concepts of translation and election.

The Roman empire was translated to the Germans in 800. Thus the imperium was “transferred,” that is, taken from one people and given to another, to the Germans, not to the person of Charles the Great. (Irenicus is not consistent as to the ethnicity of Charlemagne, and whether he is the first German emperor.) Thus this transfer is an event in the progression of world empires, from the Assyrians to the Romans. Medieval versions of the world empires stemmed from Orosius and Jerome among others. But the papal coronation of Charles was merely a sign of the exceptional nature of German virtue. The legal transfer came later when a German pope,

75 Irenicus, Germania, 67v-69r.
76 Irenicus, Germania, 66v-69r.
77 Irenicus, Germania, 66r.
Gregory V (996-99), gave Otto III the right to permit his successors to be elected by the princes. Oddly this bizarre tradition of the papal origin of the German electors was generally accepted by both papalists and imperialists for the next 400 years. Thus the election—fixed in 1257 at seven designated electors—became the uniquely German way of passing on the empire. Otto III (or Otto I) was the first emperor of the Germans. The imperium is and always will be German. Hence today Maximilian I is the emperor of the Germans and not king of the Romans. Germany is nothing less than the ancient Germania Magna with expanded borders over the centuries. Irenicus turns Tacitus on his head: Roman Germany is the focal point of the German empire which spilled over into the Roman empire.

Other Humanists adopt Irenicus’ conception of the German empire as an alter-Roman empire. Johannes Cochlaeus (1479-1552), from a village near Nuremberg, was a defender of Catholic doctrine against Luther and the Hussites. He builds on Tacitus’ Germania to evoke an extended German empire, mixed with descriptions in the style of the Italia Illustrata. Cochlaeus attempts to describe the borders of Germany, with minute descriptions of towns and regions. Integrated with this geography are notes about the cultural achievements of the Germans, such as inventions (printing press, cannon,) and art (Dürer among others). No nation or region can come close to their cultural heights. Austria was part of the Roman empire, while

78 Irenicus, Germania, 69r. See Wimpeling, Epitome, Chaps. 20-1, 17v-19r.; S. Franck, Germaniae Chronicon, 102r.
79 See Langhans, Die Fabel von der Einsetzung des Kurfürstencollegiums.
80 Irenicus, Germania, 69v: ad Maximilianum Germanorum imperatorem... Maximilianum Germanorum imperatorem non Romanorum. In retaliation for being addressed by Pope Gregory VII as a mere king of the “Germans,” Henry IV boasted he was in fact king of the “Romans,” a more universalist title giving him claim to Italy and some control of spiritual affairs.
81 Cochlaeus, Brevis Germanie Descriptio (1512), Chap. 3, pars. 1-5.
82 Brevis, Chap. 4, par 30, 88-92.
83 See Brevis, Peroratio in Germaniam, 162-65.
Hungary was formerly lower Pannonia. Maximilian I is descended from the Roman emperors, “always Augustus.” The regions of Germany (Germanice regiones) form part of the Germania Illustrata of Conrad Celtis. These descriptions are based on the writings of classical geographers. The empire is nostre Germanie.

In his extensive writings about Germany Jacob Wimpheling likewise stresses the centrality of the Translation of Empire to Charlemagne. Pope Leo III recognized the legitimacy of Charlemagne’s conquests when he crowned him emperor with the acclamation of the Roman people. Sometime in the past, the empire (Romanum imperium) was translated to the Germans from the Greeks. In Wimpheling’s garbled account of the translation he designates the eastern Germans (Frank-Germans) as the Germany which traces its history back to the time of Tacitus. Maximilian I is the emperor of the Germans, who long before had expanded south and west. Following Irenicus and the medieval tradition, Wimpheling acknowledges Pope Gregory V’s gift of the principle of election at the time of Otto III. The electors are the “Roman people,” who represent the entire Roman empire. The empire was translated to the Germans “in Germany,” which includes Alsace, the author’s sub-theme in his treatise. Post-Charlemagne Germany is a nation and an empire. Wimpheling assures his German readers, especially the princes, that Maximilian I in his wars in Italy is simply following the historical policy of his imperial ancestors since the time of Charlemagne. He implies that the German empire was originally the Frankish empire and part of the (extra-Roman) empire of Karolus Magnus. But after the empire was transferred to him and the “German Franks” the eastern half (Germany) became the pivot of the new empire of the Germans. Alsace was always part of the German half. The “French” remain de iure subject to the German empire.

84 Brevis, Chap. 6, par 11, 116; also Chap. 5, par 11; Chap. 8, par 24.
85 Peroratio, 162-64.
86 Johanni Coeleo Norico Schole Laurentiane, Brevis, 166. For Cochlaeus’ nationalism, see Bagchi, “Teutschland über alle Welt,” 37-53.
This motif of the far-reaching German empire in the east is developed at length in Wimpheling’s *Epitome*. For our purposes here, the main point is that Charlemagne’s Frankish empire is German not Roman, and never was Roman. The German empire is the continuation of the Germania Magna of the first century, and expanded under Pepin, Charlemagne, and Louis the Pious. Many emperors since Claudius were Germans, from the “German” areas overrun by the Germanic tribes which migrated out of Germany. When the emperor moved to Constantinople, the empire was translated to the Germans, with some connection to the coronation of Charlemagne. The German empire includes the ancient Roman Germania Superior and Germania Inferior. The emperors of Germany and its expanded borders continue down to Maximilian I. Wimpheling’s description of the physical borders of Germany at the time of Charlemagne is not precise, and not always clearly connected to “Germanic” Italy and Gaul. He strains to make links between Charlemagne and the German Ottonians and Staufer. Wimpheling’s outline of German history after Charlemagne is less a political narrative than a series of themes: the Roman empire passed to the Germans legally and as part of God’s plan; the German empire was *de facto* an empire before the coronation of 800; the German emperors trace their descent back to the first Roman emperors; German emperors rule essentially the same empire with the same German essence (Germania); Gaul and Italy are part of the German empire, even if at times only *de iure*; Innocent III’s translation confirmed the translation to Charlemagne; Germania is both an empire and a nation; the emperor represents the entire German people.

Sebastian Franck (1499-1543), from Donauworth in Bavaria, in his *German Chronicle* (1538) Charlemagne was the first German emperor, who received the empire—which was called Germania—


88 *Epitome*, Chap. 9 [misprinted as 10 in 1562 ed.], 10r-11v. Wimpheling strongly denies that the imperial title derived from the ancient Gauls. Early Germania expanded across the Rhine to the Vosges, which forms a sort of boundary between France and Germany. See Dickens, *The German Nation and Martin Luther*, Chap. 2 (“Humanism and the National Myth”).
from the Greeks.\textsuperscript{89} After this translation he was no longer king of the Franks but the king of Gaul and Germany. The basis of his new empire is Germany, as others testify (Wimpheling, Lupold of Bebenburg, Irenicus, Otto of Freising).\textsuperscript{90} The western Franks may belong to the empire, but the center is Germany, from where some Germans, such as the Lombards, emigrated to Italy.

The tendency of the German Humanists to designate the Holy Roman Empire as German was hardly an innovation. The later Middle Ages witnessed apocalyptic prophecies which portray the empire as distinctly German, even to the point of being anti-Latin. Modern historians of the German nation often pay little attention to this prophetic tradition with its widespread dissemination of prophecies about the German empire. One of the most popular was the Gamaleon letter (c.1400) which foretells of an imminent upheaval in Europe, ending with the victory of the Germans just before the End Times.\textsuperscript{91} The “German” empire will seize all church property and overthrow the supreme pontiff. There will be a clash between the Romance powers and the German rulers, culminating with the triumph of the Last World Emperor.

The letter of Brother Sigwald foresees the citizens of Nuremberg leading the purification of the Germans. The popular Eve of Ascension (late 14\textsuperscript{th} century) prophecy foretells of the destruction of the Roman clergy and the renewal of the entire church brought about by the German empire. \textsuperscript{92} The catalyst for this transformation

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{89} Franck, \textit{Germaniae Chronicon} (1518), 81r-83r. “Also ist in der person Caroli das reich vom Griechen an die Teutschen in Germaniam gewendt,” 81r.

\textsuperscript{90} Irenicus, \textit{Germaniae}, 82r, \textit{passim}. Good analysis of the invasions in Franck in Ridé, \textit{L’image}, vol. 2, 819-66 at 833-47.

\textsuperscript{91} See Kneupper, \textit{Empire}, Chap. 2, esp. 52-61. In some versions the German emperor will destroy the Roman empire and its descendants, including the Roman pope. See Dickens, \textit{German Nation}, Chap. 1.

\textsuperscript{92} Kneupper, \textit{Empire}, Chap. 3. See Lerner, “Medieval Prophecy and Religious Dissent,” 3-24. These prophecies give a special role to imperial Nürnberg.
\end{flushleft}
of Christian Europe would be the German people. The “Welsch Lands” (Romance language Europe) are set against the German Lands. The Auffahrt Abend prophecy is sharply anticlerical and anti-papal. Many of these prophecies were translated into German for faster distribution. The “Foolishness of the Welsch” and similar prophecies contrast the corrupt Latins and greedy popes with the virtuous Germans. The emperor is often portrayed as fully German and less Roman and universalist. The empire is emphatically German. The German empire will destroy the Roman “emperor” (the pope). The German empire is elective, that identifying quality which sets it apart from other sovereigns.

The German Humanists generally had little taste for these millenarian prophecies, but many of their patriotic renderings appear in these popular predictions of the late Middle Ages. Like the prophecies, the Humanists are interested in the Germanness of the emperor and the empire; the empire as the leader in church reform; the emperor as head of a crusade to liberate Christendom from the Turks; the radical differences between the German and Roman empires; the role of the German Folk in the mission of the empire; the increasing importance of the German aspects of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation; the contrast between Romantic and Germanic languages; and the use of apocalyptic attacks and counter-thrusts by Catholic and Lutheran polemicists starting in the 1520s. While we cannot be sure if these prophecies directly influenced the Humanists, we can say at the least that Humanism and prophecy emerged from the same cultural milieu. It might be noted that even when the unity

93 Kneupper, Empire, 157-67.
94 Kneupper, Empire, Chap. 4.
95 Kneupper, Empire, Chap. 7 (“German Identity in Prophetic Thought”). As do many of these late medieval prophecies, the Gallorum levitas dwells on the uniqueness of the German constitution, particularly the princely election of the king.
of the empire came under increased stress with the arrival of the Lutheran Reformation and the Valois-Habsburg wars, many of the Humanists, from both northern and southern Germany, continued to emphasize the German essence of the empire.

**Conclusion**

Almost from the beginning of the Humanist movement in Germany after 1450, there was a decidedly patriotic component in the way the Humanists wrote about Germany, however Germany was defined. In part, the impetus for this thrust was the determination to refute the negative depictions of Germans, both ancient and modern, by the Italian Humanists, beginning with Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini. (The stereotype of the German Fury is evident since at least the twelfth century.) The Italians challenged the Germans to show that the latter can do more than just fight; that they had a worthy past; that they had produced many writers who recorded their history along with their other cultural accomplishments; that they had a distinct identity, which can be traced back to the ancient sources, particularly those of Tacitus. The initial response of the Germans was to affirm, somewhat defensively, that they loved the Greco-Roman classics just as much as did the Italians. Thus the first parry was to limit the discussion to a literary plane, in the manner of a war of words. Few Germans at first showed much interest in this academic quarrel.

By the 1490s, however, the German counterattack was taking on a patriotic veneer. The negative (reply to the Italians) was becoming more positive (assert German worthiness for its own sake). The patriotic tone of the German Humanists became louder. They searched ancient and medieval sources for information about their former greatness. More to the point, they sought practical applications of their learned studies to immediate circumstances. The problems of the empire under Maximilian I compelled them to clarify the relevance of their literary pursuits to political realities, often using Tacitus’ *Germania* as their model. The turmoil of the 1490s threatened the unity and the very existence of Germany: the
invasion of the French in 1494, the loss of some of the Burgundian and Netherlands inheritance, the reforms debated at the Reichstags of 1495-1498, the Swabian Wars and the Swiss breakaway, wars in eastern Europe and the Turkish advances, conflicts involving Venice and Milan, and disputes in Tyrol and Bavaria. The Humanists placed their hopes in the emperor, who could still promote powerful images of an illustrious Roman and Germanic past. Increasingly the German Humanists focus on the German core of the Holy Roman Empire. Their terminology reflects this obsession with German history, as in their preference for the name Deutschland in lieu of the traditional German Lands, Alemmania, Teutonia, and their variants. While they continue to view Germanness as a common loyalty to the empire and the emperor, the Humanists place more emphasis on the German heartland, with its advanced culture, varied topography, and geographical beauty. In the early days of the humanistic movement they felt they had to counter Tacitus’ derogatory remarks about the terrain and climate: no wonder the Germans are indigenous! Who would want to settle in a land so desolate and frigid? Over time the Humanists learned to ignore such comments and concentrate instead on the praiseworthy aspects of Tacitus’ Germans, especially their virtues of courage, loyalty, and love of freedom. They came to view German history and civilization as equal and even superior to ancient Rome and contemporary Italy.

Modern historians of German Humanism have not neglected the tendency to identify the Holy Roman Empire with the German nation, a term used after 1490 with increasing frequency. So too the attachment to the idea of the Roman empire with its universalism has been much discussed in recent scholarship. Certainly Maximilian I never stopped promoting his ties with the ancient Roman empire and the Roman line of emperors, whom he considered his ancestors. Maximilian’s Triumphal Arch woodcut and his cenotaph in Innsbruck abound in imperial themes, both Roman and Germanic. Although an Austrian Habsburg, he often referred to himself as German. Both Maximilian and the German Humanists realized the need for an ideological narrative that affirmed the empire’s need to counter the threats of the powerful neighbor to the west (France) and to the east (the Ottoman Empire).
Yet modern scholars may have underappreciated the German Humanists’ vision of the Holy Roman Empire as itself German. Some of this misunderstanding, it is suggested here, lies in the concept of the Translation of Empire, that staple of German political theory since at least the time of Frederick Barbarossa. We may be taking the Humanists too literally when we assume that the Roman empire was transferred to the Germans on Christmas, 800. Certainly many of the Humanists place the *translatio* in the context of the patristic notion of the progression of the world empires (usually four prior to the Germans). It is significant that the Humanists display a strange ambivalence about the person of Charlemagne, who after all was the occasion of the Translation. Granted that medieval German writers about the empire did not always give the honor to Charlemagne, with Otto I and Otto III being other choices. Yet the Humanists, for all their fascination with the German heritage of Charlemagne, were divided as to whether or not the honor of the Translation should go to him. The reason for this hesitancy, we submit, is because the Humanists want it both ways: the Roman empire was translated to Charlemagne, but in another sense he already held an empire. This empire, by whatever name, was essentially in eastern Europe, a descendent of the Roman Germania Magna. It was not (usually) the kingdom of the Franks, since the tribes in the eastern part were “Germans.” Nor did it derive from the Gauls, as the French sometimes claimed. The Humanists’ description of the period of Charlemagne and his successors is varied and often ambiguous.

The reason is simple: they strive to make the Carolingian empire a continuation of Tacitus’ Germania, yet without abandoning its historical ties to the universal Roman empire! This attempt to square the circle runs through much of German polemical writings in the era after the Staufer in the thirteenth century. (Witness Lupold of Bebenberg’s views of Germany with the “additions” of Burgundy and Italy as constituting the empire.) The Humanists want the empire to be thoroughly German, yet with a history which precedes Charlemagne and even Constantine. Indeed, Germany is *pre*-Roman! Germany’s unparalleled pedigree makes the Romans/Italians and the French look like neophytes! While the *translatio imperii* may have been made to a king (Charlemagne), it was more importantly
made to a people (Germans). They imply that Charlemagne was already an emperor, if only de facto, when Pope Leo crowned him on Christmas Day. The Germans deserved the empire by reason of their virtue, a traditional argument going back at least to Alexander of Roes.

Obviously the Humanists' notion of Charlemagne's empire as Germania involves some fabrication of their historical sources, and clinging to some medieval myths. In fairness to the Humanists they may have been unaware of the biases and distortions in the chronicle sources they rely upon and rarely question. In their explanations of the *translatio imperii* they took advantage of the ambiguity of the word *imperium*, which could mean authority or command as well as the usual land empire. (The great sea empires of the sixteenth centuries were just emerging.) The Humanists in effect rationalized the Germans' possession of the empire more as a reward for their virtue and their long de facto possession than by any legal transfer of power, by no less than a pope. In effect, nothing of substance was transferred in 800 (or 962).

The German Humanists of course recognized the translation of the Roman empire to the Germans, and indeed took pride in the event. After all, the *translatio imperii* showed that the Germans had divine approval, and took the empire away from the Romans and their present hapless descendants, the Italians. And, as some eschatological forecasters would have it, this empire is the final world empire. What the German Humanists insist on is that the German essence of the post-Roman empire far surpasses the Romanness of the *imperium*. The German empire is an alternative Roman empire and always has been. It was, if you will, a parallel empire, and now expanding in power and cultural glory as never before. The German mission is Christian; the pagan Roman mission, such as it was, was world conquest and selfish ambition. The German absorbed what was left of the Roman, and is now flourishing.

In the context of the 1520s the Germans often associated the Roman empire with papal Rome, which exploited the German church. Even for those Humanists, such as Wimpheling, who remained Catholic, the papal curia was the enemy. Yet even after
1530 Catholic and Lutheran Humanists could not cease extolling the German empire, now as fractured as ever. Charles V may not have considered his world empire “German,” but the German Humanists would not abandon the German or Germanic imperium.

Napoleon got it right. He was emperor of the French. From now on, subject peoples would be “French” in the sense that they acknowledged the New Charlemagne as their overlord. Maximilian I got it half right, in the eyes of the German Humanists. He was the emperor of the German Nation. But he was also emperor of the Germans in the sense that the imperium was itself German. Caesar Augustus’ capital was Rome. Napoleon’s was Paris. But Maximilian’s “capital” was the German People. Germania was and is the “capital” of the Holy Roman Empire! Innsbruck could hardly be called a capital. The Humanists mutatis mutandis transposed Tacitus’ Germania into a 1500-year old imperium deutscher Reich.

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*Conrad Celtis: Woodcut by Hans Burgkmair, 1507*
Both medieval and early modern English writers described the tumultuous, raging sea as the epitome of chaos and evil. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both manuscript and print documents connected seething storms with the power and influence of evil, especially the devil. As the Reformation advanced, this link included Satan’s supposed minions, witches. In addition to these texts, woodcut illustrations confirmed in very stark terms, a direct association between the devil, the sea, and sailors’ supposedly anti-religious behavior and beliefs. One powerful image revealed “the man in the shyppe” tormented by the devil; others depicted the devil steering a vessel to its doom. This causal link created resilient stereotypes about what was perceived as sailors’ lack of Christian, especially Anglican, values and beliefs. In I challenged the notion of English seafarers as “the other”. Here, he identifies part of the process that labeled seamen as “the other” as one of social memory. This artifact of social memory, that the devil and the malevolent sea were intimately connected, cast an fiction so robust – that sailors were naturally irreligious and superstitious, dismissive of formal religion – that it endured throughout the period.1

For every sailor, the sea was a power to be revered, respected, and feared. Poet, prose writer, and dramatist Thomas Lodge, newly converted to Catholicism, remarked on this when he wrote in 1596:

What shall I thinke of this world, but that it is a rocke whereon all mortall men make shipwrack, a desert, wherein men are soon lost, a sea, wherein we are quickly sunk, full of perils, full of snares.2

1 This paper is based on a presentation given at a session on seamen and soldiers during the 48th annual Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association meeting held June 17-18, 2016 in Albuquerque, NM. My thanks to session chair Jennifer McNabb for her insightful commentary and for all of those who commented on the paper, especially Adam Zucker, who pointed me to research on publisher’s devices. Any mistakes to be found here, however, are entirely my own. Here, early modern period in England refers mainly to the Tudor and early Stuart eras.

2 Lodge, The Divel Conjured, B III. Lodge famously made two overseas voyages, one in the late 1580s to Terceira and the Canaries, a second in 1591 with Sir Thomas Cavendish to Brazil and the Straits of Magellan. It was during his first voyage that he composed Rosalynde (published in 1590), which formed the basis of Shakespeare’s As You Like It.
More significantly, most seafarers and English coastal dwellers generally feared the open sea as a haven for evil, a conception wholeheartedly supported by the church. According to work by Insung Lee, the sea in the Anglo-Saxon and Christian tradition was a metaphor for corruption, “of itself uncontrollable and given to inundating the land.”

Lee pointed out that in the Bible, the sea is seen not only as a symbol of evil; it is evil, the dwelling place of Leviathan who is “king over all the children of pride.” In fact, the sea, which God created is never pronounced to be good anywhere in the Bible, including in Genesis 1:2, 1:10, or Psalm 95:5.

Medieval historian Michel Mollet du Jardin noted that the sea was “the favourite dwelling-place of the powers of Evil . . . of Satan.”

This notion of the sea as the epitome of evil, had by the sixteenth century, become associated with dramatic descriptions of furious storms, which in turn reflected the power and influence of the devil, and his handmaidens, witches. Indeed, unlike other aspects of religious belief and practice that transformed over the course of the Reformation, the association between evil, the devil, and the sea remained unchanged. This connection occurred not only in texts, but also in woodcut and pen and ink illustrations, which confirmed in visual terms a direct link between the devil, the sea, and stereotypical discourses that had developed since the late Middle Ages, that sailors were by nature irreligious, superstitious, and dismissive of formal religion.


7 Both early modern contemporaries and modern scholars have argued dichotomously that seafarers were either irreligious/atheistic and uncaring of spiritual faith, or some of the most devout, because of a particular closeness to God at sea. Drawing upon Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopic space, I have elsewhere argued that seafarers were neither all irreligious nor passionately devout; to suggest either is a caricature. The issue is not whether sailors were irreligious in their actions or pious; they could be both simultaneously with the framework of a religious shipboard culture. The core of my published work instead contends that seamen who lived between 1550 and 1688 displayed a range of spiritual stances from sincere faith to lukewarm compliance to disbelief in God. Patarino, “Religion and Shipboard Culture Among Tudor-Stuart Seafarers”. For my initial arguments, see: Patarino Jr., “One Foot in Sea and One on Shore.”
In this paper I will argue that this association, a chaotic sea linked with the power and influence of evil, helped to fuel land-based society’s perceived stereotypes about sailors’ supposed irreligion.\(^8\) In fact, this discourse is another artifact of what cultural historians call social memory, a line of argument that I first presented three years ago at the RMMRA.\(^9\) There are tangible benefits for historians to trace and understand the process of social memory formation, as it helps us to understand one of the reasons why sailors were perceived as different, how English society created such a durable meme of seafarers as “the other”.\(^10\) As a result of such tangible stereotypes developed through social memory, John Pettit Andrews during the late eighteenth century could refer to “the race of sailors” as “truly eccentric,” while Lord Thomas Macaulay portrayed tarpaulin sea officers as “a strange and savage race.”\(^11\) Seafarers had become an anthropological “other.”

8 This current work seeks to trace at least one origin of these societal stereotypes; I am not attempting to trace the patterns of shipboard culture, or the effects of the Reformation. I have already done this in previous work. Sailors adhered to a complex mix of popular folklore (such as a belief in witches) and religion that satisfied their emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs. In this they were very much like those who lived entirely on land. Patarino, “Religion and Shipboard Culture Among Tudor-Stuart Seafarers,” 163; Patarino, “One Foot in Sea and One on Shore” especially chapters 4-6. While religious beliefs changed and developed at approximately the same pace aboard ship as they did in England, other supernatural convictions, such as a belief in the devil, witches, omens, or ghosts, gained efficacy through a complex sea folklore. Patarino, “Religious Shipboard Culture,” 190-192; Patarino, “One Foot on Sea, One on Land,” chapter 6.

9 Patarino, “Benefiting from Social Memory,” presented at the 45\(^{th}\) annual Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. This paper argued that between the period of the early Middle Ages, when Christian writers first defined concepts of “superstitious” and “magic” and the late-18\(^{th}\) and early 19\(^{th}\)-century, when folklorists strove to define national character, a process of social memory cemented the notion of the “superstitious” sailor into the cultural milieu, thus limiting our ability to discern the complex religious values and practices of early modern seamen.

10 There is a small, but growing historiography on this issue of seafarers as “the other.” Cheryl Fury, for example, has described seamen as “isolated”, possessing a “distinctive and well-developed subculture”, emphasizing how “To a certain degree seamen have always been ‘outsiders’ among the land population.” Fury; “The Elizabethan Maritime Community,” 125; Fury, Tides in the Affairs of Men, 125. J.D. Alsop, on the other hand, has clearly challenged the notion of the deep-sea Tudor and Stuart seaman as “the other.” Alsop, “Tudor Merchant Seafarers,” 75. For my views disputing seafarers as “the other”, in terms of religion, see Patarino, “Religion and Shipboard Culture Among Tudor-Stuart Seafarers”. My initial arguments appear in Patarino, “One Foot in Sea and One on Shore.”

The multi-disciplinary concept of social memory has almost a century-long pedigree in historical analysis. The foundation of memory studies was established during the 1920s, when French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and the art historian Aby Warburg independently developed separate theories of what they identified as “collective” or “social memory.” Halbwachs said that “collective memory” was an embodiment of past memories that “lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping memory alive.” All societies are bonded through the mechanisms of social groups, and thus social groups help to define our memories of the past. While historians acknowledge that social memory shares some common ground with what post-modernist historian John Tosh in his text on historical method labeled “historical awareness,” the two are not at all the same thing. Scholars such as the German Egyptologist Jan Assman, have noted that history and memory need not oppose one another. According to Tosh, however, social memory is a collective identity that requires “a picture of the past that serves to explain or justify the present, often at the cost of historical accuracy.” Here, social memory serves “to sustain a sense of oppression, exclusion, or adversity,” what Tosh labeled as the “most powerful” manifestation; this fits best the constructed narrative that English seamen were separate in their religious beliefs and practices. In this understanding, social memory is a vehicle for marginalization, instead of maintenance.

12 Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 125. Building from the work of Durkheim and Nietzsche, Warburg and Halbwachs shifted the discourse over collective knowledge “out of a biological framework into a cultural one.” The concept of “social memory” first appears in Warburg’s Kreuzlinger Lecture of 1923.


14 Tosh, The Pursuit of History, 2. Tosh’s main contributions lie in the fields of British and African history.

15 Assmann’s groundbreaking work linking Egyptian and Hebrew culture, notes that history and memory can and should complement one another, because “the truth of memory lies in the identity that it shapes.” Assmann, “Moses the Egyptian,” in Collective Memory Reader, 210. He argued that “mnemohistory” should be able to deal with how the past is remembered, and “not with the past as such.” Assmann, “Moses the Egyptian,” in Collective Memory Reader, 209. Thus, we should acknowledge that there are some positive attributes to social memory: society in the present can interact with the past.

16 Tosh identifies at least three ways that social memory serves a society: first, as an “essential means of sustaining a politically active identity,” second, as a “foundation myth,” and third, “to sustain a sense of oppression, exclusion or adversity.” Tosh, Pursuit of History, 2-3.

17 Tosh, Pursuit of History, 4-5.
To begin, for most Englishmen, the open sea was not simply a dangerous place to work but was an environment imbued with the supernatural. While it provided nourishment and was a medium for transportation, trade, and communication, the sea was also a source of fear, “powerful, capricious, and destructive.” Seafarers themselves often described the ocean as “indifferent, cruel and malevolent,” but also pure: it would not allow itself to be sullied by thieves or murderers because it possessed a kind of moral integrity. Yet, for the most part, the sea was a haven for evil.

A great deal of literature, stretching from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, consistently described the sea in negative terms, often referring to evil and fear. This is remarkable given that the authors, ranging from Catholic to Anglican to Puritan, all depict the sea in essentially the same general manner. For example, in the relatively few instances that Chaucer mentioned the sea in The Canterbury Tales, he emphasized it as a place where men drowned. William Shakespeare went somewhat further, most likely as a result of theological development since the Reformation. Ariel, the “airy spirit” character from, The Tempest, when explaining how passengers reacted to the tempestuous storm, said,

All but mariners
Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel…
Was the first man that leap’d; cried, “Hell is empty,
And all the devils are here.”

In answering the question, “What may the memory be compared to,” English poet William Basse wrote in 1619, “To the Sea and the Land, the part that retaineth all, to the Land, that devoureth all, to the Sea.” Milton, crafting Paradise Lost from a committed Puritan point of view, has Christ, “The King of Glory,” coming to “create new worlds,” and “from the shore…viewed the vast immeasurable abyss/Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild…” Often, Milton revealed the sea’s diabolic nature as when Belial warns
against being caught “in a fiery tempest,” where bodies “shall be hurled/Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey/Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk/Under yon boiling ocean, wrapped in chains.”24 The turn of phrase, “boiling ocean,” is uncomfortably reminiscent of Satan’s Hell.

This perception of the sea as a font of malevolence probably originated on the continent, but was developed further by English writers. For example, one of the three dream vision poems written by the monk Guillaume de Deguileville during the early 1330s, Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine (The Pilgrimage of Life), was an allegory explicitly addressed to a “wide audience of laypersons, including the rich and the poor,” and was a literary influence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in much of the West, including England.25 Building on the trope that life is a pilgrimage, Guillaume’s pilgrim, presumably his dream self, was told by the allegorical figure, God’s Grace, that to find Jerusalem, “you must cross the great sea”, which “is full of many troubles, tempests, and torments, great storms and winds.”26 Soon he discovers Satan roaming the shore, casting a net “with his line of temptation” to entrap souls bound for heaven.27 Guillaume linked the sea to the sin of pride: “The sea,” says Grace, “is never without storms, for Vainglory blows there, the bellows carried by Pride.”28 Satan “hunts those he thinks might fly off and leave the sea...he is always spinning temptations, always weaving, always braiding, always reinforcing, his webs and snares and nets.”29 After Grace carries the Pilgrim over the sea, passing through and enduring Syrtes, Scylla and Charybdis, Bithalassus, and the Siren, and “all the other perils of the sea,” she explains that Satan is “the admiral of the sea...enemy of the lineage of Adam,

25 My thanks to the scholar who provided me this lead during the 48th annual RMMRA conference. Guillaume’s three dream-vision poems (written between 1330 and 1358) include Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine (Vie I), Le Pèlerinage de l’âme (Vie II), an account of the soul’s journey to Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, and Le Pèlerinage de Jhesuchrist, the life of Jesus as the ideal pilgrim. Guillaume, in Clasby, xiii, xv. As an allegory, Life is a “text that says and means two things,” and “mean one complex thing.” Clasby, xvii.
26 Guillaume in Clasby, 8.
27 Clasby, xxiv.
28 Guillaume in Clasby, 160.
29 Guillaume in Clasby, 161.
king and lord of Iniquity”. Drawing upon a long tradition of ship symbolism in the writings of the Church fathers, Guillaume’s pilgrim comes to the Ship of Religion, a literal representation of monastic life. Guillaume alludes to the danger inherent at sea, saying that it is best to cross rather than to swim; those who swim “are in danger and it is hard for them to escape it.”

Guillaume’s work, especially the *Vie Humaine*, was so popular, that it was translated into multiple languages, including English, with numerous manuscript copies circulated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. What is most significant, is that for both the *Life* and *Soul*, the English text differed from its French sources in significant ways, so much so, that the modern translator of *Soul*, Rosemarie Potz McGeer stated that the English versions of *Pilgrimage of the Soul* written during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries “might best be considered an adaption, rather than translation,” what she described as an “Englishing” of the text.

How did English writers adapt the ideas about Satan, evil, and the sea to their own experience; in what ways did they “English” the text? During the early seventeenth century, William Baspoole modernized and revised several fifteenth-century English transla-
tions of Guillaume’s *Life*, which he titled *The Pilgrime*. To scholars of *The Pilgrime*, Baspoole is credited with a revision of the *Lyfe*, in other words, the authorship of *The Pilgrime*, rather than simply a translator. Baspoole’s “Englishing” undoubtedly means that he reinterpreted Guillaume’s Ship of Religion; it was no longer associated with a Catholic religious order, but instead the Church in a general sense, given that he writes *The Pilgrime* post-Reformation. Baspoole did mirror some of Guillaume’s contention about the sea: “the great Sea of this World,” he says, “is full of anguish, greate windes, tempests, and tentations infinite.” Moreover, he labeled “Sathan” the great, Lord high Admirall of the sea of the world. More noteworthy is how Baspoole “Englished” his text: for while Guillaume’s Satan swept up souls, while standing on the beach, Baspoole’s Satan, “so hiddyous…uglie to looke upon, so fowle and so naughtye,” stood in the sea, not on the beach, “with his baytes with his hookes with his snares and with his tempting vanities.” Although a small turn of phrase, it may suggest an even more direct association between the devil and the open sea in seventeenth-century England, than is evidenced in fourteenth-century France.

The key to why the devil was so feared at sea was, of course, the pervasiveness of violent, abrupt, weather. All who lived along the coasts of England had sufficient cause to fear harsh weather.

35 Baspoole in Walls and Stobo, *The Pilgrime*, 4-5, 11-13. While apparently Baspool did not use a French version of Life, presumably he was aware of it. According to the editors, Baspoole used and at one stage owned Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 740; this was his basic text. There is also evidence he consulted at least two other versions of Life.

36 Walls and Stobo, *The Pilgrime*, 6. Baspoole’s manuscript of *The Pilgrime* was owned by Samuel Pepys. Its designation is: Magdalene College Cambridge MS Pepys 2258. Pepys, an important Restoration administrator in the Royal Navy probably acquired the text for one of its illustrations of a ship heading out to sea. Walls and Stabo, *The Pilgrime*, 51. The Cambridge colophon refers to the illustrations in the Pepys MS as emblemata, because the term was used during the seventeenth century to refer to a drawing or picture that expressed an allegory or moral fable, in the context of what we now consider emblem books. Walls and Stabo, *The Pilgrime*, 53.


41 John Stow reported several highly destructive tempests that hit London, one in July 1563 and another in December 1565. The first caused the death of several people in Covent Garden; a man of Essex “was torne to peces as he was carrying hay.” Another storm hit on Christmas Eve Day morning, whereby the great gates at the west end of St. Pauls were blown open. Stow, *The Annales*, 656, 659.
Weather at sea, however, was the defining element of the sailors’ existence, and it was around the volatile and intense nature of inclement weather that most of their fears revolved. Captain John Smith, in *The Sea-man’s Grammar*, defined all types of weather, differentiating between gales, winds, whirlwinds, and hurricanes. In *King Lear*, William Shakespeare famously equated madness with the “vex’d” sea. When Baspoole’s pilgrim beholds the sea, he finds that it “was much troubled with greate wynds, stormes, and cruell tempests,” where he thought himself “nothing safe because of the tempestuous Stormes and troublesome waters.”

On land, if cruel weather suddenly arises there is a greater likelihood that one may find shelter: under rocks or trees, in a cave, or in a human-built construction, such as a house or barn. At sea, however, even if one wanted to hide, shivering below deck, all hands were needed to survive the storm. Even for relatively small barks and wherries that hugged the shore, sailing at sea could be a sobering experience. On the open deck, the wind drowned out most sound and spray buffeted the body; one felt naked, alone, and vulnerable. For example, during Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Summers’ voyage to Virginia in 1609, a terrible tempest, the tail end of West Indian Hurricane, not only separated the fleet, but also was so violent that “men could scarce stand upon the Deckes, neither could any man heare another speake . . . .”

The seafarer’s terror rose and fell with the wind; it was constant work even to stay alive.

and what for the grete crye and noyse of the maryners . . . and for the noyse and syghte of the idyous and ferefull storme and tempest, there was no man that toke any rest yt nyght.


43 The character of Cordelia says to the Doctor and soldiers, “Alack, tis’ he: why he was met even now As mad as the vex’d sea . . . .” Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act IV, Sc. IV. Line 2, 1081.


45 Baspoole in Walls and Stabo, *The Pilgrime*, 337.

46 Taylor, *A New Discovery by Sea*, A3v. On a side note to the text, Taylor noted that there were five men who braved the foul sea: two were afraid, two were not afraid, and he was “halfe afraid.”


According to depositions given to the Bristol Corporation-Court in 1657 by seamen of the ship *Little Fortune*, the crew encountered a massive storm that ruined their vessel. They were about 200 leagues off the coast of New England when

a very great storm arose and continued for the space of vi days then following in which tyme by reason of the said storne, the said ship had much losse and damage that is to say the head of the maine mast spent and all the sayles and rigging worne and torne and by the extremity of weather . . . the said ship did worke soe much that...the plankes loosened from the Timbers... .49

Evil, in the guise of the devil, demons, or imps often had its way at sea. Diabolical magic, said Thomas Lodge, forced nature to submit and be subject to the magician’s incantations.50 A sixteenth-century naval ballad titled *A Song of Seamen and Land Soldiers* equated the speed of a ship with the work of the devil.

‘Tis brave to see a tall ship saile,
With all her trim gear on-a
As though the devill were in her taile,
She for the winde will run-a.51

Jeremy Roch, a Restoration captain, told of his encounter with a pilot from Deal, who described sparrows hovering over the waves. According to the pilot, the birds were “the Devil’s imps, for they never appeared to any ship or vessel but mischief followed.”52

Here, the theology is complex: good Christians maintained that God was ultimately responsible for both the beneficial and destructive forces of nature. Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, first published in 1584, held that “a glorious God that maketh the thunder” and that the scriptures demonstrated that “the blustering tempests and whirlewinds” blew “according to his will.”53 While it is uncertain if Scot had access to Johann Weyer’s *De praestigiis...*
daemonum, it is clear both works drew upon a common dogma. If Satan had “power over the air” it was only possible with God’s permission. If Satan had “power over the air” it was only possible with God’s permission. This position also appeared in the work of William Perkins, who noted God granted the devil and some demons a certain amount of power to create “works of wonder” by “hurting” and “by raising of Tempests.” There were, explained Perkins, “two sorts” of wonders: true and plain, or lying and deceitful. Only God created wonders that were properly called “a miracle.”

Various illustrations of the period, meant for popular consumption in England, also confirmed the power of the devil and evil at sea. One early example is an emblem of a medieval ship with accompanying text that was published in Guiot Marchant’s The Shepheardes Kalendar. The Kalendar appeared in various editions, published by a number of different printing establishments in England, between 1503 and 1631. In this woodcut (See Figure 1) from the 1570 edition, a man, presumably a mariner, rows between the forces of heavenly light, seen in the sky above the bow of the ship, and the devil. Satan, with his tongue stuck out, seductively whispers temptations into the sailor’s ear, as the mariner, sitting at the stern,

54 The Dutch Physician and pioneer in the field of psychiatry, Johann Weyer (was one of the earliest scholars opposed to the persecution of witchcraft. First published in 1563, De praestigiis daemonum et Incantationibus ac Venificiis (On the Illusions of the Demons and on Spells and Poisons) it was re-published as a revised and enlarged edition in 1583, the year before Scot published Discoverie. Although French and German editions were created, the book was not translated into English until the modern era. English scholars would have used original Latin editions. Weyer, in Witches, Devils, and Doctors, 217.

55 Perkins, The Damned Art of Witchcraft, 2. Cotton Mather noted “Satan, let loose by God, can do wonders in the air,” such as raising storms and discharging “great ordnance of heaven, thunder and lightning; and by his art can make them more terrible and dreadful, than they are in their own nature.” Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, 361.


57 Perkins, The Damned Art of Witchcraft, 13.

58 Here, I use the term “emblem” as it was understood during the early modern period as a “combination of picture and interpretation,” that would “impel the reader to study the explication in the succeeding text.” Kathryn Wallis, ed., from Baspoole, The Pilgrim, 54. The earliest version of this illustration appeared on the continent in Guiot Marchant, Compost et Kalendar des Bergiers (Paris, 1493).

59 The Shepherd’s Kalendar was first translated into English and published in Paris, possibly by Alex Barclay (1475? - 1552), the Scottish poet and author who became chaplain of Ottery St. Mary in Devon, and later a Benedictine and then Franciscan monk. This first English edition appeared in 1503 as The Kalendayr of the Shyppars and continued to be published by different printing houses throughout the sixteenth century. H.H. Brindle rediscovered the image and brought it to the attention of maritime historians, but focused solely on the image as an example of medieval reefing gear. Brindley, “Mediaeval Ships. No. VI. Pt. ii,” 241-2.

60 I used the c. 1570 edition for the clarity of its woodcut illustration. Since it is unchanged, the use of the image passed from print shop to print shop, here to Thomas Este. Here Beginneth the Kalender of Shepherds, newly augmented, Cap. xiii.
raises his eyes toward St. Nicholas, the patron saint of seamen.\textsuperscript{61} The text above the illustration, “Thereafter foloweth of the man in the Shyppe that sheweth the unstableness of the world,” echoed in lines directly following the woodcut in the 1518 edition.

The mortall man leuynge in this worlde is well\textsuperscript{62} Compared to a shype on
the see . . . The shype issoone as it is entred into the see unto the ende of
her vyage nyght & daye is in peryll to be drowned or taken with enmyes
for in ye see ben perylles withoutnombre. Suche is the body of man
lyuynge in ye worlde. The marchaundysse that he bereth is his soule . . .
the porte or haven is deth . . . the see is the worlde full of synnes. For
who that assayeth for to passe it is in peryll to lose body & soule & all
his goodes & to be drowned in the see of helle fro the whiche god kepe
us. Amen.

\textbf{Figure 1}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{The Shipton Kalenda}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{61} Here Beginneth the Kalendar of Shepardes (London, 1570), Cap. xiii.

\textsuperscript{62} Here Begynneth the Kalender of Shepardes (London, 1518?), Cap. xiv.
It is interesting that while the devil represents a threat to all Christians who strive against sin, here, it is at sea that he works, creating a powerful metaphor of the peril that threatens humanity, both at sea and by implication, at home. The devil and the evil inherent in the sea were a danger to seamen’s souls.

Significantly, this is not the only time we encounter this image. Reginald Scot’s first edition of *Discovery of Witchcraft* (See Figure 2) depicted a printer’s devise or emblem, presumably held by print-shop owner Henry Denham, of the devil steering a typical sixteenth-century square rig.

63 Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1.

64 My thanks to Adam Zucker for pointing out the literature on printer’s devices. The practice of printers and publishers using special ornaments or designs to distinguish their work came from the continent. Ronald McKerrow noted that emblems usually referred to aspects of the work itself, and could be owned by either the author or the publisher. Emblems could be simple objects (such as an anchor, a mermaid, or a caduceus) or a complicated picture, often times borrowed or purchased from an emblem house. By the late 16th century, most initials fell into several emblem categories. McKerrow, *Printers and Publisher’s Devices*, XI, XIII, XVI, XXI, XXV. McKerrow also pointed out that few of the emblems from the later period “could be claimed as genuinely English in origin.” The template used by Henry Denham’s shop originated with the Parisian printers of *The Kalender of the Shyppardes*. McKerrow, *Printers and Publisher’s Devices*, XXV.
We can tell that the figure is the devil because he is fully naked to the elements, which is consistent with other images depicting Satan. The woodcut illustrates the point in the text that describes how “faithless people” believed that neither thunder nor lightning, “raine nor tempestuous winds come from the heavens at the power of God,” but rather that storms were raised by the power of witches or conjurers who called upon the power of Satan.

The image was popular enough to appear at least several more times, albeit crudely redrawn, on the cover of a weekly news pamphlet (See Figures 3 and 4) during the tumultuous mid-1640s.

**Figure 3**

![Image of the Weekly Account pamphlet](image)

65 The figure steering the ship is naked although his genitals are covered. Sailors may have gone topless aboard ship, but it is doubtful they were often naked below the waist. All depictions of sailors in books or pamphlets of the period show English seamen fully clothed, so unless the artist or Scot himself had special knowledge of habits of dress aboard ship, it is unlikely a sailor. Furthermore, a generic illustration of a seaman steering the vessel would not reflect the point made in the text. The image is consistent with other depictions of the devil. See for example, Baspoole, The Pilgrime, 321, Cust, ed., The Pylgremage of the Sowl. Finally, clearly the figure does not represent God. Although Scot says on the following page that “it is neither a witch, nor divell, but a glorious God that maketh the thunder,” the level of nudity again is problematic. Scot, Discoverie of Witchcraft, 2. While Michelangelo’s depiction of God on the Sistine Chapel is nude, most representations of God the Father show him fully clothed. Paintings or woodcuts of Christ normally present him clothed with the exception of scenes from the passion.

66 Scot, Discoverie of Witchcraft, 1.

67 The Weekly Account, 1.
There could be a number of reasons why the new image, obviously reminiscent of that used in Scot, is of such lower quality. What is most significant here is that it is still popular enough to use by the mid-17th century, this time to report on the movement of armies, likely resonating with society reeling from a civil war. Even more suggestively, it appeared as an emblem for a broadside petition sent to Parliament in August 1648 from the “Well-affected Citizens of the City of London,” “humbly shewing that many Trecherous Plots and Contrivances working by the Common enemie” (See Figures 5 and 6) were appearing again “to obtain their wicked ends, the destruction of this Parliament, together with the ruine of our Religion, Law, and Liberties.”

As of yet, I have not been able to trace how the emblem passed from Henry Denham’s printing shop to Bernard Alsop. McKerrow explains that most devices passed from one owner to another save for cracks or accidental damage. Some, however, were altered over time, and that is clearly the case here. One reason that McKerrow identifies is that the new owner might want to change details that could be identified with a block from a former owner. The inferiority of later English work may be due, he says, to the rise of copper-plate engraving, which came into vogue about half-way through Elizabeth’s reign, “to thee neglect of the better kinds of woodcutting.” McKerrow, Printers and Publisher’s Devices, XXX, XXXIV. McKerrow traced the transfer of other emblems and devices from Denham’s shop to Richard Yardley and Peter Short, but it is unclear where the devices went from there. Our emblem here is not one replicated by McKerrow. See McKerrow, Printers and Publisher’s Devices, 170.

The Humble Petition, 1. The new owner is presumably Richard Cotes, printer to the honorable City of London during 1647-1648. It is, for the moment, unclear how the image passed from Alsop to Cotes.
Figure 5
The concerns of the petition put into the context of the run-up to the second Civil War, that the Parliament “intend not really to settle Religion according to the word of God” suggests that the framers of the petition were well aware of the woodcut’s influence, that it was the devil firmly in control, steering political events.  

At least one other illustration of which I am aware, which connected the devil with the sea, may have helped to shape images of seamen during the early modern era. Although William Baspoole’s *The Pilgrime* circulated mainly as manuscript, it did draw upon well-understood ideologies about the devil. The pen and ink drawing at the head of Chapter 23, *(See Figure 7)* shows Satan, the Beast, emerged within the sea, “fishing with greate diligence amongst those Creatures so troubled in their understanding . . . with Cordes, and nets,” eager to entrap those souls swimming in the sea, “diversely cloathed.”  

70 *The Humble Petition*, 1.

71 Baspoole, *The Pilgrime*, 321-322. The editor, Kathryn Walls explains that the illustrations in the Pepys MSS, are pen and ink, which was a newly fashionable art form in England during the Restoration.
The fact that the devil swims within the sea, trying to catch those, who cannot fly to heaven, makes the connection between evil and the sea more immediate and palatable. The image of the man in the shyppe, with the devil at his back, and Baspoole’s pen of ink of the devil in the sea suggest a powerful metaphor for both seamen and landsmen, and may have helped form elements of social memory that defined the sailor as “the other” compared to landsmen.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, shipboard culture stressed evil’s power not only through the machinations of the devil and demons, but also of witches. The élite defined witchcraft as a peculiar heresy, focusing on magic that hurt people, rather than on natural or “art magic.”[72] Conjurers, sorcerers, and witches all practiced art magic, except that they also paid homage to evil spirits, demons, and most especially to Satan. They pursued demonic or black magic and caused illness, death, or destruction, due to their being seduced by the devil. It is to this group that witches who raised storms and tempests absolutely belonged. Many sailors thought that the devil seduced humanity, and that sometimes men but most es-

[72] Briefly, natural magicians sought to bond (often secretly) with nature in order to produce results, most of which were not understood by the natural philosophers of the day, but was accepted as science. “Art Magic” is the term used by Barbara Rosen to describe the natural magic practiced by Neo-Platonic practitioners of the Hermetic tradition, an attempt to compel spirits or demons to act on the behalf of the practitioner. For a basic historiography on the nature of medieval and Renaissance magic one may consult the following sources. Rosen, Witchcraft; Flint, Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe; Kieckhefer, Magic in the Middle Ages; Kieckhefer, “The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic,” 816; Yates, Giordano Bruno; Walker, Spiritual and Demonic Magic; Copenhaver, “A Tale of Two Fishes”; Luhrmann, Persuasions of the Witch’s Craft.
especially women took this errant path toward evil. In this regard, the demonic aspects of witchcraft were a constant feature during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The figure of the devil, which arrived relatively late in English witchcraft trial depositions, was a prominent and consistent image of shipboard culture throughout this period, and indeed lasted even longer as part of shipboard culture than in England.

Witches were also considered to be part of the evil found at sea, or at the very least acting upon weather at sea. A witch says one seventeenth-century source “is the Devills Otter-hound, living both on Land and Sea.” While most cases of diabolical witchcraft in England dealt with sudden illness, or with the mysterious deaths of one’s livestock or family, witchcraft at sea focused almost exclusively on the ability to affect weather. According to Reginald Scot, of the three types of witches the most feared were those who raised hail, tempests, and “hurtfull weather” such as thunder and lightning. In 1608, William Perkins in *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* listed as his first set of enchantments, the “raising

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73 Malcom Gaskill did, however, suggest that not all accused witches were older, single or widowed women, marginalized in society. Gaskill, “Witchcraft in Early Modern Kent, 257-87.

74 The notion that shipboard culture embraced supernatural ideologies about demonic forces and witchcraft that mirrored elite views than popular culture is one that I fleshed out in greater detail in my unpublished work. See, Patarino, “‘One Foot in Sea and One on Shore,’ especially 422-25; 463-509; also Patarino, “Benefiting from Social Memory”.


76 The study of witchcraft in England has a long and complicated historiography, much of which depends upon essentially anthropological and feminist approaches. Historians seek to understand not only the phenomenon of witchcraft, but also the ensuing persecutions that reached a peak in England and on the continent in the period between c. 1490 and 1650. Current scholarship points out that most of the people accused of witchcraft were in fact the ubiquitous cunning men and wise women. They offered a number of benign services; providing love charms to the unrequited or helping to heal some of the common physical ailments of village society. From the initial publication of Malleus Malifícārum on the continent in 1486, Christian clerics struggled to conceptualize notions of evil by developing theories of demonic forces at work in the world. Eamon Duffy explained how the Malleus did not simply warn against sorcery. It also served as a guide for the lawful use of charms and incantations. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 285. For a more complete rundown of the historiography see: Patarino, “One Foot in Sea,” 474, note 130.

77 Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 7. According to margin notes, Scot consulted Malleus Malifícārum, par. 2, quest. i, cap.2. Scot, of course, set out to prove that witches and devils did not truly exist. Instead, he argued that witches and conjurors depended upon trickery and well-developed skills of chicanery.
of stormes and tempests; winds and weather, by sea and by land.”

Even King James I wrote about this most dangerous category of witch, whose work, he said, was “verie easie to be discerned from anie other natural tempests.” An undated Cornish song went,

I think I’d like to be a witch
I’d churn the sea, I’d tether the winds
As suited my fancy best
I’d wreck great ships if they escaped my path
With all the souls on board.

According to William Perkins, these were binding witches; those who had “consented in league with the devill, to use his helpe, for the doing of hurt onely.”

Recorded incidents of the diabolical at work at sea can be found during much of the period. Some seafarers swore that witches could take the shape of waves, which caused ships to sink, usually because the witch held a grudge against one of the sailors or passengers. Sir Francis Drake had one of his men hanged because he suspected that he was a sorcerer, lurking among members of...

78 Perkins (1555-1602) was the second major witchcraft writer, after King James I, to accept witchcraft as a real phenomenon. His work relied heavily on the Bible to prove their existence and the need to root them out of society. Like many Puritan divines, he was a Fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge. Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 127-8.


81 Perkins, *Damned Art*, 174. Good witches were those who healed others, i.e. unbinding witches.

82 Rappoport, *The Sea: Myths and Legends*, 34-5. Jennifer McNabb, as panel commentator for the initial presentation of this paper at the 48th annual Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, asked if the sea itself was feminized. While an interesting question, I have not found the sea to be referred to in gender terms; however, this may be an interesting direction for further analysis.
the crew. During the reign of Charles I, Lancashire officials tried a “huge pack of witches” after it was discovered that “they had a hand in raising the great storm wherein his Majesty was in so great danger at sea in Scotland.” Londoners from all levels of society, probably including sailors, learned about the infamous “Lancashire witches” through a popular play written with the help of official depositions.

Deep-sea sailors feared a woman’s power to generate storms at sea to such an extent that they sometimes took matters into their own hands against female passengers suspected of being witches. Ironically, seamen shared more with élite views of demons and witches, as agents of the devil, than with more popular conceptions of white witches and cunning folk. One never hears of the existence of any cunning men plying their trade aboard ship. This bond, however, did not stop the élites from considering seafarers to be “the other,” because the more instinctive correlation was between evil, the sea, witches and storms. According to depositions from the Province of Maryland, in 1654 the sailors of the ship Charity, sailing from England to the Chesapeake, believed that a passenger, one

83 John Cook provided this narrative in BL, Harleian MS 540, fol. 93. Drake suspected that Thomas Doughty was a conjuror and his brother a witch, able to “call spirits from the vasty deep” and raise the devil in the form of a bear, a lion or a man in armor. Although Drake empanelled a jury to decide the Gentleman’s fate, Doughty argued that Drake did not possess the “power of Magellan” and decried the fact that he would be hanged “like a dog” instead of beheaded like an aristocrat. Cook’s manuscript also appears in a printed modern edition, along with other documents from the incident. See: Vaux, The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake, 173, 195, 199-203.


85 This is, of course, Thomas Heywood’s and Richard Brome’s The Late Lancashire Witches. Herbert Berry argues convincingly for the playwrights’ use of official depositions. See Berry, “The Globe Bewitched,” 216-20.

86 Making the analysis more complex is the fact that given their fervent beliefs in omens, some seafarers, looking to explain a violent tempest, blamed women who were not necessarily identified as witches. In fact in one case, no woman was even aboard. Buccaneers of the Revenge sailing along the South American coast in 1684 were “discoursing of the Intrigues of Women” when there “arose a prodigious storm.” They concluded that, “discoursing of Women at Sea was very unlucky, and occasioned the storm.” James Shirley, The Young Admiral, D4.

87 To date, I have seen nothing that suggests such people operated aboard ship. This does not mean that sailors did not avail themselves of the services of cunning folk. Alan Macfarlane noted, for example, a sailor from Ipswich, who after taking his daughter first to a local physician, went to a local cunning man, who “confirmed that the child was bewitched.” Macfarlane noted that the cunning man could offer both physical and mental comfort, “translating a physical misfortune into a symptom of spiritual malice.” Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, 122. Patarino, “Religious Shipboard Culture,” 190.
Mary Lee, was a witch. They investigated and found a witch’s mark and rather than suffer the indignity of another search, she confessed the next day. The captain, wanting nothing to do with the incident, hid in his cabin, while the crew hanged the unfortunate woman.\footnote{88}{William Hand Brown, ed., \textit{Archives of Maryland}, Vol. 3, 306-08.}

At least two other examples exist of women accused and hanged as witches on ships traveling from England to Jamestown, Virginia and Maryland, both of which occurred in the late 1650s.\footnote{89}{John Washington, the great-grandfather of George accused the merchant Edward Prescott in the Maryland Provincial Court of hanging Elizabeth Richardson on a trading run from England in 1658. Prescott balked at the charge, saying that the ship’s Master, John Greene, and the crew were ready to mutiny if he had not hanged the woman at sea. Steiner, ed., \textit{Archives of Maryland}, Vol. 41, 327-9. His passengers and possibly his crew forced one Captain Bennett to hang at the yardarm an old woman named Katherine Grady in 1659. Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia, Vol. 1, 280-81. Bruce uses as his source Conway Robinson, \textit{Transcripts of General Court Records from the Virginia Historical Society Manuscript Collection}, 243.}

A Bristol court arraigned, convicted, and executed twenty-five local women due to a tale told by a ship’s quartermaster, who had recently traded at the Straits of Gibraltar. Supposedly, on an errand to the ship’s hold, he saw “a sort of women, his known neighbors making merry together, and taking their cups liberally.” When he surprised them, threatening to turn them in to the captain, they vanished, but not before making the quartermaster lame for life. On its return journey, the ship became “stuck” in the sea, although they had a strong gale and were close to home. Upon arrival, the quartermaster lost no time accusing the women.\footnote{90}{Sandys, \textit{Ovid’s Metamorphosis}, 167.}

In one notable case, a minister of Suffolk, Parson Lewis, demonstrated how even the clergy were sometimes unable to escape Satan’s power; the one’s to suffer were seafarers. Lewis confessed that he instructed one of his three imps to attack a ship of Ipswich and caused it to sink in waves that were so violent, it was as if the “water had been boyled in a pot.”\footnote{91}{Reverend John Lewis, age 70, was a pastor at Brandeston, Suffolk, when he was tortured and accused as a witch by the notorious witch hunter, Mathew Hopkins for causing the tempest off the coast of Norfolk. Fourteen persons drowned as a result of the ship sinking. John Stearne, \textit{Confirmation}, 24. Stearne was the partner of Hopkins.}

Ships’ captains, in an effort to ensure the safe passage of their vessels, sometimes sought out witches who offered favorable winds for
sale, which we also see in the image of the *Man in the Shyppe*. Increase Mather reported, as late as 1684 that winds were sold to captains; the notion that witches could sell winds lasted in England at least until the early nineteenth century. Thomas Nash, in his *Discourse of Apparations*, explained how these winds worked: “Three knots in a thread, or an odd grandams blessing in the corner of a napkin, will carry you all the world over.” Olaus Magnus best described the process. The witch tied three magic knots to an unbreakable strap. Within the first knot one found gentle breezes, within the second knot, stiff winds, and if they untied the third knot, they endured raging gales. Those who doubted the power of the winds suffered even greater misfortune.

The fact that shipboard culture borrowed only what it needed in terms of the overall cosmology of witchcraft is telling. Shipboard culture was open to the full range of notions about witches through the experiences seamen had while growing up in England. Yet the isolating environment of the sea, which regularly pummeled the ship with tempests, served to constrict these cultural nuggets of especially salient information. For seamen, the only really useful notion about witches was that they could control weather.

It has been suggested that the provocative image of Satan seductively whispering in the mariner’s ear, along with the descriptions of how sailors cursed and boasted during storms, may have been another way for English society to make sailors “the other” by

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92 The fourteenth-century English chronicler and Benedictine monk of St. Werbergh’s in Chester, Ralph Higden, in his *Polychronicon* first described the existence of such witchcraft on the Isle of Man. According to Higden, “In that Ylond is sorcylege & wytchecrafte used. For women there selle to shipmen wynde as it were closed under thre knottes of threde, So that the more wynde he wold have, the mo[re] knottes he muste undo.” Higden, *Polychronicon*, Liber primus, Cap. 44, 56. The passage also occurs in the 1495 and 1527 editions. See, STC Nos. 13434 and 13440. *Polychronicon* was a general history from the Creation until 1342, upon which others continued the narrative to 1377. William Caxton printed the 1482 version, and the Cornish translator John of Trevisa (1326-1412) rendered the work into English.


96 In previous work, I developed the idea of a unique, but permeable shipboard culture tied to the physical space of the ship, which acted as a heterotopic space, a concept initiated by Foucault. See: Patarino, “One Foot in Sea,” 14-27, 477.
feminizing them. Other woodcut illustrations that I have sampled do indeed show the devil mostly in contact with female characters. Unquestionably, it has been established by a preponderance of scholars that witchcraft accusations were gendered – with more women than men accused of consorting with the devil. There is a wide, established historiography that need not be restated here. In addition, much work has been done that associates women with verbal excess, since mumbling and cursing were grounds for accusing women of witchcraft in the courts. At its base, shipboard culture was almost exclusively male; scholars have labeled this a homosocial society. Shipboard culture itself was gendered because it entailed a homosocial culture where the concern and behaviors of men helped to shape both cultural and social elements. At this point, I do not see are any clear subtexts, especially in terms of use of language that reveals any uneasiness about sailor’s sexuality.

What is interesting, however, is how the structure of the ship itself was sometimes gendered, which could perhaps spill over into how landsmen perceived sailors, and therefore be ensconced in social memory. For example, the poet William Basse, in his A Helpe to Discourse, wrote: “Q. There are two things that cannot be too much trimmed, and what are they. A. A ship and a woman.” Although

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97 I heartily thank Jennifer McNabb, for this astute inquiry regarding sailors and gender as part of her panel commentary for this paper, originally presented at the 4th annual Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association.

98 For example the illustrations in Guillaume’s Pylgremage of the Sowle, Caxton’s 1483 edition, shows the devil mainly in contact with women or what is obviously female mermaids. This is true also in the MS. copy upon which the printed work is based. See: Cust, ed., Pylgremage of the Sowle.

99 See for example, Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, 171-2; Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 502-512.

100 Over time, the term homosocial has gained a broad meaning. Foucault argued that gender (through the auspices of his discussion on homosexuality) was itself a socially constructed notion. Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1, 42-3. Increasingly, homosocial has come to mean the “social bonds between persons of the same sex,” or “male bonding.” Sedgwick, Between Men, 1. Two examples of works that have fruitfully investigated typical homosocial environments, i.e. social spaces that not only define their membership as mainly male but also foster a range of bonding relationships between their members, are: Clarke, “Race, Homosocial Desire and ‘Mammon,’” 84-97; Quinn, Same-Sex Dynamics, 66-83.

101 In earlier work, I looked at some of the issues at play in shipboard society, including issues of crime, discipline, punishment, and sexuality. The homosocial environment of the ship did play a role in social and power relationships. These are issues that I will be developing in an upcoming study. Patarino, “Living Outside the Ordered Society”.

best known for his elegy on Shakespeare, Basse collected a number of “witty” questions and answers. In a later fourth edition of *A Helpe to Discourse*, co-authored with E. Phillips, Basse asks an additional question that says more about gender standards for women, than for sailors. Also common were other gendered proverbs, under the label, “A Ship and a woman are ever repairing.”

Seafarers were not the only social group reproached by the economic and educational élites in England during the early modern period. More generally, the literate social élite disparaged those of “mean” or “vulgar” status as being superstitious. As Peter Brown suggested, “incorrect belief had a clear social locus among the ‘vulgar.’” What made the stereotyping of sailors unique was the causal link between evil, the sea, and seamen’s supposedly irreligious behavior. Sailors were one of the primary groups caught within the evolving theological debate, which Michael Hunter astutely called, “the vocabulary of irreligion.” They were routinely portrayed by contemporaries as superstitious and irreligious, wholly uncaring about higher matters of faith or obedience to God. Commentators described them as demonstrating only the outward signs of religious belief. Jacobean courtier and poet Sir Thomas Overbury, for example, enthusiastically characterized sailors’ faith in God as ephemeral and shallow.

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103 In answer to the question, “In what things should a Woman bee like unto a Ship, and what things not? Basse said, “In this, a ship is the greatest moveable that a man possesseth, & yet it is turned and guided by the stern, a little piece of wood; so must a Wife in this be like, being willing to bee guided by the direction of the husband; and as it sailes not but by deliberation, sounding, and compasse, so must not she walke but by discretion and judgement. But herin she must be unlike, for as one ship may belong to many Merchants, and many merchants may be owners in one ship: so must not the wife, she must be properly belong to one; and as a ship of all the goods a man possesseth cannot be housed, a wife of all things must not be left abroad; and lastly a Shippe may bee painted, but a Woman should not.” Basse and Phillips, *A Helpe to Discourse*, 81-82.


106 Hunter, “The Problem of ‘Atheism’ in Early Modern England,” 149. Hunter’s thesis questions whether the movement to define atheism, with its numerous publications in the century after 1580, actually helped cause the very phenomenon they attempted to refute. Not only did clerical writers touch upon the subject; so too did lay writers, part of a movement whereby the laity became increasingly aware of their role and power within the Church. See Schwarz, “Some Thoughts,” 171.
A fore wind is the substance of his creede: and fresh water the burden of his prayers . . . . He sees God’s wonder in the deepe, but so as rather they appeare his play-fellowes; the stirrers of his zeale; nothing but hunger and hard rocks can convert him. ¹⁰⁷

The early Stuart humorist, Richard Braithwaite, who “knew the London river well,” said

In a tempest you shall hear him pray, but so amethodically, as it argues, that hee is seldome vers’d in that practice. Feare is the principall motive of his devotion; yet I am persuaded, for forme sake, he shews more than he feels. ¹⁰⁸

The implicit assumption was that sailors were impossible to convert to true religious belief because of fear; the overwhelming fear of storms, of the power of the devil to wreak havoc with ships. Although Overbury and Braithwaite prose have been described as “too anxious to display their wit,” they all too adequately represented the developing social memory of contemporary English landsmen. ¹⁰⁹ According to the late 16th-century divine Richard Hooker, fear was the true culprit; everyone knew that sailors demonstrated great dread in times of storm. “Fear . . . if it have not the light of true understanding concerning God, wherewith to be moderated, breedeth likewise superstition.” ¹¹⁰ Fear, it seemed, was the English sailor’s primary motivation for whatever legitimate religious convictions he possessed. Men of learning, the social, educational, and spiritual élite, equated what they perceived as a lack of religious fervor among seamen with lost morality. Some Calvinist and non-conformist pamphlets written after 1660 were especially critical of the moral character of the navy, rather than “a Christian Navy” they saw “the suburbs of hell.” ¹¹¹

For those who observed the behavior of sailors, one of the worst hypocrisies was that while some prayed during storms, there


¹⁰⁹ Lloyd, British Seamen, 73. For further discussions on the use of literature influenced by maritime life see Charles N. Robinson, The British Tar in Fact and Fiction. The Poetry, Pathos, and Humour of the Sailor’s Life (London and New York, 1909), Chapter III.


¹¹¹ An Inquiry into the Causes of Our Naval Miscarriages, 9. The writer of this satirical pamphlet had a definite axe to grind. He compared the King’s “corrupt” Restoration navy with that of the Commonwealth. Also note that since the copy that had existed in the library of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) was either stolen or sold in the 1980s, refer to the copy on microfilm in the British Library, E. 1980 (12).
were many others who became defiant, cursing and boasting that they had survived. Early modern English society took curses seriously, believing that there is great power in words. Many considered such curses as directly offensive to God, since it was only through His power that such terrifying weather existed, either because He caused the storm, or because He allowed the devil to affect weather patterns. Sailors, they argued, mocked the power of the divine. Said Richard Hooker, they have a way of “turning things that are serious into mockerie, an arte of Contradiction by way of scorne.” One of the signs of an atheist, according to Thomas Fuller, was that the atheist scoffed and “made sport at sacred things,” a behavior that “abates the reverence of religion.”

Not everyone was convinced that sailors were atheists. Several writers overlooked the crude behavior of crewmen and refused to equate disorder aboard ship with irreligion. In 1649, in a sermon before “the watry generation” aboard a warship docked at Gravesend, the Reverend Hugh Peters declared, “I love a tarpauling

because they pray so fervently when they are in danger though they swear as devoutly when a storm’s over; and truly however it appears, they have the gift of the spirit in them, that they will take so much pains to pray at all.

In 1653, Sir Henry More, known as one of the “Cambridge Platonists,” pointed to the objective heart of the issue. In *An Antidote Against Atheisme*, More explained that

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112 As of yet I have found nothing in the prescriptive literature that equated male seafarer’s cursing with female gender roles, or connected this type of cursing to “the world turned upside down.” This may be because seafarers seemed to curse out of bravado or possibly fear, rather than as a weapon meant to insult, or as a “tool of social influence”. See: Laura Gowing, “Gender and the Language of Insult”; Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*; David Underdown, “The Taming of the Scold”; Laura K. Deal, “Widows and Reputation,” 382.


114 Fuller, *The Holy State*, Book V, Chapter 6, 379. Presumably, Fuller meant those who made sport of the sacred, such as being saved by God from a storm. The proper behavior, according to contemporaries, would have been to pray rather than to shout and curse defiantly in the face of God’s mercy.

men doe naturally in some heavy Adversity, mighty Tempest on the Sea or dreadfull Thunder on the Land . . . reflect upon themselves and their actions, and so are invaded with fear . . . . Nor is it materiall that some allege that Mariners curse and swear the lowdest when the storm is the greatest, for it is because of the usualness of such dangers have made them loose the sense of the danger, not the sense of a God.116

Writers like Peters and More, however, were in the minority. Due to the developing narrative, sailors were still believed to be irreligious, and they would continue to be seen in this regard as separate from landsmen.117

Linking seamen with narratives about an evil sea may have been partially responsible for societal attitudes that sometimes de-humanized mariners. Of all the early modern secular depictions of seamen, perhaps the most meaningful to the process of social memory were those that compared ship’s crews to wild beasts. At least partially, these mischaracterizations drew upon stories of inadequate discipline aboard ship, especially on naval vessels. Sir William Monson, a naval admiral who wrote between the 1580s and the 1630s, described common sailors as “the most rude and savage people in the world.”119 Neither “birds nor horses can shew more extravagant lewdness, more dissolute wildness, and less fear of God,” said Monson, than the men who plied the seas.120 The admiral pointed to several factors unique to shipboard culture as the cause of this unruly behavior. Either the sea itself worked “contrary effects to the land,” or one could blame the men’s feelings of “lib-

116   The Cambridge Platonists were divines who commented upon toleration and tried to apply the ideal to matters of religion. They were considered Orthodox in their leanings, and indeed More was an outspoken critic of certain Sectarian tenants, however, the Cambridge Platonists tried to apply reason to the religious controversies of the day. More, An Antidote Against Atheisme, 30.

117   Also my arguments and conclusions in Patarino, “Benefitting from Social Memory.”

118   Previously I argued for a relatively nuanced view of sailors’ behavior aboard ship, suggesting a significant balance between camaraderie and the need for individuals to defend their place within the ship’s hierarchy. I also argued that by focusing so tightly upon discipline sailors, as a group, seem more unruly, mutinous, and prone to violence than other members of English society do. I plan to explore the social relationships aboard ship more fully in the next phase of my research. My early ideas about discipline as a component of shipboard culture are found in Patarino, “Living Outside the Ordered Society.”

119   Monson, The Naval Tracts, 436.

120   Monson, The Naval Tracts, 386.
erty” while ashore after being “penned up in a ship like birds in a cage.”

Monson’s comment suggests that the root of the stereotype may have lain less with ill behavior than with the fact that seamen were so intimately connected with the restless oceans. In the process of overcoming nature, English people discerned the “fragile boundaries between man and the animal creation” and defined these animal qualities as undesirable. Terms such as “bestial” or “brute” became synonymous with the animal condition. “It was even bestial to go swimming, for . . . it was essentially a non-human method of progression.” People applied bestial labels to both social groups and environments; it was not long before thinkers delineated both the “ideal” human and the sub-human. Sailors, essentially living and working in an alien environment, found themselves targeted for this type of labeling. This link between the bestial sea and bestial sailors also equated seamen with irreligious behavior. Those seamen who demonstrated negative, animal-like qualities, who aligned themselves too closely with wild nature, and who misbehaved in such a way as to reflect these attributes, were obviously irreligious and had turned away from God. “It is not wonderfull that base desires should so estinguish in men the sense of their owne excellencie,” remarked Richard Hooker, “as to make them willing that their soules should be like to the soules of beasts.”

In a few cases, moreover, mariners themselves made use of the stereotype in order to point to social tensions aboard ship. During the first recorded court martial on board the Golden Lion in 1587, the sailors complained that, “you make no men of us but beasts.” A naval grievance report from 1628 exclaimed, “They say they are used like dogs, forced to keep aboard without being suffered to come ashore to refresh themselves.”

121 Monson, The Naval Tracts, 436. While it is true that Monson’s quote singled out misbehavior on land, the root of their poor conduct lay in conditions aboard ship.

122 Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 26.


124 People of the lower ranks of society also found themselves labeled as essentially sub-human, and thus distinct. In England, this meant the “beast-like” poor, “ignorant, irre- ligious, and squalid in their living conditions.” Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 43.


126 Lloyd, The British Seaman, 12.

127 Lloyd, The British Seaman, 71. Lloyd quoted from Calendar of State Papers Domestic, March 29, 1628.
While the raging sea was commonly considered a font of evil and malevolence, and literally a playground for the devil and witches, in both literature and woodcut illustrations, these documents suggest a direct link between the devil, the sea, and sailors’ supposed irreligious behavior and beliefs. Images such as “the Man in the Shyppe,” depicting the devil steering a vessel to its doom illustrated complex stereotypes, an artifact of social memory that branded sailors as essentially separate from landsmen, irreligious and superstitious. The idea of sailors being separate remained as part of English social memory, for much of the early modern period, based upon a link to the evil inherent in the erupting waves of the chaotic sea.

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Richard III: Beyond the Mystery

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He is not the likeliest theme for an American undergraduate classroom: his reign lasted barely two years; he contributed nothing of lasting significance to history; he is more memorable for his spectacular final defeat than for any victory; he was accused of murdering children; and he was after all an English king, as far removed as possible from the typical experience of an American undergraduate. Even the times he lived in are against him. In the immortal words of Mark Twain, his century was “the brutalest, the wickedest, the rottenest in history since the darkest ages.” Yet he continues to fascinate students, mainly because he was also the victim of one of the most vicious smear campaigns in history, which turned him into a deformed, inhuman monster, the form in which he was immortalized as one of the most memorable characters in Shakespeare’s history plays. Now his defenders are out to set the record straight, with a society and even a journal bearing his name. The planets seem to be smiling upon their enterprise: in 2012 his body was discovered underneath a parking lot, and reinterred to great fanfare in Leicester Cathedral on 26 March 2015.

The life and reputation of Richard III constitute one of the most enduring historical puzzles of English history. The topic thus makes a marvelous case study for historical methodology, how the historian weighs evidence and builds arguments. In this article I share my own approach to teaching Richard III, which I have de-

1 Twain, Personal Recollections, vii. Cf. on this point the comments of Ross, Richard III, liii.

2 On the reburial ceremony, see “The Reburial of King Richard III,” and Arens, The Richard III Reinterment. For the discovery itself, see the summary by Hilts, “Richard III,” 40-46. For the full report, see Ashdown-Hill et al., Finding Richard III.
developed over the course of the past fifteen years in various courses. Although I have taught an entire undergraduate seminar on the subject, I usually teach Richard III as one theme in a larger course, particularly a course on historical methods. Currently, I teach Richard III in a course that I call “Unsolved Historical Mysteries,” which is essentially a course designed to introduce non-history majors to the discipline. There are three “mysteries”: the trial of the Templars, Joan of Arc, and Richard III.

The notion that these historical problems can pose as “mysteries” raises a simple question. Is history just a puzzle waiting to be solved? If we put all the facts together, will there be a clear solution? Or is history something more complex and more difficult than that? I suppose that every historian would readily grant that some historical problems can indeed be “solved”: the attribution of a text, for example, or maybe the identity of a historical disease. But every historian also realizes that our evidence is partial, and that every historical interpretation is provisional. Indeed, historical revision is the central dynamic to our discipline. The idea that the past has a solution is the first article of faith of the conspiracy theorist.

Each of my mysteries has what we might call a “puzzle” component. The Templars were accused of secret crimes by people who stood to benefit from their downfall. Joan of Arc claimed that her voices were from God, and against long odds helped turn the tide of the Hundred Years War. And of course some contemporaries and later historians accused Richard III of having his nephews murdered. Each case invites discussion of some basic “empirical” problem: were the Templars guilty? How did Joan rally the troops? Did Richard order the murder of his nephews? Yet the point of the course is also to move students beyond these puzzles, to see that while they may be important, they represent only the beginning of the historical discipline, the first step toward producing a narrative of the past. Put more simply: once we know that the Templars were innocent (and they certainly were), what next? Whether or not she was sent by God (something beyond the historian’s capacity to determine),
who was Joan of Arc? Does our entire understanding of Richard III depend on the manner in which he rose to power? What questions does the exclusive focus on the princes leave unasked?

Fundamentally, each episode illustrates how historical narratives are constructed out of primary sources: this is the basic lesson of the course. The fundamental objective is thus to immerse the students into a historical problem through primary sources, and then to take a first step toward constructing a narrative from those sources. For this reason, I handle the vast secondary literature mainly through bibliographies and individual reports on selected readings. This is a course devoted to primary sources.

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The unit on Richard III comes last, and I begin by introducing students to the traditional version of English history, which reached its culmination with Shakespeare’s Richard III. In reading this play, they confront the mature Tudor version of Richard as a monstrous villain. To drive the point home, I also have them watch Richard Loncraine’s 1995 version with Ian McKellen, which is marvelously entertaining and perfect for the purpose of this course. I also take some time with a lecture here to set up the late fifteenth-century background and to establish the cast of characters.

We turn next to the revisionist version that took shape over several centuries in response to the caricature found in Shakespeare. To introduce the revisionist account, I assign Josephine Tey’s classic detective novel The Daughter of Time, which is short enough to be read in a single evening (unless the students are texting all night). Detective Alan Grant of Scotland Yard has made a study of the human face, and believes that he can deduce a person’s character from the face alone. Hospitalized following an accident, a friend brings him a collection of prints of historical figures to whom some mystery is attached. He comes upon what he takes to be a kindly face, only to discover that he is looking at the archvillain of English history, Richard III. His curiosity piqued and his method called
into question, he consults various textbooks and supposedly reliable histories of the period, only to find that their version of Richard produces more questions than answers. He then calls upon a young American named Brent Carradine who is supposed to be researching the Peasants’ Revolt at the British Museum but is much happier to help Grant get to the bottom of the mystery surrounding Richard. Over the course of a few weeks, under the direction of Grant’s armchair detective work, the case against Richard unravels. They realize that history books are filled with “tonypandy,” the falsehoods they teach you in school. Chronicles contradict. A key source, Thomas More, is five years old when it all happened. Everything is hearsay. Contemporaries fail to mention the dead princes, and people behave as though nothing is the matter. Elizabeth, the boys’ mother, comes out of sanctuary and then to court after they supposedly were murdered. Above all, the traditional account relies on assumptions that are shown to be utterly implausible. Richard had an ironclad claim to the throne and no real motive to kill the princes, since if they were illegitimate, no one would have come to their support and they were no danger to him. For that matter, there were other possible heirs to the throne walking around freely. Grant gathers them all into a list:

He copied it out again for young Carradine’s use, wondering how it could ever have occurred to anyone, Richard most of all, that the elimination of Edward’s two boys would have kept him safe from rebellion. The place was what young Carradine would call just lousy with heirs. Swarming with focuses (or was it foci?) for disaffection. ³

Finally, Grant produces a psychological profile of the unfortunate king. All of the evidence shows Richard to have been the kind of man who never would have stooped to such an act. Yes, Grant concedes, men of integrity had committed murder before, but not the murder of children, and not for that purpose. A man who possessed the qualities that Richard displays in his acts and letters could not have committed that kind of murder. In this reexamination of the case, historians themselves come in for some rough treatment: credulous, incapable of fathoming the psychological depths of their subjects, reducing history to a peepshow of two-dimensional figures. Only after demolishing the traditional version of Richard and

³ Tey, The Daughter of Time, 137.
having written two chapters of a book on the subject does Carradine
discover to his great dismay that George Buck, Horace Walpole, and
Clements Markham knew all of this centuries ago.\(^4\) Carradine is in-
consolable. Grant reassures him that the book is still worth writing,
that the British public still need convincing. Carradine will write his
book after all. Grant’s advice conveniently provides cover for Tey
herself in choosing such a well-known “crime” for Grant to solve.

Tey’s novel has served as a point of entry for many readers
into the exploration of Richard’s life and times, and at this point the
students are usually fully engaged with the question of Richard’s
guilt or innocence. The class dedicated to discussion of Tey runs on
its own, and for the most part I try to get out of the students’ way as
they argue the merits of the case for and against Richard. There is
much to consider beyond specific details: the idea that a five-hun-
dred-year-old crime can be solved using the empirical methods of
a modern detective; the implicit assumption of Tey (through Grant)
that personality profiles are necessary to evaluate and reconcile con-
tradictory material and to bridge gaps in the evidence; and, of course,
the claim that historians are full of prejudice and totally deficient in
their understanding of human psychology. All of this should provide
for lively discussion.

The next step is to channel that energy into the close reading
of the primary sources, and I begin with the earliest contemporary
account of Richard’s seizure of power, Dominic Mancini’s De oc-
cupatione regni Anglie per Riccardum Tercium libellus, translated
as “The Usurpation of Richard the Third.”\(^5\) Mancini was an Italian
living in England in 1482 and early 1483. He completed his work in
December of the same year, following his departure from the island.
He thus provides an account that took shape long before writers had
an incentive to slander Richard to please the king. But this is none-
theless a complex and even contradictory account, drawing on a va-

\(^4\) On Richard’s historical reputation since Shakespeare, see the convenient summary of

\(^5\) Mancini, *Usurpation*. 
riety of sources including the author’s own eyewitness testimony. Its interpretation is hardly straightforward.  

I set the stage for the reading of Mancini at the close of our discussion of Tey. This is in fact a text that Tey should have known about but did not: it was discovered in 1934 and first published, with English translation, in 1936, fifteen years before the publication of the novel. This then is new evidence, unknown to Shakespeare or Tey, and the challenge is clear: whose version of events does Mancini’s account support? I ask the students to imagine that they are Shakespeare or Tey. Which details would they use or avoid?  

My own sense is that Mancini invites a more human understanding of Richard and his motives while at the same time providing evidence that some contemporaries feared that Richard was planning to have the children murdered. (On the specific question of the princes’ fate, Mancini admits that he is ignorant of the truth, but he fears the worst.  

Specifically, Mancini constructs a plausible scenario in which Richard might well have had the princes murdered, but out of self-preservation and anger over his brother Clarence’s death. This interpretation is so favorable to Richard that some historians have suggested that Mancini has swallowed Richard’s own propaganda. But we also see a powerful counter-narrative, a foretaste of what was to come under the Tudors. Mancini claims that at the time of Edward IV’s marriage to the widow Elizabeth Woodville, the duke of Clarence “vented his wrath” with “bitter and public denunciation of Elizabeth’s obscure family.” He also proclaimed that Edward “ought to have married a virgin wife.” Mancini continues:

6 Cf. Pollard, “Dominic Mancini’s Account,” 159: “Mancini’s narrative is complex and to some extent inconsistent and contradictory partly because of the differences of opinion carried by his sources and partly because he was writing from memory.”

7 Speaking of the young Edward V, Mancini states: “Whether, however, he has been done away with, and by what manner of death, so far I have not at all discovered.” Mancini, Usurpation, 92-93. See further, note 91 on pp. 127-28; and Ross, Richard III, 96-104.


9 “Fratres vero Eduardi, qui duo tunc vivebant, etsi graviter uterque eandem rem tulerunt; alter tamen, qui ab Eduardo secundo genus erat et dux Clarinetorium, manifestissimum stomachum aperit; dum in obscurum Helisabetum genus acriter et palam inveheret; dumque contra morem [MS: maiorum] viduam a rege ductam predicaret, quem virginem uxorem ducere opportuisset.” Mancini, Usurpation, 62-63. The translations of Mancini are Armstrong’s.
But Richard, the other brother, who is now king but then was duke of Gloucester, being better at concealing his thoughts and besides younger and therefore less influential, neither did nor said anything that could be brought against him.\(^{10}\)

After the marriage, Elizabeth worried that Clarence would never allow her sons to succeed Edward IV. Clarence then was accused of conspiracy against the king and executed, though Mancini is uncertain if this was a fabricated charge or a real plot. Richard was undone:

At that time Richard duke of Gloucester was so overcome with grief for his brother, that he could not dissimulate so well, but that he was overheard to say that he would one day avenge his brother’s death. Thenceforth he came very rarely to court. He kept himself within his own lands and set out to acquire the loyalty of his people through favours and justice.\(^{11}\)

Already in these early passages written in 1483, Mancini pretends to unlock the secrets of Richard’s heart. Richard is “better at concealing his thoughts” (ad dissimulandum aptior erat) than Clarence and only a tragedy such as Clarence’s death could shatter the pretense of his poised behavior (nequivit tantum simulare). And yet at the time of the announcement of the marriage of Edward IV to Elizabeth Woodville, at Michaelmas in 1464, when he was supposedly concealing his true thoughts, Richard was less than twelve years’ old!\(^{12}\)

Moreover, all of these events occurred many years before Mancini moved to England. His account therefore raises the important problem of second-hand knowledge. In fact, Mancini may not even have known any English; it’s perhaps a safe assumption


that he did not.\textsuperscript{13} In any case, Mancini clearly received much of his information from friends, some of them situated very close to the throne, and sympathetic to the party of the princes.\textsuperscript{14} He mentions one individual, John Argentine, physician to young King Edward V and later to Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII.\textsuperscript{15} According to Mancini, Argentine was one of the last to see Edward alive. He told Mancini, “the young king,” he told Mancini, “like a victim prepared for sacrifice, sought remission of his sins by daily confession and penance, because he believed that death was facing him.”\textsuperscript{16} A close reading of Mancini’s text reveals many passages relying on information that must have been gathered from informants. Here, at least, this is hardly eyewitness testimony.

In sum, Mancini’s text allows students to see the Tudor version of Richard III in utero, at a point when Richard is still recognizably human, with plausible and even defensible motives for his actions, with no trace of physical deformity. At the same time, this is not a sympathetic treatment. Mancini very nearly accuses him of having the princes murdered, and attributes to him an “insane lust for power” (vesana regnandi libido) – another foretaste of the language of Tudor writers.\textsuperscript{17} Mancini also refers to his “ambition” and “deceit” (ambitio, ars), clearly referring to his ambition for the Crown.\textsuperscript{18} A. J. Pollard concludes that although Mancini knew nothing of Tudor propaganda, he “saw the events from exactly the same standpoint.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{13} Pollard, “Dominic Mancini’s Account,” 152.

\textsuperscript{14} Pollard describes the party as that of Edward V (“Dominic Mancini’s Account,” 163).

\textsuperscript{15} Mancini, \textit{Usurpation}, 92-93, 127 n89.

\textsuperscript{16} “Referebat Argentinus medicus, quo ultimo ex suis regulus usus fuit, regulum tanquam victimam sacrificio paratam singulis diebus confessione et penitentia suas noxas diluere, quod mortem sibi instare putaret.” Mancini, \textit{Usurpation}, 92-93.

\textsuperscript{17} Mancini, \textit{Usurpation}, 90-91. For more on Richard’s designs on the crown, see pp. 94-97.

\textsuperscript{18} Mancini, \textit{Usurpation}, 82-83.

\textsuperscript{19} Pollard, “Dominic Mancini’s Account,” 163.
To illustrate the early growth of the Tudor version of Richard, I assign a selection from John Rous’s History of the Kings of England.\textsuperscript{20} Rous was a Warwickshire priest who had praised Richard in his English version of his History of the Earls of Warwick, written sometime between 1483 and 1485. But he soon had a change of heart, and in his History of the Kings of England, which he wrote sometime during Richard’s reign but then revised early in the reign of Henry VII (he died in 1492), he provided some of the cruder details of the Tudor legend.\textsuperscript{21} Richard is now Antichrist, born after two years in his mother’s womb with teeth and long hair, and misshapen. He murders his nephews and Henry VI (possibly with his own hands), poisons his wife, and imprisons his mother. The rest is a bare recital of the events of his reign, ending with his defeat at Bosworth Field. Rous seems to have had little impact, and his primary value is to illustrate the early development of the Tudor legend.

Depending on how much time one has, one might also assign a selection from the Croyland Chronicle continuation, which students should know since Grant and Carradine cite it frequently in the novel. The continuation covering Richard’s rule (known as the “Second Continuation”), composed in 1486, has been called “the most important single source” for Richard’s reign.\textsuperscript{22} The author (whose identity is uncertain\textsuperscript{23}) was highly capable and well-informed about contemporary events. His account might be thought of in some ways as a supplement to Mancini. There are obvious differences, principally among them the much more central situation of the Croyland author, which made him an eyewitness to many of

\textsuperscript{20} A convenient selection in English translation can be found in Hanham, Richard III and His Early Historians, 118-24.

\textsuperscript{21} For further details on Rous, see Ross, Richard III, xxi-xxii.

\textsuperscript{22} Ross, Richard III, xliii. For the text, see Crowland chronicle. The portion covering the rise to power and reign of Richard III is pp. 150-77 (Latin with facing-page English translation).

\textsuperscript{23} Ross and other scholars believed (Richard III, xliii) that the author was Richard’s own chancellor, John Russell, bishop of Lincoln, but recent research has apparently cast doubt on this attribution. See Thomson, “Russell, John,” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24318, accessed 15 June 2016].
the events that he describes. But like Mancini, he displays clear hostility to Richard. He refuses to accuse him outright of murdering the princes, but he nonetheless implies that he did so. In this account Richard proceeds to remove every obstacle to his claim of the throne for himself, at first in secret but then openly. In the end, it is hard to disagree with the conclusion of Charles Ross, who, following his survey of the primary sources, insisted that Tudor writers did not simply invent the “wickedness” of Richard III, but “were building upon a foundation of antagonism to Richard III which antedated his death at Bosworth.”

At the same time, it would be naïve to ignore the growth of the Tudor legend as we find it in writers such as Bernard André, Thomas More, and Polydore Vergil. André is the easiest to overlook. Poet laureate and official historiographer under Henry VII, he was also tutor to Prince Arthur from 1496 to 1500, and certainly in a position to gather good information. Unfortunately, André also suffered from some form of very poor eyesight, possibly what he and contemporaries called blindness. Besides that, he seems to have been a poor choice simply by constitution for the work of a historian. By inclination he was first of all a poet. His Life of Henry VII suffers from some confusion, but mostly from a missed opportunity to fill in gaps in our knowledge. Its great value lies not so much in its details but in its evidence of the development of the Tudor legend, wherein the monster Richard plays the foil to the divinely favored Henry VII, who ushers in the new dynasty. Here Richard moves off of center stage, and the work naturally turns to the early reign and accomplishments of Henry Tudor. For André, the rise of the Tudors becomes drama on a heroic scale. In this account, the ancient war between Saxons and Britons finally reaches its happy conclusion with the triumph of Henry VII (the Tudors were Welsh), his mar-

24 On this point, see Ross, Richard III, xliv.

25 Ross, Richard III, xlviii. See also p. 100 for a summary of the sources that support the conclusion that the princes were already dead in 1483.

26 For what follows, see my Introduction to André, The Life of Henry VII.
riage to Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV, and the birth of their son Arthur. The two Roses are now united following a period of war and bloodshed that reached its climax in the tyranny of Richard III – and indeed, André seems to have been the first to cast Richard as a tyrant.²⁷

The most authoritative treatment of Richard by a writer in Tudor England is that of Polydore Vergil, who sets Richard in a longer historical development going all the way back to Richard II – that is to say, as Charles Ross observed, Polydore essentially provides the basic architecture of Shakespeare’s fifteenth-century history plays.²⁸ Vergil’s Anglica historia has been regarded as having some claim to “serious and sober history” (or at least far more than Thomas More), as an “important and independent source of fact,” and even as “coolly detached and rationalistic” in comparison to the “dramatic” version of More.²⁹ Much of its value depends on its comprehensiveness: of all the sources under review, Vergil gives the most thorough treatment of Richard’s reign. For the purposes of this class, the salient feature of his treatment of Richard is his suggestion that from the moment when Edward IV had passed away, he was consumed by lust for power, “kyndlyd with an ardent desyre of soveraigne.”³⁰ Likewise, Richard’s seizure of his nephew Richard out of sanctuary was only the first step in his careful plan to do away with the princes. Vergil’s Richard is nonetheless torn between ambition and guilt, “enflamyd with desire of usurping the kyngdom” while still “trubblyd by guyltynes of intent to commyt so haynous

²⁷ For frequent references to Richard’s tyranny, see André, Life of Henry VII, 20-29.


³⁰ Ellis, Three Books, 173.
wickednes.”  

All the ingredients of classical tragedy are present. As in Shakespeare, Richard conceals his true purpose and “so enveglyd the myndes of the nobilitye.” Slowly, the nobles realize that Richard’s aim is to “convert the regall authoritie into tyranny.” The specter of tyranny returns, but Richard steps off the page as a more three-dimensional figure than in Andrè, driven by a desire to rule and capable of deep plots and stratagems, but also liable to doubt and fear. Vergil likewise turns the screw on the reader by elevating the princes to a more central place in the narrative and by emphasizing their “tender age.” For Vergil they are the “most innocent nephews,” “those babes of thyssew royall,” “these sely children,” “these two innocent impes.” The enormity of the crime galvanizes the public and sets in motion the catastrophe.

Students may find it fruitful to compare Vergil with Thomas More’s History of King Richard the Third, written between 1514 and 1518. As the title indicates, Richard is now the sole focus, in what is surely the most entertaining account of the king before Shakespeare. While Vergil’s narrative had greater influence upon subsequent historians, it was More’s version that shaped Shakespeare’s play. Physically, Richard is the same in More and Shakespeare, ill-favored and crook-backed. More’s Richard is not without some virtues: he is intelligent, but he employs his wit in evil directions; he is courageous and liberal, though his generosity worked


33 Ellis, *Three Books*, 182.

34 On Richard’s stratagems, see for example Ellis, *Three Books*, 179, 183; on Richard living in “contynuall feare,” see p. 187.

35 Ellis, *Three Books*, 188.


37 The standard scholarly edition can be found in *The Complete Works of Thomas More*, vol. 2. For the date, see lxiii-lxv. For the relationship and priority of the English and Latin texts, see liv-lix. For the question of the influence of Vergil upon More, and of More upon Vergil, see *History*, ed. Sylvester, lxxv-lxxix.
against him, bringing him “vnstedfaste frendeshippe, for whiche hee was fain to pil [pillage] and spoyle in other places, and get him stedfast hatred.”

But these meager virtues cannot compete against the catalogue of his vices. They are too numerous to mention, but perhaps the unifying thread is dissimulation: “outwardly coumpinable [companionable] where he inwardely hated, not letting to kisse whome hee thoughte to kyll.”

Such oppositions abound in More. We are now firmly in the realm of invention: this is something that could hardly have been apparent to an impartial observer. In More’s account, Richard’s dissimulation shades easily into concealed ambition, Richard’s desire for the Crown even during the lifetime of Edward IV.

The History is by any reckoning a magnificent literary accomplishment, giving birth to the arch-villain that we know from Shakespeare. In particular, the work packs an emotional punch that is missing from earlier accounts such as André’s. As in Vergil, the princes are not just obstacles to Richard but “innocent tender children.”

Their mother, Elizabeth, tries heroically to save her youngest son from being committed to his uncle. Then when Richard has seized the throne, he turns next to the murder of his nephews:

But as he finished his time with ye beste death, and ye most righteous, yt is to wyt his own : so began he with the most piteous and wicked, I meane the lamentable murther of his innoocent nephewes, the young king and his tender brother.

When the henchmen come for them in the Tower, the “sely children” are lying in bed, helpless prey for the murderers, who smother them with pillows:

Thei gaue vp to god their innocent soules into the ioyes of heauen, leauing to the tormentors their bodyes dead in the bed.
The murder of the princes is even a turning point for Richard. Ever after, More claims (citing the “credible report of such as wer secrete w' his chamberers”), “he neuer hadde quiet in his minde” but when he went abroad, “his eyen whirled about, his body priuily fenced, his hand euer on his dager, his countenance and maner like one alway ready to strike againe.” Restless at night, he “rather slumbred then slept, troubled wyth feareful dreams, sodainly sommetyme sterte vp, leape out of his bed & runne about the chamber, so was his restles herte continually tossed & tumbled w't the tedious impression & stormy remembrance of his abominable dede.”

Such are the major literary sources for the reign of Richard III. Together, they provide students with sufficient material to begin forming their own narratives. At the conclusion of the unit, I ask the students to commit to a position on Richard in a short “position paper” responding to this statement: “The only reason that Richard III has been vilified is that he lost the Battle of Bosworth Field. His historical reputation is proof of the old adage that history is written by the victors.” In some way, I feel it’s important for them to take the first step toward constructing their own narrative out of primary sources.

I also require a final project in the form of a paper, which may cover any of the three “mysteries.” If the students choose to write about Richard III, I ask them to focus on a narrow theme, something that is manageable in the space of twelve to fifteen pages, using the primary sources. I offer suggestions, but I also encourage them to come up with their own possibilities. One idea is to trace a theme in the sources, such as the treatment of the princes, Richard as tyrant, Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV, the nobility, Henry VI, or the Battle of Bosworth Field. Some of these will require more research into the secondary literature than others, and of course other themes are possible. A second idea is to offer a close reading of one source or to compare two or more sources: Polydore Vergil and Thomas More; Bernard André and Vergil or More; Dominic Mancini and More; the Croyland Chronicler and Polydore Vergil. A third is to examine a source that we did not read in class, such as one of

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43 History, ed. Sylvester, 87.
the London chronicles or a later source such as Hall, Holinshed, or the so-called “Encomium of Richard III,” billed as “the earliest defense of King Richard III.”

Of course the serious student will wish to consult the sizable secondary literature on Richard and the late fifteenth-century background to his life and reign. Although the emphasis in this course is on primary sources, I certainly encourage their exploration of the secondary literature, and I provide them with a bibliography that appears below. The most important criterion for the final essay is that I begin to hear the students speak in their own voice. Students are free to make of Richard what they will. Ideally, the mystery of Richard and the princes will not be an end in itself, but the first step to a deeper understanding of the historical enterprise.

**Unsolved Historical Mysteries: Selected Bibliography**

I have intentionally kept this bibliography small for the purposes of this course. For further bibliographic guidance, see the extensive website of the American branch of the Richard III Society. The *Ricardian* also publishes an extremely helpful annotated bibliography with every annual issue. Pollard, Richard III though now dated, has a helpful section for “Further Reading,” which is reprinted with permission on the Richard III Society’s website. The best search engines are probably the Bibliography of British and Irish History and the International Medieval Bibliography, both searchable (with subscription) through the Brepolis gateway.


44 Kincaid, *The Encomium*.
45 For an overview of some other primary sources, see Ross, *Richard III*, xxxiv-xli.


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Works Cited in Footnotes


*Forensic Reconstruction of the Face of Richard III*