Revels End: A Conceptual History of the Late Medieval and Early Modern English University Stage

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Abstract

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Academic drama has, once again, been rediscovered after being largely ignored by the New Critics and the historicists during the second half of the last century. The vast majority of this recent attention – most notably Jonathan Walker and Paul Streufert's collection *Early Modern Academic Drama* (2008) – considers theatrical performance in the universities as a pedagogical instrument within a larger humanist educational program. My dissertation, "Revels End: A Conceptual History of the Late Medieval and Early Modern English Academic Stage," presents the stage as a localized site within the two most ancient English universities. Focusing on the site of performance, my project examines the theatrical events and the curious textuality of the works associated with the university stage as it emerged from the medieval period. In this effort I rely on the evidence found in the *Records of Early English Drama* (*REED*) volumes for *Oxford* (2004) and *Cambridge* (1989) and the two publication runs of *Renaissance Latin Drama in England* from Georg Olms Verlag Press (1983-92). Adapting the methodologies of Richard Beadle and Alexandra Johnson, I argue that the academic stage was an ephemeral and temporary site within the university governed by the conventions of community festive drama. In this regard, the experience of playing was often at direct odds with the emergent humanist pedagogy of drama. Official

reactions to the unpredictable reality of staged performances kept the academic stage uncomfortably perched on the margins of other discursive centers, namely: the university curriculum, the local government and ecclesial apparatus, the pan-European humanist movement, the vernacular stage and the nascent professional stage. Furthermore, the textuality of the academic dramas discloses that scholars memorialized the experience of playing over and above the texts of individual dramas.

The argument is presented in two distinct parts. The first half of my dissertation draws from archival sources and readings of the earliest extant academic dramas with the texts and records of Merton College's Christmas lord traditions, which dates from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century, the records of Edward Watson's 1512 degree play and Thomas Chaundler's 1460 play, *Liber apologeticus de omni statu humanae naturae*. A close examination of this underappreciated work reveals that Chaundler, who twice served as the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, deploys popular dramatic forms drawn from the cycle plays and the morality tradition as a humanist gambit. The first half concludes with an analysis of the effects of the English reformation on the university stage, arguing the English reformation's attack on the festive culture greatly reduces the diversity of the productions in academic institutions. In this effort I draw attention to the texts associated with a 1522 performance of *Miles Gloriosus* in Trinity Hall, Cambridge directed by Stephen Gardiner, a 1545 performance of the protestant propaganda play *Pammachius* in Christ's College Hall, and the textuality of three academic dramas published during the Henrician reformation, Nicholas Grimald's *Christus Redivivus* (1544) and (1546) and John Christopherson's *Jephthah* (1546). The second half of my dissertation turns to the academic stage's history of interpretation, as told through the critical reception and editorial treatment of one of its most important sources, the St. John's College, Oxford MS 52.1. This manuscript contains the spectacular Jacobean text, *The Christmas Prince*, which memorializes the college's 1607-08 winter revels. I dispute the claims of an earlier generation of editors and critics, who, like F.S. Boas, saw in it the seamless continuation of medieval dramatic practices in the post-reformation university.

Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation forces a student to walk a long and sometimes arduous path; however, one does not complete that journey alone. I received a great deal of assistance and guidance from many people, who, wittingly or not, helped me along the way. This particular journey began when I left Seattle in June of 2008 and spent nearly 16 months overseas courtesy of a Bonderman Travel Fellowship and a Fritz Foreign Study Fellowship. For that opportunity I owe the Graduate School of the University of Washington an immense debt of gratitude. My return to campus in the Winter Quarter of 2010 marked several new beginnings in my scholarly career. During the Winter and Spring Quarters of 2010, the inaugural cohort of Hanauer Fellow in Western Civilization met with Professor Jane Brown, under whose guidance I came to terms with several important books that influenced this project, particularly Ernst Robert Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* and Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer*. In addition, my Hanauer peers generously responded to an earlier version of chapters four and five. Second, I participated in the Huckabay Teaching Fellows colloquium during the Winter of 2010, facilitated by Lana Rae Lenz and Jennie Dorman from the Center for Teaching and Learning. The fellowship later provided a quarter of support to design an undergraduate course based on *The Christmas Prince*. Third, despite some misgivings because of the time commitment, I participated in Professor Thomas Postlewait's graduate seminar in theatre historiography in the Drama School that winter. The effort, however, paid dividends. Postlewait's scholarship helped me conceive of the "theatrical event" in ways that dovetailed with the theories introduced in the Textual Studies program, led by the incomparable Professor Mona Modiano. Finally, I also started working that winter for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. In the four years since, I have evaluated freshman applications alongside of professionals dedicated to reaching out to underserved communities. These committed individuals not only transformed the way I see the responsibility of the university in our society but they also forced me to reconsider my own pedagogical methods. For this privilege, I owe my supervisors, Robin Hennes, David Sundine, Liz Mendez and Ellen Azoze, many, many thanks.

This project would not have been possible without the assistance and feedback from many people. Professor John Coldewey's editorial guidance improved the quality of my prose and sharpened my thinking. Paul Remley and Bob Stacey, the other members of my advisory committee, kindly lent me their time and expertise. Their editorial supervision saved me from errors both small and large. They are all truly exemplary scholars and mentors. In conducting the research for this project, my interest gravitated to ways in which the lived experience of the performance of theatre within academic communities was memorialized in texts. While it may sound cliché, I had a profound experience while holding in my hands the original texts that formed the pillars of my dissertation: the St. John's MS 52.1, the Trinity College MS R.14.5 and the original 1548 printed editions of Nicholas Grimald's plays. I would like to express my thanks to Catherine Hilliard of the St. John's College Library and Joanna Ball of the Trinity College Library for treating me as a welcomed guest. The staff at the British Library exudes a courteous professionalism. They always listened and thoughtfully responded to each of my questions; even the poorly formulated ones. I also received a great deal of help much closer to home. Faye Christenberry of the Suzzallo Library at the University of Washington was involved with this project from its very beginning. She asked questions, recommended sources and gave superb advice regarding codicology and Oxford pubs. She also purchased many books on my behalf for the library and made available microfiches of manuscripts from collections far and wide.

The physical act of writing was more strenuous than I ever could have imagined. I spent a spring and a summer working at the Bainbridge Island home of Professors Thomas Lockwood and Juliet Shields while sitting their cat, Hamish. Dan Flieder and Shawn Gutierrez provided their upstairs bedroom in Los Angeles – "a wooden jem retreat meditation little house" – several times over the course of this project. Likewise, Dave Watson and Rory Nordeen generously shared their friendship and hospitality with me, first in Seattle and later in San Francisco while I was "doing some funney work." For such blessings, I can only ask with the poet Peter Orlovsky: "how luckey can I be?" Finally, my family – my parents, Lyle and Barbara Rygh, my sister, Wendy, and her husband Mark, and their three beautiful children, Megan,

Adam and Emma – gave me their steadfast love, support and encouragement throughout, inspiring to me to put one foot in front of another until this journey was complete.

Dedication

To Dave Watson and Rory Nordeen,
with gratitude

Introduction

The Texts and Contexts of the University Stage

> "In the second half of the 1960s I traveled repeatedly from England to Belgium, partly for study purposes, partly for other reasons which were never entirely clear to me, staying sometimes for just one or two days, sometimes for several weeks."
> —W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

The Materials

In the concluding paragraph of his 1989 essay, "The Universities," appearing in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, Alan Nelson makes a prophetic statement:

> Although the academic theatre will repay study in its own right, the student of drama will not rest satisfied until the question of the relationship between the academic and professional theater has been deliberated. Materials for exploring this question are being prepared on two distinct fronts. On the one hand, archival records of the colleges, universities, towns, and counties of Cambridge and Oxford are being gathered systematically under the auspices of the *Records of Early English Drama*. On the other hand, the texts of college plays are being edited in photographic facsimile with individual introductions under the auspices of a project entitled *Renaissance Latin Drama in England*... Until these current projects are completed, patience and caution should be the watchword (146).

At least in terms of the study of academic drama, the times have indeed changed. Nelson's warning not to speak too soon ("for the wheel is still in spin") is no longer a valid concern. In the twenty-five years since the publication of his essay, the long-expected materials have finally become available to the members of the academic community. Indeed, Nelson's own invaluable contribution to the *Records of Early English Drama* project (*REED*), a two-volume edition of all extant records of performance from towns in Cambridgeshire and colleges at Cambridge University, appeared later that same year. John Elliot's

volume dedicated to Oxford followed in 2004. Collectively, these works allow scholars access to the archival footprint of dramatic activity within both these ancient universities from the first available records in the thirteenth century to the temporary closure of the universities during the English Civil Wars. In addition, the two runs of *Renaissance Latin Drama in England* were completed in the mid-1990s. Published by Georg Olms Verlag under general editors Marvin Spevack and J.W. Binns, the first series showcases the work of academic playwrights associated with Oxford University and the second with Cambridge. As a result of these efforts, roughly one hundred and fifty plays by seventy identifiable authors have been made widely available in facsimile editions. A great many of these works have now been transcribed and translated by Dana Sutton and appear on the website of the Online Philology Museum.[1] While the pace has been slow, scholars have begun the task of sifting through this incredible mountain of data.[2] Several exciting doctoral dissertations have been written on the subject of the academic stage in the last decade,[3] and more peer-reviewed academic articles are being published on the subject with every passing year.[4]

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[1] Sutton's work can be accessed at the following site: http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/

[2] It must be said from the onset of this project that it is informed by a larger set of questions facing scholars of early English drama. The study of patronage and performance, particularly outside London, is one of the many areas of scholarly inquiry where the *REED* records have been used to illuminate local practices in light of national patterns. Particularly in his use of archival evidence, Paul Whitefield White's *Drama and Religion in English Provincial Society* has been a useful guide.

[3] The long and impressive list of recent doctoral dissertations in the field should begin with Sarah Knight's 2002 Yale University dissertation, "From *Pedantius* to *Ignoramus*: University Drama at Oxford and Cambridge, 1580-1625." Special thanks should be given to Richard Beadle who alerted me to Douglas Paine's unpublished 2008 Cambridge dissertation, "Academic Drama at Cambridge c. 1522-1581." Professor Beadle also put me in contact with its author, who generously answered my questions and offered me help on my way. In many respects, I view my own project, which examines the medieval character of the university stage, as indebted to both studies. In researching this dissertation, I have also consulted Paul Vincent Sullivan's 2005 unpublished University of Texas at Austin dissertation, "*Ludi Magister*: The Play of Tudor School and Stage" and Ursula Potter's 2001 University of Sydney dissertation, "Pedagogy and Parenting in English Drama, 1560-1610."

[4] The most significant peer-reviewed publication to appear in recent times is Peter Happé's 2013 article in *Medium Ævum* on the generic formulations of the *Liber Apologeticus*. His article appeared after the completion of this dissertation and sadly its ideas are not incorporated in that particular chapter; however, its appearance does signal the growing appreciation of the university stage in the history of early British theatre.

Perhaps the most noteworthy and critically engaged example of scholarship coming from this emerging field can be found in Jonathan Walker and Paul Streufert's 2008 collection of essays, *Early Modern Academic Drama*. In the introductory chapter to his collection, Walker situates the volume's efforts both in terms of the history of interpretation of the academic stage and its place in the wider history of British theatre. Turning first to the history of interpretation, he cites three important books that appeared in the early decades of the twentieth century that his collection of essays seeks to "supplement and systematize" (2). These works are: Frederick S. Boas' 1916 monograph *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, G.C. Moore's 1923 study, *College Drama Performed in the University of Cambridge* and T. Vail Motter's 1929 work, *The School Drama of England*. Collectively these works represent early attempts by scholars to think systematically about dramatic performance as it occurred within early modern English schools and universities. Unquestionably Boas dominated the study of university drama from his first publications on the subject until his death in 1957; furthermore, it is a field over which his work still holds tremendous sway. To this day his *University Drama in the Tudor Age* remains the most cited work and the only full-length monograph dedicated to the subject.

Returning to Walker's work, I would amend his list of academic sources to include the publications of the Malone Society, which, under its general editor, W.W. Greg, produced diplomatic editions of *The Christmas Prince* in 1923 and *Gesta Grayorum* in 1914. These two editorial projects, among other Malone Society publications, distanced themselves from the earlier interpretations and editions of academic plays usually provided by invariably self-congratulatory histories of individual colleges or from the amateur efforts of local historians and antiquarians. Meanwhile, the two early dominant schools of literary thought in the Anglo-American academy, the Historicists and the New Critics, largely ignored academic dramas as sites for critical reflection. Beginning in the mid-1970s, a second wave of scholars was profitably engaged for nearly three decades in the massive archival and editorial projects described earlier by Nelson. While not cited by Walker, perhaps the most interesting work of scholarship concerning the university stage that emerged from this period is Nelson's 1994 book,

Early Cambridge Theatres. In this work he convincingly shows that the technology of stage design was largely developed in the colleges and then transferred to the purpose built stages in London.

A second issue raised in Walker and Streufert's introduction is the place of academic drama within a critical history of British theatre. The volume's title, *Early Modern Academic Drama*, signals their understanding of theatrical practices fitting into historical and critical frames larger than the Renaissance. Typifying the academic stage as "Renaissance" has been a standard critical practice for years. Indeed, Boas opens his *University Drama in the Tudor Age* with this memorable evocation:

> University Drama in England was the product of special conditions which existed in full force for about a hundred years, from the closing decade of Henry VIII's reign to the outbreak of the Civil War. It is therefore essentially a creation of the Renaissance age. Its tentative beginnings during the mediaeval period, and its sporadic survivals after the Restoration, form but the prologue and the epilogue to its main history (3).

Nelson would seem to concur with Boas' assessment. He observes that "University drama in England is essentially a postmedieval phenomenon... Although plays continued until 1642, their heyday was the middle third of the sixteenth century" (137). It may be worth remarking that while Boas treats university drama as a social phenomenon conditioned by its performance on the collegiate stage, Nelson's interest is in its relationship to the professional stage. Walker and Streufert thus have good cause to expand the conversation to include the pedagogical role filled by the academic stage, and they approach it largely through the lens of New Historicism – that is, theatrical phenomena seen as part of a "poetics of culture." Apropos of his introductory essay's title, "Learning to Play," with its allusion to Stephen Greenblatt's iconic New Historical essay on Caliban, "Learning to Curse," Walker's introduction characterizes the academic stage as a humanist and Latinate institution that, following Horace's dictum, was intended to delight and inform students in the process of their education. Humanist pedagogues like Roger Ascham encouraged the rehearsal of dramatic texts within a program of rhetorical study so students might learn the words of acknowledged masters and have occasion, in the course of public performance, to use those

words in a political context. Seen from this perspective, the early modern academic stage is a singular efflorescence of humanist learning, employing the languages of the classical revival and its accompanying dramatic forms.

However, critics have also long acknowledged that the available accounts of the academic stage – with examples ranging from Stephen Gardiner's letter to William Paget to a long list of abuses and riots connected with playing – reveal the significant gap between the stated pedagogical theory of drama and the unexpected outcomes of live performance. Walker notes that something often impedes the realization of a humanist performance. The ideal of "unlocalized settings and uncluttered stages" espoused by humanist pedagogues, he observes, is never quite realized in in a pristine way. Walker remarks that:

> In addition to offering young scholars rich instructional opportunities through the dramatic mode…academic plays seek to articulate humanistic ideals within the unpredictable circumstances of concrete social relations, which students can inhabit and observe through the simulacrum of dramatic performance. Such an approximative enterprise, however, has the inexorable consequence of producing a gap between the ideals that humanism encoded as universal principles and the practices that it read as embodiments of those ideals. This gap is one that academic plays both enact and examine (2).

Resisting such a New Historicist reading, Douglas Paine, in his 2008 Cambridge University dissertation, "Academic Drama at Cambridge c.1522-1581," argues that the gap between theory and practice was a product of the contingent realities of staged performance and often was created in knowing partnership with the audience. As he remarks,

> I do not propose a comprehensive or unified model for the ways in which the pedagogical function of drama was prescribed by the institutional authorities in Cambridge… Approaches towards drama and dramatic production…were diverse and fragmented, often ad hoc rather than deliberated, and subject always to immediate circumstances and the exigencies of sixteenth-century academic life. However…it is legitimate to detect a more

> general desire to press academic plays into pedagogical service as training in elegant Latinity, rhetorical skill, and moral probity. It was an attempt that overlooked or rather denied the realities of Cambridge drama and dramatic production (6).

Particularly in his insightful treatment of the extant texts of Thomas Legge's play *Richardus Tertius*, first performed in 1597 at St. John's College, Cambridge, Paine's dissertation goes to great lengths to document how the authors and redactors of the texts associated with the academic stage encoded the unpredictable spectacle of live performance into their works. Many extant versions of Legge's play are "readerly" in their orientation, meaning they take steps to describe and explain the disruptive spectacle of live performance. It would seem that the unpredictable and often violent response of the audience, which, in this case is the gruesome murders committed by Richard III, was a feature of the theatrical experience rather than a problem. The lacuna in Paine's otherwise outstanding analysis – and for that matter, the same objection can be directed at Kent Cartwright's book *Theatre and Humanism* – is its lack of an explanation as to *why* it proved so difficult for humanist playwrights and pedagogues to find suitably behaved audiences within the university community. A persuasive case, based on the archival record, certainly can be made that these contemporary critics have relied too heavily on the theories of early modern pedagogues like Roger Ascham, who misconstrued the academic stage and obscured the largely haphazard and certainly violent nature of university entertainments in the late medieval and early modern periods.

If we allow the archival record to guide our search, the answer to this question of behavior will require a radical reformulation of the accepted scholarly narrative of the university stage itself. In order to grasp the failure of academic drama as a pedagogical instrument, it will be necessary to return to the culture of festive entertainment as found in the late medieval universities. When it first emerged from the late medieval culture, the university stage was simply a temporary phenomenon brought into being for a short time and largely governed according to the rhythm of that festive culture. In this dissertation I place the fragmentary archival records of the university stage into conversation with extant academic dramas. What appears is how the practices of communal festive drama – so excoriated by the new learning and

ultimately banished by the reformation – continued to exercise a powerful influence over the performance and reception of humanist drama. In doing so, I expand the materials, the historical timeframe and the theoretical approaches available to the critical conversation concerning the university stage. The primary sources of evidence will be those mentioned by Nelson, namely: the archival record of performances found in the *Oxford* and *Cambridge* volumes of *REED* and the academic dramas published under the title *Renaissance Latin Drama in England*, especially the texts of Nicholas Grimald's *Archipropheta* and *Christus Redivivus*. The *REED* volumes for both universities do not provide a smoking gun or jaw-dropping revelation; rather, the accumulated mass of expense accounts and bursar reports demonstrate a remarkable consistency of practice throughout the period of investigation.

The second site of reflection in this dissertation is Thomas Chaundler's 1460 play, *Liber Apologeticus de Omni Statu Humanae Naturae*.[5] This massive work stands as an outlier to both Boas' and Nelson's scholarship and to the educational program described by Walker. Probably written while he was serving simultaneously as warden of New College and chancellor of Oxford University, Chaundler dedicated the play and the unique presentation manuscript containing the text to his patron Bishop Thomas Bekynton. Doris Shoukri has edited a diplomatic edition containing a side-by-side translation of the play, published in 1979 by The Modern Humanities Research Association in partnership with the Renaissance Society of America. Oddly, the *Liber Apologeticus* is best known for its fifteen incomparable grisaille illustrations that precede the text of the play in the manuscript. This aspect of the work received attention in the early years of the twentieth century during the first wave of research and publication concerning the academic stage. In fact, the Provost of Eton College and well-known bibliographical scholar M.R. James published a version of the all fifteen illustrations for the prestigious Roxburghe Club in 1916. It is impossible to imagine that a critic of Boas' stature would have been ignorant of the existence of the Chaundlerian manuscripts. Rather, he probably did not consider the *Liber Apologeticus* a legitimate drama. In that same vein, Shoukri doubts that the play was ever performed because of its

[5] A sprawling work befitting its likewise sprawling title, the Latin title can be translated as "A Defense of Human Nature in Every State," but will simply be knows as the *Liber Apologeticus* hereafter.

prodigious length. One of the primary goals of my second chapter is to revisit those opinions and to insist on Chaundler's importance to any serious study of the university stage.

The last site of reflection for this study will be St. John's College MS 52.1, a manuscript that contains a text known as *The Christmas Prince*. In contrast to the study of *Liber Apologeticus*, *The Christmas Prince* is one of the most-read works in the field and probably the most influential text in the scholarly construction of the academic stage. It is also, I suggest, one of the most mis-edited and misunderstood works in the canon. On its most basic level as a material object, the manuscript contains two separate but related works: Griffin Higgs' dedicatory poem to John Buckeridge, the college's president from 1606-1611 concerning the life of the college's founder, Sir Thomas White, who died in 1567. The second part of the manuscript contains a history of the 1607-08 winter revels at St. John's College, Oxford. As it turns out, sometime between the conclusion of the revels on the first Saturday of Lent season in 1608 and the binding of the two texts together around 1610, the efforts of multiple authors, scribes and editors brought this remarkable manuscript into being. The activities and events of the winter revels comprised a wide suite of cultural performances that the text encodes as "sports," including banqueting, processions, games of chance and skill, masks, dancing, singing, and most certainly, the performance of dramatic works. With materials in English, Latin and Greek, this macaronic text has been commonly known as *The Christmas Prince* since Philip Bliss first published a redacted version of the manuscript account in his *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana* the early seventeenth century. As a crucial text in the reception history of academic drama, the manuscript account of the revels contains scripts for eight original dramatic works, including three full-length dramas influenced by classical sources, three shorter shows or devices, a farcical masque and a blended morality play *cum* folk comedy. My two chapters dealing with this text collection demonstrate that the text is neither an objective report of the events of the winter, nor is it a repository for dramatic scripts to be reactivated at a later date. Rather, the text relies on a complex framing device that, in a certain sense, generates the performances that occurred in the college that winter.

The Issues, Arguments and Claims

It may now be worth returning to Nelson's warning that began this introduction, where he urges caution until the publication of the *REED* volumes dedicated to the universities and the texts of the extant academic dramas. His warning assumes that the desired completion of the archival record, both in terms of the traces of performance and of the dramatic works themselves, would reveal a clearer understanding of the relationship between the academic and professional stages. Barring some other discovery, there appears to be nothing in the way of additional evidence to consider. Perhaps the clearest measure of the critical consensus on this matter can be found in Martin Butler's 2003 essay, "Private and Occasional Drama," found in the second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama*. According to Butler, the importance of dramatic performance in the Universities and the Inns of Court goes beyond "the rather mediocre plays" that survive from them. First, he notes that the only playwright to successfully navigate the transition from the academic to the professional stage was Thomas Randolph. In the early 1630's Randolph moved between Cambridge, where he had gained a reputation as a Neo-Latin comedic stylist, and London, where he was a member of Ben Jonson's coterie. Unfortunately, an early death cut short his career, perhaps also cutting short a vital link of communication between the two dramatic ecosystems. Second, Butler specifically praises the collegiate environment that was the formative milieu of the University Wits such as Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe. All three men appeared as actors on the academic stage and went on to find acclaim as playwrights on the professional stage in London. Third, Butler also praises the intellectual and cultural life of the Inns of Court in London that fashioned the termer-dramatists – with "termer" being the period signification for a law student – such as John Marston, John Webster, Francis Beaumont, and John Ford (152). Although he acknowledges, "significant theatrical innovation took place under their auspices," [i.e., the broader academic stage] – and here he draws special attention to *Gorboduc*, written and performed in the Inner Temple in 1561, and Legge's *Richardus Tertius* – he raises these plays only to dismiss the entire category from serious consideration in the study of Renaissance drama. He claims that:

> The impact of college drama on the wider world was limited by the specialized nature of the drama. Much of it was in Latin…and much was entrenched in fighting the obscure battles of civic and college politics. College plays tended to be poor imitations of Italian neo-classical comedy…or they were staid moralities… To pass muster with the college authorities, such plays had to be educational or chaste… Even when popular in style, their academic preoccupations prevented them from being populist (153-54).

There is little to be gained arguing against Butler's assessment; if the standard of judgment is populist or democratic appeal, he is certainly correct. However, it might be more productive to reframe his observations into a set of historiographical questions: how, and more importantly, why, does the academic stage carry an importance well beyond the mediocre (according to contemporary critics) plays that survive? Why, according to the same school of thought, does the academic stage have a larger than deserved reputation among early modern dramatists and audiences?

The study of "Renaissance Drama," to quote the formulation used by the Cambridge University Press, focuses upon discrete plays modeled after classical exemplars with identifiable authors, performed by professional troupes in purpose built playhouses or in adapted spaces in the great houses of the aristocracy. Conditioned to see the products of the academic stage as independently circulating works of art performed on non-localized stages, scholars, such as Butler, often characterize the academic stage as a derivative phenomenon to the professional London stage, arguing it offers poor imitations of Italian comedies and tragedies. A useful contrast to Butler's portrayal of the academic stage can be found in Alexandra Johnson's 2008 essay, "An Introduction to Medieval English Theatre," found in the second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre*. "Medieval Theatre," again borrowing the nomenclature of the Cambridge University Press, is defined as a social phenomenon that took place in the community where amateur or semi-professional itinerant players appropriated spaces to perform their works. Important for the purposes of this dissertation, Johnson treats the universities as one site among many others within late medieval English culture where communal festive drama flourished. Her essay draws attention to the ways that universities were venues of localized performance. In describing the

movement of entertainers, musicians and players, she explains how entertainers travelled under the patronage of local officials or aristocrats: "the players of Lord Neville visited King's Hall, Cambridge in 1361-2…[and] there are frequent entries in college accounts of the later fourteenth century for the payment of visiting entertainers" (15). In her description of the emergence of the Easter play, she likewise notes, "Magdalen College, Oxford, bought costumes 'pro ludo in die pasche' in 1495-6, and between 1509-10 and 1519-20 the college incurred several play expenses at the Easter festival" (13). As my first and third chapters show, she could have chosen other, even later, examples. What has become increasingly better understood in recent times, through the work of Lawrence Clopper, among others, is the degree to which medieval modes of theatricality persisted well into the early modern period.[6] This study will suggest that traditions established in the late medieval period, informed by the wider practices of communal festive drama within English culture, shaped the manner in which early modern audiences and institutions within the universities conceived of and responded to dramatic performance, much more so than the later theoretical writings of humanist pedagogues admit.

To the extent that they mention medieval practices at all, most studies of the academic stage treat the practices of communal festive drama as quite distinct from the dramatic formulations of classically based plays, which occurred simultaneously. Boas' introductory chapter in *University of Drama in the Tudor Age*, instructively titled "From Medievalism to Humanism," treats the products of humanism as an evolutionary leap forward from their medieval forbears. He makes this claim despite the fact that all the examples of festive drama he cites, most notably *The Christmas Prince* are, in fact, happening at the same time as the production of the humanist Neo-Latin dramas. One of the first goals of the present study, then, is to distinguish the literate practices of the academic dramas from the university stage as a site, where various forms of theatre were performed. The stages associated with academic institutions certainly played host to the performance of classical dramas and to the works composed in affected languages of the classical revival. At the same time, however, those same stages were also playing host to performances, many of which fall under the auspices of community drama. Viewed from this perspective,

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[6] See Clopper's *Drama, Play and Game* 268.

humanism proliferated the sorts of performances available to the university stage; it is the English reformation that culled its acceptable forms, first by edict and then by a forced radical change in public taste. Nevertheless, something of the medieval character of the university stage survived through the early modern period.

The university stage was an ephemeral site on the margins of the university, with its own history and traditions that stretch back to the medieval period. Some of the traditions are codified. As a result of its curious and liminal status within the university, it existed on the margins of other institutional and discursive centers as well. It relationship to those centers of influence can be summarized as follows:

- While a handful of talented university men went on to find acclaim on the professional stage and one playwright successfully transitioned from the university to the London scene, the academic stage remained very much on the margins of the professional stage.
- The English university became a collegiate institution as a result of changing social, religious and economic dynamics during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a trend that only intensified after the reformation. Nelson's scholarship memorably details how, when they were built, collegiate stages were seen as temporary structures that appropriated space in chapels or halls.
- Many late medieval institutions such as Merton College and Chaundler's own New College approved and funded the use of a Lord of Misrule during the winter holidays. In general though, the great majority of the traditions of performance occurred within an oral tradition, leaving scant traces of their existence.
- Despite the fact that both universities offered extraordinary lectures on classical playwrights like Terrence and Plautus, and later Sophocles and Aristotle's *Poetics*, Edward Watson is the only known case in the records where a student was required to write a play in order to be awarded a degree. Yet there are records of at least one hundred

and fifty plays written by men associated with the universities and performed regularly. In fact, the academic stage existed on the margins of the curriculum.

- Looking at the practices of the halls, hostels and colleges in the arena of festive drama, particularly the Lord of Misrule traditions, it can be said that traditions surrounding the academic stage remained on the periphery of late medieval cultural entertainment, even as the tastes changed.
- The extensive records of festive drama demonstrate that the academic stage does not act simply as an organ of a humanist educational program.
- Because both universities received charters from the Pope and the Crown, they had a curious relationship to authority, particularly to the local government and local bishops. As a result of the corporate nature of the university, with its constituent colleges and halls where most productions took place, the stage already acted as an ambiguous entity, one not necessarily supervised by church, state or university authorities.
- In ways that remain largely unexplored—and that bear tremendous consequence to our own historical moment as our culture undergoes the transformation from print to digital culture—the textual cultures of the academic stage were situated on the margin between manuscript and print culture.

The Path

In the most general terms, this dissertation asks the question how the early modern academic stage emerged from its medieval predecessors. The answers, provisional as they must be, are presented in two parts. The first part, comprising chapters one through three, offers a critical reconstruction of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century academic stage as a series of highly localized sites within the university. The first chapter presents an extended discussion of the records of dramatic performance in the pre-Reformation universities as documented in the *REED* volumes for *Cambridge* and *Oxford*. It first

traces the relationship between early practices of communal festive drama, common in the late medieval period, with the types of performances that can be identified from the archival records of the university stage. Second, this chapter examines the ways in which classical drama entered the medieval university during the years just prior to and after the publication of the first extant academic drama. The second chapter turns specifically to that text, Thomas Chaundler's 1461 play, *Liber Apologeticus*. Chaundler's works have until quite recently been completely excluded from the critical conversation regarding academic drama. A close reading of the two Chaundlerian manuscripts illustrates the complicated nexus between live performances in the college and the methods of its textual representation. A close reading of the *Liber Apologeticus* demonstrates Chaundler's acute awareness and appreciation for the features and concerns of the vernacular and popular stage. The third chapter examines the impact of the English reformation on the academic stage, particularly in how the academic stage portrayed the old religion. During the course of the Henrician reformation several aspects of popular entertainment – festivities of misrule for example – became subject to regulation. As a result, the sorts of entertainment produced on the collegiate stage narrowed to the well-known canon of Latinate and humanist plays examined by Boas. The task of the third chapter, in large measure, is to describe the winnowing process and to narrate its effects. In this effort I will examine five important theatrical performances: first, a 1522 performance of *Miles Gloriosus* in Cambridge directed by Stephen Gardiner; second, a production in Cambridge of the Protestant propaganda play in 1545; third and fourth, the publication of Grimald's *Christus Redivivus* (1540) and *Archipropheta* (1546); and finally, John Christopherson's *Jephthah* (1544).

The second part of the dissertation, comprising chapters four and five, is more theoretical in orientation. Here I examine the history of interpretation of academic drama, as told through the editorial and critical reception of the St. John's College MS 52.1, containing *The Christmas Prince*. In the fourth chapter, the claim will be advanced that previous editors and interpreters have profoundly misunderstood the codicological and formal features of *The Christmas Prince*. The manuscript as a whole contains a textured history of the college's 1607-08 winter revels, one intended for the benefactors of the mock court who funded the revels. The story contains a framing narrative that organizes a variety of documents

drawn from the revels, including scripts of dramatic works. In the fifth chapter, this document's unique textuality fosters a conversation between the framing device and its constituent texts. Informed by their readings of Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* and Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Politics*, the particular achievement of the authors and redactors of *The Christmas Prince* is the way that they encode an unfolding sense of visual spectacle, of the rise and fall of their mock principality into a manuscript account.

The Guides

There are three emergent bodies of scholarship this dissertation draws upon in making its argument: first, the turn toward the study of local drama in the study of early English theatre; second, the accompanying turn towards social and economic analysis in the history of university education in England; and finally, the on-going revaluation of early English humanism. The last thirty years has witnessed nothing short of a revolution in the assessment of the late medieval English vernacular stage. Gone is the evolutionary model of development championed by E.K. Chambers (or, for that matter, Boas), which stressed the organic growth from the festive dramas of the oral tradition ending in the professional London stage. Instead, a large and influential body of scholarship has focused on the remarkable development of localized vernacular dramatic traditions. The epitome of this approach can be found in the journal *English Medieval Theatre* and the essays contained in the *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre*, edited by Richard Beadle. Alexandra Johnson's introductory essay to the second edition gives historical context to the debates in the field and introduces the scholars whose work sets the disciplinary standards. As the introduction to this dissertation has, with any luck, demonstrated, my own approach to the academic stage borrows heavily from this body of scholarship. I will, in due course, recognize my debts in the chapters that follow.

In the present study my interests will be limited to the two ancient English universities. The fact that dramatic performance takes place in a university does not mean it is only the province of the privileged or elite. Universities, and particularly its colleges, were precisely the sorts of institutions where such questions of privilege were negotiated, particularly with regard to social mobility and the changing

notions of class in late medieval and early modern periods. In this conversation, two books deserve special mention: first, though published in 1974, Lawrence Stone's collection, *The University in Society*, remains a source cited by contemporary scholars, particularly its examination of the changing demographics of the universities in the late medieval and early modern period. Second, Rosemary O'Day's 1982 book, *Education and Society,* examines the social and economic contexts of university education, particularly the lives and careers of scholars. The long-lasting effects of Stone's work can be seen in the new found interest in the social and economic history of Cambridge and Oxford as produced by the university presses. In the mid-1980's, the Oxford University Press released a five-volume study, *The History of the University of Oxford,* edited by T.H. Ashton. Cambridge University Press published a corresponding four-volume study, *A History of Cambridge* edited by C.N.L. Brooke, with the first volume appearing in 1988.

The last thirty years have also witnessed a thorough revaluation of the history of early English humanism. Two recent studies that situate the proliferation of humanist books and practices in the fifteenth century deserve special mention here. With his chosen title signaling a departure from Roberto Weiss' dim views of fifteenth-century English scholars, David Rundle's 1997 Oxford dissertation, *Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of Quattrocento Humanist Writings and their Reception in England, c. 1400-c. 1460,* painstakingly traces the circulation of humanist books and scribes across the late medieval England. Basing many of his findings on Rundle's textual scholarship, Daniel Wakelin's 2007 book, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, offers a compelling definition of humanism and a useful reading of Chaundler's *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*. Rundle and Wakelin agree that humanism, understood as a group of practices that self-consciously returned to the classics, developed in local environments in pre-Tudor England. The universities incubated specific varieties of those practices during the fifteenth century, practices that Andrew Coles has recently called ecclesiastical humanism. Several of the essays in Jonathan Woolfson's edited collection, *Reassessing Tudor Humanism* (2002), have likewise proved helpful in reassessing humanism. One final note should be made in reference to humanist thought in the university. While humanism certainly enjoyed significant influence in reference to the academic

stage, many of the traditions and shared understanding of these stages are based on implicit social understandings of plays and playing. In this respect, my debt to Victor Turner's *From Ritual to Theatre* and Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* will be obvious. In reference to the specific time and context of late medieval and early modern England, Lawrence M. Clopper's *Drama, Play and Game: Festive Culture in Medieval and Early Modern Period* and Chris Humphrey's *The Politics of Carnival: Festive Misrule in Late Medieval England* acted as more immediate guides to the subject matter.

Chapter One

Community Drama and the Late Medieval English University Stage

> "It does not seem to me, Austerlitz added, that we understand the laws governing the return of the past, but I feel more and more as if time did not exist at all, only various spaces interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry, between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like, and the longer I think about it the more it seems to me that we who are still alive are unreal in the eyes of the dead, that only occasionally, in certain lights and atmospheric conditions, do we appear in their field of vision."
> —W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

Introduction

The winter months of 1566-67 witnessed a tremendous flurry of a new sort of theatrical activity at Merton College, which announced its arrival as a major center for dramatic performance among the colleges of Oxford University. A particular pair of records from this year found in the *Merton College Registrar* deserves special mention. In the first instance, here quoted from the *Oxford* volume in the *REED* series, the chronicler reports: "Tertio die lanuarij acta est Wylie beguylie Comoedia anglica, nocte, In aedibus Custodis, per scolares, praesentibus vicecustode, magistris, baccalaureis cum omnibus domesticis et nonnulis extraneis: merito Laudandi recte agendo prae se tulerunt summarn spem" (1.146).[1] This record provides the first evidence of the performance of classically influenced dramatic works – in this case it is notable the chronicler specifies a *comoedia* – being performed in the precincts of the college. F.S. Boas discounts the possibility that the Merton performance of the vernacular comedy *Wylie Beguylie* is related to the anonymous Elizabethan-era comedy, *Wily Beguilded*, known to have been

[1] In this study I cite records from the *Oxford* and *Cambridge* volumes of the *Records of Early English Drama* in the original language(s) provided in the records; furthermore, translations are always provided in the footnotes. I cite quotations in the MLA style, parenthetically noting the record by volume and page number. "In 3 January an English comedy, Wylie Beguylie, was performed at night in the warden's lodgings by the scholars, when the vice-warden, masters, (and) bachelors, with all the members of the house and some outsiders, were present. (The scholars,) who are deservedly to be praised for performing it correctly displayed the greatest promise" (2.983).

performed in Cambridge in addition to the London stage. He argues that the later play's obvious debts to *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet* suggest a separate textual tradition.[2] Baldwin Maxwell, however, in his 1922 University of Chicago doctoral dissertation, raises the possibility that later play was a reworking of an earlier source, perhaps the drama performed at Merton.[3] Later during the same winter, the chronicler mentions a second occasion when a classical drama, this time a comedy of Terence, was performed in the college: "Septimo Die Februarij agebatur Evnuchus Terentianus in aedibus Custodis per scholares, praesentibus omnibus Domesticis et non nullis extraneis" (1.146).[4] At first glance, the records of the two performances appear, for all intents and purposes, as the very epitome of Renaissance academic drama, illustrating, as they do, the re-introduction of classical dramatic formulations on non-localized stages.

To see only what is historically novel in these two entries from 1566-67, however, is to miss a deeper pattern of continuity linking the performances of these humanist dramas to the earlier formulations of theatrical performance that occurred not only in Merton College but throughout a great many institutions connected to universities in the late medieval and early modern period. An entry in the *Merton College Bursars' Accounts* for the same year confirms the two performances, noting the following expense: "tibicinibus ex consensu quo tempore fabulam egerunt scholastici in domo Custodis v s" (1.146).[5] The entries' place in the account book suggests that the plays took place in the extended break between Hilary and Lent terms when most students remained in the college. Stretching back to the late thirteenth century, a king, usually junior master, was appointed as a lord of the revels to rule over the college's holiday celebrations. This figure was specifically known in Merton as the *rex fabarum,* or the

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[2] Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* 157; and "University Plays" in *The Cambridge History of English Literature* 6:338n.

[3] Maxwell 205ff.

[4] "On 7 February Terence's *Eunuchus* was performed at the warden's lodgings by the scholars, when all the members of the house and some outsiders were present" (2.983-84).

[5] The translation provided in the editorial apparatus – "To pipers by agreement when the students gave a comedy at the warden's lodgings, 5 s" (2.983) – is incorrect. It seems the translator repeated the translation s/he provided for the earlier entry.

"king of beans." For reasons that will be made clear in the course of this dissertation, the use of such lords of misrule fell out of use in the universities during the course of the English reformation. The scribe's entry from 1566, nevertheless, represents an echo of that earlier cultural practice.[6] As it would happen, the college's register also provides the most extensive description found in any English university of the Christmas lord tradition, including a nearly complete list of Merton's Christmas lords and a great deal of other information about the practice from the years 1485 to 1539. In addition to this source, the evidence found in the BL MS Royal 10.B.ix, which memorializes several announcements of a new *rex fabarum*, indicates the practice was already in use and considered quite old by the first decade of the fifteenth century.

The specific task of the first half of this chapter is to look backwards from the Merton College performances of 1566-67 and to examine the evidence of theatrical activity in the medieval universities. I argue here that humanist dramatic performance was deeply conditioned by the practices adapted from the wider festive culture. The two plays performed during the winter of 1566-67 at Merton are representative of a wide swath of humanist drama in the English universities, in which several specific details related to its performance, particularly the descriptions of the timing and location of the performances, are intricately related to the festive tradition. The discussion of the Merton College holiday traditions will, in turn, provide the necessary background to analyze what is certainly the most puzzling record in either volume of the *REED* project dedicated to the universities: the fragmentary and incomplete pair of

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[6] The figure of the Christmas lord will emerge as an important object of study in this dissertation. In the first half of this study, this figure connects traditions drawn from the wider festive tradition, found in vernacular and popular practice, to the so-called elite and Latinate culture of the universities. As a figure of misrule, he was a representative of the "world turned upside down" topos, to borrow the phrase of Ernst Robert Curtius in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. In the early days of the Henrician reformation, the use of such figures was explicitly banned in the monastery and church schools by a 1541 royal decree. The use of such lords of misrule in the universities seems to have waned in the course of the reformation. Cambridge University banned the practice voluntarily in 1548; while it appears the practice was allowed to fizzle out of its own accord in Oxford. In the second half of the text, it will be noted how the figure of the Christmas lord, or more precisely, its memory, was appropriated by the Jacobean text, *The Christmas Prince*, which was published in 1611, as a device to introduce and evaluate different forms of political rule.

comments from the *Oxford University Register of Congregation and Convocation* that clearly indicates that in 1512 a scholar named Edward Watson was, first, required to compose, and then successfully submitted, a comedy and one hundred songs in order to determine as a bachelor of arts. The central problem raised by this anomalous record is not why there are not more such "degree plays" and where would scholars go to find more traces of them; rather, given our knowledge of the role of humanism in the curricular and extracurricular life of the university on the eve of the reformation, one must explain how and why could there be a single instance of this phenomenon at all. The singularity of the degree play brings into question the extent that pedagogical concerns may have governed the production of humanist drama in the universities. This exploration must begin with the obvious but often forgotten premise that the universities participated in a wider English culture of what John Coldewey has called "communal festive drama" or what Alexandra Johnson refers to as "community" or "festive drama."[7] Before turning specifically to the Merton records of the *rex fabarum* and Edward Watson's degree play, however, this chapter must confront two particularly vexing problems: the terminology used to describe dramatic and theatrical performance and the nature of the surviving evidence.

Part I

The Social Context of the Late Medieval University Stage

The title of Boas' monograph, *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, and that of his influential essay, "University Plays," found in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, telegraphs his main contention that all university drama is more properly understood as collegiate drama, and collegiate drama is a product of Renaissance humanism.[8] More contemporary scholars, like Jonathan Walker and Paul Streufert, generally prefer the term academic drama, because, in the first place, it is inclusive of performances held in the growing network of feeder schools to the universities in England, such as Winchester College or the Merchant Taylors School. Secondly, the term "academic" also pays

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[7] Coldewey, "From Roman to Renaissance in drama and theatre," 61; Johnson, "What if No Texts Survived?" 9.

[8] Boas, *The Cambridge History of English Literature* 12.1. <http://www.bartleby.com/216/1201.html>

respect to the rich history of performance in London's Inns of Court.[9] However conceptually useful, there is also something lost in this transformation. The term "academic" has come to signify in recent criticism – and on this point Martin Butler's essay "Private and Occasional Drama," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama* would be a prime example – a mode of dramatic performance rather than simply denoting a specific site where performances occurred. This change in terminology, according to Douglas Paine, "has resulted in a portrait of drama that was merely 'academic' in its pejorative sense: esoteric, isolated, lifeless" (4). In this matter I fully agree with Walker and Streufert, Paine, and Kent Cartwright before them, that academic dramas have been unfairly treated in contemporary criticism.[10] However, I would also observe that part of the problem lies in the lack of specificity introduced by the term "academic." Throughout this study I will refer to the textual and theatrical productions associated with any educational organization as "academic dramas." Because the spatial context of performance and the social conventions that governed such performances are vital to my argument, I will use the term "university stage" to describe the ephemeral and temporary sites of performance within any of the organizations that exist under the corporate structure of the university.

Universities were unique social institutions that possessed a quite different institutional culture in relation to the feeder schools and the Inns of Court. The feeder schools, effectively primary schools, educated boys as young as six or seven in the fundamentals of Latin drama. While there is some disagreement on the subject, young men were generally admitted to the universities at between fifteen and seventeen years of age. What separated a university from the law schools, and the feeder schools for that matter, is the clerical status conferred on university students. In Cambridge and Oxford, even crimes

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[9] See Walker's introduction to *Early Modern Academic Drama*, 3. In addition, Sarah Knight's essay in Walker and Streufert's collection takes up the text, *Gesta Greyorum*, which is an account of the Gray's Inn winter revels of 1594-95. Gray's Inn's impressive history of performance has, in fact, achieved a degree of notoriety in our own historical moment by its representation in Hilary Mantel's Booker Prize winning novel, *Wolf Hall*. For an intriguing imagination of a performance of a comedy in the Inns of Court depicting the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, as seen from the surprisingly sympathetic perspective of Thomas Cromwell, see Mantel 161.

[10] See above for Walker and Streufert; Paine 6; Cartwright 4.

committed by scholars against citizens of the town, including violence against property and persons, were adjudicated in the universities' own courts, presided over by the Chancellor or his representative. Only in rare circumstances could students be tried in civil courts.[11] In addition, despite being called England's third university, nothing approaching a collegiate system ever appeared in the law schools. Finally, a strict division was maintained between the universities, which trained canon and civil lawyers for ecclesiastical and royal courts, and the Inns of Court, which trained lawyers in English common law. While it was not uncommon for university students to study at the Inns of Court, long-standing prohibitions in force in the period prior to the reformation prevented clerics from studying common law while in holy orders without special permission. And while the universities and the Inns of Court both emerged as sites where humanist drama was introduced to English audiences, the different rights and traditions associated with each effectively created two very different institutional and theatrical cultures. As a result, even the entertainments within the universities took on a different character because of the protection of clergy.[12]

Oxford and Cambridge were, first and foremost, towns that participated in a distinctive late medieval English culture. And the records from both towns disclose an incomplete portrait of local parishes and guilds that celebrated traditional observances as diverse as Robin Hood Plays, Hocktide and Rogation days, biblical and saints' plays. Describing a complex donation paid to one of Cambridge's two major lay guilds, the following entry from the *Corpus Christi Guild Minutes* dated to the year 1352 offers only a tantalizing glimpse into this vanished world. The record states, "Willelmus de lenne pelliparius & Isabella vxor eius intrauerunt fraternitatem & dederunt elemosine .j. marcam & xij d pro cera & expendit

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[11] For a description of the university courts in Oxford, see Hackett, "University as a Corporate Body," 78; and for Cambridge see Leader 43.

[12] In *Drama, Play and Game*, Clopper describes the violence associated with the performance at the universities: "The move at the Cambridge colleges from Terence as reading to Terence as performance may have been in part a not entirely successful attempt to contain the rowdyism associated with Christmas and other revels. There are an astonishing number of records of payments for replacing the glass in the halls and chapels after the performances. That this bacchanalian eventuality was expected is indicated by the replacement of glass with lesser work before some performances and finally by Trinity College's decision to put nets before the windows in 1578-79 (they still had to replace some glass that year)" (60).

in ludo filiorum israel dj. marce vel soluerunt dj marce & habent diem ad soluendum citra festum sancti mathei apostoli. Soluerunt ceram tewpore ingressus soluerunt totum Hardy (1.5).[13] Despite the convoluted state of this entry that so clearly gave the translator fits, it can be said that William and Isabel de Lenne donated a sum of money as a down payment on what was probably an initiation fee upon joining the guild. They promised to pay the balance before the feast of St. Matthew. Some of that money was earmarked as alms to the poor. The balance, some 12d, was used by the Treasurer to purchase wax used in the performance of a play in honor of the Children of Israel, *ludi filiorum Israel*. This record raises several interesting questions about drama in Cambridge outside the universities, with the most important question being whether the record refers to a representative drama based on the biblical story. A staple of the mystery cycles, this biblical episode is dramatized in all four of the extant English cycles and became well known for the histrionics of the character Herod. Shakespeare alludes to this feature in *Hamlet* when the prince instructs the visiting players not to "out-Herod Herod" (2.3.15). The story was also depicted in several smaller scale works, such as the *Coventry Carol* and the Digby *Killing of the Children*. However, the word *ludi*, to which I will return later in the chapter, opens a variety of other interpretations because of its impressive semantic range. Indeed, this particular record could very well indicate the occurrence of a set of games rather than the performance of a dramatic work.

The towns of Cambridge and Oxford, in turn, were hosts to the corporations known as universities. And it would be incorrect to say that *the* University of Oxford was founded on a particular date; rather, *a* university *at* Oxford, as Richard Southern argues, "emerged."[14] Although it is difficult to estimate the numbers, Southern claims there is evidence that teaching and learning took place in Oxford since at least 1096. On the other hand, Cambridge University was specifically constituted in 1209 when party of disgruntled scholars migrated to the East Anglian town from Oxford after the hanging of a

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[13] William de Lenne, skinner, and Isabel, his wife, entered the confraternity and gave one mark for alms, and 12d for wax, and he (the treasurer?) spent on the play of the sons of Israel a half mark or they paid half mark and have a day for payment (of the rest?) before the fest of St. Matthew the Apostle. They paid the wax at the time of (their?) entry. They paid all to Hardy. (2.1047).

[14] See, R.W. Southern, "From Schools to University," in *The History of Oxford University* 1.

scholar by citizens of the town. Throughout the medieval period, the relationship between the universities and the towns was in no way symmetrical. One of the motivating factors that incentivized medieval students and teachers into this sort of corporation or guild was economic. Bound together, they were able to negotiate favorable prices for such necessities as food and rent. In time, this collective bargaining power was enshrined in law not only by the crown in England but also by papal dispensation as a privilege of universities throughout Christendom. However, the universities themselves were not monolithic entities. They were self-governing confederations comprising a number of institutional bodies, such as faculties, nations, hostels, halls and the nascent colleges – each possessing its own system of governance. And each of these institutions had specific traditions of authorized and unauthorized entertainments.

In the period before the sixteenth century, the *REED* entries for both universities surely over-represent performance records drawn from purely collegiate sources.[15] Of the 596 total records of performance prior to the English reformation (with 339 being found in the *Cambridge* volume and 257 in the *Oxford*), 126 are drawn from sources associated with the towns, such as parish churches or guilds, or other sources unrelated to the university (33 found in Cambridge sources and 93 from Oxford).[16] In addition, only 9 records, all from Oxford sources, are drawn from the university as an administrative unit. In fact, of the records from both universities, 461 are from collegiate sources; that is, some 98% of the records associated with the university and 77% of all available records from both volumes in the period before the English reformation. These records refer in a general sense to performance. So, of all 596 entries, only 58 records refer to performances recognizable as performed dramas – and all came from college sources. A brief exploration of the development of the collegiate university puts the earliest available records of performance in some context. If nothing else, it will draw attention to the negative

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[15] "In 1500 Oxford and Cambridge each had ten colleges," Craig Thompson notes in *Universities in Tudor England*, "by 1600 each had sixteen" (2). A corresponding dip in the number of halls and hostels can be noted in McConica, "The Rise of the Undergraduate College" 32ff.

[16] For my purposes here I define the English reformation as beginning with the Supremacy Act of 1534, rather than the Submission of the Clergy in 1532.

space where certain kinds of records did not survive. This is the case because, with few exceptions, no other educational organizations such as halls or priories, convents or hostels, survived the reformation intact. In this context, the collegiate system, with its stately buildings and manicured lawns so familiar to contemporary visitors to both universities, was itself a product of the many of the same historical circumstances that conditioned the growth of university drama.

Beginning in medieval times, wealthy clerics began to form colleges within the university as chantry organizations. Walter de Merton, the Bishop of Rochester, founded Merton College in the thirteenth century; in a similar vein, William Wykeham, the Bishop of Winchester, founded New College in the fourteenth. In this model of organization, the foundation would endow a college of clerics to sing masses for the souls of the benefactor's family in addition to carrying on their scholarly duties. During the Tudor period, beginning with Henry VII but accelerating under the reign of Henry VIII, members of the aristocracy – and the monarch himself – began to endow colleges in increasing numbers.[17] Following the economy of patronage, colleges provided potential employers with a steady stream of qualified staff. And because the collegiate system provided a funding mechanism for a limited number of promising students, it also offered the social order a means of benefiting from the education of promising young men who otherwise could not afford the fees into the university. This function helped generate a mystique surrounding the English collegiate system. In fact, patronage from powerful aristocratic lay families helps to explain how the collegiate system survived the reformation even as the wider spiritual economy that underwrote chantry organizations crumbled. A secondary unintended benefit of the development of colleges within a university system was that they emerged as a solution to the problem of unruly student conduct in what was already an extraordinarily violent period. Because Colleges were more clerical in nature than other educational establishments, by statue they exercised a greater degree of control over student life and conduct.

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[17] For a discussion of the social implications of aristocratic patronage of the university, see Guy Fitch Lytle's essay, "Patronage Patterns and Oxford Colleges c. 1300-C.1530" 135-36.

Colleges were not the only institutions charged with managing student learning and conduct in the late medieval period. What the *REED* volumes cannot testify to is the influence of halls, hostels and convents – many of which were sponsored by monastic and mendicant orders – on the development of the university stage. Universities came into political and social predominance in the thirteenth century at a moment when there was a vigorous reform movement within the monastic tradition and the expansion of the mendicant orders' influence in religious life and culture of Europe. These two sectors of the medieval church were deeply implicated in the development of the university.[18] In course of the English reformations, the foundations connected to monastic or mendicant institutions were routinely folded into the surviving organizations that were deemed orthodox. Monastic institutions in the universities – like St. Alban's Hall, which was once owned and operated by the Benedictine convent at Littlemore and then folded into Merton College during the dissolution, to mention just one – might have been a conduit between the vital literary and dramatic culture of the monasteries and the universities. In her exploration of the account books for medieval English monasteries, Sheila Lindenbaum has demonstrated how monastic houses made liberal use of entertainers, both local and itinerant.[19] Lindenbaum's findings are especially important to the study of academic drama because the extant records from the late medieval period indicate that itinerant players – with the proviso, as it will be explained later in this chapter, that the terms "play" and "players" are deeply contested – visited both universities with similar levels of regularity beginning in the fourteenth century. In fact, one of the very earliest records of performance from either university occurs when Lord Neville's players visited King's Hall in 1361.[20] Recent studies of

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[18] For a discussion of the history of the religious orders in Oxford, see M.W. Sheehan, "The Religious Orders 1220-1370" 193; and R.B. Dobson, "The Religious Orders 1370-1540" 539.

[19] The opening line of Lindenbaum's essay, "Entertainment in English Monasteries" is instructive in this matter: "The few scholars who have paused to consider entertainment in English monasteries have invariably been startled by how much monastic entertainment there was" (411).

[20] As Alexandra Johnson comments in introductory essay to the *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre*, "Traveling groups were plentiful all over the kingdom from the mid-fifteenth century" (8). In her essay "What if no Texts Survived?" in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, she also observes, "Patronised travelling companies remain a major feature of English theatrical life until the closing of the theatres in 1642" (16). For the specific record from 1341, see *REED Cambridge* 1.6 and 2.1042. King's Hall

itinerant players that make use of the *REED* project's data, such as the notable studies by Paul Whitfield White and Andrew Gurr, draw attention to a dynamic dramatic culture that existed in the kingdom as a whole.[21]

The Intellectual Context of the Late Medieval University Stage

Scholars living and working in the two English universities in the Late Middle Ages were the direct inheritors of a complex suite of theoretical concepts regarding classical drama and theatre. The tradition was neither hermetically sealed nor universally shared along any single point in its transmission history; rather, it should be considered as a register of the opinions regarding classical drama shared by literate clerical classes. It should also be viewed as an accepted wisdom that received and interpreted the new humanist conceptions of drama and theatre, informed by Aristotle's *Poetics* and a newly recovered corpus of classical drama. Lawrence Clopper, in *Drama, Play and Game*, has observed that the vocabulary used to describe dramatic and theatrical performance – both in its a technical and metaphorical senses – is often retroactively applied to medieval and early modern usage. In this work he insists that the medieval intellectual tradition did not share our own finely developed senses of either word. His book acts as a warning for scholars to refrain from theatricalizing events that do not properly belong to that category of understanding. For most of the medieval period, a "drama" was not a literate script for a play invented for reactivation on a stage by actors. Rather, the term "drama" – or more properly "dramatic" – was understood as a mode of poetic expression where the author is not present as a character in the plot or action of the text. The biblical text of the *Song of Songs* is the most cited example

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continued to host patronized itinerant players throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1442-2, the hall made payments to both the King's and the Earl of Salisbury's players. For more details, see ibid, 1.29 and 2.1064. The colleges of Oxford also made payments to patronized itinerant players the well-known entertainers of the Duke of Gloucester visited Merton College in 1431-2, *REED Oxford* 1.916 and 2.917.

[21] Our new scholarly understandings of the significant geographical reach and cultural influence of itinerant players, or property players, in provincial England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is, perhaps, the lasting legacy of the *REED* project. Paul Whitfield White made extensive use of the records in his landmark work, *Drama and Religion in English Provincial Society, 1485-1660*. In addition, his collection, edited with Suzanne Westfield, *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*, contains Andrew Gurr's essay "Privy Councilors as Theatre Patrons."

of this form of poetic expression.[22] In addition, there was no sense of the theatre as a purpose-built site of performance through the High Middle Ages. The inchoate concept of the *theatrum*, as it was passed down from antiquity, was understood as a fundamentally flawed institution because of its connection to the persecution of early Christian believers in the forum. Pushing forward Clopper's analysis into the realm of performance studies, Donnalee Dox offers a masterful exploration of the concept of the Roman *theatrum* in her book *The Idea of Theater in Latin Christian Thought.* Dox's work relates the rhetoric of abuses found in the medieval period to the reimagination of the theatre in the early modern period, drawing a connection between medieval understandings of the *theatrum* to the early modern readings of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Vitruvius' *de architectura*. In doing so, she clearly articulates one the great mysteries of theatrical historiography, namely: how is it that the vocabularies of classical drama and theatre introduced in these two monumental works, though known to the medieval scholars as early as the thirteenth century, were only reactivated and reimagined during the sixteenth century?

As a partner to this mystery, universities occupied a privileged yet curious position in the transmission of dramatic and theatrical vocabulary and practices in the western tradition. The medieval intellectual tradition held largely negative associations regarding the concept of the classical stage as it was mediated through the texts of influential church fathers such as Augustine and Tertullian and from the encyclopedic tradition, most notably St. Isidore of Seville.[23] It was along intellectual fault line that the rich Roman dramatic and theatrical vocabulary was translated into a rhetoric of abuses. Broadcast through Gratian's *Decretals* in the twelfth century, the prohibitions against the *ludi inhonesti* were widely disseminated across the Latin west, and were a ubiquitous feature of early ecclesial proclamations on the subject. Given the widespread opprobrium against drama from early on, it is somewhat surprising to discover that the fifth-century scholar Honorius of Autun would employ the metaphor of drama to describe the role of priests and the congregation in the mass. As O.B. Hardison argues in his 1965 work,

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[22] Clopper 8ff.
[23] See Coldewey, "From Roman to Renaissance in drama and theatre" 30-32; Johnson, " Introduction to Medieval Theatre," 3; and Dox 11.

Christian Rite and Christian Drama, early medieval intellectuals like Honorius did not share the same concept of drama and play as it was understood in the Greco-Roman world. The concepts signified by the words "play," "drama," and "theatre" had significantly altered over time. Clopper defines the *ludi inhonesti*, in his readings of the ecclesial prohibitions as activities existing in the semantic field of play and playing, which the medieval tradition grouped with all sorts of festive games. Furthermore, Honorius' interpretation of the mass as sacred drama indicates that he thought Roman dramas were performed by mimes imitating the action while a single voice recited the text. This idealized though incorrect conception of Greco-Roman performance held sway over much of the medieval period. It was this widespread but flawed understanding of drama that was employed by Pope Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council when they issued further injunctions against the *ludi inhonesti*, this time as part of a larger program of reorganization and consolidation of the social and religious sphere in the thirteenth century. These included the much discussed – and, according to Clopper, the much misunderstood – injunction declaring that clerics were forbidden to frequent performances of *mimi, iocutores et histriones* and that such performances were forbidden on church grounds. The concern of the council was the ritual purity of the priestly class. As Clopper convincingly argues, the prohibitions were intended to stop clerics from fraternizing with the laity and to maintain the appropriate amount of respect for sanctified ground. The mimes, jesters and actors specified by the prohibitions, as Johnson explains, "were associated with the leisure sphere of the laity"[24] These prohibitions did not outlaw or in any way cast aspersion on the performance of representational drama *per se*. In fact, a separate dramatic tradition, briefly described below, was able to grow in western culture precisely because of the absence of an anti-theatrical bias during the middle ages.[25]

In spite of the largely negative connotations of classical drama, communities in the Early and High Middle Ages, who were by and large members of secular or religious houses, developed a form of

[24] Johnson, "Introduction to Medieval Theater" 2.
[25] See, Clopper 268.

what Dox has called representational drama.[26] The first example of a dramatic form native to the European Middle Ages is the liturgical dramas, with the notable example being the *quem quaeritis* trope.[27] This form of drama developed within the context of monastic communities as an aide to worship. Its purpose, as Johnson explains, "[was] originally liturgical and ceremonial and…later became didactic and emotive."[28] Secondly, another type of dramatic practice was also developed in the long shadow cast by the few surviving manuscripts of Roman poets and dramatists, where Terence's comedies were held in places of particular reverence. Although there is a dearth of evidence specific to Britain, the enduring influence of Terence's works on medieval dramatic composition and performance in the Latin west can be found in the tenth-century plays of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim in Germany and the twelfth-century bawdy French school plays from the Loire Valley. The collection referred to as the *Fleury Playbook* includes the work, *Babio*, which may well have been composed by an English playwright.[29] Because these works seem to have been performed only as closet dramas, medieval intellectuals did not draw a connection between the events and the performances in their lived experience with literate plays like Terence's that once were performed in the Roman *theatrum*.

Festive Practice and the University Community

The English universities in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century can most fruitfully be understood as laboratories where the generic forms of classical drama and the accompanying technologies of theatrical performance like the proscenium stage – the *theatrum* – were reactivated and reimaged. To fully appreciate the scope of the innovation it needs to be seen in the context of localized performances already widely available in late medieval culture. The same scholars who had inherited the intellectual concepts of classical "drama" had also a lived experience of "theatre." At this point, however, our critical vocabulary fails in calling such performances "theatre." They are localized performances, often described

[26] For a definition of "representative" drama, as distinct from the "mimetic" drama of the Early Modern period, see Dox 99.
[27] See Smolden 123.
[28] Johnson, "An introduction to medieval English theatre," 4.
[29] See Bourgeault 145.

in the archival record with the Latin words *miracula*, *presentationes* or *ludi*, or in the vernacular with the term "pley" or "pleying." These performances could have been as complex as the great mystery plays, like those of York or Chester, most prevalent in the north of England; or the morality plays, such as the sprawling *Castle of Perseverance* or *Mankind*, both from East Anglia. "Performances" might also be as simple and ubiquitous as the seasonal mummings or other examples of communal festive drama. In order to situate the universities with this wider culture of performance, it would be useful to return to Coldewey's introductory essay in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre* in order to gain a greater sense of the ways in which the two universities participated in a network of practices common to late medieval English culture. In that essay, he divides the periods of British drama into four major loci of investigation. Importantly, the loci themselves are not strictly chronological divisions; rather, they are cultural formulations of performance that emerge in one context and persist through time, migrating through and being transformed by communities of practice. Two of the four are the Roman *theatrum* and the liturgical and school drama of the early and high middle ages. The third major area of inquiry is the widely received canon of extant dramatic texts found in late medieval England. This body of texts includes the mystery plays, the morality plays and the occasional or the shorter non-cycle plays like those found in the Digby MS. To the degree it exists, the evidence for performance of these works in the universities will be examined in the concluding remarks to this section. But for now we need to turn our attention to the fourth area of inquiry, the collection of localized practices Coldewey calls "communal festive drama."

Communal festive drama encompassed any number of localized practices, often related in some way to natural and seasonal phenomena as understood by a largely unlettered agricultural society. To examine this theatrical tradition, the nature of the evidence necessarily shifts from surviving texts of the dramas themselves, like those of Terence's *Eunuchus* or the anonymous *Wily Beguiled*, plus the legal and philosophical texts that discuss drama. Instead, we need to addend to the archival traces that document such intensely localized activities and events. As we will see, words and phrases used by medieval and early modern scribes and accountants in their ledger books to describe the events that occurred in their

local communities both challenge and expand notions of theatrical performance. While they provide primarily details of financial transactions or of civil disputes, the most frustrating aspect of interpreting these records is the lack of information they provide regarding the specific content of the events described as plays or playings. Still, the attention paid to these fragmentary records of performance has revolutionized the study of late medieval and early modern theatre.[30] Speaking as a critic, Johnson, in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre*, notes the frustration of combining the two sorts of evidence. "Marrying the two types of source information is not always straightforward," she exclaims, "but it enhances what we can know from each separately. However, our knowledge will always be tentative and fragmentary because of the incomplete nature of both textual and documentary evidence" (8). Speaking as *REED's* general editor in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, Johnson does, however, offer an interpretation of the pattern that emerges from the mass of data generated by the *REED* project. Community drama, as she terms it, "falls into three broad categories: biblical drama, saints' plays and folk drama, such as the Robin Hood plays" (6). Turning specifically to the folk plays, she further comments, "The broad pattern that emerges from the external evidence is of widespread folk drama throughout the countryside responding to the seasonal needs of a basically rural community"(9) Robin Hood plays are best understood as festivals or games where the outlaw, Robin, and his maid, Marion, lord over the proceedings, in much the similar manner as a lord of misrule will govern a holiday revel. While Johnson does not specify a statistical allocation based on the *REED* project as a whole, in surveying the records found in the *REED* volumes *Cambridge* and *Oxford*, the distribution among these three forms of

[30] In the two seminal essays already quoted in this chapter that document this revolution, Johnson points to the 1955 publication of F.M. Salter's *Medieval Drama in Chester* as a crucial turning point in the study of medieval drama. (See Johnson, "An introduction to early British theatre," p.3; and "What if no texts survived?" p. 1.) As she suggests, Salter's innovative approach sought out external evidence for the performance of the mystery plays in municipal, parish and guild records. His methodology inspired a generation of scholars, many of whom would form the nucleolus of the *REED* project, to take seriously the external evidence of dramatic performance. For a brief history of the early years of the *REED* project, see Sally-Beth Maclean, "Birthing the Concept: The First Nine Years," in REED *in Review: Essays in Celebration of the First Twenty-Five Years,* 39-51.

community drama is by no means equal. In fact, in the available records, only a single biblical and saints' play can be reliably identified. However, of those two particular records, the first is the already mentioned donation by William and Isobel de Lenne to the Corpus Christi Guild of Cambridge for a performance of a *ludi filiorum Israel*. The only clear example of a saints' play found in the *REED* volumes *Cambridge* or *Oxford* is found in the *Magdalen College Libri Computi* for 1506-07, where he following set of payments are all related to the Christmas celebrations: "Solutum domino burges pro scriptura lusi beate marie magdalene (10d) / Solutum homini ducenti Cantica a magistro Edwardo martyn ad mandatum vicepresideis (8d) / Solutum Kendall pro diligentia sua in luso Sancte marie Magdalene Mandato vicepresidis (12d) / Solutum domino burges pro notacione diuersorum Canticorum ad mandatum Magistri vicepresidis per billam (5s) / Solutum pro expensis mimi tempore natalis domini hoc anno (4s)" (1.46).[31] In this example, the scholar Burgess was compensated for the production of a *scriptura*, almost certainly a staged performance. However, the play may not have been a staidly religious or even devotional text. Mary Magdalen is, in fact, the patron of the college, and the context of performance is the holiday revels [*tempore natalis domini*], performed in conjunction with songs and a performer.

When approaching records of biblical or saints' plays in the late medieval period, Johnson and Clopper (among others) advise interpreters not to assume that the records in question necessarily refer to something resembling a performed work of theatre. Certainly, there are examples of biblical or saints' plays that clearly resemble a work intended for performance in an arena approaching mimetic theatre. Such plays, – the Digby Plays are a good example – are based on biblical narratives or a saints' lives such as those found in Vorgaine's *Legenda Aurea* or the vernacular thirteenth-century *The South English Legendary*. Plays in surviving manuscripts often include generous portions of humor, or spectacular displays in the depiction of the miracles of biblical figures or saints, or in their martyrdom, perhaps

[31] "Paid to Sir Burgess for the writing of the play of St. Mary Magdalene (10d) / Paid to the person leading songs by Mr. Edward Martin at the vice-president's command (8d) / Paid to Kendall for his diligence in the play of St. Mary Magdalene at the vice-president's command (12d) / Paid to Sir Burgess for the notation of various songs at the vice-president's command according to the bill (5s) / Paid for a performer's expenses in Christmas-time this year (4s)" (2.940)

suggesting a lay audience. The mention of such plays in archival records can also encompass a wide range of festive and celebratory folk activities. As Clopper memorably observes, many a saints' play was, in fact, a parish ale or games held in honor of the saint. The concept of game, contest and competition inform the ways in medieval and early modern authors used the Latin word "ludus" or the English word "pley." As Clopper remarks, "The most vexed medieval usage is *ludus,* or 'pley,' for it is tempting in many cases to read these terms as 'drama' when there is insufficient evidence for that understanding." When they use the words *ludus* or "play," medieval scribes can use the terms to describe a great many types of games and sports. A player, it should be added, might be a participant in a game of skill or chance, an actor in a play or a musician. In his essay, "Plays and 'Play' in Early English Drama," Coldewey notes the "word 'play' is historically and conceptually a philological subset of the word 'game,' not the other way around" (182). Coldewey's most instructive example of how such terms can mislead interpreters is his analysis of the records of the Dunmow Corpus Christi play. In his reading, the surviving receipts prove that the event was not a scripted religious drama but a set of games, much like a parish olympics.

A certain type of theatre, understood as *ludi* or "pleying," predates the production of classical plays or the composition of the literate dramas inspired by the classical revival in the universities. In these, to borrow Peter Holland's formulation, theatre existed without drama. While there is very little mention of biblical or saints' plays in town or university sources, archival records do testify to a variety of festive practices, with the most repeated and important accounts relating to St. Nicholas Day bishops or Christmas lords. The Feast of the Innocents, discussed above in the context of William and Isobel Lenne's donation to the Cambridge Corpus Christi Guild, was one of two church holidays associated with the inversion of status ritual known as the boy/bishops. Celebrated on December 28 during the season of Christmas, the holiday honored what the medieval church believed to be the first Christian martyrs: those children in Galilee whom Herod ordered put to death in his attempt to kill the Christ child. In collegiate churches and monasteries throughout Europe it was the holiday where a young boy was paraded as a boy/bishop in a ritual of social inversion. Seeking to limit the scope of the festivities, English episcopal

statute moved this practice to the feast day of St. Nicholas, which is celebrated on December 6 during the penitential season of Advent, the twenty-eight days before the celebration of Christmas. While the celebration was first developed in religious houses, lay people, as Johnson explains, also came to enjoy this practice and adapted it for their own use, as she insists, under the supervision of the proper authorities.[32] It is certainly not out of the realm of possibility that the Lenne's donation subsidized this sort of festivity rather than a mimetic performance of the biblical story. Though variegated in its forms, the practice of boy bishops and Christmas lords was widely adopted in both English universities. In Oxford, Lincoln College paid a clerk of St. Michael's, a parish Church in Oxford, for his part in the celebration of St. Nicholas Eve in 1476. Several records indicate that Magdalen College celebrated the same holiday from at least 1483. In addition, records from Cardinal, New College and Exeter Colleges testify to using some form of Christmas lord during the holiday festivities. Under the subheading of mummings, the sum of 2d was given to the one playing the Hobby Horse at the Christmas 1467 in All Soul's. At Cambridge, the records of King's College demonstrate the first use of a Christmas lord in 1456. The practice seems to continue unabated until 1548. In fact, English collegiate foundations in the high and late medieval period often wrote instructions and funding sources for such Christmas celebrations into their founding documents.[33]

The records of the Merton College *rex fabarum* offer the most detailed description of the lord of misrule traditions at any Cambridge or Oxford college. "Such domestic details are the small change of the register," as G.H. Martin and J.R.L. Highfield note in their *A History of Merton College*, "and a welcome addition to the rather meager picture of college life which the earlier records afford" (142). However, the practices must have been very important to the identity of the college and its scholars. Indeed, the traditions at Merton must have been well established by the time of the first available record in 1485

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[32] See Johnson, "An introduction to medieval English theatre" 17.
[33] For a discussion of festive drama in medieval university, see the first chapter of Boas' *University Drama in the Tudor Age* 3-7. This section provides a useful reading of the archival footprint of festive performances in the medieval halls and colleges; happily, he also provides a comprehensive study of the founding documents of the colleges and how festive culture is, or is not, present in those documents.

because they occur in the register according to a regular formula. The very first instance found in the *Merton College Register* states: "Magistei persons Eligitur rex Collegij decimo octauo die [eiusdem] Nouembris electus est pro [(.)] rege fabarum in collegio secundum antiquam consuetudinem Magister lohnnes parsons et hoc quia tunc promotus erat ad Collegium Etonense" (1:30).[34] The first formulaic utterance common to all the records is the date, either on or near November 18, the Eve of the Feast of St. Edmund. St. Edmund was an East Anglian king during the time of the Viking invasions, who was captured during a fierce battle. According to Lygate's *Vita* of Edmund, the righteous king chose death rather than submitting to the Dane's demand that he renounce Christ. In the record of the *rex fabarum,* Edmund's voluntary martyrdom becomes intimately related to the seasonal mummings. The mummings, in their most basic Christian form, are short Christmas plays, usually containing a recognizable set of characters: St. George, the Turkish Knight, a devil character often called Beelzebub, a young man named Johnny Jack and the liminal figure of the Doctor, who seems to practice a form of magic. Emphasizing the turn of the seasons adjacent to the Christmas holiday, most plays depict a battle between St. George and his primary adversary, the Turkish Knight. After the issue of their battle, a ritual sword fight, the Doctor resurrects the corpse of the loser. St. Edmund, like George, is a martyr who is resurrected every year at the turning of the seasons.

The *rex fabarum's* connection to mumming goes deeper than simply its gesture toward the social rituals that mark the changing seasons. The seasonal mummings, like the Merton College *rex fabarum*, acted as a ritual of social inversion. In the celebration that follows the resurrection, Johnny Jack, usually played by the youngest member of the mummers, aggressively panhandles the assembled crowd for food and money. In its formulaic announcement, the register suggests a similar economic relationship is being played out in the college. Each entry proclaiming a new *rex fabarum* provides an explanation for scholar's election to the kingship. The first record quoted above mentions that the selection of John

[34] "On 18 November Mr. John Persons was elected as the king of beans in the college according to the ancient custom and this (was) because he had then been preferred (to a post) at Eton College" (2.927).

Parsons as king was made "quia tunc promotes erat ad Collegium Etonense" (1:30).[35] When a king was elected but who was not about to be preferred, the register will go out of its way mention the reason why another candidate was not selected. In 1486 when Master Byrde was elected king, the register notes that his election occurred "non obstante tunc temporis Bacallario hanchyrch promoto et eodem anno procuratore existente Magistro Ardern" (1.30).[36]

We should observe that a body of scholarly opinion groups the boy/bishops and Christmas lords into one category. Martin and Highfield's description of Merton's *rex fabarum* falls into this camp. Referencing the newly elected king, they note "his seniority was at odds with one common feature of the Saturnalian tradition, which is that rank should be overturned during the festival, but he was evidently expected to regale the company, and had therefore to be a man of some means" (141). The inversion, it turns out, is not based on age or seniority in the college, but on economic status. A more apt comparison would be to the mummings, where the wealthier members of the audience were traditionally charged with providing for the (poorer) performers. In the case of the Merton lord, the fellow who was just preferred to a post outside the college, and will therefore shortly leave the community, was expected fund the proceedings for the winter. But just what was the *rex fabarum* responsible for? At the very least, it seems, the king provided a formal supper followed by a fire. The records are scant, but in 1507 the register notes, "decimo die mensis lanuarij magister lohannes waytt pro offio regali conviuauit omnes socios cum igne et [cum] alijs lauticinijs secundum morem antiquum. / Conviuauit magister wyngar tunc senior regens decimo quinto die mensis predicti omnes regents" (1.49).[37] A similar description can be found in the

[35] "because he had then been preferred at Eton College" (2.927).
[36] "notwithstanding that at the time Hanchurche as a bachelor was promoted and in the same year Mr. Ardern was proctor" (2.933).
[37] "On 10 January Mr. John Wayte entertained all the fellows with a fire and with other luxurious arrangements according to ancient custom" (2.942).

record from 1510, when, "in die sancti vlstani conviuauit magister wyngar Rex omnes socios cum pluribus ferculis" (1.53).[38]

In 1507-08, the formula used to describe the election of the *rex fabarum* was modified to include some description of the manner in which the king is selected. When Master Symons was elected to the post in 1513, the register observes, "nucij de partibus remotis afferents secum litteras pro rege eligendo" (1.58).[39] In a display of playful learning from fellows, a letter would arrive from far away on St. Edmond's eve announcing that a king had died and a new one must be elected. Nine such letters that announce the death of the old king and demand an election of a new have survived from the early sixteenth century. Six letters can be found in the ASC Arch182, ff. 91v-4v and three in the BL MS Royal 10.B.ix, ff 129-22. The former collection also contains a seventh letter, which, strangely, refers to an election of a Christmas lord at Canterbury College.[40] Elliot published one of these letters in the editorial apparatus to his *Oxford* volume of *REED*. The following letter, purportedly from "Neptune", announces the death of the previous king and commands the election of another:

> Hinc est quod nostris auribus nuperime iam intonuit relacio fidedigna. quod Rex vester eximius/ celsi frater attlantis, renunciaturus seculo. famosissimi regni vestri septrum resignauit & arma Ne tante regionis communitas nobis ab inicio precipue peramanda tanquam gens sine capite populus sine principe vel oves pastore sublato, in direpcionem incidant pariter et ruinam. Vobis iniungendo mandamus quatinus omni mora postposita/ ad eleccionem noui regis celeriter festinetis/ eo procedentes consilio vt quater in fratris rabiem Gole temperante, vestre nauis remigium ad vniuoce portuam concordie feliciter applicetis Quicquid in premissis feceritis/ nobis fideliter intimantes/ cum proximo iam

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[38] "On St. Wulfstan's Day, Mr. Wyngar, the king, entertained all the fellows with many dishes of food" (2.944).

[39] "messengers came from remote parts bringing with them a letter for the electing of the king" (2.947).

[40] My source for the codicological details of the manuscripts and the contents of the letters is Eliott's helpful Appendix 5, "College Lords and Merton's King of Beans, 2.796. His translation of the sole letter that has circulated outside that collection can be found in his Appendix 13, 2.1081.

> illuxerit festivitas clementina. Scriptum in portu pelionis. Instanti: quo thetis vndique bacho gaudebat honore. (2.799)[41]

With documents dating from the late thirteenth century, the letters contained in these two manuscripts are particularly important to the study of academic drama because they demonstrate a textual tradition connected to the university stage well before the publication of the first humanist plays.

Finally, it must be noted there is not just one holiday tradition at work in the Merton records. The records provide evidence of two additional separate, but clearly related, holiday practices. First of all, in most years between 1513 and 1561 the register provides a detailed accounting of the annual visitation of the college by the town's office holders, who, in a flourish of learning, the register calls the *ville satrapes*. The records describe that every year on the Feast of the Circumcision, celebrated on January 1, a delegation from the town's government visited the college to sing a song. Martin and Highfield agree with Salter, who calls the ensemble something of a town band.[42] In return for singing the song, most years they receive a noble for their efforts, which the formulaic inscription insists is not given out of obligation "sed solum ex humanitate et liberalitate nostra" (1.62).[43] Second, the records also document a regular (though only intermittently reported from 1485 until the curious final record in 1574) observance of an *ignis regencium*, or regent's fire, which seems to be at least partially funded by the senior regent during the holiday season. According to Salter, it was "less sumptuous" then the dinner given by the *rex fabarum*. The register offers a wistful glimpse into the transformation, if not the death, of both traditions.

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[41] Hence it is that a trustworthy report very recently now thundered in our ears that your excellent king, brother of the noble Atlas, about to renounce the world, has resigned the scepter and arms of your most renowned kingdom. Lest the community of so great a region - from the beginning, especially dear to us - like a nation without a head, a people without a prince, or sheep with the shepherd taken away, should fall into depredation and ruin equally, we enjoining you command that, with every delay put aside, you hasten quickly to the election of a new king, proceeding by this counsel so that, after Golias four times acts as a restraint against his brother's madness, you may steer the oarsmen of your ship into the port of unanimous concord. (You shall write) imparting faithfully to us whatever you have done in the foregoing when next the feast of Clement dawns. Written in the port of Pelion at the time when Thetis was rejoicing everywhere with Bacchus in honour (2:1081).

[42] See Martin and Highfield 141n, and Salter's introduction to the *Registrum Annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, *1483-1521* xx.

[43] "…but only from our kindness and generosity" (2.950)

The last entry mentioning a visit from the town band dates from 1561 and simply notes: "In die circumcisionis, satrapae villae oxoniae huc ad nos a prandio non venerunt omnino, quod mirum videri possit, cum ante hac quae collegium nostrum in illos sponte & vltro contulerit, [aui] auidissime captare solebant" (106).[44] Although some form of the practice most certainly continued after this date, the final mention of the regent's fire is made in 1576, where the scribe notes: "Nouembris vicesimo secundo Ignis Regentium, qui per multos iam annos cineribus reconditus et pene extinctus iacuit, iterum vires capit: et tanto prorumpit ardore, vt sine pomis, nucibus, vino, cxterisque eius vis retundi nequibat" (1.163).[45] The last references to both practices, dating well into the Elizabethan period, clearly express nostalgia for the old ways, which were unquestionably withering away not only at Merton but across both English universities.

In *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, Boas, with his ever-keen eye for such details, observes: "it is an interesting point of contact between mediaevalism and humanism that Jasper Heywood, translator in 1559-61 of Seneca's *Troas, Thyestes,* and *Hercules Furens,* should have been the last Merton *Rex Fabarum*" (6). We might ask, what conditions prompted the end of these practices? Boas assumes a direct evolutionary transition between the "medieval" and the "renaissance" events. But like so many other "medieval" practices, they might have continued in continuity with the "humanist" dramas, were it not, of course, for the English reformation. During its unpredictable course, the rules governing the boy/bishops and other such practices associated with the festive culture vacillated wildly in the course of the sixteenth century.[46] Henry VIII specifically banned the practice of boy/bishops in religious institutions in 1451, a

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[44] "On Circumcision Day the town officers of Oxford did not come here to us from dinner at all, which could seem a wonder since before this they were accustomed to take very eagerly those things which our college conferred on them freely and voluntarily" (2.974).

[45] "On 22 November the regents fire, which for many years has lain hidden in ashes and almost extinguished, again takes strength and bursts out with such heat that its force could not be repressed, (even) without fruit, nuts, wine, and the rest." (2.988).

[46] Ronald Hutton's monumental work, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, provides a full account of the battle for "Merry England," what he understands as the popular and folk traditions appropriate to the season, during the English reformations. This work intersects with the history of the universities at several

decision that was reinforced by his son's more reform-minded advisors after his death. Like other practices of the "old religion," the boy bishops were allowed to return during the restoration of Catholicism under the rule of Queen Mary. There use was likewise permitted under the terms of the Elizabethan settlement. However, judging by the disappearance of such records from the archival record, the use of Christmas lords in the universities clearly diminished over time, trailing off in the middle years of the sixteenth century.

The University Stage and Late Medieval Vernacular Drama

The universities, as we have seen, were situated in a larger matrix of social and educational practices that were simultaneously local (namely, the practices of communal festive drama) and transnational (the humanist appropriation of classical Latin as a literary language.) The traces of theatrical performance found in the two ancient English universities in the years prior to the reformation locate Cambridge and Oxford within a shared English culture of communal festive drama. We can now turn to a final site of theatrical evidence, following Coldewey's last area of exploration, the established body of dramatic texts from Late Medieval England – a relatively small canon of texts comprising the four extant English mystery plays, the five moralities and roughly dozen non-cycle plays, such as the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* and the *Digby Plays*. Despite the tireless efforts of both sets of *REED* editors, no mention of any of these dramatic texts were found in reference to either universities or their towns. Boas, whose mastery of the archival evidence is proved at nearly every junction, already has observed the lack of evidence for these dramatic forms in *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, where he makes the following observation:

> At Oxford, had miracles or moralities been commonly performed, some reference to them might have been looked for in the MS. Register of Merton, the oldest foundation (1264), which begins in 1485, but there is no such entry. Nor at any of the other foundations of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries does any trace of the performance of scriptural

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key junctures. For his discussion of the repression of "lords of misrule," see 8-14. For a full description of the late medieval and early modern celebration of Christmas, see his later work, *Stations of the Sun* 1-33.

> plays appear to have been discovered. It is curious that the only detailed evidence of the acting of liturgical or miracle plays at Oxford comes from the account-books of Magdalen, a college founded at the close of the mediaeval period (1448), and one which became essentially the home of the Classical Renaissance in Oxford (2).

However, his reading of the evidence in this passage is tied to an understanding of the reformation that sees a lack of documentation of the practices of the old religion as definitive proof of its absence, and to an evolutionary model of theatre that sees a direct progression from medieval to humanist dramatic formulations. On one hand, Boas' assumptions on this point need to be interrogated, since such evidence in all likelihood would not have survived the dissolution of the monasteries and the later stages of the reformation in the universities, when heterodox bodies were folded into the surviving orthodox institutions. On the other hand, however, another explanation for a lack of reference to the mystery or morality plays in either of the university towns is possible, one that does not rely on Boas' problematic historiographical assumptions. In his essay "Lay and Clerical Impact on Civic Religious Drama and Ceremony," Lawrence Clopper suggests that the localities where the mystery tradition found its fullest expression were in those areas where the laity had achieved a greater scope of control over the local government as well as the expression of their spirituality through relatively autonomous craft and religious guilds. Given the inordinate clerical influence over the affairs of the university towns, it would hardly be surprising that neither Oxford nor Cambridge shows any evidence of an independent civic mystery tradition. The absence of any reference to morality plays is perhaps much less surprising. As Pamela King observes, "The five plays that constitute the corpus of medieval English moralities do not really supply adequate evidence of a coherent 'movement' within the development of native theatre" (259). In any case, it is the lack of a thriving local mystery or morality tradition in the universities that makes Thomas Chaundler's *Liber Apologeticus*, with its unmistakable gestures to both vernacular and popular dramatic forms, such a curious, puzzling and ultimately important text.

Part II

Edward Watson's Degree Play and the Spatial Context of Early Academic Drama

The second section of this chapter considers the widely held opinion that humanist dramas within the universities were primarily understood as instruments of academic instruction This chapter opened with a reference to a pair of performances held at Merton College, Oxford during the winter of 1566-67, where the bachelors of the school performed the vernacular comedy *Wylie Beguylie* and later Terence's Latin comedy *Eunuchus*. The account book indicates that the two plays were presented in the time of beans, the long break between Hilary and Lent terms. Seen in relation to these humanist plays, an analysis of the Merton College's *rex fabarum* records shows how the medieval practices, as informed by the wider culture of festive drama persisted well into the early modern university, shaping the audience's perception of humanist drama. We are now in a position to examine the status of classical drama within the academic life of the university during the same period. Our vehicle into this world will be Edward Watson's degree play, which, I will argue, represents a false start, an untaken path in integrating classical drama into the university's curriculum. While the performance of classical drama remained in an ambivalent situation on the margins of the curriculum, the university stage, nevertheless, became the site where classical drama was first reactivated and reimagined for English audiences. Explaining the unruly nature of the audiences, the practices of communal festive drama shaped the specific spatial context in which academic institutions and audiences received the academic dramas.

Schooling, to the degree it was available earlier in the Middle Ages in England, had been primarily administered by cathedral schools and monastic institutions. It was possible that members of the lesser clergy organized local schools in cities or larger towns, but these efforts were by no means systematic or widespread. There was, of course another model, one from the trades. In passing down the skills necessary for a trade, children were often apprenticed to masters in certain professions for a period of time in order to learn the skills necessary to take up the occupation in their own right. In addition to the many craft guilds, apprenticeship was a practice frequently used among common law lawyers. Such practices ultimately contributed to the growth of London's Inns of Court. Likewise, the development of

practical skills under a master's tutelage was also a primary ingredient to the formation of the European university in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The *universitas*, denoting a concept of universality, does not refer to the totality or fullness of the curriculum; rather, the university is the totality of its members. The *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* was essentially a guild or a corporation of masters and scholars much in the same way a guild of carpenters would be the *universitas carpentariorum*. The University of Paris, which is the model of organization and administration copied by the English universities, established itself as a guild of its teaching regents. In Oxford, the authority of the corporate body was invested in its regent masters, who were given responsibility for the administration of all the formal educational activities of the university. Regent masters were scholars who had recently earned their master's degrees and were appointed by their constituent colleges or halls for a period of two to five years. Collectively these regent masters were referred to as the congregation, which expressed its will in statements called graces. A higher body, including the universities' doctors, was called the convocation, but delegated most of the work of running the university to the lower chamber. A similar bicameral body, called a Senate, held power in Cambridge. This system of organization is in marked contrast to the University of Bologna in Italy, renowned for its faculty of law, where the power of the corporate body was invested in the totality of its students, who banded together to hire and fire their teachers. While such notable variations of organization and academic specialty can be detected across Europe's universities, what did not vary was the curriculum. The set of acts and ceremonies – and the body of knowledge that informed and animated them – needed to earn a degree were nearly identical throughout Europe's universities. Reflecting this unity of practice, universities were able to grant degrees that were recognized throughout Christendom. A holder of a master's degree was deemed qualified to teach at any university in Europe, a privilege known as the *ius docendi ubique*.

The work of the two English universities was its transmission of this codified set of technical and vocational skills appropriate to the student's expected profession or social function. It is within this system that Edward Watson, whose Hall or College, sadly, is unknown, earned his bachelor's degree. According to his record in the *Oxford University Register of Congregation and Convocation*, Watson

was granted the permission, a grace, to supplicate as a bachelor with the unusual proviso that he must compose one hundred songs in praise of the university and a comedy. The incident is recorded in two entries. The first entry states: "Eodem die supradicto Edwardus Watson scolaris grammatice quatenus studium 4or annorum cum praxi ad docendum sufficiente vt admittatur admittatur ad docendum in eadem facultate hec est concessa. sic quod componat C carmina in laudem vniversitatis et vnnam commodeam infra annum post gradum susceptum" (1.54).[47] Sometime later, the second entry records the completion of the requirement: "Eodem die admissus est ad informandum in grammatica dominus edwardus Wattson" (1.54).[48] Without precedent or analog, the demand that a supplicant compose a play and one hundred songs is unique in the history of both universities. While admitting the record "is the only known instance in University records of playwrighting as a statutory degree requirement," Eliot's appendix dedicated to the degree play in his *Oxford* volume does attempt to put this anomalous event into some context.[49] Looking forward in time, he makes the argument that the presentation of a drama at the time of determination became an informal tradition at Oxford. As he explains, "Other evidence points to an informal tradition at Oxford of undergraduates presenting original dramatic compositions as part of the ritual of supplicating for their BA's" (2.871). In support of this claim, he first cites the example of Nicholas Grimald, who presented his play *Archipropheta* to Dr. Richard Cox, the Dean of the newly reconstituted Christ Church College as "evidence of his abilities" (2.871). Grimald, who is perhaps better known for his role as an editor of *Tottel's Miscellany*, was already an established scholar at the time he dedicated the play to Cox in 1547. As Eliot acknowledges, the play was composed well before that date and the author dedicated its publication to Cox as part of the successful campaign to be named a fellow at the newly reopened college. The second source Eliot cites is the poems of Martin Lluelyn, who

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[47] "On the same day cited above this (license) was granted for Edward Watson, scholar of grammar, to be admitted for teaching in the same faculty since (he has completed) a course of four years with sufficient practice for teaching, provided he compose one hundred poems (or songs) in praise of the University and one comedy within a year after the position has been accepted" (2.946).

[48] "Sir Edward Watson was admitted for teaching in grammar on the same day" (2.946).

[49] See Appendix 12, "Degree Plays," 2.871.

matriculated at Christ Church in 1636. The first two poems found in his collection, *Men-Miracles. With Other Poems*, describes a situation where Lluelyn presents a completed drama as part of the process of determining. In Martin's poem, the narrator describes how he came to Oxford with a fistful of papers, which are representative not only of the germs of his play but also the state of his learning. At the conclusion of the second poem, he graduates with a bachelor's degree and a book, which is a complete play. As he explains in the text, he dedicated the play to two men who were Deans of Christ Church while he was a student, and under whose guidance he was able to flourish. The final, and perhaps most compelling, piece of evidence Eliot cites is the long tradition of playwrighting at St. John's College, Oxford, where part of the ritual composing and performing a play was placing a fair copy in the college library. The plays cited by Eliot are interesting in their own right: Grimald's work will be the subject of the third chapter in this study; and the most influential of the St. John's plays, *The Christmas Prince*, will be taken up in the fourth and fifth chapters. The salient difference, however, between the later plays cited by Eliot and Edward Watson's effort in 1512 is that individual colleges do not grant degrees. That privilege was the sole prerogative of the university's congregation.

In order to better understand the role of drama in the curricular and intellectual life of the university around1500, we can retrace, hypothetically, Edward Watson's steps through Oxford. This exercise is valuable because it delineates a common path shared by all the academic playwrights and most of their audiences mentioned in this study. We might begin by noting that the curriculum administered by Thomas Chaundler in Oxford during his long tenure as chancellor in the second half of the fifteenth century was for all intents and purposes the same as the one completed by Edward Watson. The thirty-five years that elapsed between the presentation of Watson's degree play and the dedication of Grimald's *Archipropheta* to Cox, and the ninety-five years that separate Watson from performances of *The Christmas Prince*, illustrate a stubborn continuity of practice in the education of undergraduates at both

universities.[50] The continuity is made all the more remarkable because of the massive structural and institutional changes that occurred during the same time frame in every other sector of society. Despite the growing influence of the new learning, Fletcher observes in his study of the Arts faculty in the late middle ages that "The Oxford arts student in 1500 was required to read a series of works little different from that established a century earlier" (343). In the wake of the reformation, Thompson, in his history of the Tudor universities, can likewise remark, "We may conclude, then, that the B.A. course in the sixteenth century was mainly traditional, medieval, in content" (11). The composition and performance of humanist dramas in the university should be viewed through this long continuity of practice in both universities.

Viewed from the top, the faculties of law, medicine and theology, which granted doctoral degrees, were considered the pinnacle and defining achievement of the late medieval university. Before anyone could enroll in any of these programs, it would be expected that he would already hold a masters degree. The arts faculty was the anchor of the university's educational practices. When students enrolled as an artist, the technical term for an undergraduate student, they normally spent four or five years in study prior to determining as a bachelor. An additional period of study of three years was required for the completion of a master's degree. When Edward Watson enrolled in Oxford c. 1507, he would have first registered his nation, based on his place of birth. If not already arranged, he would then associate himself with a master within a hall, convent or college, a person to whom he would pay his fees directly. Once those fundamentals were established, he would register with the authorities in order to be afforded the protections of the university. Unless he were employed in the town as a secretary or grammar teacher, the artist had few responsibilities other than being a student. He would attend cursory and ordinary lectures on a set of texts he would be expected to master. He would also observe disputations as directed by his supervisor. While he would have some choice in the specific texts he would study, the basic framework of

[50] "Like other national institutions," as Thompson notes, "their condition in 1500 or 1600 was due to accident as well as design, to unexpected and frequently unwelcome changes, to adaptations to new demands. Both universities remained largely medieval in curriculum and customs. Innovations did not always displace inheritances; new and old were adjusted in a manner practicable enough to serve the universities' purposes, flexible enough to respect ancient statues and customs" (2).

the degree requirements had been in place since at least 1431, when the last major revision of Oxford's arts curriculum occurred. After the prescribed course of study, the artist would begin a process to determine as a bachelor, usually a full year before his degree day. The master, with whom the student was working under in a hall or college, had to support the student's request to appear before the congregation. And the master, in turn, would guide the artist through the acts and ceremonies needed to determine as a bachelor. First, he would seek the approval of his college or hall. After calling on the officers of the university, the candidate would then go before the congregation, which would meet in the Great Church of St. Mary's, on four successive meetings, each time to request the grace to determine as a bachelor. With the permission secured, the candidate was then required to undergo a series of disputations called determinations, which were held during the Lenten season. The purpose of this process, where the artist would be the respondent, was for masters to determine if the candidate had read the statutorily required books and attended the appropriate lectures. "This was the arduous part of becoming Bachelor," as Thompson explains, "for he had to stand against all comers who chose to oppose him on logical or philosophical questions" (11). At the conclusion of the determination, the bachelor would then be granted his degree and could proceed to take up responsibilities in the instruction of artists, now being able to participate in disputations and give cursory lectures.

In following the well-worn path through the liberal arts on the way to determination, Watson would be expected, in his first years, to study texts drawn from the *trivium*, namely the linguist arts of grammar, logic and rhetoric; and then, in the following years, the quantitative arts of the *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, music and astrology/astronomy. He would have had some, but not necessarily plenty of, opportunity to engage the new learning within the university curriculum. A student in c.1500 in the curriculum of the late medieval university could not choose to study the *studia humanitas* exclusively, much less poetry or drama. "There is evidence that individuals were able to study humanist texts at Oxford and that there were more such opportunities as the fifteenth century progressed," Fletcher observes, "The university's registers give examples of students being required to lecture on such classical texts as Sallust, Terence, Cicero and Virgil. The two latter writers we might expect to find among those

studied in the medieval faculty of arts, but the two former were not well known" (343). The evidence cited by Fletcher is the assignment of scholars to ordinary and extraordinary lectures, as organized and administered by the congregation. A similar move towards humanistic learning was also to be found at Cambridge, where the Terence lectureship was established in 1488. "This was a general humanities lecture for scholars in their first and second years," Leader explains, "it was not restricted to any one text, and was one of the first statutory effects of humanist influence on Cambridge studies" (118). The effect of this was to establish the "Terence" as shorthand for any of the newly recovered humanist texts and practices. And the most far-reaching effect this sort of humanism had on the university curriculum was in the study of rhetoric. Despite its ubiquity in late medieval education, it is a difficult concept to define. As Leader explains, "Rhetoric in the medieval university meant many different things at different times, and sometimes many things simultaneously. It was, in a sense, a vestigial appendage of grammar that was difficult to isolate…the two words were interchangeable" (117). Grammar and rhetoric could encompass the study of poetry, preaching and drama, depending on the context. In addition, as Mary Carruthers notes in *The Book of Memory*, the study of rhetoric also overlapped with the *ars dictaminis*, which not only taught student how to properly speak or compose Latin, but also how to organize information in the memory.

It was in this area of study where Watson, in all likelihood, would have read classical drama and dramatic theory. Given all that has been said thus far about the aims and purposes of late medieval university education, the congregation's act to require Watson to write a play should be viewed as an act made in all seriousness. Its grounds would have been economic. Put crudely, it would have been intended to improve his chances of finding employment, probably as a grammar school teacher. In describing the reasons why humanist texts would be taught in late medieval Oxford, Fletcher observes, "Not all these students [lecturing on classical texts] were artists, and we must suspect that these conditions were imposed on them because the university wished in this way to benefit from their special knowledge. It is probable also that recipients of many of these conditional graces were intending to take employment in grammar schools, for such work was in demand and could be financially rewarding. It was perhaps for

this reason that they had developed these interests beyond the statutory requirements" (343). Of course, it is disappointing that Watson's name falls out of the archival record, so there is no hint concerning his career path. However, what can be said unequivocally is that the congregation will never again require such an act, despite having set a precedent. Its silence on this point suggests the ambivalent status of humanist drama in the universities curricular life.

Certainly, there are records of poems and songs written in praise of the university dating back to the twelfth century.[51] However, the most important, and perhaps least understood, word in the record is *commodeam*. And the timing of its use could not be more curious. The general consensus of scholarly opinion holds classical drama was first reactivated in Cambridge and only later spread to Oxford. However, the appearance in 1512 of the term comedy, which is the first use of the word in the *REED's Oxford* volume, certainly disrupts that narrative. It comes only two years after the first attestation in Cambridge, where a reference is made to the performance of a *Commedia Terentij* in King's Hall in 1510.[52] Evidence of a similar sort of performance cannot be found in Oxford until 1534 when an unnamed *comediam* was staged at Magdalen College. Indeed, the first known performance of a drama clearly associated with the classical revival – not only in the universities but also in the whole of England – occurred when a comedy of Terence was performed at King's Hall, Cambridge in 1510-11. The King's Hall account book survived only because the information it contains was useful to administrators and accountants when it was merged with the neighboring Michaelhouse to form Trinity College by order of Henry VIII in 1546. The specific item of interest in the *King's Hall Accounts* states, "Item solutum est pro Commedia Terentii in ludo vi s viii d" (1.84).[53] The unusual use of the term *in ludo* [literally "in a play"] highlights the novelty of the event. The usage would make it clear to the college's auditors that the expense was dedicated to the performance of a dramatic work rather than a different sort of purchase related to Terence, such as purchasing a book of his plays for the library. It would seem a culture of

[51] See Hackett, "The University as Corporate Body" 93.
[52] *REED Cambridge* 1.84
[53] "Likewise payment was made for a comedy of Terence as a (literally, in a) play, 6 s 8 d" (2.1102).

performance was developing in King's Hall because a second record for a play of Terence occurs in 1516-17. The entry reads: "Item in regard magistro thrope pro ludo pueroum suorum therencii iii s iiii d" (1.88).[54] Master Thorpe, who was a member of the arts faculty, was either reimbursed or rewarded for producing a play of Terence [*therencii*] using his undergraduate students [*pueroum suorum*] as actors. Referring to the 1510 King's Hall performance of Terence, Clopper discounts the probability that a robust dramatic culture existed in the early sixteenth century, noting that other entries mentioned in the archrival record from this period were probably not examples of classical drama but those of the festive tradition. "To be sure," he notes, "there are references to *ludi* at Christmas from 1455-56 on, but I suspect these are to Christmas Lords of Misrule, though it is uncertain what the college disguisings may have been (from 1456-57 on). The move at Cambridge from Terence as reading to Terence as performance may have been in part a not entirely successful campaign to contain the rowdyism associated with Christmas and other revels" (60). Clopper, among other critics, may have underestimated the prevalence of a humanist culture of performance in the universities in part because they associated the festive tradition only with excess and rowdyism.

The spatial context for reimagination of the performance of classical drama in England during the first decade of the sixteenth century was the college, particularly the college hall, as scholars adapted the classical dramatic formulations largely within the particular opportunities and limitations suggested by the festive tradition. I have situated the university stage as developing at the intersection between the practices of early humanism and community festive drama. The point I have been making is that humanist dramas and festive traditional playing are not mortal enemies or mutually exclusive options. Rather, contemporary scholars of the academic stage should better appreciate the sheer diversity of performances available on the collegiate stage, as it existed on the cusp of the reformation. As I argued in the first chapter, the tradition of community festive drama provided the spatial cues for the performances of humanist drama.

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[54] "Likewise 3 s 4 d as a reward to Master Thorpe for his boys' play of Terence" (2.1103).

While universities played an important role in the spread of humanism, particularly returning the study of Greek to England, as institutions they were largely left in the position to react to the spread of humanism rather than to chart its growth. The formal curriculum of the university, namely the requirements needed for the attainment of a degree, did not change significantly throughout the fifteenth, or for that matter the sixteenth, century. The hallmarks of scholastic education, a circumscribed body of texts, largely inspired by Aristotelian thought, taught through lecture and disputation, remained staples of the university experience for students taking degrees throughout the period. Still, the influence and impact of humanism can be found in other spheres of the university. Indeed, Thompson observes that: "Academic humanism, best symbolized perhaps by cultivation of Greek and, after 1535, rejection of Scotus, Aquinas, and others of that ilk, broadened the intellectual range of English universities… Yet, however much tone and tastes shifted during the century, the formal Arts curriculum changed relatively little. *This fact is not surprising…for the most effective or significant intellectual activity in a university is not necessarily visible in the round of studies for the B.A*." (11).[55] The reactivation of classical drama as a performed art was not a product of the curricular life of the university. Like other aspects of the classical revival in the universities, these activities occurred in localized sites within the wider organization.

Humanism and Community Festive Drama

In a recent review of Daniel Wakelin's *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature* in the *New Chaucer Review*, Wendy Scase observes, "In keeping perhaps with the humanist ideals he has described, Wakelin provides no conclusion…Instead, he provides a huge amount of little-known material and a model for reading it" (391). The truth is that Early English humanism was not a well-defined or universally recognized body of study, and borrowing the overused, but in this case, apt term from contemporary critical theory, Wakelin's book *performs* his central thesis concerning English humanism in the fifteenth century. In the selection of the texts he reads and in the ordering of his book, his work persuasively demonstrates that what connects late-medieval English adherents of the *studia humanitatis*

[55] Emphasis mine.

to each other are the activities of humanism and not its ideals. Wakelin's readings provide a glimpse into the disparate practices employed by a loosely assembled community of practices whose members are recognizable, in his definition, only by a self-styled and highly self-conscious return to the classics. With equal measure acumen and laconic wit, his introduction enumerates some of those wide-ranging practices: "compose and correct Latin verse; read (or pretend to read) translations of Claudian; reconstruct Cicero's lost work from classical sources; add indexes to Chaucer; sell phony books; tell the bourgeoisie what not to read" (9). Returning to Scase's assessment of the argument, there is a particular loose thread from that "huge" tapestry of "little-known material" that sheds light on the development of the university stage in the fifteenth century. Wakelin's book opens with a lengthy anecdote in which he quotes a letter found in early sixteenth-century collection of letters associated with Magdalen College.

> The letters mostly come from a network of boys and old boys of Magdalen College School in Oxford. Why were the letters collected? They exemplify good Latin, one of the goals of the school in Oxford…[was] good correspondence, a transferable skill for a keen young man to learn. A few of the letters are by Bernard Andre or Thomas More, not members of the school but admirable models of style, and thus these letters suggest the influence of humanism on the young schoolboys… But if there are signs of humanism in these letters, then something surprising appears. What does this particular letter discuss? The writer has been hunting for 'interludes or comedies in English or in the vulgar tongue'… Here the humanists seem interested in English literature. The interest recurs in another letter in this book of model letters: in one letter, the writer discusses 'the parts which I added to the *comedy* of Solomon' ('eas partes quas in comediam illam que de salamone est adiecimus'). A play about Solomon is mentioned too in some phrases for translation practice from Magdalen College School. Who knows which language the play of Solomon was in? But it is intriguing, if it might be English, that the addressee of this other letter is John Holt, a master at Magdalen College School, and that the writer is Thomas More.

Wakelin's aim in quoting this collection of letters was to prove that vernacular and the Latinate cultures of humanism existed in a state of mutual interest and influence. In addition to the material translated from the Latin and Greek into the vernacular, Wakelin is eager to show material from vernacular tradition was adapted into Latin by members of the cultural elite. He does not pursue questions regarding the role and status of the performance of dramatic texts in the early years of English humanism; his book does, however, look across various sites of humanist activities in such places as baronial manor houses, monastic foundations, colleges, episcopal courts, and institutions associated with the crown from the chapel royal to chancery, and Wakelin makes the relevant point that early humanism was *institutional* but not *institutionalized*.

The first half of this chapter theorized that classical drama was reactivated within the spatial confines of the university stage as informed by the conventions of communal festive drama. The second half of this chapter has advanced the claim that the performance of classical drama and the composition and production of plays in the affected languages of the classical revival occurred at the intersection between the academic and social practices of the university. It is precisely because of its connection with the unruly nature of staged performance, and not in spite of it, that academic dramas were able to escape their specific context and emerge as important texts in the project of reimagining classical dramatic formulations in English culture. My argument seeks to temper some of contemporary scholarship's emphasis on the pedagogical aims of producing classical plays or of writing and performing Neo-Latin and Neo-Greek dramas within academic institutions. As I observed in the introduction, contemporary scholars have recently explored humanist academic drama as opportunities for rhetorical training in the schools, viewing it as a tool of cultivating polished verbal and written communication while simultaneously quelling unruly behaviors and supplanting the more disruptive forms of entertainment. The recognized problem of this approach, observed by Cartwright, Walker and Paine, is that both the history of live performance in the universities and of the textual dissemination of the dramas discloses a considerable gap between the stated intentions of humanist pedagogies and the contingent reality of performance.

Rebecca Bushnell's *A Culture of Teaching* resists the temptation to see humanist pedagogy as "saturated in disciplinary power" (17). Very much in agreement with Wakelin's conception of humanism, she makes the case that educators occupied an ambivalent position between abject powerlessness and the centers of political power. And in his introduction to *Early Modern Academic Drama*, Walker connects the ambivalence of the humanist educational practices to the academic dramas. Citing Bushnell, he suggests that early modern academic dramas often "registered their own paradox and contradictions, stressing the ways in which schools and scholars understood their social capital" (7). Indeed, the disjunction between the stated pedagogical goals of humanism and the uncertain lived experience of education has been part of the critical conversation for some time.[56] The title of Walker's introduction, "Learning to Play," alludes to Greenblatt's iconic piece, "Learning to Curse." While there is obvious value to studying the academic stage with the wider rubric of pedagogy, I want also to suggest that consideration be given to the ambivalent status of the academic drama and the university stage through the lens of one more Greenblatt essay: "The Circulation of Social Energy." In this opening essay to *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Greenblatt explains how the London professional stage provided a site where issues of political and social import could be negotiated precisely because it offered a node of collective pleasure. Surely, as I hope to show, the same is true for academic stage.

[56] It is necessary to cite Lisa Jardin and Anthony Grafton on this point. In their monumental work, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, they have already noted what they memorably call "the gap between strongly held ideal views and the reality which is educational practice" (xvi). Two strands of this work's multifaceted argument deserve mention in this context. First, in their description of the School of Guarino in Vernoa, they observe that exigent circumstances that often forced the espoused humanist program to be replaced with "meticulous, readily retainable, ready-to-recall instruction" (22). Second, in describing the influence of Petrus Ramus in the [birth] of the humanities as a coherent educational philosophy in Northern Europe they remark that the humanities succeeded in replacing scholastic educational practice not because of its inherent excellence or utility but because of political expediency. As they famously remark, the humanities valorized a hierarchical system of social authority, "with its closed governing elites; hereditary offices, and strenuous effort to close off debate on vital political and social questions." This attitude, in their estimation, produced "a properly docile attitude toward authority" (xiv).

Conclusion

Arguing academic dramas have been unfairly discounted because of their connection to pedagogical practices, Kent Cartwright, in his book *Theatre and Humanism,* has championed their role in the development of the London popular stage. The wider argument holds that critics have over-estimated the importance of the morality tradition at the expense of humanist drama in tracing the development of the popular Elizabethan stage. More relevant to the purposes of this study, Cartwright advances the claim that the dramas produced in academic institutions were crucial for their influence on the University Wits in their formative years, particularly Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene and John Lyly. In his analysis of the academic dramas as seen in conversation with the vernacular works of the wits, Cartwright deploys the well-known Horatian formula that drama should "instruct and entertain" as a heuristic device to gauge the "creative tension" that animates the humanist plays, which, in his estimation, illustrates "a complex relationship between knowledge and experience" that captivated this set of dramatists (19). I am certainly inclined to accept Cartwright's premise that humanism played a key – and, indeed, an under-appreciated role – in the development of the Elizabethan popular stage. However, his study is primarily literary and theoretical, and he comes down firmly on the side of instruction. His argument would only be stronger had he paid more attention to the other half of Horace's dictum, the role of delight.

To best understand the pleasure and delight of the academic drama and the university stage, it is necessary to differentiate between the work of the university and its leisure sphere, or, as Victor Turner would define it, its sense of play. This chapter opened with an examination of the records describing the performance in 1566 of two humanist dramas in Merton College. The analysis then moved backwards in time to trace the very concept of play and playing: in reference, first, to the prohibitions against the *ludi inhonesti* in the high middle ages; and second, the impressive semantic range of "pleying" as found in the records of community drama. Johnson and Clopper both noted that the *mimi, iocutores et histronies* were performers connected to the leisure sphere of the laity. Johnson, Coldewey and Clopper each assume a division within the medieval experience of temporality where work is strictly divided from the sphere of play. In the next chapter we will encounter the works of Thomas Chaundler, a fifteenth-century

chancellor of Oxford. Chaundler, in a letter to his patron, Bishop Bekynton of Bath and Wells, styles this division according to the Roman formulation of *otium*, which is best understood as calm and leisurely reflection, as opposed to the required tasks of *negotium*, the negation or lack of *otium*, as imposed by one's social responsibilities. Later chapters will suggest that the dramatic works of Chaundler, Grimald and the later St. John's playwrights were all performed within a site opened up by the conventions of festive drama – in short, the leisure sphere of the university. Thus, while the fragmentary record of Edward Watson's degree play leaves many more questions than answers, this record remains the only known instance where the composition of a classical inflected dramatic text was required for a degree. Meanwhile, the collection, redaction and publication of the letters announcing the Merton College *rex fabarum*, rather than the degree play, represent a formative period for humanist drama as a textual exercise in the university. Many of the documents associated with the academic stage – beginning with the Merton letters and extending to the two Chaundlerian manuscripts and the St. John's manuscripts – memorialize the communal experience of playing over and above the pedagogical presentation of the text of any particular play. If Chaundler's *Liber Apologeticus* passes unmentioned in Boas' published scholarship and is not generally considered by later scholars in the context of academic drama, the work of the next chapter is to situate Chaundler's dramatic work within the context of the university stage, especially as it represents a festive culture ubiquitous in late medieval English society.

Chapter Two

The Chaundlerian Manuscripts and the Performances of Humanism

> "On this second meeting, as on all subsequent occasions, we simply went on with our conversation, wasting no time in commenting on the improbability of our meeting again in a place like this, which no sensible person would have sought out."
> —W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

Introduction

As we have seen, the academic stage in late-medieval and early-modern England was a site where dramatic works were performed and a site for textual practices whose dissemination had implications well outside of the borders of the university. The first chapter of this study examined the "pre-history" of the academic stage, tracing the broader historical, textual, linguistic, intellectual, pedagogical, and dramatic contexts that existed adjacent to the publication of the first extant academic drama of English provenance, Thomas Chaundler's 1460 play, *Liber apologeticus de omni statu humanae naturae*, or hereafter in this chapter, *Liber Apologeticus*. This chapter turns specifically to a close examination of that early text.

Chaundler's position as Warden, first of Winchester and then of New College, Chancellor of Wells Cathedral and twice Chancellor of Oxford University, has attracted some interest in recent times to his literary works. Happily, this resurgence of scholarly attention to Chaundler has extended to his *Liber Apologeticus*.[1] Andrew Cole, in his essay "Heresy and Humanism" offers a provocative examination of Chaundler's influence. Cole argues that Chaundler's play is the prime example of an emerging "writing to bishops" genre in fifteenth-century England.[2] He suggests that this genre emerged as the English

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[1] It is exciting that a scholar of Peter Happe's stature chose to publish an article on the generic formulations of the *Liber Apologeticus*. His article appeared after the completion of this dissertation and sadly its ideas are not incorporated in this chapter. See, Happé, Peter. "Genre and Fifteenth-Century English Drama: The Case of Thomas Chaundler's Liber Apologeticus."

[2] Andrew Cole's essay "Heresy and Humanism," found in Paul Strohm's 2006 collection, *Middle English* is the first concentrated effort by a contemporary scholar to put Chaundler's daunting play into conversation with its historical context. In support of a wider argument about humanism, Lollardry and English literary culture, Cole uses Chaundler's text as proof that church officials, particularly those who

ecclesiastical establishment directed its energies towards humanistic pursuits in a relative calm period between two intense periods of persecution of the Wycliffite heresy. In this work, however, Cole assumes Chaundler composed the *Liber Apologeticus* with Bishop Thomas Bekynton as its exclusive audience, and in this respect, his interpretation represents a wide swath of scholarly opinion that tends to see the text through the lens of the client/patron relationship. There is reason for this position, since the patronage relationship is clearly depicted in the dedicatory illustration to the Trinity College (TC) MS R.14.5 and in the Argumentum to the text of the *Liber Apologeticus*. However, because it privileges the textual history of the manuscript over the substance of the dramatic text, this line of interpretation cannot adequately account for the size, scope and complexity of the work or its puzzling relation to the suggested audience. [3]

In fact, there is no widespread agreement among scholars about such basic details as the genre or dramatic form of the *Liber Apologeticus*. In his entry on Chaundler in the *National Biographical Register*, Jeremy Catto reflects this critical confusion. He describes the play as "a version of the contemporary mystery, or more precisely morality play" (269). In comparison to other works of late medieval theater, the *Liber Apologeticus* certainly defies a simple formal description. Introduced by an Argumentum, also called a prologue in the text, the *Liber Apologeticus* contains four discrete acts, each describing a different stage in the salvation history of humankind. Allied to the various stages of the salvation story, each frame of Chaundler's drama appeals to a different theatrical modality. Like the cycle plays, Chaundler's drama shows a fundamental interest in the workings of salvation, especially as history stretches forward to

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have reason to be in contact with the upper echelons of the episcopate, were using their resources, time and energy previously devoted to persecution of the Wycliffite heresy to the cultivation of humanist learning– what his essay calls "ecclesiastical humanism." In particular, he contends that these church officials styled of new genre of address to their episcopal superiors, what he calls "a writing to bishops topos" that was informed by the mirror of princes tradition. As Cole comments, "Something is interfering with the familiar narratives about religious writing in the fifteenth century...That something is, I suggest, 'ecclesiastical humanism,' which might offer a partial explanation why 'the authorities lost interest in pursuing heretics" (425). Within the rubric of "ecclesiastical humanism," Cole's analysis treats Chaundler's play as a gift that bears an uncomfortable message to the Bishop to reform his government of himself and his affairs.

[3] Rundle's useful examination of the Chaundlerian corpus in his 1997 unpublished Oxford dissertation suggests, in a much less specific way than Cole, that the text and manuscripts were intended for Bekynton. As he comments, "Presenting works in praise of this educational patron might have been another way of begging for money" (455). Shoukri describes the *Liber Apologeticus* as an "anomaly."

encompass his own historical moment. But where the cycle dramas are organized around the salvific work of Christ, Chaundler presents a humanist interpretation of the atonement, told from the perspective of the play's main character, Homo (or as he will be referred to throughout this chapter, Man). And indeed, this character connects the "first" man of the cycle dramas to the "everyman" of the morality tradition. For Chaundler, Man serves as a representative of all humankind, in so far as he experiences sin, participates in redemption, and is expected to live in a political community under the terms of the new dispensation. As should become clear in the course of this chapter, much of the conceptual confusion regarding the *Liber Apologeticus'* formal features, its theological scope and orientation, and its presentation in its manuscript context evaporates when it is viewed as a play intended for the university stage conditioned by the practices of communal festive drama. While the ornate illuminated manuscript containing the *Liber Apologeticus* is dedicated to Bekynton, and while the *Liber Apologeticus* itself is likewise dedicated him, it is certainly not the case that the play in all of its complexity directly addresses itself solely to the bishop. Yet to date, no one has presented a comprehensive examination of the work that differentiates the textual history of the manuscript from the *Liber Apologeticus'* formal characteristics as a dramatic text. Resisting the trend to see this play as written to Bekynton within the context of a dyadic patronage relationship, this chapter seeks to reclaim the *Liber Apologeticus* as an academic drama intended for performance on the collegiate stage. Despite its characterization as a "miracle" or "mystery" play by Catto, or as an exemplar of the *speculum episcopi* genre by Cole, the play should be described first and foremost as a humanist text that appropriates popular dramatic forms, in addition to its other source material, for Chaundler's theatrical purposes. And when we return to the matter of patronage, I want to situate the two Chaundlerian manuscripts within an economy of patronage that extends beyond the dyadic patron/client relationship. In both documents the depiction of the client/patronage relationship is not a statement from Chaundler made directly to the Bishop Bekynton in an emerging genre akin to the "mirror of princes" tradition; rather, in Chaundler's analogical method, the patronage relationship is lauded within the context of the wider Wykehamist community.[4] Chaundler seems to have understood the

[4] I use the phrase "Wykehamist community" to denote a network of relations among the students,

patronage/client relation as a political relation with its own proper virtues, that, when faithfully attended to, contributes to the smooth operation of the entire social order.

In the following reading of Chaundler's texts, the first section of this chapter will survey his literary output, describing the formal characteristics of his literary works in relation to the codicological features of their particular manuscript contexts. The second section turns directly to the *Liber Apologeticus*, reading its use of source materials and dramatic form as a kind of humanist gambit. Chaundler was responsible for the production of two presentation manuscripts as gifts to Bekynton, the already mentioned TC MS R.14.5 MS and the New College (NC) MS 288. The third section returns to the difficult textuality of the two Chaundlerian manuscripts, speculating how the manuscript circulated in an economy of patronage conditioned by a wider network of Wykehamist relations.

The Chaundlerian Manuscript Context: Revelations of a College at Play

The plain fact is that the *Liber Apologeticus* remains underappreciated for its literary and dramatic possibilities, particularly within its academic context. It was dismissed as verbose and unperformable by earlier critics, including its first contemporary editor, Doris Shoukri[5] This critical

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graduates, staff and benefactors of the two institutions founded by William Wykeham, Winchester College and New College. It would be tempting to classify these relations as merely an old boys network. Chaundler is working as an administrator at a pivotal point in the history of English higher education as the collegiate university is emerging from the patchwork system of halls and hostels that housed and educated students. The spiritualized vision of the English college – so familiar to contemporary visitors to Cambridge and Oxford – was produced in no small measure by the efforts of college administrators, like Chaundler, to strengthen the institutions they were shepherding within the corporate structures of the university and the English church. See Lytle, "'Wykehamist Culture' in pre-Reformation England."

[5] Shoukri remarks, "Its defects are readily apparent, if we are to consider that a dramatic work is meant to be performed. Even for a closet performance, the play is lacking in action and in appeal to the senses of the audience. The speeches are unconscionably long, God's particularly are essentially monologues, and they are formal and didactic. What dialogue there is, is witty and effective, but there is far too little. Apart from Man's attack upon Reason and the ejection of Fear from the House of the Spirit, there is no light relief to the serious atmosphere of debate. If we consider the Liber a work to be read, not seen or heard, these defects assume less importance. But then it must be considered as something of an anomaly, written as it is in dramatic form" (22). The assumption undergirding this assessment is that a single standard of theatrical enjoyment is common to vernacular and academic drama. The readerly quality of the work actually implies a shared nexus of pleasure between Chaundler's play and his academic audience, who could be counted on to have in their memory a great many of the texts Chaundler drew upon in crafting this drama. We also forget, to our peril, the pleasures of accomplished rhetoric and grammar, even for the less learned. In any case, an academic audience would be well situated to understand the playful

assessment in fact led Shoukri to call the text at best an "anomaly" somehow related to the assumption that Bekynton alone was the only intended audience.[6] Her error is understandable in some respects, since the literary text exists in a unique manuscript copy, where both the literary text and the unique manuscript happen to be dedicated to Bekynton. While issues of preference and patronage reach deeply into both the composition of the play's text as well as the construction of the physical document, it does not necessarily follow that the text of the *Liber Apologeticus* must be submerged or subsumed in the particularity of the book's status as a gift in an economy of patronage. The goal of this section is to clarify critical understandings of the two Chaunderlian manuscripts as material objects in distinction from the texts, literary and otherwise, contained within them. To accomplish this task, some context must be given to Chaundler and Bekynton's relationship within the Wykehamist community. Having documented the economy of relations that governed the production of the manuscripts, it will then be possible to profitably examine their shared codicological features.

The topic of Chaundler's social position and his institutional loyalties must be approached with some sophistication. The very terms used to describe the patronage/client relationship are very much at stake in the production of the two manuscripts that carry his literary works. At the very least, it can be said that both men were the product of the Wykehamist educational system at a transitional moment in the history of the late-medieval education. As Catto indicates in his biography, little is known about Chaundler's early life, save for the fact that his birth was registered in St. Cuthbert's parish in the city of Wells c.1417. Chaundler was offered a scholarship to Winchester College, matriculating in 1431. While a student at Winchester, he was taught by the future Bishop of Winchester, William Waynflete, who would later provide him his first preferment. He left the lower school in 1435 for New College, Oxford, where he quickly rose through the academic ranks, being elected a fellow in 1437. Called to return to the feeder school, he was elected to the Wardenship of Winchester College in 1450. Four years later he was

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appropriations and subtle distinctions that Chaundler used as threads in the weaving of this massive tapestry.

[6] The manuscript and the included texts are intended to address Bekynton. And for Cole, their meaning is clear: "The lesson here for a bishop is as clear as the lessons in the exempla of the Mirror of Princes tradition: rule your kingdom, rule your temporalities, by first ruling yourself" (433).

promoted to the Wardenship of New College, a post he would hold for twenty-one years. The narrative presented in the Argumentum in the *Liber Apologeticus* explains that Bishop Bekynton, who had been provided the See of Bath and Wells in 1443, was responsible for additional preferments for Chaundler, including the appointment of Chaundler as the chancellor of Wells Cathedral. Bekynton was also an important institutional patron, having made several substantial donations to both of Wykeham's colleges during Chaundler's chancellorships.

Bekynton himself was formed in his profession according to a similar pattern of patronage and preferment within the same network of relations. Also born in relatively humble circumstances, he was, as his biographer notes, a protégé of Winchester and New College founder, Bishop William Wykeham.[7] Through his influence, Bekynton was able to enter royal service, rapidly assuming positions of greater political sensitivity. Bekynton, and his contemporary and fellow Wykehamist William Waynflete, served in important positions in Henry VI's government, providing personal and institutional contacts for Chaundler. In no small measure, Chaundler's contacts among trusted advisors to the Lancastrian king swayed his election to the chancellorship of the Oxford University in 1457, when he replaced George Neville. Mirroring the changing fortunes of the Lancastrian side, Chaundler resigned his office in 1461 when Edward IV ascended to the throne. The chancellorship passed back to Neville, who was the younger brother to the Yorkist "kingmaker," Richard Neville, the Earl of Warrick. Though outside the parameters of this essay, Chaundler would serve again as the university's chancellor from 1472 to 1479, following the Neville family's falling out with Edward IV.

Chaundler's literary output is contained in two unique presentation manuscripts. Both were compiled under his direct supervision as gifts for Bekynton. This is important to note, since I argue that the codicological and literary features common to the TC MS R.14.5 and the NC MS 288 illuminate the dramatic and textual pretensions of the *Liber Apologeticus*. It is generally agreed that the Trinity College manuscript was compiled first, being produced in Oxford sometime between 1457 and 1461, while the

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[7] See Dunning, "Beckington, Thomas (1390?–1465)."

New College manuscript dates from sometime between 1461 and 1465.[8] The most important of shared feature common to both manuscripts is their elaborate and identifiable humanist script. In the production of both manuscripts, Chaundler employed the services of the noted humanist scribe, John Farley, whose fine Italianate hand is evident in both works, with one notable exception that will be discussed below.[9] In addition to a common scribe, many other codicological and literary features connect the works, including the selection of materials and their arrangement within the book. Chaundler clearly compiled both presentation manuscripts so that they contain four distinct groupings of material in a particular order. Though divergent in terms of their artistic value, both works open with a set of illustrations that provide cues for interpreting the subsequent material and for setting a social context for patronage. Following the illustrations, Chaundler deliberately chooses to memorialize and to give pride of place to works that provided occasions for students to practice eloquence on the collegiate stage. And he selects literary artifacts that memorialize his own relationship with Bekynton. These works, then, are connectors for the particular relationship shared by the two men, tying them into a common intellectual, social, and political matrix. In both manuscripts Chaundler concludes with exempla drawn from devotional literature: in the first case, advice for living in the time of plague, and in the second, an exhortation to crusade, which, even in Chaundler's historical moment, remained one of the highest expression of worldly Christian devotion.

We should examine these two manuscripts more closely beginning with the earlier one, from Trinity College. It contains, in order of appearance: fifteen illustrations, the text of the *Liber Apologeticus*, a dialogue called the *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*, copies of four letters written

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[8] The dating can be established because in the caption to the introductory illustration in the TC MS R.14.5, Chaundler refers to himself as both the chancellor of Oxford University and the Chancellor of Wells Cathedral, posts he held simultaneously only during those years. In the dedication to the subsequent NC MS 288, the only title he mentions is his position at Wells, establishing the *terminus a quo* as Chaundler's resignation from the Oxford University chancellorship in 1461 and the *terminus ad quem* as Bekynton's death in 1465.

[9] Shoukri notes some disagreement about the identity of the scribe; her notes quote H.E. Slater who observes, "It is possible that he [Farley] is the writer of one, even both, of the Chaundler MSS" (23 n.48). Rundle is more forthcoming: "Farley is certainly the scribe of the bulk of the manuscript…but the final pages (fol. 64v – 73v) are written in a different humanist script" (452).

by Chaundler to Bekynton drawn from the course of their long correspondence, and a devotional text written by the Italian physician Simon de Covina. For the illustrations we know that Chaundler retained the services of a remarkable but unknown team of illustrators. Placed at the very front of the work, the fifteen highly ornate grisaille illustrations are in Burgandian style.[10] The first depicts the moment Chaundler presents the bound manuscript to his patron, while the following fourteen depict important scenes drawn from the *Liber Apologeticus* itself. A number of motifs introduced in the first illustration reoccur throughout the entire set, including the textured pattern that adorns the walls, the composition of the parquet floor and, most importantly, the design of the throne itself. (see Illustration 2.1.)

Next in the manuscript appear works dedicated to student performances. The first item in this group is the original drama composed by Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, which we will return to in due course. Following the *Liber Apologeticus* is a dialogue composed by Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*, (hereafter, simply *Libellus*). In this work Chaundler lifts large sections of Leonardo Bruni and Piercandido Decembrio's Italian poems in praise of, respectively, the city-states of Florence and Milan and crafts them into the form of a dialogue. He places the Latin words of these Italian masters in the mouths of his first character, Andrew, a citizen of the cathedral city of Wells, and, secondly, Peter, a citizen of the abbey city of Bath. Each citizen presents an argument for his city's precedence on the occasion of the Bishop's appointment to the see. According to Chaundler's introduction, this poem was performed "for the enjoyment of all" at the College's Christmas celebrations. Set in the Christmas of 1443 (not the date of its composition but rather the year Bekynton was provided to the See), the two ambassadors vie for the bishop's favor before the bishop's assistant, Daniel. The bishop's representative offers a conciliatory judgment that short-circuits the so-called conflict, emphasizing, as Rundle puts it, the "features of unity between the two towns," namely the fact that they share the same bishop. Interestingly,

[10] Montague Rhodes James published a heavily redacted version of the Chaundlerian manuscripts for the Roxburge Club in 1916, under the title *The Chaundler MSS*. The goal of this publication was the dissemination of the manuscript illustrations. As he states, "First, we have his *Liber Apologeticus de omni statu humanae naturae*, illustrated by the beautiful pictures which are the *raison d'être* of the present publication" (9). He also included the four illustrations accompanying the NC MS 288 and a modest description of the content of both manuscripts.

a rubric in the margin of the text declares that Daniel gave preference to Wells. Daniel Wakelin's book *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature* presents a compelling reading of Chaundler's *Libellus*. In his reading of the *Libellus*, Wakelin rethinks the text in terms of its intended audience, which he sees as those invested in the college. In the *Libellus* (which has obvious parallels to the *Liber Apologeticus*), Wakelin shows how students were asked to recite verbatim the words of accomplished poets in carefully crafted rhetorical situations. It seems almost certain that Wakelin was right: the collegiate stage was the context of performance for the *Libellus*. What he seems to have missed, however, is that Chaundler's rhetorical strategy was conditioned by its performance in the time of social inversion, governed as it was by the *rex solati*.

Following the two literary works for student performance, Chaundler inserts copies of four letters written by him to Bekynton that range chronologically from the early 1450's to one that dates to the years just prior to the manuscript's completion. Importantly, he includes letters that praise the completion of Bekynton's various building projects in Wells and that touch upon the completion of his tomb, two subjects broached in the argumentum of the *Liber Apologeticus*. At the end of the manuscript, Chaundler places a twelfth-century Latin poem of Italian provenance written by Simone de Covina, offering spiritual advice for life during plague time. To give some historical context, the Trinity College ms. was compiled in the midst of the War of the Roses, and Bekynton firmly supported the Lancastrian claim. But as Rundle notes, the selection of Covina's text, with its astrological features, gives Chaundler and Bekynton's shared political situation, since it was written in response to another momentous catastrophe, the plague of 1348.

Chaundler supervised the compilation of a second presentation manuscript, the New College ms., between 1461 and 1465. This later manuscript was made according to the similar bibliographical and codicological formulas as the previous manuscript. With one notable exemption, the later compilation showcases the same fine Italianate hand of the Oxford University scribe, John Farley. The New College ms. includes four sketches executed in black ink placed at the front of the book though they are not as sophisticated as the grisaille illustrations in the Trinity copy. The first two sketches show group portraits

of the scholars and masters, respectively, of Winchester and New Colleges, set against the backdrop of each college's buildings; the third, a portrait of Wykehamist "worthies"; and the fourth, a picture of the walled cathedral grounds at Wells. The similarities between the two manuscripts extend to the rationale used in selecting texts for inclusion into the collection. Following the four illustrations, Chaundler gives pride of place to two texts that feature student performance. The first is a set of seven *Collocutions.* As Chaundler explains in his introduction, they were the product of one of his former New College philosophy students. Next appear two *Allocutions* that Chaundler himself composed. These two works, like the *Libellus*, are written in the form of a dialogue and both take up the subject of the life and manners of Wykeham. Over the course of the *Collocutions*, two students, Pannescius and Ferrnandus, prove, using Aristotle and Cicero as sources, that Wykeham possessed all the classical virtues. Their evidence consists in the foundation of Winchester and New College. The *Allocutions* that follow mark a continuation of this exercise. Quoting patristic sources extensively (including Ambrose, Augustine and Lactates), they demonstrate that Wykeham, in a similar manner, possessed all the Christian virtues. Modern commentators, following Leach, have found these two exercises dreary, but it is important to understand them within two frames of reference. First, it was Chaundler's practice to put the words of authorities, often verbatim, into the mouths of student performers. Second, these texts draw attention to the site within the college were their performance occurred. The *Collocutions* and *Allocutions* were both staged during the reign of the college's *rex solati* during the holiday season. This figure can be understood as a representative of the same "lord of misrule" or "Christmas prince" tradition established by the *Libellus*. Following the two performance texts, Chaundler continues the theme of praising founder by inserting a prose biography of Wykeham, followed by a copy of the founder's will.[11]

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[11] In the appendix to his dissertation Rundle provides a descriptive bibliography of various late-medieval humanist manuscripts. Describing the NC MS 288, he writes, "this volume appears to be the presentation volume of Chaundler's *Collocutions* given to Bekynton… The main part of the volume was written in Oxford by another Wykehamist, John Farley." As for the occasion of the manuscript's presentation, Rundle is characteristically blunt: "Chaundler, as letters in Bekynton's correspondence shows, repeatedly asked the bishop for financial assistance for the Wykehamist foundations. Presenting works of this educational patron might have been another way of begging for money. Moreover, Bekynton was already

Chaundler concludes the compilation with the insertion of three contemporary circular letters composed by Pope Pius II, each concerning his recently proposed crusade to the Holy Land, although there is some confusion as to where and when the final letter was inserted into the manuscript. In any case, the inclusion of this letter raises some related textual issues that bear on the composition and audience for the *Liber Apologeticus*, and we should sort those out now. Briefly, some of the materials contained in the New College ms. circulated separately, implying a wider audience than Bekynton for the *Liber Aplogeticus.* A related manuscript in the British Library, BL MS Cotton Titus A.xxiv, contains the first five pieces of the New College ms., although the texts are arranged in a different order. In this alternative collection of texts, the *Collocutions* and the *Allocutions* follow copies of Wykeham's will and the circular letters. In his dissertation, Rundle first raised the possibility that BL MS Cotton Titus A might be a rough draft by Chaundler, but he dismissed the idea because "The handwriting here [MS Cotton Titus A] "bears little similarity to Chaundler's hand in BL MS Harley 43," an authenticated Chaundler autograph. Questioning Weiss' dim view of humanist activity in the two generations before Colet and More, Rundle's careful textual analysis in his doctoral dissertation aims at identifying centers of humanist activity by examining book making practices, which include scribes' Latin usage, handwriting and other modes of textual presentation. His interest in the New College ms. and its textual relatives derives largely from their relation to Farely's scribal activity. In the New College ms., the third letter from Pope Pius II is in a different hand, one that displays features of humanist influence. This letter, according to Rundle, may have been added in Wells sometime after the manuscript had been given to Bekynton. Such a circumstance would indicate the presence of a humanist scribe, and perhaps a circle of scribes working in the Bishop's chancellery in Wells. Relevant to this discussion, in Rundle's estimation there is nothing extraordinary about the MS Harley 43, that it does not exhibit a humanist script, and that the text was not for presentation.

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infirm in these years – the inclusion of Wykeham's will might have been a timely (if unsubtle) hint to Bekynton that he should remember his *almae maters* in his last testament" (454).

These textual matters and the relations between the New College ms. and the BL MS Cotton Titus A are of great importance, for they undermine two assumptions about the companion Trinity College ms. First, it need not be assumed that the *Liber Apologeticus* was composed simultaneously with the production of the manuscript; and, second, it need not be assumed that Bekynton is the play's only audience. The two manuscripts at Trinity College and New College that contain Chaundler's literary works survived in all likelihood because of the outstanding nature of the Latinity and because of their remarkable illustrations. But given the fact that other literary texts written by Chaundler circulated independently of presentation copies, it is surely possible that the *Liber Apologeticus* possessed a readership wider than the intended patron Bekynton.

Both Chaundlerian manuscripts make reference to festive drama connected to the college's Christmas celebrations. The *Collocutions* and the *Libellus* explicitly mention that they were performed before the *rex solati*, the local version of the Lord of Misrule or Christmas Prince. We should not be surprised, since Christmas time was an important locus for dramatic activity at medieval colleges and for the Inns of Court.[12] As discussed in the previous chapter, early in the histories of both English universities the semi-clerical and highly stratified institutional structure of the medieval university adopted the inversion of status rituals found within the ecclesial and monastic organizations to suit the particular needs of halls, hostels and early colleges. The Wykehamist institutions were no exception. The founding documents of New College underwrote the celebration of the boy bishop at the feast of the innocents. The founding statutes' language is unmistakable: "Permittimus tamen quod in festo Innocencium pueri vesperas matuinas et alia divina officia legenda et cantanda dicere et exsequi valeant secundum usum et consuetudinem ecclesia Sarum" (79). Much of the practice continued in a localized oral tradition until such times when those practices had to be rationalized and explained – the time of the reformation. As a result perhaps, texts memorializing Elizabethan and Jacobean collegiate revels – texts like *The Christmas*

[12] The list of dates where performances occurred and of the festive holidays where they were permitted can be found in the editorial apparatus for both the *Cambridge* and *Oxford* volumes of *REED*. See *Oxf*ord 2:846 and 2:900; *Cambridge* 2:961 and 2:1034.

Prince from the early 17th century, or the *Gesta Grayorum*, exhibit a rich sense of nostalgia – a sentiment completely lacking in Chaundler's manuscripts.

Given such circumstances, it is nothing less than remarkable that Chaundler twice chose to memorialize aspects of the New College Christmas revels. Though learned, Chaundler's audience had a rich sense of the movement of the ritual year. Standing behind the texts that emphasize rhetorical eloquence like the *Libellus*, the *Collocutions* and *Allocutions*, and, as it will be suggested the *Liber Apologeticus*, is a ritual world where student performance was informed by the learned yet carnivalesque inversion of status rituals common in the college environment. The playfulness of festive drama brought a freedom of presentation and adaptation of sources for the academic playwright and his performers. It also demands that the audience (and readers) understand the experience in a light quite different than the one they brought with their official critical competencies. Because two of the other three dramatic works found in the Chaundlerian corpus directly reference the context of their performance as the Christmas season, and given the fact that relatively few opportunities for playing occurred within the late medieval university, we must surely consider that the *Liber Apologeticus* was also a holiday play. If Chaundler's goal, as it will be suggested, is to tell the story of salvation from the perspective of humankind, it is not insignificant to this argument that the turning point of the play is the brief, but crucially important scene depicting the incarnation of Christ.

The *Liber Apologeticus* as Humanist Play

The previous section of this chapter enumerated the codicological and literary conventions that informed the production of the two Chaundlerian manuscripts to highlight the possibility of a larger audience than the patron to whom they seem to have been directed. In both works Chaundler included texts that showcased for his patron the performance of eloquence within the collegiate context. Such performances, it has been suggested, occurred on stages authorized and conditioned by the conventions of communal festive drama. In the following section I argue that the generic features of the *Liber Apologeticus* should be understood within the context of the text's most probable venue and time of performance: in the New College hall during the Christmas holidays.

Despite leaving a lengthy correspondence from his career as an academic and ecclesial administrator, none of Chaundler's philosophical or theological writings have survived. If the play is an accurate reflection of his opinions, even by the strict standards of post-Wycliffe Oxford, the *Liber Apologeticus* is unquestionably an orthodox text. And yet commentators as diverse as Rhoades, Shoukri, Rundle and Cole have all noted that the play is undeniably strange.[13] The *Liber Apologeticus* does not make a single mention of the church, the sacraments or the soteriological work of Christ, among other commonplace theological topics, despite its massive scope and prodigious length. Adapting Wakelin's approach, the present section of the chapter will return to the *Liber Apologeticus*, demonstrating how it operates, in all of its complexity, as a humanist document designed to showcase student eloquence in a distinctly early humanist vein. It seems clear that, much like the *Libellus*, student actors assumed roles within familiar dramatic and rhetorical situations in which they repeat the exact words of acknowledged masters. In the *Liber Apologeticus*, however, the rhetorical situations are familiar to the students from the vernacular dramas in addition to situations common to late medieval collegiate education, but here presented in the context of learned revelry.

Perhaps the best way to underline how this process works is by following the Argumentum of the *Liber Apologeticus* and its four acts in turn. The Argumentum, when actively read, displays for the audience the patronage relationship itself. The first act bears strong resemblances to the creation and fall of the first humans in the great cycle plays, where Chaundler's main character, the allegorical "Man," replaces the biblical Adam found in the cycle dramas. Concluding with Man's summons to face judgment in court, the second act appears much like a scholarly disputation between God and man concerning the culpability of Man's recent fall into sin. The third act portrays a courtroom drama, in which God's Truth and Justice prosecute the indicted Man, who is defended by God's Mercy and Peace. The impasse among

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[13] On this point MR James' observation is especially apt, "One thing that has struck me in reading it," he observes, "is the absence of ecclesiasticism, and specifically Catholic teaching. Nothing is made of the Church or the Sacraments; nay, even the earthly life of Christ and His Passion are hardly alluded to, though they are implied: nor, I think, is there any mention of the Trinity. There has been evidently an effort to present the scheme of Redemption on the broadest possible lines and to avoid all detail that would tend to fix it in time and space" (5).

the four daughters of God is only resolved in the incarnation. The fourth act then presents redeemed Man living under the terms of the new dispensation within the familiar expectations, on the part of the audience, of a morality play.

The Argumentum: Performing Patronage

One common complaint among critics worries that Chaundler, in the Argumentum, is over-fulsome in the praise of his patron.[14] Still, as we have already noted, Cole suggests that Chaundler's praise of Bekynton works to urge the bishop to reform his behavior. Both of these interpretations misconstrue the Argumentum's relationship to the balance of the work. Closer examination reveals that Chaundler deliberately blends aspects of the emerging humanist movement with the inherited treasury of scholastic thought in order to set out the intellectual concerns of the drama. In the Argumentum, an unnamed character, but one who is clearly associated with the author, directly addresses an oration to Bishop Bekynton. There can be no doubt that the address effusively praises the patron; but it is far from the acclaim of a mere sycophant. Chaundler structures the Argumentum, which, importantly, he also calls a prologue, according to a series of intricate analogical correlations and distinctions.

Stated in the form of a question, the first sentence opens with the familiar medieval humility topos: "Audebone tue magnanimitati exiguum opus hoc et pene abortiuum decenter satis commendare?[15] In a text that will rely on its audience's ability to draw distinctions and see contrasts between what is said and what is left unsaid, and what is expected versus what is provided, the second sentence answers the

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[14] With his characteristic wry humor, MR James remarks, "Grateful and loyal he assuredly was: his devotion to the memory of Wykeham is sincere. His praises of his living patron Bekynton are tiresome to the last degree, but perhaps no more fulsome than others of their time" (4). Shoukri agrees, "Even his own works are used and dedicated elaborately to the Bishop. The effusive style of the dedications is typical of the period, as is also the abundance of classical allusions which serve as a kind of subtle flattery of the patron's learning. Even Chaundler's disconcerting habit of showering Bekynton with titles was a common practice of his day" (5).

[15] Is it becoming of me to venture to commend to your magnanimity this slight and rather premature work?

question, but in an incongruous manner. As opposed to the expected gesture to the generosity of his patron, Chaundler makes the rather unusual appeal, instead, to his patron's virtue of piety.[16] As he writes,

> Et si quidem magnanimitatem uereor, mihi intererit nihilominus innata tibi pietas, perbeate presul, quam tua pace, O magne Antistes, confidenter temptare audeo. Hanc enim quamquam ab ipsis cunis crediderim tecum nasci, adeo tamen sublimiter probitate morum extulisti ut si tuas uirtutes reliquas tacite preteream, uidebitur nimirum hee sola magnifiee ac eelebriter te efferre.[17]

This is the first of *nineteen* instances in the 150 lines of the Argumentum where Chaundler uses a form of the word *pietas*, clearly making it the governing concept of the Argumentum. The selection of *pietas* is a curious choice both as a praiseworthy quality in a patron and as site of exploration proper to a drama. It is a choice made even stranger by the fact that piety is a contested concept in late medieval philosophical and theological thought, with a wide range of conflicting sources informing its use.[18] Chaundler chooses

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[16] In Latin the root *pieta-* can be declined as a noun with a semantic field similar but not coterminous with the English word "piety"; in Latin it can also be conjugated as a verb or verbal noun, where it is understood as an activity directed toward some object. In her version of the *Liber Apologeticus*, Shoukri usually translates this sense with some form of the English word "devote" or "devotion." A useful description of the history of the English word piety can be found in the introduction to James Garrison's book, *Pietas from Vergil to Dryden*.

[17] "Although I respect your magnanimity, it is your natural piety, most blessed Prelate, to which by your leave, O mighty Bishop, I shall boldly venture to appeal. For though I believe that this virtue was born with you in the very cradle, you have by the probity of your conduct heightened it to such a point that were I to pass over in silence your other virtues, this alone would notwithstanding lead to your frequent and splendid praise. Grant me leave a while, blessed Priest, that in my writings, however rude they be, I may succeed in my small measure in setting down your praises."

[18] Cicero defines piety as the devotion showed to ones parents, country and gods. In 2.66 *de inventione,* he explains that, "pietatem, quae erga patriam aut parentes aut alios sanguine coniunctos officium conservare moneat." ["Duty warns us to keep our obligations to our country or parents or other kin."] In a somewhat different manner in *de natura deorum* 1.116 he defines pietas in reference to justice: "Est enim pietas iustia adversum deos" ["Piety is justice towards the gods."] In the biblical tradition, piety is defined negatively; people or acts are *impius*, such as 1 Sam 2:8 in the Vulgate, "Pedes sanctorum suorum servabit et impii in tenebris conticescent quia non in fortitudine roborabitur vir." ["He will keep the feet of his holy ones; But the wicked [*impii*] shall be put to silence in darkness; For by strength shall no man prevail."] Augustine, in a tradition transmitted widely in Latin west through Lombard's *Sentences*, understood piety to be distinct from virtue. In *The City of God* Augustine defines *pietas* as a deep sense of humility that is completely a divine gift working in the human heart. This is opposed to his understanding of a false virtue, which he equates with vain and prideful display. In 5.13 of *de civitate dei* he writes, "Verum tamen qui libidines turpiores fide pietatis impetrato Spiritu sancto et amore intellegibilis

not to define piety at this stage of the oration; instead, he modifies its use with the adjective "innate," claiming it is the bishop's "natural piety" [*innata pietas*] to which he is appealing. This signals, even to an audience schooled only in the basics of divinity, that the work concerns itself with virtues mainly within a broadly scholastic framework. According to scholastic thought, an innate virtue is one that requires some measure of divine favor or gift, as opposed to an acquired moral virtue gained solely through habitual actions. In the *Summa theologica* and the *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, Aquinas defines this sort of "innate" virtue as an infused moral virtue.[19] While they require divine gift, these virtues can be retained and deepened by practice. Chaundler declares that this sort of piety, namely one heightening inborn virtue through probity of conduct, is the model of devoted practice that he desires to practice in his own life. As he states, "Primum uero ita eolendam a me pietatem arbitreris, ut instituendo atque solicite exequendo habitui te mihi in inicio exemplum proponam. Illud ante omnia celebre mecum est quo modo cum pietate iusticiam eumque iustieia pietatem diuino quodam more permisces quandoquidem in omnes iusticiam dirigis, tamen in parentes in patriam in Deum ante cetera dixissem precipue exerces pietatem" (48).[20] We might note how the patron's piety is distinct and noteworthy because it mixes "justice with devotion" and "devotion with justice" in a manner suggestive of divinity itself. The chiastic construction demonstrates

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pulchritudinis non refrenant, melius saltem cupiditate humanae laudis et gloriae non quidem iam sancti, sed minus turpes sunt." ["However, men who do not obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit and bridle their baser passions by pious faith and by love of intelligible beauty, at any rate live better because of their desire for human praise and glory." In the course of adopting Aristotle's virtues into a coherent theological system, the scholastics disagreed with Augustine and incorporated much of Cicero's definition of piety found in *de inventione*. Specifically quoting that definition, Aquinas, in the *Summa* recognizes piety as a constituent of the cardinal virtue of justice, conditioning the acts of outward devotion required of a child toward a parent and a subject to his lord.

[19] Bonnie Kent, writing in her essay, "On the Moral Life," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* explains, "It would be difficult to exaggerate the difference between these two kinds of moral virtues. Acquired moral virtues are directed to the imperfect happiness of earthly society and make one morally good in human terms. Infused moral virtues are directed to, and make it possible to merit, the perfect happiness of the afterlife. Acquired moral virtues measure desires and actions according to the rule of human reason, observing a mean determined by prudence. Infused moral virtues measure according to divine rule, observing a 'mean' appointed by God" (248).

[20] "First indeed you must understand that in my cherishing of piety, I must take you from the start as a model of the attitude which I must learn and put into practice. I honour most of all the way in which you mingle justice with devotion, and devotion with justice, in a certain divine manner, in that you achieve justice toward all, yet you specially demonstrate devotion toward parents, toward country, and, may I add, particularly toward God."

textually that if piety is the central theme of the Argumentum, its companion term, justice, will be the theme of the play that will follow. It also demonstrates the propriety of the bishop's character, signifying a proper mixture of virtues in the dignity of his person. The lack of the chiastic construction, when its absence is glaringly obvious, such as in the description of Lucifer in the first act, will show the reader a definite lack of such proper proportion and balance.

Chaundler seems to offer his own definition of piety in the subordinate clause that qualifies how Bekynton demonstrates his piety: it is devotion shown towards parents, country and God. Recognizing that his praise of piety might be considered strange, Chaundler interrupts the oration here, anticiating an objection by the bishop: "Licet apte magis me uales corrigere, uerum quia Deo religionem exhibemus."[21] The definition of *pietas* that Chaundler quotes here is exclusively Ciceronian. As a rhetorical move, the feigned objection of Bekynton reminds the audience that piety is not a theological virtue, which the oration would seem to imply. One cannot be "devoted" – nor in Aquinas' thought should one be – to God in the same manner as one is expected to offer devotion to parents or political authorities. But when he continues the narrative in his own voice, Chaundler simply dismisses the objection, using it as an occasion to efface his own learning and reinforce the piety of the bishop's learning, which was acquired by long study. As he states, "Sed esto ut in tantillis uoeabulis defieiam, non enim comparandus tibi sum qui litteris apprime eruditus, itemque studiose adhuc illas agis ut memoriter pene omnia ab euo ingesta contineas, quamuis et cetera multa cumulare possem in quibus non dicam coetaneos sed et te ipsum ferme uicisti."[22] Indeed, the compliment to the bishop's learning and memory, which are deeply intertwined in

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[21] "You may well correct me, for in truth we show God reverence, not devotion." The connection Chaundler can assume his audience will make is to Aquinas' discussion of the piety among the virtues of justice in *ST* II-II, 101. For Aquinas, the reverence owed God is of a different magnitude to the devotion owed to parents and country: "Unde sicut ad religionem pertinent cultum Deo exhibere, ita secundario gradu ad pietatem pertinet exhibere cultum parentibus et patriae" ["Therefore, as it is for the virtue of religion to pay homage to God, so in the next level [*ita secundario gradu*], it is up to pietas to render its own kind of homage to parents and country."

[22] "I grant that in such small distinctions I am deficient, for I am not to be compared with you who are exceedingly learned in letters, and moreover pursue them studiously to such an extent that you retain in memory well nigh everything taken in from earliest times."

medieval education, becomes another occasion to discuss the dedication necessary to bring infused, or innate, virtues into perfection through devoted and habitual practice.

Following this definition of piety that conflates scholastic and humanist sources, Chaundler moves on in his opening oration to enumerate examples of the bishop's devotion to parents, country and God. Again moving in a chiasmic formulation, he begins with devotion to God: "Effluentem igitur abs te pietatem tum in patriam tum in parentes tum in omnes bene meritos elucidare para. Non poterit equidem Wellensis ecclesia tua non eloqui preconia, nam illi quam enim beniuolus tam certe beneficus semper affuisti. Intelligant uelim ubi ceciderit corpus, an pocius *ubi thesaurus tuus,* quoniam, si euangelium textualiter sequor, *ibi et cor tuum*" (51).[23] Not coincidentally, the grammar of this sentence – namely the implied subject of the third person plural subjunctive *intelligent*– suggests an audience overhearing the oration. Chaundler demonstrates a patronage relationship for audience's instruction in the same manner that Bekynton's building program educates them about piety. And the bishop's piety towards God is made manifest in the example of the building program he undertook at Wells.[24] The curious mention in the text of "where the body has fallen" [*ubi ceciderit corpus*] is a reference to the construction and consecration of Bekynton's own tomb years before his death.[25] Having described in some detail the building program at Wells, Chaundler turns to how Beknyton's care of the poor, who are raised up as living stones, signify his devotion to his native land. In discussing the piety expected towards one's parents, Chaundler reverses the polarity of the definition. Instead of the expected praise for Bekynton's care for his own parents, Chaundler thanks his patron for the fatherly care he has shown to *him*, evidenced by his appointment of Chaundler to be Chancellor of his church in Wells.

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[23] "I should therefore like to point out the devotion which streams from you toward our country, and again toward parents, and then toward every one well deserving. Indeed your church at Wells cannot but sing your praises, for assuredly you have ever stood by it, more indeed as well-doer than as well-wisher. Let them understand where the body has fallen, or rather where thy treasure is, since, if I follow the Gospel textually, there is thy heart also."

[24] For a description of Bekynton's building program in Wells and its effect on civic life see Colchester's *Wells Cathedral, A History* 22-23.

[25] Bekynton's tomb will be discussed in the third section of this chapter.

We should pause here to take note of the Argumentum's trajectory. The oration began with the praise of Bekynton's piety, articulated according to a humanist definition. It then moves to the manifestations of that piety. As he reflects upon the example of the bishop's piety, Chaundler makes a conceptual leap: the example of the Bishop's faithful devotion spurs him to meditate on piety itself. As a result, he travels in his mind to the depths of divine piety. Now he notices that:

> Pietas tua hec quam amplissime transfundis tum in multos tum magis in me, beatissime pater, exilitatem meam commouit ut de pietate artius cogitarem. Ita profecto fit ut in diuine pietatis uiscera uiderer animo transmigrare. Intuebar etenim mundi et terre orbem omnipotentem utriusque Creatorem Deum et qualisque in creaturis signata fuerat Dei pietas. Inter creaturas quidem illam que ad imaginem Dei facta esse creditur diligencius considero. Magna estimabatur in creando pietas sed in lapsi reparacione maior.[26]

In the same way that the focus on Bekynton's piety offers an unusual starting point for reflection, the focus on divine piety seems even more abstruse. If, according to Chaundler, it is God's pious devotion that prompts the creation of the world and the redemption of fallen humankind, then piety itself would be subsumed into the other attributes of God. In the context of late medieval theology, a more accurate description of God's motivation in the creation and redemption of the humankind begin with other of God's attributes, such as power, charity, or mercy.

However that may be, divine piety appears as the subject of the work, and in the penultimate paragraph of the Argumentum, Chaundler explains how his chosen title, *Liber apologeticus de omni statu humanae naturae*, signals three fundamental areas of engagement with the new learning. Wakelin has

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[26] "This your devotion which you poured out most abundantly, not only to a great many but also to myself, most blessed Father, inspired my weakness so that I might reflect on piety more closely. So it happens that I seemed to travel in mind to the bowels of the divine piety. I beheld indeed the orb of the heavens and earth, God the omnipotent Creator of both, and I saw how the piety of God has been stamped upon his creatures. Indeed I examine very carefully that one among his creatures who is believed to have been made in the image of God. God's piety was reckoned great for creating, but greater for restoring after the fall."

already noted how stylized references are early humanist gambits, self-consciously aping classical formulations.[27]

It must be stressed that the Argumentum is not incidental or a supplement to the main work. In what amounts to a remarkable display of formal originality, we find that, starting with the first capital of the first paragraph, and extending through the capital of every subsequent paragraph, the author has woven an authorial acrostic into the text. And he tips us off: "Titulus libri ex ipsa serie capitalium litterarum colligitur, prima earundem prologo seruiente."[28] The acrostic when spelled out in full it reads: "A Magistro Thoma Chauundeler Ecclesie Wwellensis Cancellario Apologeticus liberis editor de omni statu humanae nature docens." We should also see that in calling his work an apologia, he makes an explicit appeal to the newly recovered text of Plato's *Apology*, where Socrates defends himself against the charges of corruption of the youth and impiety towards the gods, and, following his conviction, acquiesces to his death sentence. Very much in the mainstream of theological opinion in the Latin west, Chaundler understood human life in the world along broadly Augustinian contours: all life is a pilgrimage from the human city towards the redemption promised in the divine city. This ultimate state of blessedness is only fully achieved in death, where the soul is reunited with God. However, a redeemed humanity participates, in a proleptic manner, in the restoration of the creation, thus validating both the natural world and the political realm. The degree to which Chaundler was familiar with Platonic thought, including the doctrine of the forms, is unknown. However, the gesture to Plato is not mere ornament. Chaundler is well versed in the four-fold method of interpretation suggested by Augustine. His readings of Plato's *Apology*, just like his appropriation of other texts, needs to be seen through the lens of allegory. The concept of apology, a defense, reverberates through every act of the play. As Chaundler explains, "Dicitur quidem Apologeticus, quia excusatorius uel responsorius ab apologia que est excusacio uel responsio. Vnde et liber quem ediderat Plato de morte Socratis uocatur *Apologia Socratis* ab excusatoria uel responsoria Socratis defensione. Apologeticus dicitur. Insuper de omni statu humane nature docens

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[27] Wakelin 163-168.

[28] "The title of the book is made up from the initial capital letters, the first one introducing the Prologue."

quoniam uti optime nosti, disertissime pater, humanum genus consideratur, uel ut institutum uel ut destitutum uel postremo ut restitutum" (48).[29] As the play runs its course, Socrates will be linked analogically to the person of Bishop Bekynton and also to the play's main character, Man.

Chaundler thus takes the apology or defense speech as his mode of exploration and declares that he is seeking to exculpate, or defend, every "state" of the human experience. As he explains, "Insuper de omni statu humane nature docens quoniam uti optime nosti, disertissime pater, humanum genus consideratur, uel ut institutum uel ut destitutum uel postremo ut restitutum" (48).[30] A thoroughly orthodox medieval thinker, composing within the Augustinian tradition, Chaundler understood that in its first "state," or mode of existence, humankind was created in a prelapsarian bliss, from which the first humans fell into a state of sinfulness. According to the logic of atonement and justification deployed by Chaundler, referencing Anselm's *Cur deus homo*, the offense caused by human sin required a satisfaction that could only be provided in the incarnation of God into human flesh. Only under the influence of Christ can a redeemed human nature righteously exercise authority over itself and order society under the terms of the new dispensation.[31] In each of the four acts of the *Liber Apologeticus*, a certain kind of nobility is conferred upon Man as a rational creature because he comes to a self-realization where he can know, articulate and ultimately learn from his own fall. That Socrates was falsely convicted and executed on a

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[29] "Indeed, the book is called Apologeticus because it is intended to excuse and refute, from apologia, which is a defense or refutation. Whence also the book which Plato published on the death of Socrates is called *Apologia Socratis* from its excusing or refuting defense of Socrates. Therefore because the first man, Adam, offered excuses for his sins which are touched upon in the work, this book is rightly called *Apologeticus.*"

[30] "Furthermore, as you well know, most eloquent Father, as one who gives instruction on every state of human nature, the human race is considered as it was when created, or as fallen and deprived, or as restored."

[31] Chaundler's opinions about the atonement, in so far as they can be assessed in the context of a drama, borrow heavily on the thought of Anselm and Abelard. As we shall see, the play is astounding for what it lacks, namely a reference to Christ's person or work. Despite some of its dated features and overt affiliation with Protestant theology, Gustav Aulen's *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, remains the most cited work in the history of the atonement in Christian theology. The book is useful for its concise description of medieval substation and influence theories of Christ's person and work. Citing these widely circulating view in the medieval period, Aulen memorably comments, "All satisfactory accounts of the atonement...begin, but do not end, with the moral influence theory" (7).

charge of impiety, in this sense, baptizes him in a humanist-scholastic narrative because of the ingenuity of his defense. In a similar manner to Plato's *Apology*, Chaundler's work styles itself as a defense of a fallen humanity. In the tangled thicket of significations woven into his use of the word piety, Chaundler plaits an elaborate chain of analogies linking the efforts of the redeemed Man of the *Liber Apologeticus* with the model of piety illustrated by Bishop Bekynton and the other pious worthies alluded to in the play, figures like Socrates and Aeneas. In so doing, he bestows upon human intelligence a certain sense of dignity gained in the struggle to define itself within creation.

Chaundler closes the frame of the Argumentum, or perhaps more accurately, completes the chiasm, by returning to the humility topos in the final sentence. Alluding to his new position as Chancellor of the Cathedral of Wells, he presents the work as the first fruits of his labor and asks for its correction if it should be found wanting. Supplicating himself, he pleads, "Suscipe nunc, pater, laborum meorum primicias, ut dum non apte fungor simul Oxoniensis ac eciam Wellensis Cancellarii loco, tu pii Cancellarii usus auctoritate, mei opusculum firmes in solido et ubi uidebuntur corrigenda cancelles."[32] Thus the Argumentum opens and closes with gestures towards Bekynton as a patron. Likewise, each of the four acts in the play that follows are dedicated to Bekynton. Through all this we should keep in mind that the *Liber Apologeticus* is one of several texts found in the lavish presentation manuscript, all given to a generous patron who shared his Chancellor's humanist impulse and theological inclinations. Another text bound in the Trinity College ms., the *Libellus*, clearly implies performance before a collegiate audience, and in the companion manuscript from New College, two additional texts were memorialized because of their connection to performance in the college. The issue of patronage, in short, though important, should not obliterate other dramatic, philosophical and theological issues raised the Argumentum. The *Liber Apologeticus,* in addition to whatever else it might be, is in the final analysis styled as a work of drama. As such, the text should be read with one eye directed towards its manuscript

[32] "Receive now, Father, the first fruits of my labours, and since I so inadequately fill the posts of Chancellor at Oxford and also at Wells, do you use the authority of a holy Chancellor, strengthen in substance this little work of mine, and if ought appears in need of correction, strike it out."

context, as it circulated within an economy of patronage, and with the other toward its performance on the academic stage.

Act One: A Collegiate Cycle Play

The first act of the *Liber Apologeticus* turns to the first state of human nature, as Chaundler understood it: the created order prior to introduction of sin. Despite the fact that no scenes are demarcated in any of the acts, the first act clearly is comprised of three discernable dramatic frames. In the first, God appears on stage to deliver a lecture that situates God's own creation of humankind in the wake of the fall of the angels. In the second, God animates Man with a rational soul and invests his creature with the symbols of a dual lordship. Third, when God departs the stage and leaves the Man to his own devices, Man immediately fails in his charge to keep community with Reason and Sensuality, precipitating his fall.

Following the exit of the actor who spoke the Argumentum, the first character introduced on the stage is God, whose lecture narrates the fall of angels and the creation of the world. Because of the ordering of its subject matter, the speech signals to the audience that, despite drawing on source material written in Latin, the act's formal and dramatic structure derives from its reference to the vernacular cycle plays. The first episode depicted in all four of the extant English miracle plays is the fall of angels. Gesturing towards its dramatic appropriation of the cycle play tradition, God's opening remarks are: "Non uidebor mihi satisfecisse nisi formetur creatura racionalis alia que sui multiplicacione et gracia et numero casum angelorum complere et in integrum restaurare ualeat" (56).[33] If the organizing principle of the speech is drawn from the vernacular dramatic tradition, much of the material quoted by God in the opening address is quoted verbatim from the second book of Lombard's *Sentences*. Conflating the roles of redactor and author, Chaundler makes the quoted material part of the play's narrative. One example of his attention to detail can be found in the description of Lucifer's fall, where God remarks, "utpote qui statim factus est, statim a iusticia et ueritate se auerterit, ac proinde dulcedinem beatissime uite, exigente

[33] "I shall not seem to have made reparation from myself except by forming another rational creature who, by multiplying, may be able to make up in grace and number for the fallen angels, and restore our number to full complement."

iusticia ac ueritate eadem, idipsum amisit" (54).[34] Here it is worth noting Chaundler's attention to rhetorical form: earlier, in the Argumentum, Bishop Bekynton was described as comingling "piety and justice with justice and piety in a certain divine manner." The chiasm echoes the proper mingling of attributes. Lucifer, as we see, lost the proper mixture of the elements in the fall.

The second portion of God's address turns to the creation of Man, where God offers an extensive discussion of the human form. While there are no stage directions accompanying the text, it can be inferred that the actor playing Man, while still in his pre-animate form, is standing motionless on stage next to God. Giving an allegorical interpretation of their location and function, God enumerates for the audience the manifold features of the human body. The lengthy exegesis draws attention to the shape of Man's face, the distribution of his sense organs, his upright stature, and the shape and location of his heart and brain. One example will easily epitomize the entire class. Speaking of Man's face, God describes how the creature was marked with the divine signature: "Ut in facie eius bis scribatur homo Dei, notulis et litteris pandentibus artificem testantibusque Deum esse creatorcm suum" (56).[35] In conceit of this common medieval didactic device, the letter "m" is made from the check bone and bridge of the nose, while the "o's" are the eyes; likewise, one ear forms a "d" and the other an "i" and the nose an "e." Reading the signature left to right and then right to left, Man was marked by his creature, "[H]omo Dei." The fanciful nature of this example illustrates again the implied collegiate context of the audience with New College students as young as 15 or 16. We might recall that Chaundler's portrayal of the Bishop in the Argumentum was laudatory and pedagogically driven. Now illustrating the nobility of his intellect, the portrayal of the prelapsarian – indeed, preanimate – Man is likewise accomplished for didactic purposes within the dramatic context.

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34 "Immediately after he was created, he thereupon turned forthwith from justice and truth, and hence, as justice and truth require, he lost all the sweetness of this most blessed life."

35 "Thus 'homo Dei' be twice written on his face by means of marks and letters disclosing the artificer and testifying that God is his creator." In this matter, Shourki's footnote provides a helpful sources and analogs to Chaundler's usage, p. 56, note 7.

The lesson God delivers to the audience concerning the allegorical shape and functions of the human body culminates in the animation of Man, where God bestows on the creature before him a rational soul. He declares, "Itaque animam racionalem ad imaginem nostram creatam uiuificando regendoque huic corpori inspiro ac in eius faciem insufflo uite spiraculum" (62).[36] And now, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, having created Man, God turns to the creature and begins to lecture him about his inheritance and his capacities. It is in this context that a connection can be made to the Mirror of Princes tradition. According to Chaundler, Man is to exercise a dual lordship. In the first place, he is to rule over his constituent faculties. Having accomplished self-mastery, Man can then justly rule over the creation. Indeed, God speaks to Man about his role in creation using terms and phrases drawn from the coronation liturgy as found in the *Liber Regalis*.[37] Alluding to the service of royal investment, God crowns Man saying, "constituamque tel principem ut duplicis prerogatiua dominii glorieris, supra passiones et uires intrinsecas appetitus sensitiui et sensualitatis partes, ac dehinc ut cunctis animantibus terre presis, que uel mole corporis, uel uirium magnitudine, uel armis dentium quam tu sis multo ualenciora sunt" (62).[38] As a sign of the lordship bestowed on him, God presents to the creature a specter and orb,and then Man's two new allegorical partners, Reason and Sensuality, female figures who collectively assume the role of Eve. As God declares, "consiliarium igitur unum ex hiis qui in habitaculo meo sunt eidem coaptabo, et preterea alteram ueluti ancillam, quanto obcecaciorem, tanto suis aptiorem ministeriis, ei dabo in iumentum. Equidem sit prior racio, sensualitas hominis pedissequa." (66).[39] The first realm that Man is charged to rule over and govern is the community he forms with Reason and Sensuality.[40]

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[36] "In this way, therefore, I breathe into this body, to animate and rule it, a rational soul created according to our own image."

[37] See Shoukri 62n11.

[38] "I shall establish you as prince, so that you may glory in the prerogative of double lordship, over the passions, both the inward forces of sensual desire and the parts of sensuality; and then, that you may rule over all living things of the earth."

[39] "I shall assign to him one counselor from among those who live in my dwelling. In addition, I shall give another handmaid, as a beast of burden, as it were, the more blind the more fit for her duties. At all events, let Reason have first place and let Sensuality be man's attendant."

[40] In his essay "Philosophy of Mind," Norman Kretzmann observes, "Aquinas, following an Aristotelian line, thinks of sensuality as sorted into two complementary appetites or powers: the *concupiscible* – the

In another moment that surely might be exploited for its sense of spectacle, Reason presents Man the gift of a mirror when they are first introduced, which she calls the *speculum racionis*. Humbling herself before the throne, she tells Man: "Accipe igitur, O homo, de manu mea speculum racionis…illius efficacie et uirtutis, ut in agnicionem creatoris tui cuius imaginem geris et creaturarum preterea omnium…ac presertim tuimet, quid sis" (70).[41] The purpose of the gift is to assist the man in his quest for self-knowledge and proper action in the world. Reason explains further, "Cum ergo tibi in agendis rebus dubium uertitur, quidque agere debeas ignoratur, omnino inspice lucidissimum speculum istud et in eo clarissime quid rectum, quid iniquum, quid uitandum, quid penitus agendum sit reperies" (70).[42] However, she also gives an ominous warning about the mirror's power to see into the state of his soul: "Si, quod absit, igitur distortus aliquando aut deformis' exigencia demeritorum, imaginem Dei amiseris, effectus idolum mortis atque confusionis, noli distortum esse speculum iudicare, immo affectui inordinato tuisque miseriis deformitatem illam ascribe. Verum, quia cuiusmodi es talem effigiem ac similitudinem tibi, uelut reflexis quibusdam intentionum radiis, presentabit" (70).[43] At this point, evidently pleased with the situation, God exits the stage, leaving man alone with his counselors.

Despite the gift of the speculum, through which he could have questioned his motives, Man's actions immediately begin to disrupt the community he shares with Reason and Sensuality. In rapid

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inclination to seek the suitable and flee the harmful (pursuit/avoidance instincts) – and the *irascible* – the inclination to resist and overcome whatever deters one's access to the suitable or promotes the harmful (competition/aggression/defense instincts). Distinct sets of passions (or emotions) are associated with each of these powers: with concupiscible: joy and sadness, love and hate, desire and repugnance; with irascible: daring and fear, hope and despair, anger. For philosophy of mind and for ethics, the important issue is the manner and extent of the rational faculties' control of sensuality, a control without which the unity of the human soul is threatened and Aquinas' virtue-centered morality is impossible" (145).

[41] "Receive, therefore, O Man, from my hand, the mirror of reason…of such power and efficacy that, having looked into it, you will be able to arrive more fully at a knowledge of your Creator, whose image you bear, and besides, of all the creatures…and especially at a knowledge of yourself, of what you are."

[42] "Therefore, when you have to do something and doubt turns about your mind, and you do not know what to do, by all means look into this clearest of mirrors and in it you will perceive most clearly what is right, what unjust, what ought to be avoided and what ought thoroughly to be done."

[43] Therefore if (Heaven forbid!) at any time, distorted and deformed by the constraint of your demerits, you should have lost the image of God, and become a picture of death and confusion, do not decide that the mirror is distorted. Rather attribute that deformity to excessive passions and to your own wretchedness. For whatever sort of person you are, it will present your image and likeness as if reflecting the beams of your intentions"

succession, he accepts the advances of Sensuality, favoring his flirtatious handmaid over the too-staid Reason. At the advice of Sensuality, Man banishes Reason from his presence. Humorous banter ceases, however, when Man accepts the Fruit from the hand of Sensuality. It has been observed by Flood that Chaundler's account of the fall lacks Eve's contribution. He has also, of course, left out the serpent. In the miracle cycle plays tradition Lucifer, often dressed as a worm, seduces Eve to sample the forbidden fruit.[44] But in Chaundler's account it is Man's own inability to properly follow Reason that is the root cause of sin. Stated only in terms of dramatic representation, the consequences of the fall are tremendous, with the most notable shift being the transformation of the linguistic register. Chaundler's prose turns from the academic language spoken by God and Reason to a classically inflected rhetoric spoken by Man. When he bites into the forbidden fruit, Man becomes aware that he is alone. He looks into his mirror only to see a distorted form. Sounding very much like Aeneas as he is compelled to leaving smoldering Troy, Man cries, "Erubesco nuditatem meam, sed magis a facie potentis Dei contremisco. Detestor uitam et omnes horreo, fugio, execror. Repetam siluestres fugas et saltus densos ut abscondar in eis et mixtam feris ducam similemque uitam" (84).[45] In his shame, he desires to hide in the wild wood – the *silvestri* – familiar from Latin pastoral poetry. As it will become apparent in a later act, the specific allusion is to Virgil's *Aeneid*. Allegorically speaking, the dark wood that Man retreats to following his fall is analogous to the woods in which Aeneas lost his self control in his desire for Dido, and the woods he must struggle through in his search for the golden bough and the entrance to the underworld. Like Aeneas, the pious founder of the Roman people, Man is driven out of his native land and must struggle to establish himself in a new place.

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[44] For a full account of the role of Eve in all four of the extant English morality plays, see John Flood's book, *Representations of Eve in Antiquity and in the English Middle Ages*, 106-109.

[45] "I tremble at the presence of Almighty God. I loathe life and I tremble before, flee, and curse all men [the more correct rendering should be: "and curse all things"]. I shall seek again the wooded retreats and dense forests so that I may hide myself in them and mingling with the wild beasts lead life as they do."

Act Two: Disputing Sin

The second act opens with God on stage offering the frank admission that man disobeyed, and, as a result, will die. Recapitulating Anslem's opinion, God speaks of a desire to show mercy to the Man, but to do so would deny God's own existence, seeing that God is Justice and Truth personified. Meanwhile, sin must be punished in order to maintain the order of the universe. Yet God allows Man the opportunity to answer the charges. "Vocabo tamen hominem hunc si forte aliquando conuersus, penitenciam egerit / ut, humilem ueniam postulans, post hunc lapsum preuium earn consequi ualeat.Vbi es homo? Cur, post istiusmodi commissa facinora, peccata non detegis, sed petis fugam et latebras? Nescio ubi sis homo. Surge, inquam, homo et de latibulo ueni tuo" (86).[46] At this summons, Man enters onstage to face God, and he now takes the role of a student challenging a master in a disputation. The dramatic frame has shifted away from the themes introduced by the miracle plays to a scene out of a schoolroom drama, one more familiar to an academic audience. In a provocative manner, Man advances the claim that it was God, not Man, who was the author of his own sin. "Ex illo quoque auctor diceris operum bonorum in homine quod uoluntatem eius in bonum trahis. A pari ergo racione probaris et autor mali peccatique mei quod in te commiserim" (90).[47] In return, God offers a full-throated defense of Man's free will. Shourki notes that Chaundler has crafted the argument using quotes from Peter Lombard's *Sentences*; what has gone unnoticed, however, is that God's line of argument crafted by Chaundler's editorial interventions, pays homage to the Oxford theologian, Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine.[48] Needless to say, Man comes out

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[46] "Nevertheless, I shall summon this man to see if perchance, being at length converted, he will do penance, so that, seeking humble pardon after this fall, he may be able to attain it. Where are you, Man? Why, after having committed such wicked deeds, do you not lay bare your sins, but rather seek flight and places in which to hide? I do not know where you are, O Man. Arise, I say, Man, and come forth from your hiding place."

[47] "You are said to be the Author of good works in Man, from the fact that you draw his will toward the good. Therefore, by the same token, you are proved to be the Author of evil and of the sin which I have committed against you"

[48] Chaundler's quotation of Lombard traces Bradwardine's argument as found in his *De causa Dei contra Pelagianos*. Heiko Oberman describes the contours of the argument on pp. 171-173 of his work, *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, A Fourteenth-Century Augustinian.* The crucial importance of Bradwardine's thinking about the atonement and its affect on English devotional literature is discussed by Jeremy Catto in his essay, "1349-1412: Culture and History" found in *The Cambridge Companion to*

on the losing end of his disputation with God. And there are consequences to be paid. God snatches the scepter from Man's right hand, replacing it with a flail, or as Shoukri would have it, a scourge. Likewise God takes the orb from Man's left hand and gives to him in return a pitchfork, or shovel. God takes leave of Man with a curt yet enigmatic farewell: "Inter has tue condicionis erumpnas, si ueraciter te criminis penitet, non obliuiscetur misereri Deus quoniam tempus miserendi ueniet, usque tunc ut meruisti. Vale" (97).[49] Stinging and sharp in its tone, the rebuke does come with the oblique promise of grace. The "until then" of the word *tunc*, provides an indefinite temporal horizon for its arrival. As a result, Man remains suspended between the knowledge of the impending punishment due to his guilt and the arrival of mercy.

Defeated in argument and stripped of the symbols of rule, man is left alone to wait and ponder his situation. The second act comes to its rueful conclusion with Man offering his thoughts in a soliloquy, which, in its 109 lines, is carefully structured into two component sections. First Man expresses to the audience that he is wracked with fear, particularly the fear of death: "Continui horrors terrent et eterni torquebunt pro scelere dolore" (98).[50] And as he contemplates death, he admits to his own crime that he had denied in the earlier disputation with God. As he confesses, "Me miserum, peccaui in Dominum meum et ea propter iustissime patior tribulacionem hanc cordis mei. Non enim ipse dedit uoluptates, non illecebras, non uanam gloriam, aut sciencie cupiditatem, non incentina libidinis aut equalitatis Dei, quam

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Medieval English Mysticism. Catto relates Bradwardine's thinking on atonement to Rolle. He writes, "The quiet gestation of Rolle's writings, followed by their rapid proliferation in the last part of this period, illustrates the coming of age of a literary genre new in England: guides to the art of contemplation, now becoming distinct from sermons, exhortations to a better life, expositions of the Decalogue, and other instruments of moral and pastoral religious teaching. It was a literature of which the common ground was the development of *conscientia* (self-awareness) as the starting point of contemplation. This was a notion grounded in the moral and pastoral theology of the later fourteenth century; it had come to be articulated as the great speculative questions of the mid-century, the relation of God's omnipotence to human free will and that of divine grace to human merit, and had been subtly refocused in more personal terms, on the issue of salvation, or justification as it would be termed in the following century. These great questions had never been purely speculative, and as developed by Thomas Bradwardine in his *De causa Dei contra Pelagianos (The case of God against the Pelagians),* the doctrine of God's gratuitous grace and predestination of the saved became a source of consolation and a spur to steadfast faith for the sinner, and therefore a powerful influence on confessors (like Bradwardine himself) by whom men of action sought to be absolved" (114).

[49] "Amidst these tribulations of your state, if you are truly penitent for your crime, God will not forget to show mercy since the time to have mercy will come; until then, as you have deserved. Farewell."

[50] "Continual fears terrorize me and everlasting pains will torment me because of my crime."

ego miser appetii, et uanam concupiscenciam pro quibus hiis equissime comprimor malis meis" (100).[51] After confessing to his own sin, the grammar changes from the first to the second person. Once speaking *of* himself, he now speaks *to* himself: "Vtinam cognouisses decora anima, Dei imagine signata, utinam cognouisses te homo, quia gloria Dei fuisti, cognouisses inquam te, quantusfueris, attendissesque ne, quando laqueis irretitus, inimici preda uenantis factus, fauces terribilis leonis incurrisses qui rugit et circuit querens quem deuoret" (100). In short, education happened. Man learned. In evidence of his learning, the soliloquy makes a dramatic turn as Man connects his own guilt to a more generally conceived sense of human nature. In the very next sentence, Man's grammatical number changes again, this time to the third person. Having come to an understanding of his own culpability, he weeps for his unborn descendants, whom he addresses with these words:

> Unde hoc maxime doleo quia futura progenies tota posteritasque mea ueneno mei facinoris infecta est. O dulcissimi filii mei, quid peccastis uos aut quid egistis mali, ut peccatorum et preuaricacionum mearum participes efficiamini…Quid particulariter dixerim de quibusdam cum generaliter omnes ob meam exosam preuaricacionem sine sciencia, sine uerbo, sine uirtute nascentur, flebiles, nudi, debiles, imbecilles, parum a brutis distantes, immo minus in multis habentes?...Rursum propter quod ineluctabile scelus tota et omnis posteritas deperibit. O dulcissimi filii, quis mihi det ut pro uobis singulis singulas mortes soluam? (102-104).[52]

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[51] "O wretched me! I have sinned against my Lord and on that account I suffer this tribulation of my heart most justly. For he gave neither the pleasures, nor allurements, nor vain glory, nor longing for knowledge, nor incitements to lust, or to equality with God, which together with vain concupiscence, I a wretch sought, and for all of which I am most justly weighed down by these my woes."

[52] "Wherefore this I especially lament, that future generations and all my posterity have been poisoned by the venom of my wicked deed. O my dearest children, how have you sinned or what evil have you done that you should be made partakers of my sins and transgressions…But why should I speak singly of some, when the whole race, because of my hateful transgression shall be born without knowledge, without the word, without virtue, tearful, nude, feeble, weak, hardly distinguished from the brutes, or rather having in many ways less than the animals?...On the contrary, because of this irreparable crime, posterity, all and entire, will perish. O most dear sons, who will grant me that I alone might buy off for each of you each of your deaths?"

Through his address to his unborn progeny, Man artfully conflates the Virgilian allusion to an unborn future race with an address to the audience, who of course share the stain of Adam. When Aeneas journeys to the underworld in Book Six of the *Aeneid*, he sees the souls of "races unborn." His dead father, Anchises, then introduces him to the yet unborn Romans. In Man's address to his progeny, he uses the vocative, "Oh my dear sons," [*O dulcissimi filii*], conflating the unborn, yet condemned, race with the audience. In so doing, this speech lays the necessary groundwork for connecting, in the single character Man, the individual faults of the first man, or Adam, of the miracle tradition, to the common lot of death, which is faced by the everyman of the morality tradition.[53]

Act Three: Courtroom Drama

The third act comprises two distinct dramatic scenes: the first is a courtroom drama where advocates for God and Man try the indicted Man on the charges of impiety; second is a depiction of the redemption of Man in the incarnation of God. The action onstage begins with God reviewing what has gone before. God reminds the audience that Man was created as a rational creature in the image and likeness of God in order to restore the number lost in the fall of the angels, and for this reason God finds Man's harsh treatment of Reason so reprehensible. Knowing that the offense caused by such a sin demands punishment, God observes, "Et si ego elatis et superbientibus angelis nusquam peperci, quanto magis putredini huic homini miserrimo nequaquam parcere debeam" (106),[54] and decrees that Man will be called to a public account of his deeds: "Ita ego ad indesinentes racionis et consciencie querelas ueni ad iudicandum hominem. Assistent igitur iudiciis ueritas et iusticia aduersus hominis preuaricacionem,

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[53] When he first enters the underworld in 6.703 Aeneas notices the specteral precense of unborn nations. "Interea videt Aeneas in valle reducta / seclusum nemus et virgulta sonantia silvis, / Lethaeumque, domos placidas qui praenatat, amnem. / Hunc circum innumerae gentes populique volabant [After these things Aeneas was aware / Of solemn groves in one deep, distant vale, / Where trees were whispering, and forever flowed / The river Lethe, through its land of calm. / Nations unnumbered roved and haunted there.]

[54] "And if I did nowhere spare the proud and haughty angels, how much more ought I not spare this corruption, most wretched Man?"

impietatisque maliciam obiecture" (108).[55] In order to make sense of this charge, we (and the audience) must recall the mine of meanings associated with the word *pietas*. In the Argumentum, Bekynton's piety was praised, which in turn led Chaundler to contemplate the God's piety. It is God's piety that gives impulse for the creation and redemption of the world. Now, in God's indictment, which calls him to account for original sin, Man must face the charge of impiety, the same charges faced by Socrates in *The Apology*.

With the charges read out for the audience, God commands Justice to summon Man to appear before the court: "Verum quia absentem nisi prius uocatum condem[p]nari non decet, fac, O iusticia, presentari hominem compareatque in iudicio" (106).[56] God then leaves the main playing area and ascends a throne, appointing Truth and Justice to prosecute man. Man, however, approaches the bar prepared for the proceedings: he has brought his lawyers, Peace and Mercy. He informs God, "Ceterum graciosissimas duas induxi quas quidem meas in hac re aduocatas constituo: altera est misericordia, altera pax. Eis plenariam tractandi respondendique committo potestatem, quas ipse tu Deus clementer exaudire digneris" (108).[57] What ensues in this lengthy third act is a courtroom drama scene featuring the four daughters of God, familiar to us from the morality play tradition. As God sits on the throne adjudicating the trial, the two sets of advocates argue the case to a standstill. Each daughter addresses the court in speeches that quote verbatim large portions of two sermons by Bernard of Clairvaux, the *Sermo in Adventu Domini* and *In Festo Annuntiationis Beatae Mariae Virginis*. The crux of their disagreement is simple: God's Justice will be insulted if a policy of Peace is followed and God's Truth will be perverted if Mercy is shown; and yet God's nature must show both Peace and Mercy. At the trial's end, the four advocates remain caught in this impasse, and describing the double bind, God laments, "Si non moritur

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[55] "But since it is not fitting that an absent person be condemned unless he has first been summoned, cause Man to present himself, O Justice, and let him appear for judgment."

[56] "And so, at the ceaseless complaints of Reason and of conscience, I have come to judge Man. Accordingly, let Truth and Justice stand in judgment against the transgression of Man, *and charge him with the wickedness of impiety*. [Emphasis mine.]

[57] "Besides, I have brought two most gracious ones, whom I herewith constitute my advocates in this matter: the one is Mercy and the other Peace. Full power to handle this and to give opinions I entrust to them whom you yourself, O God, will mercifully deign to hear."

homo, estimabitur perire iusticia, et si delicto suo non satisfaciat nee saluetur homo, uidebitur perire misericordia. Ego iusticia et ueritas, ego misericordia et pax. Si ergo in me sunt idem, quare inter se scissa sunt earum corda ac diuisi animi?" (128).[58] As it turns our, God is the only being by whom the dilemma can be resolved. Repeating an Anselmian formula, God notes that because a human perpetrated the transgression against God, God's honor demands that atonement of that offense must also come from a human. Yet finite humanity cannot appease an infinite God; therefore, God must incarnate into human form. Thus the Incarnation. Now God descends from the throne while making this address to the court: "Iustus et misericors, paciens et multe misericordie et uerax, ego ueniam et uidebo eum. Descendam et alligabo uuinera eius pro homine factus homo" (130),[59] and the language of reconciliation replaces the adversarial tenor of the courtroom. God approaches Man and greets him as a brother: "Igitur verbum caro factum sit et habitet in homine. Salue frater" (130).[60] He then preaches a sermon to Man, choosing as his text the parable of the Good Samaritan. And after the final point of exegesis – concerning the raising of Lazarus (as opposed to the resurrection of Jesus) – God declares the forgiveness of Man's sin: "Ecce totus efficitur sanus homo" (137). In a work emphasizing rhetoric, it is no accident that the redemption of man occurs within a sermon. Expressed as royal fiat, the atonement of Man's sin is made efficacious in the incarnation of God, even while no direct reference is made to the work or person of Christ. Indeed, the only mention of Christ's name found in the entire text is the brief marginal note, which reads, "*Christi ascensio*" (137). In the same address in which Man's sins are forgiven, God acknowledges that the sinful impulse has not been completely eradicated in human nature, and so he presents to Man the four cardinal virtues to watch over him. "Sed quoniam non ad perfectum et plenum in eo peccati fomes extinguitur, quatuor uirtutibus cardinalibus, iusticie uidelicet, prudencie, fortitudini, et temperancie, fragilitatem

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[58] "If Man does not die, Justice will be thought to perish; and if Man does not give satisfaction for his sin and is not saved, Mercy will seem to perish. I am myself Justice and Truth; I am myself Mercy and Peace. If, therefore, in Me they are one and the same, why are their hearts rent amongst themselves and their minds divided?"

[59] "Just and merciful, long-suffering and of much mercy, and true, I shall come and I shall see him. I shall descend, and I shall bind up his wounds, on behalf of Man made Man."

[60] "Therefore, let the word be made flesh and let it dwell with Man. Hail, Brother."

hominis nondum solidatam regulandam committo, ut uiuat homo et non pereat in eternum" (137).[61] With this gift the third act ends and God exits the stage, telling man, "Tu igitur gaude et interim, uale frater" (138).

Act Four: From First Man to Everyman

The fourth and last act of *Liber Apologeticus* witnesses the transformation of Man from a character resembling the first man, who was drawn from the miracle play's treatment of Adam, into an everyman character from the morality tradition, a character who must face his own approaching death. Recognizing Chaundler's use of this tradition, Shoukri adds in her edition of the play the subtitle, "a moral play." Catto seems to agree with the designation, noting that the play is "more properly" a morality rather than a miracle play. In the extant English morality plays, an everyman figure receives an uncomfortable reminder of his mortality, a *momento mori*, and must prepare for death and the last things. In *Everyman*, for example, the plot is driven by Everyman's quest to find company—seeking companions from his external world and his inner life—in his appointment with death. As the fourth act of the *Liber Apologeticus* begins, however, Man has already suffered some of the consequences of sin when he loses his symbols of power and authority, finding them replaced by the pitchfork and the flail. Moreover, Man has already expressed his contrition and accepted the reality of his impending mortality. The crux of the fourth act of the *Liber Apologeticus* is not to be found in the expected reformation of the inner or external life brought about by the fear of death and judgment, as the generic narrative of the morality tradition would suggest. Rather, the fourth act addresses the question of whether or not one should actually fear death.

When the act opens, Man is sitting in council with the four virtues—Justice, Temperance, Prudence and Fortitude. Unlike the previous three acts, it is Man, in a sign of his redemption, who opens the act with a brief speech nominally addressed to his counselors, that recapitulates the plot and sets the dramatic context. In this speech, he expresses his joy in the community he has found. Following man's

[61] "Behold Man is made entirely sound. But since the kindling of sin is not extinguished in him wholly and perfectly, I commit the frailty of Man, not yet firm, to be ruled by the four cardinal virtues, namely, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance, so that Man may live and not perish for all eternity."

address to his counselors, each of the four virtues makes a brief statement about its role in the righteous community they have formed with Man under the terms of God's new dispensation. At the conclusion of the counselors' remarks, Man happily states, "Gloriandum est profecto in tali societate…quam dulcis est caritas que facit cohabitare unanimes" (144).[62] But, before Man can finish, Prudence interrupts him, warning of an intruder: "Ecce adest quidam terribilis ualde, atroci aspectu et minas gerens" (144).[63] Enter the first messenger, who announces himself as the Fear and Memory of Death. He was sent because his master, Death, has heard rumors how Man has gloried in the greatness of his redemption. The messenger's task is to "command" [*precepit*] that he brings to the very front of his thoughts [*cogitatinibus*] the memory of death. Receiving the news, Man queries the messenger, wishing to know when his master will arrive and who might come with him. In this respect, Man's reaction follows the expectations of the morality play genre. The messenger notes that Death is near but he does not know the hour of his arrival. He can say, however, that when he does arrive he will come with "great books" and "fiery chains." The learned in the audience will have noted that thus far in the fourth act, the account of Man sitting in council and the interruption by the messengers is drawn verbatim from Hugh of St. Victor's *De anima*. Chaundler now adds to this account the important detail that each of the messengers carries a letter from their respective masters. Petrarchan in its form and style of address, the letter from Death is the crown jewel of the play's rhetorical treasure chest. In the salutation, Death introduces his attributes, though they will not resolve themselves into a pattern until the final two words: "Terminus et finis uniuerse carnis, iusta mors, peccati pena, metus et terror omnibus quos uita uiuificat et quos tegit caro, ultimum et maximum omnium terribilium, homini adhuc in carne relicto usquedum uenero, salute" (148).[64] In the body of the letter Death recapitulates the content of Man's salvation history from his own perverse perspective. First he notes that in the fall Man became a "monster and anomaly" [*monstrum*

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62 "There must, indeed, be rejoicing in such fellowship…how sweet is charity which causes those of one mind to live together."

63 "Lo! Here is some one, very terrible, of hideous aspect, bearing threats on his face."

64 "End and aim of all flesh, death, just penalty of sin, fear and terror to all whom life quickens and whom flesh covers, sends, to Man still remaining in the flesh until I shall come, the last and most frightful of all terrors, greetings."

anomalumque] within the created order. Showing off some his learning, Death demonstrates the etymology of his name, claiming that Death [*mors*] is derived from the bite [*morsu*] of the forbidden fruit. His letter states his claim over Man, reminding him: "cuius tui peccati cum nos pena fuerimus et tu ipse mortalis factus, nostre dehinc potestati subiectus fueris" (150).[65] Playfully imitating Petrarch's letters to famous authors, Death closes his own with the note, "Scriptum infra tartarea claustra, ministrante nobis specialissimo nostre secretario, Sathana, post annos regni nostri sexies mille sexcentos et uiginti quatuor" (150).[66] Man does not, however, show any emotion or attempt to bargain with Death's messenger in order to postpone the inevitable. Rather, he seems fully composed. Wondering if the Messenger should be admitted to their fellowship, he poses this question to his council: "Rectum sane et iustum teneo Deum timere. Sed instruat te fortitudo, interroga eum si compati poterit secum stare mortis timorem" (150).[67] Each of the four counselors, all quoting scripture, advise Man that Fear should, indeed, join their fellowship.

With that matter settled, Man begins an oration in praise of their recently expanded community, but before he can finish, Prudence takes note of another messenger approaching the council. This second messenger is described as a beautiful woman, "cheerful and bright with comely countenance" [*pulcher, hilaris, ac decoro uultu nitens*.] Man bids her to come near and explain her business. Announcing herself as Charity, she, too, brings a letter from her master. God's letter follows the same form and structure of Death's missive, though lacking the latter's humor and irony. Written from heaven, the letter reminds Man of his redemption; and it exhorts him to take action: "Age ergo, O homo, age ut letificemur in tuo aduentu. Confige mentern tuam in huius amore patrie propter quam cuncta dampna, contumelias, egestates, abiectiones nequaquam forxnidare sed et ipsam mortem despicere et eternitatis amore paruipendere et conculcare debes." The action greatly desired by God is for Man to spurn Death: "Quod si

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[65] "Know that since we were the punishment of your sin and you yourself became mortal, from that time forth you became subject to our power."
[66] "Written below the gates of hell, with Satan, our very special secretary, ministering to us, in the year of our reign six times a thousand, six hundred and twenty-four."
[67] "Does Fear deserve that we give some thanks or should he rather be received into the household, that he may relate to us the perils of death?"

iuste certando mortem contempseris, permanebit amor nuncius noster ut testimonium perhibeat super hiis que fiunt apud te" (158).[68] Having heard both messages, Man asks his council for advice and decides that Charity should join their fellowship, since no fellowship with Charity could ever tolerate Fear of Death. Thus is Fear of Death dismissed from the fellowship and, outraged, promises to report the event to his master. "Exibo et conquerar ei qui me misit. Mors enim tantam in me nuncium suum factam iniusticiam uindicabit" (161).[69]

Shortly thereafter Death arrives for Man and speaks. Like his letter writing style, Death's speech is hyperbolic, opening his address with three superlative nouns hurled as insults to Man: "Vilissimum, impiissimum, et superbissimum hominem, totum in fortitudine et uirtute sua gloriantem, de me omnium terribilium maximo et iusta peccati sui pena paruifacientem, hac manu mea feriam et opprobrium sempiternum dabo illi deleboque nomen eius de terra" (162).[70] Man does not flinch at this provocation, particularly the insult of being called "impius," which was the charge he faced at his trial. Instead, his response is measured, composed and brief, a rarity in this text. Man simply says, "Respice mors quam acceptus est mihi, quam carus eciam, tuus aduentus" (162),[71] and ascends to the throne. Here the death of Man is celebrated as a coronation: Justice presents Man the cloak of immortality and hands him the golden rod of justice; Temperance replaces Man's scourge with the lost scepter; Prudence takes the shovel and returns the orb; Fortitude clothes Man in the robe of glory. The last lines of the play are spoken by Charity as she crowns man: "Nunc ueni; coronaberis homo corona quidem aurea quam

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[68] "Act, therefore, O Man, act so that we may rejoice at your coming. Fix your mind upon the love of this land, because of which you ought in no way to fear losses, dishonour, poverty, humiliation, but to despise death itself and by love of eternity to esteem it lightly and tread it underfoot. And if by striving justly you shall have scorned death, Love, our messenger, will remain to bear testimony concerning those things that are done at your house."

[69] "I shall go and I shall complain to him who sent me; for death will avenge so great an injustice done to me his messenger."

[70] "This most vile, most impious and most proud Man, wholly glorifying in his strength and power, making light of me, the greatest of all terrors and the just punishment for his sins, I shall strike with this my hand, and I shall give him everlasting disgrace and I shall blot out his name from the earth."

[71] "Look, Death, how acceptable, and how dear even, your arrival is to me."

repromisit Deus uigilantibus et diligentibus quam usque nunc ego ipse tibi reseruaui iustum premium iuste certanti" (164).[72]

While Chaundler's verbosity has been widely panned, we need to bracket contemporary critical distaste for his admittedly florid and prolix style so as to understand his remarkable achievement. The *Liber Apologeticus* presents a humanist version of the salvation story, where sin and redemption are explored only in reference to the experience of Man. The detailed reading of the *Liber Apologeticus* provides material evidence for three claims regarding this underappreciated work. First, the play, in all of its complexity, could not have been addressed solely to Chaundler's patron, Bishop Bekynton. The play's theological scope is too large and its linguistic range too great for an audience of one, which suggests that the work may well have been performed on the collegiate stage for a mixed audience with varying levels of education. In this context, the figure of Bishop Bekynton becomes an example of piety for a scholarly audience. Second, regarding the play's treatment of sources and analogs, Chaundler places quotations from key philosophical and theological texts already part of the education of bachelors—particularly Peter Lombard, Peter Comestor, Hugh of St. Victor and St. Bernard of Clairvaux—into the mouths of student actors within recognizably theatrical contexts. This reformulation of resources gives narrative shape to the quoted texts. Regarding the work's dramatic form, Chaundler is not simply employing motifs from the miracle and morality traditions. In the transformation of Man through the various generic formulations raised in subsequent acts, Chaundler places the tenets of humanist-inflected scholasticism into a conversation with theological assumptions and dramatic conventions deriving from those popular traditions, making specific interventions into generic conventions. Finally, the transformation of Man is successfully navigated through the various dramatic frames because of the rhetorical inventiveness and wide register of Latinity the author deploys in the text. In this regard, it might be suggested that the *Liber Apologeticus'* sheer volume of prose, the variety of rhetorical features, and the multiple generic frames are a feature of the author's luxuriant maximalist style. It could further be suggested that the *Liber*

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[72] "Come now: you will be indeed be crowned, O Man, with the golden crown which God promised to those who watch and love him."

Apologeticus is a collection of rhetorical set pieces—such as disputations, speeches, court pleadings and the like—imbedded into the frame of a drama.

The Chaundlerian Manuscripts and the Extended Audience of Political Theater

The first section of this chapter examined the codicological features common to both the Chaundlerian manuscript at Trinity College and the one at New College, paying special attention to the textual memorialization of performance in the college. The second section took up the text and contexts of the *Liber Apologeticus* as a work intended for performance on that stage. At this stage of the argument it can be said with some confidence that the audience of the dramatic work was different from Bekynton, to whom the manuscript was presented. Still, the existence of two manuscripts of this work remains to be explored. In particular, what work might Chaundler have hoped to accomplish with the production of these two magnificent codices? While Chaundler dedicated the manuscripts to Bekynton, in a very real sense he is not addressing his patron at all. We should now turn to those manuscripts to see some of the ways that Chaundler bypassed his intended recipient and positioned his patronage relationship vis-à-vis Bekynton as an example of humanist piety for a wider audience within the Wykehamist sodality.

We can begin by remembering that in the Argumentum to the *Liber Apologeticus*, Chaundler labors to demonstrate Bekynton's pious devotion to God with a description of his building program at Wells cathedral. In a curious aside, Chaundler approvingly notes the tomb Bekynton had constructed and consecrated some fifteen years before his death. It appears to have been an example of what Panofsky calls a cadaver tomb, its top canopy presenting an effigy arrayed in clerical finery: the miter, toga, chasuble, staff and the episcopal cross and ring. In contrast to the intentionally ostentatious display, the lower half containing a shriveled and naked corpse, with bones creeping through the once living skin. (See Illustration 2.20) The precedent in England for constructing such a tomb actually came from Bekynton's own patron, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry Chichele, Bekynton's fellow alumnus of New College and older colleague in Henry VI's administration. (See Illustration 2.19) Their tombs present a complex narrative about social class, advancement and memory in late medieval society; a

narrative that Chaundler adapts and broadcasts in the manuscripts presented to his patron.[73] Bekynton and Chichele, like Chaundler, were born into humble circumstances. All three men were identified as promising from an early age. All three parlayed attendance at Wykehamist institutions into high office. And both of the bishops constructed their final resting places long before their deaths. Meant to communicate that the world's vanities end in the grave, the inscription on Chichele's tomb is instructive: "I was pauper-born, then to primate raised. Now I am cut down and served up for worms. Behold my grave." As for Chaundler, buried in Hereford Cathedral under a nondescript plaque, I want to suggest that he constructed his own tomb in the two manuscripts given to Bekynton. In his selection of texts and meticulous direction over the artwork and illustrations, Chaundler honors his mentor's theological perspective, spirituality and humanist learning. Moreover, as he presents Bekynton to a wider audience, Chaundler simultaneously deflects attention away from the manner the manuscripts are shaping his own legacy.

Writing in *The Chaundlerian MSS*, M.R. James mentioned that Chaundler does not make reference to the fifteen illustrations in the text of the Trinity College ms.[74] Perhaps the manuscript was compiled and executed after the completion of the texts, or perhaps the illustrations were meant to act as a guide to reading rather than constituent parts of the text itself. As noted earlier, the first illustration in the manuscript depicts the moment Chaundler presents the TC MS R.15.4 to Bekynton. The subsequent

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[73] Panofsky equates the tomb design to a collective or community response to the Black Death. Because life was so precarious, Panofsky theorizes that the communal feeling had more relevance than individual lives. "Perhaps it is also this feeling for the collective," he writes, "as opposed to the individual, relevance of the life lived on earth, and not only the general preoccupation with the macabre that can be observed all over Europe after the Black Death, that we can explain the strange and fascinating phenomenon to which I have repeatedly alluded in employing the term…*representacion au vif* and re*presentacion de la mort*…the placing of a "lifelike" effigy, arrayed in a costume befitting the dignity of a prince or princess, prelate, or at least, a knight, on top of a "deathly" figure showing the deceased as a mere corpse." Panofsky goes on to explain that the two effigies are combined "into what may be described as a 'double-decker tomb' wherein the disintegrating body of the deceased, divested of that which distinguishes the high from the low and the rich from the poor, occupies, as it were, the lower berth while his stately effigy, proudly proclaiming his station in life, reposes above" (64).

[74] At points in his commentary James seems to grow weary of Chaundler. However, his insight is always penetrating and nowhere more so than when he notes two oddities concerning the *Liber Apologeticus*: "Two points should be noted before we go further: first, that he makes no allusion to the pictures; and second, that he never describes the book as a play" (10).

fourteen depict episodes drawn from the *Liber Apologeticus'* transformation of the character Man through every state of human nature. The majestic second illustration shows the creation of man occurring in the wake of the fall of angels, where the two events shown are intertwined within a singular process. God sits on the throne with his loyal angels on his right side. On the left side of the throne, the fallen angels, led by Satan, rush headlong into the abyss. The astounding design of the illustration places the head of the now hideous angel Satan at the heel of the newly created Man, who is raising up his head to acknowledge his creator. The fall of angels may be a singular event, but it inaugurates a procession of consequences. In the third illustration the prelapsarian man, depicted as a youth, sits on the throne while he receives the symbols of his lordship, the scepter and the orb, from the hand of God. Succumbing to the charms of Sensuality in the fifth illustration, Man's fall into sinfulness is illustrated in the sixth illustration as he rushes into the wild wood. In the next, God calls out to him to admonish him for his harsh treatment of Reason. Because God's righteousness was offended, Man was put on trial, and in the ninth illustration, the four advocates argue Man's case before God, sitting in judgment on the throne. In the tenth illustration God and Man, having been reconciled, share the kiss of peace, as do the two opposing sets of lawyers. The rest of the illustrations correspond to action in the fourth act of the play. The eleventh shows Man, now in his prime, standing next to God in the field he must plow. In this scene, God presents Man his new counselors, the four cardinal virtues. Also prominently featured here are the pitchfork and flail held by Man, the tools of subjection that replace his scepter and the orb. In the very next illustration Man, who has now grown old, sits on a throne surrounded by his counselors, still holding the pitchfork and flail. In the twelfth image, two messengers can be seen approaching the throne, bearing letters from their masters. Depicted as a skeleton bearing a spear, Death enters the frame, and stabs Man in the chest in a manner reminiscent of the soldier stabbing Christ at the crucifixion. But in his death, Man has been restored to his full glory. In the final illustration, the symbols of Lordship have replaced the fork and flail and Caritas has placed a crown on his head.

The transformation of Man as told in the manuscript illustrations is simultaneously a history and a process. In a diachronic sense, these illustrations are historical facts that, to Chaundler and his audience,

explain the "state" of their world. In a synchronic sense, they are also a story common to each Christian soul. It is the common lot of humanity to live within a conflicted relationship between the higher faculty of reason and the desires of the body. The rift in that relationship can never be completely mended during human life; rather, it must be transcended in and through death. Further, the incarnation provides an example to human beings of how to order one's inner life and worldly affairs, and with the help of the four cardinal virtues—a class of virtues Aquinas calls "infused moral virtues"—any human being can cooperate with grace in the proper ordering of one's inner and the external affairs. Chaundler, as has been noted, is an analogical thinker. The process that is common to all can be found, allegorically, in the history of a single individual Man.

For the collegiate audience, Bekynton's piety in the Argumentum is the example that demonstrates how a human being can cooperate with grace in the perfection of virtue. Linking the first illustration to the subsequent fourteen, piety becomes invested in the throne as a symbol of self-control. Returning to the first illustration, we find that it depicts a scene where three men are gathered in an otherwise indistinguishable room. Light flows in from a window placed in the upper left corner. A figure identified in the caption as Bekynton is seated in a canopied throne looking down upon another man who kneels before him. The second man, Chaundler, adopts a submissive posture yet maintains and returns the gaze of his patron. He kneels before the bishop as he presents the book in which the illustration appears. The artists pay particular attention to the clothing worn by each figure. Chaundler is wearing the toga, tabard and pileus denoting his status as a doctor of canon law and a doctor of theology.[75] The bishop's mitre is elevated slightly off his head, revealing his own pileus. The pileus functions as a marker of accomplishment, signifying that Chaundler and Bekynton have both been incorporated as Doctors of Canon Law. The bishop accepts the book with his outstretched left arm from the kneeling Chaundler, who proffers the book with his crooked right arm. The gesture of giving generates a strong line flowing

[75] Despite it parochial tone, E.C. Clark's 1894 extended essay, "English Academical Costume," is an important source of information to decode the semiotics of the academic dress depicted in the Chaundlerian manuscripts. Though his interest is primarily his home institution, Cambridge University, he does provide a helpful reading of the "New College on 'parade'" illustration on 85ff.

upward from Chaundler's right arm to Bekynton's left, forming the base of an equilateral triangle. It is, indeed, a line that links both men's hearts through the agency of the book. The triangle is completed in the articulation of the lines generated by the raised right arm of Bekynton, as he makes the sign of the cross over Chaundler, with the line of the bishop's crozier. Symbol of episcopal authority, the crozier is not in the hands of the bishop; it is held by a third man who stands nearby but slightly behind the Bishop and clearly overlooks the scene with some satisfaction. More than a simple ornament to the illustration, this third figure introduces a third person into the dyadic patronage relationship. His positioning and the fact he is holding the crozier denotes that he is an assistant to the Bishop. The tonsure and the similarity of his academic dress to Chaundler signify he is a member of the network of relations that connect the Wykehamist educational institutions to centers of episcopal power. Secondly, in his right hand he is holding a book. A book, not coincidently, of identical shape, size and color of the book Chaundler presents to Bekynton. This last book – whatever text it might be – forms the immediate background to the ritual of gift-giving presented in the foreground.

The third man and the book he holds are representative of the twinned humanist virtues of the circulation of patronage and of books within a shared community of practice. This figure and the book he holds offer keys to understanding Chaundler's conception of his readership. The manuscripts, compiled and produced with the Bishop in mind, were designed to outlive their makers. Particularly in humanist circles, books were objects to enjoy, collect and then pass on. Bekynton himself knew this well: he was the secretary to Duke Humphrey during the negotiations that saw the Duke's collection donated to Oxford. In the ecclesial humanist milieu in which Chaundler circulated, books carried on a life of their own and were in community with each other long after their original owners were dead. Chaundler could reasonably expect that after Bekynton's death both books would continue to circulate in the Wykehamist orbit, or, if not, eventually return to the New College library. Which is, in fact, precisely what occurred in the case of the New College ms. The path of the Trinity College ms. was made considerably more

complicated by collectors during the reformation.[76] In many respects, editorial decisions made by Chaundler can be seen with this extended audience in mind.

In her introduction to the *Liber Apologeticus*, Shoukri observes that the play's interest in peace, reconciliation and social harmony are simply too vague to refer to any specific events in 1450's connected to the War of the Roses. Outside of the mention of the Jack Cade rebellion in one of the letters reproduced in the Trinity MS, Chaundler does not make mention of particular political events in either presentation manuscript. As an influential administrator in both Wykehamist institutions, his cause, in addition to his reputation, are clearly served by insulating the institutions from outside political forces while providing access to potential patronage relationships with powerful political figures to his students. Certainly, there is an ideology of public service introduced in the Argumentum and reinforced in the text of the *Liber Apologeticus*. It is coded as *pietas*, with its devotion to country, the *patria*, rather than the crown. However, it is also a largely de-politicized rhetoric of service, reinforcing the image of the college as a place of reflective study. In the same letter that mentions the Cade rebellion, Chaundler alludes to the Roman dichotomy, found in his exemplars Cicero and Seneca, between *otium* and *negotium*. In that letter Chaundler fashions the college as a place of *otium*, or refuge, from the world's unrelenting business, its *negotium*.[77] If the business of the college is the immediate business of education through lecture and disputation and the longer term project of placement, all three of which are playfully sent up in the Chaundlerian MSS, the center of the college's *otium*, or considered reflection, is the stage itself, temporarily carved out of the college hall.

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[76] For the provenance of the NC MS 288, articulating its transit from Oxford to Wells and back, see Rundle, 534. Regarding the TC MS R.14.5, Shoukri comments, "Concerning the provenance of the manuscript, we know that Chaundler presented it to Bekynton, and we can assume that Bekynton left it to the Cathedral Library at Wells, the seat of his Bishopric, since Leland saw it there during the reign of Henry VIII…We also know that the manuscript was given to Trinity College, its present owner, by Thomas Neville, Master of Trinity College 1593-1615. How it came from Wells Cathedral into the possession of Thomas Neville is unknown" (10-11).

[77] Shoukri reprints the letter on page six of her introduction. See also the *Appendix of Documents* of *The Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton* for other examples of the device, particularly Chaundler's letter to Bekynton, CCLXXXII.

The assumption underwriting Cole and Rundle's analysis of the two manuscripts is that Chaundler, as the junior partner in the relationship, wanted something from Bekynton. Cole has suggested that Chaundler's manuscripts – pointing specifically to the dedicatory illustration in the Trinity College ms., the Argumentum of the *Liber Apologeticus* and the third illustration found in the New College MS as evidence – show that Chaundler wanted the good governance of the Bishop's person and lands, implying something was amiss. Cole places his readings of Chaundler within a larger argument we have seen before, claiming that these writings typify a new cultural scene where ecclesial humanists developed a new "writing to bishops" genre in the gap between two intense periods of Lollard persecutions by the English episcopate.[78] In a more limited argument, Rundle, making particular reference to the reproduction of Wykeham's will in the New College MS 288, characterizes the main objective of that text as a less than subtle attempt at asking for money. There is good cause to question both assumptions: neither the textuality of the manuscripts nor the historical framework surrounding them supports such conclusions. The compilation of both the Trinity College and New College MSS are meant to strike a more reverential chord by placing the dyadic patronage relationship into a wider frame of reference.

By the early and mid-1460's, Bekynton's health was failing and his political star had long since begun to fade. After failing in his diplomatic mission to arrange a marriage relationship for Henry VI in France, Bekynton was demoted from his position as Chancellor of England, so that when he arrived in Wells in 1444 he was a man much reduced in stature in political circles. Although still wealthy and influential, the next twenty years were largely spent with him incumbent in his bishopric. In addition, by the time both manuscripts were compiled, Winchester and New College themselves had achieved firm

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[78] It is not within the scope of this chapter to fully evaluate the entire range of humanist literary production within the English church between 1430 and 1470. However, it is possible to contest the argument that Chaundler's humanist writings were, in the first place, directed to Bishop Bekynton; and secondly, developed in a context that was free of Lollard suspicion. Looking only at the *Register of Bishop Bekynton of Bath and Wells, 1443-1465*, it would seem that a robust persecution of heretics was not in anyway at odds with the generous cultivation of humanist practices. Looking only at members of the Wykehamist circle surrounding Chaundler, Bekynton's register show that five individuals were found guilty of heresy in his court. Chaundler himself supervised the burning of Reginald Peacock's books. A trusted assistant to Bekynton, Hugh Sugar, acted as investigator three times in cases of Heresy on behalf of the Bishop.

financial footing, in no small measure thanks to the assistance of Bekynton and fellow Wykehamist Andrew Holes, who served as an English diplomat to the Roman curia. Their collective lobbying efforts during the 1440's allowed English collegiate institutions the power to seize alien priories, adding an important revenue stream to the college.[79] In addition, Chaundler did not necessarily need the Bishop's largess for his own personal needs. In the years leading up to the publication of the manuscripts in 1460, he had already developed close ties to other members of the English episcopate outside of Wykehamist and Lancastrian circles, notably to the Yorkist George Neville. In addition to several benefices bestowed upon Chaundler, Neville would follow Bekynton's example in appointing Chaundler as the Chancellor of his own cathedral church in York.

The question remains, then: if Chaundler did not require money, favor or any of the direct advantages of pleasing a powerful benefactor through precious gifts, what work might he have expected the two manuscripts to accomplish within the economy of patronage? Chaundler's interest seems to have been in fostering an ecosystem of patronage rather than strictly tending to his own immediate needs. In the manuscripts he fashions the patron/client relationship he shares with Bekynton as an example to other clients and patrons connected to the Wykehamist sodality. As a result, he simultaneously cements his own reputation as a Wykehamist while presenting a humanist vision of a spiritualized and largely de-politicized college. It is in this sense that one can legitimately say he is talking past the Bishop to a pre-figured Wykehamist audience. While they lack the professional artistry found in the earlier Trinity College ms., the four illustrations found in the New College ms. situate Chaundler's readership, illustrating how he, as compiler, prefigured his ideal and idealized reader. In his *History of New College*, Leach, perhaps citing an unknown source, claims that Chaundler himself was the artist. The principle of motion within stasis so evident in the illustrations preceding the *Liber Apologeticus* in the earlier Trinity College ms. inform the interpretation of the four illustrations found in the later manuscript. Taken as a group, the four pictures tell Bekynton's life story while simultaneously reflecting on the accomplishments of the Wykehamist circle. The first two illustrations are group portraits of the students and staff of

[79] See Evans and Faith's essay "College Estates and University Finances 1350-1500" 643.

Winchester and New College. They also trace Bekynton's path through the Wykehamist institutions. The third is an important group portrait of what will be described as the Wykehamist sodality. Drawing attention to the Bishop's massive building program, the final illustration depicts the bishop in his cathedral accepting the gift of the book from Chaundler's hands.

Alluding to his earlier discussion of the procession organized by Bekynton of the students of Winchester College before Henry VI at the dedication of Eton College, Leach calls these illustrations of colleges "on parade."[80] The progress of the drawings move from the "feeder" school, Winchester College, founded by Wykeham in 1394, to the "upper" school, New College, founded in 1379. Within each portrait, the artist pays special attention to the movement and growth of scholars through the gradations of academic rank. Surrounding the warden, members of the colleges are arrayed according to rank from chorister to scholar; and from bachelor, to master and doctor.

The third illustration presents a group portrait of twelve men, connected by their relationship to Winchester and New Colleges. In the caption to this illustration published in their *History of the University of Oxford*, Catto and Evans described the third illustration as the "sodality of New College." Rhodes termed the picture a "Wykehamist group portrait." Both descriptions are right. Importantly, the third illustration is not strictly a "New College" sodality; rather, it is inclusive of both colleges and men who were educated in other institutions. A sodality, in medieval practice, was an extra-ecclesial body, like a confraternity, one that existed for a particular purpose, such as the protection of pilgrims or service to the poor. It is outside of the official role of the church and its varied organizational structures. Cole has directed our attention to the representation of patronage in this picture, noting the up turned face of Chaundler gazing at Bekynton while he clutches the Bishop's downward flowing robe. The flow of patronage down from Bekynton to Chaundler continues as implied from other texts in the manuscript, from Chaundler to his own students. However, his interpretation of the dyadic patron/client relationship should be expanded in two respects. First, the image of patronage between Bekynton and Chaundler should be seen in its place within Bekynton's biography, coming after the pictures of the Winchester and

[80] See, Leach, *A History of Winchester College* 216.

New Colleges and just before the image of the bishop residing in his cathedral. Second, and most importantly, the illustration as a whole should be read as depicting a process of relations, or what was earlier called an ecosystem of patronage, emanating from Wykeham. When preparing this manuscript in the early 1460's Chaundler did not know the outcome of the struggle for supremacy between the Yorkist and Lancastrian houses. In an era before alumni relations and institutional advancement, Chaundler is crafting a lasting image of Wykehamist schools – its "brand identity" to borrow another contemporary phrase – in a quasi-spiritual rather than a political sense. And patronage, clearly, is a significant component of Chaundler's spiritualized vision of the collegiate experience.

At the center of the "group portrait" or "sodality" is the seated figure of William Wykeham, holding in his lap the two institutions he founded, New College and Winchester College. Arrayed around him are eleven "Wykehamist" worthies: in the first rank, the archbishops, from left to right, Chichele and Cranley; in the second rank, Bishops Bekynton and Waynflete. Arranged in a semi-circle at the bottom of the page are the "lesser" worthies, from left to right: Chaundler, Andrew Holes, John Newton, Hugo Sugar, whose back is to the viewer, followed by William Say, Richard Andrew and John Selot. The Wykehamist ethos Chaundler seeks to project to his readership can be found in the pattern of relations that inform this crucial illustration.

We should turn our attention for a short moment to Wyckham and his worthies, since they dwell so securely in the *Liber Apologeticus* illustrations, and their influence shadows the text itself. Of the first order, of course, is William Wykeham, who was probably born sometime between 1320 and 1324, and began his career not in the church, but in administration. He served as secretary to the constable of Winchester Castle, where he came to the attention of Edward III and quite possibly his son, Edward the Black Prince whose household was based in Winchester. He was not ordained until he was about forty, in 1362, and one year later was appointed Lord Privy Seal. He was elevated to the see of Winchester in 1366 and was appointed Chancellor of England in 1367, a post he held until 1371. He returned to the Chancellorship in 1389, serving until 1391. The biography of the founder fuses fact with legend. He is credited for shepherding the careers of talented students drawn from the lower classes, and certainly he

promoted those he whom he had discovered and mentored like Chichele and Bekynton. In the illustration, Wyckeham are the two archbishops, Chichele of Canterbury and Cranley of Dublin, and they also merit some commentary as part of the Wykehamist circle. Born in Northampton in 1362, Chichele was a commoner educated at Winchester College and then New College before entering royal service. In this portrait Chichele is seen holding a model of All Soul's College, which he founded in 1438. Unlike others in this group portrait, Cranley was educated at Merton College, where he supplicated as a Doctor of Divinity. Wykeham's episcopal register indicates Cranley was ordained by Wykeham in 1380 and was appointed two years later as the first warden of Winchester College. He was later made warden of New College, and was subsequently elected Chancellor of Oxford University. He was then elevated to the archiepiscopal see of Dublin in 1397, serving until his death in 1417.

The bishop standing opposite Bekynton is William Waynflete, who was provided the lucrative bishopric of Winchester in 1447. In the 1430's, when Chaundler was a student at Winchester, he was resident master, leaving in 1441 to enter royal service. Notably in this portrait Waynflete, who founded Magdalen Hall in 1448, is not depicted holding a representation of his institution. In any case he remained in the king's inner circle throughout the turbulent years of the 1450's, becoming Chancellor of England in 1456. Moreover, he was the guiding figure in the reconciliation efforts between Henry and the Yorkist forces. He organized the public displays of reconciliation and harmony during the Love Day of 1458, and delivered the opening sermon at the Coventry parliament a year later. He was also a great rival to Chaundler's other patron, George Neville, who impeded the investiture of properties needed to fund Waynflete's college. This rift might explain why Waynflete appears without a representation of his own Oxford foundation.

The lower orders of the portrait are no less important. Among the "lesser" Wykehamist luminaries, Chaundler places several noted humanist scholars *cum* public servants. Andrew Holes, whose contacts in the Curia helped smooth the formation of Eton College and helped in Bekynton's own elevation to the Episcopate. Furthermore, his private book collection steered copies of classical texts to English readers. John Selot was mentioned in the register of Bishop Bekynton as a proctor for prebentary

appointment before his translation to the Archdeaconry of Cornwall, which he held from 1449 to 1461. William Say, likewise, was associated with the Cathedral Church of Wells prior to his appointment as Dean of St. Paul's in London. He was a bachelor of theology by 1451 when he was appointed as a canon of Wells and a prebentry of the Church at Ilton. Both Richard Andrews and John Newton were associated with the Salisbury Diocese in the time when Holes was the incumbent dean. Before his translation to the Archdeaconry of Cornwall in 1449, Andrews served as secretary to Bishop Aiscough, who was killed in the course of the Jack Cade revolt. Andrews went on to serve as the dean of the chapel royal under both Henry VI and Edward IV. Newton was appointed Archdeacon of Berkshire in 1433, which in those years was still in the territory of the Bishop of Salisbury. Hugh Sugar, whose back faces the reader in the Wykehamist group portrait, spent his entire career within the diocese of Wells, where the Bishop's rolls describe him as Bekynton's treasurer. Rhodes has suggested his face is turned away because he was dead at the time of the drawing, as if turning his back on the world. However, this is surely not the case: he was one of the executors of Bekynton's will, surviving the bishop by seven years. Instead, he probably turns his back on worldly ambition: when he was offered a promotion to the archdeaconry of Bath, he lasted only two weeks in that role only to return to his position in Wells at the side of Bekynton; in Chandler's presentation he is facing Bekynton.

The final illustration found in the New College ms. is a portrait of Bishop Bekynton in his cathedral. Chaundler, if he was indeed the artist, gives prominence to the newly fortified walls surrounding the cathedral grounds, including the "beggars gate," now named after Bekynton. The two figures approaching the gate of the cathedral are beggars. In the upper left-hand corner, Chaundler repeats the motif of the presentation of the book found in the Trinity College ms. The bishop, sitting on his throne with his assistant hovering over his right shoulder, accepts the book handed to him by Chaundler, who kneels before the throne.

The years when the New College ms. could have been presented to Bekynton, between 1461 and 1465, truly are the nadir of the Lancastrian cause. With the Lancastrian forces decimated by their defeat at Towton, Edward became king in 1461, with George Neville assuming a role in government as Chancellor

of England. Indeed, it was to Neville that Chaundler resigned the Chancellorship of Oxford University in the autumn 1461. Chaundler's politics, as expressed in the two manuscripts, can be best described as a careful avoidance of politics on the part of the college. In the portrait, the three figures most closely allied with Henry VI are his godfather, Chichele; his former secretary, Bekynton; and his former chancellor, Waynflete. At the time the illustration was made, Wykeham, Chichele and Cranley were already dead. Waynflete and Bekynton were effectively relegated from positions at court, spending their time as incumbents in their sees. The two deans, Say and Andrew, were flexible enough in their politics to continue serving in key positions in government regardless of which side had the political upper hand. Among the lower ranks of the worthies, it might be of some importance that only Andrew Holes faces the reader fully. Exemplifying a life dedicated to service followed by secluded study, Holes spent the bulk of his career as a diplomat in Rome before retiring to a secluded life as a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral.

Conclusion

To his admirers and detractors alike, most scholars who have examined Chaundler's works and career agree that he is something of a harbinger of the Renaissance in England.[81] Certainly he was responsible for improving the quality of Latin both in its writing and in its textual presentation. In his role as shepherd to the Wykehamist institutions and Oxford University, he was partly responsible for bringing the study of Greek to England. However, we should also take note of what he was not: namely: an educational reformer. He did not reform the curriculum along humanist lines, nor was he a thinker who ventured out of the theological mainstream. He was, however, an educational administrator at the college and university level in a period of profound transformation within the English universities. Colleges emerged as semi-clerical corporations whose existence was funded through wealthy patrons who formed chantries in the colleges, leading to a particular form of organization that transformed the universities and

[81] Representative of the vein of thought inspired by Weiss, Shoukri notes, "He was obviously not a Renaissance scholar, nor even a Colet or a Linacre, but he nourished the seeds of the New Learning, prepared a habitation for it and assisted at its birth." Wakelin offers the more circumspect compliment, "He earned his living with the good use of words" (163).

provided a further degree of insulation from the pressures of the political world. As Evans and Faith write in the second volume of *The History of the University of Oxford*,

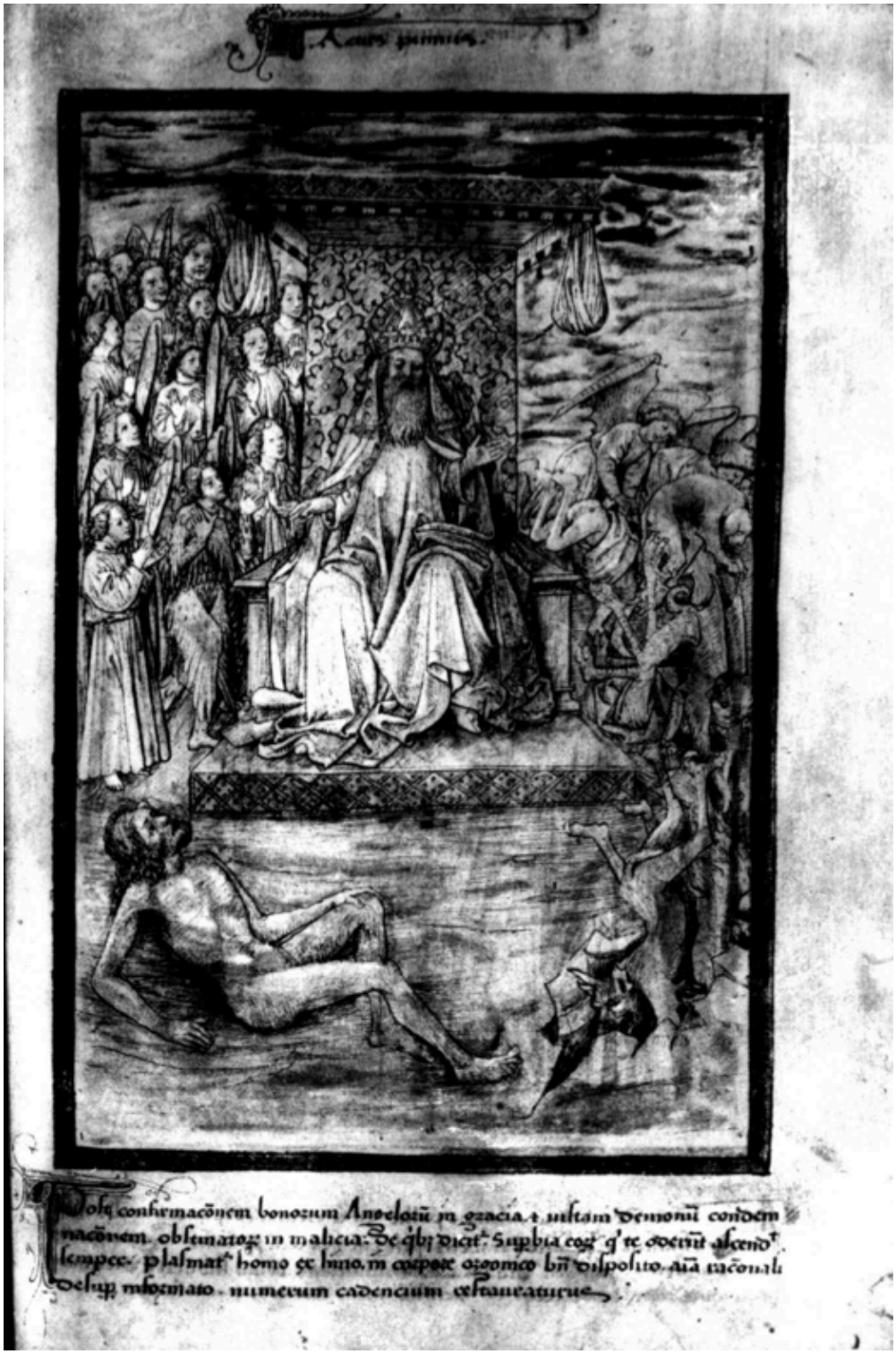
> "The colleges had an advantageous political position, perhaps increasingly so. They had powerful friends and patrons, sometimes their own alumni, who could be called on to bail them out in a crisis with a gift of more property or simply cash... Two colleges founded by bishops of Winchester—New College and Magdalen—were sustained in their early years from the revenues of the episcopal estates. Major figures like Wykeham, Chichele, Bekynton and Henry VI himself were ready to come to the aid of colleges. This favored political position was perhaps part of a wider general esteem. The colleges seemed to have acquired public recognition as deserving institutions which were entitled special consideration, and they had begun to be seen by lay donors as deserving recipients of charity. These factors evidently helped them when it came to the acquisition of the property of the alien priories or securing exemption from taxation, Edward IV's resumption of Lancastrian grants, or the abolition of chantries and the confiscation of monastic lands in the sixteenth century" (702).

It is beyond the scope of the present study to determine how far Chaundler's form of humanism helped inaugurate the de-politicized college. But Chaundler's manuscripts certainly help situate theatrical performance as a site within the university where humanist values were put into conversation with forms drawn from the vernacular drama. As the next chapter will explore, this uncomfortable pairing of theatrical values served to create a disruption between the humanist theory of performance and the contingent realities of a live event.

Figure 2.1: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.2: Trinity College MS R.14.5



Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.3: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.4: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.5: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.6: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.7: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.8: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.9: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

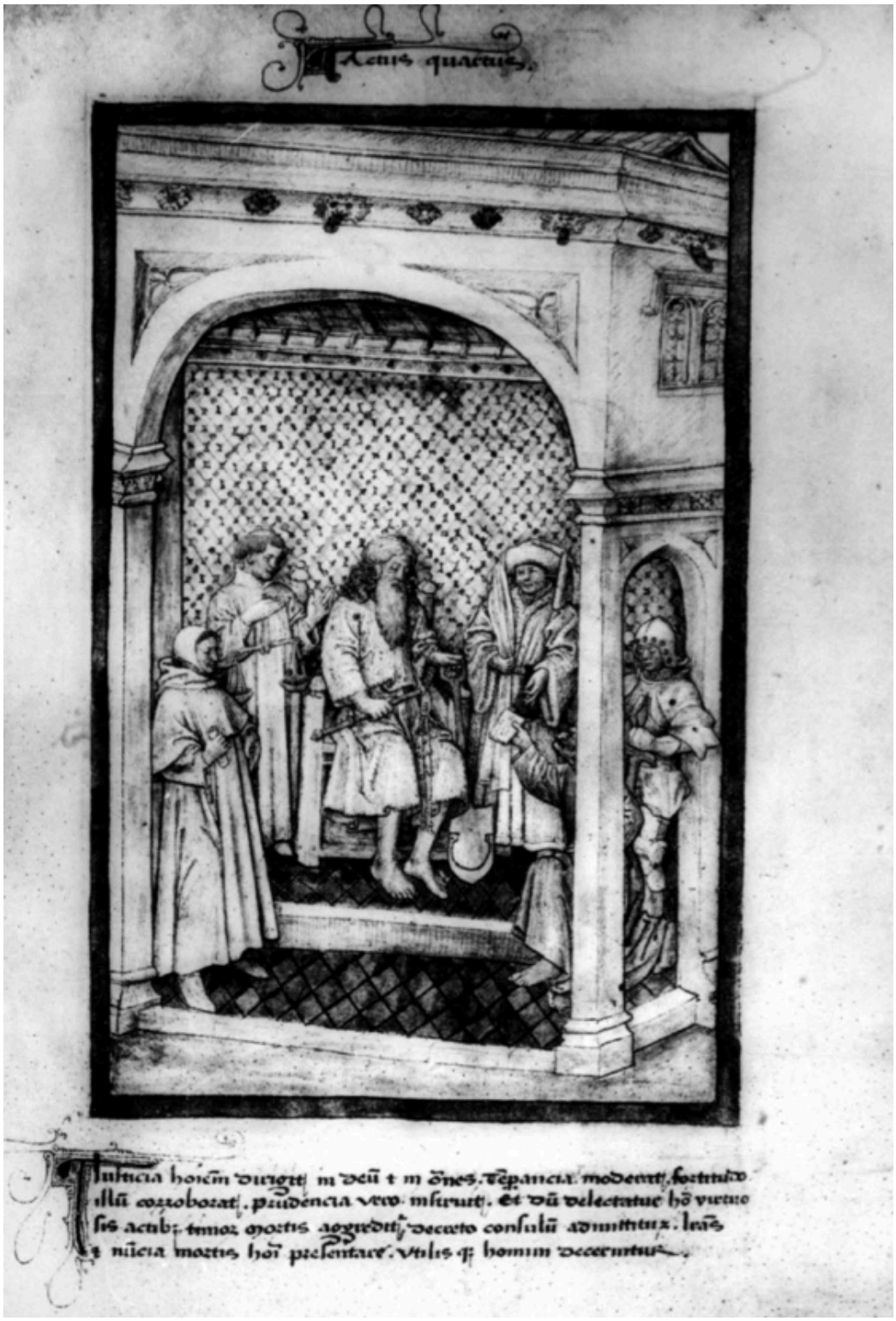
Figure 2.10: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.11: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.12: Trinity College MS R.14.5



Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.13: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.14: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.15: Trinity College MS R.14.5

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.16: New College MS 288

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.17: New College MS 288

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

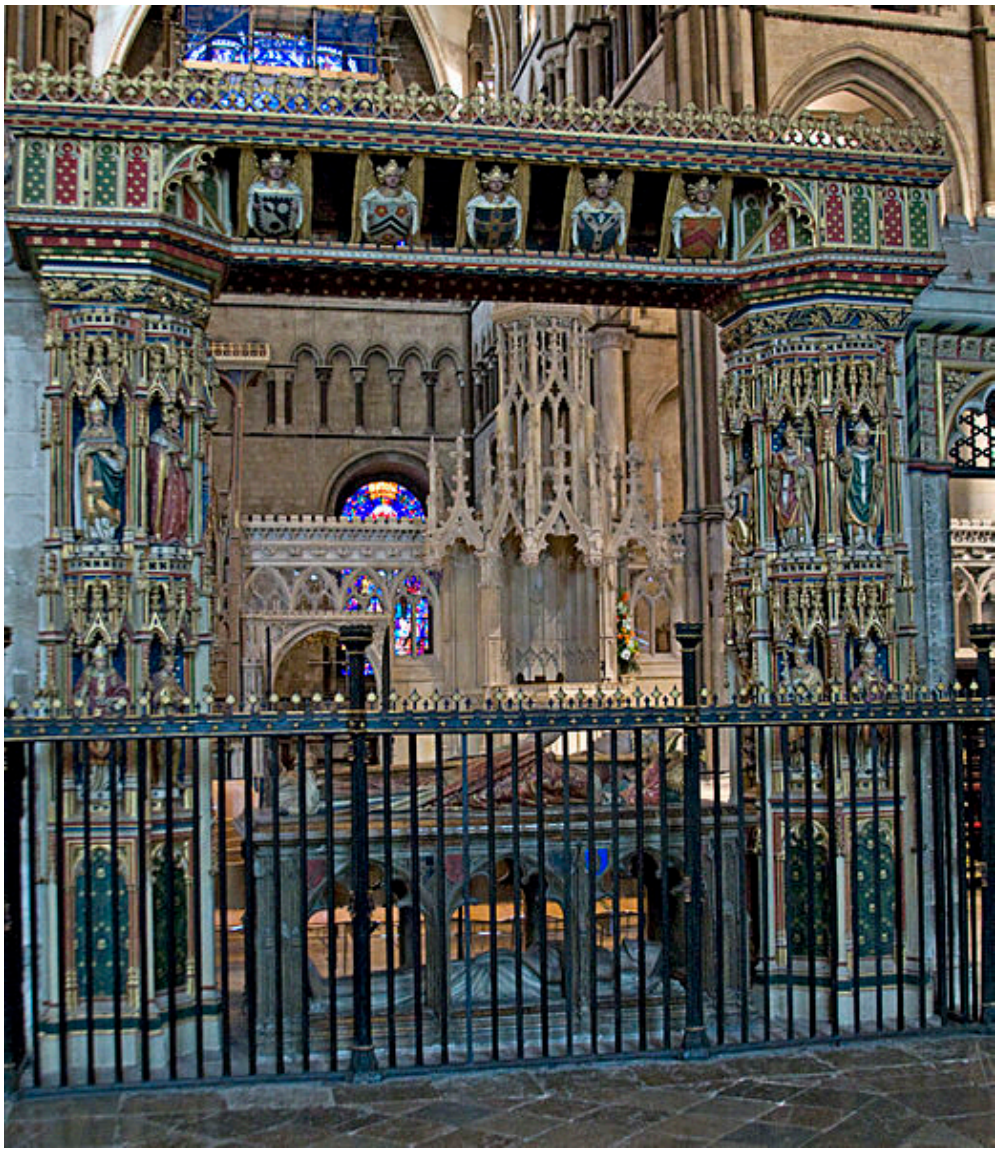
Figure 2.18: New College MS 288

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.19: New College MS 288

Source: James, M.R. *The Chaundler Mss: Introduction on the Life and Writings of Thomas Chaundler and an Appendix Containing Descriptions of the Trinity College and New College Mss., with Extracts Therefrom*. London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916.

Figure 2.20: Archbishop Chichele's Tomb in Canterbury Cathedral



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Canterburycathedralhenrychicheletomb.jpg

Figure 2.20: Bishop Bekynton's Tomb in Wells Cathedral

Source: Todd A. Rygh

Chapter Three

The Impact of the Reformation on the English University Stage

> "Only in the books written in earlier times did she sometimes think she found some faint idea of what it might be like to be alive."
> — W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

Introduction

I suggested in the introduction that the early modern university stage developed at the intersection of three overriding cultural and historical forces. First and foremost, the late medieval university stage emerged within the framework of what Alexandra Johnson has called community festive drama. The first chapter began with the analysis of a pair of plays – the vernacular work *Wily Beguilded* and Terence's *The Eunuch* – performed in the winter of 1566-67 at Merton College, Oxford and then proceeded to look backwards in order to explicate the continuity of medieval practices that shaped their production and reception. Secondly, humanism proliferated the types of performances offered within the universities. The festive tradition is not the antithesis to humanist drama. Rather, humanism in fifteenth-century England comprised a diverse collection of critical and textual practices united only, in the words of Daniel Wakelin, by a self-conscious return to the classics. Particular communities – in places such as schools, colleges, monasteries, chanceries, and episcopal or aristocratic households – experimented with classical dramatic forms within the spaces first opened by the festive tradition. The second chapter examined a specific site where early humanists experimented with classical dramatic forms: Thomas Chaundler's New College, Oxford. His *Liber Apologeticus* adapted a portion of the dramatic possibilities suggested by the new learning within the context of festive tradition. Highlighting the novelty of production, the textual evidence of the two Chaundlerian manuscripts implies a much wider readership than simply Bishop Bekynton or the immediate members of the college. Finally, this chapter turns to the ramifications of the English reformation for the university stage. It will enlarge on the importance of playing – and humanist studies more generally – to a university divided along sectarian lines. Additionally, it probes the

relationship between the university stage as a localized site of performance and the textual cultures that disseminated the experience of playing beyond the spatial confines of the university.

In order to better understand the role of the reformation in shaping the unique character of the English university stage, this chapter examines five performances associated with the university stage that occurred between 1522 and 1546. The argument falls into three sections. The first section briefly situates the university stage within the politics and policies of the English reformation. The second section reads two important performances that occurred at Cambridge University: first, a 1522 production of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* in Trinity Hall under the direction of the future Bishop of Winchester and Privy Councilor, Stephen Gardiner; the second a performance of the Protestant propaganda play *Pammachius* in Christ's College on Shrove Tuesday of 1545. Its performance prompted an angry interchange of letters between the same Gardiner, who at the time also served as the Chancellor of Cambridge University, and his Protestant-leaning Vice Chancellor and the Master of Corpus Christi College, Matthew Parker. I argue that the prestige of the university stage can be gauged by the theological language used to describe the experience of playing by both Catholic and Protestant scholars. The third section looks at the curious textuality of the academic dramas through the work of two academic playwrights: Nicholas Grimald, who composed *Christus Redivivus* in 1540 and *Archipropheta* in 1546; and John Christopherson, who wrote the only surviving Neo-Greek play *Jephthah* sometime before 1547. Far from pedagogical instruments for training students in rhetoric, these three texts illustrate the particular conditions operative in the Henrician reformation that valorized the composition of dramas for production on the university stage and of the ways in which that prestige was activated by academic playwrights in disseminating their work.

The English Reformation and the University Stage

The title of this dissertation gestures both to Harold Gardiner's 1946 study of the final performances of the great English cycle plays, *Mysteries End: An Investigation into the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage* and to the conversation it inaugurated. In that work Gardiner argues, with mixed success, that a heavy-handed Tudor administration interested in furthering a Protestant agenda pressured local authorities to shut down the plays. Sarah Beckwith in her 2003 book, *Signifying God*,

reexamines many of the same sources. Her reading of the material places a great deal of emphasis on a two-fold transformation in the culture. In the first place, she notes there was some evidence of coercion by government officials on local organizers to either cease or modify the production of the mystery cycles; however, she finds this influence to be intermittent and not as widespread as in Gardiner's assessment. In the second place, Beckwith notes a change in popular taste and attitudes towards the plays that caused the organizers, perhaps of their own accord, to modify the productions. In a famous turn of phrase, she sees this transformation as a change from the theatre of "signs" to a theatre of "disguises" (122). As she acknowledges in the introduction, *Signifying God* relies on a generation of scholarship that questioned the received notion that the English reformation was an inevitable event. Beginning with his 1984 work, *The Reformation and the English People*, scholars like J.J. Scarisbrick and later Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy convincingly argue that late medieval English popular religion was a strong and vibrant cultural force. In fact, Haigh, in *The English Reformations*, likens popular religion on the eve of the reformation to a "large and untidy garden, alive with luxuriant foliage" (121). According to this line of interpretation, local religious institutions – such as parish churches, guilds, shrines to local saints and chantries organizations – enjoyed a large measure of popular support. One of the most loved expressions of popular devotion in this period were the Eucharistic processions, often sponsored by local guilds, and the more elaborate productions of the great cycle dramas, which were likewise connected to the Feast of Corpus Christi.[1] In *Theater of Devotion*, Gail McMurray Gibson suggests that within all forms of medieval theatrical culture, but particularly in the cycle plays, communities developed ways of perceiving the interrelationships between actors, audience and the subject matter of the performance according to what she calls an "incarnational aesthetic." As she explains, "There was a growing tendency to see the world saturated with sacramental possibility and meaning and to celebrate it" (6). In the production of the

[1] As Miri Rubin notes in *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, "In those towns where political power and wealth were exercised through craft guilds…dramatic cycles were supported and presented by the crafts, expressing both the processional-communal and the sectional elements in town life" (272).

cycle dramas, late medieval communities understood themselves to be participating in the drama of sin and redemption synchronically, meaning within their own historical moment.

The reformation in England did not begin as an attack on this religious and devotional culture; rather, it began as an act of state, arising from particular needs of King Henry VIII to secure permission from the Pope to divorce his wife, Queen Katharine of Aragon. Unable to receive papal dispensation through the machinations of Cardinal Wolsey, Henry, who was advised in this process by Protestant sympathizers like Cromwell and Cranmer, maneuvered England into a state of schism with the Catholic Church. He accomplished this by guiding a slate of carefully crafted pieces of legislation through Parliament. This processes culminated with Henry being named the Supreme Head of the English Church.[2] Haigh calls these initial steps towards reform the legislative reformation, which effectively transferred legal authority over the Church in England from the Pope to the English crown. The issues at stake in this early stage were not doctrinal in nature. When Henry assumed undisputed control, he moved towards a measure of reform in the church and in the devotional culture. In matters of faith and practice, the English church ceased to be the national branch of the Catholic Church and became a distinct entity, eventually known as the Anglican Church. Historians commonly referred to this period as the Henrician reformation. The dissolution of the monasteries and the suppression of the cult of the saints mark the signature accomplishments of the reformers, at least from their perspective. While these actions appeared to be underwritten by a Lutheran theology, Henry himself was never fully committed to the Protestant cause. His reformation, therefore, moved by fits and starts as he vacillated between favoring the reforming and the conservative wings of the new church. "England had blundering Reformations," as Haigh describes the situation, "which most did not understand, which few wanted, and which no one knew had come to stay" (16).

The English reformation, according to Haigh, occurred in two distinct spheres. As already noted, the crown and the parliament imposed a legislative reformation from above. On the other hand, he calls

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[2] A concise history of the magisterial reformation and an itemized list of the acts of parliament that made it possible can be found in Dickens, *The English Reformation* 118-22.

the longer-term effects of the reformation of corporate worship, spiritual practice and personal morality the "Protestant reformation," as reforming ideas and practices spread throughout the kingdom. Even within the relatively brief span of the Henrician reformation, a considerable divide opened between the culture informed by what was quickly called the "old" religion and the particular brand of belief and practice taught by the new Henrician Church. In addition to an attack on monasticism and the cult of the saints, the Henrician reformation impacted other aspects of the popular culture. Using the ritual year as a point of comparison, Ronald Hutton in *The Rise and Fall of Merry England* describe how localized celebrations were suppressed or modified during the reformation. The symbolic world of late medieval England, which was largely visual and relied on ceremony and ritual, was at odds with the reformers emphasis on text and order. In *The Stripping of the Altars*, Duffy explains, "Behind the repudiation of ceremonial by the reformers lay a radically different conceptual world, a world in which text was everything, sign nothing. The sacramental universe of late medieval Catholicism was, from such a perspective, totally opaque, a bewildering and meaningless world of dumb objects and vapid gestures" (532). The loss or modification of local religious practices, many of which blurred the line between "festive" and "spiritual," deeply affected the character of many small close-knit communities.

Particularly important to the study of the university stage, the practice of boy/bishops was outlawed by royal decree in 1541 in church schools. It seems the universities voluntarily followed suit. The practice was banned outright in Cambridge. An entry in Cambridge's *Black Parchment Book* for 1548 declares: "Nullas sit in festo nativitatis Dominus ludorum, quocumque modo censeatur" (1.164).[3] In Oxford it seemed simply to dwindle away. The universities probably ended such practices out of fear. As Scarisbrick observes, "Even the universities trembled for their survival. The dissolution of the monasteries had resulted in the closure of dependent house…Incredible though it may seem now, both universities braced themselves for a struggle to survive at least severe mauling by the crown" (88). Festive culture within the university was caught in a pincer movement between increased regulation on the part of the university administration and the state on one hand, and the change in popular taste and

[3] "No one shall be a lord of games at Christmas in whatever way he is titled" (2.1123).

temperament in entertainment on the other. If humanism proliferated the kinds of performances, history itself in the form of the reformation changed the context of performance, winnowing the acceptable sorts of plays and games that could be produced on the university stage. These interventions into the festive culture had the effect of shrinking the pool of entertainments over time from a wide spectrum of productions to those works that were, in the words of Butler, "chaste…[and] could pass muster with college authorities" (154). In sum, the English reformation transformed the university stage from a site largely governed by the festive tradition to one associated with the non-localized stages of the humanist revival.

While recent historians like Scarisbrick, Haigh and Duffy highlight the plight of those who resisted the reformation and mourned the lost richness of their culture, it should be noted that the reformation, including its attacks on the festive tradition, enjoyed a significant measure of support both in the universities and in the population as a whole. In *English Humanists and Reformation Politics Under Henry VIII and Edward VI*, James K. McConica notes, "The media via of the Henrician settlement was to many not simply a compromise, but the fulfillment of a positive tradition rooted in the cause of Erasmian reform" (199). To fully grasp the far-ranging effect of this transformation on the university stage one need only to compare its status in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre* with its sister volume, *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama*. In the medieval experience, the university fully participated in a shared festive culture. In the Renaissance, the festive culture, or the "revels," was contained within two distinct theatrical ecosystems: the popular stage and the masques of the nobility and aristocracy. In the classification system employed by the editors of *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama*, academic dramas become grouped with the courtly and aristocratic masks as an object of study.

Stephen Gardiner and the Sacramentality of the Theatre

A distinctive dramatic and theatrical culture emerged in the early modern universities at the confluence where reimagined classical dramatic forms met practices related to the festive tradition. Though greatly diminished, classical culture never truly left England. Indeed, it remained an important

force long after the Roman legions withdrew back to the continent in the early fifth century. Still, the ghost of Roman drama was never completely absent even as the physical structures, the *theatra,* entered into a period of erosion and decay. These crumbling ruins, nevertheless, provided a powerful conceptual touchstones for the medieval mind, bringing together a curious suite of understandings concerning mimetic performance and, in a broader sense, the usefulness and potential dangers of appropriating aspects of an admired and yet a dangerous pagan culture. Informed by frequent prohibitions against playing, the signifier *theatrum* held together a host of negative connotations in medieval thought as a site associated with Christian martyrdom and the licentious excesses of a pagan culture.[4] As a result, medieval intellectuals had very little idea of its basic architecture and function. In addition, only a few copies of classical dramas – notably, the plays of Terence – remained in circulation. To the extent they were performed, a narrator read the text while actors mimed the action on stage. Something curious happened in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As they were cataloging and disseminating the work of classical authors, humanist scholars, notably Petrarch, began probing the possibilities of using classical Latin as a vehicle of composition. In this effort, humanist scholars identified the works of other classical playwrights. In his own searches of European libraries, Petrarch claimed to have seen eight comedies by Plautus. Unknown in the medieval period, these comedies quickly became an influential source for playwrights working in the vernacular in England and throughout Europe.[5]

An important performance of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* occurred in Cambridge under the direction of Gardiner, who used his Trinity Hall students as actors. Leicester Bradner dates the performance in 1522, when Gardiner, John Leland, William Paget and Thomas Wriothesley were all simultaneously in

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[4] "The *theatrum* as a structure was so much a thing of the past that it was no longer necessary to try to have much of a consistent picture of it," as Lawrence Clopper explains in *Drama, Play and Game*, "more important, the vocabulary of the theater could be used to stigmatize activities thought to be immoral and worldly" (41).

[5] For instance, the master of Westminster School, Nicholas Udall, who was then in the employ of Stephen Gardiner, wrote the first extant English comedy *Ralph Roister Doister* in 1553 based on Plautine models. University actors produced the second extant vernacular comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, most likely composed by William Stevenson, in Cambridge two year later. These two early dramas, though influenced by the humanist revival, were not academic, at least in the sense that they were esoteric or solely intended solely for an elite or university-educated audience.

residence. Some confusion exists as to where the performance occurred. The register for Queen's College, Cambridge notes that an unnamed comedy of Plautus was performed in 1522, and according to the college's *Magnum Journale*, three separate payments were made for labor and materials related to the performance.[6] In two poems describing the event, Leland claims that Gardiner's was the first production of Plautus in England.[7] And there has been scholarly conjecture that the performance directed by Gardiner and the Queen's College performance are, in fact, one and the same.[8] Yet Leland's use of theological language to describe the efficacy of performance shades his description of the event. Rather than merely claiming historical precedence, his claim for the primacy of Gardiner's performance emerges from examining it as a product of reformation politics.

Leland expected with some measure of confidence to earn his reputation to posterity as a poet. And while his Neo-Latin poetry is some of the most technically brilliant work of its kind composed in early modern England, scholars primarily consult his work for his remarkable descriptions of the manuscripts collected at the dissolution of the monasteries. However, he dedicated several poems, now collected in the *Poetic Encomia*, to many well-placed friends, including two separate poems praising

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[6] As the journal states, "Item Richardo Robyns pro labore suo quando agebatur comedia plauti & resercione vnius gradus iuxta pontem & vnius scanni in columbario iij d. Item pro clauis dictis teynternayles quibus firmabantur ornamenta edium in eadem comedia j d ob. Item Iohunni Keyle pro suo labore quando agebatwr comedia plauti ij d" (1.93). "Likewise for Richard Robyns for his labour when a comedy of Plautus was put on and for the repairing of one step next to the bridge and of one bench in the dovecote. Likewise for nails called tenter nails (ie, hooked nails) with which the decorations of the houses were attached in the same comedy. Likewise for John Keyle for his labour when a comedy of Plautus was put on" (2.1104).

[7] Gardiner's production was not the first known performance of Plautus in England. The students of John Rightwise of the St. Paul's school performed an unknown play by Plautus for the court of Henry VIII in 1519.

[8] "Gardiner's *Miles Gloriosus*," as Bradner notes, "either was the Queen's play, in spite of the fact he was a Trinity Hall man, or it must have preceded it. In either case, it was, as far as we know, the first acting of Plautine comedy in Cambridge" (402). In preparing the materials for inclusion for his *REED* volume, Nelson observes, "Whether these were two separate productions or a play at Queen's assisted by performers from outside the college, is unclear" (2.711). The collection of humanist talent among the colleges of Cambridge, in particular, was an important point of contestation between the colleges, and, of course, their patrons. Furthermore, the performance of drama very quickly became an important point of pride among the Oxbridge colleges. For these reasons alone I would lean toward the opinion that the two colleges held separate, probably competing, performances within a year or two of each other. It seems unlikely that competing institutions would cooperate in matters – usually pertaining to the college hall – that would be considered a matter of domestic importance and pride.

Gardiner. Both poems elaborately describe theatrical accomplishments; in addition, the nature of the praise is in both poems executed in theologically charged language. Gardiner's affiliations and loyalties represent the conservative wing of the Henrician reformation, although Leland's religious beliefs are less well understood. In the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, his biographer, James P. Carley, calls him a "moderate" Protestant and he had friends and contacts spanning the sectarian divide, both in England and overseas, which makes his work all the more remarkable. Leland composed his first encomium between 1523 and 1531. In it he remarks that Gardiner is a graduate in both faculties of the law and a royal servant. Indeed, Gardiner supplicated as a doctor of civil law in 1521 and of canon law in 1522 then left his teaching position in Cambridge to enter Cardinal Wolsey's service in 1523. The poem also expresses the fact that Gardiner was expecting, but had not yet received, promotion to the episcopate. This event, in fact, occurred in the late summer of 1531, when he was provided to the see of Winchester. In the following verses, Leland interweaves descriptions of Gardiner's abilities with the novelty of the theatrical event to extraordinary poetic effect.

> Tu Plauti quoque fabulas poetae / Antiqui lepidas quidem et uenustas / Illas conspicuo decore quodam / felix actor et eloquens uel usque / Ad miracula nunc suis theatris / pulchre restituis, nitensque facto / miles lumina gloriosus ille / sic certe mea capta detinebat / vt dum uixero semper actionem / Illam uel memori sinu recondam. / partes praestitit [haucumus] amplas / Achinus quoque tunc sua decorum / personae exhibuit: sed unus ille / fabrilegus erat puell instar / multorum lepidus, uenustus, ardens / Cuius gloria crescet undecunque (1.94)[10]

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[10] I will quote Leland's poems as they are printed in the *Cambridge* volume of the *REED* project. There is also a printed edition of the *Poetic Encomia* available at *EEBO*. In *REED*, Nelson quotes the text as it is found in manuscript edition contained in the Bodleian MS Tanner 464. For ease of scholarly communication I will quote the sources in the language provided in *REED* and will provide a translation in the footnotes. In both cases, the citation will be given according to the volume and the page number. "You also, as a fortunate and eloquent performer, are now restoring beautifully those charming and witty plays of the antique poet Plautus to a miraculous extent (and) with outstanding beauty to their (ie, the college's?) theatres, and that polished *Miles gloriosus* so surely kept my captured sight while it was being performed that as long as I live I shall always keep that performance in my recollection. Haucuinus

What is of particular interest in the first encomium is the manner in which Leland employs theological vocabulary to describe the efficacy of the classical theatre at the same time as he imitates classical sources. He describes Gardiner as a "blessed and eloquent actor" [*felix actor et eloquens*] who "restored" [*restituis*] the "charming and witty plays" [*fabulas…lepidas…et uenustas*] "of the antique poet Plautus" [*Plauti…fabulas poetae antiqui*] "now" [*nunc*] "to their theatre" [*ad theatris*] "by means of, or like, a miracle and with outstanding beauty" [*usque miracula…pluchre*]. Leland appropriates the word *fabula* from classical sources to describe a dramatic poem or play. However, a *fabula* in late medieval usage would also be associated with the work of mimes or of closet dramas. And often such *fabula* were of negative, or at the very least, neutral moral content.[11] Curiously, Leland modifies the word *fabula* with the adjective *miraculum*, which likewise contains a dual set of significations. On one hand, his use of it in this context brings to mind Ovid's tendency to signify something as wonderful, marvelous or strange. Here, a useful point of comparison would be Ovid's description of the frightful sky as seen by Phaethon in the second book of the *Metamorphoses* when he loses control of his father's sun chariot. At that moment, he exclaims, "Sparsa quoque in vario passim miracula caelo / vastarumque videt trepidus simulacra ferarum" (2.193). On the other hand, Leland's usage also seeks to claim the sacramental and visual efficacy of the medieval *miracula*. He relies on the notion that the biblical plays, like the great cycle plays, participate in a synchronic re-enactment of their subject matter. In a similar manner, the performance of *Miles Gloriosus* claims a sacramental space as it presents Plautus's play in the historical present [*nunc*].

The spatial context of this miraculous event is none other than the classical *theatrum*. But Leland's phrase "to his theatres" [*ad…suis theatris*] raises the obvious question: to what theatre, exactly, is he referring? On one hand, it could be said that Leland intended to praise Gardiner for producing a play within the college. The translator, whose version of the poem appears in the *REED* companion volume, holds this view. And the second encomium dedicated to Gardiner seems to support this interpretation. In

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provided large parts; indeed Achinus also then showed his own abilities as something suitable for (his) role: but that Wriothesley was charming, witty, enthusiastic; he, though one lad, was worth many men. His glorious fame will grow from every side" (2.1105).

[11] Clopper, *Drama, Play and Game*, 27.

that work, Leland opens the text with the remark, "Ad stephanum Gardinerum uirum undecumque doctissimum…lucida cumque scholis monstres pigmenta politae / Rhetorices, lambit prima corona comam. / Et cum stet docto te fabula docta chorago / Comica turn scenis parta corana tuis" (1.95).[12] Leland styles Gardiner as "the learned producer" [*docta chorago*] who brings forth the "learned play" [*docto fabula*] on "his stage" [*tuis scenis*]. However, Gardiner does not possess the stage by virtue of his position within the college or because he is producing the plays in the college. Instead, he occupies the role of chorus master. This position encompasses a wide range of responsibilities and privileges in ancient Greek usage. In this context, the *choregos* organizes and funds the performance on half of the city as a function of civic pride. In building the *theatrum* and producing the play, the company, with Gardiner as its leader, is understood as restoring Plautus to his own proper stage, meaning the Roman *theatrum*.

The theological language Leland uses to describe the Trinity Hall production of *Miles Gloriosus* is a stark reminder that humanist influenced dramas did not only usher in new works from Greek and Latin authors but also reintroduced a technical vocabulary of stagecraft. As intellectuals formed within late medieval institutions of thought and practice, Leland and Gardiner certainly understood the use of the term *theatrum* in the western tradition's long catalog of abuses lodged against dramatic performance. Leland's reappropriation of the classical vocabulary of stagecraft also suggests new ways of conceiving and enjoying dramatic performance on the part of the audience. Evidence of this new approach to performance can be found in a poem Leland writes in praise of Thomas Wriothesley sometime after his appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1544. In this encomium, Leland returns again to the Trinity Hall performance of *Miles Gloriosus*, where he specifically praising the quality of Wriothesley's portrayal of the braggart warrior Pyrgopolynices.

> Ad Thomam vriteslegum Tichofeldensem Angliae Archigrammataum. Quid nunc commemorem quo te comoedia plauti / Accepit plausu miles et ille tumens / si mihi indictum solidum perfloruit unquam / Aures si aut oculi praeualuere mei / dispeream si

[12] "To Stephen Gardiner, most learned in every way… And since you show bright colours of polished rhetoric to the schools. The highest crown wreathes (your) hair. And since the learned play depends on you, the learned producer, then the crow for comedy (is) brought forth on your stages" (2.1105).

> non fueris tam lucidus actor / quam qui maxime, et hic dicere uera licet. / sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora gerebat / sic quoque personuit, quisquis et ille fuit, / Actor compositus Romani cura theatri / Atque operis precium rettulit omne sui (1.95).[13]

Leland's encomium praises Wriothesley's ability to represent the character in ways that seem to the poet as "burgeoning forth" or "giving birth" to something that was "true" or in the words of the *REED* translator, "real" [*solidum perfloruit unquam*]. According to the theological terminology of the poem, Wriothesley "resurrects" the Roman actor into the world.

It could be said that Leland's effusive praise was the product of a poet whose interest was in flattery. However, turning to his own recollections of the event, Gardiner, too, understood the performance in similar terms. He makes reference to the 1522 performance in a private letter dated 13 November 1545 addressed to William Paget, an actor in the production. Writing from Bruges, Gardiner opens the letter bemoaning two factors. Despite modest military successes earlier in the year against both the French and the Scots, Gardiner worries about the cost of the wars and what the unfavorable terms for peace might mean for the King's standing at home and in Europe. In concert with this concern, he bemoans England's deteriorating relationship with the papacy and the Protestant principalities. Secondly, he complains to Paget about his own lack of access to the court. Indeed, two catastrophic blows did weaken his position. In first place, the King had distanced himself for a time from the conservatives on the council, notably Gardiner and the Duke of Norfolk, after the failure of his marriage to Catharine Howard. And second, the King personally intervened on behalf of Cranmer, saving him from the heresy charges drawn up by Gardiner in 1443. Following Queen Catherine's execution in 1542, Gardiner spent most of the intervening years away from court, exiled on various diplomatic missions to France, Germany and the Low Countries. In the letter, he does, however, express the `confidence that if he could return to

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[13] "To Thomas Wriothesley of Titchfield, lord chancellor of England… What now? I shall call to mind with what applause the comedy of Plautus received you and (how) that braggart soldier burgeoned forth as something real, if the task was imposed on me. If my ears or eyes prevail, may I perish if you were not as splendid an actor as anyone (could be) – and I am telling the truth! Just so did that polished actor whoever he was, who was the darling of the Roman stage; just so he moved his eyes, his hands, his lips; just so also he spoke out in ringing tones, and repaid the whole price of his labor" (1105).

court, he would be able to regain his influence in no small measure by his ability to manipulate Wriothesley. It is in this context that Gardiner recalls his experience acting in and producing *Miles Gloriosus* in Cambridge. He blurs the lines between the seriousness of his current situation and the plot of Plautus' play. He recalls that he, in playing the part of Periplectomenus, works in league with Paget's Miliphidippa to manipulate Wriothesley's Palestrio. As Gardiner remarks,

> This is an othir maner of matier thenne where I played periplectomenus youe Miliphidippa and my lord chauncelir/ palestrio/ and yet our parties be in the[s] tragedie that nowe is in hand/ If we thre shuld nowe sitte togethir and take/ counsayl what wer to be doon as we did in the comedye/ we shuld not be a litel troubled/ and palestrio fayne to muse Longer for compassing of this matier and seding of it as/ the poete callith it thenne he did there (1.94).

Gardiner's recollection of the event aligns with Leland's interpretation. However, their observations of the event cannot be considered the witness of unbiased observers. The English reformation intervened between the performance of *Miles Gloriosus* in the early 1520's and their recountings of the event, which were composed during the 1530's and 40's.

Nowhere is the reformation's direct effect on the university stage more apparent than in the exchange of letters between Stephen Gardiner and Matthew Parker on the matter of a performance of the play *Pammachius* in Christ's College, Cambridge on Shrove Tuesday 1545. Indeed, Gardiner's own experience of and obvious fondness for the theatre makes the crisis of 1545 such an important event in the history of the university stage. Its resolution maintained not only the freedoms and privileges of the university, but also the independence of its stage from state control. The fellows of Christ's College allowed the protestant propaganda piece, *Pammachius*, to be performed in the college hall. The German reformer Thomas Kirchmeyer – also known by his scholarly name, Thomas Naogeorgus – composed the play, dedicating the 1538 edition to Cranmer. John Bale translated the work into English sometime before 1548, where it remained an influential play among English protestants hoping to harness the popular stage for propaganda purposes. Sometime after the play's performance in the college on February 27, one of the

junior fellows of the college, Cuthbert Scot, notified Gardiner. (Scot, a religious conservative, would later become master of the college during the reign of Mary.) Scott's report spurred Gardiner to seek information from his Vice-Chancellor, Matthew Parker. Happily both sides of their correspondence survived, providing a fascinating portrait of the university stage during the reformation. Gardiner's initial inquiry to Parker can be found in a letter dated March 27, 1545. In a letter composed in English, Gardiner coyly asks his newly elected Vice Chancellor,

> I haue been enformed that the yought in christes college contrary to the mynde of the master and president hath of late playde a tragedie called pammachius a parte of which tragedie is soo pestiferous as were intolerable. I wyl geve noo credyte to thinformation but as I shal here from youe wherin I praye youe that I maye shortly by youe knowe the truth If it be not soo I wylbe glad and if it be soo I entende further to travayle as my duetye is for the reformation of it (1.133).

The overtly polite tone of the letter is only a thin veneer of civility. At the time the crisis came to a head 1545, Parker had only recently been elected Vice Chancellor of the university. Gardiner however, previously knew him, because Parker had already served as a chaplain to Anne Boleyn before being appointed to the chapel royal and a tutor, over Gardiner's objections, to the Princess Elizabeth in 1537.[14]

In his response Parker seeks to diffuse Gardiner's wrath by refuting his claim that the production took place without the blessing of the president and masters of the college. "The president hymself," he remarks in a letter dated April 3, "with whom I conferred in this cause, shwed me that it as not to be so, for he alleged that it cost the college wellnigh xx nobles alowed bi the master & companye" (1.134). He also notes that the play could not have been offensive because it had been redacted to remove any

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[14] As David J. Crankshaw and Alexandra Gillespie, "Parker came to the attention of Queen Anne Boleyn, then arguably the leading English lay evangelical, and her circle. By his own account he was called to court on 30 March 1535 and was thereafter appointed one of the queen's chaplains. It was a decisive turning point in his career, setting him on the road to Canterbury."

unseemly references. Parker goes on to explain that "I am the credibly informid they vsed this forsight bi the aduertysment of the master & seniours to omyt all such matter wherby offense might Iustly haue rysen" (1.134).

Gardiner, angry at Parker's tepid response, sends his chaplain, most likely William Meadow, to help facilitate the official investigation. Announcing his decision, he writes:

> I wyl and require youe that vpon receipte of thiese my lettres ye assemble the masters and presidentes of the colleges with the doctors of the vniursite and declaring vnto them this matier to require them to assiste youe in the trial of the truth concernying the said tragedye, and that by due examination of such as wer there it may be truly knowen what was vttred and soo by ther iugement approued for good. Which by the ordre establyshed by the Kinges Maieste in this churche is reproued or by them reproved which by the Kinges Maieste is allowed I haue harde specyalties that they reproved Lent fastines all ceremonies and albeit the words of sacrament and masse wer not named yet the rest of the matier wryten in that tragedie in the reprofe of them was expressed (1.135).

Gardiner's rhetoric in the letter weaves between two distinct voices, disclosing something of his split loyalties. The voice associated with his role as Chancellor exhibits a distinctly different tone than his voice as Privy Councilor. As Chancellor, he certainly wishes to safeguard the privileges and freedoms of the institution. Furthermore, his own experience makes him well aware of the social prestige attached to the university stage. Indeed, throughout the entire conflict with Parker he never seeks to restrict its development. However, as a council member he is seeking to maintain his newly restored position in that body in order to steer the reformation towards a more conservative path. In this regard, the letter establishes the author's authority as a royal councilor by expressing his support for the supremacy. In Gardiner's mind, however, there are limits to the reformation. The performance of *Pammachius* in Cambridge might well have been acceptable when Cromwell was alive; however, it was certainly not in 1545. Gardiner's response to the performance can be seen within the context of religious conservatives seeking to limit the effect of propagandist theatre and other forms of public religious expression

employed in the earlier phases of the Henrician reformation.[15] Notably, Gardiner himself was one of the architects of the Act of Six Articles of Faith and the Statute for the Advancement of True Religion that passed parliament in 1539 and 1543, which he cites in the letter to Parker.[16]

Parker, with Gardiner's chaplain looking over his shoulder, finally did bring the matter to the convocation of the masters and doctors. In a letter detailing the proceedings dated May 8, the Vice Chancellor steadfastly maintains that the performance was not offensive. He justifies his position saying, "I might make answer to your Lordship, what was vttered ther, The answer of them all after ther examination at our next meeting was that none of all ther companies declared vnto them that they were offended with anything that nowe they remembre spoken" (1.136). Parker further explains that the only complaint that he heard lodged against the performance came from Master Scot, which was already known to Gardiner. In repeating the claim, Parker must have appreciated Gardiner's split loyalties and perhaps sought to test the Chancellor on the limits of the coercive power of the state within the university. Cognizant of his own precarious position, he had to concede something to his superior's demands. As a result, the letter sent to Gardiner reporting on the scrutiny included the redacted copy of the play used in the performance and sworn statements from two actors, John Crane and Nicholas Greenwall, who both confessed that the text of the play was "thorowgh owt poysen" (1.138). When the redacted text reached

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15 As Janette Dillon notes in *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England*, "One of the earliest attempts to legislate specifically against plays, as opposed to any other kind of ungoverned speaking, was the Act for the Advancement of True Religion (1543). It warned that plays and printed matter should 'meddle not with interpretacions of Scripture, contrarye to the doctryne set foorth by the Kinges Majestie' *(34 Henry VIII, c.i; Statutes of the Realm,* vol. m, p. 894). Though religion was not the only matter on which the state sought to silence players, it is symptomatic of the deeply-rooted equation between heresy and sedition (see pp. 82-3 above) that religion is singled out for such attention" (86).

16 As Dillon further explains, "Thomas Kirchmayer's *Pammachius,* written in 1538 and translated by Bale some time before 1548, is an example of this Latin Lutheran drama; and the fact that Kirchmayer dedicated it to Cranmer in 1538 is an indication of the direction in which England's religious leaders appeared to be pushing at that time. (Performing it in 1545, however, was another matter. The play provoked both outrage and defense when it was performed at Christ's College, Cambridge, and the correspondence between the Chancellor, Stephen Gardiner, and the Vice-Chancellor, Matthew Parker, suggests the changed climate of Henry's later years of government, with the authorities much more edgy about propagandist drama" (94).

Gardiner in London, he was, predictably, quite angry. In his next letter to Parker, dated May 12, he promises to bring the matter before the Privy Council.

As promised, Gardiner brought the matter to the Privy Council, which met at St. James' Palace on May 16, 1545. However, no direct action was taken against the actors, the President or Masters of Christ's College or Vice Chancellor Parker. Instead they decided, at Gardiner's behest, to leave the matter in Parker's hands, instructing him "to admonish them to endeavor themselves so to employ their wits and studies in knowledge of that is good, true and wholesome as all that is indeed poison, either in learning and manners, be expelled and put out" (1.141). Gardiner engineered this outcome in order to protect the university's rights and privileges, staying his anger against Parker and other reformers in the Cambridge community. Privately, however, he must have been livid. Two days after the Privy Council delivered its relatively mild rebuke, he fires off another letter, this time in a more formal Latin, to express his displeasure in rather ominous and foreboding terms. Sparing any formalities, Gardiner explains to Parker in the first sentence, "Res ipsa idicat, omnen apud uos perijsse reuerentiam. Verstri uestra derident apud uos, quod in traoedia Pammachij etiam cum poma, sunt professi…Non expectatum opinor, ut quae publice apud uos fiant, et ita fiant ut publicentur, intra uestros contineantur parietes, nec ad alios manent. Rerum uestrarum statum multi tenant, et has uestras discordias et dissensions clare intelligunt" (1.141).[17] Gardiner used his influence in the Privy Council to shield the privileges and freedoms of the university, particularly its ability to produce plays on the newly recovered classical *theatrum*. However, he was also quite comfortable employing coercive tactics to achieve his ends, even in his dealing with a well-connected person, like his Vice Chancellor. And on this point his use of dramatic metaphor is telling. In an allusion to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Gardiner warns Parker that his actions allowing Protestant

[17] "The event shows that all proper deference has died among you. Your own men deride your efforts in your own precincts. Indeed they guaranteed the truth of this with ostentation in the tragedy Pammachius when, while (possibly because) you were looking on and dithering…I do not think it right to expect that things which take place publicly within your bounds, and take place for the purpose of being public, would remain within your walls and not become known to others. Many understand the state of your affairs and are clearly aware of your disputes and disagreements. They notice many things which you do not imagine, and this first of all, that there is virtually no college in which one does not find partisanship among various factions" (2.1114).

expression within the university will bring about his doom: "Et quemadmodum Sophocles scripsit, in nihil sapiendo iucundissimam esse uitam, ita quidam uestratium putant, in nihil agendo tutissimam. Sed falluntur et illi, et ut interim secure sint tuti certe non sunt, qui commissum munus non exequuntur, ratio nem aliquando reddituri, preter expectacionem" (1.141).[18] Gardiner, in fact, is so upset with him over the incident, he remarks that it would not be a bad idea to have the vice chancellor an office appointed by the chancellor, as the practice was in Oxford at the time, rather than being elected by masters and doctors.[19] With this curt postscript, Gardiner brought the controversy of *Pammachius* to an end. The exchange of letters between these two powerful figures offers an important window into what literate communities understood to be the power and opportunities, but also the dangers of theatrical performance.

Christopherson and Grimald and Textual Cultures of the Academic Stage

Thus far I have defined the reformation narrowly in terms of the capricious wavering of the Henrician reformation in England. The task of the balance of this section is to situate the university stage within a wider flow of events. We should remember that when Luther ignited the reformation in Germany in 1517, Henry himself wrote a tract against the reformer, for which he received the title *fides defensor* by the Pope Leo X in 1521. Yet by the early 1520's England already had a religious underground, a dissident religious movement lurking in the kingdom. Protestants, particularly in London and East Anglia, enjoyed an influence far beyond their numbers. Old Lollard books had circulated in clandestine networks for over a century both in England and overseas. Wycliffe's writings were exported and had a profound effect on the Czech reformer Jan Huss. In turn, Huss served as a guide and inspiration to Luther, who famously remarked that he was the reborn swan prophesied by Hus before his burning.

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[18] "And (further they notice that) just as Sophocles wrote that life is sweetest when we are conscious of nothing, so some of your own that that life is safest when they are doing nothing. But they are also wrong, and even though they may be undisturbed for a time, those who fail to carry out a duty entrusted to them, sometimes offering a reason contrary to expectation, are surely not safe" (2.1114).

[19] Perhaps alluding to the Wycliffite heresy, Gardiner caustically remarks, "Apud Oxonienses, nihil est horum, et michi dictum fuit a quodam administracionem apud uos, commodiorem futuram, si Cancellarij vnius suffragio, ad illorum exemplum, procancellarius designaretur" (1.141). "Nothing of this kind happens among the Oxonians, and someone has said to me that there would be a more suitable administration at your university if the vice-chancellor were chosen by the decision of the chancellor alone" (2.1114).

Luther's pamphlets and books were available and read in England prior to being banned in the early 1520's. A group of scholars interested in the news coming out of Germany met at Cambridge's White Horse Inn. This group, not unlike a contemporary academic interest group, included conservative thinkers, including Gardiner, as well as reform-minded academics like Cranmer, Latimer, Parker and Bale.

Throughout Europe, leading reformation figures commended the use of drama as a pedagogical tool within the universities and as a means of instructing the unlettered.[20] Dramatic activity in the universities became valorized as a place to incubate dramatic rhetorical acumen. Luther's chief lieutenant in the reformation in Germany, Philip Melanchthon, directed his Wittenberg students in early performances of Terence and Plautus. His efforts also included writing an introduction to his version of the play; moreover, he directed his student in the earliest known performances of Sophocles.[21] Martin Bucer, who fled to Cambridge in 1549 under the protection of Cranmer, promoted the use of drama as a vehicle to instruct the laity in his final work, *De Regno Christi*.[22] Thus Protestant and Catholic humanists promoted the performance of classical dramas. Gardiner, along with other conservative humanists such as John Fisher – who would have almost certainly been present at the Queen's College performance of *Miles Gloriosus* in 1522 – continued to produce classical dramas for the university stage and to patronize academic playwrights. Importantly, the university stage remained a site beyond the grasp of those who

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[20] As Steven Ozment in *The Age of Reform* notes, "Protestant religious reforms continued to go hand in hand with humanist educational reforms in Protestant cities and towns throughout much of the sixteenth century. Protestant reformers continued to share with humanists a belief in the unity of wisdom, eloquence, and action, even through Protestant views on church doctrine and human nature gave their educational programs a content different from those of the humanists" (302).

[21] Melanchthon's introduction to Terence's plays can be found in Argumentum: in "Eunuchum Terentii" (*Ennaratio Comoediarum Terentii*), in *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia: Corpus Reformatorum XIX*, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bertschneider (Halle: Schwetschke, 1853), cols 712-715. For an overview of rhetoric in Melanchthon's humanist educational philosophy and an analysis of his *Institutiones Rhetoricae*, see Kees Merhoff, "The Significance of Philip Melanchthon's Rhetoric in the Renaissance" 44-52.

[22] An overview of Bucer's opinions on the various roles of drama as an education tool for the laity can be found in Howard Norland, *Drama in Early Tudor Britain, 1485-1558*, 142; a broader perspective on the role of drama in spiritual practice in the context of the reformation can be found in James A. Parente, *Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition: Christian Theater in Germany and in the Netherlands, 1500-1680*, 14, 232ff.

would simply exploit it for purposes of propaganda. Using Stephen Greenblatt's term developed in *Shakespearean Negotiations*, it might be said that the university stage was a site of negotiation between competing religious viewpoints precisely because it had currency within both camps, as well as within the institution and in the wider culture. As will become clear in the following works of Grimald and Christopherson, the university stage, with some measure of deliberation, remained a conciliatory space within academic communities during the lifetime of Henry VIII.

The most active years of the English reformation, from 1546 to 1564, turned out to be the most creative and fruitful phase in the history of the university stage. As Alan Nelson observed in the editorial apparatus to his *Cambridge* volumes, "More than a third of all known performances of Cambridge college plays occurred in this eighteen years" (2.712). The records cited by Nelson use terminology – words like "tragedy" or "comedy" – that clearly marks the performance as a drama. Often, however, not all the details of those productions – even such information as the title of the play or the identity of the playwright, are regularly mentioned. And while the plays might have been original compositions, it is far more likely that most of those performances – like the 1522 performances of Plautus in Cambridge – came from the expanding canon of humanist drama. This efflorescence might also be a function of contingent circumstance, since the records cited by Nelson are exclusively drawn from institutions that survived the reformation intact. Even with this caveat in mind, this period in the history of the university stage stands out as remarkable in its own right.

With Leland and Gardiner's correspondence on the stage in mind, we might now raise the question of just how "academic" the university stage was? Certainly the university stage existed for the collegiate community as a vehicle for instruction. The Statutes of 1546 of Queen's College, Cambridge, for example, required the performance of plays and the participation in them by younger scholars. As we have seen, contemporary critics all too readily have assumed that the primary purpose of these requirements was pedagogical. Yet these performances took place in the same spaces and times as earlier performances that were associated with the festive tradition, and the university stage already possessed a certain amount of public appeal and cache during the Henrician reformation that had precious little to do

with its educational value in the training of rhetoric. I would argue, rather, that the performance of dramatic works for pedagogical purposes within the context of academic intuitions represents only a portion of the cultural work of the university stage. Academic playwrights in this period clearly sought, and indeed some achieved, a readership beyond the university. Curiously, this esteem, as Butler forcefully pointed out in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama*, was not a product of works or playwrights migrating from the universities to the popular stage. Rather, the influence of the university stage is a subtle one better gauged through the strategies and patterns of the dissemination of the academic dramas as texts.

The title of Alexandra Johnson's 1989 essay "What if No Texts Survived?" poses a counterfactual question to students of late medieval English drama: if not a single dramatic text, such as the manuscript of the *York Plays* or the early printed book *Everyman*, survived from late medieval England, what would scholars be able to know about theatrical performance relying only on surviving archival records? Our knowledge, according to Johnson, would be limited to the numerous records of localized performances of biblical plays, saints' plays and the festive tradition, corresponding "to the seasonal needs of a basically rural community"(9). That having been said, the surviving body of literary texts – however interesting and important each might be – does not offer a representative sample of dramatic activity from across the kingdom. Johnson in fact believes that "the few dramatic texts that have survived are the special ones" (10). Elsewhere I have called the plays written for the university stage "academic dramas" and defined them as the humanist plays written in the affected languages of the classical revival. Written over the course of two hundred years, roughly one hundred and fifty works survive that fit this definition. These texts, to use Johnson's term, are special, meaning that they do not necessarily offer an accurate representation of the practices found within the colleges and halls.

In order to appreciate better the inter-related contexts for the performances of academic dramas, stretched between the live production of drama within the institutions of the universities and their

particular manuscript contexts, we might take a lesson from the careers and works of Nicholas Grimald and John Christopherson.[23]

Christopherson and Grimald were exact contemporaries as students at Cambridge. Grimald's father was not John Baptista Grimaldi who worked in Henry's administration as a tax collector, as Boas believed, so he was not, pace Boas, carrying forward an inherited Italianate theatrical culture.[24] In Grimald's own poem, "A Funerall Song, upon the Death of Annes his Moother," he claims to have been born in Brownshold [now Leighton Bromswold], outside of Huntingdon, to a farming family. He was educated at the village's free school, run by the prebend of Leighton Bromswold, Gilbert Smith. Under Smith's patronage, Grimald matriculated at Christ's College in 1534 and supplicated for his B.A. in 1540. His fellow student John Christopherson, who likewise came from plebian origins, was born in Ulverston in Lancashire,[25] and was educated in the household of Humphrey Wingfield, probably arriving in Cambridge a year after Grimald. Christopherson first enrolled at Pembroke Hall but later transferred to St. John's College, where he became a protégé of the Greek scholar John Redman.

Grimald migrated to Oxford in 1542, incorporating his degree and becoming a fellow of Merton College. According to the dedicatory letter addressed to his patron Smith, who had recently been promoted to the Archdeaconry of Peterborough, Grimald composed his play on the resurrection of Christ,

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[23] In this dissertation dedicated to the university stage, my focus has consistently remained on the site of performance, conceived both in terms of a production held within the universities and as a textual event. I selected Grimald and Christopherson not because they are representative of all academic playwrights. Rather, in the first place, I selected Grimald because Elliot mentions his plays (as well as several plays from St. John's, Oxford, such as *The Christmas Prince*, the subject of the next two chapter) as an example of "degree plays" – a claim which requires scrutiny. (For my discussion of "degree plays," see Chapter 1, 47.) In the second place, Grimald and Christopherson's careers illustrate the various contexts of performance of the academic plays across the growing sectarian divide of the Henrician reformation. The composition of drama fits into a larger set of competencies and achievements exploited by – in these two examples, plebian – intellectuals for advancement. This fact certainly highlights the need for a prosopographical study of the English academic playwrights, which, presumably, would explicate the shared characteristics and common avenues of production and publication of this underexplored group of texts and authors.

[24] In a remark that evokes both Chambers and Darwin, Boas explains in *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, that Grimald "had in his blood something of the warm temperament of the south and its natural dramatic instinct" (25). For a more contemporary biography, see Michael G. Brennan, "Grimald, Nicholas (*b.* 1519/20, *d.* in or before 1562)."

[25] See Jonathan Wright, "Christopherson, John (d. 1558)."

Christus Redivivus, while he took rooms at Brasenose College during the winter of 1541-42. The students at Brasenose intended to perform it for the edification of the citizens of the town. Despite the reformation emphasis placed on a vernacular religious experience for the laity, the performance of plays in Latin remained an important vehicle for lay instruction.[26] Therefore, the suggestion that *Christus Redivivus* was performed for a lay audience should be taken seriously. Indeed, it was a fact not lost on the academic playwrights that humanist drama began with a popular audience in mind. Certainly on the continent at the beginning of Italian humanism two centuries earlier the widespread influence of Albertino Mussato's play *Ecerinis* (1314) cast a long shadow into the future over the composition and performance of Neo-Latin dramas.[27] With regard to Grimald's *Christus Redivivus*, Easter plays were a staple of the popular stage in the Henrician period.[28] Finally, Grimald's skillful modulation of the play's tone and employment of visual spectacle certainly would be inviting to a popular audience. While he relies on classical models, particularly Plautus, for basic structure and content, Grimald deftly moves between the worlds of elite and

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[26] Because Latin was "the language of truth," reformation-era playwrights continued to use Latin to communicate with popular audiences. As Janette Dillion remarks in her 1998 work, *Language and Stage in Medieval and Early Modern England*, "In performance, the audience listens to and accepts the different functioning of the two languages as part of the ceremonial experience. The non-Latinate spectators may listen to the sound of Latin as they watch a performed spectacle without finding the loss of verbal comprehension frustrating, since they understand the visual text, and perhaps even enjoy the aural experience of the Latin in this context" (148).

[27] Mussato wrote and produced the play *Ecerinis* in 1314 for the town of Padua in an affected imitation of classical Latin. For his service he received from the grateful town the revived but ancient honor of the poetic laurel. Mussato's award made both Dante and Petrarch envious, spurring their own desires for such an award. Although Mussato's work borrows more from Seneca and Boethius, its reputation was, in part through Petrarch's campaign for his own laurel in his letters, broadcast widely in the Latinate west. Many of Petrarch's letters – particularly *Familiarium IV, 3&7; and V,1* – when discussing the poetic laurel, dismiss the validity of the Paduan civil servant and diplomat's poetic abilities. Resonating with its audiences and readers alike, the play spread across the peninsula. "As a literary drama," Roberto Weiss comments in *The Spread of Italian Humanism*, "the *Ecerinis* proved successful throughout Italy, being read and commented upon just as if it were the work of an ancient classical writer" (16). Albertino The repute of Mussato's and other classical or classically inspired works were carried to England by humanist letters, books, scholars and practices as they spread in diverse and uneven ways throughout the kingdom in the fifteenth century.

[28] Describing the persistence of the Easter plays, and their popularity in the Henrician period, Johnson notes in her essay, "An Introduction to Medieval English Theatre," "Easter or 'Resurrection' plays, which characteristically retain strong elements of liturgical ceremony, have the longest history of any vernacular Biblical drama from the medieval and early modern period" (12). See also Johnston, "The emerging pattern of the Easter play in England."

popular culture. In fact, critics have long noted that certain aspects of the play bear a strong resemblance to the medieval cycle dramas, particularly the much remarked upon scenes involving the four soldiers recruited by Caiaphas to guard the body of Christ. George Coffin Taylor in a 1926 article first raised the possibility that Grimald directly consulted a medieval source, suggesting that Grimald saw the manuscript of the N-town plays and translated the lines for the four soldiers into Latin. Patricia Able has sought to modify Coffin's argument, claiming instead that the Digby *Death and Resurrection of Christ* served as the immediate source for this episode. Rebuking the entire line of inquiry, Ruth Blackburn in a short and tightly written summary of the debate suggests that both scholars "overemphasized the authors dependence on medieval sources" (247). Yet Blackburn seems to have moved too far in the other direction. As Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador notes in his edition of the play, "[W]hat can be observed in his dramatic oeuvre…[is] the intermingling of the classical and medieval traditions… The verbal parallels between *Christus Redivivus* and any of the resurrection plays in the cycles are not only sparse but also not really close and can more easily be explained as arising out of similar or identical situations than by direct influence" (9). In any case, Grimald certainly understood the importance of physical comedy and spectacle in appealing to a popular audience. While there is no external evidence of its performance in England, Grimald's play achieved a degree of renown in Germany. Johan Gymicus, who was John Bale's publisher and friend, produced an edition of *Christus Redivivus* in Cologne in 1543; Philippus Ulhardus published a separate version of the play, evidently pirated, in Augsburg in 1556. It is the second version of the play that Sebastian Wild used as a source for his *Von dem Leyden vnd Sterben, auch die aufferstengung unsers Herren Jesus Christi*, which was published in 1566. Grimald and Wild, in turn, were the two primary sources for the 1662 version of the still-performed *Die Oberammergauer Passionsspiel*. The curious afterlife of *Christus Redivivus* offers a hint of the shared culture of performance – linking academic and popular drama – that persisted in England during the Henrician reformation.

Grimald wrote a total of eight plays, of which only *Christus Redivivus* and *Archipropheta*, survive. He dedicated the second play, composed in 1546, to Richard Cox, Dean of Christ Church, as part

of a successful application for a position in the recently reconstituted college. Reshaping the biblical story to the generic demands of a classical tragedy, the skillfully drawn plot turns on the relationship between Herod – an effective monarch but also one prone to making rash decision at the behest of his wife – and the widely respected but flawed prophet, John the Baptist. A manuscript copy of the play, in Grimald's hand with the dedication to Cox, survives in the British Library, MS Royal 12 A. XLVI.[29]

Like Grimald, John Christopherson used the publication of drama to further his academic career. An acknowledged scholar of Greek, Christopherson was elected a fellow of St. John's College in 1542. He wrote the Neo-Greek play *Jephthah*, published sometime between 1543 and 1547, based on the biblical account of the eponymous warrior/judge whose story is found in the Book of Judges chapters 10-12.[30] He dedicated this version of the play to William Parr and Cuthbert Tunstall. Perhaps simultaneous with the production of the Greek version, Christopherson translated the play into Latin and dedicated it to King Henry. His introductory letter clearly signals his intentions for the work, reminding the King that "saepius ad tua Celsitudinem Graecae lecturae, Cantabrigiensis petendae caussa supplex quide accessi, hactenus tame ea res minime translata est" (f. 4r). As the passage illustrates, Christopherson was campaigning for the vacant Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. While he was passed over for the professorship in favor of the Christ's Church scholar, Nicholas Carr, he was appointed as an inaugural fellow at Trinity College when Henry merged Michaelhouse and King's Hall .

In his essay "Christopherson at Cambridge: Greco-Catholic Ethics in the Protestant University," Paul Streufert notes that *Jephthah* accomplishes two important goals. In the first place, its wide appropriation of Archaic, Classical and Koine Greek provides robust opportunities for students to

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[29] Gymicus published a slightly different version of the play in 1548, with an updated dedication and a modified third act.

[30] Born to a prostitute by a royal father, Jephthah was already marked as an oddity, on the edges of the social order. However, his military prowess establishes his authority over the people. During a battle with the Ammonites he swears a vow that if God grants him victory he will offer as a sacrifice the first person he sees leaving his house. Upon returning home from the battle, he is sickened because it is his beloved daughter who rushes out of the house first to greet him. The salient issue at stake in the play is the efficacy of vows made to God; clearly a timely topic in the reformation.

encounter words and idioms from a wide range of Greek usage. More importantly, the play's disruption of the friend/enemy binary encourages its audience to think beyond sectarian divisions in defining membership in the community. As Streufert notes,

> Christopherson's appropriation of the friend/enemy dichotomy offers a complex and nuanced understanding of English Catholic and Protestant identities at this time. Rather than simply drawing Catholics as *philoi* and Protestants as *ekhthroi*, he carefully circumscribes the groups along national and even ecumenical lines, paying honor to his Protestant king, while encouraging him and England to return their loyalties to Rome (49).

Streufert's insightful reading of the play's linguistic and literary properties advances the scholarly conversation concerning this peculiar text. However, he clearly limits the play's audience to the college's undergraduate population, despite taking note of Christopherson's multiple dedications. Perhaps it is the case that Christopherson conceived of his work for the immediate needs of the collegiate stage. However, both he and Grimald published their plays and dedicated them to influential figures in order to capitalize on the novelty and popularity of the university stage with potential patrons.

Streufert opens his essay on Christopherson's *Jephthah* with an anecdote from a 1592 letter by William Gager. In his essay's first sentence, Streufert explains, "In an often quoted sixteenth-century letter to John Rainolds, the Christ Church playwright and fellow William Gager writes of the value of playing and play-making for students and scholars at the collegiate level." He then quotes Gager, "Plays serve to practice our own style either in prose or in verse; to be well acquainted with Seneca or Plautus; honestly to embolden our path; to try their voices and confirm their memories; to frame their speech; to conform them to convenient action; to try what mettle is in everyone, and of what disposition they are of; whereby never anyone amongst us, that I know, was made the worse, many have been much the better'" (43). While his footnote observes the letter comes from the Corpus Christi College MS 352, Streufert nevertheless cites the lines from Gager's letter as they are found in John R. Elliott's essay, "Plays, Players and Playwrights in Renaissance Oxford" – a move which amplifies the words "often quoted" used in the

first sentence of the essay. The primary point of academic drama, according to Streufert, is educational: "In addition to the behavioral, social and religious instruction so prominent in sixteenth century collegiate drama, the need for linguistic instruction encouraged the proliferation of such plays" (43). Christopherson's *Jephthah* may very well have been used to instruct student actors in the Greek language; yet it had a very different purpose when it was disseminated as a text. It is easy to conflate our understanding of drama as pedagogical instrument with drama as a performance – both in the sense of a live event within the college and its textual dissemination. Nowhere is this conceptual confusion more evident than in the scholarly appropriation of the letters of Gager. It must be noted, he was a product of the Elizabethan settlement. He entered Oxford in the early 1570's as an undergraduate and left in 1592 to assume a post in the church administration. His argument with Rainolds, which Boas rightly calls a "specialized phase" of the conflict, is better understood in the context of a wider Puritan attack upon the theatres. With his characteristic verve, Boas observes in *University Drama in the Tudor Age* that "The pamphleteering warfare in which Northbrooke, Gosson, and Stubbes were protagonists on one side, and Lodge and Nashe on the other, is familiar to all students of dramatic history" (220). Gager's views in this exchange of letters should not be taken out of context and then used as a defining statement for the academic stage throughout its long history.[31] Indeed, his argument in the letter largely recycles humanist clichés that were already commonplace in the late sixteenth century. Even the small quote cited by Elliot and Streufert, reads like a justification of current practice because the performance of plays is deemed pleasurable rather than an impassioned plea for drama born of a theory of education. I am not claiming that academic playwrights in the Henrician reformation saw little or no educational value in the performance of their original works; rather, reaching back to Johnson's essay, it is more profitable to think of their works extending their venues as they circulated as texts, fitting into more localized and unique contexts.

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[31] For an overview of this controversy, see Appendix 11, "The Anti-theatrical Controversy," in Elliot's editorial apparatus to the *Oxford* volume of *REED*, 2.861. It should be noted the entire epistolary exchange, which involved more correspondents than Gager and Rainolds, was not fully memorialized in the Elliot's volume.

In contrast, the role of drama in humanistic education in the early modern period should be viewed within a wider set of social and economic transformations occurring within the universities. Humanism transmitted to the upper classes, largely through the influence of the Tudor court, a new vision of itself. Humanism postulated a vision of an educated aristocracy along the lines of the Roman model: Instead of solely a martial class, it was now seen as literate, educated and urbane. Refined aristocrats were expected to be educated in the classics; training in dancing and music, which taught harmony and grace, was also expected. Memorizing dramas offered students the opportunity to recite verbatim the words of accomplished poets in carefully constructed rhetorical situations. It was in this milieu that works such as Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster*, published posthumously in 1570, Thomas Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano,* which appeared in 1561 as *The Book of the Courtier*, and Sir Thomas Elyot's 1537 work *The Governor*, gained their particular cultural currency. In fact, Elyot, among others, had made plans (which never came to fruition) to establish an academy nearer to London to teach students in the humanities. Instead, the aristocracy began sending their sons to the universities in ever-greater numbers.[32] And as the universities accepted more students of gentle birth, administrators and faculty members necessarily adapted their practices to fit the needs and expectations of this new class of students. Offering an alternative reading list to the traditional scholastic curriculum, the education of gentlemen scholars formed the beginning of the tutorial system.[33] In this context, rather than the scholastic curriculum for students taking degrees, the study of humanist drama developed as a tool for training in rhetoric according to the form suggested by Ascham.

Conclusion

Commenting on Ariel's harrowing production of a mask featuring the Goddesses Juno, Ceres and Iris, the enchanter/director Prospero comforts his audience of two, Ferdinand and Miranda, with the famous statement: "Be cheerful, sir. / Our revels are now ended. These our actors, / As I foretold you,

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[32] James McConica. "Scholars and Commoners in Renaissance Oxford," 160ff.

[33] See Stone, "The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body 1580-1909," 26-27; and James McConica, "The Rise of the Undergraduate College," 66-67.

were all spirits, and / And melted into air, into thin air" (4.1.148-50). For Shakespeare, who wrote *The Tempest* in 1610, the revels were a production only of the stage – as he calls them later in that same speech, an "insubstantial pageant" (4.1.158) – that resolves itself into an all too ordered reality. However, the reveling, or festive, culture was once a matter of great importance attached to the public sphere. My first chapter situated the late medieval university stage at the confluence of that festive tradition with the new learning. The second chapter offers contexts for the performance of Chaundler's fifteenth-century play *Liber Apologeticus* within the New College, Oxford, community. This chapter has examined the effects of the Henrician reformation on the university stage. The reveling culture, both in the universities and in the wider picture increasingly moved from the public sphere to the move governable space of the theatre. But as Nelson reminds us, the reformation era was also the "heyday" of theatrical performance within the universities. Indeed, the university stage possessed a cultural cachet beyond its immediate locale, as Leland and Gardiner's recollections reveal. In this respect, the university stage was not the sole province of Catholics or Protestants, nor is it possible to reduce its operation to a political or theological reading. The texts of Christopherson and Grimald illustrate how academic playwrights sought to capitalize on its broad popularity in disseminating their work.

This dissertation does not cover in any detail the university stage of the Elizabethan settlement. The potential topics for such an investigation are manifold, including: the royal visits to Cambridge and Oxford; the curious textuality of Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius* and the plays of William Gager, which contemporary critics likened to Shakespeare's. Instead, I have directed my inquiry into the manner in which the festive culture, particularly the use of the lord of misrule, is remembered and memorialized in later texts. As such figures fell out of use, they did continue to exercise a haunting influence on the performance and reception of the later humanist dramas on the university stage. The most important memorialization of the lord of misrule tradition is the subject of the next two chapters. Here we will examine the texts, contexts, and manuscript evidence of *The Christmas Prince*. Published in 1611 as a coterie manuscript, the text is ostensibly an account of the 1607-08 revels at St. John's College, Oxford. Yet far from an unironic adaptation of the lord of misrule tradition, as Boas contends, the authors and

redactors of *The Christmas Prince* appropriated its use within a complex political and economic narrative artifice that satirizes both collegiate authorities and the sitting monarch, King James. In doing so, this authorial team both capitalizes upon and obscures features of the lord of misrule tradition, building on the practices and significations connected to it.

Chapter Four

The Texts and Events of *The Christmas Prince* and the Construction of the Academic Stage

> "At the most we gaze at it in wonder, a kind of wonder which in itself is a form of dawning horror, for somehow we know by instinct that outsize buildings cast the shadow of their own destruction before them, and are designed from the first with an eye to their later existence as ruins."
> —W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

Introduction

Writing in the *Cambridge Companion to Theatre Historiography*, Thomas Postlewait observes, "Historians who study cultural performances share a familiar and basic problem. Before they can describe and interpret the past actions of their subjects, they must first identify and construct or reconstruct those performances as historical events." (89) The role of the critic, according to Postlewait, is to define the theatrical event against its context – namely those shared understandings, background practices and collective habits of thought that give the performance its own particular texture and importance. The difficulty, he explains, is the fact events and contexts merge from the perspective of the critic. He continues, "We need…to give events and their conditions separate identities as we carry out our research, and carry forward our explanations and interpretations… Our task is to identify, describe, and explain the parts and their possible relations" (90). The work of the present chapter is to delineate the texts and contexts of St. John's College (JSC) MS 52.1, a manuscript which contains the text now commonly known as *The Christmas Prince*. The first section of this chapter will examine the manuscript's editorial and interpretive history and its role in the development of academic drama as a recognized field of study. Its earliest editors and interpreters, primarily Oxford men, separated their understanding of the text into two distinct spheres. In the first place, the manuscript was thought to be a collection of eight discrete dramatic scripts; in the second, a literal history of the performances on the collegiate stage as articulated by the framing device that connects the document's eight plays to each other. Unfortunately, this tendency to uncritically accept the narrative of the performances within the college as historical fact has given this particular text its unmistakable note of sentimentality and nostalgia in the scholarly record. The

second section of this chapter redefines the theatrical event as occurring by virtue of the construction of the manuscript itself. Offering a contrasting theory of its codicological and literary features to those of its earlier editors and interpreters, the final section of the chapter identifies and describes the peculiar strategies of representation – which are related to the text's economic and political narrative – used by the authors and redactors in their production of the manuscript. In the course of this chapter, three overriding orthodoxies regarding the text of *The Christmas Prince* will be interrogated. First that this document is a "history" that, in the words of Boas, "allows the reader behind the scenes" of the collegiate stage. Second, on the level of textual production, this essay will contest both Earl Jeffrey Richards' assertion that seven of the plays found in the text represents a play-cycle; and the corollary to his argument, that the final play included in the text, *Periander*, is an afterthought to the text and does not "belong" to the cycle. This opinion he shares with John Elliot, editor of the Oxford *REED* volume, who actually excerpted certain portions of the manuscript to use as records of performance. Finally, given the nature of the evidence concerning the literary form of the manuscript, I want to challenge the notion expressed by Dana Sutton in the notes to his digital translation of the five Latin plays of *The Christmas Prince* that a new translation and edition of the entire text is unwarranted.

The Reception History of *The Christmas Prince*

Writing for a staunchly pro-union and pro-empire audience in the February 1887 edition of the home and away journal, *Murray's Magazine*, William Courtney, in "Old Oxford Revels," recounts the events of the 1607-08 winter revels at St. John's College. I want to rehearse Courtney's contentions here in some detail, since a good deal of subsequent scholarship has followed in his footsteps. The opening lines of the article set a happy scene of excitement in the school: "On the night of the 31st of October 1607, a company of graduates and undergraduates were collected in the Hall. The scene was a riotous one, because although the object of the meeting was to witness divers sports in preparation for Christmas, there appeared to be no clear arrangement what the sports should be or by whom they should be represented" (236). The following day, the Feast of All Saints, brought an end to the commotion, according to Courtney, for good reason: it was "Owing to the happy suggestion made by the more

thoughtful of the collegiate body that they should appoint a Prince of the Revels, who should serve as a Christmas lord to supervise all the forthcoming festivities for the months of December and January" (236). At this point Courtney pauses from his narrative to explain two important things: first, that the office of the lord of misrule was a "lay brother" to the boy/bishops found in the cathedral schools; and second, that the tradition of employing a lord of misrule had fallen out of use at the college for thirty years, (strongly implying that no winter entertainments had been held in intervening years). Both statements are problematic, as we shall see in due course. When he resumes the narrative, Courtney conflates the events of the St. John's revels with the history of reformation interdicts against the boy/bishop tradition. As he explains, the role of the "Lord of Misrule was to be a 'Master of Merry Disports,' taxing his friends with a royal hand, and holding acknowledged and disputed sway till the Puritans came and swept all these pleasant joys away" (237). In describing the selection of the Christmas lord in the college, Courtney elides the failed appointment of John Towse to the office (unmentioned in his account) with the election of Thomas Tucker. "The appointment was not made without some trouble," Courtney notes, "grave uncertainty prevailed as to whether they should choose a graduate or an undergraduate, and the only way of meeting the difficulty was to hold a formal election, in which each member of their society should be allowed to give his vote" (237). "They" and "their society" were left deliberately vague enough to infer that the society that elected Tucker was the college as a whole. This, unfortunately, misrepresents the source text entirely. Courtney in fact turned a blind eye to the political issue of class that is so clearly articulated in the manuscript account. As will become clear, the "society" in question was an electorate comprised of seven "scholars" of the college and six gentlemen "commoners," who collectively took it upon themselves to appoint John Towse lord – who rejected the offer – before they elected Tucker to the post.

After describing the election of Tucker, Courtney details the labors and the joys of producing the winter's festivities, including descriptions of the eight dramatic performances composed and produced for the occasion and then memorialized in SJC MS 52.1 (hereafter, *The Christmas Prince* ms.) As he draws his description of the revels to a close, Courtney again lets the veil of distanced objectivity slip:

> That England was a merry England before the Puritan came and swept all such joys away; that even so solemn a place as Oxford felt the contagion of the general Yuletide sports – these facts are tolerably familiar to most historians; but the most surprising feature, in such a narration as that which Mr. Griffin Higgs has left for us, is the marvelous fecundity of the College wits. No less than eight plays were written and produced in the course of some twelve weeks, all of them of native growth and hastily composed to suit the occasion. At no other time than in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, could such a happy vein of dramatic activity have been possible or explicable. At that period all England was dramatic, and the academic intelligence felt the charm no less than the civic rabble of the towns. (245)

Courtney's main targets – familiar enough to his era – are the iconoclast puritans of the protectorate-era who, he would say, eradicated the joys of playing throughout the social order. Taciturn, dogmatic, and insensitive to dramatic art, these puritans sit at the opposite pole of the merry England Courtney finds in the college revels. His admiration for the tradition embodied in *The Christmas Prince* seems obvious, and we might seem churlish not to agree to such idealization. But Courtney's imagined community of the revels erases the stratified community described in the manuscript account that actually celebrated the revels.[1] Himself a fellow of New College until his death in 1928, Courtney left the teaching of philosophy for a second career in journalism. In preparing this article for *Murray's Magazine* – a publication where he would eventually rise to the position of editor-in-chief before leaving for the same position at the *Fortnightly Review* – his training in both fields seems to have failed him. He did not know the field, and

[1] The pursuit of medieval and early modern manuscripts and their publication among antiquarian circles has been seen in tandem with the growth of triumphant nationalism, especially as European national cultures looked to premodern sources for national epics and foundation myths. For a discussion of the dynastic realm and its connection to religion, see Anderson's *Imagined Communities*19-27. For a discussion of the role of popular stage in the creation of an imagined sense of national unity in early modern England, see Peter Womback, "Imagined Communities: Theatres and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century" in *Culture and History 1305-1600 Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writings* 139ff.

his sources (in this case a single source in his research) failed him. As it turns out, the imagined revels were the only revels he knew.

The sole source consulted by Courtney was Philip Bliss's heavily redacted version of *The Christmas Prince,* published in 1816 in the first volume of his *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana.* Bliss'ss transformation of the anonymous text found in the unique *Christmas Prince* ms. – a text which bore no title and never circulated outside of St. John's Library – into the first printed edition of *The Christmas Prince* by "Griffin Higgs" stands as the defining moment of its reception history. In fact, Higgs – though mentioned as participating in and contributing financially to the events of that winter – was merely the author of the dedicatory poem that precedes the account of the revels in the manuscript. Meanwhile, Bliss'ss editorial treatment and introductory material was equal parts advertisement and scholarship. Son of a Church of England rector, Bliss was a noted book collector and antiquarian, educated at Chipping Sodbury grammar school and later The Merchant Taylor's school before matriculating at St. John's in 1806. A precocious scholar, he was made a fellow of the college by 1809 and supplicated for the degree of Doctor of Canon Law in 1820. It was during this lengthy stay at St. John's that he published the volumes of his *Miscellany*. His biographer describes these works as "historical reprints as small tracts in limited edition."[2] The purpose of this work, as described in the advertisement to the first volume, was to offer "a select collection of curious tracts illustrative of the history, literature, manners and biography of the English nation" (1). Bliss's much redacted published account of the revels, it turns out, excises significant portions of the text: of the 9336 lines found in the original manuscript account, he published a truncated version of 2233 lines. His selection – less than a quarter of the manuscript – includes only one text of a complete dramatic work, the mask, *The Days of the Week*. He does include the title and *dramatis personae* of the other seven plays, and he does indicate the places where he excised material from the original manuscript in his version with a series of asterisks, although his editorial marks do not indicate the length or quality of the lacunae.

[2] See Alan Bell, "Bliss, Philip (1787–1857)"

Bliss's text could be cast as textual plunder, the pirating away of stolen gold and leaving the galleon to the flames. But he never advertised his work as a complete edition of the manuscript, and his goal was, rather, to tell tales of a very specific sort, and, of course, to sell books. Towards that effort, he traded on that age-old commodity, nostalgia for simpler times. Set against the anxiety of the Regency years, the *Miscellany* repackages Tudor and Jacobean stories, admitted oddities, for a middle class readership. We should note in passing Bliss's appeal to class in the advertisement that introduces his version of *The Christmas Prince*: "The history and antiquities of a country are never better illustrated than by a view of its early manners and customs, and in this investigation the sports of the populace, and the recreation of those in a higher situation in life, afford, perhaps, the best and most certain information" (vii). So Bliss shaped the raw material he found in *The Christmas Prince* ms. to fit an ill-informed preconception of the lord of misrule tradition for presentation in his book. Important to the later reception history of the text, Bliss's editorial interventions into the manuscript draw undo attention to the frame tale that surrounds and informs the larger plays. He selectively targets the portions of text that carry forward the narrative of Tucker's term as the Christmas lord, relating the device in the introductory material to the boy/bishop tradition in ecclesial institutions and the lords of misrule found in villages and aristocratic household. When we return to Courtney, we find that his treatment of the boy/bishop and lord of misrule tradition is largely an epitome of Bliss's introductory material, with the important exception being Courtney's invective against the Puritans. Set against Courtney's disapproval, Bliss's commentary on the interdict against the practice is remarkable for its impartiality: "The custom prevailed till the ascendancy of the puritans during the civil war" (ix). In fact, interdicts from the courts of Henry VIII and his son, Edward had already taken aim at the practice in England's schools and colleges. It should now be clear that Bliss, Courtney and, implicitly, Boas, all blame puritanical restrictions for the loss of an important medieval tradition, one epitomized in *The Christmas Prince* ms.. As we shall see, the text itself claims the practice of using a lord of misrule was already an anachronism by the early years of the seventeenth century. Yet in Bliss's introduction, the story of Tucker's rise and fall is neither read with an eye towards its remarkable literary character, nor what it says about the history of festive drama. Rather it is packaged

nostalgically as a story from a long gone and much better past. Viewed out of context, the neutering of the text and the stripping of it down to its framing device might easily be mistaken for a valid history. What had been story to Bliss had become historical fact for Courtney and later for Boas.

The first mention of *The Christmas Prince* in the scholarly record comes nearly a full generation after Courtney's 1887 account appeared in *Murray's Magazine.* F.S. Boas' entry "University Drama" appeared in the 1907 edition of the *Cambridge History of English and American Literature*. Despite claiming to have access to the manuscript, it is obvious that Boas relied on Bliss's text for his treatment of *The Christmas Prince.* For example, he repeats the error, first promulgated by Bliss and repeated by Courtney, that Griffin Higgs was the author of the work. Boas writes, "It is a manuscript written by Griffin Higgs, a member of the college."[3] That having been said, Boas does at least move beyond Bliss and Courtney's fixation on the Christmas lord tradition. Boas' construction of the events is driven by the performances of the plays. As he observers, "The manuscript is an account of a series of festivities which lasted from All Saint's Eve…till the first Sunday in the following Lent."[4] For Boas, apparently, the account of the St. John's revels provided a unique insight into the production of those dramatic works. "No extant document," he writes, "not even Gager's letter to Rainolds, lets us so completely behind the scenes of the collegiate theatre, or brings home to us so intimately the hopes and fears, the labours and difficulties, connected with the performances." Tone deaf to the ironic character of the framing device, for Boas the account of Thomas Tucker as the lord of misrule becomes a literal and accurate history of the events of the winter. Long was it to be so.

Split between performance and narrative history, the bifurcated text of *The Christmas Prince* remained squarely in Boas' gun sight when he published the first – and to date, the only – book-length treatment of the English academic stage in 1914, *University Drama in the Tudor Age*. Despite their astonishingly late date of performance, the account of the St. John's revels, along with the records of the Merton College *rex fabarum*, ascended to the status of the missing link between medieval dramatic

[3] The text can be found at the following permanent link: <<http://www.bartleby.com/216/1221.html>>
[4] ibid.

formulations and the polished products of the Renaissance drama in the universities. The first chapter of *University Drama in the Tudor Age,* "Medievalism to Humanism," demonstrates how the existence of "lord of misrule" and allied practices in Elizabethan and Jacobean England represents the continuation of the medieval inversion of status rituals in the colleges. Continuing the Darwinian metaphor, unfortunately the collegiate stage is also something of an evolutionary dead end to Boas. His interpretation of the collegiate stage was deeply influenced by E.K. Chambers' appeals to Darwin and Fraser.[5] For the universities, the evolutionary progression begins with festive drama practiced in the early halls and colleges, itself an adaptation of the mumming traditions found in the popular culture. The mimetic impulse, according to this vision, becomes refined when it comes into contact with humanist learning. In the end, the dramatic tradition in the colleges comes to an abrupt finale with the puritan victories in the civil wars.

Appearing under the Malone Society imprint, Boas edited the revels portion of *The Christmas Prince* ms. and published it in 1922. He continued Bliss's usage, retaining the title *The Christmas Prince.* But Boas was a serious scholar, and while his understanding of the history of British theater more generally conceived can be traced to Chambers, his opinions and practices regarding scholarly editing most certainly derive from his collaboration with the rightly renowned W.W. Greg. Following the conventions of the Malone Society, he transferred the conventions of manuscript culture into the medium of print, and his diplomatic edition of the text of *The Christmas Prince* painstakingly accounts for every mark or sign present in the original manuscript. In this respect, his version helps to heal the damage imposed on the text by Bliss's editorial and commercial blunders. Noting that Bliss published only the one play from the work, Boas' introduction announces, "seven pieces…are here published for the first time… [f]ive…in Latin and two…in English" (vii). He also corrects the earlier error that Griffin Higgs was the author of the document. As he acknowledges, "There is no evidence for associating him with the

[5] A full explanation or deconstruction of Chamber's influence is not necessary in this context. Since the 1950's historicist critics, beginning with O.B. Hardison, began proving inconsistencies in Chambers' grand narrative of progression from Celtic and Anglo-Saxon religious rituals to the London Stage. For a devastating critique of Chamber's influence see Alexandra F. Johnson's introduction to second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre,* 1-25.

editorship of any part of the [text].” The scholarly apparatus of the work is in many ways exemplary. Boas divides its extensive material into two distinct sections: the “higher” literary criticism; and the “lower” path of textual studies(to borrow Thomas Tanselle’s terms). In the first section, he offers a thorough overview of the historical circumstances of the 1607-1608 revels, explicating the performances as discrete theatrical events. In the second section of the introduction – corresponding to the arts of the lower criticism (to such a degree that it is published in a smaller size of font) – Boas presents a masterpiece of descriptive bibliography. In compact and elegant prose he narrates how the physical properties of the manuscript tell the story of its own creation as a coherent text. The textual features Boas describes include the paper, watermarks, binding, ink and the multitude of scribal hands. The only shortcoming in Boas’ approach, if it can even be called by that name, is that the two sections of his apparatus never engage in a conversation regarding what the manuscript was *for*, or why the manuscript exists in its particular form. Moreover, as Boas himself admits in the introduction, the printed edition fails to provide an accurate representation of the text’s rich visual imagery, like that of the mock heraldry of the Prince and his court. The conventions of monochromatic print, as Boas knew, could not really convey the lively appearance and vibrant colors in the manuscript that contribute to the text’s satire of political authority. Still, Boas’ edition of *The Christmas Prince*, in providing a full and complete edition of the manuscript, invites the reader to make those judgments and to press the text further.

A long time passed after Boas edited the text – two generations of scholars. But the wheels grind slow and fine. The next important moment in the publication history of *The Christmas Prince* occurred in 1982, when Georg Olms Press published a facsimile edition of the manuscript in its collection *Renaissance Latin Drama in England*. Retaining the title of *The Christmas Prince*, the volume’s editor, Earl Jeffrey Richards, presents an extensive bibliography and an insightful introduction to the work. Richards, the first critic to grapple seriously with the complexities of the manuscript’s anonymous and collective authorship, notes that the choruses introducing each of the five acts of the plays *Philomena*, *Philomathes* and *Periander* “all stage a running commentary on the play in question, including discussions on how well the main action of the play has hitherto been represented” (5). Richards’ essay

also draws attention to the curious manner in which the members of the mock court are transformed before the audience into actors in these dramas. "The Prince plays himself in a number of the dramas," he observes, "and thus the princely court is not a gratuitous frame for the cycle but rather an integral part of the collection which 'generates' the rest of the cycle" (6). Despite these observations, Richards still maintains that the play *Periander* did not belong with the rest of the collection. Here he explains: "That *Periander* was somehow not felt to 'belong' to the rest of the collection might be deduced by the codicological aspects of *The Christmas Prince's* transmission. *Periander* alone has also survived separately from the other works in a manuscript found in the Folger Library (Folger J.a.1)" (5).

As he concludes his introduction, Richards makes a notable admission, that he has been the first critic to question Boas and Greg's assumption that the narrative material is historically accurate: "[They] accept the various intervening narratives as historical descriptions somehow separate from the dramatic parts of the cycle, rather than an integral part of the entire production" (35). And certainly, his reading of the framing device is keenly aware of the porous boundary between the "narrative," or "historical," and the "dramatic" portions of the text. Although his essay does not fully articulate the work's complex intertextuality, he does note that "given the remarkable literary features of *The Christmas Prince*, it is surprising how little attention this collection has attracted" (35). Richards' guarded comments correctly anticipate that a sustained literary study of the text would undermine previous interpretive and editorial strategies.

The appearance of certain portions of *The Christmas Prince* in two recent archival projects has provided greater access to the text for the non-specialist reader. First, the *Oxford* volume of *The Records of Early English Drama* appeared in 2004, edited by John Eliot with assistance from Alan Nelson and Alexandra Johnson. This work provides scholars a robust footprint of dramatic activity in Oxford prior to the civil wars. The non-dramatic portions of *The Christmas Prince* ms. were reprinted in the first volume, with translations of the Latin and Greek material in the second. Then, two years later, in 2006, Dana Sutton published digital editions and translations of each of the five Latin plays in his online Library of Humanist Texts, now hosted at the University of Birmingham's online Philological Museum. In Sutton's

rationale for *The Christmas Prince* project, he claims that his work fills the gap created between the translation of the Latin material in the editorial apparatus of the *REED's Oxford* volume and the availability of the English texts in Boas' edition. His opinion is actually found in the notes to his introduction of *Ara Fortunae*: "There is no need for an edition of the entire document: a complete transcript was published by Frederick S. Boas, with the help of W. W. Greg, under the title *The Christmas Prince*…and a photographic reproduction of the manuscript has been published with an Introduction by Earl Jeffrey Richards… Additionally, the narrative portions of the ms. may be read on pp. 340 - 381 of the first volume of *Records of Early English Drama*…What is lacking, however, is individual editions of the Latin plays in the cycle, and my purpose is to make good this deficiency by presenting such editions in The Philological Museum." [6] Happily then , the entire document is currently available in a scholarly edition and in translations, but the results turn out to be very disjointed indeed.

These two publications associated with *The Christmas Prince* have raised interesting questions regarding the theatrical nature of the event and the nature of the archival evidence surrounding it. Elliot, per *REED's* editorial policy, published the non-dramatic portions of the text, excluding the scripts of the eight dramatic works.[7] Yet in the case of *Periander* he printed the chorus preceding each of the play's five acts, seemingly violating *REED* policy. Though not fully explained in his editorial rationale, two factors probably influenced Elliot's choice: first, in the manuscript account, the play occurred after the abdication of the prince in the play *Ira Fortunae*; and second, as Richards has already noted, *Periander* is the only piece of *The Christmas Prince* that circulates independently from its manuscript context.

Elliot, like Richards before him, considered the play *Periander* an afterthought to the event, which was narrowly defined as the time in between the rise and fall of Thomas Tucker as the Christmas lord. In the editorial apparatus of the *Oxford* volume of *REED,* Elliot notes that "*The Christmas Prince* was not a play per se but a sequence of plays and other 'Christmas lord' entertainments stretching over

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[6] <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/ara/intro.html>

[7] See *REED's* editorial guide at the website: << http://www.reed.utoronto.ca/handbook.pdf>>. For an astute reading of those editorial assumptions, namely those that separates the presentation of the text from an interpretation, as *REED* attempts, see Postlewait 93ff.

the 'Christmas season,…" In fact, there were two plays mentioned in the documentation that were not fully integrated in the event: *Periander* (listed as a separate play below) and *Yuletide* (see Appendix 6:2)" (806). The entire text of *Periander*, it would follow, would constitute part of the archive that explains the work rather than being a portion of the work itself. Elliot only included the chorus, it seems, because *REED's* editorial guidelines do not allow the publication of a full dramatic text. Still, the connection Elliot draws between *Periander* and *Yuletide* is particularly problematic: the former is a play contained in the manuscript, composed by a St. John's playwright and acted in the college hall by collegiate actors. In addition, its plot structure and thematic concerns both indicate that the author fully understood the political and money-interested narrative that informs *The Christmas Prince*. On the other hand, *Yuletide* was a play mentioned only once in the framing narrative, where the narrator explains that it was a work performed for the benefit of Thomas Tucker at Christ Church College where Christmas lords were "much jested at" (189).

The question of *Periander*'s status in the manuscript is a crucial issue not only in the interpretation of *The Christmas Prince* but also in our understanding of the academic stage more generally. It speaks to the persistent elision of issues of textuality in the scholarly construction of the academic stage. In terms of its textual history, a version of the play *Periander*, which an alternative manuscript tradition attributes to St. John's alumni John Sansbury, is found in a miscellany now at the Folger, Folger MS J.a.1. The bibliographical evidence from this Folger MS will not justify either Richards' or Elliot's conclusions. With a *terminus a quo* of 1660, the manuscript was assembled at a date decidedly later than the publication of *The Christmas Prince* ms. Moreover, a comparison of the two versions of the play shows that the only major difference between the two versions is the absence of the chorus in the Folger MS J.a.1. [8] The existence of an alternative manuscript does not signify that the play is extraneous to the theatrical event documented by *The Christmas Prince* ms., nor does it discount the strong – perhaps overwhelming – probability that *Periander* was composed for the occasion of the 1607-

[8] I wish to thank Faye Christenberry, the English Department Librarian at the University of Washington's Suzzallo Library for making available a microfiche of this manuscript for my inspection.

08 college revels. It is just as likely that Sansbury's own copy of the play, which he presumably lent to redactors and scribes employed in compiling the manuscript, did not include the chorus, which may well have been written as the plays were performed. It seems more logical to conclude that the chorus was the product of a collective effort and then added by the scribe during the redaction process. Richards has already noted that the insertion of a chorus incorporating information about the audience's reception of the play is a reoccurring motif found in several of *The Christmas Prince*'*s* other plays. As we will see in the next chapter, this play is the obvious – and in many respects, inevitable – conclusion of the text's political fiction. While no longer the prince, Tucker does play the eponymous role of the despised tyrant. When he delivers the play's epilogue, he notes his double death, both as Periander and the Christmas Lord.

Recovering the Documents of *The Christmas Prince*

Richards called for a closer examination of the literary features of *The Christmas Prince* ms, one which , when executed, would confirm previous editorial and interpretive strategies or call for new ones. The first task in this wider operation must be the critical reevaluation of the codicological features of the manuscript. At this stage of the argument it may be worthwhile to remember Postlewait's advice that opened this chapter regarding the conditions that separate theatrical event from its context. In the effort to define the theatrical event, he recognizes the importance of employing archival sources to better decipher the parameters of the event. Yet such archival documents do not explain themselves nor stand on their own. The purpose of such an archival investigation is to arrive at what Postlewait calls its marginal zones:

> Besides factual information, historical documents contain potential meanings that may elude other investigators. Unless, as Bloch suggests, historians can comprehend the variability of the codes of representation that calibrate the statements in the documents, they may have great difficulty in recognizing the "marginal zones" that exist at the boundaries of the documents. The interpretive framework cannot be ready made before the fact (or just within those facts); it must be derived from the codes that one discovers and deciphers in the investigation (129).

Meanwhile, the quality and character of available documentary evidence varies as it overlaps with particular questions and concerns brought into the process by the investigators, who themselves may be embedded in prejudices common to their own cultural and historical moment. The archive, in other words, with the same fundamental substance, can speak in different voices to different investigators. And here is the main point for *The Christmas Prince*: at every crucial juncture of its history, editors and interpreters have demonstrated a persistent bias towards live performance in the construction of the theatrical event. Apart from rare speculation about the authorship of individual plays (after Higgs was disqualified), the reception history of *The Christmas Prince* scarcely mentions the authors or redactors whose work fashioned the manuscript out of constituent documents into its present form. Ultimately, previous interpretative strategies have provided unsatisfying readings of *The Christmas Prince* because they fail to account for the sheer diversity of the documents found in the manuscript.

If the textual features of the manuscript becomes the focal point of our investigation, then the theatrical event might be defined more persuasively by elucidating its representation. The representation of performed theatre turns out to be one tool of many to achieve this goal. I propose to work in the tradition of Thomas Tanselle, whose *A Rationale For Textual Criticism* provides a useful framework to deal with codicological and literary strategies evidenced by the manuscript. Tanselle suggests that the *work* exists imperfectly in the mind(s) of the author(s) before it was instantiated into a particular copy, a *document*. Importantly, the author's intentions may or may not have been realized in any particular document. Thus, for Tanselle, the text is always provisional, subject to error. More importantly, it may never represent the fullness or totality of the author's vision for the work. *The Christmas Prince* ms. is unique, and those who composed it seem intent on presenting the work, in its singularity, as a coterie manuscript, available only to the limited number of readers admitted into the college's library. Still, Tanselle's textual definitions are especially useful in the case of *The Christmas Prince*. Certainly, the traditional markers of authorial intent are missing here. There is not a final, best, or even provisional statement of authorial intent outside of the text. Indeed, the identities of the men who fashioned this work have been obscured by history. At the very least, however, those of us who act as readers, editors and

critics of this text should seriously consider, on the basis of the internal evidence found in the text, a seemingly radical but obvious possibility: that the final form of the manuscript itself represents an approximation of authorial intentions, that it is a complete work, a composite play of sorts, rather than an imperfectly copied collection to be dismembered for its theatrical parts.

As a physical object, *The Christmas Prince* ms. contains two separate but related texts. The account of the winter revels of 1607-08, now given the title *The Christmas Prince*, is preceded by Griffin Higgs' poem dedicated to St. John's president, John Buckeridge, on the life of the college's founder, Sir Thomas White. The manuscript consists of thirty gatherings, twenty-three of which are devoted to the revels and the remaining three being devoted to Higgs' poem. The remaining gathers are left blank. Careful attention to the construction of the manuscript shows a collection of documents (theatrical scripts, texts of speeches, songs, snatches of verse, account records, laws, proclamations and tax rolls, etc.) intertwined by means of a far more limited narrative than has previously been appreciated. Many of the documents inserted in the manuscript are scribal memorializations of various productions generated during the winter's events. These constituent documents are all transcribed according to a regular formula. Boas noted that the text is knitted together in a very deliberate manner:

> Here it will be observed that in the case of every important play (that is all except *Saturnalia* and *A Vigilate*) the text begins a fresh quire, leaving the personae to be added on the last page of the preceding quire, and we shall see later that this addition is usually in another hand. Each play is written in a different hand, while three hands perform the editorial work of supplying the setting and the links between the plays. It is evident, therefore, that the labour of copying out the texts was assigned to a number of scribes, whose work was then collected and connected into the consecutive account that we now find (xxiii).

The longer texts are copied into discrete gatherings. The texts of the smaller documents, such as the text of Tucker's acceptance speech or the Boar's Head Carol, seem to have been transcribed simultaneously as narrative commentary.

A brief vignette drawn from the work illuminates how constituent documents were collected and redacted in the construction of the manuscript. In describing the audience's enthusiastic reception of *The Seven Days of the Week*, the narrator observes that the play was performed before dinner on the evening of January 10, 1608 in the private lodgings of the president. He adds that a second play, *Somnium Foundatoris,* was performed after dinner on the same night, its subject being "the tradicion that wee have concerarning the three trees that wee have in the president his garden" (135). Explaining the text's absence from the manuscript, despite its positive reception, he explains that "this interlude by the reason the death of him that made it, not long after was lost, and so could not bee here insereted but it was very well liked and so wel deserued for that it was both wel penned and well acted" (135). While not mentioned in the text of *The Christmas Prince*, the name of the deceased author was most likely John Alder, who died while visiting London in December of 1608.[9] The anecdote of Alder's lost play, however, reveals three important pieces of information regarding the construction of the manuscript. First, a team of authors and/or redactors who guided the manuscript to publication acted as intermediaries between the authors of the individual texts, people like Adler, and the scribes who used those fair copies in the compilation of the individual quires. Second, the manuscript as a whole is not attempting to record play scripts that might be re-enacted; rather, the text of Adler's lost drama was desired for inclusion because it was not only well written but also because it was well acted. Finally, this vignette suggests that the anonymity of the creators of this text is deliberate. Even though some members of the college surely knew their identities, the relatively small team of authors and/or redactors who fashioned the manuscript account of the revels into its current form, as well as the authors of its constituent documents, preferred to remain anonymous. If we apply these three observations to the construction of the manuscript as a whole, it is clear that we are discussing a strange but coherent work. Indeed, the authors and redactors of this manuscript attempt, with a high degree of sophistication, to encode a kind of meta-spectacle associated with the live theatrical performance.

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[9] See Boas in the introduction to *The Christmas Prince* xi.

The narrative portion of the text is much less extensive than previously assumed. Instead, the authors and redactors provide coherence by a skillful arrangement of the textual fragments. (see Table 1). We might look at gatherings *f* through *i* as an example of the process where the memorialization of documents drives the redaction. A single scribal hand presents this procession of texts collected from the revels, and connects them with a taut narrative. The first document inserted into the manuscript is the brief narrative describing the events occurring on October 31 and November 1, 1607. Included in this gathering are the prince's acceptance speech, a copy of a bill expecting duty and allegiance from the masters from the mock council meeting held after his private inauguration, a tax bill presented to the masters that was approved at the same meeting, the superscription to past fellows and members of the college, and the table enumerating who responded and in what amount. Starting with a fresh quire on the MS page 6(r), Scribe B is responsible for the play *Ara Fortunae*. Following the play's epilogue on MS page 26(v), Scribe A continues with a description of the play's reception. On the next MS page, 27(r), appears a page to memorialize the documents that follow the Prince's legitimization: the copy of the proclamations that display his seal and his titles and the seal and titles of his council; the copy of the laws asked for by the character Philarchus in *Ara Fortunae*; and a bill advancing Henry Swinarton as this Prince's librarian. These texts are followed by a brief narrative description of the Prince's Christmas Day celebrations, up to but not including the text of the play performed, *Saturnalia,* which scribe C continues on MS page 40(v). Embedded in the narrative is the description of the procession into the hall and the lyrics to the Boar's Head Carol sung during that procession. If Boas is right, that the hands defined as Scribe B and Scribe D indeed represent the same man, only five hands directly contribute to the production of the text.[10] Two scribes, B/D and F, are responsible for copying the vast majority of the historical narrative that connects the larger textual fragments such as the dramatic scripts. In the first section of the revels, defined as gatherings *f* through *i*, it becomes clear that scribe B/D is cooperating with scribe A; in the second section, gatherings *k* through *t*, scribe F coordinates the efforts of scribes G,

[10] As Boas explains, "There is little doubt that B and D are really the work of one scribe, but it is convenient to distinguish the purely Italian hand used in the play from the English hand (with Italian admixture) used for editorial purposes" (xxv).

H, and I; and in the final gatherings, *v* through *2e*, scribe B/D and F share the labor of copying the narrative.

The Textual Event and the Framing of Theatrical Performance

Bliss, Courtney and Boas clearly were won over by this intriguing and utterly charming text. Yet their collective critical instincts failed them when they looked to distinguish *The Christmas Prince* as history or text. In the words of Boas, the framing material "allows us into" the experiences that surround and inform the performances that occur on the collegiate stage. Earlier in this chapter I sought to problematize the distinction between history and dramatic performance with the evidence of textual studies. I argued that the text of *The Christmas Prince* presents a skillfully constructed artifice, one that weaves together a variety of documents from winter revels by means of a simple yet effective framing narrative. While copied by several different hands, the text maintains a remarkable clarity of voice. The final task of this chapter is to describe the character and timbre of that literate voice as it emerges from the work's peculiar form, which turns out to be, a la *Canterbury Tales,* a framing narrative that broods on the function and importance of story itself.[11] The construction of *The Christmas Prince* offers an interlocking set of framing devices against which various constituent texts can be read. Also like Chaucer's fragmentary text, the framing device emerges from a patchwork of generic and textual formulations. Moreover, it is wider in scope than the rise and fall of Thomas Tucker as the Christmas lord. While Chaucer's work is a story that ultimately broods on the nature and power of stories, the transformation of Tucker is a meta-theatrical device that explores the nexus between political legitimacy and economic power.

The following anecdote from the play *Ira Fortunae* brings into sharp relief the complex artifice of the framing devices. In the third act, the lord marshal, along with the prince's court and closest advisors, desert their monarch. With his lieutenant in tow, the marshal appears on stage just before he resigns to complain about the heavy burdens of his office. "Princeps bonus / In signum amoris me marescallum

[11] Helen Cooper's *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales* provides a model of reading multiple generic and textual formulations alongside the codicological evidence of the text's construction, see Chapter One, "The Genre of the Story Collection," and Chapter Five, "Links within the Fragments."

eligit, / Et quia fidelem sensit in honorem suum. / Partimque populi gratia ludos iubet / Parare, pompas splendidas, spectacula, / Subitos tumultos premere qui nimium solent / Sequi triumphos" (206).[12] Having neatly laid out his responsibilities within the political fiction of the revels, he turns to his lieutenant and requests a brief accounting of their tenure in office. The ensuing conversation traces the rise and fall of the prince – traditional fodder for a *de casibus* tragedy – through the reception of the performances produced by the mock court. The lieutenant begins his report with *Ara Fortunae*, saying it was "Quam turba placide applausit, et grate satis / Accepit ut spectaculum" (206).[13] The next topic covered is the events connected to the celebration of the Twelve Days of Christmas,

> SUB: Ludi, ioci, / Privata pompa, decuit et sollenitas / Pro tempore apta. Post dies paucos venit / Philomela virgo muta, sed quanto sono? / Clamore quanto? Crederes mutam minus. / Sed et ista primo placuit adventu satis. / At cum secundo garrula et nimium loquax / Prodiret, o quam nauseam cunctis tulit! / Iani Calendis prodiit Tempus gemens[14]
>
> MAR: Aegre querelam Temporis tempus tulit, / Connexionem ignara plebs desiderat. / Pars melior hominum sensit, et plausu suo / Versus probavit. Prosa (scio) placuit minus. / Prologus in ipso limine offendens nimis / Oppressa scena (cogimur semper queri) / Sequentia ita turbavit ut placidum omnium / Cursum impediret. Transiit tamen, et quibus / Pars nulla placuit, ut sibi placeant volo. (206)[15]

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[12] "[O]ur good prince has appointed me marshal. In part, for the people's sake he commands me to prepare plays, splendid masques, spectacles, and to quell the commotions that very often attend on triumphs."

[13] "[it was] applauded and accepted well enough as a spectacle."

[14] LIEUT: Plays, games, private masquings, and an appropriate solemnity for the season. A few days later there came along Philomena, a mute maiden, but with what noise it was performed! With what shouting! You wouldn't imagine that she was a mute. And she was pleasing enough in her first performance. But on her second, when she came onstage as a talkative chatterbox, oh how she nauseated everybody. On New Years appeared lamenting Time.

[15] MAR: Time's time caused complaint, the ignorant commoners failed to get the connection. But the better sort of people appreciated it and clapped at the verse parts. But I know that the prose bits were less well liked. The prologue, giving offense at the very outset by ruining his scene (we are always obliged to complain), threw what followed into such confusion that he prevented the peaceful progress of everything. Yet the play passed and I hope that those for whom no part was pleasing might please themselves.

In this interchange the lieutenant draws special attention to the audience's enthusiastic response to the actor who played the role of Philomena. In the next play, *Time's Complaint*, the same actor played the widely panned role of the long-winded figure Time. Marking the descent of the prince, the marshal next inquires into the reception of *Philomathes*. Appropriate to the play's place in the downward trajectory of the prince's fortunes, the lieutenant reports that it did not please everyone. Describing the events of the subsequent week, the lieutenant then makes the telling remark, "Omitto reliqua quae domi accepta optime. / Bis acta quaedam in gratiam aliorum quibus / Vel ipse rumor placuit. (206).[16] The marshal elaborates that certain "others" [*aliorum*] requested and were granted a reprise of the play, which was the mask *The Days of the Week*. As he explains, "Et digni viri / Quibus placere nos decet. At hic non locus / Est nominandi quemlibet, honoris licet / Causa: quod aili facere dicuntur, minus / Fecisse vellem. Sed dies praesens adest" (206).[17] In answering the final question, the lieutenant offers the simple statement, "Munus ut linquam meum" (206).[18]

The exchange between the marshal and lieutenant suggests three distinct frames of performance. First, the conversation assumes that the individual festive and dramatic performances (i.e., the plays, masks, and spectacles) organized by the court are the primary achievements or disappointments of the reign. Because there is no other record of the events described in *The Christmas Prince* ms., the performances of live theatre, defined broadly, are lost as historical events with an identity separate from their textual representation. Rather, the individual records of performance vibrate with and against the framing narratives, with deliberate comedic and ironic effect.

The political fiction that informs the mock court's performance of their duty adds a second valence of dramatic and textual performance. In the lines cited above, the audience would be aware that Minerva and Fortune are influencing the action from their chairs on the dais that surround the stage;

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[16] "I pass over things which were done domestically and well received. Some were preformed twice for the sake [*in gratiam*] of others who had taken pleasure in even the rumor of these things."
[17] "And these were worthy gentlemen, whom it behooves us to gratify. But this isn't the place for naming names, even for honor's sake: I wouldn't want to have done what others are said to do. But now we come to the present day. Now what needs to be done?"
[18] "For me to resign my position."

however, the marshal and the lieutenant are not aware of these larger forces at work that control their destiny. The common conception first expressed in Courtney's article and continued by Boas in his essay in *The Cambridge History of English Literature* and in *University Drama in the Tudor Age* is that the lord of misrule, as practiced in collegiate institutions was the "lay brother" of the boy/bishops found in ecclesial or monastic organizations' inversion-of-status rituals. In their readings, *The Christmas Prince* offers an unironic appropriation of these traditions. Certainly, on first glance, the arrangement that Tucker has with the authorities of St. John's College appears to be consistent with historical precedents. As mock lord, he can demand obedience from his subjects regardless of their social rank. In fact, he seems to preside over the college with a great degree of autonomy. He also has some degree of disciplinary authority, including the use of the college's stocks for punishing malefactors. Befitting his station, Tucker dines at the high table during his period as lord. However, unlike Merton College's *rex fabarum*, for instance, he is not expected to finance the festivities. Rather, he is able to levy taxes from the students, masters and alumni of the college. It impossible to peer behind the artifice of the manuscript to determine historical fact. At the same time, the presentation of the taxes paid to the mock lord play a crucial role in the authors' and redactors' rhetorical strategy in constructing the economic and political fiction of the manuscript. We may recall that Courtney's account of the revels obscures the fact that Tucker was elected by a panel of undergraduates consisting of seven scholars on the foundation of the college with the other six gentleman commoners. For the moment we should keep in mind that scholars on the foundation of the college enjoy a *relatively* less privileged situation than the gentlemen commoners, at least in terms of their economic status. We should also note that from the moment of his private installation as prince, Tucker, who was a student on the foundation of the college, attempts to conceal the facts of his election. Having claimed a democratic mandate to rule in his acceptance speech, he now seeks a divine mandate to legitimate that rule. And then, after his successful consecration at Fortune's temple in the play *Ara Fortunae*, Tucker's lordship, as portrayed by the marshal and his lieutenant, follows the arc of a *de casibus* tragedy.

The political fiction that informs the mock court's appearance and disappearance in the accounts of the revels emerges from the economic transactions preserved in the manuscript. And the body politic that authorized Tucker's lordship will extend beyond the death of his second or sacred body in *Ira Fortunae*. At the conclusion of *The Christmas Prince*, this financial narrative will dissolve itself back into the physicality of the manuscript, as the book itself becomes a choragic monument. Returning to the conversation between the marshal and his lieutenant, the marshal makes the curious declaration (in the context of an actual performance) that "now is not the place" [*at hic non locus*] to "gratify" [*placere*] those who requested the reprise of *The Days of the Week*. The mask was performed a second time, according to the lieutenant, "for the sake of" or "in gratitude to" [*in gratiam*] the Vice President. The redaction process differentiating the audience of the plays from the readership of the manuscript once again fashions the audience of the "live" performances into unwitting participants in a larger fiction. The marshal's utterance simultaneously situates his performance within a staged drama and in the manuscript representation of that very same drama. In one sense, the stage is not the site to show the proper appreciation for the gentlemen who supported the mock court. However, in the context of a manuscript, the marshal's comment gestures to the appropriate site where such gratitude can be expressed: namely in the physicality of the book. He is referring to the particular documents that enumerate the names of those men, who, like the Vice President, paid taxes to the mock government on two separate occasions. Just as important as the dramatic texts or the collection of mock royal insignia, the tax rolls and list of expenditures are integral to the work of the manuscript. [19] The mock court collected taxes in the communities surrounding Oxford and even further afield, in London. The names found on the tax rolls, along with the amount they paid in tax, gesture towards a network of social and economic relations that extend beyond the confines of the college.

In so far as they provide the funding mechanism for the winter's festivities, the lists also underwrite the prince's political authority – regardless of whatever political philosophy he might be

[19] In Boas' edition of *The Christmas Prince*, the first of the mock government's tax rolls can be found on 9 and the second on 134.

espousing to legitimate his own rulership. These lists, then, are not a record of performed theatre in the same way that the expense ledgers of the college itemize expenditures related to its operation. Rather, the representation of financial records – in the context of a fictional political system – facilitates a conversation regarding the nexus between political legitimacy and economic power. The text fashions this group of men, largely well-connected alumni and/or fellows of the college, as the prince's choregos. In ancient Athenian practice, the choregos was established as a mechanism where the wealthier members of the city could equip, train and provide transportation for the city's entry to the dramatic festival.[20] In his work *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia*, Peter Wilson explains the choregos provided a system of esteem where the wealthier members of the community could subsidize the performances within a firmly democratic context, much in the way that the authors of *The Christmas Prince* styled the choregos of this "play." As Wilson notes, "It is possible to detect here the outlines of a civic ideology in accordance with which the tragic khoregia operates as part of a negotiation engineered by the city between power and potentially conflicting social and economic interests within it" (55). Likewise the manuscript, in its singularity, is offered to the choragi as a monument to their role in the performance of the revels, although it is hardly a straightforward or unironic memorialization.[21]

The political and economic narrative of the text reaches back into the college's history and spreads outward to encompass a wider community of practice. At his private installation, Tucker separates the members of the body politic into two groups, naming the members of his court who will assist him in the production of the revels, his *praefecti*. He then demands the rest of the citizens play taxes

[20] For an extended definition of the choregos in Aristotle's work see Wilson's, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia* 21ff. It must be mentioned that the only version of *The Constitution of Athens* available to contemporary scholars is a late nineteenth-century discovery. The authors and redactors of *The Christmas Prince*, however, were able to infer the contents of that document through other ancient quotations of that document, most likely Plutarch's *Lives*.

[21] Another aspect of Wilson's argument deserves mention in this context: "Choral performance frequently projects, in the words of its participants, an image of its own spontaneity; essential to much of its performative efficaciousness is a sense of that it arises as a collective response directly from the moment, from the occasion of worship or ritual that gave rise to it – and this no less so in the second order world of dramatic representation, where khoroi frequently respond to events on stage with choral prayer, painas, laments and so on. Yet this spontaneity is the product of intense labor; and the task of the khoregos was, in an important sense, to arrange this labor that conceals itself and produces the 'grace' of choral performance" (51).

to the new government. In a flourish of learning, he calls this group of boys and men his *choregos*. The prince, like a model Stuart ruler, also moves to expand his tax base. Following his private installation, Tucker's mock council sends two bills to the Master's fire. The first is a pledge for duty and allegiance to the government and the second is a tax levy. The levy, drawing on the pedigree of the office, states: "The copy of an ancient act for taxes and subsidies made in the reign of our predecessor of famous memory in this parliament, held in *aula regni*, the vi of November 1577 and now for ourself newly ratified and published, anno regni i, November 7, 1607" (9). After the prince's public installation in the play *Ara Fortunae*, the narrator again specifically mentions that 1577 was the last year that the device had been employed in the college. In this instance, however, the account names Tucker's predecessor in the office as the noted philosopher Dr. John Case. In describing the audience's reception to *Ara Fortunae*, it is noted that "Some upon the sight of this show (for the better ennobling of his person, and drawing his pedigree even from the Gods because the Prince's name was Tucker, and the last Prince before him was Dr. Case) made this concept that *Casus et Fortuna genuerunt Τυχερον Principem Fortunatum,* so the one his Father and the other his Mother" (28). The sentence, roughly translated, reads "Case and Fortune gave birth to Tucker, Prince of Fortune." The Latin word *casus* refers to Dr. Case, but it also denotes an "unfortunate turn of events" – as in a *de casibus* tragedy. If the account found in *The Christmas Prince* is accurate, Case last served as the Christmas Lord two years after his fellowship was revoked in the wake of his marriage and the persistent rumors of his Catholicism – a fall, indeed.[22] The surname "Tucker," on the other hand, when transliterated into Greek, *Τυχερον,* is a homophone for the Greek goddess *Τυχη,* the goddess of luck or fortune. In both instances mentioning Case as Tucker's predecessor, the text fashions the device of the lord of misrule as a historical revivification that had not been used in the college for thirty years. It is important to note here that account books and other historical sources associated with St.

[22] For a brief treatment of John Case's scholarly achievements and work as an independent tutor after leaving St. John's, see J.W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* 366.

John's College indicate that winter revels indeed occurred in the intervening years.[23] What was not used was the conceit of the lord of misrule in order to organize and regulate the holiday festivities. By the opening years of the seventeenth century, the use of a lord of misrule figure within the collegiate context was an anachronism. The performances of the individual dramas may have been memorable; however, all the documents included in the manuscript appear to have been conspicuously placed in regards to their relation to the story as a whole.

Authorship, Literary Genre and the Construction of *The Christmas Prince*

In his introduction to *The Christmas Prince* for the *Renaissance Latin Drama in England* series, Richards concludes that the work is a play-cycle in which the mock court "generates" individual dramatic performances. I want to suggest that a more complex strategy is in play in the form of a Menippean satire, as defined by Ijsewijn and Sacré in the *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies* as a narrative consisting "of an irregular succession of parts written in prose and others in various poetic metres" (74). In the specific case of *The Christmas Prince*, its authors and redactors expand the genre to weave a complex narrative that follows a limited number of characters – notably the mock lord, Thomas Tucker – through the manuscript account's various textual and generic formulations. All the constituent performances found in *The Christmas Prince* are of one fabric as they contribute to that single unfolding performance. Tucker and members of the court are transformed into actors in a play, and aspects of their roles as mock lords continue to exist in the dramatic world of the play. Furthermore, their faults, although revealed in the course of the play, follow the actors back into the framing narrative, as well as into subsequent dramatic performances.

Marvin Carlson in *Performance* describes this cumulative movement through time of the material effects associated with performance as ghosting, "the external associations evoked by the reappearance in the theatre of elements previously experienced in other contexts, such as a known actor in a new role"

[23] For a description of dramatic entertainment at the college that places the 1607-08 in an institutional context according to the college records, see W.C. Costin. *The History of St. John's College Oxford 1558-1860* 18-21. In *The Early History of St. John's College* 228ff, Stevenson and Salter provide a succinct treatment of Elizabethan era dramatic practices in the college.

(220). the stage – or more properly the text's representation of the stage – is haunted by the memory of what certain individuals in their roles as actors have said and done on it. The authors and redactors achieve this sense of continuity by signaling to the reader that the cues provided in the text must be understood in a cumulative sense. These details, which include such varied facts as the staging, costume and props, move from performance to performance but remain the same. The preservation of the visual aspects of the festive and dramatic works (that is, their spectacle) is very much a primary readerly achievement of its authors.

The anonymous authorship of the work as a whole and of its constituent parts draws attention quite naturally to the proper names that it does provide. Generally speaking, there are two groups to consider: first, the text's most obvious feature, the mock court; and second, the group of wealthy and well-connected St. John's students, faculty, fellows and alumni who pay taxes to the government, which the text styles as the choregos. This characterization may carry a satiric sting. That the work operates as satire is most noticeable in the interplay between the framing narrative and the individual performances of drama. We have already noted that within the fictive world of *The Christmas Prince*, the failure of *Time's Complaint* precipitates the fall of the prince as a political leader. In the wider context of the revels, the narrator announces that the prince's treasury has run dry, necessitating a second round of taxation. The authors and redactors of the text then insert a copy of the new tax bill marked with the privy seal, and the list of those who responded to the second summons. It is no coincidence that the play *Philomathes* would come next in the manuscript. Intersecting with the political and financial narrative of *The Christmas Prince*, the play appropriates the concerns of class, privilege and wealth common to the framing narrative and recycles those issues through the conventions of a Plautine comedy. Indeed, the play demonstrates a profound understanding of the issues introduced in the framing narrative and then repeated in the various performances that preceded it on the stage. While Tucker does not act in *Philomathes*, his ambivalent political situation clearly influences the action on stage. Seeking to assuage the critics who called *Time's Complaint* incomprehensible, those of the "best judgments in the house" are ordered by the administration to review the next play slated for performance, upon which they order its authors to add a chorus (131).

With that prerequisite met, the mock court successfully prevails upon the authorities for permission to stage the five-act Latin comedy *Philomathes* on January 15, 1608 for a public audience. Like the previous four works performed in the college hall that winter, *Philomathes* relies on the same Plautine two-house set for its dramatic and intellectual backdrop. The house on one side of the stage depicts a residence in the university town of Athens belonging to Crito ("judicious"), a man of modest means and uncle to the main character's love interest, Sophia ("wisdom".) The house on the other side of the stage depicts a home in Megara belonging to a wealthy man named Chrystophilus ("lover of gold.") Unlike the previous plays, the altar does not exert an overwhelming influence over the plot. Its presence, however, can be appreciated at a crucial juncture of the play. Like any good comedy in the Plautine tradition, the final act ends with a wedding. After a resolution negotiated outside of Chrysophilus' house that allows Sophia to marry, her uncle comments that it is now time to go "inside" and complete the required vows.

At the very beginning of the play *Philomathes*, a figure representing Janus opens new proceedings by dragging the unwilling figure of Time back onto the stage. Metamorphosing into yet another dramatic context, it is announced that Time will serve as the chorus for a new play in order to make atonement for his crimes at the place they were committed. The first act contains only three scenes, each introducing a separate strand of the plot. After Janus and Time leave the stage, the first scene commences with an argument between the protagonist, Philomathes ("lover of learning") and his love interest, Sophia. Although the action is set in Athens, the play's concerns are firmly rooted in contemporary Oxford. Philomathes is a poor student at the Athenian school – equivalent to being on the foundation of an Oxford college – with no prospects of family wealth to support him. While Sophia is the Greek word for wisdom, the character in this play is no allegorical figure but a sophisticated and savvy woman.[24] She is in love with the young student but she is also keenly aware of the financial hardships a marriage relationship would create for her. The overcoming of those economic obstacles to a happy union forms the basic plot of the comedy. The author(s) contrasts Philomathes' predicament with that of his wealthy classmate Aphronius ("mindless.") In the second scene, the action shifts to Megara, where

[24] See Sutton's introduction, <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/philomath/intro.html>>

Aprhronius' father, Chrysophilus, is introduced as he counts his money. Questioning the worth of an education, he loudly complains to his servant about the expenses his son has run up while studying at that "Athenian" school. The subsequent conversation, though brief, does introduce three important details. First, Crito, the uncle to Sophia, owes Chrysophilus a sizeable sum of money. Second, Chrysophilus has a very beautiful, and much younger wife, Autarchia ("self-governing,") whom, the audience learns, he cannot sexually satisfy. Finally, Chrysophilus has become the executor of a will that leaves a fortune to the deceased heiress, Anaea. In order to take possession of her dowry, he intends to match Anaea with his son. With this end in mind, Chrysophilus orders his servant, Cerdous, ("useful") to Athens with a letter addressed to Aphronius explaining the situation and asking him to return home at once. The final scene of the first act introduces Phantasta, a classmate of Philomathes and Aphronius, who appears on stage as he preens, fussing over his clothes and practicing his elaborate diction. Setting up the comic device that will drive the plot, the second act commences with a chance meeting between Philomathes' close friend, Chrestophilus ("good friend") and Aphronius, who has recently come under the spell of Phantasta. Unaware, Chrestophilus complains about his recent conversation with their mutual acquaintance. Aphronius takes offense at Chrestophilus' insult of Phantasta and seeks to exact some revenge. When the conversation turns to Philomathes and his pending nuptials to Sophia, Aphronius spots his opportunity. He boasts, untruthfully, that he once had sex with Sophia. As he takes his leave, Chrestophilus mentions in an aside he believes the boast to be patently false.

When Chrestophilus' servant Cerdous notices he has lost the letter he was charged to deliver to Aphronius, he makes the observation to the audience: "Quosdam hic astrorum a consiliis, / Philomathen, Chrestophilum, qui amissa arte restituant."[25] In hopes of finding the two astrologers, he turns to a bystander, who coincidently happens to be Chrestophilus, to ask, "Generosi, ubi Philomathis, Chrestophili, astrologos / Quos dicunt, hospitium est?"[26] To which Chrestophilus replies, "Parum in his

[25] "There are certain men who are privy to the stars, Philomathes and Chrestophilus, who can employ their art to restore lost things."
[26] "Noble sirs, where is the house of Philomathes and Chrestophilus, whom they say to be astrologers?"

Chrestophilus sapit. / At ille quem quaeris Philomathes callet admodum." (171).[27] Chrestophilus' reply would be found humorous in an audience of academics because it makes a sly allusion to King James' *Daemonologie*. Published in 1597, this work is written in the form of a philosophical dialogue where the king's alter ego, Epistemon, ("experienced" or "expert") lectures his fictional interlocutor, Philomathes, on the danger of the diabolical arts. The fact the two characters share a name is no coincidence. Early in the first section of the work, James' alter ego explains the lawful and unlawful uses of astronomy and astrology. As opposed to the study of astronomy, which describes the motion of the heavens, astrology is a hermeneutical art that relies on correct interpretation and application of theoretical knowledge of the movements of the heavens to practical situations in the sublunary world. It is this aspect of astrology that James finds objectionable. However, the authors of *Philomathes* situate Philomathes' understanding of astrology as superior to his "experienced" teacher.[28] Given the Aristotelian figures of Time and Motion that join Time as the play's chorus, it seems unlikely the satire is pointed at the practice of astrology as a whole.[29] Rather, Aphronius and Cerdous – and, by extension, King James – fundamentally misunderstand the legitimate uses of the art. Whether or not this is the considered opinion on the subject held by the authors, the device does trade on the well-known opinion of James in academic circles as the wisest fool in Christendom.

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[27] "Chrestophilus has no knowledge of these matters, but that Philomathes you seek is very well-versed."

[28] Astrology, according to James, has two distinct branches. "The first," Epistemon explains, "by knowing thereby the power of simples, and sicknesses, the course of the seasons and the weather, being ruled by their influence." That instrumental use of the stars, unrelated to mathematics, (i.e., drawing of charts, etc.) when employed with moderation, though, is completely lawful, though neither necessary nor commendable. The second branch of astrology, which concerns the author(s) of *Philomathes*, is to use mathematics to draw inferences from the stars. As Epistemon explains to his pupil, "this is to trust so much to their influences, as thereby to fore-tell what common-weales shall florish or decay: what persons shall be fortunate or unfortunate: what side shall winne in anie battell: What man shall obteine victorie at singular combate: What way, and of what age shall men die: What horse shall winne at matche-running; and diverse such like incredible things… And this last part of Astorologie whereof I have spoken, which is the root of their branches, was called by them pars fortunae. This parte is now utterlie unlawful to be trusted in, or practized amongst christians, as leaning to no ground of natural reason: & it is this part which I called before the devils schole" (160).

[29] For the opinions of the educated classes on the validity of astrology, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 353-355.

This opinion is likewise emphasized in the manner in which the play intersects with the larger financial narrative of *The Christmas Prince*. In the manuscript, the text of *Philomathes* immediately follows the revelation that the mock principality is broke, necessitating a second round of taxation. In the third act of the play, Aphronius wishes to meet a skilled "magician" who can exercise "imperium" over the "daemons" in order to produce "miracles." Philomathes grants his wish. Trading on his intellectual ability as an astrologer – i.e., an interpreter – the poor student assumes the role of a director (magician) summoning his actors (daemons) to a performance (miracle.) However, in this production only half of the participants in the performance are aware of their assigned roles. The play moves with some deftness to arrange, in the final scene, that the entire cast of characters will arrive in Megara. Once they are all in place, Philomathes directs the proceedings with aplomb, aptly manipulating Aphronius and his father. Having been informed of Aphronius' earlier boast, Philomathes coaches Sophia to appear pregnant, despite her initial protests. In the climatic moment, Philomathes, Chrestophilus and Crito are able to trap Aphronius in his lie in front of his father and future bride by producing a seemingly pregnant Sophia. In order to clear Aphronius' path to marry Anaea, Chrysophilus agrees to compensate Crito by cancelling his debt and providing Sophia a dowry, provided a suitable marriage partner can be found. On cue, Philomathes steps forward as that willing man. Contributing to the comedic affect, upon their arrival at Chrystophilus' house, his wife, Autarchia, takes up with Chrestophilus. Appropriate to its intended festive context, the play ends as both pairs head to the altar. The successful outcome of the play results in the surreptitious transfer of money from the wealthy to the poor. Philomathes' performance thus recapitulates in miniature the economic narrative of *The Christmas Prince* as encoded in the prince's proclamations, tax rolls and lists of expenditures. Nevertheless, there is an unmistakable hint of sorrow in his victory. Despite wily Philomathes' success in securing economic stability and a happy marriage, the two transactions come at a great cost, which was paid by the play's female characters: namely, Sophia's dignity and Anaea's loveless marriage.

Conclusion

Like so many other textual productions associated with the university stage, the text of *The Christmas Prince* is "readerly" in its orientation, with at least one goal of memorializing the communal experience of playing, compared with a "theatrically" oriented text that would simply store the text of a play (or plays) for later reactivation. When viewed from this perspective, Thomas Tucker emerges in the text as a complex literary character occupying a work of fiction whose generic classification would be something akin to a Menippean satire. The object of the satire slips between national and localized frames of reference. The authors and the redactors surely seem interested in sending up the newly enthroned King James – who actually visited Oxford in August 1605. At that time he was entertained by the St. John's playwright Matthew Gwinne, evidently unsuccessfully since, famously, the king reportedly fell asleep during a performance of Gwinne's *Vertumnus sive annus recurrens*. As an aside it should be added that King James was known for his imperious nature, some very real pretensions to learning, and for his profligate spending habits. To best understand the satiric pretensions of the authors and redactors of this text, it might be useful to go to the very end of the text, the epilogue, which offers cryptic permission for secondary meanings: "Seria vix recte agnoscit, qui ludicra nescit." That is, roughly translated, the epilogue proclaims, "He who is ignorant of play will scarcely understand serious matters." This epilogue is also a pithy allusion to Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, where in the opening paragraphs of this work, Folly explains her own genealogy. Noting that her father was the God Plutus, Folly explains her patronage,

> Mihi vero neque Chaos neque Orcus neque Saturnus neque Iapetus aut alius id genus obsoletorum ac putrium deorum quispiam pater fuit. Sed πλουτος ipse vnus, vel inuitis Hesiodo et Homero atque ipso adeo Ioue πατηρ ανδρως τε θεων τε. *Cuius vnius nutu, vt olim, ita nunc quoque sacra prophanaque omnia sursum ac deorsum miscentur*. Cuius arbitrio bella, paces, imperia, consilia, iudicia, comitia, connubia, pacta, foedera, leges,

artes, *ludicra, seria, iam spiritus me deficit: breuiter, publica priuataque omnia mortalium negocia administrantur*" (91-98).[30]

Perhaps it was for these reasons that the manuscript was never intended for dissemination outside of the college library. Although they were certainly known to their immediate readership, the authors and redactors of the text hid their identities behind its multiple frames of dramatic performance. In this regard, a representation of theatrical performance is only one tool in a repertoire of rhetorical devices available to a play. Repeating the narrative of Tucker's term as lord of misrule as if it were historical fact without reference to its textured construction is a naïve critical assumption . But the question remains: who might the intended audience of *The Christmas Prince* have been? The answer is, at least two. First of all, the manuscript in its entirety seems to have been designed as a monument not to those who wrote the plays or performed in them but to those patrons who funded their production. Borrowing from classical Greek dramatic practice, the text refers to this group of donors as its choregos and the book becomes their choragic monument. These donors became, in many cases, the objects of the satire even as they provide the money that funds the festivities.

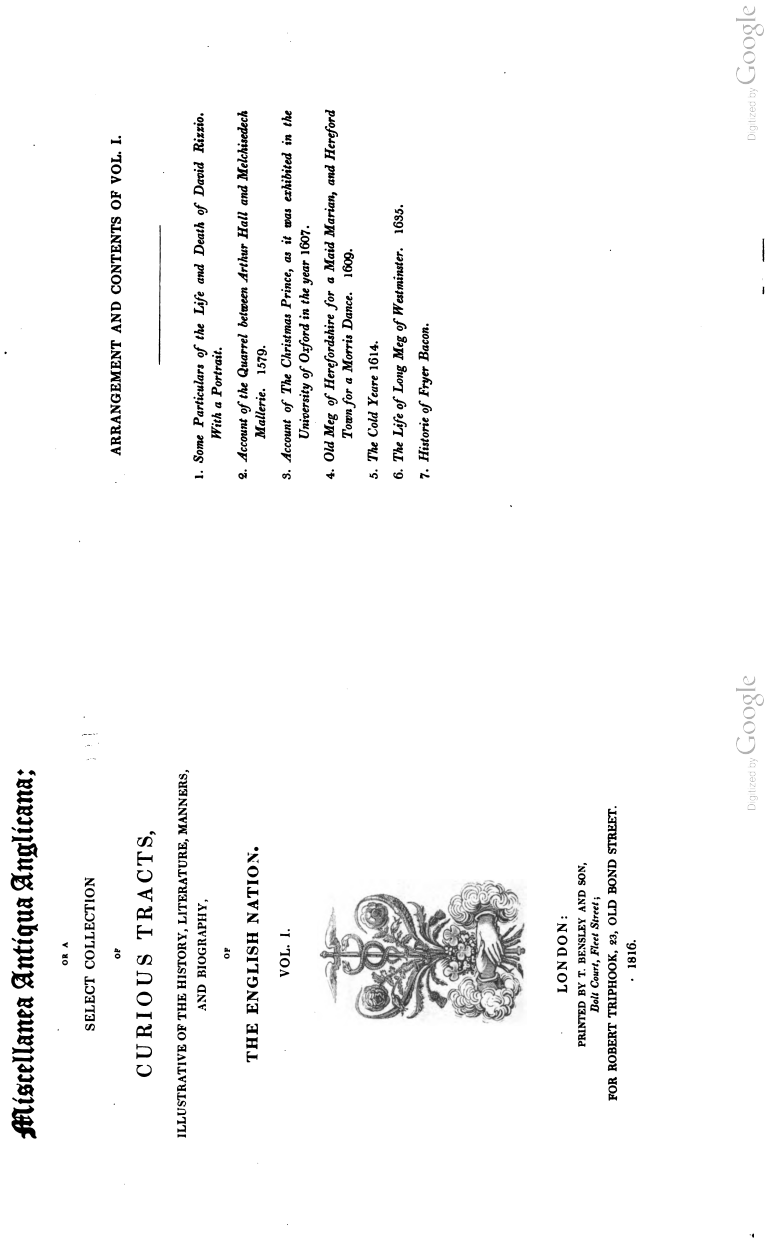
However, in a broader sense, the manuscript is joining a community of books that have memorialized performed theater at St. John's College. In the appendix dedicated to Edward Watson's degree play in the *Oxford* volume of *REED*, Elliot suggests that an informal tradition existed in Oxford for undergraduates to present a dramatic composition as evidence of their abilities at the time of their determination. As evidence, he points to St. John's College, where he notes the active tradition of placing copies of bound dramatic texts composed by members of the college in the library. Most likely referring to the same group of manuscripts, Sutton, in his introduction to *Ara Fortunae*, makes the observation that *The Christmas Prince* shares many textual and codicological features with other manuscripts containing

[30] "My father was not Chaos, nor Orcus, nor Saturn, nor Iapetos, nor any one of that set of obsolete and moth-eaten deities. Rather, he was Plutus himself, god of riches, who, in spite of what Hesiod and Homer say, and in spite of Jove himself, was 'father of gods and men.' *At the mere nod of his head, all institutions both sacred and profane are turned upside down* – so it always was and is nowadays. His decision controls wars, truces, conquests, projects, programs, legal decisions, marriage contracts, political alliances, international treaties, edicts, the arts, matters of serious and silly – my breath is giving out – in short, *all the public and private business of mortal men is under his control*" (10). Emphasis mine.

Ovidian Latin dramas composed by members of the college. Unfortunately the collection has been torn asunder; some manuscripts remain in the college library while others have migrated to various research libraries or to private collectors. This makes a detailed study of the collection at this time pretty much impossible. However, the broad outlines of a textual culture has emerged from the study of *The Christmas Prince* in relation to other textual productions related to the university stage. As we saw at the beginning of this study, the BL MS Royal 10.B.ix and the ASC Arch182 both contain letters announcing the election of the Merton College *rex fabarum* by the college's regent masters. And the Chaundlerian MSS suggest the performance of dramatic works in front of the New College's *rex solati*. The authors and redactors of all four of these manuscripts, using similar strategies of representation, memorialize the communal experience of playing over and above the text of any single play.

As this discussion of the codicological properties of the St. John's College MS 52.1 comes to a close, it is crucial to keep in mind how this manuscript offers a unique witness to and fits into a wider community of practice. The work testifies to the existence of a literate theatrical culture that extends beyond the confines of the college. The political fiction of the framing device unites the theatrical performances of the revels with the record of the financial transactions that funded the events. The next chapter builds on this textual evidence to offer a more detailed reading of *The Christmas Prince's* remarkable literary features, particular the political and economic fiction that informs the rise and fall of Thomas Tucker as the Christmas lord.

Figure 3.1: Title Page from Bliss's 1816 version of *The Christmas Prince.*



Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana;

OR A

SELECT COLLECTION

OF

CURIOUS TRACTS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HISTORY, LITERATURE, MANNERS, AND BIOGRAPHY,

OF

THE ENGLISH NATION.

VOL. I.

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FOR ROBERT TRIPHOOK, 23, OLD BOND STREET.

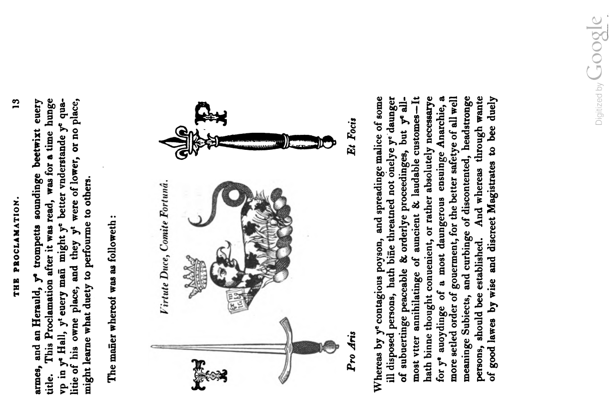
1816.

ARRANGEMENT AND CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

1. *Some Particulars of the Life and Death of David Rizzio. With a Portrait.*
2. *Account of the Quarrel between Arthur Hall and Melchisedech Mallerie.* 1579.
3. *Account of The Christmas Prince, as it was exhibited in the University of Oxford in the year* 1607.
4. *Old Meg of Herefordshire for a Maid Marian, and Hereford Town for a Morris Dance.* 1609.
5. *The Cold Yeare* 1614.
6. *The Life of Long Meg of Westminster.* 1635.
7. *Historie of Fryer Bacon.*

Source: Charles Bliss and St. John's College (University of Oxford). "An Account of the Christmas Prince, as it was Exhibited in the University of Oxford, in the Year 1607." *Miscellanea antiqua Anglicana: or, A select collection of curious tracts, illustrative of the history, literature, manner, and biography, of the English nation.* London: Printed for R. Triphook, 1816.

Figure 3.2: The Prince's coat of arms from Bliss's 1816 version of *The Christmas Prince.*



THE PROCLAMATION. 13

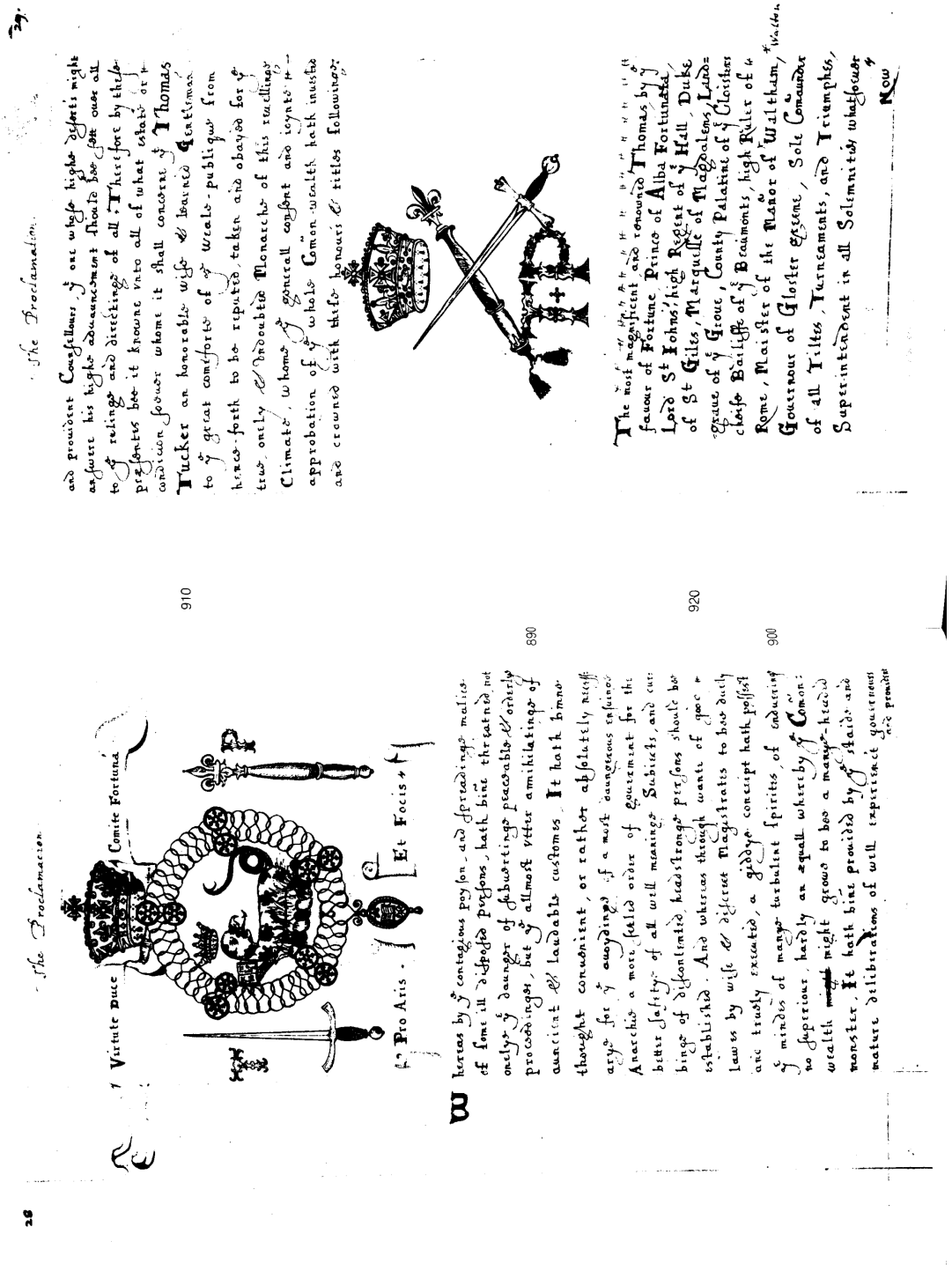
armes, and an Herauld, ye trompetts soundinge beetwixt euery title. This Proclamation after it was read, was for a time hunge vp in ye Hall, yt euery mañ might ye better vnderstande ye qualitie of his owne place, and they yt were of lower, or no place, might learne what duety to perfourme to others.

The mañer whereof was as followeth:

Whereas by ye contagious poyson, and spreadinge malice of some ill disposed persons, hath biñe threatned not onelye ye daunger of subuertinge peaceable & orderlye proceedinges, but ye allmost vtter annihilatinge of auncient & laudable customes—It hath binne thought conuenient, or rather absolutely necessarye for ye auoydinge of a most daungerous ensuinge Anarchie, a more setled order of gouerment, for the better safetye of all well meaninge Subiects, and curbinge of discontented, headstronge persons, should bee established. And whereas through wante of good lawes by wise and discreet Magistrates to bee duely

Source: Charles Bliss and St. John's College (University of Oxford). "An Account of the Christmas Prince, as it was Exhibited in the University of Oxford, in the Year 1607." *Miscellanea antiqua Anglicana: or, A select collection of curious tracts, illustrative of the history, literature, manner, and biography, of the English nation.* London: Printed for R. Triphook, 1816.

Figure 3.3: The Prince's coat of arms in as found Edwards' 1983 version of *The Christmas Prince.* Richards, Earl Jeffrey. *The Christmas Prince (Acted 1607/8)*.

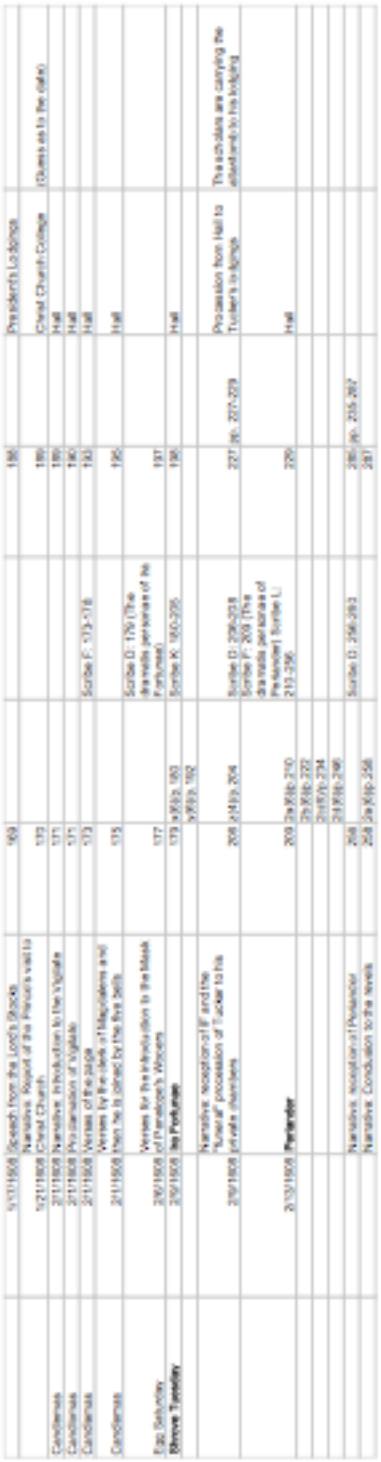


Source: Earl Jeffrey Richards. *The Christmas Prince (Acted 1607/8)*. Hildesheim; Zurich; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1982.

Table 3.1: The divisions of the St. John's College MS 52.1

Holiday	Date	Contents	Page in MS	Quire Gathering (number of leaves) /page in MS	Scribal Hand in MS	Page in Boas	Text found in Biles' edition as marked in Boas 1923 edition	Location	Note
Hallowe'en/All Saints	10/31/1607	Narrative: Election	5	f(6)/p.3--reveals on f2	Scribe A: 5-13	3	pp. 3-14	The Hall	
	11/15/1607	Prince's Acceptance Speech	7			6		The Hall	Poistian in Greek (6)
	(not long after)	Copy of a Bill to Master's Fee for Duty and Allegiance	9			7			
	11/17/1607	Copy of an Act for Taxes and Subsidies	10			9			
		The Superscription to sometime Fellows or Commoners of the College	12			11		Signed from "The Palace of St. John's in Oxon"	
		"The names of those who were served with this writ"	13			12			
St. Andrew's Day/Election of the college's officers for the next year (13)	11/30/1607	**Ara Fortunae**	14	g(6)/p.15	Scribe B: 14-26	14		The Hall, no scaffold or stage	Poistian in Greek (15)
St. Andrew's Day	11/30/1607	Narrative: Reception of AF and Genealogy of Tucker	26		Scribe A: 26-39	27	pp. 27-47		
St. Thomas Day	12/21/1607	Proclamation	28	h(2)/p.27		31		Proclamation read in the Hall with "trumpets sounding"	
St. Thomas Day	12/21/1607	Statues	35	k(12)/p.31		41		"Given at our Manor of White's Hall"	
St. Thomas Day	12/21/1607	Bill for advancement of Henry Swinnerton	38			44		Hall	
Christmas Day	12/25/1607	Narrative: Christmas Day	39			45		Chair of State placed in his private lodging	
Christmas Day	12/25/1607	Carol of the Boar's Head	39			45		Hall, Tucker at the High Table	
Christmas Day	12/25/1607	**Saturnalia**	40		Scribe C: 40-47	47		Hall. Private Show	
Eve of the Feast of the Innocents	12/28/1607	Narrative: Reasons for postponing Philomena	48		Scribe D (=B): 47-50	56	pp. 55-60 (inversion of Philomena's OP with the first few lines)		Describes the private performance of the mask The Twelve Days after the Saturnalia. (Holy Days in Latin and working days in English.)
	12/29/1607	**Philomena**	50	k(6)/p.51	Scribe E: 51-83	58		Hall	
				l(6)/p.63					
				m(5)/p.73					
	12/29/1607	Narrative: Reception of Philomena	84		Scribe F: 83-88	101	pp. 101-106		
New Year's Day	1/1/1608	Verses on the presentation of the New Year's gift of gloves to the college president	84			102			
New Year's Day	1/1/1608	Narrative: Public procession before the performance of Time's Complaint	84			102		From the Prince's private lodgings to the Hall	
New Year's Day	1/1/1608	**Time's Complaint**	88	n(6)/p.87	Scribe G: 87, 89-110 (No MS Page 88)	103		Hall	
New Year's Day/Twelfth Night	1/1/1608	Narrative: Reception of Time's Complaint, and the preview of the comedy being prepared for Twelfth Night	111	o(6)/p.100	Scribe F: 111-16 and 119 (pages 117 and 118 are blank)	130	pp. 130-154		"Twelfth eve and Twelfth Night passed away in silence because the Comedy being wholly altered could not be so soon acted neither could any other thing be so suddenly provided to furnish those nights" (132)
		Treasurer's Bill of Expenses	113	p(4)/p.112		132			It contains the expenses for the entire revels, not the expenses to that point.
"Calendis Februarii"	2/1/1608	Copy of the bill for additional taxation and the names of those that "obey'd" the receipt	115			133			(out of order)
	1/10/1608	Narrative: Report of performance of Somnium fundatoris, and a introduction to The Seven Days of the Week	116			135		President's Lodgings	The SF was performed at dinner; TSDOTW was performed after
	1/10/1608	**The Seven Days of the Week**	119	q(6)/p.120	Scribe H: 120-128	136		President's Lodgings	"privately acted"
	1/10/1608	Narrative: Reception of TSDOTW, and the various events leading up to Philomathes	129		Scribe F: 129-131	152			
	1/15/1608	**Philomathes**	131	r(6)/p.132	Scribe I: 132-168	154		Hall	
				s(6)/p.144					
				t(6)/p.156					
	1/15/1608	Narrative: Reception of Philomathes.	169	v(6)/p.168	Scribe D: 169-172	187		Hall	The stage was pulled down after the performance
	1/17/1608	Narrative: repeat performance of SDOTW	169			187	pp. 187-198	President's Lodgings	

Table 3.1, continued: The divisions of the St. John's College MS 52.1



Chapter Five

The Christmas Prince as Textual Performance

> "It seems to me then as if all the moments of our life occupy the same space, as if future events already existed and were only waiting for us to find our way to them at last, just as when we have accepted an invitation we duly arrive in a certain house at a given time."—W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

Introduction

Despite its storied reception history and its important place in the history of interpretation of university stage, *The Christmas Prince* remains an enigmatic and misunderstood text, in large measure because it has been asked to carry weight that its structures cannot bear. Freed from serving Boas' evolutionary model of development of the academic stage as a whole, it is now possible to understand the St. John's College (SJC) MS 52.1 in light of its own curious textual identity and localized history of performance. The fourth chapter argued that the specific events of winter revels were memorialized in the manuscript through an elaborate collection of theatrical documents brought together by a framing device. The literate properties of that framing device, especially as it interrelates with the eight dramas, establish *The Christmas Prince* as something other than an archive of scripts to be reenacted or a collection of historical documents pertaining to specific performance of live theatre. In his edition of the text, Earl Jeffrey Richards notes the extraordinary properties of the work: "Given [its] remarkable literary features it is surprising how little attention this collection has attracted" (35). Building on the textual analysis of the previous chapter, the work of the present chapter is to follow through on Richards' proclamation and to fill that lacuna in the scholarly record by offering a reading of this multifaceted work as a large and surprisingly coherent literary text. In their editions of the text, Richards and Boas both offered complete descriptions and plot summaries for each of the individual parts of the text. In this chapter I want to offer a reading of *The Christmas Prince* that highlights the interdependence among its parts, the importance of features such as reoccurring characters, the subtle uses of props and staging, and the political,

philosophical and theological concerns that unite the various parts of the manuscript account of the revels into a coherent text.

In the previous chapter I suggested that Menippean satires like Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* or Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* profoundly influenced the authors and redactors of *The Christmas Prince* in their construction and arrangement of the manuscript materials. The techniques employed might also be compared to contemporary experimentations with genre in musical theatre, film and fiction. In John Fisher's 1994 *Medea, The Musical*, for example, the audience is given a wider picture of the stage, watching the production of a musical from behind the scenes. From such a position they observe how the actors in the play resist the constraints placed upon them by the conventions of a Greek tragedy. Or, another useful example is Baz Luhrmann's use of pastiche, with the camera following the actors in *Moulin Rouge* as they prepare for and then perform their various roles on the stage. Finally, David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* tells a diffuse narrative through various genres – including a diary, letters, pulp crime fiction and science fiction. These later examples of genre-bending works provide a legitimate point of comparison with *The Christmas Prince* because its authors and redactors were themselves sophisticated readers of the Greek and Roman classics in addition to possessing near-encyclopedic knowledge of the Christian tradition. Far from being an unironic appropriation of the lord of misrule tradition or an historically accurate account of the revels, the rise and fall of Thomas Tucker, told according to the conventions of a *de casibus* tragedy, is a political performance that resonates with other textual and dramatic performances of the text. Tucker's election to the role of Christmas prince occurs as the result of a political process inaugurated by the inversion of status rituals associated with carnival and reified through an affiliation with Aristotelian political thought. Providing the political and social conditions that allow his rise to the throne, these two devices bracket his elevation to the mock throne. The fictional state authorized by the carnival process provides the authors and redactors of the text a space to imagine a new politics, both in terms of the national context and also within the highly stratified world of the college. The vocabulary of Aristotelian political thought affords them an ethical perspective to ascribe to the newly formed state. In turn, two motifs authorize the emergence of devices that Tucker

will use to legitimate his reign as the college's lord of misrule. Those devices are, first, an ever-present wheel of fortune that sits on or near the altar of the temple dedicated to the fickle goddess. Second, Fortune legitimates Tucker in the upside down world of carnival as a divine right monarch with a second, sacred body.

We should begin reading *The Christmas Prince* with the premise that the authors and redactors of the St. John's College MS 52.1 provided a coherent text following a limited number of characters. Some are named in the manuscript account – the obvious example being Thomas Tucker – and others would have been personally known to the text's intended audience through textual and theatrical signs. Let us look first at the political and cultural fictions that allow the emergence of Thomas Tucker as a Christmas lord. We will then explore the performances of Tucker's reign, where our reading will follow four stops on the wheel of fortune: his ascendency, his zenith, his fall and then the death of his sacred body. Finally we will turn to the special role of the play *Periander* in bringing the entire text to an obvious and inevitable conclusion.

The Reveler as a Political Animal

In his ground breaking work on the carnival, *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin advances the claim that carnival-time was the second life of the people as opposed to the ordinary life imposed by structures of officialdom, those systems of authority based in the hierarchies of the feudal system, church and government.[1] As a second life devoted exclusively to play, carnival comes into being for a bounded

[1] A great deal of scholarly attention has been focused upon the phenomenon of the carnival since the appearance of Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* in 1965. Literary scholars, working along largely historicist and new historicist modes of inquiry, have systematically contested Bakhtin's method and conclusions, highlighting his work's lack of attention to the details of historical circumstance and their local context. To this list of scholars we should include the work of early modernists Robert Weinmann, Michael Bristol and Leah Marcus and medievalists Kathy Ashley and Gail McMurry Gibson. Cognizant of writing in the midst of this on-going conversation, Chris Humphrey's work, *The Politics of Carnival*, turns to the granular records of inversion-of-status rituals in late medieval and early modern England. In her introduction she returns, if only briefly, to Bakhtin's work. She makes the interesting observation that his concern was not necessarily "the problem of the carnival," but rather "the problem of 'carnivalisation,' the influence of carnival forms on literature and literary genre since the Renaissance" (97). It is under the aegis of former – i.e., the problem of carnivalization – that Bakhtin's writings are, in fact, a useful starting point for this investigation. Unlike Humphrey's examples of misrule plumbed from her reading of the archival record, *The Christmas Prince* is already a literary interpretation of the carnival

period of time in relation to the holidays of the Christian calendar and was celebrated in the profane space of market place as opposed to the sacred space of the church.[2] For our purposes in the depiction of the revels in *The Christmas Prince* ms., the carnival works as a motif not because it represents a naive or unproblematic adaptation of the college's traditions. In fact, in 1607, the use of lords of misrule in the colleges is not so much a contested practice as it is an old-fashioned or outmoded one. The authors and redactors of *The Christmas Prince* styled the use of the Christmas lord in a carnivalesque world as a strategy of representation. In their hands, the account of the St. John's revels presents an inversion of the social order germane to the college environment. Consequently, they give scrupulous attention to the text's chronology. The proceedings described in *The Christmas Prince* open on Halloween and come to an end the first Saturday in Lent; bounded by those dates, Tucker's reign begins domestically on All Saint's Day and publically on St. Andrew's Day and ends on Shrove Tuesday, the day before the start of the Lenten season.[3]

Within this bounded sphere, the device of the carnival allows a speculative zone, outside of normal time and outside the grasp of the traditional structures of authority, in which to imagine a new politics. The use of Aristotle in turn provides the authors and redactors a critical vocabulary to adjudicate the quality and effectiveness of that new political order. The text assumes a knowledge of Aristotle's three natural constitutions as described in Book Four of his *Politics*: monarchy, aristocracy, and his

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and should be interpreted as such. Furthermore, the authors and the redactors of *The Christmas Prince* deployed the carnival as a political foil to the normal operating procedures of the college; this is very much in the same vein as Bakhtin's elision of medieval religion and the postwar Soviet state. In short, in this chapter I am much more interested in Bakhtin as a literary critic and theorists than historian.

[2] Bakhtin's classic definition of carnival is found in the introduction to *Rabelais and his World*: "In fact, carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators.... Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants... The tradition of the Saturnalias remained unbroken and alive in the medieval carnival, which expressed this universal renewal and was vividly felt as an escape from the usual official way of life" (7-8). For an application to the Renaissance stage, see Bristol, *Carnival and Theater*, particularly chapter two, "The Social Function of Festivity."

[3] For a full rendering of the historical development and classical antecedents of the "world turned upside topos" see Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* 102ff.

complex idea of polity, or πολιτειαν in Greek. These forms of governance are intrinsically related to their degenerate forms: tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. In the course of his study of the extant constitutions of the ancient world, Aristotle generates this taxonomy by asking two fundamental questions: first, who is to rule; and second, on whose behalf?[4] In a monarchial form of government, a king rules on behalf of the governed, so that human beings might flourish. In a tyranny, a single man holds power with a view only to his own ends, which usually center upon the pursuit of wealth. Important to the irony of *The Christmas Prince*, a polity – which Aristotle describes as a state where the many rule in the interest of all – denotes both a specific type of governing system and is the general term for any type of constitution.[5] The perverted form of polity is a democracy in which "the people," usually of the lower classes, rule with only an eye for their own economic benefit. The danger of a democracy – particularly the Athenian democracy, according to Aristotle – is that the lower classes will govern for their own advantage without respect for the law.[6] However, as Aristotle himself points out, few states live under a pure constitution of any variety. Instead, many states have blended constitutions that mix features of pure and impure constitutions. On that fact hangs the machinations that ultimately bring about the institution of a Christmas Lord at St. John's during the winter of 1607-08.

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[4] For a robust account of Aristotle's taxonomy of constitutions found in the *Politics*, see C.C.W. Taylor's essay "Politics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*; for a discussion of the importance of the *Politics* to late medieval philosophy, see Jean Dunbabin's essay, "The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*. For Aristotle's enduring influence in the Renaissance political thought, see Jonathan Woolfson's essay "Between Bruni and Hobbes: Aristotle's *Politics* in Tudor Intellectual Culture," found in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*.

[5] Aristotle's defines the "polity" or "constitutional" state in the *Politics* in terms of the elements that it borrows from the other constitutions. Note the curious tie-in to Tucker's claim that he is following the "constitution" of Athens: "In the aristocratical or constitutional state, one element will be taken from each – from oligarchy the principle of electing to offices, from democracy the disregard of qualification" (IV.9.10).

[6] "A fifth form of democracy, [referring specifically to Athens] in other respects, the same, is that in which not the law, but the multitude, have supreme power, and supersed the law by their decrees. This is a state of affairs brought about by the demagogues. For in democracies which are subject to the laws the best citizens hold the first place, and there are no demagogues; but where the laws are not supreme, there demagogues spring up...this sort of democracy being relatively to other democracies what tyranny is to other forms of monarchy. The spirit of both is the same, and they alike exercise a despotic rule over the better citizens" (IV.4.15ff).

The opening paragraph of *The Christmas Prince* presents a society in crisis. The fiction of the carnival suspends the operations of the college's structure of authority, leaving a political vacuum. The choice of All Hallows Eve, October 31, as the starting point for the holiday celebrations is significant because it is the day in folk culture where the earth ceases to be productive and then remains fallow until the regeneration that takes place in the spring.[7] That evening, according to the "custom" and "statues" of the college, the undergraduates of the body met to "begin," that is, to plan, their Christmas revels. Because of the holiday, the chronicler is able to conflate the disguising appropriate to All Hallow's Eve to the wider project of planning the Christmas festivities. Drawing on Aristotle's *Politics* , the narrator describes a stratified society divided into three conflicting classes: the seniors, sophomores, and freshmen, which correspond to Aristotle's conception of the state as divided into the aristocracy, the middle classes and the poor. Accustomed to command, the seniors and graduates came to "see" sports, that is, to see them accomplished, which is to say that they would dictate the recreational activities and events of the winter. The younger undergraduates, whom the document memorably terms "poulderlings," came to "make" sports. In other words, they are to be the "agents" of the entertainment, working at the behest of the seniors. Drawing on the legal distinction, these "agents" in turn have at their disposal the "patients," the very youngest undergraduates, the "Freshman punies of the first year." The authors and redactors fashion these youths as the rabble-rousing poor, who were "by no means admitted to be agents or beholders of those sports before themselves have been patient performers of them." Intending to disrupt the entire process, these youngest students came to the meeting in order to "make sport with all" (3).

This stratified society, broken into three warring classes, is, at the beginning of *The Christmas Prince*, unable to come to any agreement about the shape of the holiday celebrations. The freshmen think the poulderlings "too busy and nimble" to adequately organize the sports while in turn the poulderlings believed the freshmen are "too dull and backward in their duty" (3). After this initial impasse on

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[7] For a description of the development of the Celtic celebration of Samhain and its survival in medieval and early modern England see, Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun* 360ff. He also provides an account of the Feast of the Dead, or Hallowtide, and how it was transformed in the Henrician and Edwardian reformations on 371ff.

Halloween night, the "standers by" dismiss both groups, believing them both to be "too forward and violent," but with the expectation that a night's rest would "somewhat abate their rage" (3). The hoped for result does not materialize; rather, confusion and discord carries over to the next day, the Feast of All Hallows, and the conflict threatens to spread from the youth of the college – the undergraduates – to the men of the college, those who have earned their bachelor's degree. In order to avoid "the utter annihilation of all Christmas sports for the whole year," a Christmas Prince is suggested, a lord of the revels, to govern the proceedings. As the narrator explains, "Some who studied the quiet of all mentioned the choosing of a Christmas Lord or Prince of the Revels, who should have authority both to appoint and moderate all such games, and pastimes as should ensue, and to punish all offenders which should anyway hinder or interrupt the free and quiet passage of any auntient and allowed sport" (4). The deployment of a lord of misrule emerges as a political remedy for the chaotic state out of which threatens the very existence of the Christmas celebrations; furthermore, it is a solution offered by an anonymous person or persons, whose influence in fact manufactured the political discourse and silently shaped the course of events.

The college readily assents to this suggestion and an electorate of thirteen undergraduates gather to select the lord. The group consisted of seven scholars on the foundation of the college (meaning they are at the college on scholarship and the college funded their room and board). Joining them in the commission are six gentlemen commoners of the college, who provide for their own needs.[8] Meeting in conclave, the assembly debates various advantages of selecting an undergraduate as opposed to a graduate

[8] As explained in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "The colleges were originally intended only for the fellows and scholars 'on the foundation', the admission of other students, as 'commoners' or boarders, being a subsequent development, which eventuated in the recognition of many ranks of students, as (at Oxford) noblemen, gentlemen-commoners, fellow-commoners, commoners, battelers, servitors: q.v. These grades are now practically obsolete; and the only existing distinction is into scholars, or students on the foundation, and commoners. The latter word thus tends to be understood as a 'common or ordinary undergraduate', i.e. one who has not gained a scholarship, exhibition, or other special distinction." For a description the changing dynamics of class in the post-reformation university, see Lawrence Stone, "The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body 1580-1909," by 1607, he estimates that nearly half of the matriculated students were of gentile rank. In the same collection, James McConica's essay "Scholars and Commoners in Renaissance Oxford," shows the increasing numbers of gentlemen who attended the two ancient universities, 160-166.

student or junior master before choosing a particular candidate for the office. This electorate, which the play *Ara Fortunae* later fashions as the Senate, proclaimed John Towse lord by acclamation: "they laid hands on him and by main strength lifting him up *viua voce* pronounced him Lord" (4). He promptly rejects the honor. While it might be the historical reality that Towse declined the proffered crown for other reasons, the narrator couches Towse's rejection of the office as a failure of the political process. And as the mechanism in place for subsequent elections proves, a new candidate is not required. Indeed, Towse himself is again nominated and is narrowly defeated. Clearly the situation demanded a change in the political framework by which the monarch is selected. Later that night the same electorate processes to the hall, where they ask the vice president, along with one of the deans of the college and one of the senior undergraduates, to oversee a ritualized election called a scrutiny. In order of their status, the members of the electorate, not the college as a whole, comes forward to cast their ballot, but the election, too, proves to be an unruly event, with the Freshmen again disrupting the proceedings. "Some in the lower end of the Hall, to make sport," the narrator observes, "had their names loudest in their mouths whom they least thought of in their minds and whom they knew should come shortest of the place" (5). In the end, the dean announces the results: "Nominatur in hoc Scrutinio duo quorum: Ioanes Towse habet suffragia sex. Thomas Tucker habet suffragia septem" (5).[9] Given the Aristotelian framework employed by the document as a whole, it is no coincidence that the vote falls seven to six in favor of Tucker, a "plebeian" from London and on the foundation of the college (according to Emden's records). Towse, on the other hand, his rival, is a gentleman commoner, likewise from London.[10] Given satiric edge and the way in which the plot unfolds, it no coincidence that Tucker acted as Towse's servitor in the college during normal times. Highlighting Tucker's role as Towse's servant, Towse later accepts the role of

[9] "Two names were nominated for this election: John Towse received six votes. Thomas Tucker received seven votes." Because it is important to maintain the macaronic quality of the manuscript, all quotes from *The Christmas Prince* will be drawn from the Boas edition and cited in their original language. Occasionally, for ease of reading or the clarity of the argument, I will normalize the English and Latin text, with those emendations marked footnote. In addition, I will provide a translation in the footnotes; to ease scholarly communication, unless noted, I will use Elliot's translation of the Latin portion of the records found in the supplementary appendix to his *REED Oxford* volume; in addition, again except where noted, I will use Sutton's translation of the Latin plays found in Online Philology Museum.

[10] Tucker and Towse's information can be found in Emden, *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714.*

Tucker's Chamberlin in the mock court. In his seal of office, it is noted that he was "Purueior for ye [Lords] Princes pallace; Ouer seer of all feast's, and banquet's, furnisher of all Chamber's, and Galleries" (37).

Tucker is initially unsure whether he should accept the office, given the exuberance of the crowd, but his indecision does not last long. Three or four days after the election, the prince-elect gathers the bachelors and senior undergraduates in the college hall for a meeting styled as his private installation. Recycling the same Aristotelian themes, the event begins with various speeches, with some in support of monarchy and others of democracy. In addition, some are in support of "sports and revels" while others rise in their opposition. All the speeches, evidently given in English, circle back to one topic, the speaker's opinion of the new leader: "all of them drawing some conclusion concerning the like or dislike of the government newly begun" (6). The prince-elect intercedes in the midst of this debate in order to offer his thoughts on the matter in a short and dignified speech presented in Latin. By indenting the text and placing scare quotes around every line, the redactor draws attention to the artifice of Tucker's speech. And the switch to Latin transforms the tone of the debate, which also highlights Tucker's own personal transformation as a character within the narrative. Opening with a coy acknowledgement of the difficulties he has had in accepting the office, he quickly moves to fashion himself as a reluctant latter-day Cicero, called to the service of the republic. He styles his audience as "viri electores clarissimi" and "electores conscripti" (6). As his speech continues, however, the powerful nature of the office begins to affect his actions. He declares that he was not chosen to arbitrate a particular debate regarding the nature of the government; rather, he stresses, he has come to assume command. As he emphatically proclaims, "Disceptationum vestraum [sic] non accessi judex, accersor imperator" (6).[11] He tempers that statement, somewhat, by disavowing tyranny: "Tyrannidem non profiteer, imperium exercebo" (6).[12] His linguistic transformation into a monarch is seemingly accompanied by an apparent diminishment of his mental

[11] "I have not come as the judge of your debates, I am sent as (your) commander."
[12] "I do not profess tyranny but I will exercise rule."

capacities. And as he dedicates the revels to Minerva, Vulcan and Prometheus, in the mode of imperious leader he declares that the kingdom will follow the Athenian constitution (or "polity.") He clearly states,

> Quare primitias amoris, atque officij vestry statuo extemplo exigendas, ne aut ipse sine authoritate imperare, aut imperium sine Gloria capessisse videar. Πολιτειαν Atheniensem sequimur, cujus norman Ego ad munus regium jam suffectus, Minvervae, Vulcano et Prometheo sacra cum ludorum Curatoribus pro moris vso, prima mea in his sacris authoritate fieri curabo. Interim vero (Viro nostra authoritate adhuc majors) juxta praedictae Reipublicae jmaginem choragos, seu adjutores desidero, qui non tantum ludis praeponantur, sed et liberalite pro opum ratione in Reipublicae impensas vtentes, ex aere publico praemia partim proonant, partim de suo jnsumant hoc nomine quod illorum sint praefecti. Quae alia vestry sunt officij moniti praestabitis, quae amoris, vltro (vti spero) offeretis. (6)[13]

It is a delightful irony that an elected ruler claiming in Latin to seize the *imperium* at the same time promises his subjects that their state will follow the democratic constitution of Athens, which he references in Greek, πολιτειαν. The new prince's interpretation of the word polity or constitution is predictably narrow. The truth is that the extent of his interest in the constitution is the institution of the choregos as a funding mechanism for the revels. The political context of *The Christmas Prince* suggests that the text's use of "polity" is accompanied by a biting irony: as an elected official who slides into the role of a tyrant, Tucker represents the worst excesses of *both* democracy and tyranny.

Fortune's Mandate

The narrative of Tucker's election, his acceptance speech and the copies of the tax bills and laws which follow his installation in the manuscript, introduce the first two devices employed by the authors and redactors of *The Christmas Prince*: the carnival state and the overt deployment of Aristotelian

[13] "Wherefore I establish that the first fruits of love and of your duty are to be exacted immediately, lest I myself should appear to rule without authority or have seized power without glory. We follow the Athenian constitution [πολιτειαν] to whose standard, I appointed now to the task of kings, with the curators of plays, will take care, as my first responsibility."

political vocabulary. These two devices set in motion other motifs and devices that inform Tucker's kingship. Indeed the political theories that Tucker uses to justify and legitimate his reign evolve along with his own self-understanding. In the first play memorialized in the text, *Ara Fortunae*, the prince wishes to erase the history of his election and claim a divine mandate for his rule. Despite its relative brevity, only 430 lines, the work provides a lively introduction to the Prince's reign, setting his rulership on an ascendant trajectory from which he will reach his zenith of power (and, of course his eventual downfall). The narrator offers two important facts in the preface to the play. First, it was performed after dinner on St. Andrew's Day "because at that time the college was also to choose their new officers for the year following" (13). Second, despite the Prince's earlier promise to dedicate the proceedings to Minerva, Prometheus and Vulcan, he has changed his mind and decided to dedicate the entire project to Fortune. In so doing, he metaphorically jilts the goddess of wisdom and decides to cast his lot with the goddess Fortune, an action that will have immense consequences for the mock kingdom.

Performed in Latin, the play's first act recalls the political machinations that resulted in the election of the prince and the tumult that preceded his own acceptance speech. In the opening scene three citizens debate the condition of the newly founded government. Drawn along Aristotelian lines, the first citizen favors a strong monarchy, the second citizen calls for a polity although clearly in the sense of a constitutional state. The first citizen protests at the passivity of the current king, "Quin ergo profert semet in apertum diem? Et adhuc recentem legibus firmat statum; Ut tanti oportet corporis verum caput?" (15).[14] The second citizen takes offense, preferring instead a constitutional government without a king. "Faeliciorem credo πολιτειαν fore capite vacante, si voces Regem caput" (15).[15] The brief interchange is important here because it draws attention to the last instance when the word πολιτειαν was used, at the prince's private installation when he promised to follow the constitution of Athens in the institution of the choregos.

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[14] Why doesn't he come out in broad daylight and firm up our newly founded constitution [*statum*] with laws, as behooves the true head of such a great body?

[15] If you are calling a king a head, I am of the opinion that a constitution [πολιτειαν] is better off when it is headless.

The argument on stage between the two might have come to blows had not a third citizen intervened. The third citizen urges calm, "Sistite duellem, viri,"[16] and proceeds to chastise the two citizens in turn: "Tu nimis es atrox, tuque violentus nimis" (15).[17] In his effort to diffuse the quarrel, he stakes out a political middle ground: "Sine rege poterit esse sat faelix status, Nec rex nocebit interim, (16)[18] and echoing Aristotle's criticism of democracy, he justifies this position to the democrat: : "Haud ulla servat iura popularis status" (16).[19] He then reminds the supporter of monarchy of the dangers of a king becoming a tyrant: "Servant tyranno subditi stricte nimis" (16).[20] While sounding rational because it represents the Aristotelian concept of the middle way or golden mean, the political philosophy expressed by the third citizen is also consistent with the tenets of an aristocratic constitution. And by implication, the third citizen may very well be the theatrical embodiment of the anonymous voices who suggested the use of a Christmas lord in the tumult preceding Tucker's election. Given what will occur in the next act, the authors and redactors of the text are making a point that is applicable to any official who claims to hold a *de jure* right to their office: despite whatever a king might say about his authority, he rules only with the tacit support of the aristocracy because they control the funds.

The appearance of a messenger on stage interrupts the conversation, and the news he bears significantly changes its tenor. He announces, "Ille qui princeps fuit / Nuper creatus vix sibi firmum satis / Credens futurum regimen a vobis datum, / Et turbidorum pessimam invidiam timens, / Sacras ad aedes ire Fortunae parat / Consulere numen, facere quod numen iubet. / Si det tenere, si modo eripiat dea / Abiicere regnum statuit et sceptrum suum, / Nec sine deorum numine imperio frui" (15).[21] It might be laughable that a monarch would seek divine approval from Fortune, but the prince's desire for divine legitimation places Aristotelian notions of sovereignty in contrast to contemporary theories of *de jure*

[16] "Cease your quarrel, gentleman."
[17] Speaking to the tyrant, "You are too harsh;" and to the democrat, "you too violent."
[18] "A state without a king can be happy enough but in the meantime a king does no harm."
[19] "Scarcely any state observes the laws."
[20] "Subjects are too punctual in obeying a tyrant."
[21] "He who was lately created our prince thinking that the government you have granted him is not on a firm enough footing, is making ready to go to Fortune's temple, consult the goddess, and do as she commands. He'll keep the position if the goddess grants it, but if she takes it away he has decided to abdicate his scepter, and not to enjoy power without divine consent."

lordship. The concept that a king rules by divine right without the necessary consent of any powers in the realm, religious or secular, in fact underpinned King James' own theory of monarchy. While James ascended the English throne in 1603, he had previously advanced that very theory in two widely circulated texts, *The Law of Free Monarchies* and *Basilicon Doron*, which had been published in the 1590's while he was still James VI of Scotland. The former text advances four fundamental claims about kingship: first, monarchy as an institution is divinely ordained; second, a monarch is only accountable to God; third, succession is hereditary; and, fourth, subjects have no right to revolt. Forged in his struggle with Scottish Presbyterians, James' conception of monarchy was antithetical to several strands of contemporary English political thought. His ideas ran afoul of both Catholic and Puritan political philosophy, with the former emphasizing the mediation of the Pope and the latter believing the community of the faithful should hold the monarch accountable – by any means necessary, including open rebellion – to scriptural standards. Key to the political satire of *The Christmas Prince*, James' formulation of rule by divine right flew in the face of the native English constitutional tradition exemplified by John Fortescue's description of a limited, or constitutional, monarchy found in *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*.[22] The state authorized by carnival existed prior to Tucker's elevation; likewise, it will endure after his deposition, and whatever he may say about the nature of his authority, the audience understands it is merely theatre –a show and hollow display of power. The academic audience watching *The Christmas Prince* can understand that despite his best efforts to erase the fact, the kingship passed to Tucker only with the consent of a representative body. Under an aristocratic constitution, the moneyed classes might authorize a monarch because, as the third citizen has already explained, "*in the meantime*, a king does no harm."

After the messenger delivers his announcement, the first and third citizens exit, expressing their pleasure with the decision, leaving the second citizen – whom the stage directions name as Misanax ("king-hater") – alone on stage. Meantime, the third citizen has called the tyrant by name: he is

[22] Mark Kishlansky has argued in his book, *A Monarchy Transformed. Britain, 1603-1714*, that by the end of Elizabeth's reign the English political system was to a degree participatory and consultative. As Kishlanky writes, "monarchical power was limited by the evolution of its practice."

Philarchus, "rule lover." The two names are particularly important here because they introduce another of the text's re-occurring concerns: the relationship of servants to their masters, and members of the lower classes to their social betters. The authors and redactors are particularly eager to satirize the lengths some servants will go, without question, to please their masters. At the same time, they cast aspersions on lawless characters, such as Misanax, who, in his soliloquy that ends the first act, drops the hint that jealousy and envy, not principle, are at the root of his political philosophy. But Misanax is clearly based upon two characters from *Julius Caesar*. Like Cassius, Misanax publicly opposes monarchy on philosophical grounds, but privately he would very much want to be king. As he admits, "Sed si ego regnum occupem, / Quantum probabo regna!" (17).[23] At the conclusion of this soliloquy he vows to disrupt the installation of the prince and declares he will foment a rebellion. The allusions to Shakespeare's play reinforce the general sense of anxiety towards the legitimacy of the monarchy as an institution within *The Christmas Prince*.

With Misanax's words still lingering in the air, the action shifts to the opposite side of the stage where the Temple of Fortune is located. Tolmaea, Fortune's temple slave, steps forward and opens the third act with the following speech:

> Haec illa toties principum donis, ducum / Spoliis optimis, aucta Fortunae domus. / Hic ara stat magnifica, quam totus colit / Mundus, sacrisque adornat humanum genus / Hic orbis est thesaurus, hic honor et labor, / Copia et egestas, spes, metus, mala cum bonis / Numine sub uno militant. Dextram bonis / Plenam merenti porrigit, laevum malis / Gravibus onustam praebet indigno. Suum / Cuique tribuit. Utque iustitiae dea / Caeca est: ut omnes fronte et aspectu pari / Excipiat, ita Fortuna ut interna optime / Perpendat hominum merita. Non oculos habet / Externa ne respiceret et notis daret / Bona, quae merenti dare vel ignoto decet. / Si quando stultis faveat, hoc aequum putat. / Qui se

[23] "If I were to gain the throne how greatly I should approve of kingdoms"

> iuvare nesciunt, miseros iuvat. / Natura quos afflixit, haec sorte erigit. / Una dea premente, dea iuvat altera (17-18).[24]

Tolmaea clearly is an extraordinarily poor interpreter of Boethius. But her ignorance is rooted in the same misconceptions about Fortune held by Boethius himself in the opening book of *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Tolmaea still believes the goddess gives good fortune to the worthy and bad fortune to the wicked. She does not yet understand that the epitaph "blind" refers to the course of Fortune's wheel, which is forever blind because it is forever the same. By the conclusion of *The Christmas Prince*, however, Tolmaea and Tucker will both learn the truth – which, not coincidently is the same lesson learned by Boethius – that Fortune is only constant in her inconstancy.[25]

Heard from within her temple, the voice of Fortune interrupts Tolmaea's speech, warning the temple slave that uncouth men are approaching. Misanax approaches the temple accompanied by three comrades with the intent of tearing it down. With all the self-righteousness of a "rule lover," Tolmaea confronts the rebels and explains that "Fortuna dat tantum manu / Quod facta vestra postulant" (19).[26] Again, while the premise is laughable, the rebels, unaware of the nature of the goddess, reply with their complaints, stated according to a coherent political philosophy. The first rebel bases his objection to the new government on legal precedent, asking, "Cur iam locat / In civitate libera imperii statum?" (19).[27] The second rebel objects to Tucker's rule with an appeal to Aristotle, asking the temple slave: "Aut cur

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[24] "This is the home of Fortune, decorated by the gifts of princes and the spoils of captains. Here stands her magnificent altar, at which all the world worships, which humanity adorns with its offerings. Here is the world's treasure-house, here honor and effort, want and plenty, hope, fear, good things and bad all serve under a single deity. She offers her right hand, full of good things, to the deserving, but to the unworthy she offers her left, weighed down with heavy ills. Being a goddess of justice, she's blind: just as she receives all men bearing an equal outward appearance, so Fortune excellently weighs their inward merits. She has no eyes lest she look at outward things and give good things to men who are familiar to her, but rather so she might give to the deserving, even if he be a stranger. If she sometimes shows favor to fools, she thinks this is fair, for she helps wretches who do not know how to help themselves. So those whom Nature has afflicted, she lifts up by her lot. When one goddess oppresses, another one helps."

[25] For an explanation of the place of Fortune in the cosmology of early-modern intellectuals see Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* 52-61.

[26] "Fortune does nothing but dole out what your deeds demand."

[27] "Why is she now imposing a royal government on a free city?"

tyrannum instituit alienum, exterum?" (19).[28] The reference to Tucker as an alien is curious. In his notes to the play, Sutton observes "Immediately after the election of Thomas Tucker, the members of the college went looking for him. Since he did not reside in college premises, he could humorously be termed a foreigner."[29] Seen in the larger political narrative of *The Christmas Prince*, it is more likely the alien or foreigner [*alienum*] refers to Tucker's social status as a plebeian. In this state authorized by the carnival, the plebeians are in command and the gentleman commoners are playing the roles of the rebels. We might also note that the complaint that the king is a foreigner or alien is yet another barb aimed at James, the Scottish king. In any case, as punishment for their rebellious impulses, Tolmaea hands the three unnamed rebels, in turn, the symbols of their new occupations: a beetle, a carter's whip, and black smith's hammer. Finally, she turns to Misinax, who has been the most sharp-tongued in insulting the government and the goddess, and she gives him a cobbler's apron. In this we find another gesture towards Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The gift reveals the other half of Misinax's Stratfordian pedigree, namely as the saucy cobbler from the opening scene of *Julius Caesar*. Tolmaea thus punishes the group with hard labor while reminding them of their social status: "Accipere laete principem vulgi est opus, / Eligere et instituere Fortunae datur" (19).[30] The ironic ambiguity of the line is one of the jewels of *Ara Fortunae*. In this scene, the rebels are punished by hard labor for not accepting the prince; in the wider context of the revels, the lot they accept is that of actually paying for them.

Chastised and cowed into accepting their punishment, the rebels exit the stage. The next act begins with the Prince approaching the temple with his court. He, too, loudly complains about his fate, saying he was dragged into his current position against his will. Looking at the audience, whom he styles as the "commons," he sighs that the love of the people is a burden. Despite their love, however, he will not accept command unless it is confirmed by a divine voice. With same level of understanding of Boethius as Tolmaea, he announces "Munus agnosco datum, Sed munere frui metuo, nec statuo frui /

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[28] "Or why is she setting up a tyrant who is a foreigner, an alien?"
[29] See Sutton's notes to *Ara Fortunae*, <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/ara/notes.html#153>
[30] "The task of the common folk is to accept their prince with good cheer, the prince fortune has given them to choose and institute."

Divina nisi vox aliqua confirmat ratum / Quod vestra vox decrevit. Haec ergo est dies, / Haec hora qua Fortuna consulitur, dea / Benignitatis" (21).[31] When the court approaches the temple, Tolmaea instructs each member to approach the altar and spin the wheel. The first person is the Philosopher and, to his great disappointment, he is told to sit on the left side of the altar. In an aside to the audience he reminds himself to calm his "rebellious impulses." In contrast, the next two officers, the Treasurer and the Chamberlin, are given symbols of rule, the wallet and the key, and told to sit on the right side of the Prince. Then, the Prince himself is called before the altar, where Tolmaea makes the momentous proclamation, "Fortuna ridet, plaudite, coronam dedit" (24).[32] Hearing those words, the prince feels an immediate transformation in his first, or natural, body. It is a sign that his coronation at the altar was efficacious. What prince senses is the addition of a second, sacred, body. He exclaims "Assurgo, dumque surgio, quam fio potens! / Quam subito totus mutor! En solito magis / Sunt oculi acuti, et auribus plura audio. / Hae longiores sunt manus, et dum loquor / Velociores, ut scelus capiant, pedes. / Cor duplicatur, spiritus intus tument. / Metuite regem, subditi. Officium tuum / Perage, sacerdos" (24).[33] The prince's second body encompasses the entire realm upon his or her lawful coronation.[34] Referring to this scene in his introduction to *The Christmas Prince*, Boas observes "William Laud, then a Master of Arts of St. John's, must have felt well repaid by such a speech which was his first assessment towards the expenses of the Revels" (ix). Tone deaf to the irony, Boas misinterprets the speech as expressing support of the divine right of kings. At the time of the play's performance in 1607 and the publication of the manuscript in 1611, Laud's opinions on

[31] "I acknowledge this was given me as a gift, but I am afraid to enjoy this gift, nor do I choose to enjoy it unless some divine voice should confirm what your voice has decreed. So this is the day, this is the hour when Fortune is being consulted, that goddess of kindness."
[32] "Fortune is smiling, you all should cheer, she has given a crown."
[33] "I am rising up, and how mighty I am growing as I rise! How suddenly I am wholly changed! Lo, my eyes are keener than usual, I hear more with my ears. As I speak, these arms are growing longer, and my feet swifter, so that they might catch crime. My heart is doubled, my spirits swell within. Fear you king, subjects."
[34] For the standard definition of the King's Two bodies see Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* 14.

the subject were, to say the least, very much in flux, and were only fully fleshed out when he entered royal service.[35]

The coronation ceremony in the play concludes with the final members of the prince's entourage being asked to approach the altar. Predictably the peasant and the fool join the philosopher on the left, or sinister, side of the goddess' altar. Having his court arrayed around him, the prince asks for members of the commons (the assembled members of the college) and the senate (the committee that elected him to his office) to come to the temple for an address. In it he recognizes the history of his kingship, admitting, "Agnosco vestrum munus imperium datum"[36] Yet in reference to his divine election, he immediately points out, "Maior potestas erigit. Nutu deae (24)."[37] With the blessing of the goddess in hand, he promises to use the power vested in his office: "Hoc regimen obtinemus, et nutu deae / Hoc regimen exercibimus. Rursus loquar / Hoc regimen exercibimus forti manu, / Summo rigore" (24).[38]He concludes the speech with a boastful promise, revealing his characteristic nonchalant confidence:

> Et ista pro imperio satis / Loquuta. Sequitur, quam quidem vellem magis, / Vox nostri amoris. Spondeo studium, fidem, / Noctis vigilias cura quas faciet. Dies / Labore plenos spondeo vestris bonis, / Pompas, triumphos gratiam in vestram paro. / Promitto ludos, principem quicquid decet / Regnante me vel fiet, aut fiet nihil. / Haec mea voluntas loquitur (25).[39]

This boast will come back to haunt him. While he may not have noticed, the goddess is also watching his speech from her temple. It is this tableau presented to the audience at the end of *Ara Fortunae* that will be the governing image of Tucker's kingship: with the goddess secretly locking on, a mock king and his

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[35] For the doctrine's novelty and Laud's change of mind on the subject, see MacCulloch's *The Reformation* 513-521.
[36] "I recognize that this rule is the gift you have given…"
[37] "A greater power has arisen."
[38] I shall obtain this government in accordance with the goddess' will, and in accordance with her will I shall exercise it. I say it again: I shall exercise this rule with a strong hand and extreme severity.
[39] That's enough said about my government. It follow (and I would prefer to speak of this) that I say a word about my affection. I pledge my zeal, my loyalty, and wakeful nights, which my care will require. I pledge days full of effort for your good, I am preparing masques and routs for your sake. I promise plays, and whatever befits a prince will occur during my reign, or nothing will occur."

court are raised up by the command of Fortune, who gives the monarch a divine mandate. Simultaneously, the disgruntled members of the court chafe under the burden of insult while a rebel underclass waits in the wings to sow rebellion. The members of the audience understand what the actors do not: the blessing, or, indeed the curse of Fortune is always temporary. Tucker may enjoy a divine right and possess the sacral bodies of a king, but those possessions are short lived; likewise, those who were placed in lowly positions will shortly see their fortunes rise.

The authors and redactors of the text signal to the readers early in *Ara Fortunae* that the play occurred on a set featuring a two-house stage design. Drawing heavily on Alan Nelson's *Early Cambridge Theatres*, a perceptive study of Cambridge stages, Sutton notes that the two-house stage design fits into a familiar tradition of academic stagecraft.[40] In *Ara Fortunae*, one side of the stage depicts a house belonging to the prince and the other a temple sacred to the goddess Fortune. [41] Except for the mask *Days of the Week*, all the plays performed in college hall that winter employed the same set design. More than a shared backdrop, the altar especially gathers meaning that is transferred to the subsequent plays govern the proceedings of the revels. Relying on the audience's understanding of Greek and Roman cultic practice, the altar slips between the notion of a place where worship occurs and the site where sacrifice is offered. In the play *Ira Fortunae*, the altar also becomes the tomb where the prince's sacred body will be interred. This altar/tomb duality capitalizes on the potent theological symbol in the context of Jacobean England, where the altar had come to represent profound difference of understanding of the sacrament of communion between Anglicans, Puritans and Roman Catholics. And the altar very well may

[40] See Dana Sutton's appendix to *The Christmas Prince*, "In the absence of a permanent *scaenae frons* academic tragedy and comedy employed temporary structures called "houses," no doubt an inheritance of the booths employed in mystery plays. The question is how many such "houses" would have been employed in a given play. In examining the evidence for the large dining halls such as those of Trinity, Queens, and St. John's Colleges, in which most plays were produced, Nelson concluded that there was a raised stage area with a "house" on either side. The main argument in favor of this arrangement was that the area at the back of the stage was used for the seating of particularly distinguished spectators: if more structures were built on the stage, the view of these honored gentlemen would be blocked, and the actors would be obliged to play with their backs turned toward them. [http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/victoria/houses.html]

[41] As already explained, *Ara Fortunae* was performed without the benefit of a built stage but clearly used the same set. Not requiring a stage, *The Days of the Week* was performed twice in the President's lodgings.

have held special significance within the localized context of St. John's College itself. The college proved receptive ground to the ideas of Jacobus Arminius and his particular reverence for the sacraments as a means of grace. It was the academic home of several notable High Anglican Divines, including the future Archbishops Laud and Juxon. Both paid taxes to the mock government of the revels.

The Christmas Ascendancy

The celebration of the Christmas holiday is next described in the manuscript. In the progression of Tucker's kingship around the wheel of fortune, it clearly represents his ascendancy. On Christmas morning a chair of state covered by a cloth containing the emblem of state was placed in his private lodging, befitting his status. Later that afternoon he joined the President, Buckeridge, at the high table for supper. The meal extends the inversion of status ritual. The text carefully describes how the prince was attended while at table by both a gentleman commoner and a scholar of the foundation of the college. Before the meal a company of scholars performed a version of a mumming. Six scholars of the house dressed in silk processed into the hall carrying the mustard while a complementary number of gentlemen of the college were arrayed in guard's coats bringing in the head of a boar. The assembled company sang an adaptation of a Boar's Head Carol in English, memorialized in the text. The head of the boar itself was held aloft by the "lustiest" of all the guard, who was wearing a horseman's coat. This "the lustiest guard" held a superior social rank to Tucker and may very well have been Towse – or the actor who played Misanax or the philosopher in *Ara Fortunae*.

Immediately following supper the youngest members of the college presented a brief play called *Saturnalia*. Performed in Latin, this play offers a clear continuity of theme and visual effect with the previous play, *Ara Fortunae.* The same set and props are used. One side of the stage contains a house, while on the opposite side is a temple that contains an altar sacred to Saturn. The play opens as the festival of the Saturnalia is drawing to a close. Appropriate to the demands of the holiday, a master is forced by the dictates of the holiday to wait upon his servant. In a humorous aside to the audience, the master observes, "Celebrantur hodie fest Saturno sacra / In hisce servo dominus inservit suo, / Hodieque famulos quisque quo plures habet / Eo vel ipse pluribus servit miser. / Quin nunc beatum sentiam memet

virum, / Quod unus uni serveulus restet mihi" (49),[42] connecting the present play with the inversion of status rituals performed at supper. In fact, the master's opening lines identify him as the philosopher in *Ara Fortunae*, the play where the peasant and the fool are asked to join the philosopher on the left hand side of the prince and the fool makes the remark that a king can afford many fools while a philosopher can barely provide for one. Now, in *Saturnalia*, the philosopher/master must wait upon his student/servant. The servant's speech and actions during the saturnalia are notable for their bravado and racy sexual innuendo. Luxuriating in the role of the Saturnalian lord, the student comments to his master: "Siccine morari festa me dominu decet? Funde Ganimeda mi tuo vinu Ionui. Cratera primu numina plenu ebibam" (49).[43] The master, who clearly does not enjoy this display of power, reminds his servant that the social inversion will not last for very much longer: "Tu servitutis vix leve subibis iugum, Dominiusque rursus, rursus ego flagrum geram. Postervitatem tum lues misere tuam" (50).[44] However, the slave's impertinence is far from at an end.

Producing a dog collar with a bell, the servant demands that his master wear it so he will be able to tell his dog from all the rest. Walking across the stage, the servant and the master travel to the temple to perform the sacrifices required by Saturn on the holiday. As the pair traverse the stage, the audience becomes aware of Hercules, lurking about the temple deep in thought. He performs a soliloquy drawn from Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, which condemns the barbarity of the Pelagians' celebration of the saturnalian rites that required human sacrifice. His speech is unheard by the master and servant, and they interrupt Hercules' thoughts. Although angry, Hercules gazes upon the approaching servant and his "dog" and decides to hold back in order to watch and discover their intentions. When they reach the temple, the servant removes the dog collar from his master, which evidently releases him from his canine form, and

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[42] "Today we celebrate the feast sacred to Saturn, during which the master serves his servant. And today the more servants a man has to serve, the unhappier he is. But now I see myself to be a blessed man, since I have only one."

[43] "Is this how it befits me, the master, to wait for the festivities? Pour wine for your Jove, my Ganymede. First I'll drink off an entire bumper for the god."

[44] "This holiday won't last forever, slave. You're going to submit to no light yoke of servitude, and when I'm your master again, I'll be the man to hold the whip once more. You'll wretchedly pay for your pertness."

then the servant commands the master in no uncertain terms that it is time for the saturnalian sacrifice. The master is confused because he cannot find a suitable victim for the sacrifice. Now the servant's true motives for treating his master so horribly are revealed: in a carnivalesque inversion of the Abraham and Isaac story, the servant demands to be sacrificed on the altar by the master. According to the servant, death would be preferable to a life of servitude.

It is at this very moment that Hercules intervenes in the argument. Commanding the servant's silence, he corrects the pair's assumptions regarding the oracle that commands human sacrifice. Assuming the role of a weary professor, Hercules asks the servant to read the oracle inscribed in Greek on a tablet: "Στείχετε μαιόμενοι Σικελῶν Σατυρνίαν αἶαν, / Ἠδ' Ἀβοριγενέων Κοτυλών οὗ νᾶσος ὀχείται, / Οἷς ἀναμιχθέντες δεκάτην ἐκπέμψατε Φοίβῳ / Καὶ κεφαλὰ Ἄδῃ, καὶ τῷ πατρὶ πέμπετε φῶτα" (52).[45] Taking that tablet, the servant – once again the surly student – snarls and reluctantly translates the oracular commandment from Greek into Latin. When the he finishes the exercise, Hercules corrects the translation of the Greek word φῶτα. The servant had translated the word as "man," but, as Hercules notes, it should be rendered as "light." He goes on to interpret the text, explaining that the god requires a sacrifice of candles and not of men. Having prevented the servant's sacrifice by the master, Hercules moves to dedicate the servant as a priest in the temple. In doing so, Hercules places the servant outside the authority of his master, frustrating the normal course of the saturnalia. His intervention into the conflict between the servant and master likewise frustrates the interpretive strategies that engender such violence in normal, or non-carnival, time.

Stressing the importance of correct interpretation, the play comes to a close with Hercules speaking, and, at his request, his new priest reiterating, this lesson connecting Saturnalia and Christmas: "Haec festa posthaec proximo quivis suo / Ut gratuletur, φῶτα sibi mutuo dabunt.ubique festum hoc cerei illustrent

[45] "Fare forth the Sicels, Saturnian land to seek, / Aborigines' Cotyle, too, where floats an isle; / With these men mingling, to Phoebus send a tithe, / And heads to Hades, and send to the sire a man [φῶτα]."

volo, Praeclara ne lux numina desit cave. Haec festa mutent, reliqus sint rata omnia" (54).[46] The very candles that Hercules demands as a sacrifice to Dis in lieu of human sacrifice become the candles used in the midnight mass. As described in the narrative prologue to the play, its very purpose is to explain "the first cause of Christmas-Candles…[with] an application made to the Day, the Nativity of Christ" (49). The symbolism of the candles conflates the message of the half-human hero Hercules with that of the god-man, Jesus, whose nativity is celebrated on that very day. In this respect, the play represents the birth of Christ as another inversion of status ritual, where the Christian God, in the second person of the trinity, incarnates as a particular human being of low social status.

Zenith

The manuscript account of the revels opens with a state of chaos and uncertainty, out of which a monarch is elected. And from the moment of his election, the monarch begins to exhibit a tendency towards tyranny combined with an inflated sense of self-importance and a less than stellar intellect. The satire thus trades on common conceptions of the sitting monarch, King James I. The text's anonymous authors and redactors also direct their satire to more localized figures of authority. The portrayal of the prince's Christmas day activities, particularly the play *Saturnalia*, focused the reader's attention back to the particular setting of the revels within the confines of the college. The next play presented in the college hall blurs the distinction between national and local satire. Like the previous plays composed and performed in St. John's College and discussed in chapter one, the five-act Latin tragedy *Philomena* is adapted from a well-known Ovidian tale, but it is not a straightforward reworking of that material. Continuing the narrative of the mock court, the drama shades Tereus as a tyrannical ruler surrounded by over-eager servants. The play clearly employs the same two-house stage design that was introduced in *Ara Fortunae* and used again in *Saturnalia*. The action of the play alternates between the palace of Tereus and the abandoned shrine of Bacchus, now a hovel shared by a shepherd and his daughter. However, it is

[46] "Henceforth, so that each man might congratulate his neighbor on the holiday, I want them to borrow each other's light. I want these candles to brighten this festival everywhere, take care that the god does not lack his light. Let them transform the holiday, let everything else be duly ordained."

also revealed in the admiral's resignation speech in *Ira Fortunae* that the production employed a papier-mâché boat and a harbor scene executed in purple to augment that the basic set design.[47]

Blurring the distinction between narrative frame and performed drama, the manuscript account of *Philomena* begins with a depiction of the prince and his court, dressed in their academic gowns, as they process through the great hall to take their seats around the dais of the stage. Fortune follows the court, accompanied by her priestess, Tolmaea, who is carrying a book. Turning to the court, the goddess chides them for their delay. This play, which enacts the slaughter of "innocent" Itys, had been intended for performance on the Feast of the Innocents. However, it was delayed so the carpenters could complete the scaffold and stage. She then commands the prince to approach the book, which is no doubt a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* in order to choose his lot. In a display of bibliomancy, the prince's finger chances on the name Tereus. Having heard the name, Fortune then commands the court to "Exuite vestras, turba praegravior, togas. / Vel ipsa velum porro deducam meum / Oculis apertis ut meas partes agam" (59).[48] In response, both the mock court and Fortune's entourage vacate their seats, save for the crown and scepter left on the chair of state, and approach the stage as actors. The chorus arrives on stage first. It comprises only two members: actors representing earth and sea. In their conversation that precedes the play, each accuses the other of overstepping their proper authority and of being the more malevolent force in human affairs. This conversation offers a meta-commentary not only on this particular play but on the work of the revels as a whole. This important technique, which will be used in other plays in the manuscript account, transforms the motifs of the carnival – the opposition between Apollonian and Dionysian, "officialdom" and the so-called "second life," providence and fortune, philosophy and poetry, *serio* and *ludis* – into an ongoing conversation. Returning to these themes, the chorus will introduce each of the play's five acts. In both its figurative and literal senses, the play never strays from the liminal area separating land and sea.

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[47] See the admiral's comment in *Ira Fortunae*, 2.4.

[48] "Take off your gowns, you right distinguished company, as I myself shall divest myself of my veil, so I may play my part with open eyes."

As the first act begins Tereus has just arrived home to Thrace from his trip to fetch his queen's sister, Philomena, from their father's home in Athens. Before Procne can be made aware of their arrival, Tereus beckons one of his servants, asking him, "Adesto Phaule, tu me amas?" (62).[49] He follows that leading question, which the servant obviously would answer in the affirmative, with another: "Plerique superos non timent, quia non vident. / Quid si innocentes, quos vides et quos amas, / Necare iubeam?" (63).[50] The clever and calculating manner of this conversation reveals the depth of Tereus' depravity as a ruler and displays something of his cunning tactical mind. More problematically, the servant's only question in acquiescing to the murder was how they ought to be accomplished rather than the reasons that justify the killing. Recalling the third citizen's critique of monarchy as a political system in *Ara Fortunae*, the servant appears all too eager to please a tyrant. The servant was, in fact, enthusiastic in following Tereus' instructions that he sink the ship and drown the crew. When the servant returns from his bloody work to claim his reward, Tereus coolly dispatches him just before killing Philomena's maid. Before placing their bodies in the tomb, he addresses the dead woman, "Phaulum sequetur, nuptias iungam in nece" (67).[51] With the murders accomplished, Tereus successfully isolated Philomena by murdering any person who knew of her arrival. He can then turn his attention to the seduction of sister-in-law. He uses the same rhetorical strategies that successfully convinced his servant to murder his own peers in cold blood, first announcing himself to her a "potent king" deserving of love. His speech to Philomena places his both actions and desires above both the law because of his status. Philomena's resistance, however, challenges the exemption of the sovereign: either virtue is required of all, or it is meaningless. Appropriately, the scene ends without a resolution. Instead, in a clever homage to Ovid's tale, Tereus suggests they go on a walk along the wooded seashore to enjoy the birdsong.

As the pair walks off stage, the audience's attention briefly shifts to the home of the royal shepherd Faustulus and his daughter Faustula, who are characters drawn from the rustic tradition. In this

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[49] "Come here, Phaulus. Do you love me?"
[50] "Many men do not fear the gods, since they do not see them. What if I command you to murder innocents whom you see and whom you love?"
[51] "She'll follow Phaulus, I'll marry them in death"

brief introduction to the characters of the subplot, the audience overhears the shepherd talking to his daughter about her marriage prospects. When they walk off stage heading in the opposite directions, Tereus returns to the stage alone, offering a soliloquy in which he reflects on the crimes he has already committed and eagerly anticipates his next move.

> Adhuc relicta est hora pietati brevis, / Tempusque paenitentiae, veniae locus. / Nam quae peregi levia sunt, prorsus nihil, / Si comparentur ad scelus quod iam paro. / Monstrum est: parentem terret, in lucem tamen / Prodibit. At relligio, ius, leges vetant, / Dii, fama, virtus, terra, mare, caelum tremunt. / Quid dii? Quid aether? Fabulae at aniles ioci. / Quid fama? Fmus quae cito ac surgit cadit. / Relligio? Fallax larva, figmentum irritum. / Quid iura? Tensa retia ut capiant rudes. / Quid ipsa virtus? Umbra, vox, ludus, nihil. / Qui metuit umbris non potest rebus frui. / Philomela, venio. Nec metue, fies enim / Iunonis instar, et soror et uxor Iovis (69).[52]

The political philosophy advocated by Tereus in this speech could easily be imputed to Tucker in his role as monarch. It also prefigures that of the tyrant Periander. The obvious flaw woven into all three characters, who are really one, is the mistaken belief that divine sanction of their lordship provides an exemption from the laws and that divine retribution will not seek them out.

When the curtain opens on the second act, Tereus has already raped Philomena. Repeating the oaths found in Ovid's account, Philomena promises to scream the details of her shame to the entire world. Intervening into the Ovidian account, her next line places her plight firmly in the context of the revels: "Succumbo ad aras, perge mactare hostiam." (71).[53] Just as the act of cutting out her tongue has been completed, the shepherd and his daughter arrive home to find the king and the mutilated Philomena in

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[52] "A short hour remains for piety, a time for repentance, and an opportunity for repentance. For the things I have committed are trifles, all but nothing, in comparison to the crime I am preparing. It is a monstrosity: it terrifies its progenitor, and yet it will come to light. Religion, right and law forbid it, the gods, reputation, virtue, earth, sea and sky tremble. But what are the gods? What is heaven? Jokes and old wives' tales. Religion? A deceitful mask, a pointless invention. What are laws? Nets stretch to capture the unwary. What is virtue itself? A shadow, a word, a game, nothing. A man frightened by shadows cannot enjoy things. Philomela, I am coming. Have no fear, for you will become Juno-like, both the sister and the wife of Jove."

[53] "I fall at the altar, go on and slaughter the sacrificial beast."

their home. Explaining that she is a witch he has captured, the king charges Faustulus with the task of being Philomena's jailor.[54] Tereus' rhetorical strategy again seduces his inferiors to commit barbarous acts. In addition to paying Faustulus for his efforts, he gives him full scope to abuse the prisoner as he sees fit because only her continued humiliation will keep her dark powers in check. When Tereus leaves, the shepherd puffs with pride. He finds the situation a significant improvement of his lot and his daughter's marriage prospects. His daughter, however, is not convinced of the prisoner's guilt. Seeing the innate virtue in the prisoner's face, she cannot bring herself to believe that the maid pulled out her own tongue, much less the accusation that she is a witch. Faustula emerges as a sympathetic and virtuous character while her father joins the legions of servants in *The Christmas Prince* who put aside virtue too quickly to follow a tyrant.

Back in the royal palace, Procne remains unaware of the events unfolding in Thrace. Awaiting the arrival of her husband, she sits with her wise counselor, Eugenus, and her young son, Itys. Procne prays for the safe return of her husband and the arrival of her dear sister. Following her prayer, Procne and Itys' conversation bends to the topic of the stars and the gods. Procne assures her son, "Est deus in astris, qui manus longas habet, / Oculos acutos, sedulas aures" (74).[55] In his response, Itys demonstrates he has been catechized according to the Jacobean theology of lordship, where the gods rule above and the king below. As the child explains to his mother, "Scio. Iupiter in astris regnat, in terris pater, / Uterque deus est, quin pariter ambo audient" (74).[56] In the midst of this conversation, Tereus bursts into the room and tearfully announces that his ship has sunk, dragging Philomena to the bottom. During the course of their conversation, Tereus cynically nudges his queen towards religion as a balm for her grief, reminding her of the overlooked observances to Bacchus. Procne, despite her sorrow, takes up her role as priestess and takes on the challenge of organizing the cultic rites. Linking the two strands of the plot, she recalls the hut that was once a shrine sacred to Bacchus and decides to reconsecrate it for festival.

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[54] For an account of the trend toward educated skepticism toward witchcraft, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 573ff.

[55] "Amidst the stars there is a god who has long arms, keen eyes, and careful ears."

[56] " I know. Jupiter reigns in the stars, Father on hearth. Both are gods, so they should both hear us."

In the third act, Faustula strikes up a conversation with a handmaiden to the queen, who was sent to inspect the space, as they prepare the altar for the celebration of the bacchanalia. In their conversation, Faustula lets slip the story of the strange prisoner at their home. Curious, the maiden asks to see the imprisoned woman. When she meets the handmaiden, Philomena produces the napkin she embroidered, which she is to smuggle to the queen. Procne had suspected her husband's guilt before the maid's incredible story reached her ears. Holding the proof of her husband's guilt in her hands, her mind immediately springs into action. First, she demands the maid guide her to the shepherds hut; but not before, second, she orders a costume appropriate for the bacchanals for Philomena, lest her presence provoke suspicion. When Procne arrives at the shepherd's hut leading her band of bacchants, her heart is set on revenge. She issues this command:

> Plenae furore Bacchides, laetae iocis, / Intrate fortes hoc vetus templum dei. / Hic ara stat vetusta, quae quondam frequens / Gratos odores, victimas pingues tulit, / Et opima regum spolia. Nunc pastor diu / Vilis rudisque incoluit, et sorde inquinat / Nos vindicare iniuriam tantam decet. / Pergite, sorores, ducite errantem chorum (88).[57]

Shockingly, the shepherd's daughter is shown no clemency; her throat is slit by the reveling hoard. In the aftermath of the frenzied slaughter at the altar, the audience's attention returns to the palace. Procne and Philomena share a brief moment alone. However, the young prince Itys interrupts their company. He wants to show his mother and aunt the new gold chain that was a gift from his father. With a nod from her sister, Procne grasps the chain and uses it to choke her son while Philomena stabs the child and then slits his throat. The balance of the story is familiar to generations of Ovid's readers: the sisters decapitate Itys and cook a pie that uses the boy's lifeless flesh to feed his father. When Tereus calls for his son to join him at the table, the sisters throw the boy's severed head at Tereus. Transforming the Ovidian tale into the generic demands of a tragedy, he draws his sword and he kills both sisters when the content of the meal is

[57] "You Bacchants, filled with frenzy, happy with your sports, be brave and enter this ancient temple of the gods. Here there stands an old altar, which once often received welcome perfumes and fat victims, and the fine spoils of kings. Now a rude and uncouth shepherd has long inhabited it, and befouls it with his filth. We should avenge such a great insult. Continue sisters, lead your wandering chorus"

made known to him. The play ends when Tereus, driven mad by the voices of the furies, takes his own life.

The rousing public acclaim given to the play *Philomena* represents the high point of the prince's rule, and the pinnacle from which he will fall. Tucker himself plays the part of the tyrant Tereus. As his reign nears its end in *Ira Fortunae*, the prince will be passed a note from an augur that reads, "Memento Bacchanalia" (212).[58] Later in *Ira Fortunae* the prince fears that the swelling hoard of the philosophers will unleash the same fury the bacchants visited upon the shepherd and his daughter. Even in his role as the Christmas lord, he remains culpable for his actions that occurred while he was in character. In his reaction to the final act, Earth is so disgusted by the actions taken by Tereus, Philomena and Procne as a lot that he promises Sea that he will give up the cause of protecting and sheltering humankind. Leaving the stage, he swears, "Et ipse praeceps in luem humanam ferox. / Iniquititas onera non feret amplius / Oppressa tellus, mota confundam omnia." (101).[59] For Tucker and the other members of the court, the promised retribution arrives quickly, and from a most unlikely source.

Downfall

More so than any other document contained in the text, the play *Time's Complaint* relies on this sense of internal referentiality within *The Christmas Prince* for its intelligibility and humor. Occurring just two days after the staging of *Philomena*, its performance on New Year's Day 1608 was, according to the manuscript account, a complete disaster. The framing narrative describes the audience's immediate reception in unambiguously negative terms, saying they found it full of absurdities. Subsequent critics have unanimously agreed. Huffman surmised the script was many years old at its performance, or represented a blending of source materials.[60] In his introduction, Boas dismisses the work's design, commenting, "The allegorical episodes are obscure and of scant interest" (xv). However, like Chaucer's "The Tale of Sir Topas" or "Melibee," it should be considered that *Time's Complaint* is not just bad, it is

[58] "Remember the Bacchanalia."
[59] "And I shall hurl myself headlong into mankind's destruction. No longer shall the oppressed earth bear the weight of its iniquity. Being shaken, I shall confound everything."
[60] See Huffman 54.

bad by design. Or put in the Boethian vocabulary that informs the text as a whole, its peculiar wretchedness serves a larger purpose. And that purpose, as the lieutenant's report in *Ira Fortunae* highlights, is the downfall of the prince. In his report he offers a stinging indictment of the ignorant "commoners" in the audience who failed to grasp the connections between *Philomena* and *Time's Complaint*, namely that the same actor who played the role of mute Philomena also played longwinded Time. The connections between the two plays extend well beyond the doubling of a main character. The marshal's explanation in *Ira Fortunae* also implies that even the better, or more knowledgeable, part of the audience did not recognize that *Time's Complaint* satirizes the dramatic strategies employed in *Philomena*. In the previous play, the author(s) blend characters drawn from the Ovidian source with the rustic shepherds taken from pastoral poetry. It seems the audience in the hall that night missed the point that *Time's Complaint* sends up the technique by using a similar genre-bending strategy, only taken to an absurd extreme when the playwrights conflate the allegorical figures of the morality tradition with a host of stock characters from the commedia del'arte.

The procession that opens *Time's Complaint* mimics the manner in which the members of the mock court processed into the college hall and were transformed before the audience into actors in the bibliomancy that preceded the performance of *Philomena*. When the actor speaking the prologue comes on stage to announce the production's theme, he cannot remember his lines.[61] After this inauspicious beginning, the character Time makes his way from the audience through the musicians to the stage as they tune their instruments in preparation for the show. In an ironic inversion of the prologue's intended lines, Time announces that he is waiting for the opportunity to petition the prince with his own complaint. As the court processes through the great hall to their chairs around the dais, the sergeant at arms and chamberlain initially hold off Time, barring his access to the monarch. With his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, the prince, who played Tereus two nights earlier, relents, telling Time, who played Philomena in that performance, "Speake freelie man, wee graunt thee libertie" (107). With that line, the tenor of the

[61] However, the readers of the manuscript are given access to those intended lines: "Worthelie heere wee bring you time's complaint; whom wee haue most iust cause for to complaine of ffor hee hath lent vs such a little space" (104).

entire production changes. The stage directions note a flourish of music, with Time singing: "Sound out my woes sad solemne harmony; / For Time and Musicke always well agree" (107). Co-opting the role of the prince, specifically his power to conjure a performance, Time transforms himself from a penitent into an impresario, responsible for producing his own play. He offers a second, corrected, prologue: "Time the obseru'd of all that meane to thriue / Causes your attentiue silence and good-will, / Whilest out of these sad reisters of woe / Hee takes of true account of all his cares, / Sorrow will speake, 'tis some though small reliefe, / To have free libertie to tell our griefe" (107). The stage direction indicates Time moves to his study and opens a manuscript. Given Time's later references to his study as the temple of the "immortal" gods, the study is set in the temple formerly sacred to Fortune, Dis and Bacchus. His leisurely perusal of the book mimics the *sortes ovidium* that provided occasion for the performance of *Philomena*. However, Time clearly has revenge on his mind. Leafing through *The Metamorphoses*, he first glosses the sorrow of Hecuba. Flipping through the pages, he next mentions the murder of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March, a threat which once again recalls the theme of the fall of princes. Turning to the last page of the book – it is worth mentioning that the apotheosis of Julius Caesar is the final episode in the *Metamorphoses* – he points his finger at the prince. Proposing an additional Ovidian tale of violent transformation, Time makes the following accusation, which humorously conflates Tucker's personas as the character Tereus and the lord of misrule in the carnival:

> I here's a slaue an holie homicide / A skillfull Cleark at mischief, deeplie learn'd / To drawe inuentions euen out of hell, / Whome time shall ever curse and ages rue. / For death was allwais knowne to bee too cruell: / Yet he hath taught her a new Tyrannie, / A quicke dispatching mean's a thundering euill, / A lowd resounding voice of blood and murther. / A bratt of brimstone and of sulphur's brood, / A lightening tempest, wch with one fierie blast / Is able to make desolate a land. / Confound the great designes of mightie kings, / Laie wast the trophies of Antiquite: / Blow up the temples of the immortall Gods; / O let mee here with grief and lament die. / That time must no help this miserie" (108).

Having accused Tucker of Philomena's murder and mutilation, which taught death a new tyranny, Time then imagines a cataclysmic revenge that would completely consume the stage, and with it the mock kingdom. In the particular locality of the staged production he seems powerless to affect his desire. So, as the first act comes to a close, he takes his seat and begins to cry himself to sleep. In the wider context of the manuscript account of the revels, he is, in fact, brings about the downfall of the prince, through the agency of the bizarre and sorrowful dream that follows. What happens in the second act is only sensible if the audience understands that the actor playing Time assumes all the faults of the allegorical figure he represents, as will be described by the rude characters that populate his dream vision, in addition to holding all the grievances from his earlier portrayal of Philomena.

The grandiloquence of Time's complaint against the prince greatly contrasts with the conversation shared between the two characters that walk on stage in the dream world: a dim-witted rustic and a braggart cashiered soldier. Moved by their tales of mutual woe, Clynias, the rustic, agrees with Bellicoso that they should seek out and hang the perpetrator of their common misfortune, namely: Time. The pair quickly find the accused, who is reading Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, "reviewing direfull acts: of murther, periurie, treason, rape, theft" (111). Agreeing to sound him out, they decide to hold off hanging him. Instead, they are treated to Time's own long-winded complaint, which beings with the golden age and ponderously winds its way to the present moment. They indulge him, in part, because in his complaint he reveals he has a beautiful daughter, Veritas, who, as he explains, has left home and taken up with her two new friends, Opinion and Error. Time convinces Bellicoso and Clynias to go on a quest to return to him his wayward daughter. Before they can leave, however, they must first find a scholar to guide them in their quest; the completion of this task has thus far eluded Time. Luckily, Bellicoso knows where one can be found. And the scholar in question is none other than the philosopher insulted by Fortune at the installation of the prince when the "place assign'd to him on the left hand was wch hee disdained" (115). The tangled tales of woe told by Time, the scholar Studioso, Clynias and Bellicoso, as they carry out the search for Veritas, constitute the main plot. The subplot is introduced in the opening scene of the third act when Time, now sitting in a public house, hears the approach of Humphrey

Swallowe, a drunken cobbler – which is another tie in to Ara Fortunae – who wishes to register a complaint about the rising cost of beer. He is then followed on stage by Good-Wife Spiggot who asks, "Oh Lord what a wicked Time is this?" (119). The details of the farcical quest to find Veritas and the machinations of Humphrey are not only complicated, but, as Boas correctly observes, obscure. The details are not necessary to the argument; rather, it is sufficient to say that when these two strands of the plot are finally brought together in the concluding fifth act, Studioso, Bellicoso and Clynias have, successfully transported Veritas, along with her friends Error and Opinion, back to her father. Shortly after the reunion, a bailiff arrives, bringing with him Humprhrey Sawllowe in chains. Fearing he is to be hanged, the pair is followed by the distraught Good-Wife Spiggot. Interrupting the conversation between father and daughter, the bailiff, named Philonices, wishes to speak to Time, the "maintainer of all faults" (127). However, his words fail him because he was surprised to see Veritas, with whom he once shared a brief romantic attachment in his student days. However, Veritas is as unimpressed with Philonices as she is with her bumbling father. Being omniscient, and profoundly bored with the proceedings, she flatly explains to the entire gathering the unlikely chain events that led to Swallowe's false imprisonment, thus paving the way for his nuptials to Spiggot. With that business accomplished, Veritas summarily informs her impoverished father that she is unhappy with the style of life he can provide for her. Frustrating Time's intentions, she returns to her life with Opinion and Error, leaving with the words, "Father adew" (129). In an ironic symmetry to his prologue, Time abruptly and unceremoniously concludes the play with an appeal to the prince: "Bright Maiestie / Looke downe vppon perplexed miserie, / Repeale concealed truth from banishment, / And cure sicke Times consuming languishment. / O helpe thou onlie wich cnast helpe afford, / All may bee mended by a Princes worde" (129).

At the conclusion of *Time's Complaint*, the audience assembled in the St. John's College Hall sat in stunned silence. This reception stands in direct contrast to the conclusion of *Philomena* two days earlier, which was met with thunderous applause. The chorus' dire warning of destruction in the earlier play proved a harbinger of things to come, with the predicted catastrophe having come into fruition. The frosty reception on the part of the audience, which included a large number of students and masters from

other colleges and citizens of the town, worried the St. John's authorities sufficiently to consider barring the performance of any additional plays that winter. For a brief time a subsequent play, which had been intended for performance on Twelfth Night, was held in administrative limbo. The narrator describes the immediate reception of that play, *Philomathes*, in positive terms: "This play was very well acted, but especially the Chorus, the stage was never more free, the Audience neuer more quiet, and Content" (187). In keeping with the play's position in the descent of the mock kingdom, the lieutenant offers a more sober assessment in *Ira Fortunae*, "Vix placuit tum hoc omnibus." (207).

Thomas Tucker, Homo Sacer

The prince's demise finally occurs on Shrove Tuesday during the performance of *Ira Fortunae*. Important to the chronology of *The Christmas Prince*, Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras, is the last day of the carnival that precedes the penitential season of Lent. Crafted as the companion piece to *Ara Fortunae*, the play depicts the end of Thomas Tucker's term as the Christmas Prince and, according to its prologue, the death of his sacral body. Once the prologue leaves the stage, the goddesses Fortune and Minerva, who will serve as the chorus, process through the audience to take their seats on the dais. Despite the fact Tucker spurned the goddess of Wisdom to dedicate the winter revels to her, it is Fortune who is now angry with the Prince. Recalling the boasts made at his installation, she registers the complaint, "Et sacra annua / Promisit olim, victimas pingues, dapes, / Augustiora templa, qui tandem nihil / Ingratus et iners praestitit. Non sic ferret / Impune" (200).[62] Despite Tucker's earlier insult, Minerva pledges to protect him and save him from evil. As the first act opens, the philosopher stands on stage alone. He has been a curious and ambivalent character throughout the revels. He has professed loyalty to the prince, despite the earlier insult to his dignity at Fortune's temple in *Ara Fortunae*. Hercules later robbed him of his student/servant during the performance of *Saturnalia*. He did, however, exact some revenge by leading the knights-errant to Veritas in *Time's Complaint*, thus precipitating the downfall of the prince. In his brief soliloquy he surveys the sickened and frail state of the kingdom and promises to bring about the

[62] "And once upon a time he promised me yearly sacrifices, fat victims, banquets, and a nobler temple, but the lazy ingrate has never produced them"

Prince's death by leading the rebellion against the mock lord and his band of poets. Standing before the Temple of Fortune he vows, "Accelero cladem, sic enim incumbit mihi / Nam regno in isto, dum poetarum chorus / Triumphat, ego misellus excludor domo" (200).[63] Overhearing the vow, Tolmaea, who still does not yet fully understand the fickle nature of her mistress, promises the philosopher succor. She addresses him saying, "Sedem capesse, philosophus princeps erit. / Sed principatum ludicrum nunquam petas. / Non ut poeta inimicus in scena obvia / Regnabis, alter dabitur et melior locus, / Perpetua sedes. In scholis regnum tibi / Erige, quod annus nullus aut mensis brevis / Finire poterit" (201).[64] The only condition that Tolmaea places on the philosopher's scope of action is not to violate the prince's sacred body. Having agreed to the condition, the philosopher leaves the temple. When he exits the stage, the four rebels approach the temple. Including Misanax, these are the four who were condemned by Fortune in *Ara Fortunae* to lives of hard labor for their insubordination. At the urging of Tolmaea, the four agree to repent of their sins and take up the study of philosophy. Agreeing to the condition, they change their workers tools for scholars robes. Upon leaving the temple, the four encounter the philosopher. Surprised by the sight of what he believes to be laborers dressed in scholars' robes, the philosopher believes a popular rebellion is under way. (In a moment of supreme theatrical irony, the audience understands that the four rebels are, in fact, gentlemen who were first dressed as laborers and now, more recently, as scholars at the behest of an ignorant temple servant, who scarcely understands the nature of the deity she serves.)

As the second and third acts unfold, the play pits the two groups against each other: the philosophers, who are in their ascendancy, versus the poets, whose numbers are thinning. The authors skillfully shape *Ira Fortunae's* atmosphere of fragile instability that infects the state by alternating between depictions of a disintegrating court, whose members appear on stage singly or in pairs to defect

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[63] "I am hastening his death, for thus it behooves me. For in that realm, while the choir of poets triumphs, I am wretchedly excluded from my home"

[64] "Fortune offers you her hand. Take a seat, the philosopher will be prince. But you must never seek a mock-kingdom. You will not reign on stage like the poets you hate, another and better place will be granted, a perpetual home. Establish your kingdom in the schools, a kingdom which cannot be ended by any year or short month"

from the government, with the swelling ranks of the philosophers, whose numbers are boosted by the new recruits. The chorus looks upon the defections with predictable reactions. Fortune remains defiant. Minerva, seeing the rebellion's success, looks forward to the establishment of a new political order saying, "Fortasse principatus hic fragilis ruet / Ut melior idem exurgat" (213).[65] As the rebellion takes shape, the prince has been off stage for two complete acts. When the attention of the audience finally returns to him in the opening of the fourth act, his condition is deplorable. He appears ragged and confused. The prince's remarks allude to two important source texts for the authors. First, having just been roused from his sleep, he shares with the audience his fevered dream in which he entered a richly appointed hall only to be greeted with hisses from the crowd. The description of the entry into the hall uses language drawn from Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. Second, in an obvious gesture to *King Lear*, only the loyal and sharp-tongued fool accompanies the prince while the other members of his court abandon him. As the penultimate act unfolds, he slowly comes to understand that his court has deserted him and his kingdom is lost; however, these moments of realization – what Aristotle calls *anagnorisis* in *The Poetics* – are carefully plotted. In the moments he comes to graspe the reality of the situation, he is simultaneously able to describe his plight with much more sophistication and a newfound accuracy. In short, the further he distances himself from the idea of *de jure* rule, he become more intelligent.

More evidence of the satiric treatment of King James' theories of monarchy can be found throughout the fifth act, when the confrontation between the two factions reaches its inevitable climax in front of Fortune's temple. The philosophers, who now have the upper hand, capture the much-diminished prince, who finds himself left alone with only the company of his fool. Forced into submission, the prince stands before the same altar where the goddess once blessed his claim to the throne. The altar, as Tolmaea reveals, is now, or always was, a tomb. In a scene that cleverly draws from Richard's abdication in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Tucker is forced to offer his resignation by giving up the placard bearing his

[65] "Perhaps this fragile principality will collapse so a better one might arise"

coat of arms.[66] Tolmaea promptly rips it in two and then places it in the tomb. Recognizing that his sacred body has been violated, he asks her whether he should kill himself, a question she answers by saying that it is not permitted. Once the "sacred" body has been violated, the remaining "physical" body exists only in a liminal state beyond the protection of the law. Sensing the prince's vulnerability, the fool steps forward at this point and commands the prince to remove both his own and the fool's livery. While clearly degrading, the fool's actions move Tucker from his liminal status back into the social order, albeit at the lowest rung. Now dressed in the livery of a fool, the former monarch is forced to endure the philosophers' insults until their chief, Tucker's former rival who was scorned at Fortune's altar, admits him back into their company. Thus the fiction of the divinely appointed monarch, and his two bodies, comes to an end. Tucker and his mock court are folded back into the community of scholars – joining the rebel, the philosopher, and the fool – under the patronage of Minerva. As the balance of power tips, Fortune, who is now the disgraced patron of a vanquished host, leaves the stage defeated and humiliated by the goddess of wisdom and her train of philosophers. Fortune stands bereft of even her simple-minded temple slave, who, finally learning the true nature of the fickle goddess, flees from her service to Minerva's.

A Double Ending

After the performance of the play, the tomb carrying the prince's sacred body was paraded through the streets of Oxford to his private chamber. Tucker's reign as mock lord, which followed the revolution of fortune's wheel, is not coterminous with the bounded time of the carnival. And the body politic, as authorized by the carnival, continues to exist without a monarch, making the words of the third citizen in *Ara Fortunae*, that a state can survive quite happily without a king, seem prescient. After describing the details of the wake, the narrator makes the observation, "Heere we thought to have made an end of all, and to have puld downe the scaffolds and stage, but then many said that so much preparation was to much for so small a showe. Besides there was an English tragedy almost ready which

[66] See Albert Rolls' insightful reading of Richard II's forced abdication in *The Theory of the King's Two Bodies in the Age of Shakespeare* 111ff.

they were very earnest should be performed" (228). While the narrator gives the impression of spontaneity, the play *Periander* clearly continues *The Christmas Princes'* exploration of tyrants and the assent of their willing subjects. Drawing connections to Aristotelian political thought, *Periander* enacts the fall of a hated tyrant, a fact made more poignant because Tucker himself will play the role of Periander. Permission must have been sought and given for its performance, occurring, according to the narrator, on the first Saturday in the penitential season of Lent. Any lingering doubt that the state constituted by the carnival continues without the prince as its head dissipates upon closer examination of the play's presentation in its manuscript context. Because it occurs after the demise of Tucker and his court, no reference is made in the framing device to the previous government in the opening procession of *Periander.* Instead, the master of the revels walks through the crowded hall discussing the readiness of the current production with his servant, a character only identified as a boy, who is clearly a party to the production of the play.[67] It is the master, however, who clearly possesses administrative and editorial control over the proceedings. Interrupting the conversation between master and servant, a member of the audience stands and confronts them saying, "Pox: begin your play, and leave your prating" (231). Another member of the audience immediately rises in opposition, wanting to know why someone would make so much noise. The two, evidently, are well known to each other. Addressing the troublemaker as Sir Detraction, the second man derides the first as "[the] epitome of all the fowle mouthe's in a whole university" (231). In his response, Sir Detraction refers to his interlocutor as "Master Resolution." Resolution, of course, suggests a compromise. Turning to Detraction, he says, "you and Il'e sit for Chorus" (231). The opposing forces of Resolution and Detraction continue their running critique of the play after each of the five acts following the example of the choruses in the previous plays.

Written and performed in English, *Periander* traces the annihilation of the tyrant and entire royal family of Cornith according to the formula of tragedy introduced in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Boas and Richards in their respective introductions to the text have noted that the author of *Periander* drew his

[67] According to the proclamations that follow the prince's private installation, William Blagrove was appointed to the office of the master of the revels. Ironically, it was an office he later held under Charles I.

portrait of the eponymous tyrant from three separate episodes found in Herodotus' *Histories* and a single chapter from Diogenes Laertes' *Lives of the Philosophers*.[68] These four sources inform discrete episodes in the plot. However, what has gone unnoticed is *Periander's* connection to Aristotle's *Politics*. The framing device has already placed the mock government in conversation with Aristotle's taxonomy of constitutions. In the fourth book of *The Politics*, Periander's Corinth is mentioned as an example of a state that changes its constitution after the factions that form the state forcibly realign themselves, moving from a tyranny to a democracy. In *The Politics*, Aristotle explains,

> The people having been the cause of the victory in the war against Athens made a revolution from constitutional government to democracy…and again at Ambracia similarly the people joined with the adversaries of the tyrant Periander in expelling him and then brought the government round to themselves… It must not escape notice that the persons who have caused a state to win power…stir up faction; for either those who envy these men for being honored begin the faction, or these men owing to their superiority are not willing to remain in a position of equality. And constitutions also undergo revolution when what are thought of as opposing sections of the state become equal to one another… Universally then in connection with all the forms of constitution the origins and causes of factions and revolutions are of this nature (1304a).

In *Ira Fortunae*, the rebel underclass and a scorned philosopher lead a revolution that deposes the tyrant, and thus become the dominant power in the state. The spectacle that precedes the performance of *Periander* highlights the efficacy of the philosophers' revolution.

The plot of *Periander* relies on the distinction made in *The Politics* between political and pre-political rule. Political rule refers to the constitutional organization of the polis; the unit of organization that precedes the polis is the household. In *The Politics* there are two precursor relationships to political rule appropriate to the household: the master/slave and the marriage relationship. Periander fails to cultivate any sort of human flourishing in the context of either relationship. In fact, the first act begins

[68] See Richards 32-34, and Boas xvi.

with a display of grotesque domestic violence. In the presence of his pregnant wife, Melissa, Periander wantonly summons his two concubines, the servant girls Pornaea and Zona for his gratification. Disgusted, Melissa asks him to send them away. In response, he strikes her, causing her to fall down a flight of stairs. Periander's mother, Crataea, who witnessed the attack, attends the queen as she lies on the ground. Looking up to her son, she says, "I feare [she] will loose her life, and birth and all" (233). Reaching back into Herodotus, Periander already has a reputation for rash and senseless violence. And so does the actor charged with playing the role. As a participant in the mock court that organized the revels, Tucker embodies all violent acts taken in his role as prince, which includes, the liberal use of the college's stocks. In addition, his character absorbs all the guilt for his acts while taken in character, notably his portrayal of the cruel tyrant Tereus. This scene presents an interesting challenge for Thomas Tuckers as an actor. While he must embody those earlier roles as a man accustomed to command and violence, he must also communicate the transformative effect on Periander of seeing his wife's corpse, which is both disturbing but also a confounding experience to him. Standing over her lifeless body his thoughts sputter, "Had she bin speachles sooner sh'had sau'd all: / But iealous fool, Pornaea wronged her not / Nor Zona; – yet Zona and Pornaea did: / No, – Periander only: – Mother see / Howe my Melissa doe's – Kinge Proclus daughter / should not haue bene so wrongd: dull Cypselus / And quick-eyed Lycophron / her sonnes and mine / Must needes distast it; and the stirring vulgar / Begin to change" (234). At this moment, as the stage direction indicates, he becomes silent. His words fail him. When he regains his the power of language he makes two crucial decisions: first, he calls for his sons who have been living with their maternal grandfather; and second, he determines upon the death of the two concubines, Pornaea and Zona, whose romantic liaisons Melissa was forced to watch. He appears alone in the very next scene, carrying the corpse of his wife. Placing her on the bed "where last a mother I Melissa made" he attempts to revive her in an act of necrophilia (235). Once the two servant girls offer their brief last words and are burned, attention returns to the palace, where Periander and his mother appear alone on stage. Justifying her feelings with numerous classical antecedents, Crataea attempts to seduce her son. The request shocks Periander. Walking off stage before his mother can finish her appeal, his words fail him for a second time.

He does not, or cannot, respond. The author found Periander's incestuous relationship with is mother from Diogenes' biography of the tyrant and, as Boas wryly suggests, developed it "with some zest" (xvi). Far from being gratuitous or prurient, however, the four gruesome spectacles that occur in the first act – namely Periander's murder of Melissa, followed by his act of necrophilia, the burning of the servant girls and the overwhelming suggestion of incest – demonstrate the profound failure of Periander as the head of his own household. His instability of mind and rashness of action will have serious repercussions in the political realm. The seeds of the kingdom's destruction come from the household and explode into the public realm: Corinth is rotting from the inside out.

As a tyrant, he is already, in Aristotelian terms, something of a degenerate political leader. When Periander recalled his sons from the home of their paternal grandfather, King Procles of Epidaurus, in a fit of grief, he did so without understanding the consequences. Once they arrive, the explosive dynamics of the father/son relationship will reverberate throughout the political realm, and will provide a counterpoint to the other affairs of his household, particularly Crataea's attempted seduction of her son. As the second act opens, the two princes are greeted by a contingent of young nobles, including Lysimachus, one of Periander's young courtiers, who was a playfellow of the two princes before they were shepherded away to their grandfather's house. When the pair arrives at court, the elder son, Cypselus, dutifully responds to his father's greeting. In a crucial scene adapted from III.50 of Herodotus' *Histories*, the younger prince, Lycophron, however, remains silent and refuses to acknowledge his father's greeting or answer his questions. Periander first queries his courtiers, asking if something happened on their journey. They reported he appeared fine and was talking prior to the audience. Suspecting his father-in-law's influence, he asks his younger son if any words may have passed between him and his grandfather. Taking Cypselus aside after the ceremony, Periander interrogates him further. Clearly not knowing the ramifications of this answer, Cypselus dimly recalls his grandfather's parting words, "Remember who it was that kill'd your mother" (249). Incensed, Periander banishes his younger son from the palace. Under no condition, he instructs his court, are they to offer assistance to Lycophron. Despite the royal edict, the young nobles all rally to the side of the prince, causing a deep rift in the social body. In its depiction of a disintegrating

court combined with a populace with split political loyalties, the play has appropriated the political narrative of the revels and translated it to the conventions of a Greek tragedy.

The action of the second and third acts alternates between Periander in his palace, as he navigates his mother's advances, and Lycophron standing in front of an unspecified house in Corinth. The fourth act brings both of these simmering conflicts to their unseemly ends. Driven to desperate measures, Crataea disguises herself as Europe, the daughter of the courtier Aristaeus, and slips into bed with her son in the hopes of being mistaken for the younger woman. Her plan manages to work, until Melissa's ghost wakes Periander. Full of loathing, he runs out and shares the details of Crataea's advances with his courtier Lysimachus. Crataea interrupts, inserting herself into the conversation, but begging for Lycophron's return. She warns him, "I tell you your Sonne Cypselus is sicke man." Exasperated, Periander replies, "And so is Lycophron; and so am I; / And so are you Crataea" (268). Hearing these words, she takes a knife and stabs herself as she makes the chilling prophecy: "heauns graunt this blowe / may expiate my parte; yours will be next" (268). After the death of his grandmother, Lycophron comes to the palace to confront his father. Periander responds by banishing his only credible heir to Corcyra. It is not clear how much time passes in the world of the play, but later in the same act Periander relents and sends his daughter Eugenia to fetch Lycophron from his exile with instructions to offer him the immediate possession of the throne. Prescient to the reality that neither one of her brothers will ever occupy it, she repeats, first in Greek and then in its English translation, the Delphic oracle found in V.92 of *The Histories* spoken to her grandfather: "Cypselus Aetides famous Corinths Kinge / He and his Sonnes but not his Sonnes ofspring" (273). Indeed, her mission was ultimately futile. By the time she arrived the Corcyrans had murdered Lycophron. When Eugenia tells Periander the news, he is numb with grief. The stage direction indicates he is to leave the stage and then return, pushing a chair that holds his son's dead body. In this moment he achieves a supreme clarity. He first summons Cypselus and Eugenia. As they arrive, he calmly stabs them both. The fourth act comes to a close as he speaks the following benediction over the bodies of his murdered children: "Why nowe all's euen, nay wee'l make short worke

/ Our tombe wilbe a princely messes for death / Il'e have it yawne ; till I Come stalking too / Then hand in hand to hell wee'l sadly go" (278).

The tomb already accepted the bodies of Periander's wife, Melissa, his concubines, Zona and Pornaea, his mother, Crataea, and his youngest son, Lycrophon. The actions taken by Perainder in the fifth act are only sensible if the reader is aware that his overriding desire, as described in Diogenes Laertes's biography of the tyrant, is to keep the location of his burial place a secret. To achieve this goal, Periander sets in motion a complicated plot. He first instructs his servant Dorius and an accomplice that they are to kill an anonymous traitor in the palace and place his body in the tomb, with the sound of a trumpet blast being the cue for action. As a signal of the act being accomplished, the pair would give the password, "the stag was down too soon" to a group of four men, whom they were to meet as they make their escape. Unbeknownst to the would-be assassins, that password, in turn, would instruct these four men, upon Periander's instructions to kill the assassins. Much like Tereus in *Philomena*, Periander's rhetorical strategy in spinning this plot and presenting it to his men relies on the utter obedience his men will show in following his orders. At the sound of the coronet, Dorius and his accomplice stab Perainder and place his body in the tomb. As the men charged with killing the assassins lie in wait for the completion of their mission, Callistus makes the telling remark, "The heart that draws breath by favoring Kings Fears nothing." As he runs his sword through Dorius, the suddenly introspective servant Stratocles remarks, "So much for that, they might have been our fathers we have slain." To which the dying Dorius replies, "And we your closest friends but king and darkness bar distinction" (283). In directing his final performance, Periander/Tereus/Tucker manipulates his servants' loyalty to bring about his own death. Although the text does not overtly announce the fact, it would not be surprising to learn the actors responsible for playing the four assassins were the same ones playing the four rebels punished with hard labor in *Ara Fortunae* and who later joined with the philosopher Misanax to lead the revolt against Tucker in *Ira Fortunae*.

The body politic that came into being on Halloween passes out of existence is a series of well-planned exits that bring to a close the various frames of performance. First, the violent spectacle at the

end of *Periander* brings about the complete destruction of a royal family with only four servants left alive to witness the carnage. Second, the course brings to a close the on-going meta-commentary concerning the work of the revels, symbolically silencing the project's critics. After the play's rueful final line, Resolution stands and applauds the performance saying, "Howe nowe detraction? Howe nowe ; howe nowe man?" After Detraction makes his reply, "T'was scuruy all," he collapses in a seizure, suffering from what the doctor who was called to attend him describes as *phremitis*. In response, the physician recommends blood letting, though in a most appropriate manner: "Then in his tongue a vain must opend be" (284). Finally, Thomas Tucker returns to the stage to deliver the epilogue not only to the play but the project of the revels. His words recognize his double death in the production, both as Lord and as the tyrant Periander. As he remarks, "Nowe tis lente…Our former shewes were giv'n to one cal'd Lorde / This and att his request for you was storde. By many hands was Periander slaine / Your gentler hands will give him liue againe" (285). And standing behind Tucker as he delivers these lines is the overwhelming presence of the altar, which governed not only the seven theatrical performances that occurred on stage, but also the entire performance of the revels.

Conclusion

This essay has argued that a recognizable cohort of characters, lead by the mock lord Tucker, has passed through the various performances memorialized in the text, all using the same two-house backdrop. The framing devices that preceded the theatrical performances traced the journey of these characters as they pass from the political fiction of the mock kingdom into roles appropriate to the generic formulations proper to each particular play. Furthermore, the author and redactors of the manuscript have encoded the audience's responses to those performances in their construction of the framing narrative. Viewed from the perspective of the reader of the manuscript, a single narrative is carried through the entire document. The focal point of that narrative is the altar/tomb. In *Ara Fortunae*, the prince was consecrated before the altar, receiving divine blessing and a second body from the fickle goddess. Performed on Christmas night, Hercules' well-timed intervention saves the servant from being sacrificed by his master on the altar in the play *Saturnalia*. Intended for performance on the Feast of the Innocents,

the frenzied Bacchants butcher the shepherd and his daughter on the altar of Bacchus in the tragedy *Philomena*. Having been transformed from speechless Philomena, long-winded Time uses the "temple of the immortal gods" as a study in the farce *Time's Complaint*. A double wedding is celebrated at this same altar in the conclusion of the Plautine comedy *Philomathes*. In *Ira Fortunae* the space that once held the altar at the temple of Fortune is transformed into a tomb, in keeping with the *de casibus* tragedy enacted in the framing device. The prince's second (or sacred) body is offered as a sacrifice on the altar, which then becomes his tomb. The spectacle at the end of *Periander*, where the entire royal family is joined together in death, is not only the consummation of that particular tragedy, but also the end of the state constituted by the carnival.

Conclusion

Ingredients for Playing: Humanism and the English Reformation

> "Sitting by the moat of the fortress of Breendonk, I read to the end of the fifteenth chapter of *Heshel's Kingdom*, and then set out on my way back to Mechelen, reaching the town as evening began to fall."
> — W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*

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Each of this dissertation's chapters has been preceded by an epigraph drawn from W.G. Sebald's stunning 2001 novel, *Austerlitz*. The name of the work's eponymous main character, Jacques Austerlitz, simultaneously denotes the space through which history moves and a site of violent conflict. On one hand, his name gestures to the monumental railway station in the heart of Paris. This historic edifice is also a transit-point for a network of railways crossing the European continent. Key to understanding the mystery of his origins, the namesake of that building is also named after a battlefield where, during a particular moment in 1805, two great armies came face to face in a pitched battle whose issue changed the very character of European life and thought. That battle was fought on a patch of ground near the small town of Austerlitz in the province of Monrovia, which in Napoleon's time was part of the Austrian Empire. However, given the shifting borders of Europe in the twentieth century, the town would later become part of Czechoslovakia, and then, as the world turns, in the Czech Republic within a European Union, said to be "whole and free."

***

The university stage is a notoriously difficult concept to isolate and define. Its archival footprint suggests it is a product of communities at play, understood in the manner Johan Huizinga defined the term in *Homo Ludens*. Always temporary and ephemeral, the university stage of the late medieval and early modern period is best understood as existing on the margins of other discursive centers, such as the academic curriculum, the administration, the authorities of the church and crown, and, importantly, of the professional stage. In some measure, the university stage is an academic phenomenon and should be

studied in light of the texts composed in all the affected languages of the classical revival that occurred throughout what Elizabeth Eisenstein has called "the republic of letters." However, the university stage is so much more than merely "academic." It was also the site that where the classical *theatrum* was reintroduced into English culture. This dissertation has argued the university stage, as a site, was governed according to localized traditions associated with a festive tradition. So even the most studious works, such as the newly reintroduced plays of Plautus and Sophocles, were performed under the rubric of play. Academic playwrights, furthermore, did not necessarily consider writing for the stage a primary feature of their vocation. Yet the stage became a beloved and revered institution within academic communities – to such a degree, in fact, that scholars memorialized the experience of playing itself –as seen in the letters announcing the election of the Merton College *rex fabarum* – before they thought to memorialize the plays associated with the experience.

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Sebald's *Austerlitz* can be fruitfully understood as a postmodern retelling of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. As one approaches the truth of an origin there is no burning moment of recognition; no moment when a subject can say, "I see." History does not run in discrete channels. Frustrating the academic's gaze, history appears as an intersected mass of narrative threads that resist classification and order. Austerlitz is an unassuming yet fastidious academic, who, in his career, studied the monumental architecture of the nineteenth century. In the fable-like haze of memory found in the novel – a force as palpable as Dickens' fog in *Bleak House* – the imposing structures themselves prefigure the man "Austerlitz," giving to him his name and being.

***

This study began as a quest to understand the relationships among the production and dissemination of texts and the experience of a "performance" before an audience. In particular, I was drawn to the late medieval beginnings of the university stage, since that part of the story never appears in many of the new studies of the subject, including Jonathan Walker and Paul Streufert's outstanding collection, *Early Modern Academic Drama*. In the second place, I was often struck by the generally

dismissive comments concerning the festive tradition in the universities offered by F.S. Boas, Alan Nelson and even a generally sympathetic critic like Lawrence Clopper. These comments seemed all the more out of place given the new insights concerning community drama and the festive tradition made by scholars (many of whom are cited here) like Richard Beadle, Alexandra Johnson, Lawrence Clopper, Paul Whitefield White, Andrew Gurr, Meg Twycross and John Coldewey. In fact, the more I examined the archival records of performance and the textuality of the academic dramas themselves, I became convinced that many scholars simply followed in the train of Boas, over-reliant on what other critics of the Elizabethan age believed the stage accomplished within an educational establishment, rather than being guided by the lived experience of performance as testified to by archival records.

The university stage was one site of local drama influenced by the festive tradition. As I note in the first chapter, the organization of the university entered a state of flux in the late medieval period as the college experience began to emerge as the preeminent model of education. At the time, colleges were small, highly stratified organizations that relied on contacts in court, government and church organization, not only for their immediate well being but their long-term survival, placing students within reliable networks of patronage. In my readings of the academic plays – notably Thomas Chaundler's *Liber Apologeticus* in the second chapter, and Nicholas Grimald's *Christus Redivivus* in the third – it is clear that these early academic dramas reflect festive traditions echoed in their composition and performance. As a textual practice, playwrights and redactors deliberately drew attention to the festive character of the stage, highlighting the connections between client and patron as a member of a college.

This approach to the late medieval and early modern university stage is, in many respects, a response to the often-cited first chapter of F.S. Boas' *University Drama in the Tudor Age*. That chapter, instructively titled from "Medievalism to Humanism," embodies this learned scholar's own search not only for the origins of the academic stage but also for his own intellectual origins. Leaning on E.K. Chambers' evolutionary theory of medieval drama, Boas' narrative of the growth and decay of the academic stage placed great stress on *The Christmas Prince*, part of the1607 St. John's College revels Unfortunately Boas came to believe that the St. John's College revels was a connection point between the

medieval festive dramas celebrated in colleges, halls and hostels and the Renaissance dramas performed in the colleges. The goal of the fourth chapter was to examine the curious textual evidence and to interpret *The Christmas Prince* in a different light, drawing attention to its misplaced role in the construction of the academic stage as a unit of study. The fifth chapter moved on to examine the text of *The Christmas Prince*, noting particular ways in which it remembers the festive tradition in the light of its own historical moment.

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The loping and disjointed narrative of *Austerlitz* tells how, upon retiring from his job, Austerlitz engaged on a series of unplanned and erratic trips to the continent. This mysterious story is related to the reader by the equally mysterious narrator, Austerlitz' interlocutor, whom he meets apparently by chance on several of his continental journeys. As Austerlitz unfolds his story, he remembers that in the months leading up to the Second World War his parents placed him, as a boy of four, on one of the so-called Kindertransport that brought Jewish children to England, where he was adopted by a Welsh Calvinist clergyman and his frail wife. In the oppressive silence of the manse, the truth of his past was never revealed to the young Austerlitz. When he finally makes his way to his childhood home in Prague, he meets an elderly woman who had been his nanny. In their conversation, he recovers not only some of the lost memories of his mother and father but also fragments of a lost language. For Austerlitz, the search does not end with the desired catharsis of certain knowledge but only the vague and unsatisfying sense that identity – like the great buildings of Europe that memorialize once great empires and nations – is always a transitory and contested site.

***

The focal point of my analysis here is the stage itself, temporarily carved out of, or built into, the college hall, a space among a small handful of spaces where performances occurred. This transformation of a place into a playing space occurred according to a familiar set of practices found in the traditions of community festive drama. These events themselves fashioned the spaces and audiences of classical drama as it was reimagined in England. That traditional culture was a ubiquitous feature of life in the Late

Middle Ages, and the memory of that culture persisted many generations after the fall of "merry" England. The introduction to this dissertation suggests that two historical forces were operative in transforming the university stage during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In the first place, the growing trend towards humanist learning introduced a new body of Latin and Greek dramatic works and new ways of conceiving the classical inheritance, notably through Aristotle's *Poetics*. As part of a wider program of social and intellectual formation, the new learning valorized the composition and production of plays in the languages of the classical revival. In short, humanism multiplied the types of plays and playings offered on this stage. Conversely, the English reformation, occurring two or three generations later had the effect of cutting back the kinds of plays and playings available to the university stage. The task was accomplished at first by decrees, like Henry VIII's edict banning the boy/bishops. Then, over the longer term, the "Protestant" reformation, to borrow Haigh's formulation, changed social tastes and mores, including the received nature of popular entertainment.

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When W.G. Sebald began work on his novel *Austerlitz* he used photographs as talisman of sorts to inspire and guide his writing. Some of these photographs – such as the haunting photograph of the young boy in costume that served as cover art for the 2001 English translation of the novel published by Random House – were of found objects from the Second World War, representative of nameless dead. Several of the photographs used by Sebald were published in the work, seamlessly interwoven into the text. The resulting novel does not tell the story of any particular found photograph; what emerges in his novel instead is a story of the loss and suffering that occurred at the very heart of Europe during the last century. Despite the novel's resistance to a single cathartic moment, the work presents moments of transient, but real, joy. Importantly, this joy strikes Austerlitz at the recovery, even in a fragmentary sense, of his mother tongue.

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What makes the university stage such a remarkable object of study is its magnificent cultural and linguistic range. As a site for playing, and as far as the plays themselves are concerned, it is a mistake to characterize it as merely academic or elitist. Universities were, and are, transit points of peoples and cultures but in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries they also shared to a remarkable degree, a common set of cultural and curricular referents. Playwrights writing for academic audiences had ample opportunity to (borrowing a phrase from contemporary theory), code-switch between competing cultural and linguistic formulations. The late medieval and early modern academic stage provided playfulness and mirth, producing not only a rich and sadly under-read body of work in Neo-Latin and in English. It also informed – and perhaps inspired – several important early English comedies written in the vernacular, *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* among them. Perhaps the most important work performed by this study is a new appreciation of the macaronic text *The Christmas Prince*, which marks the transformation of community festive drama in the universities from a lived tradition to an event contained on the stage. Remarkably full of inside jokes and erudite learning, the text is also an elegy for the way of life embodied in the old ways.

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