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Reforming Drama: John Bale and Early Tudor English Nationhood

by

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Abstract

This dissertation contextualizes the drama of John Bale within the transformation of English theatrical playing practices contemporary in the early stages of the English Reformation. Analyzing the pattern of rewards paid to entertainers in four towns in Kent and Sussex from 1500 to 1576, I argue that parish drama began its decline in the late 1520s and that the loss of this dramatic form was offset in the mid-1530s by a surge in performances by patronized troupes. While Bale likely toured with his plays in the late 1530s under the protection of Thomas Cromwell, his plays also were performed in subsequent decades by members of local communities, signalling their status as adaptations of parish drama for performance by a small number of actors but not necessarily by those of a patronized troupe. Bale's plays thus retained characteristics of parish drama, specifically those elements that made the collective responsibility of the parish spectacularly visible in the production of such plays and that incorporated participants into this collective responsibility. Thus, in his biblical trilogy—*God's Promises*, *Johan Baptystes Preachynge,* and *The Temptation of Our Lord*—Bale fuses the evangelical explication of baptism as a token of incorporation into the body of Christ with the sale of livery tokens made, for example, at the 1540 play staged by the town of Maldon. In *King Johan*, Bale broadens this collective responsibility to a national level, urging the audience to identify and care for only the truly English poor, embodied in the character Vidua Yngland. Bale also elaborates this theme in his prose work, *The Laboryouse Journey and Serche of John Leylande*. There, he makes a case for the collective responsibility for English manuscripts, casting the proper care of them as a token signalling incorporation into the English commonwealth.

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For Alice, for everything

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Introduction

In the late spring of 1560, the evangelical preacher, polemicist, and playwright, John Bale, planned to stage a play. Like much of the evidence of dramatic performances for the period, the evidence of this performance derives from the report of a conflict. In this case, the incident made its way to court where the principals and witnesses gave their depositions, which survive in the consistitory court records. Curiously, the disagreement did not occur at the play but before it and was not occasioned by the play's content but by the tailoring of a costume for the play. What happened is this: on Friday, 24 May, Hugh Pilkington found his servant, Phillip Hall, loitering with friends in a shop in the churchyard (Canterbury 3336r-39r).[1] Pilkington asked Hall to return to work, answering Hall's inquiry as to what work he should do by noting that not only was there a woman's gown that had already been cut out waiting to be sewed but there was also other work to be done, including a player's garment, a friar's coat, that had to be made.

Richard Okeden interrupted the men's conversation, reportedly saying to Hall, "Godys blode thow arte my co*n*try man…if thowe make a fryers cote thowe shall be my co*n*try man no more." He offered two pence towards Hall's dinner if Hall refused to make the garment. Okeden then asked whether the play was Mr. Bale's doing, and

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[1] The account presented here is based on a number of depositions in the Canterbury Cathedral archives.

Pilkington answered that it was: a play would be performed at Mr. May's house and one of the characters would wear the friar's coat. Okeden replied that since Bale "cannot preach anymore he setteth forth and inventeth plaies to speak against fryers and monks and other religious people that have ben in the tymes past." Noting that Bale and May were "rych enough already," Okeden asked whether they would collect any money at the play. Not waiting for an answer, Okeden vowed to attend but immediately changed his mind, exclaiming, "goddes blode I will not com there I will goo to Romeny wher ther is good play."

In addition to providing a fittingly boisterous and unruly coda to Bale's career as Reformation playwright, the incident provides a glimpse of the Elizabethan context for Bale's plays, and by extension, those of others. Indeed, Okeden's reaction suggests a knot of loyalties tied to the performance of and participation in drama. Despite his quarrelsomeness, Okeden articulated his opposition to Bale's play in a familiar register: he conceived of drama as a supplement to, or substitute for, the preaching of evangelical sermons to which he obviously objects.

More significantly, Okeden also conceived of the play as a commodity circulating within, at least for Okeden, a moralized economy. Not only did he object to the doctrinal content of the play, he objected to the alleged financial motivation for staging these plays: May and Bale were "rych enough already" and had no business staging the play. Moreover, the economic nature of the play extended beyond the performance of the play to local workers, and Okeden moralized this economic extension. He not only vowed that Hall would be"no countryman" of his if he were to make the friar's robe but also attempted to validate their present bond as countrymen by offering a payment intended to extricate Hall from his participation in Bale's play. Finally, Okeden chose instead to attend (and presumably pay to attend) New Romney's "good play" as though by exercising this choice he declared himself a participant in an entirely different set of loyalties than those suggested by economically participating in Bale's play.

Exactly what those loyalties were remains unclear. The doctrinal cast of the New Romney play is not certainly known although it is unlikely that it expressed stridently conservative tenets.[2] Perhaps Okeden had in mind a more aesthetic judgment of the two plays, or perhaps Okeden simply meant that he thought a play depicting Christ's Passion (which the New Romney play did) was better than a play railing against "religious people that have ben in the tymes past." It may have been, too, that Okeden's objection to Bale and May's alleged profit motive underwrote the declaration of the New Romney play as "good": whereas Bale and May, in Okeden's view, were motivated by private profit, the New Romney play, produced by the New Romney chamberlains, was motivated by a charitable concern.

Whatever underwrote it, Okeden's vociferous objection resonates with the implicit attack answered by one of Bale's contemporaries, Lewis Wager. The Prologue of Wager's mid-sixteenth-century *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* defends the performers of that play against charges similar to those made by Okeden:

> O (they say) muche money they doe get.
> Truely I say, whether you geue halfpence or pence,
> Your gayne shalbe double, before you depart hence.

---

[2] Although New Romney had a lengthy tradition of performing such plays, play in 1560 was a new play (Clopper 117). For discussion of the play, see Gibson and Harvey.

Is wisedom no more worth than a peny trow you?
Scripture calleth the price therof incomparable.
Here may you learne godly Sapience now,
Which to body and soule shal be profitable.
To no person truly we couet to be chargeable,
For we shall thinke to haue sufficient recompence. (42-50)

Wager's Prologue clearly does not assume the legitimacy of the players' profit but instead defends their revenue on the grounds that the content of the play provides something of value in exchange for the audience's money. Moreover, the exchange is a fair one although the Prologue subtly suggests that the audience receives the better value in the exchange and might thus consider offering a penny rather than halfpence.

Wager's defense of the players' profit, however, differs from the plea for money and implicit defense of profit made by the Epilogue of a now lost fifteenth-century parish play. After thanking the "wursheppful soueryns þat syttyn here" for having witnessed the play in "soferyng sylens" and "withowte ony resystens" ("Reynes" 1, 5, 6), the Epilogue entreats the audience to spend its money at the ale following the play:

We pray ȝou alle in Goddys name
To drynke ar ȝe pas;

For an ale is here ordeyned be a comely assent
For alle manner of people þat apperyn here þis day,
Vnto holy chirche to ben incressement
All that excedith þe costys of our play. ("Reynes" 25-31)

Whereas Wager's Prologue defends the money earned by the players in terms of the exchange value of the play's "wisedom," the fifteenth-century Epilogue plays to a concern for the church's welfare by assuring the audience that the money raised by the play and at the ale will cover only the players' expenses. Any money gathered in excess of those costs will go towards the "holy chirche," perhaps for repair of the church fabric or the purchase of a bell or a saint's statue. The profit of the play, according to the Epilogue, will remain in and, more importantly, benefit not only the parish's material church but also the universal, immaterial "holy chirche."

Okeden's response to Bale's proposed play can be better understood in light of these two defenses. That is, Okeden's response is a complicated one which registered more than his reaction against the play's doctrinal content or his personal animosity towards Bale. Indeed, Okeden's response suggests the way in which early Elizabethan plays could occasion strong personal response based on religious affiliation but articulated through an understanding of those plays not only in terms of their content but also in terms of their operation as a social and economic practice.

This dissertation studies Bale's plays and of one of his prose works, *The Laboryouse Journey and Serche of Johan Leylande* in terms of their negotiation of the social practices of playing sketched above. The underlying argument in this dissertation is that in these works Bale presents to his audiences a participatory model of allegiance. This allegiance is marked by a proper response to a number of tokens—emblems of the larger, abstract community of evangelical England—that place particular demands on participants. This participation, moreover, is circumscribed within a social imaginary in which participation through social practice becomes legible.

Through the recent work of several critics—James P. Carley, Peter Happé, John N. King, Paul Whitfield White, to name but a few—Bale has transcended, to some degree, his reputation as "bilious Bale" to become a more widely-studied literary figure. The present chapter provides a brief biographical sketch of Bale and briefly frames this study in terms of Bale's critical reception.

To say that Bale's life was eventful would be an understatement. Living through one of the most turbulent periods of British history, Bale survived, sometimes barely, the reigns of four monarchs and saw the accession of a fifth, Elizabeth I, five years before his death. A brief outline of his life and prose works is thus valuable.[3]

Bale was born on 21 November 1495 in Cove, a village near Dunwich, Suffolk. When he was twelve years old, his parents placed him in the Carmelite convent in Norwich. He entered Cambridge University in 1514, where he received his Bachelor of Divinity in 1529. Despite there being no university record of it, Bale must also have received his Doctor of Divinity by 1534 as John Leland referred to Bale as Dr. Bale in a letter to Cromwell, and Bale, also in a letter to Cromwell, claimed to be a "doctor of dyvynyte" (*Letters* XII (2) 230)). During these years at Cambridge, Bale also travelled to through the Low Countries and to Louvain and Toulouse.

After leaving Cambridge, Bale became prior at the Carmelite priories at Maldon and, by 1533, at Ipswich. By June 1534, Bale had moved to Doncaster to become prior there.[4] Before these appointments, however, Bishop Stokesley had revoked Bale's licence to preach in Essex in 1531 because, as Bale later claimed, Bale "wold not leaue the gospell and be sworne to the obseruacyon of hys iniunccyons" (Rex 492n28; Fairfield 33; Bale, *Yet a Course* 55r). By 1531, then, Bale appears to have had evangelical leanings. Yet Bale attributed his conversion to Thomas Wentworth, who convinced Bale to "acknowledge my deformity" before casting off the "yokes" of "Antichrist" (qtd. in Happé, *Complete* 1: 147), and as Lord Wentworth's manor lay close to Ipswich, this conversion probably took place, or at least began, while Bale was prior there (Happé and King 2-3). Indeed, by the time Bale reached Doncaster, he held radical views: he was charged, but acquited, by Archbishop Lee of heresy.

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[3] For the detailed biographies on which the one below is based, see King, "Bale"; Happé, *John Bale* 1-25; Fairfield, *John Bale* passim, but especially 1-49, 144-56; McCusker 1-28; Harris 14-59; and Blatt 11-16.

[4] See King, "Bale." Harris describes a different order for the priories, with Bale serving at Doncaster before Ipswich (20-21).

Bale, however, did not leave the Carmelites until 1536 when he became a secular priest in Thorndon, Suffolk (King, "Bale"). At some point—Bale himself claimed it was immediately following his conversion but before his troubles with Lee (Happé, *Complete* 1: 147)—Bale married. Bale reports his motive in unromantic if characteric terms: "lest henceforward in any way I might be a creature of so bestial a nature, I took the faithful Dorothy to wife, listening attentively to this divine saying: let him who cannot be continent seek a wife" (Happé, *Complete* 1: 147). In his *Abel Redivivus*, Thomas Fuller described the marriage with a slightly more sympathetic view of Dorothy: Bale "tooke him a wife one *Dorothy* by name, & that name well deserving; a woman piosly affected, & one that aboad constantly with him, and inseparable and individuall companion and copartner with him in all his troubles and exilments" (504). Indeed, Dorothy suffered persecution for her marriage to Bale. In June 1545, she returned from exile with Bale to Norwich in order to help "her childe, which had undiscretely bound him selfe prentice wihin yeares, to one which was neither honest nor godly" (Bale, *First* 2: D3v-D4v).

According to Bale, she was imprisoned by the "wycked...mayre" who "sought to put her to most shamefull and cruel death, hauynge none other matter agaynst her, but only that she had bene the wyfe of a preste, whych had bene (well bestowed) a preacher amonge them" (*First* 2: D4r). She escaped, however, through the intervention of a sympathetic lawyer.

At Thorndon, Bale once again drew attention for his beliefs, and was imprisoned by Bishop Stokesley. Leland, however, intervened on Bale's behalf, writing to Thomas Cromwell and asking that Bale be permitted to "make his purgation" *(Letters* XII (1) 230). Bale also wrote to Cromwell, begging Cromwell to exercise his "gracyose goodnes" (Bale, Letter to Cromwell), and these pleas, in the end, succeeded: according to Bale, Cromwell rescued Bale "ob editas comedias"—on account of the comedies Bale had set forth (*Scriptorum* 702). Cromwell also brought Bale under his patronage: in late 1538 and early 1539, Cromwell rewarded Bale for the performance of two plays, and, as I discuss in greater detail in chapter two, Bale may have been a member of Cromwell's troupe that began touring plays throughout England by September 1537.

When Cromwell fell and was executed on 30 July 1540, Bale fled to the continent, where he remained until he was "recalled by the most pious King Edward VI" (qtd. in Happé, *Complete* 1: 147). During the years of this first exile, Bale wrote and published prolifically. By 1542, Bale had in mind the major themes he would explore during this period: the idea of two churches and the persecution of Britain's primitive church in Britain's history. In *Yet a Course at the Romyshe Foxe*, an attack on Bishop Edmund Bonner published in 1543 but "compyled" in 1542 (99r), Bale briefly noted "the "mystery" of the separation of the "true congregacyon" from "those spirituall sorcerers of

Sodome and Egypt," claiming he had already "in more ample wyse vpon the Apocalypse declared yt, whom I haue called the Image of both churches" (8r). Moreover, he "purpose[d] shortlye…to declare in a farre more larger treatyse" how Bonner's predecessors had burned heretics "euer sens Iohan wycleues tyme and sumwhat afore" (37v). The working title was provided as a marginal gloss: "Ioha*n* Wycleues battayle ageyst antychrist" (37v). During this exile, Bale produced several important works on these themes, including two martyrologies: *A brefe chronycle concernynge the examinacyon and death of the blessed martyr of Christ syr Iohan Oldecastell* in 1544 and the two *Examinations of Anne Askew*, the first in 1546 and the second in 1547. In 1545, Bale published his *Image of Both Churches*, a commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John, in which Bale presents history as a struggle between the true congregation and the Roman church headed, according to Bale, by Antichrist. John R. Knott identifies these texts, *Image* in particular, as influential in "forming Foxe's sense of his vocation as a martyrologist and his approach to the material he gathered on protestant martyrs" (46). While Bale's conception of two churches derives from a tradition that includes John Wyclif, John Hus, and William Tyndale, Bale's *Image* "did more than anyone else to popularize it" (Knott 47).

In a similar vein, Bale also published *The actes of Englysh votaryes comprehendynge their vnchast practyses and examples by all ages, from the worldes begynnynge to thys present yeare*. This book treats at length Bale's bête noire: the alleged sexual misconduct of the Roman church throughout its history. In the 1551 expansion of this text, Bale identifies the conspiracy by which the leaders of the false church managed to acquire power. The primary engine of this conspiracy was the enforcement of "perpetuall chastyte" ([2:U1r]) on the clergy, in effect making them "buggerers & whoremaisters" and thereby shaming them into submission to the church authorities ([2:U1r]).

Bale's other significant book during this period was his 1548 *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae scriptorum…Summarium*, a catalogue of British authors divided into five groups of one hundred. That year, Bale also published in 1548 *The Laboryouse Journey and Serche of Johan Lelande*. With these 1548 volumes, Bale attempted unsuccessfully to secure patronage from Edward VI (King and Happé 6), perhaps as a royal librarian or as a collector of manuscripts on the king's behalf, modelled on Leland's role in his search of the monasteries' libraries that Henry VIII's allegedly ordered him to perform. Nevertheless, Bale did make searches of the university libraries as well as of libraries in Norwich and London, and this work contributed to the 1557-59 *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Britannie…Catalogus*. These catalogues, as I discuss in greater detail in chapter five, represent Bale's attempt to build on Leland's previous work and to codify a British literary history.

Bale resided for a time in London at the Duchess of Richmond's house, along with a number of evangelicals including John Foxe, John Ponet, John Cheke, and John Philpot (King "Bale"; Harris 38). Cheke would help Bale access Leland's manuscripts, and Ponet, when he became Bishop of Winchester in 1551, collated Bale as rector of Bishopstoke, Hampshire (Harris 40). There, Bale again encountered resistance and recounted his experiences in his 1552 *An expostulation or complaynte agaynste the blasphemyes of a franticke papyst of Hamshyre*. In this complaint, Bale interprets local and personal confrontations in cosmological terms. In the preface to the text, Bale pleads with the Duke of Northumberland to restrain "the malyciouse rable of Antichristes ruffyanes" from "dagger drawynge", "fyste lyftynge", and "pullynges by the bearde and bosom" ([A7r-v]). Bale alleges that he himself was set upon by one who came

> sodenly out of an house of purpose upon me...[and] sette hys one hande upon my Bearde and bosome, and hys other hande sometyme on hys Dagger and sometyme bent it ouer my heade, as thoughe he wolde haue buffeted me on the face, wyth suche madde exclamacions as I neuer hearde of man of Bedlem, besydes the unreasonable spoyle that he had made afore that of my house. (C4r)

Bale interprets such conflict as a continuation of the historical conflict between the British church and the "filthy corrupcions of those Romysh Idolatours": Bale and his fellows "so earnestly labour, to place here in Engla*n*d, the true relygyo*n* agayne, aud [sic] to set up hys true worshippinges, as in the primiatiue church of the faythfull Bryttayues [sic], firste planted by them that were hyther sente by Christes Apostles, and fashyoned after the perfight rules of the .vii. churches in Asia" (B4v). Bale thus presents this conflict as a sign of the historical conflict between the two churches.

Violence against Bale intensified when, after a brief promotion in 1551 to a vicarage in Swaffam, Norfolk, he was appointed in August 1552 to the bishopric of Ossory (Harris 41-42). In the 1553 *Vocaycyon of Johan Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Ireland his persecucions in the same & finall delyveraunce*, Bale recounted the opposition he faced from local clergy. After Mary took the throne, Bale found the opposition to increase, and the clergy restored the celebration of Catholic ceremonies (*Vocacyon* 62). Bale commented, with characteristic indignation, that "They maye now without checke / have other mennes wives in occupienge / or kepe whores in their chambers / or els playe the buggery knaves / as they have done alwayes / and be at an uttre defiaunce with mariage" (*Vocacyon* 63). He reports a plot to assassinate him (*Vocacyon* 61), and the murder of five of his servants (*Vocacyon* 63-64). In the end, Bale fled Ireland only to be captured by pirates and delivered to a Flemish jail. But Bale, after spending three weeks in prison, ultimately made his was to safety in Germany (Harris 68-79).

In his *Vocacyon*, Bale describes his persecutions in cosmological terms. As King and Happé note, "Bale calls attention to ways in which his own suffering and the persecution of 'true' believers have been followed by divine deliverance and rejoicing. His extensive knowledge and reliance upon the English chronicles…conditioned his effort to place his own experience and that of his beleaguered co-religionists within the context of providential history" (9-10). Tracing the true British church to its origins in Timothy's conversion and baptism of King Lucius, Bale briefly outlines its subjugation by "bytter stingars in Antichristes cause" by whom "the sincere faith of the English churche decayed" (46-47) and identifies a continuous resistance: "Yet were there alwayes some in that miste of palpable darkeness / that smelled out their mischefes / & in part maintened the syncere doctrine" (48). While he includes the usual suspects Wycliffe and Thorpe in this remnant, Bale also draws on his sense of English literary history and includes Hoccleve, Gower, and Chaucer (48). Bale's narrative presents his and the English church's sufferings as a mark of its being the "true" church as "an afflicted and sorowful congregacion / forsaken in a maner / and destitute of all humaine confort in this lyfe" (86-87).

During this second exile, Bale concentrated his efforts on his *Catalogus*. Indeed, in July 1555, John Ponet wrote to John Bale in Frankfurt, requesting Bale's assistance in a propaganda campaign.[5] Although he claimed to be mindful "not to pluk" Bale from his "other more weightie purposes," Ponet nevertheless asserted that "ballet, rymes, and short toyes that be not deare, and will easyly be born away d[o]e muche good at home among the rude people," requesting that if Bale could not find time to write such material perhaps he could "pryk other men to suche easy exercises" (Ponet). By 1555, Bale had already published several tracts, including his 1553 response to Stephen Gardiner's *De vera obedientia* and Bonner's preface to it. Bale also likely wrote in 1554 the response, published in 1561, to Bonner's articles. After 1555, however, Bale's efforts were devoted to the "weightier purpose" of his *Catalogus*.

When Elizabeth I took the throne, Bale returned to England and in 1560 was appointed a canon in Canterbury. He continued to work until his death in November 1563, and wrote a typically vituperative response to James Cancellar's *Path of Obedience*, itself a response to Bale's *Vocacyon* (Bale, "A Retourne").

In the century following his death, Bale's literary reputation derived mainly from his catalogues of British authors and their works. Yet this reputation was tainted both by the degree to which Bale was thought to have appropriated the work of John Leland and by Bale's bellicose rhetoric. Anthony à Wood, for instance, commented disapprovingly of Bale's adaptation of Leland's work, noting

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[5] For the dating and transcript of the letter, see Baskerville "John Ponet." Baskerville persuasively counters Fairfield's contention that Ponet wrote to Bale in 1556 after Bale had moved, unknown to Ponet, to Basel (*John Bale* 202n25).

> Howsoever it is, sure I am, that several eminent Antiquaries have made use of them, especially *Joh. Bale* in his second edition of *British Writers*, but not in the same words that *Leland* wrot. For as he delivered things impartially and in smooth language, so *Bale* quite contrary, and full of scurrilities. (Wood, 1691 1: 70)

Wood also reported that Andrew Borde was slandered in a book by John Ponet, a "Calvinistical Bishop," and Wood questioned the book's truthfulness as it "contains a great deal of passion, and but little better language, than that of *Foul-mouth'd Bale*" (1: 60). For Wood, Bale had become the standard of scurrility.

Perhaps the most pejorative and long-lived dismissive depiction of Bale was made by Thomas Fuller, who declared Bale to be "a person, more Learned than discreet, fitter to *write* than to *govern,* as unable to command his own passion, and *Biliosus Baleus* passeth for his true Character" (Hhh3r). Commenting on Bale's excessive language, Fuller suggestively and unforgettably wrote that "Bilious Bale bespattereth him [John Canon] more than any of his order" (Ff2v). The epithet "Bilious Bale" has accompanied most descriptions of Bale's work.

Thomas Hearne later defended Bale against Fuller's insults, arguing that Bale

> Very often...retains Leland's own words, but in other places he changes them, yet with this advantage, that he hath made many excellent and very usefull additions, and the work taken altogether (and abating for too much rancour shew'd in it against the Romanists) is a most valuable and judicious performance, and far preferable to the less perfect one that was left by Leland, who however in this ought to have the pre-eminence, that

> he laid the foundation of it, and ought to be look'd upon as the master builder. (Wood, 1813 1: 202n4)

Later, Samuel Coleridge also defended Bale against Fuller's epithet: in the margins of his edition of Fuller's text, Coleridge wondered, "How happened it, that Fuller is so bitter against Bale? Bale's restless and calamitous life…which renders his voluminous labours a marvel, ought to have shielded him from all severity of censure" (qtd. in Trollope 501).

Yet it is difficult not to wince from the shrillness of Bale's voice and his biting vituperativeness. Several of Bale's more recent critics have reacted strongly to his stridency and to his dogged attacks on his bête noire, the alleged sexual misconduct of the clergy and of the friars. W. T. Davies most memorably evaluates Bale's work as "more important than readable. At times Bale seems to be not so much writing as barking in print" (203). Richard Bauckham characterizes Bale's recurrent allegations of clerical sexual misconduct as his "wellnigh pornographic contempt for popish religious orders" (21) while Jesse Harris dismisses Bale's allegations as "nauseous narratives" (*John Bale* 9). Peter Happé, the most recent editor of Bale's plays, understands Bale's obsessive return to the topic in biographical terms, suggesting that "Bale suffered a sexual shock when he entered the order" (*Complete Plays* 1: 3).

More recently, however, both literary critics and historians have discussed the context in which Bale told and retold the stories that earlier critics have found "nauseous narratives" (Harris 9). Alan Stewart, Donald N. Mager, and Garrett Epp have situated Bale's allegations of clerical sodomy in his prose and his play, *Three Laws*, in relation to the Henrician Dissolution of the monasteries, the 1533/34 Buggery Act, and the evangelical opposition to the Roman Church's insistence on clerical celibacy. Helen L.

Parish, seeing Bale as not only a prolific but a significant and influential contributor to Tudor Reformation polemic (15), situates Bale's strident rhetoric within the context of Reformation debates on clerical marriage. According to Parish, Bale's insistence on clerical misconduct was not unique but adopted a conventional attack deployed not only by other evangelical authors against enforced clerical celibacy but also by conservative authors such as Thomas More (121, 120-31).

Despite his reputation as "Biliosus Baleus," Bale did merit praise from his early critics. Fuller extolled Bale's work albeit somewhat back-handedly: "His industry therefore is very remarkable...so it surviveth his decease, in the fruit of it with us, and in the reward of it to him" (*Abel* 510). Echoing Bale's own aggressive anti-papalism, Fuller begins his brief biography of Bale in *Abel Redevivus* by noting,

> Among those who in these latter times have laboured in throwing open the skirts of the *Romish* strumpet, who with her cup of fornication had a long time bewitched a great part of the Christian world; and laying open her abominations to the light of the Sun, and the light of the world; none have traveled more, nor taken pains to better purpose, then this our Countriman *John Bale*. (502)

Fuller proceeds to praise Bale's work in cataloguing and preserving "auncient Records, that had lien long buriey [sic] in the dark, and but for him might so have done in everlasting oblivion" (*Abel* 503). Indeed, Fuller acknowledges his own debt to Bale, noting that Bale, for his own bibliographical and historiographical work, was "not more beholding to *Leland*, than I have been to *Bale* in this Work, and my *Church-History*" (*Worthies* Hhh3r).

Fuller included a poem on Bale which captures the tone of much of Bale's writing:

> Loe here the man who stir'd Romes comon shore
> Until it stunk, and stunk him out of dore.
> Twelve years he serv'd the Babilonian wit[c]h;
> Drank of her cup and wallowed in her ditch,
> Untill the sunshine of diviner Truth
> Shot saving Beames into his hopefull youth (*Abel* 510-11)

Shortly before Bale's death, Barnaby Googe also memorialized Bale in rhyme in a somewhat more sympathetic poem. Googe's poem addresses its subject as "Good aged Bale" and portrays Bale, with "hoary heares," persisting in his studies: he "Doste yet persyste, / to turne the paynefull Booke" (D1r). Googe advises Bale to "rest thy Pen / that long hath laboured soore" (D1v) yet doubts that Bale will: "thou I thynke / Don Platoes part will playe / With Book in hand, / to haue thy dyeng daye" (D1v).

It is Bale's construction of a particularly English—or British—nation as the "true" congregation that has interested many critics. Claire McEachern, for example, sees Bale as the "ur-figure" of Elizabethan nationalism. Indeed, the tracts from the 1550s suggest a type of nationalism, not grounded in democracy, obviously, but in a moral and ecclesiastical participation (26). Not only does Bale call England to repent, but he attributes the death of Edward VI as providential retribution for ecclesiastical backsliding. In this, Bale identifies if not a national will then a national willfullness. As McEachern argues, English nationalism does not depend on our ability to count the numbers on the ground in order to determine the will for a particular national government; in Tudor England this is expressed as consent. Bale thus constructs belonging in the "true" congregation as a matter of choice, or of conversion.

In his seminal study of Elizabethan nationhood, *Forms of Nationhood*, Richard Helgerson identifies two recurrent themes in the texts he studies: "One concerns the monarch and monarchic power. The other involves the inclusion or exclusion of various social groups from privileged participation in the national community and its representation" (9).[6] Helgerson persuasively argues that throughout the Elizabethan period, authors presented several authorities that rivalled the monarch's claims on allegiance. Authors thus wrote texts in which "some other interest or cultural formation—the nobility, the law, the land, the economy, the common people, the church—rivals the monarch as the fundamental source of national identity" (10). Several of these cultural formations themselves become contested not only in terms of participation but in terms of proper participation. It is through the contestation of proper participation, mediated through particular forms of social practice—writing, certainly, but also playing parish plays, or, as we have seen, tailoring a player's garment—participation appears and is contested. Indeed, participation in a "discursive community" itself is fraught with difficulty and "discursive communities" might also be thought of as a socially imagined space, replete with a grammar that makes participation there intelligible.

Bale's critical reputation also has been rehabilitated through attention to Bale's alleged anti-theatricalism and its relationship to the anti-theatrical prejudice thought to be inherent not only in later radical Protestantism but also in its early variations. In part, this focus on the Reformation's anti-theatricalism draws on an association between the Henrician and Edwardian attack on images and saint-worship and the assumption that this attack must also have extended, in the Reformation's early stage, to saints' plays and, later, to the cycle plays at York and Chester. Challenges to this view have been mounted successfully by a number of critics. As I discuss in chapter one, Bings Bill questioned the suppression theory, advanced most strongly by Harold Gardiner in his *Mysteries' End*, arguing that despite the overt attack on and the physical destruction of institutions important to local communities, drama did not become an explicit object of this attack. That is, Bings argued, why would a regime so bent on the destruction of Roman religious institutions that it would physically destroy the fabric of monastic life and along with it its social contributions such as relief of the poor, not in similarly spectacular fashion destroy religious plays? Both Bings and Gardiner, however, concerned themselves primarily with the fate of the large cycle plays at York and Chester. The suppression of religious drama at the parish level may very well have been an unintended consequence of the reforms made by Henry VIII and, more sweepingly by Edward VI. Henry VIII's abrogation of holy days and Edward VI's dissolution of the chantries destroyed, or severely limited, the means by which local plays were organized and performed. Moreover, a consequence of the dissolution of the monasteries was the bibliocaust that destroyed much of literary wealth, including the compilations of saints' plays performed, along with others, on the abrogated holy days. What demands explanation is the discrepancy between the vibrant drama of the parishes evident in documentary evidence, increasingly made accessible by the Records of Early English Drama project. A paucity of extant playtexts, especially texts of saints' plays, is at odds with the documentary evidence, but this paucity is explicable in terms of the destruction of literature wrought by the Dissolution.

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[6] For a valuable discussion of Helgerson and nationhood in the context of empire, see Hart, *Contesting* 83-84.

Lawrence Clopper, however, has advanced a skeptical reading of the lack of extant playtexts. According to Clopper, the gap exists because the saints' plays referred to in the documentary evidence were not actually plays because they were not played from written scripts. Understanding references to such plays as references to drama is a mistake, Clopper argues, because the "records cannot support the contention that they are enactments of the vita of a saint" (128). Documentary evidence proves difficult to interpret as terminology indicates only vaguely the sort of festivities enjoyed. Records which employ

> the formulae '*Ludus de*' or 'Play of' (1) cannot be assumed to be the name of a scripted play about the saint named but may be the name of a guild or church that produced the game or *ludus*; and (2) the 'play' may be some kind of dramatic enactment but it may also be a festival. A *ludus*, 'play,' or 'game,' therefore, is first of all a civic, or more likely, a parish entertainment, a *spectaculum*, whose purpose is to raise funds. Such entertainments might include scripted plays about the patron saint or some other saint; however, they might simply be sports, contests, amusements, pageants, or any combination of these. (129)

Further complicating matters, such *ludi*, even when they are "some kind of dramatic enactment" do not necessarily refer to religious drama. Rather, references to ludic *miracula*, contrary to received opinion, indicate parodies of religious ceremonies or narratives rather than pious enactments of them: "*Miracula* were not vernacular religious dramas produced by lay people, towns, or guilds; nor were they saints' plays nor…liturgical enactments…. Rather, they are activities we have called 'pagan survivals' or ones that parody the liturgy or make jest of sacred events" (70).

Moreover, the anti-theatricalism evident in the fourteenth-century Lollard tract, *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, attacks the carnivalesque and improvised saints' games—*miracula*—rather than scripted plays such as the York or Chester cycle-plays. The anti-theatricalism of *Tretise*, then, is directed less at dramatic representation itself than at riotous, carnivalesque, and parodic representation.

Such a reading of the *Tretise* is open to some question. The author of the *Tretise*, for instance, does express concern that non-parodic representation proves to be problematic as it causes the audience's unwarranted emotional response. Nevertheless, this emotional display, which seems unlikely to be caused by parody, is misdirected and "not alowable byfore God": "the weping that fallith to men and wymmen by the sighte of siche miraclis pleyinge, as they ben not principlay for theire oune sinnes ne of their gode feith withinneforthe, but more of theire sight withouteforth is not alowable byfore God but more reprowable" (102). Here, the author argues against the mimetic nature of the event: the emotional response occasioned by such events falsely derives from the representation of Christ's Passion rather than from pious contemplation.

Moreover, Clopper's reappraisal of the anti-theatricalism expressed in *Tretise* has advanced the discussion of early Protestant anti-theatricality. In his detailed study of anti-theatricalism, Jonas Barish implies that early English evangelicals inherited the anti-theatrical sentiment of the *Tretise*, condoning plays only when they displayed demonstrable pedagogical value (78-83).[7] Yet early Protestant discussions of drama were, at worst, ambivalent to drama: William Tyndale, for instance, commented approvingly of playing Christ's Passion while Heinrich Bullinger disapproved (Clopper 17). Work by White persuasively counters the argument that English evangelicalism was fundamentally anti-theatrical from its inception. Rather, early Protestant thought on drama, while expressing a wariness of its power to blur the distinction between representation and the thing itself, articulated an aesthetic conception of drama that emphasized the audience's reception of the staged action. Protestant thought thus valued drama for its ability to encourage contemplation of the events signified by the staged action but castigated drama for its production of emotion in the audience. Such an aesthetic found expression in the meta-theatricality of John Bale's plays, plays that insistently draw attention not only to the artificiality of their own performances but also to, in Bale's view, the artificiality of Catholic performances.

The critical attention to early evangelical anti-theatricality has been crucial to the revising of the understanding of early Reformation drama. Ritchie D. Kendall has traced an evangelical anti-theatricalism that distinguishes between playing within the context of an interlude and the sort of playing that Stephen Greenblatt has termed, "Renaissance self-fashioning." That is, in Kendall's view, early evangelical anti-theatrical discourse reflected a "deep ambivalence toward the idea of drama. On the one hand, the nonconformist looked upon the world of play as a barrier between the believer and his God. On the other hand, the nonconformist saw his own life as a form of internalized theater whose reproduction in satires, saints' lives, and courtroom scenes was essential to the communal worship of the brethren" (100-1). Such ambivalence appears in Bale's work as a fear, common to Lollard discussions of playing, "that in the heat of performance an audience might mistake an imagined world for the spiritual world it figured forth" (Kendall 102). Bale thus, according to Kendall, foregrounds the distinction "between godly stagecraft and Catholic playing" (109). Yet Kendall, in his convincing discussion of the relationship between Examination narratives and theatricality, situates Bale's anti-theatricality within the context of guild-performance—that is, within the context of the Corpus Christi cycle dramas. Bale "instinctively perceived" the "fraternity" between "the examination and the theater of the guild", especially in the way in which the examinee (in this case Thorpe) "plays Christ, Arundel plays Caiaphas, and his clerks play the tyrant's minions" (59). Bale, however, was likely aware of alternative playing practices—parish playing, for instance—that also presented such biblical episodes. The point is not that Kendall's analysis is incorrect; rather, the point is simply that the "guild plays" are not the only, or even the main, point of reference for Bale and his contemporaries.

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[7] See also the discussion of anti-theatricalism in Hart, *Theatre*.

Moreover, Bale consistently employs his anti-theatrical statements by associating Vice-characters with his orthodox adversaries. Catholic leaders, in Bale's view, play the role of tyrant: "ye playe Pharao / Cayphas / Nero / Traianus / with all tyrauntes partes besydes" (*Epistle Exhortatorye* xvii^{r}). They play, in addition,

> altogether hyck scorner undre the fygure of Ironia. That ye saye ye hate ye loue, & that ye saye ye loue ye hate. Lett all faythfull menne be ware of soche doube daye dremers and hollowe harted trayters / and thynke where

> as they beare the rewle / nothynge shall come ryghtlye forewarde neither in fayth nor co*m*mon welth. (xxv$^{r\text{-}v}$)

Bale's use of such theatrical metaphors does not express a condemnation of playing as such but of particularly vicious and hypocritical behaviour. Indeed, Bale lists, in his typically scurrilous manner, several Catholic practices to which he objects: "banketinges / glotonye / dronkenesse / slowthe / sedicyon / ydolatrye / wytchecrafte / fornicacyon / lechere / lewdenesse / besydes youre fylthye feates in the darke whan women are not redye at hande" (xviiir). Elsewhere, Bale defends the playing of plays and, in the same breath, denounces the "playing" of conservative ceremonies. In his response to Bonner's 1554 Articles, Bale notes of Bonner's article inquiring about priests giving privy lectures or plays that "plaies or christe*n* Comedyes hee abhoreth aboue all, because they haue opened so playneley the knaueries of his Romish secte" (*A Declaration* G1r-v). Bale turns these objections around:

> But I would therewith knewe gladly, what he thinketh of…playes at the aulter which are antichristes ydle inuencions, of holy water games, of sensing games, of procession games, with copes, crosses, canapees, candeis, crueties, sprincles, torches banners, stremers & their Cake God in a silke bagge and a boxe. (*A Declaration* G1v)

Bale's anti-theatricality is reserved for attacks on conservative ceremonies only understood metaphorically as plays.

This metaphoric anti-theatricalism developed evangelical dramatic aesthestic practices more than it fueled a reaction against traditional, Catholic playing. Foundational Protestant thinkers, such as Luther, Zwingli, Bullinger, Bucer, and even Calvin, supported drama albeit with varying degrees of reserve (Ehrstine 21-31). Their support emphasized the development of an evangelical aesthetic of spectatorship in which the performance's emotional affect on the audience should be disavowed in favour of the facilitation of intellectual and spiritual contemplation of what is signified by the performance. Thus, Luther "encouraged a fundamentally different type of interaction between audiences and the religious imagery of contemporary plays, one that fostered intellectual comprehension as opposed to an emotional response in the viewer. So long as playwrights shunned affect in favor of edification, Luther considered both religious drama and images adiaphorous, or theologically neutral" (Ehrstine 203).

This Protestant view of playing is not far removed from the Protestant view of the mass. Luther, for example, understood the Mass in terms similar to that of a play. According to Glenn Ehrstine, for Luther "both the consecration of the host and the portrayal of Christ's passion were empty theatrical acts if they did not encourage participation, indeed, spiritual completion by the viewer. Both the Mass and a stage play were ineffective without a believing audience" (24). William Tyndale equated the two, as well, characterizing priests as players and the mass as a "juggling" (White, *Theatre* 35). Indeed, Tyndale's view influenced not only Bale but his contemporaries as well to "compare hypocritical priests to 'jugglers' and medieval Vice characters who deck themselves in game-players' garments" (White, *Theatre* 35). In other words, Bale "present[s] those revered images before the spectators only to discredit them by depriving them of their original sacred context, and substituting a profane or diabolical one instead" (White, *Theatre* 34). John Bale's anti-theatricality, then, comes to be seen as a meta-theatricality which attempts, in its own terms, to expose and condemn the theatricality of conservative religion.

In his *Theatre and Reformation*, White not only dismisses the notion that Protestantism was inherently anti-theatrical, he also makes a case for the vitality of Protestant drama throughout much of the sixteenth century. White argues that, far from suppressing religious drama,

> English Protestants extended the medieval tradition of promoting drama, along with other cultural activities, as a means of legitimating and celebrating religious teaching and practice, only now the authority which sanctioned that teaching and practice was no longer the Papacy and its emissaries but the English Crown and the ecclesiastical and civic officials under its central control. (2-3)

As well as analyzing the formal characteristics of this drama, White attempts to "integrate this concern with a detailed investigation of the personnel, institution, and activities involved in their production" (5). One such institution crucial to Reformation drama, White argues, is patronage, and Bale—or rather Bale's patronage by Thomas Cromwell—becomes important for White's study as this relationship produced "the only professional playing troupe prior to Shakespeare's stage career for which we can assign a patron, a playwright, and a small repertory of extant plays. Second, it may well be representative of many itinerant troupes operating between the 1530s and the midpoint of Queen Elizabeth's reign engaged in Reformation stage propaganda" (12). White's study traces the performances of Cromwell's players, as well as other troupes, showing how active such troupes were. This activity strongly suggests that these Reformation troupes functioned as their patrons' "instruments of persuasion" (44), performing plays throughout England in order to advance the Protestant cause.

Two assumptions underwrite White's excellent study. First, he understands the patron-client relationship to be one which functions hierarchically in determining the content of the plays. That is, the patronage relationship determines the message of the plays. On the face of it, this appears to be the case: clients seek to please patrons. Moreover, as Suzanne Westfall has shown, clients were involved in the selection of entertainments presented in their households (*Patrons* 114, 132). William Streitberger, too, sees patronage as a "mechanism" for regulating the troupes' repertoires ("The Royal Image" 14). Yet as Greg Walker has argued, patronized drama expressed a more complicated relationship between the patron's authority and his or her client. Plays written in such a context "appear both to have endorsed established political authority by praising and applauding their patrons *and* to have engaged with it in complex and genuine negotiations over the use of that authority (and the power it wielded) for concrete political ends" (*Politics* 51-52). A patron, Walker continues, "was in a unique position to demonstrate his own power and wealth and to project his own views. But he was also uniquely exposed to counsel and advice" (*Politics* 64). By exposing himself to such counsel, the patron authorized criticism albeit in highly coded terms (Walker, *Politics*). In Walker's view, early Tudor drama did offer critiques of authority:

> Critics have misidentified the political impact of the household drama partly, then because they have searched in it for the wrong things. Because the drama does not confront the political orthodoxies of the court and its presiding patrons head-on, it has been interpreted as politically quiescent.

> Because the texts were not sites of obvious ideological conflict they have been read as instruments of royal authority. (*Politics* 74)

Patronage, then, may not operate in quite the top-down fashion that White assumes. The demands patronage placed on its clients may even, as suggested in chapter two in a discussion of the conservative Lady Lisle's search for an evangelical play, be conditioned by perceived authoritative demands placed on the patron herself.

In part, White adapts this conception of hierarchical patronage from a revisionist historiography of the English Reformation that sees the Reformation as imposed "from above" (White, *Theatre* 6). Indeed, historians such as J. J. Scarisbrick, Christopher Haigh, and Eamon Duffy have successfully revised the view that the Reformation was a popular response to an "anemic and corrupt" late-medieval church (Haigh 6): "On balance, the Church was a lively and relevant social institution, and the Reformation was not the product of a long-term decay of medieval religion...Catholic piety was expanding rather than contracting in the years before the Reformation" (Haigh 4). As a result, Protestantism "was not, and could not be, an attractive religion at the grass-roots level" (Haigh 6). The Reformation, then, had to be imposed on an unreceptive audience.

However, as Ethan Shagan notes of this history, the difficulty facing the "Reformation from above" model is to explain how "a revolution…[could] have been accepted or embraced by a population so heavily invested in the very belief system that the revolutionaries sought to disturb" (1). Shagan does not dispute that the Reformation was indeed imposed but offers a critique of the revisionists' implicit adoption of Foxean categories of identities. That is, Shagan critiques the "meta-narrative of conversion" which underlies Reformation historiography (7):

> for all its benefits, the revisionist model remains no less imprisoned than its predecessor in a paradigm defined by the phantasmorgic goal of 'national conversion'. 'Success' for the Reformation remains a composite of individual religious conversions, each heaped upon the next, until the mass of Protestants in England tips some notional interpretative scales and the nation itself becomes Protestant. (5)

Shagan proposes instead that the Reformation demands a nuanced approach in which the propagation of Reformation doctrine and ideas is understood in terms of their "amphibiousness and ambidexterity" (7). The adaptability of these ideas to local politics "is exactly what allowed them to penetrate English culture, [and to] seep…into the myriad crevices in the dominant belief system where ideas and practices were not fully aligned" (7). It is in the accumulation of such adaptations on a local level that allowed the Reformation's success.

One of Shagan's most compelling critiques is levelled at revisionist conceptions of resistance and comformity. While accepting the "revisionists' *theory* of resistance," Shagan argues that "their *practical* use of the concept is none the less problematic" (12). That is, the revisionist model fails to recognize the nuances of resistance when such resistance is viewed from a perspective other than a theological one. The confessional lens through which conformity is identified must be changed as neither conformity nor resistance is absolutely determined by theological definitions. Shagan proposes that the concept of collaboration be understood without the concern as to whether such collaboration amounts to conformity or to resistance. This proposal is tactical and stems from Shagan's attempt to expand the view of the Reformation beyond the strictly theological perspective. Shagan seeks to employ collaboration in a more nuanced way. On the one hand, *collaboration* has been critically employed within the meta-narrative of the conversion so that outward behaviour operates as “an imperfect cipher” for “an inward spiritual process” (13). Thus, actions or words that look or sound Protestant, from a traditional point of view, have been interpreted to suggest the agent’s inward or spiritual conversion to and ideological conformity to Protestantism. From a revisionist point of view, such acts of collaboration have been read as resistance. The problem, according to Shagan, is the revisionist premise that

> *real* collaboration could only exist where the motives of the collaborators matched the motives of reformers in the government, in other words only in the rare cases of genuine evangelical agitation in the countryside. Other cases of accommodation with the regime might result from fear or greed, but in these cases outward behaviour ceases to be an accurate gauge of religious sentiment and hence ceases to reflect a process of ‘Reformation’. (13)

Instead, Shagan adopts a more complex theory of collaboration “which undermines the notion that collaboration must be based on ideological unity” and that focuses on “the ability of collaborators to form symbiotic relationships with authority and co-opt the state just as the state is co-opting the people” (14). In this view, collaboration appears “in the ways many people who had no apparent Protestant leanings none the less chose to act as mouthpieces for the regime” (15). The imposition of the Reformation “from above” thus involved those below in a complex collaborative process, and it is through this collaboration, which Shagan understands as independent of spiritual belief, that the

Reformation's reforms achieved broad acceptance during Edward VI's and Elizabeth I's reigns.

White assumes, then, that Bale's drama proceeds to its audiences from above, via Cromwell's patronage of his travelling troupe. Yet Bale's plays present themselves as scripts not only for troupe performance but also as collaborative, in Shagan's sense of the term, scripts for local performance. Bale's plays, that is, were performed and interpreted not solely in terms of their doctrinal content but also in terms of their performance as a social practice, a practice, as is discussed in chapter one, that came under pressure during the Henrician, Edwardian, and early Elizabethan Reformations.

The term *social practice* is indebted to Charles Taylor's formulation of modern social imaginaries, and a brief discussion of Taylor's theory is salutary. A social imaginary, according to Taylor, is "what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society" (91); these imaginaries form a "common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy" (106). While social imaginaries "are carried in images, stories, and legends" (106), they are articulated through social practice: "At any given time, we can speak of the 'repertory' of collective actions at the disposal of a given sector of society. These are the common actions that they know how to undertake" (107) as well as know how to read. Thus, "The immediate sense of what we're doing…makes sense in a wider context, in which we see ourselves as standing in a continuing relation with others" (109). Social imaginaries then are defined both by the arrays of common practices available to people as they engage in social interactions as well as by the interpretations of such practices. Taylor is careful to differentiate these social imaginaries from theories of moral order, and this differentiation, in fact, is crucial to Taylor's attempts to theorize the advent of modernity. Yet, the moral order, in Taylor's view, "gradually infiltrates and transforms our social imaginary. In this process, what is originally just an idealization grows into a complex imaginary through being taken up and associated with social practices, in part traditional ones, which are often transformed by the contact" (110). In the course of this gradual infiltration, the theory or moral order is, in turn, "'glossed'…[and] given a particular shape in the context of these practices" (111). The process can continue ad infinitum, a hermeneutic spiral of ever newer glosses, or, adopting Shagan's terms, ever newer acts of collaboration.

As Okeden understood, then, the staging of a play was a social practice which made claims on a local community even before the play's performance: any participation was collaboration. As Okeden also understood, this collaboration did not rely solely on attending the play or on agreeing with the content of that play. Rather, the play made such demands on a community that collaboration could be understood, as Okeden understood it, as performing one's work. Allegiance could thus be signalled by the twopence for dinner one accepted and regardless of one's personal beliefs.

The first two chapters in this dissertation explore the shift in the social practice of playing in which Bale's plays participated. Chapter one analyzes the playing practices in the southeast of England from 1500-1576. This analysis focuses on the transition from the local maintenance of both a strong parochial dramatic tradition and support of patronized troupes to the almost sole support of patronized troupes. Chapter one thus aims to provide a context for Bale's drama, highlighting the surge in patronized drama as a shift in the social practice of dramatic performance. The second chapter reviews the evidence of Bale's patronage by Cromwell, arguing that while the evidence for this patronage is suggestive, performances of Bale's also occurred without Cromwell's patronage. That is, the chapter argues that Bale's drama itself reflects both parochial and patronized performance practices.

The last three chapters offer readings of Bale's biblical trilogy, his history play, *King Johan,* and his *Journey and Serche of Iohan Leylande*, arguing that in each of these texts Bale articulates a participatory model of nationhood. The third chapter takes up Bale's biblical trilogy, reading the play as a complex negotiation of several discourses dealing with the sacrament of baptism, the signification of allegiance through livery badges, and parochial playing practices. Bale's biblical trilogy thus operates as a nexus in which these disparate discursive constructions appear. The fourth chapter discusses Bale's *King Johan* and argues that the play presents Vidua Ynglond's widowhood and poverty as a call for poor relief. In this play, England appears as an economic space in which proper participation is marked not by poor relief but by relief of the truly poor, the English poor. The final chapter also discusses Bale's adoption of an economic discourse to represent the circulation of manuscripts in terms of commodity and profit. These terms function ambiguously, at once signalling the manuscripts as properly English objects—that is, as commodities in the sense that they are naturally produced in England and in the sense that they are tradable. Moreover, these objects are profitable in the sense that they provide a common good or benefit and in the sense that, when traded, they provide monetary profit. What is at stake in *The Laboryouse Journey*, is proper economic participation marked by social practices advancing the common good rather than seeking private profit.

Chapter One: "So long as they played lyes and sange bawdye songes": Parish and Patronized Playing in England's South-east, 1500-1576

On 16 May 1537, the Duke of Suffolk wrote to Thomas Cromwell informing him of a May game played on the past May Day. This play, according to Suffolk, "was of a king how he should rule his realm" and the actor who had played a character named Husbandry "said many things against gentlemen more than was in the book of the play" *(Letters* XII (1) 1212). Suffolk reported that he had given orders not only for the actor to be brought before him but also for the justices of the peace to "have regard to light persons, especially at games and plays." Near the end of the month, Suffolk again wrote to Cromwell, reporting that the actor still had not been found but that he would do his best to halt any playing or assemblies for the summer *(Letters* XII (1) 1284). This episode is suggestive in its details, and in these details we can discern a number of characteristics of early English drama, not least of which is this drama's subversive potential: not only could this drama offer social criticism (and, apparently, avoid couching this criticism in terms of the rupture between Protestantism and Catholicism), but it also could function as a means to assemble large crowds threatening in their numbers. As this incident took place shortly after the Pilgrimage of Grace, an umbrella description of three Northern rebellions in late 1536 and early 1537, had been put down, fears of riot and revolt likely underwrote Suffolk's concern. Suffolk took this threat seriously: his first order that any "light persons" be subject to immediate suspicion expanded, on his failure to locate and arrest the actor who played Husbandry, to a prohibition of all subsequent plays or games that summer.

The development of these responses is interesting in itself. That Suffolk did not immediately suppress "games and plays" suggests an implicit tolerance for this sort of drama. That is, while Suffolk indiscriminately banned all assemblies for the duration of the summer, his limiting of the ban to the summertime implies that plays and games would be permitted to resume in the future. Suffolk's response appears, then, to have arisen from contextual and pragmatic concerns rather than from an opposition to drama based in ideological or theological objection to playing itself, an implication given further weight by Suffolk's patronage of a travelling troupe of players during this period.

Most relevant to this chapter, however, is that the availability of the play-book suggests (although not certainly) that the play had been staged by a community—either a town or a parish—and that this community owned or had borrowed the play-book which contained this "Play of Husbandry". The existence of a play-book indicates that this particular play was drama in the sense that it had a script and was differentiated from the sort of para-dramatic activities, such as Robin Hood games, that often took place during holiday celebrations. That someone monitored, or was able to compare what the actor said with the playtext recalls the annotations made by John Clerke to the York plays. As well, Suffolk's attempt to locate the actor rather than a particular troupe suggests that the actor was neither from a local community nor a member of a patronized troupe, if a member of an organized troupe at all. The actor was likely an itinerant entertainer of some sort, a member of what Alexandra F. Johnston has identified as a pool of professional players who could be hired for such productions ("Parish" 327), as the Boxford churchwardens did when they staged their play in 1535 (Northeast 19).

To some degree, the episode also emblematizes the current state of early English dramatic studies: while we are sure that much activity took place, we have great difficulty adequately defining, characterizing or determining the extent of this activity. Moreover, it has been only relatively recently that the "book of the play", as Suffolk termed it, has been redefined for us. It is an understatement to claim that our understanding of early English drama has changed since E. K. Chambers published his monumental studies of English drama, *The Mediaeval* Stage in 1903 and *The Elizabethan Stage* in 1923. While Chambers noted and recorded evidence of "a vigorous and widespread dramatic activity throughout the length and breadth of the land" such as evidenced in the "Play of Husbandry" episode discussed above, he understood this extensive activity as an aberration (*Mediaeval* 2: 109). Commenting that "it is curious to observe in what insignificant villages it was from time to time found possible to organize plays", Chambers nevertheless assumed that the large cycle plays of York and Chester were exemplary of medieval drama throughout England and lamented that "there were several important towns in which…the normal type of municipal drama failed to establish itself" (*Mediaeval* 2: 109). This "normal type of municipal drama" now appears to have been an aberration rather than the norm: "the major *locus* for the performance of religious drama in England before 1550" is now understood to have been "not the cities but smaller towns and parishes" (Johnston, "Parish" 323). The norm was drama produced by parishes or towns, communities substantially smaller than, for example, the city of York.

This community drama was, by the early sixteenth century, less parochial than the term suggests and could be sophisticated not only in terms of stage requirements and special effects but also in terms of the commentary such plays could offer on controversial theological and political issues. Two extant play-texts, *The Castle of Perseverance* and the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, both fifteenth-century plays likely performed by East Anglian communities, require sophisticated stages and special effects. The stage diagram appended to the manuscript of *The Castle of Perseverance* not only requires that six playing-scaffolds be positioned in and around the playing place—one in the center of the platea, one at each of the four cardinal compass points, and one at the northeast compass point—but also that this very large playing place be circumscribed, if possible, by a ditch filled with water. Otherwise, the playing place is to be "strongly barred all about" by other means (Eccles, frontispiece). *The Play of the Sacrament* requires, among its effects, that a Eucharist wafer be nailed to a post and begin to bleed (508-10), and that the hand holding the wafer be ripped from the actor's arm and remain grasping the nailed wafer (515 s.d.). The wafer and the attached hand are then tossed into a cauldron of boiling oil (661 s.d.), which then turns to blood (676 s.d.), and after that, thrust into an oven which subsequently explodes and from which an image of Christ arises (700 s.d., 712 s.d., 716 s.d.). Croxton's effects, moreover, perform crucial theological work for the play as they theatrically demonstrate the doctrine of the real presence in the Eucharist: ineffective effects would serve to highlight the play's theatricality and undermine its theological commitments.[8]

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[8] For discussions of the play's potential subversion through an emphasis of its theatricality, see M. Jones and Lawton.

Such spectacular plays drew large crowds, and audiences could number as high as two thousand people.[9] To announce the performances of the plays, the producing towns deployed bann criers to neighbouring towns,[10] and, as a result, the plays could attract crowds and financial support from as many as twenty-nine other communities. The idea of community, then, often extended many miles in radius beyond the town or parish staging the drama. Moreover, these community plays were sometimes staged by professionals rather than by local, amateur citizens. Towns or parishes hired property players to manage the production as well as actors to perform in the play. Performers and actors from outside the community thus influenced this community drama.

Community drama existed alongside other forms of entertainment: patronized playing troupes, minstrels, and bearwards regularly visited, and were rewarded by, towns and parishes which also staged their own plays. This lack of competition derives, at least in part, from community drama's occasional nature as a means to raise funds for capital projects. Indeed, patronized troupes toured communities during the heyday of these locally-produced plays, and there does not appear to have been any significant conflict between the two forms. In this chapter, however, I add detail to the sketch I have just made of early sixteenth-century English community drama. I also present an analysis of four of the Cinque Ports' chamberlains' and churchwardens' accounts, focusing on the relationship between rewards made to community-produced plays and to patronized troupes. Despite the claim above that patronized troupes did not compete with community drama, the study suggests that the decline of community drama in Kent and Sussex is closely tied to a dramatic increase in the number of rewards to patronized troupes. This study suggests a re-evaluation of the relationship between these two forms is in order, and I offer a tentative hypothesis to explain the study.

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[9] See the discussion of Maldon's 1540 play below. The New Romney Passion play was witnessed by as many as six thoushand people in its four days of performance in 1560 (Gibson and Harvey 219).

[10] Whether the *Play of the Sacrament* was performed as a community play or toured is a question of some contention. See Lawton.

The typical form of parish fundraising was the church ale, an event most often held in early May at which parishioners and others would gather to eat, drink, dance, and be entertained by a variety of entertainers (French, *People* 134; Johnston "Introduction" 10). This entertainment, offered to draw a larger, and hence more lucrative, gathering of ale-goers, included bear-baiting, biblical and folk plays, and morris dancing (Johnston "Introduction" 10; Kümin 118). These ales were crucial to the finances of the parish, providing the parish with a valuable, and often the parish's largest, source of income (French, *People* 134-35; Duffy, *Voices* 6; Hutton, *Rise* 28),[11] and it appears that, if entertainment was offered at the ales, it served as an enticement to attend the ale, where money could be earned by selling food and drink, rather than as a significant source of revenue in and of itself (Stokes 68).

The parish of Boxford, for instance, held several ales a year, each organized by different men who then turned the money they had gathered over to the churchwardens (Northeast, passim). The organization of these ales appears to have been obligatory, likely because the funds raised at them, as well as at Boxford's Plough Monday and

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[11] For instance, French notes that hoggling—a game in which the local young women captured and held captive young men until a ransom was paid—provided between sixty and seventy percent of the parish of Banwell's revenue (*People* 117). Kümin reports that ales, on average, accounted for approximately ten percent of the income for the parishes in his study (108). The largest source income was rents (Kümin 108-9).

Hocktide celebrations, constituted the greatest source of the parish revenue (Northeast xii-xiii). The Boxford play, too, appears to have generated its revenue through the sale of "mete and drynk" to its audience, an arrangement that, as I discuss below, caused some degree of conflict. Parishes appear to have prepared for a substantial number of their audience to take them up on their offer to "drink ere they pass": for its 1540 play, the town of Maldon arranged that approximately seven hundred litres of double beer and ale would be available to its audience. This appears to have been a small amount as 2,700 litres were available at the 1532 Heybridge play (Mepham, "Municipal" 174).

Not all church ales served as occasions for drama, and Eamon Duffy complains that scholars of early English drama are too eager to identify any gathering together of the community as evidence of the performance of some form of drama (*Voices* 66). Indeed, community drama was more often an occasional event, staged in order to raise funds for an expensive or unique capital project such as major repairs to the church or the purchase of expensive items such as bells or saints' statues.[12] As early as 1428, the Glastonbury parish of St. John's staged both a Christmas and Midsummer play in order to help defray the parish debt (French, *People* 133). A new rood screen was purchased in 1451 by the parish of Tintinhull, in part with the proceeds from a Christmas play produced by five parishioners (French *People* 133). Two Thames Valley parishes, St. Laurence' Reading and St. Mary's Thames, staged several plays in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries (Johnston, "What Revels" 98-100). The parish of Stortsford in Hertfordshire raised money not only by staging five plays between 1490 and 1532 but also by renting props to other parishes (Greenfield, "Parish Drama" 114). In order to pay for substantial repairs to the church porch, the Boxford churchwardens staged a play in 1535, raising close to £19 (Northeast xiii, 19). Although it is unclear how much money it made, the Cambridgeshire parish of Bassingbourn staged a St. George play in 1511 as part of its fundraising for the purchase of a St. George statue, but the play appears to have been among the less lucrative fundraisers the parish undertook (Brannen 56, 59).

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[12] For a discussion of the staging of plays to raise funds, see French, *People* 133; Johnston, "What Revels" 101-2; Coldewey, "Some Economic" 92-95. On parish income in general, see French, *People* 99-136; French, "To Free"; Kümin 108-25, 316-17; Hutton, *Rise* 27-30.

After having practically disappeared during the latter years of Henry VIII's and Edward VI's reigns, these plays began being staged again in the mid-1550s, and this disappearance is discussed in more detail below. Community plays continued to be viewed as sources for funds during this revival. In part, this revival may have been spurred by the ecclesiastical authorities' interest in restoring neglected churches, to say nothing of those that had been defaced or otherwise damaged during the iconoclasm of the 1530s and 1540s. Nevertheless, the capital projects for which funds were raised also extended to secular projects. In 1562, the profit from a play staged in Sandon, Essex went toward the reconstruction of a bridge (Coldewey, "Some Economic" 92), and an early 1560s play staged in Donington, Lincolnshire perhaps funded the repair of a local dike (Stokes and Wright 63-64, 95n38).[13] Such plays, however, were not always financially successful. A series of plays in Chelmsford, Braintree, and Maldon in 1562 did not earn enough money to repay a £4 loan that the Chelmsford churchwardens had solicited in order to mount the play. Instead, the lender, Myles Blomefield, kept some of the town's costumes and its playbook, which we may know now as the Digby MS (Coldewey, "Digby" 104, 108-9).

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[13] The evidence for this fundraising is, according to Stokes and Wright, "cryptic": a note on the Donington cast list reads, "buttfenndyke for ffynding of" (95n38).

These fundraising plays could also become the occasion for conflict. In 1500, the parish of Pulloxhill sued a man in Chancery court for the money he had gathered and kept at a play he had staged ostensibly in order to raise money to repair the church (Greenfield, "Parish Drama" 116; Kümin 26n85). At times, such conflict arose less from fraudulent intentions than from simple misunderstandings. As a consequence of the 1535 Boxford play, a Peter Fenn was obliged to pay 26*s*. 8*d.* to the parish over the subsequent three years (Northeast 20, 26, 30). As the churchwardens noted in the accounts that all gatherers of money for the play were to provide, at their own expense and without reimbursement by the parish, "mete & drynk" for the out-of-town audience, Fenn apparently had kept the money in order to cover his own expenses for entertaining the audience from Neyland (Northeast 19). The gatherers of money, then, were expected to front a considerable amount of money themselves in order to provide food and drink to the audiences from various towns.

As the Fenn misunderstanding suggests, the funds raised by these plays were not drawn solely from the parish or town in which the plays were performed (although Fenn would likely have disagreed). While Coldewey identifies three means by which communities raised funds for these plays—by subscription, by borrowing, and by charging admission ("Some Economic" 93-95)—it is clear from the Boxford 1535 play and, as I discuss in chapter three, the Maldon 1540 play, that these methods were not always distinct.

Often, towns and parishes participated in a network of contributions, contributing to each others' plays when they were staged. Robert Wright has identified a number of "play centres" in Essex, a number of towns relatively near to a central town and that financially contribute to the central town's play (34, 37).[14] For example, Great Dunmow's annual Corpus Christi celebrations, which often included a play, received financial contributions from twenty-five communities although not all communities contributed every year (Coldewey, "Some Economic" 94; R. Wright 30).[15] Twenty-seven parishes contributed a total of £3 19*s*. 10*d*. to the Bassingbourn St. George play (Brannen 56). The organizers of plays in 1530 and 1532 in Heybridge, Essex gathered money from twenty-three nearby towns (Coldewey, "Some Economic" 94; Mepham, "Mediaeval Plays" 9-10). The Boxford play gathered money from twenty-six neighbouring towns (Northeast 18-19), and Diarmaid MacCulloch notes that Boxford's list of contributing communities shows "considerable overlap with the group of parishes which were at the centre of the Amicable Grant protest ten years earlier" (*Suffolk* 141), suggesting that contributions to local plays also signal these towns as participants in a wider community than the town or parish in which the plays were staged.

These "play centres" reciprocated by financially supporting their contributing communities' fund-raising activities. The Great Dunmow churchwardens gave money to several May events in surrounding villages (R. Wright 34), and the Boxford churchwardens made two disbursements to bann criers from another town, Stoke-by-Nayland (Northeast 2, 11).

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[14] Also see Sugano for a discussion of "hub-networks" in which several proximate towns took turns staging plays, the scripts of which were derived from a shared playtext housed at a central hub, likely a monastery. Sugano suggests that the N-town manuscript (and possibly the Towneley manuscript) is an example of such a playtext. See also G. Gibson, Scherb, and Stevens for discussions. On N-town as a compilation rather than a cycle, see Johnston, "Parish" 324.

[15] R. Wright lists twenty-six contributing communities, including Dunmow Priory (30).

In many cases, the town and the parish were co-terminus not only in administrative terms (Johnston, "Parish" 326). The Boxford play, for example, while raising money for the parish church, also figured in the minds of the parishioners as a town play. The memorandum dealing with Fenn's withholding of receipts refers to the gatherers not as parishioners but as "persons of the towne" and notes the contributions not from other parishes but from other "townshippes" (Northeast 19). Indeed, some parishes not only shared the same boundaries as the towns in which they existed but also the responsibility for plays such as those discussed above (Johnston, "Parish" 326; Gibson and Harvey 216). These plays, too, reflected a distinction between the wealthy civic elite and those who were not as wealthy: James Gibson and Isobel Harvey have correlated the participants of the New Romney 1560 Passion play with the tax assessments of the town's population and have shown that the participants in the play were largely the town's wealthy elite (206-14).

Although it is likely that plays or dramatic activities often (but not always) were staged on a smaller scale as entertainment at the regularly held ales, spectacular plays such as New Romney's were but an occasional element of parishes' fundraising activities. The large productions were underwritten by the intention, in the words of the Reynes Extract's Prologue, "vnto holy chirche to ben incressement" (30), and such plays secured outside financial assistance in order to further the communities' collective responsibility to the church. To a degree, these plays made this ethos of collective responsibility spectacularly visible not only to the producing communities but also to their audiences. Moreover, these audiences thus participated in the collective responsibility of the local communities, and the audiences for these plays included not only the individuals who attended the plays' performances but also the communities whose churchwardens or chamberlains had contributed money to the play. As the Reynes Prologue suggests, the "incressement" of the church relies on—is the responsibility of—those with money to spend as much as the producers of such plays. Such plays thus expanded their communities' boundaries by extending participation in their collective responsibilities to other communities. Under this broader conception of community, these large community plays were staged quite regularly, at least in some regions of England. That is, the contributions made by play centres to each other facilitated the regular staging of such plays within the larger community marked by this reciprocity.

Despite its extent and importance to parish funds, community drama declined drastically in the 1530s. This decline is substantial with evidence of ninety-two such productions in the 1520s dropping to evidence of forty-seven in the 1530s to almost no evidence of any in the 1540s (Wasson, "End" 73). This decline is made more striking by the fact that more records are extant for the 1530s than for the decades previous (Wasson, "End" 73). During Edward VI's reign, the parish ale disappeared almost entirely, as did other forms of traditional pastimes (Hutton, *Rise* 87-90). Yet the accounts of the decline during Henry VIII's reign vary. James Gibson, editor of the Kent REED volume from which I draw most of the data for the analysis below, argues that parish and borough drama abruptly ceases in Kent in 1535 as a result of evangelical reaction against traditional devotional practices (lviii-lvix). Kent's parishes and boroughs' dramatic repertoire likely consisted, Gibson maintains, mostly of miracle- or saints' plays, genres subject to suppression for their adherence to conservative doctrine. According to Gibson, this suppression was caused by Henry VIII's 1536 abrogation of holy days rather than by an explicit regulation of drama per se. While Henry VIII's abrogation of holidays in 1536 eliminated the feast days that fell during the traditional time of harvest between 1 July and 29 September and those of the Westminster law terms (Duffy, *Stripping* 394-95), its connection with the performance of local drama is less clear. To be sure, while some holidays were excepted from the general abrogation—the feast days of the Apostles, our Lady, and St. George were to be kept, as were Ascension Day, the nativity of John the Baptist, All Saints' Day, and Candlemas—at least twenty-six holidays were eliminated from the church calendar (Duffy, *Stripping* 394-95; Frere 2: 5n2; Cressy 5; Hutton, *Rise* 74). Perhaps most significantly, all celebrations of churches' patronal saints feast days—the "Church Holyday"—were moved from their traditional dates and were to be celebrated on the first Sunday of October (Duffy, *Stripping* 394). This extensive abrogation of feast days suggests a drastically reduced opportunity for the performance of drama. Moreover, the consolidation of all Church Holidays on the first Sunday in October while not actually eliminating the celebration of the saint with activities that presumably included a saint play, nevertheless isolated these celebrations: attendance at another parish's celebration meant absence from one's own. If the abrogation of holidays did not eliminate the celebration of the saints' lives, it may have limited the extent of the celebration by effectively limiting out-of-town attendance at such plays and making such productions economically unfeasible.

Moreover, the 1536 Royal Injunctions ordered that the clergy "shall not set forth or extol any images, relics, or miracles for any superstition or lucre, nor allure the people by any enticements to the pilgrimage of any saint, otherwise than is permitted in the [Ten] Articles" (Frere 2: 5). While the "miracles" cited in this order may refer to saints' plays, the Ten Articles permitted the contemplation of the images of saints so long as these images were emphasized only to be "representors of virtue and good example, that they may also be by occasion the kindlers and stirrers of men's hearts, and make men oft to remember their sins and offences" (qtd. in Frere 2: 5n3; Duffy, *Stripping* 392-94).[16] The injunctions, then, do not prohibit certainly such drama but instead order that clergy instruct their parishioners to discern between the representation and the saint herself.

The abrogation of holy days was not universally accepted without resistance and the elimination of these feast days formed a grievance of the participants in both the Pilgrimage of Grace and the Lincolnshire revolt (Duffy, *Stripping* 395-96). These changes to the calendar had "limited effect upon local seasonal customs" (Hutton, *Rise* 73-74). Many of the abrogated holy days were celebrated despite their prohibition or the celebrations of the holy days were adapted so that their observance might continue: in some cases, the eves of these feasts were celebrated instead (Duffy, *Stripping* 395-406). Indeed, the 1538 Royal Injunctions recognized and attempted to close these apparent loopholes in the 1536 Injunctions, ordering subjects not to "alter or change the order and manner of any fasting-day that is commanded and indicted by the Church, or of any prayer, or Divine Service" and that the eves of the abrogated holy days "shall be declared henceforth to be no fasting days" (Frere 2: 41). As Walter Frere notes, "the people continued to keep the eves of the abrogated holy-days, pleading as an excuse that there was no mention of their eves being abrogated", and festivities were held, for example, on the eve of St. Lawrence despite the elimination of that saint's festival day (Frere 2: 42n1). While some of the activities celebrating these holy days were readily substituted with other, less dangerous, activities—in Canterbury, for example, St. Thomas's pageant was replaced by giants (Hutton, *Rise* 74)—some activities continued. Celebration of the eve of St. Lawrence continued until at least 1541 as did the revelry of Boy Bishop processions (Hughes and Larkin 301-2; Cressy 5-6).

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[16] Burnet, G. *History of the Reformation.* Ed. Pocock. 6 vols. 1865. 4: 272.

The 1538 royal injunctions proved more sweeping and restrictive (Hutton, *Rise* 74-75) and, in Eamon Duffy's view, were "far starker, their language more dismissive of the traditional cultus" (*Stripping* 407). Nevertheless, several holy days—the feasts of the evangelical saints, Luke and Mark, and of Mary Magdalene—were reinstated in a 1541 Proclamation although several other holy days which had been abrogated but remained celebrated were confirmed as deleted from the calendar (Hughes and Larkin 301-2). These holy days included the Feast of the Invention of the Cross, the Exaltation of the Cross, and the eve of St. Lawrence (Hughes and Larkin 301-2). Moreover, as mentioned above, this proclamation prohibited the para-dramatic celebrations of the holy days of St. Nicholas, St. Catherine, St. Clement, and Holy Innocents: any celebrations in which "children be strangely decked and appareled to counterfeit priests, bishops, and women, and so be led with songs and dances from house to house, blessing the people and gathering of money, and boys do sing mass and preach in the pulpit" were to "be left and clearly extinguished throughout" the kingdom (Hughes and Larkin 302).

A more nuanced account of the effect of the early part of the Reformation on this drama is possible. John Wasson, for instance, while implying a connection between the Reformation and the sudden decline of communal drama from "its height in the 1520s," sees the causal relationship between the two events in more ambiguous terms, particularly because documentary evidence of the relationship is lacking ("End" 73).

Thus, the coincidence of the decline of such locally-produced drama with the beginning of the Reformation appears suggestive but hardly conclusive of a doctrinally-motivated suppression of such drama.

Indeed, the theory of an evangelical suppression of traditional drama, advanced most strongly by Harold Gardiner in *Mysteries' End: An Investigation into the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage*, has largely been superceded by revised explanations that highlight continuity between traditional and evangelical drama. Bings Bill, for instance, compares the "scant" documentary evidence of the campaign against the cycle plays with the overt suppression and destruction of "Fraternities, hospitals, art objects, music, traditions, and entertainments which daily affected English lives" (159). He wryly notes that "the campaign against the plays must have been covert, indeed" (160). Sarah Beckwith argues that, when it came in 1575, the suppression of the York cycle was painfully easy: Bishop Hutton simply asked to see the play for his approval simply did not return the manuscript (124-25).

In *Theatre and Reformation*, Paul Whitfield White studies the performances, touring, and repertoire of prominent evangelical playing troupes through the sixteenth-century, most notably Thomas Cromwell's players, Edward VI's players, and the Earl of Leicester's players.[17] Yet White's study focuses almost exclusively on performances of drama by patronized troupes and does not fully consider the context in which this drama was performed. Citing evidence of several mid- and late-sixteenth century parish plays, he argues that "contrary to widespread opinion, parish drama was on the *increase*, not in decline, in various parts of the realm in the sixteenth century" (135). While parishes did stage plays in the latter half of the sixteenth century, these plays suggest a revival of parish playing rather than an increase over the span of the entire century. New Romney, for instance, revived its plays in 1555 and 1560 (J. Gibson, *Kent* 778-82; 785ff), and in Essex, Chelmsford, Braintree, and Maldon also staged plays in 1562 (Coldewey "Digby"). In Shrewsbury, "the most lavish phase of civic drama occurred from 1550 to 1569" (Somerset 379), when the schoolmaster Thomas Ashton produced several Whitsuntide plays between 1553 and 1568 (Somerset 203-15). These plays may have been performed by boys enrolled in Ashton's school as every Thursday Ashton had "the schollars of the highest forme before they go to play… declame and play oon acte of a Comedy" (qtd. in Somerset 225). Given the Marian requirement for churches to be refurbished and the pre-1530s use of community drama to raise funds for similar projects (Duffy, *Stripping* 551; Hutton, "Local" 129-30), it seems likely that such revivals were undertaken to secure funds for these purposes.

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[17] For further discussion of Leicester's use of players to advance a Protestant agenda including the promotion of anti-Catholic as well as anti-Puritan sentiments, see McMillin and MacLean 18-36 and Leininger.

Yet the drastic decline of community drama did occur, and, in Kent and Sussex, at least, two forms appear to have suffered from this repression or required patronage: plays performed by players associated with other towns and large-scale, sometimes multi-day, productions such as New Romney's Passion play and Lydd's St. George play. In what follows, I analyze the rewards to entertainers made by the churchwardens or chamberlains of four towns in Kent and Sussex for the period between 1500 and 1576. The analysis reveals that the decline of community drama in these towns was underway by the late 1520s, exacerbated not only by the abrogation of holy days discussed above but also by an effective 1527 prohibition of all "man*er* of stage pley Robyn hood*es* pley wacches or wakes yeveales or other such lyke playes wherby that eny grete assemble of the kyng*es* people shuld be made" (Gibson 2: 247). During this period of decline of community drama in these towns, the number of performances by patronized players rises, surging markedly in the late 1530s and early 1540s.

A brief explanation of the method by which I gathered this data is in order. I chose towns for which records appear annually or appear to be reasonably continuous for the period. Dover, Lydd, and New Romney thus present themselves for analysis in Kent. Folkestone's records, while relatively full, do not contribute to the data as the Folkestone entries are mostly intermittent, but continuous during 1540-45. Including Folkestone's data would have skewed the overall data. In Sussex, the only town with continuous records is Rye. Most of the records I used are in English, with the exception of New Romney's pre-1519-20 records, which are in Latin. In this case, I differentiated between entries citing "minstrallis" and "lusoribus." Bann criers are designated as either "hominum" or "lusoribus" but they tend to be associated with their town's name and the verb, "proclamare" (J. Gibson, *Kent* 762, 765). As well, I took the records, perhaps problematically, at face-value. In at least one instance, the New Romney Chamberlains gave "reward*es* to the pleyers of Brokland" (J. Gibson, *Kent* 767), and the amount of the reward and other expenses indicates that these players were bann criers; I have, nevertheless, classed them as town players.

The range of entertainers rewarded in these records is diverse, and this study excludes a range of such performers. For example, several entries record payments to performers such as "foot players," "sword players," and "puppet players." I categorize such performers individually and do not subsume them into the larger group of players;

as a result, these categories are not represented in the charts below. I do, however, include payments to single minstrels under the “minstrels” rubric. As I am interested in counting the number of performances made by various entertainers, I separate collective entries recording a lump sum to various performers into individual entries. This is not always possible, however, as such entries at times do not record whether the payments were made to patronized or town players. I record such entries as “unassociated” players, and I do not attempt to divide the money paid among the groups listed in such entries.

I focused on the period bracketed by the years 1500 and 1576; the latter date traditionally marks the beginning of the permanent theatres in London, and this timespan evenly brackets the year to which John Bale attributes his plays (1538). I chose five years as the length of my periodization in order to provide a focused view of particular trends. I count the total number of entries recording payment to all troupes during these periods. Thus, while thirty-nine entries are relevant for the period 1536-40, it should be remembered that this amounts to just under eight entries per year for these five years, and these eight entries are further divided among four towns. A substantial increase, then, can be attributed to the appearance of only one regularly touring troupe as this troupe could have appeared in each of the four towns and thus could have produced four entries. Indeed, this might explain the increase in payments from 1536-45: the Prince’s players began touring in late 1537 and appear frequently in these towns’ records. Moreover, this periodization implies that a consistency exists throughout the period when high totals might be attributable to only one or two years within the period. I expand exceptional periods, however, to provide a yearly view of records.

The towns themselves are of interest in that they represent two very different sorts of town. Dover and Rye were large and wealthy compared with Lydd and New Romney. Alan Dyer estimates that, based on mid-1520s information, Rye ranked twenty-first among England's town in terms of taxable wealth while Dover ranked thirty-eighth (768-69). In terms of taxpaying population, Dyer estimates Rye at forty-first and Dover at thirty-seventh (768-69).[18] Neither Lydd nor New Romney appears in Dyer's list of one hundred towns, and Gibson notes that both Lydd and New Romney suffered from declining economies throughout the sixteenth century (xxxviii, xlii). This size and wealth is reflected in the nature of the travelling entertainment and the amount of money spent on this entertainment in both these towns. The larger towns spent far more money rewarding patronized players than contributing to town plays. The inverse is the case for the smaller town of New Romney, and partially the case for Lydd.

Dover's records show a notable increase not only in the number of rewards paid to players over the period but also in the number of rewards paid to patronized troupes. That is, players increasingly visited Dover—or were rewarded more often by the Churchwardens—after 1536, and the bulk of these players played as a patronized troupe (see Figure 1). The number of rewards paid to patronized troupes increases from the beginning of the century through to a peak in the early 1540s, declines in the early 1550s, and peaks again in the late 1560s. The accounts record no rewards to any players in the late 1520s although several payments were made to minstrels and bearwards during this period (see Figure 3).

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[18] Gibson notes that Dover's population increased through the late-sixteenth century and into the seventeenth.

Dover's Churchwardens rewarded several towns' players or bann criers throughout the period although the number of such rewards are, as I discuss below, relatively few compared with those made by the Rye Chamberlains. Nevertheless, the accounts list rewards to players or bann criers from eight different towns, including two rewards to Dover's own players in 1522-23 and 1523-24 (J. Gibson, *Kent* 421, 422). These towns whose players or bann criers were rewarded include Boughton, Brokland, Elham, Folston, Romney, Sedingbourn, and Tenterden, with Elham players receiving three payments in total.[19] The most rewarded entertainers, however, were the Canterbury minstrels and waits. They received several rewards throughout the period. Entertainers associated with towns some distance away also received money: minstrels from Norwich and morris dancers from Sandwich. Dover's churchwardens rewarded Elham's players twice—with 20d. at Christmas 1505 and with 14*d.* in 1508-9 (J. Gibson, *Kent* 392, 396)—and Elham's bann criers with 20*d.* in 1533-34 (J. Gibson, *Kent* 430). While the accounts distinguish between bann criers and players associated with towns, it is not certain that this distinction reflects different types of performance as the value of rewards to bann criers and players varied considerably: as noted above, both the Elham bann criers and players received rewards of equivalent value. In 1547-48 Romney players received 10*s.* while Romney bann criers received 3*s.* 10*d.* (J. Gibson, *Kent* 447, 448). In addition, several entries do not associate the rewarded players with any town or patron. The churchwardens, for example, rewarded unassociated players for playing before the mayor in 1508-9 and 1509-10; they also rewarded the unassociated "players of an enterlude" in 1516-17 (J. Gibson, *Kent* 395, 397, 408). Rewards to unassociated players appear linked with rewards to town players (see figure 1). Town and unassociated players were rewarded several times throughout the period, but the bulk of these rewards were paid before 1526. By the time payments to players resume in 1531, town and unassociated players disappear from Dover's accounts, not reappearing until the 1550s and in relatively few numbers.

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[19] See, respectively, J. Gibson, *Kent* 411; 399; 392, 396, 430; 429; 447, 448, 461; 416; 413; and 421, 422.

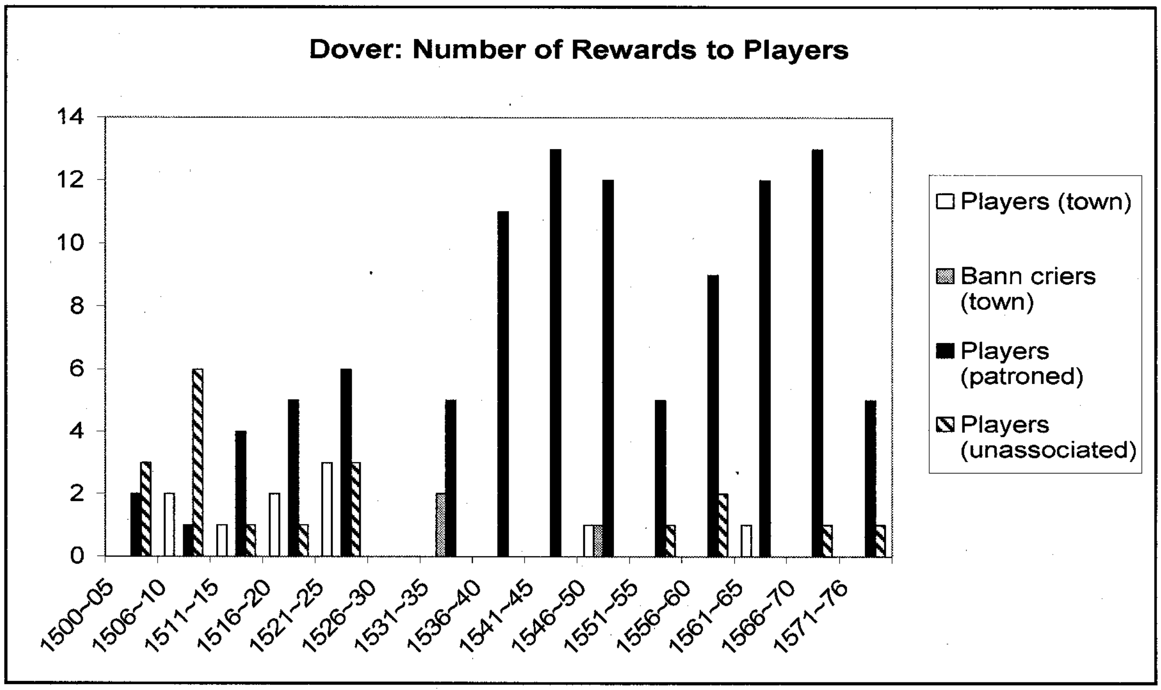

Figure 19: Number of rewards made by Dover's churchwardens to players

Rewarding players was Dover's most significant expense on the entertainment paid for in the accounts. Rewards to all players, excepting bann criers, over the period amounted to £42 13*s*. 5*d.* while rewards to minstrels totaled £26 12*s*. 2*d.* and those paid to bearwards came to a sum of £11 10*s*. 7.5*d.* All bann criers during the period shared 6*s*. 6*d.* among themselves. While the amount of money paid to minstrels declines throughout the period, the amount of money paid to players dramatically increases. The majority of the money given to players was paid after 1540.

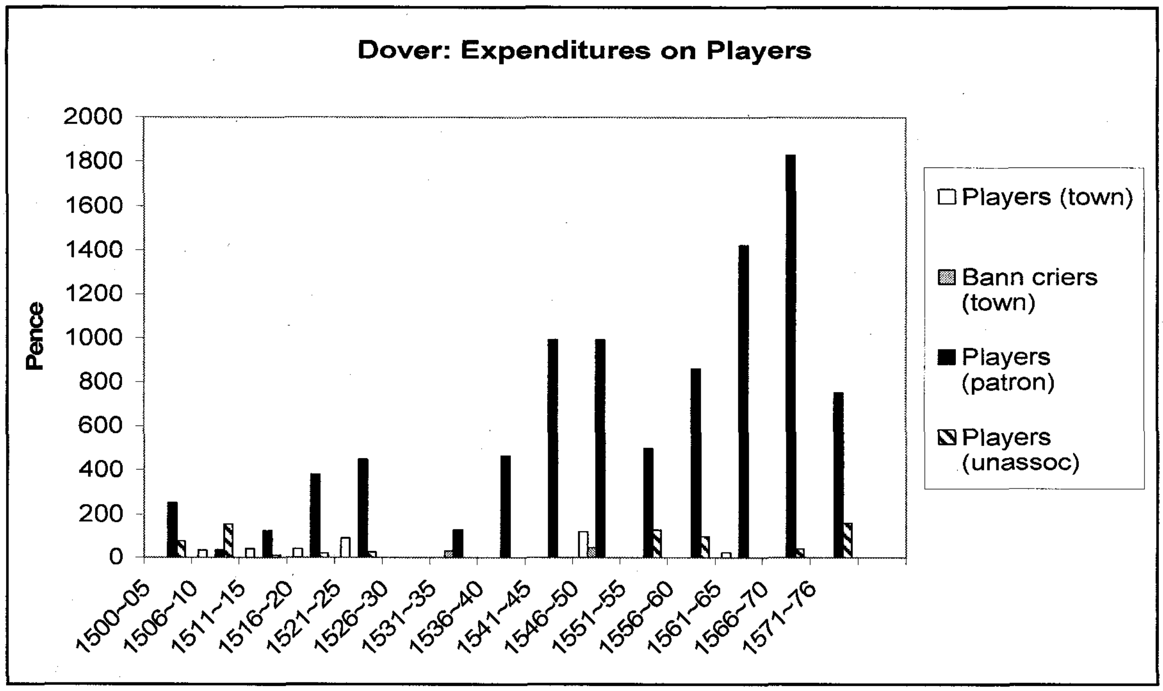

Figure 20: Expenses made by Dover's churchwardens on players

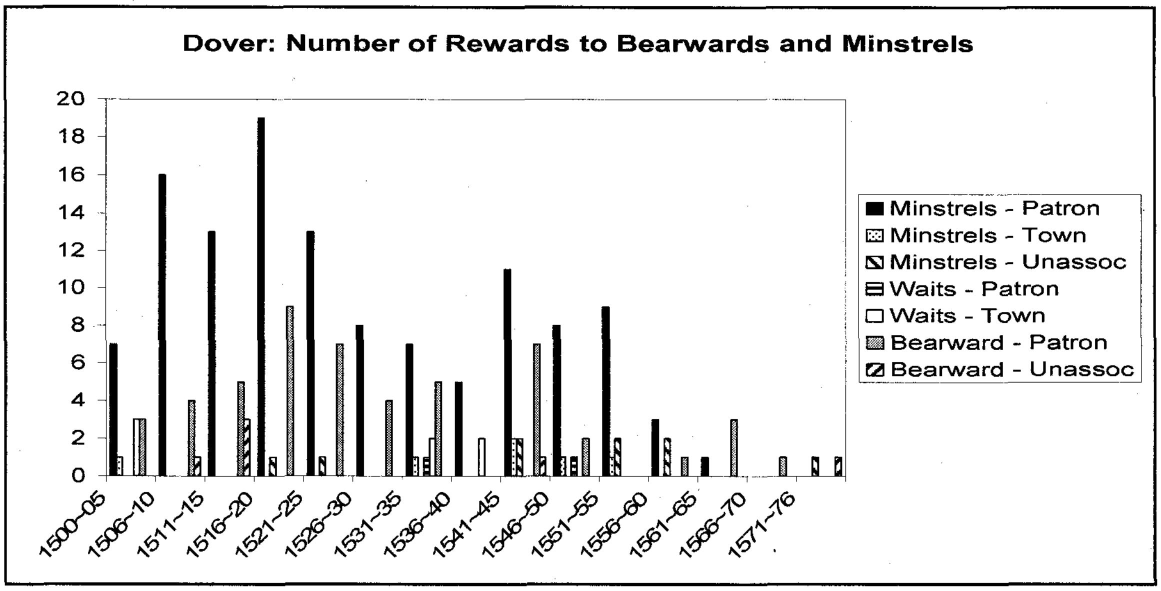

Figure 21: Number of rewards made by Dover's churchwardens to bearwards and minstrels

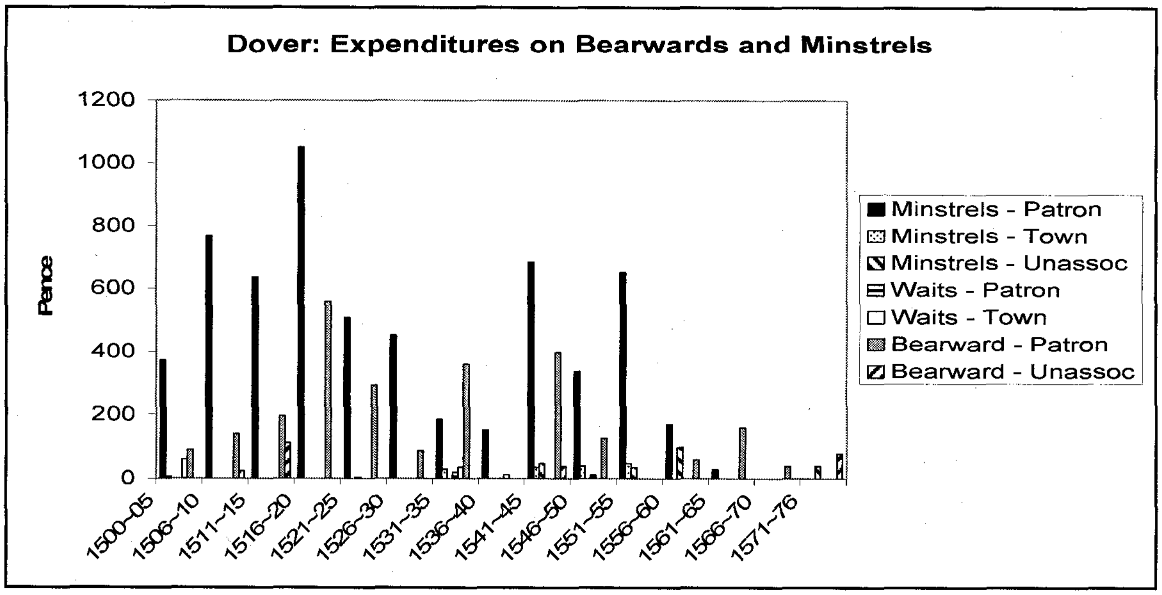

Figure 22: Expenses made by Dover's churchwardens on bearwards and minstrels

The pattern of payments at Rye is substantially different (see figure 5). Payments to town players greatly outnumber payments to any other group of players until 1531, and even then there is but one more payment to patronized players than town players over that five-year period. In 1532-33, however, the last payment to town players is recorded. Entries following this one primarily record payments made to patronized players although the number of such payments does not increase until 1540-41.

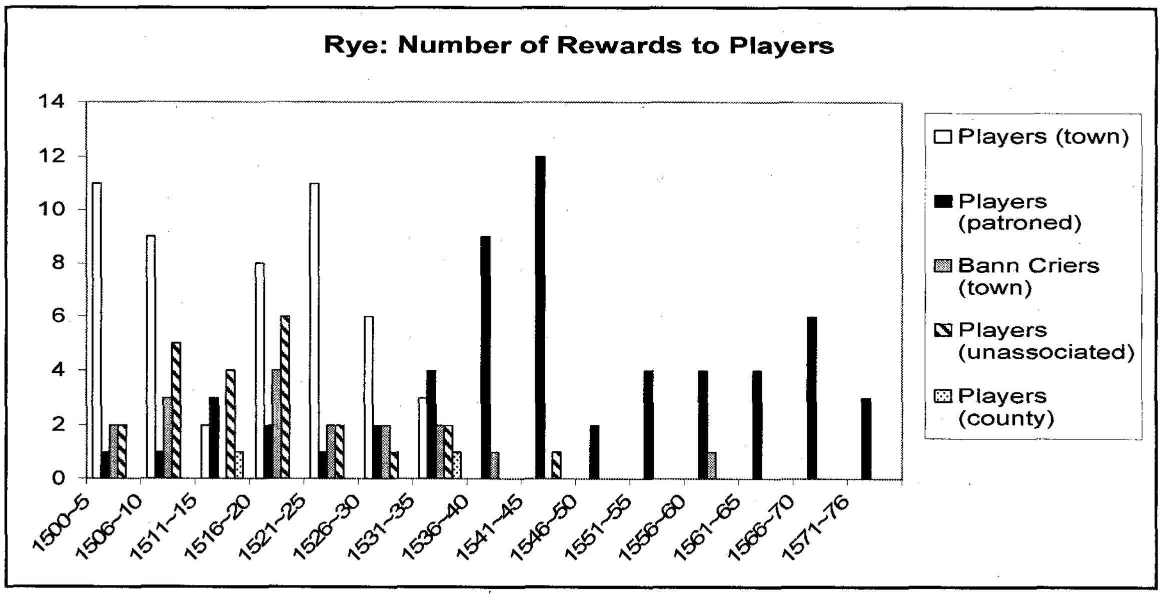

Figure 23: Number of rewards made by Rye's chamberlains to players

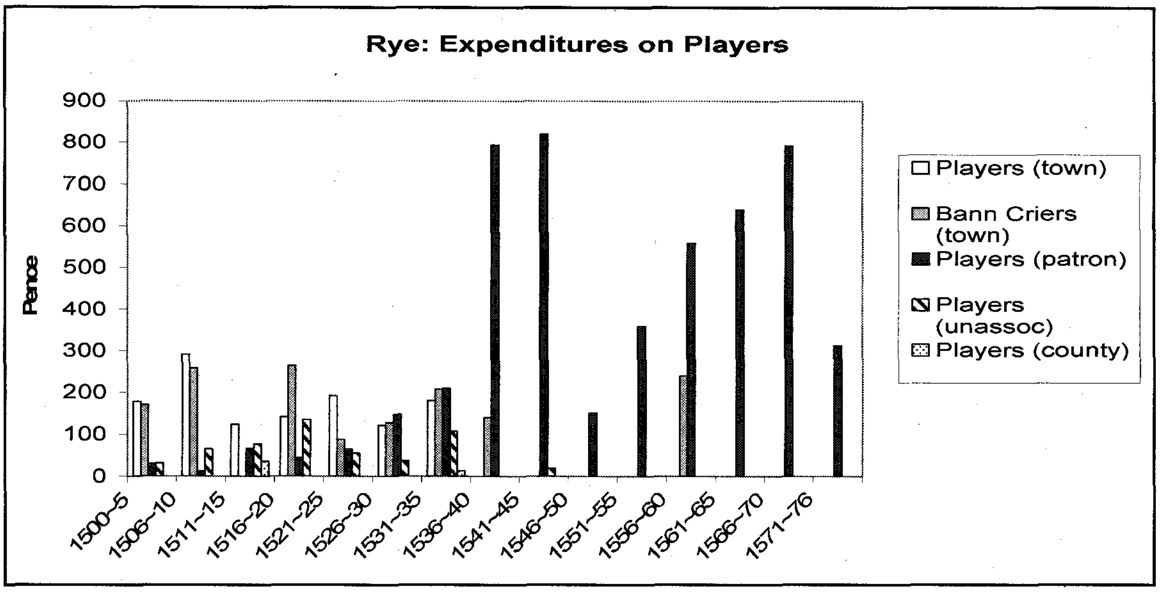

Figure 24: Expenses made by Rye's chamberlains on players

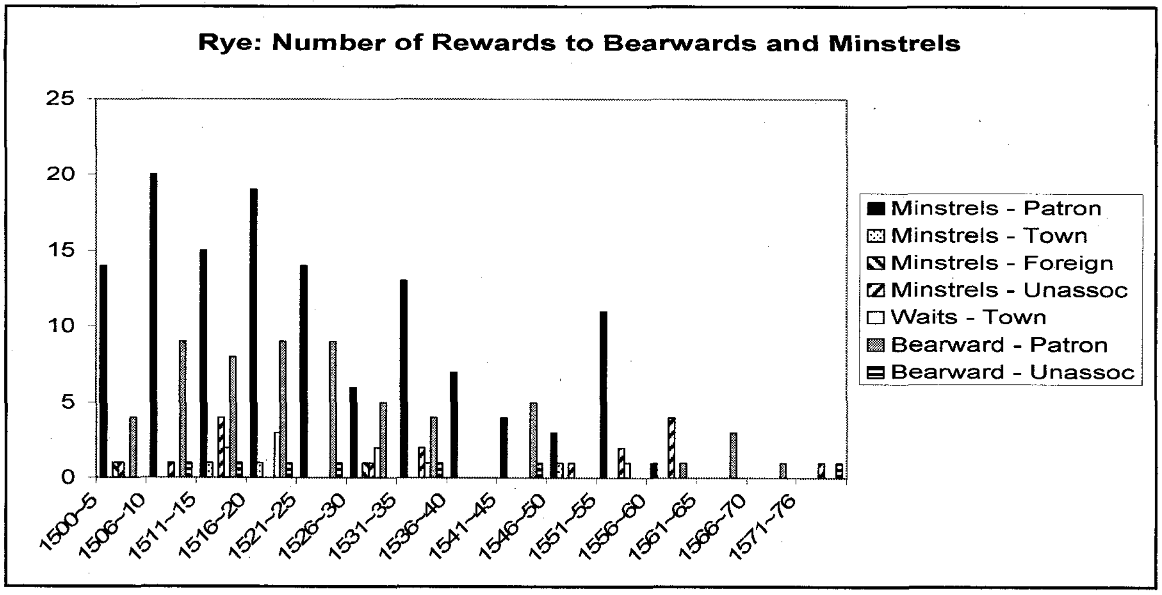

Figure 25: Number of rewards made by Rye's chamberlains to bearwards and minstrels

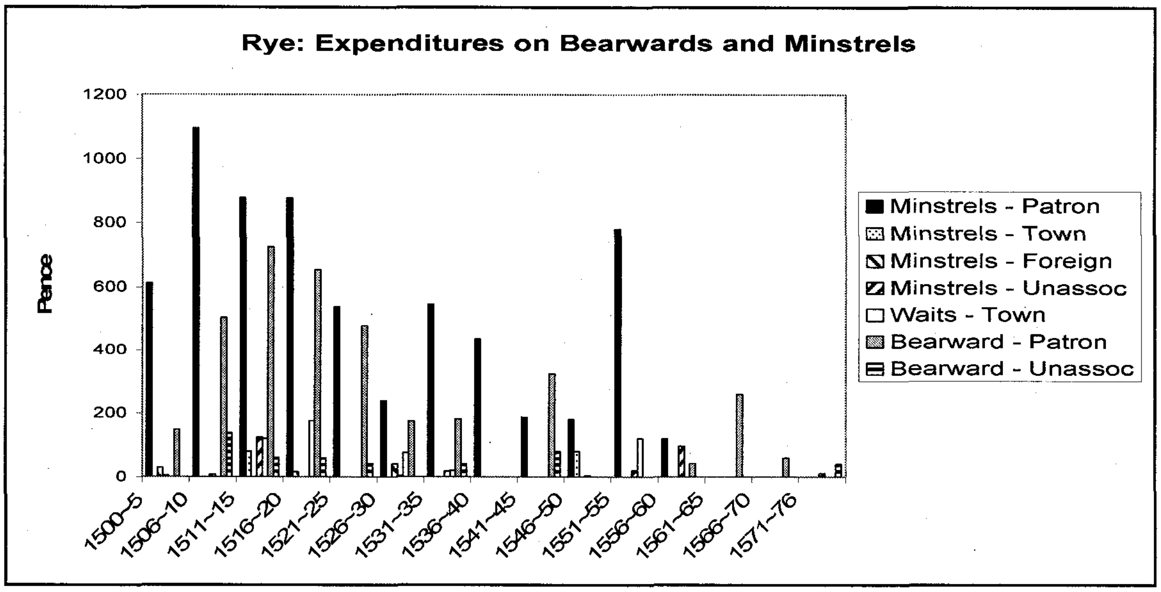

Figure 26: Expenses made by Rye's chamberlains on bearwards and minstrels

This presents a very different view of playing than do the accounts for Dover. Where the Dover accounts show a general trend to an increasing number of performances by patronized troupes, Rye's accounts evidence a more abrupt transition from rewards to town players to rewards to patronized players. Rye's chamberlains supported local towns' players at a higher level than did Dover churchwardens, rewarding entertainers from thirty-four different towns from Sussex, Kent, and Essex, as well as players associated in the accounts only with Essex rather than with a particular town. This suggests that Rye was more involved or connected with the smaller towns in its vicinity than was Dover, and the Rye chamberlains support of such players indicates Rye's participation in the sort of community network evidenced by the parish contributory networks discussed above.

While the two towns are very similar in terms of the money each spent on performers over this period (Dover spent only 10*s*. 4*d.* more than Rye), the two towns differ in the way they doled out money to various performers (for Rye, see figures 6, 7, and 8). Unlike Dover's Churchwardens, Rye's Chamberlains spent slightly less money rewarding players than they did rewarding minstrels, with players receiving £28 8*s*. 5*d.* from Rye (about 2/3 the amount Dover spent). Rye's Chamberlains, however, were more generous with other entertainers. Minstrels received £29 5*s.* 0.5*d.* (just under £3 more than Dover), and bearwards were given £16 13*s*. 11*d.* (nearly £4 more than Dover). Bann criers received a total of £6 4*s*. 8*d.* (nearly £6 more than Dover).

The pattern of payments the Lydd Chamberlains made to performers is similar to the pattern at Rye. Payments to town players or bann criers, while tending to decrease in number over the first third of the century, greatly outnumber payments to patronized troupes over the same period. As with Rye, this situation abruptly changes in the late 1530s. As did Rye's, Lydd's Chamberlains supported town players and bann criers. Moreover, Lydd itself staged its own play in 1532-33, a production that cost the town £9 15*s*. 9.5*d.* New Romney's Chamberlains paid Lydd's bann criers 22*s.* that year. Rye's accounts record two payments totaling 13*s*. to players from Lydd in their 1531-32 accounting year, so it is possible that these payments are toward Lydd's play as well.

Like Dover, however, Lydd distributed more money to players than to any other performers. Much of this money was spent on patronized troupes.

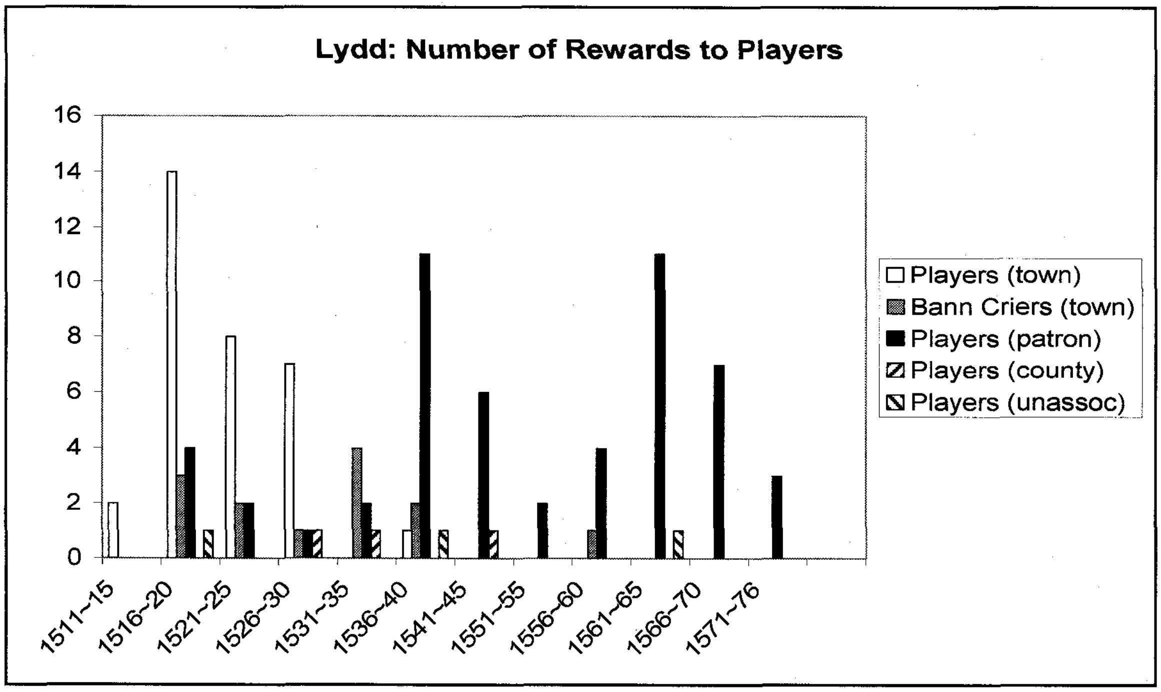

Figure 27: Number of rewards made by Lydd's chamberlains to players

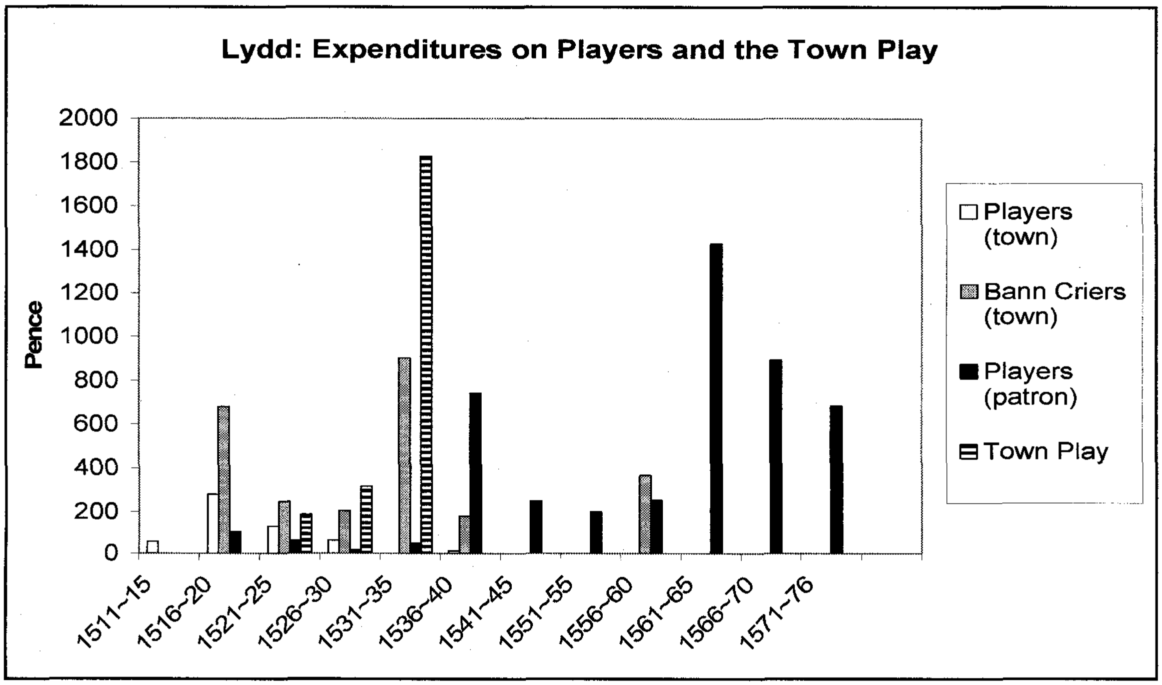

Figure 28: Expenses made by Lydd's Chamberlains on players

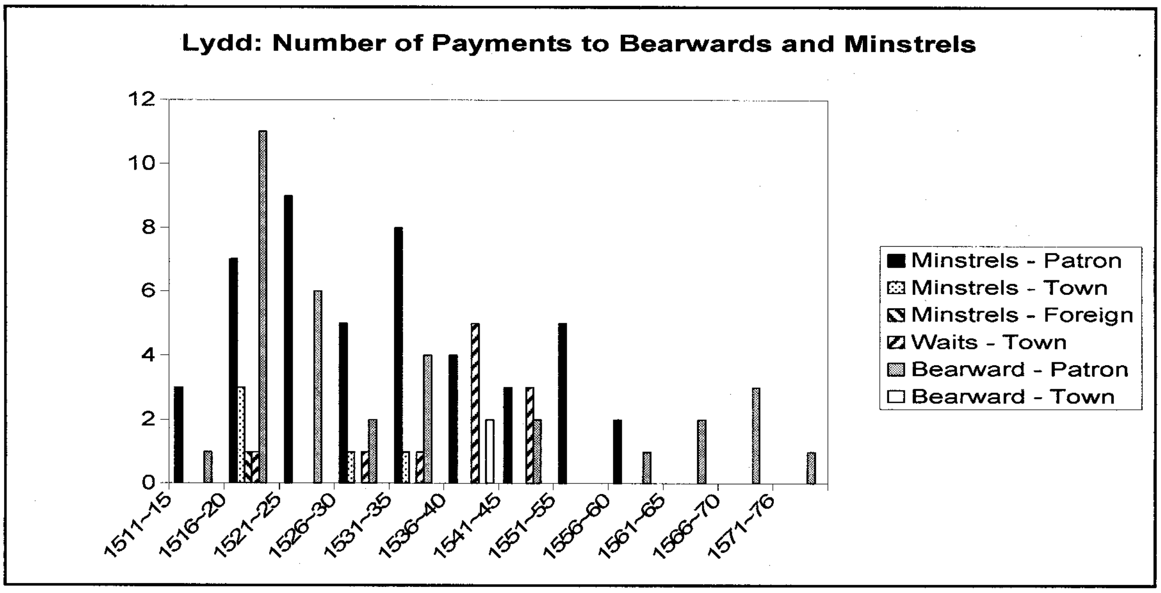

Figure 29: Number of rewards made by Lydd's chamberlains to bearwards and minstrels

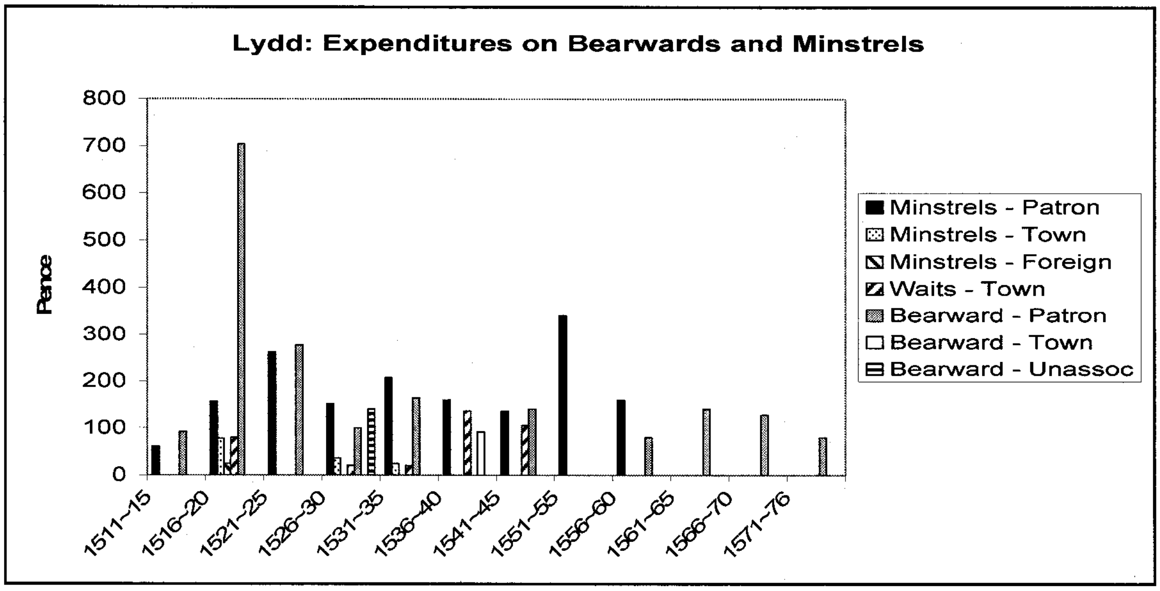

Figure 30: Expenses made by Lydd's chamberlains to bearwards and minstrels

Finally, the pattern of payments in New Romney's Chamberlains' accounts is similar, albeit less dramatic, than those of Rye and Lydd. Most of New Romney's payments prior to 1536 went to bann criers; patronized players, in fact, make only rare appearances in the accounts prior to this date. Like Lydd, New Romney staged its own play several times over the period, with the 1539-40 production marking the beginning of a long period before the town staged its next play. An attempt to stage the play was made in 1555 and then a successful production took place in 1560. I have not included the expenses from the 1560 play as these were attached to the accounts separately. In any case, New Romney's expenses are more evenly distributed among the different performers although the bulk of the amount paid to players comes from payments made to patronized troupes.

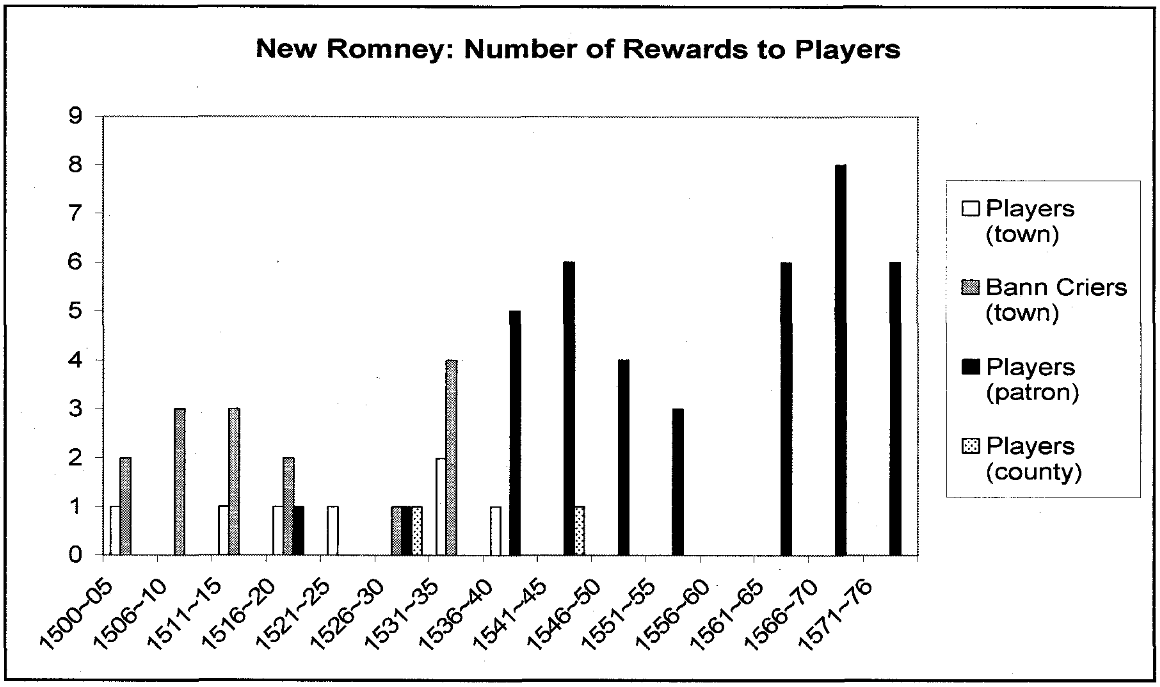

Figure 31: Number of rewards made by New Romney's chamberlains to players

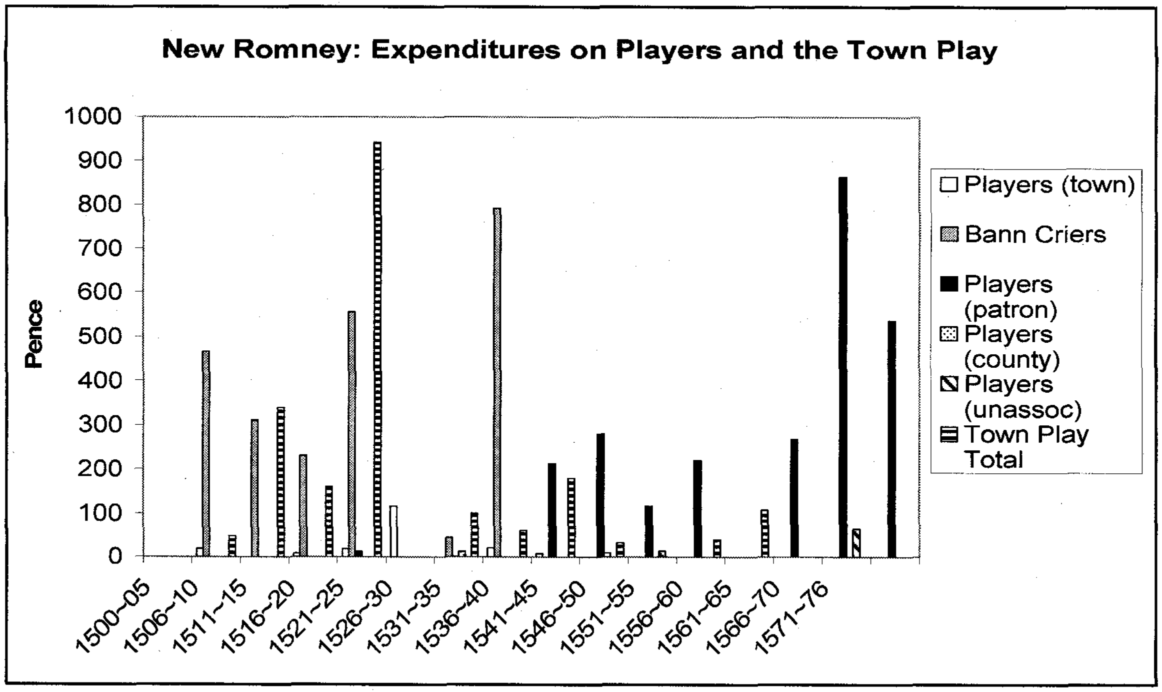

Figure 32: Expenses made by New Romney's chamberlains on players

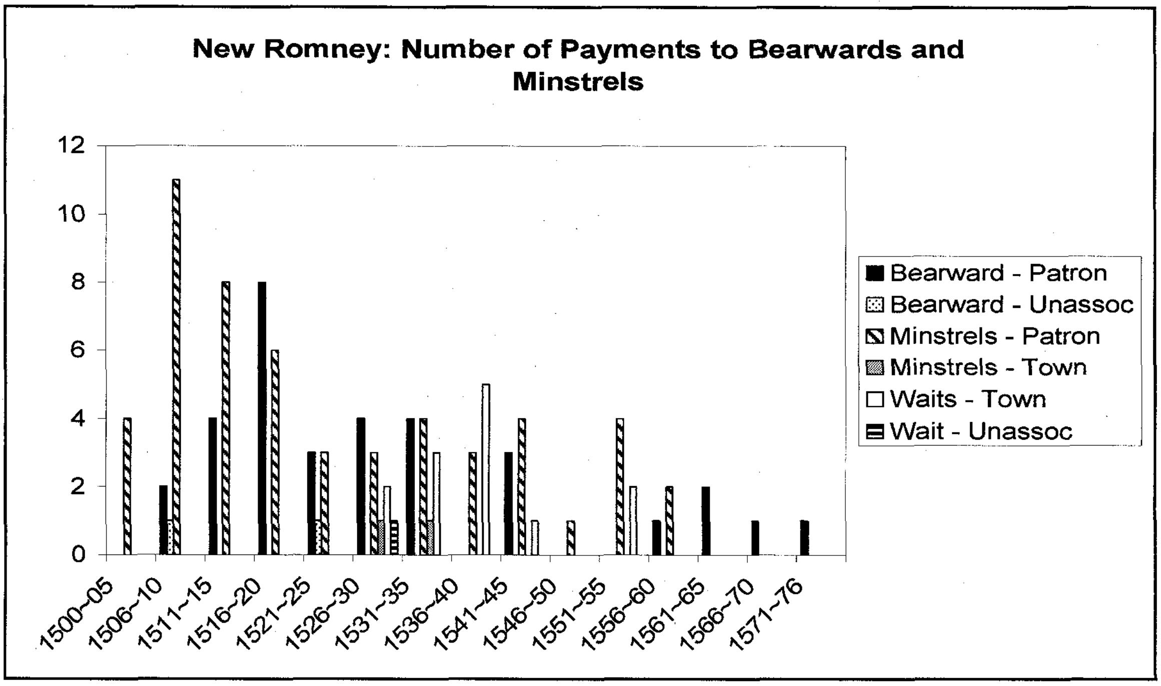

Figure 33: Number of rewards made by New Romney's chamberlains to bearwards and minstrels

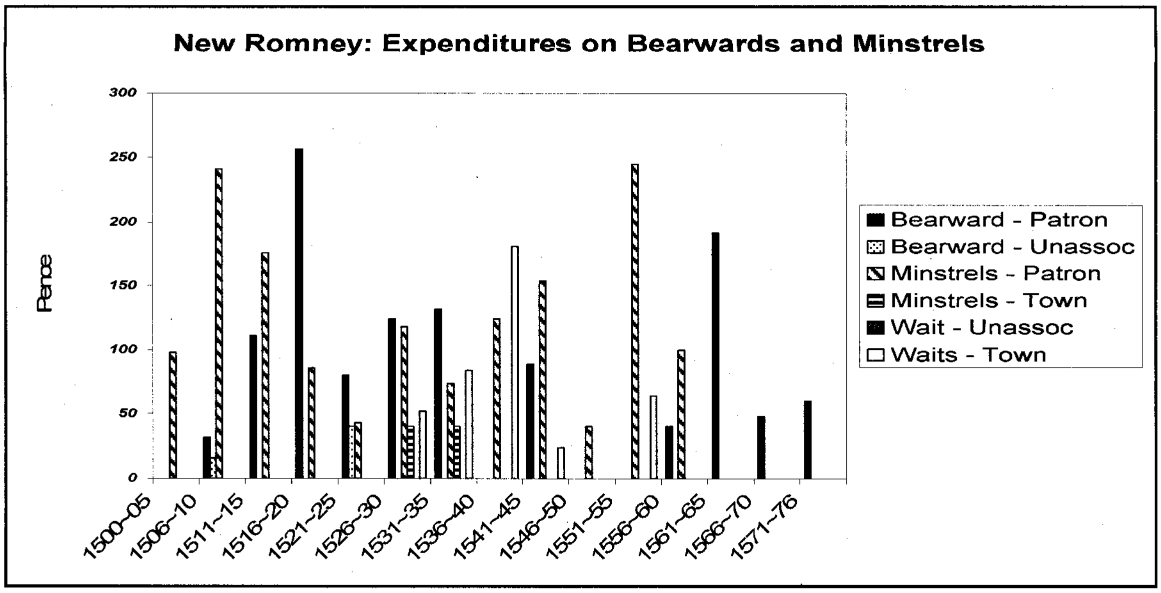

Figure 34: Expenses made by New Romney's chamberlains on bearwards and minstrels

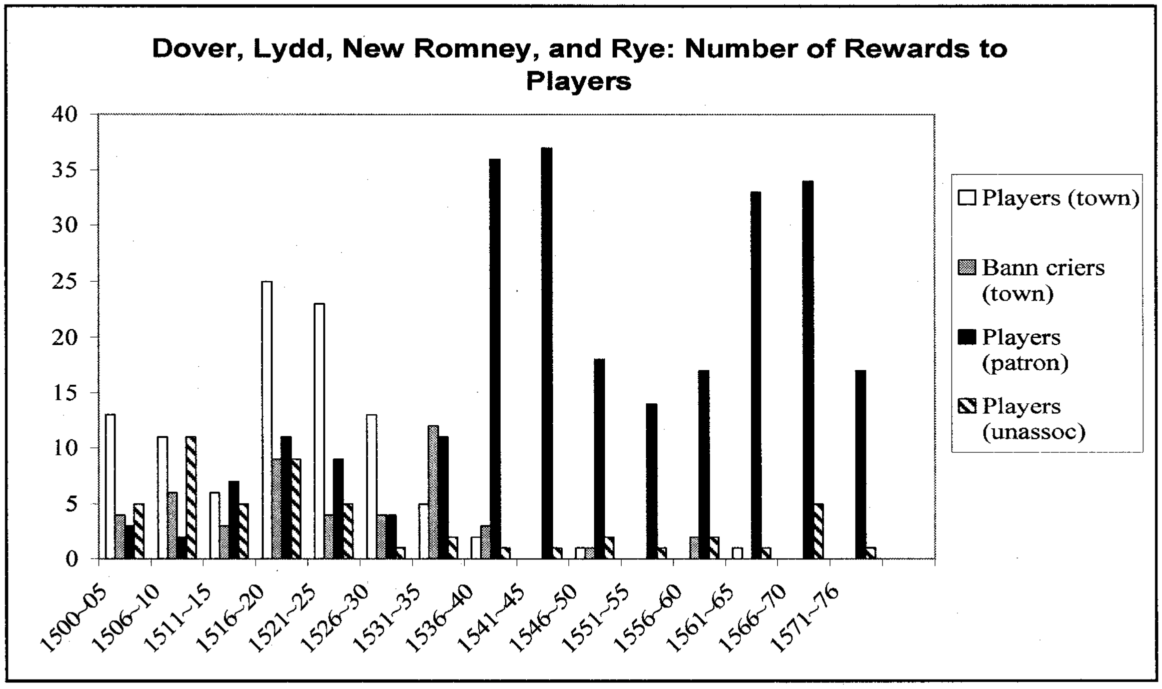

Figure 35: Cumulative number of rewards made by the four towns to players

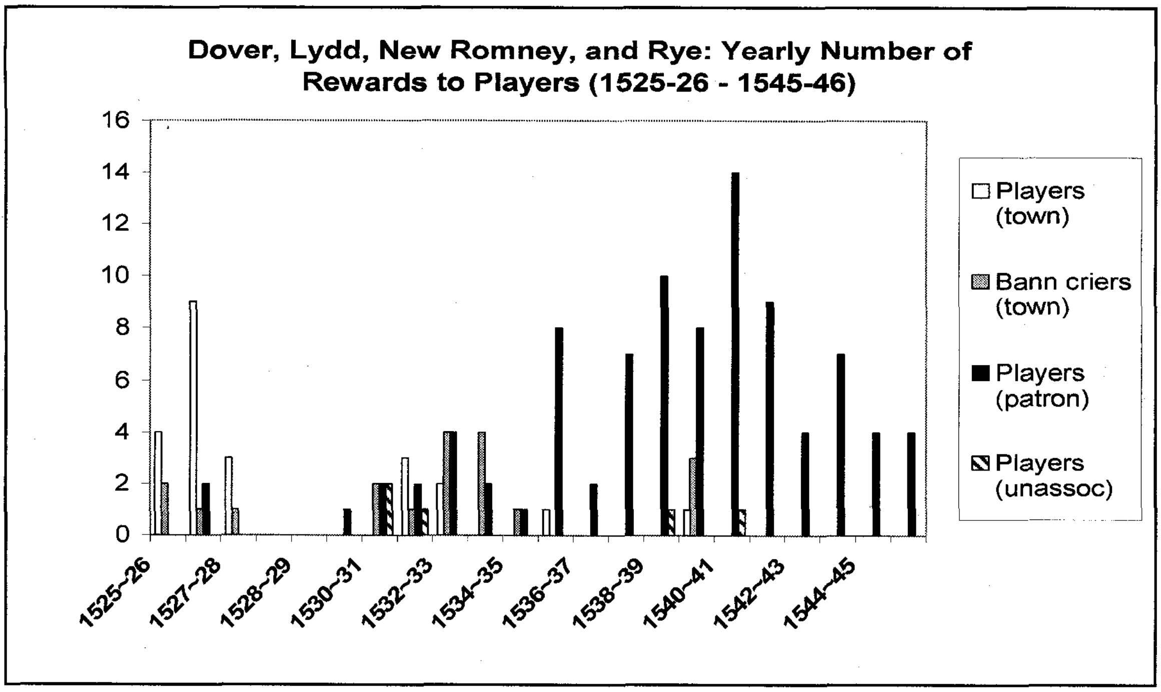

Figure 36: Cumulative number of rewards made by the four towns to players, 1525-26 – 1545-46

The consolidated town records demonstrate an increased number of rewards to patronized troupes in the latter half of the 1530s and first half of the 1540s (Figure 17). The bulk of these rewards were paid between 1535-36 and 1543-44, with a peak number of rewards in 1540-41 (Figure 18). In terms of the number of rewards made to them, patronized players began to rival town players and bann criers in the first half of the 1530s. The first third of the century evidences payments to a diverse range of players, the last two-thirds see this diversity diminish. Payments to town players peak during the ten years between 1516 and 1525 before declining to levels similar to those of the first fifteen years of the sixteenth century.

Two years appear to have been crucial in the rise of patronized playing in Kent and Sussex: 1528-29 and 1534-35.[20] While all playing disappeared in the former, likely as a result of the 1527 prohibition on playing, town players did not reappear in the same numbers as they had before, although bann criers were rewarded in greater numbers for some reason, offsetting the diminished number of rewards to town players. In 1534-35, all playing again (almost) disappeared. In the following year, however, patronized players reappeared in great numbers while town players were rewarded but once and were not rewarded again until 1539-40.

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[20] These dates can only be considered to be estimates due to the accounts' various fiscal years.

This consolidated pattern repeats itself to varying degrees in the records from the individual towns except Dover. Dover is exceptional in that its churchwardens rewarded patronized players more frequently than town players throughout the period, and Dover's exceptionality provides some reason to avoid speaking of general trends. Nevertheless, Dover's records also show that reward to town players declined at much the same rate as the other towns. Moreover, community drama did not entirely disappear: a few rewards to town players are scattered through the two decades beginning in 1546 and community drama in other counties was performed, as is discussed further in chapter three, throughout the 1540s.

The causes of this decline of community drama and surge of patronized playing in Kent and Sussex remain unclear. The abrogation of holy days surely had some effect, but this effect was limited to discouraging the reinvigoration of a practice that was in decline, or had ceased, prior to 1536. Moreover, the decline of community drama was not motivated by an incipient evangelical anti-theatricalism, or at least not by an official, centralized anti-theatrical policy: playing by patronized players supplanted the community drama; playing itself was not eradicated.

The rise in patronized playing, especially its surge in 1536-37, suggests that patronized players were mobilized as the dramatic part of a propaganda campaign aimed at disseminating evangelical beliefs or anti-papal sentiment. As is discussed in the following chapter, Thomas Cromwell orchestrated such a campaign in print and possibly, through John Bale, in drama. Unfortunately, the repertoire of the patronized players remains unknown and thus the nature of the plays performed cannot be known either.

Whatever its causes, the decline of community drama represents the loss not only of communal enteratinment but also of a practice through which communities demonstrated their contribution to or participation in a collective responsibility. While patronized players could supplement the loss of entertainment by performing their plays more frequently or in increased numbers of troupes, it is doubtful that they could substitute for the sense of collective responsibility that community drama had made visible.

The next chapters situate the dramatic work of John Bale within the context of this decline of community drama and the rise of patronized playing. To a large extent, Bale's drama supplements the loss of community drama by thematizing some of its elements: his biblical trilogy adopts as a metaphor one of the playing practices of community drama—the selling of tokens or badges—and his *King Johan* thematizes the collective responsibility England owes to the truly English poor. In the next chapter, however, I argue that Bale's extant and lost plays straddle the transition between playing practices outlined in this present chapter and that Bale's plays demand consideration within this context rather than strictly within the context of his patronage by Thomas Cromwell.

Chapter Two: "Ob editas comoedias": John Bale and Reformation Polemical Drama

The shift in the late 1530s from parish to patronized drama provides the context for understanding John Bale's plays, and much critical work on Bale's plays has focused on their origin in this period. Attention, too, has focused on Thomas Cromwell's patronage of Bale and on Bale's implicit participation in Cromwell's evangelical propaganda campaign. This attention has been warranted: as Paul Whitfield White notes, Bale's troupe is of tantalizing importance because it is the first professional, patronized troupe to which an extant repertoire of plays can be attributed (*Theatre* 12). Yet the characterization of Cromwell's patronage of Bale overdetermines Cromwell's role in the relationship. That is, in many critical approaches to the subject, Cromwell's patronage does not simply authorize the plays but authors them. As White contends, "playwrights of the English Reformation *did* operate under conditions and for purposes comparable to those of other Protestant publicists, and…the players they wrote for, and in many instances organized and participated with, were similarly involved in the dissemination of Protestantism" (*Theatre* 9). White characterizes the difference that the Reformation made in terms of playing practices: "In medieval times, these players were employed chiefly to entertain and enhance the magnificence of the courts which retained them, but scholars now believe that increasingly during the Tudor period they carried out a propagandistic function of advancing their patrons' ideological interests" (*Theatre* 12). Indeed, William Streitberger agrees that the "mechanism that helped insure this correlation between court revels and public entertainments was the patronage system. Many of the most active playing companies of this period were patronized by the Crown and nobility and so sided with their patrons" ("The Royal Image" 14). Yet Streitberger also argues that this mechanism was required not so much to disseminate evangelical ideas as to assure the acceptability of the plays' ideas in a context in which the Crown's theological beliefs shifted numerous times ("The Royal Image" 14). Suzanne Westfall, moreover, has shown the role of patrons not only in the selection of troupes' repertoire but also in the publication of the troupes' plays (*Patrons* 132, 114).

In this chapter I review the evidence of Bale's performance of his plays, arguing that while the evidence that Bale participated in Cromwell's propaganda campaign as a member of Cromwell's players is suggestive, it is not conclusive. While the analysis of the previous chapter suggests that patronization of players coincided with the aggressive reforms evident in the Dissolution of the monasteries and well as in the issuing of the Ten Articles and of the 1536 and 1538 Injunctions, it is not clear that the desire to disseminate evangelical or anti-papal ideology was the sole cause of this shift in playing practices. Indeed, community playing continued, as I discuss in chapter three, in other parts of England. I do not argue that Bale did not participate in Cromwell's players. Rather, the analysis presented in the previous chapter suggests that Cromwell's patronage of Bale occurred within the context of a more general trend to patronize playing troupes. However, I argue that it is important to remember that his participation is a probability rather than a certainty. First, as I have argued in the previous chapter, the patronization of players appears to have been a general trend, at least in Kent and Sussex, in the latter half of the 1530s. As the repertoire of these troupes remains unknown, this trend is not wholly explicable as the result of a centralized policy implementing the patronized playing of evangelical or anti-papal drama. Second, the circumstantial nature of the extant documentary evidence is such that only speculative assertions might be made, albeit to a greater or lesser degree of probability, about Bale's activities under Cromwell's patronage. Yet this speculation has been solidified as factual through repetition. More problematically, however, this solidification has focused critical attention on Bale's service to Cromwell, and this attention has, again to varying degree, overdetermined the nature of Bale's plays. That is, Bale's plays have largely come to be considered Cromwellian propaganda, with Bale carefully "toe[ing] the Cromwellian party line" (Westfall, "Useless" 26).

It is impossible to deny that Bale's plays are agenda-driven, and his *King Johan* and *Three Laws* especially so. Yet in many critics' readings, the political and propagandist character of the plays abstracts the plays from their dramatic tradition; consideration of the plays' participation in dramatic tradition is often secondary to consideration of their conformity to, if not their origination in, Cromwell's propaganda campaign of the late 1530s. W. T. Davies, for example, characterizes Bale's plays as being "directly inspired by Cromwell's policy of making the State, as represented by the King, the supreme authority in the national Church" (210). Robert Duncan sees in Bale's plays "a fascinating mirror of the main lines of Protestant propaganda in England in the 1530's" (67). Moreover, Seymour Baker House understands Bale's biblical plays as "Cromwell's Message" to the monasteries in advance of their dissolution. He attributes the plays' "message" to Cromwell's designs: "In Cromwell's hands, each became potential weapons [sic] in a program of religious reform" (124). White describes the performance of Bale's plays as the implementation of Richard Morison's objection, discussed more fully below, to festive celebrations such as Robin Hood plays. Morison's objection to such festivities rests in his assertion that in Robin Hood games, "disobedience also to [the King's] offices is tought" ("Perswasion" 18v). Morison wonders,

> Howmoche better is it that those plaies shulde be forbodden and deleted and others dyvysed to setforthe and declare lyuely before the peoples eies, the abhomynation and wickednes oβ the bysshop oβ Rome, monkes, ffreres, Nonnes, and suche like, and to declare and open to them thobedience that yo*ur* subiectes by goddes and mans lawes owe unto your Maiestie? ("Perswasion" 18v-19r)

White sees Morison's advice as inaugurating drama's inclusion in Cromwell's campaign: "The fact that Morison's proposals were implemented across the realm indicates the extent to which the Cromwellian regime recognized drama, processions, ceremonies and other religious or quasi-religious practices as a means of legitimating and internalizing its vision of a politically and religiously reformed England" (*Theatre* 14). David Scott Kastan echoes White's characterization of Bale's plays, seeing Bale's *King Johan* as the product of the propagandist demands of Cromwell's theatrical programme, a programme first defined by Morison. Kastan thus contends that *King Johan* stages its titular character "exactly as Morison would have desired, a proto-Protestant martyr" (269). In such views, Bale's plays become conduits for Cromwell's message.

Perhaps the most explicit and concerted abstraction of Bale from his context is provided by Peter Womack in his 1992 essay, "Imagining Communities: Theatres and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century." In this essay, Womack describes the 1538 production of *King Johan* as a "situation of cultural homelessness" (119). In a curious move, Womack severs the play from its cultural and social contexts, characterizing the play as unlike contemporary plays both in its performance and artistic composition:

> Its performing context...was quite unstable – its playing spaces ad hoc ones, its theatrical language neither nourished nor shackled by tradition, its patrons insecurely placed on the dangerous heights of Henrician politics. Its image of England has the sharpness, but also the limitations, of its situation of cultural homelessness. Utterly unlike ritual and communal drama (it quotes liturgical elements only in strident, argumentative parody), it offers its national figures for understanding rather than for identification. The audience was perhaps an elite one: whether or not that was so, it is treated as such; the space it occupies is extra-social; it is not invited to recognise itself as a community, but to study an externally seen community with the intention of directing it differently. (119)

Womack here describes *King Johan* as utterly unique, its performance divorced from contemporary playing practices, playing spaces, and audiences. The play works to separate its audience from its social context, enforcing an "extra-social" perspective from which the audience's recognition of itself as a community becomes impossible. Underwriting this distinctive quality is the play's origin in propaganda, an origin which determines the play's ephemeral and utilitarian character: "Bale's innovative national reference comes out of a temporary exploitation of theatre by producers who are not really interested in the medium, but are using it for immediate propaganda purposes" (119). This is a crucial moment in Womack's argument as he implicitly opposes modernity—nationalism, nationhood—to the pre-modern community. That is, not only does he identify the play's opposition of "*communitas* and ecclesiastical hierarchy" (117), but Womack himself opposes an ideal *communitas* against, not Bale, but the play's "producers." These producers—that is, Cromwell—"who are not really interested in the medium", remain distinct from—hierarchically above—the community. Womack defines community by its performance rather than by its practices; performance retains the capability of incorporating presence, of making this incorporative presence signify. Thus, it is crucial that Womack date the play to a very particular historical moment without considering what sort of discursive communities the play itself may participate in and help to construct, as that moment is defined by the usurpation of community by the state; the moment, in other words, in which the Reformation is spread in a top-down fashion. Leaving aside the debate as to whether the Reformation proceeded this way or not, Womack's move here makes not only Bale's authorship but also his—and his play's—social and cultural embeddedness disappear: the play, according to Womack, is nothing like any of its contemporary plays because it is propaganda. That is, Bale's play is abstracted from its social and cultural context because it is propaganda.

Yet Womack does not consider that the play's polemical nature embeds the text in its historical context. Early Tudor dramatic tradition influences Bale's play. This dramatic tradition includes, for instance, Wolsey's attacks on Luther in interludes (Anglo, *Spectacle* 232-33); John Roo's criticisms of Wolsey in an interlude depicting the misrule of a Lord Governance and of Lady Public Weal, played at an inn in 1526 (Anglo, *Spectacle* 238-39) that clearly bears resemblance to *King Johan* as well as to Nicholas Udall's *Respublica*; the interlude against Henry VIII's second marriage that would have been performed in late 1533 or early 1534 at Gloucester College, "a plaie off monk*es*," had it not been stopped (Elliott 75); or drama which staged the offering of advice to its patron (Walker 63-75). Womack here dehistoricizes Bale's text by identifying its message so firmly with Bale's patrons that the play's genre itself is wrenched from its history.

Moreover, Womack's assertion that the theatrical language of Bale's play is "neither nourished nor shackled by tradition" is questionable. Many critics have noted Bale's adaptation of traditional genres for his plays. Peter Happé, for instance, has traced Bale's adaptation of traditional saint- and vice-characters in *King Johan* and *Three Laws* as well as of English and Continental analogues for Bale's biblical plays ("Sedition"; "Protestant"; "Dramatic"; "John Bale's").[1]

That is, while it is important to attempt to determine the plays' dates of origin, these moments of origin clearly do not speak to a specifically datable context but rather to a significantly extended period of time, from the late 1530s to the early 1560s, if not to the late 1570s as Bale's *God's Promises* was published in 1577. Indeed, the plays can be more valuably contextualized within this broader period than within the contexts of the Henrician Reformation or, more narrowly, of the propaganda campaign waged by Thomas Cromwell.

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[1] Also see Cavanagh and Vanhoutte 48-49.

One consequence of viewing Bale's texts within the wider context I propose is that their origin in Cromwell's propaganda campaign of the late 1530s must be qualified. To some extent, I will have my cake and eat it too: while I do situate Bale's plays within the context of the late 1530s, I want their transitional nature constantly to underwrite them. Rather than emphasize the influence of particular situations and events on the plays, I aim to locate them in what Helgerson calls "discursive communities" (14). These discursive communities, Helgerson argues, substituted for the loss of the traditional bonds: "But selves do not usually identify with either text or nation directly or alone. The younger Elizabethans may have been partially uprooted from traditional associations of locality, family, and guild, but they did nevertheless enter into a wide variety of new or newly reformed discursive communities, and it was often on behalf of those communities that they represented England" (14).

Cromwell's patronage of Bale has been suspected at least since *The Mediaeval Stage*, in which Chambers sees Bale's dramatic output as "evidence that Cromwell at least found the interlude a very convenient instrument for the encouragement of Protestantism" (2: 220). In *The Elizabethan Stage*, Chambers describes Bale as "the principal agent of Cromwell's statecraft in what was probably a deliberate attempt to capture so powerful an engine as the stage in the interests of Protestantism" (1: 242). Pafford and Greg, in their introduction to the 1931 Malone Society edition of *King Johan*, made explicit the evidence for Chambers's suggestions, presenting a hypothetical explanation of the evidence that has become generally accepted. Pafford and Greg cautiously note that in light of the evidence, "All that can be done...is to suggest a story that will account for the facts as economically as possible and without offence to general probability" (xxii). They go on to suggest that Bale entered Cromwell's service in 1537, forming, "under the patronage of Cromwell, a company of actors to perform plays in favour of the reformed religion" (xxii). They admit that there is "no sort of proof for this hypothesis; but it accounts for the facts, and upon its ability to do so effectively and with economy must rest its claim to consideration" (xxiii). Jesse W. Harris, too, calls for cautious interpretation of the evidence, noting that "Bale's activities during this period [1537-40] of his career can be surmised in a somewhat vague and hazy way. It seems probable that he was in some way associated with the court, and it is not impossible that his company may have been the same company roughly identifiable as Cromwell's own in the records" (27-28n34). Despite this caution, however, Harris nevertheless asserts that "To the end of bringing these plays before the public, Bale organized a company of players. The fact that Cromwell lent financial support indicates that Bale's company was organized with Cromwell's full approval, possibly at his suggestion" (28).[2] Declaring Bale "the playwright-propagandist of the Cromwellian era" (100), Harris more cautiously notes that additional evidence of the relationship between Cromwell and Bale would but confirm Bale as "official playwright": "Although a more numerous series of incidents such as those cited above would add greatly to the picture of Bale as the official playwright of the Cromwellian period of the English Reformation, he, nevertheless, has the best claim to that title" (103). David Bevington accepts this declaration in his important book, *Tudor Drama and Politics*. There, Bevington notes Thomas Kirchmayer's dedication of his 1538 Latin play, *Pammachius*, to Archbishop Cranmer, and implies Cromwell's hand in the translation and in Bale's other plays: "John Bale, on

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[2] Also see McCusker, who notes that Bale's "company was in all likelihood that known from 1536 to 1540 as 'my Lord Cromwell's players'" (14).

Cromwell's payroll, translated the play [*Pammachius*] and incorporated its practices into the recasting of his own *King John*" (*Tudor* 97). Moreover, Bevington describes Bale's *Three Laws* as an instance in which "commissioned" plays "naturally reflect official policy in detail" (*Tudor* 97).

Some have cautioned against this view, however. Most notably, G. R. Elton argues that the evidence, while suggestive, does not bear out the claim that Bale's plays were state-sponsored propaganda. Despite linking Bale's plays to Morison's call to replace troublesome Robin Hood plays with more appropriate entertainment – he argues that Bale "came nearest to fulfilling this demand of Morison's" (*Policy* 186n1) – Elton maintains that characterizing Bale as the Tudor state's official dramatic propagandist is based on "somewhat slender grounds" (*Policy* 186n1). In characteristic style, he wryly claims to "feel some relief at the thought that the prehistory of the Elizabethan stage was not littered with pope-hunting plays commissioned by Thomas Cromwell," noting that instead "Cromwell continued to put his faith – and his money – in printing and in some writings hardly suitable for the common people" (*Policy* 185-86).

While the evidence that Cromwell patronized and protected Bale is indeed suggestive, it is necessary to approach this evidence skeptically, keeping in mind both Elton's and Leininger's caution. Moreover, evidence of unpatronized publication and performance of Bale's plays demands consideration as it qualifies the stress placed on Cromwell's influence on Bale's career as a state-sponsored playwright. Indeed, this evidence suggests a less regulated performance practice for the plays. The stress laid on Cromwell's patronage of Bale has tended to lead to a critical consideration of Bale's more stridently polemical plays, the interludes of *King Johan* and *Three Laws*. In light of the argument of the previous chapter, however, Bale's biblical plays demand attention as it is they that not so much answer Morison's demand as address the same problems more fully than do Bale's interludes.

Three pieces of evidence indicate certainly that Cromwell supported Bale's drama: Cromwell's account books record two payments made to Bale in the fall of 1538 and in early 1539. On 8 September 1538, "Balle and his fellows" were paid 40*s*. "at St. Stephen's beside Canterbury, for playing before my Lord" *(Letters* XIV (2) 782).[3] Bale and his fellows received another 30*s*. on 31 January 1539, again "for playing before" Cromwell *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). As well, an 11 January 1539 letter from Archbishop Cranmer to Cromwell includes a report of a commotion caused by an interlude about King John. While the letter does not explicitly connect Bale with Cromwell, it corroborates the evidence of Bale's dramatic activity at this time (Happé 1: 5). An enclosure to Cranmer's letter, dated 11 January 1539, reports that

> John Alforde of thage of 18 yeres, examined, saith that by reason that he had ben in Christmas tyme at my Lorde of Canterbury's and ther had harde an enterlude concernyng King John aboute 8 or 9 of the clocke at night; and Thursdaye the seconde daye of Januarye last past spake theis wourdes folowing in the house of the said Thomas Brown – That it ys petie that the Bisshop of Rome should reigne any lenger for if he should the said Bissop wold do with our King as he did with King John. Wherunto (this deponent saith) that Henry Totehill answered and said, That it was petie and

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[3] See Happé 4n16. See *Letters* XIV (2) 782 for an abstract of Cromwell's accounts for the period January 1537 – December 1539. See also Streitberger, "Financing" 26 and Harris 101n11. This performance took place on 8 September *(Letters* XIV (2) 782), and the King was likely in attendance.

> nawghtely don to put down the Pope and Saincte Thomas, for the Pope was a good man. (qtd in Happé 1: 5)

Another witness, Thomas Brown, corroborates Alforde's account, claiming to have seen the same play and, moreover, to having heard "divers tymes preistes and clerkes say that King John did loke like one that hadd run frome brynnyng of a howse" and that "he was the begynner of the puttyng down of the Bisshop of Rome" (qtd in Happé 1: 5).[4] The "enterlude" mentioned by Alforde is not certainly Bale's *King Johan*, but it is possible, if not likely, that it is. While the play's composition date is uncertain, it is agreed that the play, or a version of the extant playtext, was written by 1538.

Moreover, Totehill's reference to the putting down of St. Thomas suggests that one of Bale's lost plays, alternately titled in the *Anglorum Heliades* list the "De Traditione Thome Becketi" or "De Thome Becketi Imposturis" in the *Summarium*, was also performed. The Becket play follows *Three Laws* in *Anglorum Heliades*: it was likely written, then, by 1538.[5] Blatt attributes the reference to Dissimulation's dying-speech, in which he claims he "shall be a saynt / Prouyde a gyldar, myne Image for to paynt / I dye for the churche, with Thomas of Canterberye / ye shall fast my vigyll, and vpon my daye be merye / No doubt but I shall, do myracles in a whyle / And therfor lete me, be shryned in the north yle" (51; ll 2082-87). Happé notes that the suppression of the cult of St. Thomas began in November 1538; further, "the pope issued the Bull of Excommunication against Henry on 17 December 1538" (*John Bale* 105). Canterbury's

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[4] This evidence is printed in Cox, J. E., ed. *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*. Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846. 388.

[5] House suggests that the Becket play was performed on 8 September 1538, the day after Richard Pollard and others destroyed Becket's shrine (125, 136n8).

Chamberlains' accounts reflect this suppression, indicating that the city sponsored a St. Thomas pageant as early as 1504-5, and yearly from 1513-14 until 1537-38 (Sheppard 35; Dawson 191-98).[6] In this last instance, the pageant had been renamed "Bysshop Beckett*es* pagent" (Dawson 198), perhaps as an attempt to stave off an outright ban.[7] The pageant is linked with a watch held on "seint Thom^{a}s Night" (Dawson 191, 196). Whether the date of the pageant was 7 July, the Eve of the Translation of St. Thomas, or the 28 December, the eve of the Becket feast is unclear. A late fifteenth-century document instituted a yearly watch on the former date, however, so perhaps the pageant took place in the summer (Sheppard 32).[8] The pageant appears to have been elaborate, involving a costumed statue of St. Thomas whose head required frequent repainting, a mechanical angel, an entourage of knights (at least once played by children), and "a leder bag for y^{e} blode" (Dawson 195). The pageant was paraded about the city and the city's guns were fired, perhaps from several of the city's gates (Dawson 191).[9] The pageant wagon, for which storage was rented each year, was refurbished yearly—extensively so in 1514-15—and an entirely new pageant wagon was built in 1520-21 (193-4). A performance of Bale's Becket play during the first year that the pageant was not carried might have seemed especially apt to Cranmer, Cromwell, and Bale. Plays were performed in 1541-42 and 1542-43, with expenses for the latter including 2*s*. 8*d*. for the purchase of four pairs of "Shoes for the to^{r}mento^{r}s in the pley" (Dawson 198), as well as another expense of 23*s*. 3*d*. "for certeyn stuffe & makyng of the clothes for the to^{r}mento^{r}s for the pley" (Dawson 198). That the tormentors required new costumes suggests that the play (or plays) were new, or newly revised to include tormentors, and the inclusion of their expenses in the accounts suggests that these plays replaced the St. Thomas pageant. The stage for this play was sold to a "master Batherst" for 40*s*. (Dawson 198), although the pageant wagon was kept until late in Elizabeth's reign when it was sold for 2*s*. 8*d*. (Sheppard 39).[10]

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[6] Dawson notes that the pageant was "enacted annually" (188); however, he does not transcribe records for several years, including 1516-17 and the six-year period, 1523-24 – 1528-29, although three separate payments included in the ordinary expense accounts indicate that people were paid to store the pageant (195n1). Nor does he note whether these records are missing in the original source or whether their omission is editorial in nature.

[7] In 1539, the Norfolk town of Bungay paid 2*s*. to "s*ir* Rychard charnell for correkyn ye s*er*uyce of thom*a*s beckytt" (Galloway and Wasson 142).

[8] The Canterbury accounting year begins on 29 September (i.e. Michaelmas) (Dawson 2). The pageant likely took place on the eve of 29 December (i.e. 28 December), the feast of St. Thomas Becket.

[9] Sheppard transcribes, although does not date, an entry recording payment of 12*d*. "to ij Flemmyngs that were hurte with gunne powder in the watche" (33).

In addition to Cromwell's payments to Bale and "his fellowes" and to Cranmer's report of a performance of an interlude about King John, circumstantial evidence indicates that Bale won Cromwell's support in the year previous. In early 1537, Bale was arrested for his preaching of "erroneous opinions to the people" *(Letters* XII (1) 40). John Leland wrote to Cromwell on 25 January 1537, seeking Cromwell's intervention on Bale's behalf. Leland wrote that Bale, then imprisoned at Greenwich, "has learning, judgement, and modesty, and is worthy a better fortune than to be a poor parish priest" *(Letters* XII (1) 230). Bale himself wrote to Cromwell, pleading for intervention and, perhaps to indicate his potential value as an informant, reported details of the "papish conspiracy" which had led to arrest: Bale accused the duke of Suffolk of conspiring "wyth gyft and rewarde to them whych knoweth not hys devyllysh cawtels, he hath made stro*n*ge byldy*n*g agey*n*st me, and hath grow*n*ded the*m* upo*n* lyes supposy*n*g through my troble and pu*n*nyshme*n*t to escape dau*n*gers, to have hys full plesure, and to acco*m*plysh hys promyse to certay*n* popysh prysts, whych hath hyred hym to p*er*secute t*he* treuth of the*m* t*ha*t hath sealed agey*n*st me" (167r). In his 1557 *Catalogus*, Bale reported that "pius" Cromwell intervened "ob editas comoedias" on this and other occasions (702).

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[10] The phrasing of the record is ambiguous, however, noting the sale of "a payer of wheles and the bedd of an old pageant" (qtd. in Sheppard 39).

Also in 1537, another evangelical priest suffering persecution, Thomas Wylley, a vicar from Yoxford, Suffolk, solicited Cromwell's patronage. Signing his letter to Cromwell "fatherless and forsaken," Wylley pled for Cromwell's protection so that he could "have free liberty to preach the truth" *(Letters* XII (1) 529).[11] Wylley informed Cromwell that local reaction to his plays, one of which Wylley performed before 1534, had hindered his ability to "preach Christ": certain Suffolk priests "will not receive me into their churches to preach, but have disdained me ever since I made a play against the Pope's counselers, Error, Colle Clogger of Conscience, and Incredulity, that and the Act of Parliament had not followed after, I had been counted a great liar" *(Letters* XII(1) 529). In return for Cromwell's protection so that he "may preach Christ", Wylley offered Cromwell two completed plays, one of which had not been performed before, and another Wylley was writing at the time:

> I dedicate and offer to your Lordship a reverent receiving of the Sacrament as a Lenten matter declared by six children representing Christ, the Worde of God, Paul, Austyn, a child, a nun called Ignoransy, as a secret thing, that shall have his end once rehearsed afore your eye by the said children.... I have made a play called a Rude Commonalty. I am amaking of another

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[11] Also see White 69 for a transcript of Wylley's letter.

> called the Woman on the Rock, in the fire of faith affyning and a purging in the true purgatory, never to be seen but of your Lordship's eye. *(Letters* XII (1) 529)

Clearly Wylley was actively performing evangelical drama within a local context before the Act of Supremacy was passed in 1534, doing so with the means he had at hand. Moreover, as White notes, Wylley sought patronage "to avail him the opportunity to propagate religious and political ideas that he shares with his prospective patron, and to receive protection and approval of his works in the face of hostile opposition" (69). Whether Wylley's plea succeeded is uncertain, although on 12 April 1538 "Mr. Hopton's priest" and his children performed before Cromwell (Streitberger, "Financing" 26, *Court Revels* 279).

Like Wylley, Bale had some experience with local performance. There is circumstantial evidence of Bale's being influenced by the drama of the towns in which he lived. As a Carmelite prior in the early 1530s, Bale served at Maldon, Ipswich, and Doncaster, all towns that had a tradition of staging communal drama. By 1531, Bale was at Maldon, and Fairfield speculates that the Maldon play, which is discussed in the next chapter, might have originated with Bale: "It does seem that later in the decade the citizens of Maldon were enjoying plays depicting the life of Christ, which were put on at the White Friars' former house. This may have been a tradition which Bale started, and which survived the dissolution of the mendicant orders" (*John Bale* 31). Doncaster, too, may have offered Bale the opportunity to perform. Happé notes that "Recent work suggests that there was a Corpus Christi cycle in Doncaster during the sixteenth century" although the earliest evidence for the Doncaster play dates from October 1540 (Happé, *John Bale* 149n6; Palmer, "Corpus Christi" 222-25, 228). Happé notes that "At Ipswich the Carmelites themselves had taken a significant interest in the Corpus Christi plays" (*John Bale* 5). In his reply to the accusations against him, Bale reported that he had set forth a Harrowing of Hell play (McCusker 7), indicating that he was invovled in staging drama at a community level.

Also like Wylley, Bale had a body of plays whose subjects might have appealed to Cromwell. The evidence of Bale's dramatic work comes from several sources. First, there are five extant plays, two of which, *Three Laws* and *The Temptation of our Lord*, survive in printed editions from 1547 and 1548 while *God's Promises* survives in an edition from 1548 (Happé 2: 125, 150, 157). While only a 1744 edition of *Johan Baptystes Preachynge* survives, it likely was printed with *Temptation* (Happé 2: 141). The fifth play, *King Johan*, survives in a manuscript held at the Huntington Library.The title pages of the printed plays, however, note that they were "compyled" in 1538.

In addition, three extant bibliographies, made by Bale at the end of three successive decades, list the plays Bale had written by the time each bibliography was compiled. Comparison of these catalogues presents an understanding of Bale's evolving presentation of himself in the service of various patrons. The earliest list Bale compiled is appended to the brief autobiography given in his *Anglorum Heliades*. There, Bale lists fourteen plays written "in idiomate vulgari diuersas comedi as atq*ue* Tragedias, Sub diuerso metrorum genere" (112r). Moreover, Bale asserts that these plays had been written for John de Vere, the fifteenth Earl of Oxford (112r).[12] Bale's list, as Thora Blatt notes, appears to be categorized "by some organizing principle" (24), and, as such, is divisible into two categories. The first catalogues plays whose subject matter suggests their suitable performance by a parish or town. This category includes four plays depicting biblical narratives: a fourteen-book life of John the Baptist and three plays on the life of Christ (one on Christ at twelve, a Passion, and a Resurrection, with each of the latter plays comprised of two books) as well as two plays that deal with homiletic subject matter—the Lord's prayer and the seven deadly sins (112r). While these first two categories do not reflect necessarily an evangelical or anti-papal tenor, the following category certainly does, evidencing Bale's turn in his drama towards an explicit treatment of contemporary religious as well as political concerns. Here Bale lists a play on Henry VIII's two marriages, two plays treating the sect and traditions of papists, a play refuting the corrupters of God's word, as well as a play on the tradition of Thomas Becket (112r-v). Also included in this list are two extant plays, *King Johan* and *Three Laws* (112v).

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[12] The text reads, "Presertim ad illustriβimum Dominum Ioannem Ver. Oxonie comitem" (112r). See Happé for a convenient transcript.

The date of *Anglorum Heliades* is somewhat uncertain as it appears to have been written between 1536 and 1539 and thus presents some difficulties in establishing dates for the plays it lists. While Bale's dedication of the text to John Leland is dated 1536, and while Bale claims to have written the entire text in two months that same year (4v, 112v), two references to 1538 occur in the text, as well as one to 1539 (McKusker 100; Davies 209; Fairfield 162). The list may include, then, plays written as late as 1539, but 1538 can be established with some certainty as the limit date as the list includes *Three Laws*, a play Bale claimed to have compiled in 1538. Bale made the same claim for two other plays that are not included in the list, *Gods Promises* and *The Temptation of Our Lord*, a fact which suggests that either the list was drawn up between the writing of *Three Laws* and the two latter plays or that that Bale failed to include them. Indeed, Fairfield attributes this omission to such a failure, citing Bodleian Library MS. Selden supra 41 as evidence that "Bale was not always concerned about listing *all* his plays" (162). Indeed, Bale does not list all his plays in Selden Supra 41; he lists three by name and lists the others under broad descriptions of their subject matter. He claims to have written "de c*ri*sto, de Joha*n*ne Baptista, de tradico*n*ne papistoru*m*, de verbo dei, de rege joha*n*ne, de triplici dei lege, de tradico*n*ne thomae becketi, et alia" (195r). Moreover, in Selden supra 64, which is edited as *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, Bale lists none of his plays, noting only those texts written after Bale's return to England from Germany (114v). These lists, while appearing to be summaries of the *Anglorum Heliades* list, differ in tone from it: the *Anglorum Heliades* list aims to be comprehensive—Bale returned to the list to provide incipits in his own hand—while the notebook lists do not.

Bale may not have included the plays because, if they were written at the time, they were not written for John de Vere. That is, the *Anglorum Heliades* list indeed may catalogue, as Bale claimed, texts written for the Earl of Oxford. In fact, the *Anglorum Heliades* itself, dedicated to Leland, appears to be an effort on Bale's part to secure patronage from another source. The lack of recourse to John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, suggests that Bale's relationship with him had ceased by this time, that Bale knew Oxford's influence had waned, or that Oxford would not support Bale against Suffolk. Another possibility is that letters to de Vere have not survived. In any case, Bale's relationship with de Vere seems to have ended by the time Bale wrote his letter to Cromwell. Bale later noted that Cromwell's involvement in the case was due to Bale's plays. Bale's later insistence on marking his plays "compyled in 1538" also highlights his association with Cromwell. This is not surprising given the praise Cromwell received from John Foxe.

A limit for the earliest date can be established with reference to Bale's play on the king's two marriages, a topic which indicates that this play, at least, was written by 1534. As several critics have argued, the play's topicality suggests that it must have been written before 1534, when the King sought a third marriage (Harris 68). Harris also argues, on the basis of similar references in *Three Laws* and an accusation against Bale, that *Three Laws* was written around 1531. Blatt, however, is more cautious in attributing Bale's plays to this period, noting that

> Until more evidence comes to light we can only be sure that Bale wrote dramas as early as 1534 with the encouragement and perhaps under the protection of John Vere, whose influence waned with that of Anne Boleyn, who was executed in May 1536. The play on the King's two marriages could hardly be later than 1533-34 if it were to deal with current events at all. (29).[13]

That this topic provided subject-matter for plays is evident from an aborted interlude to be played at Gloucester College, Oxford, in the 1533-34 winter (Elliott 75).

The catalogue of plays in Bale's 1548 *Summarium*, lists an additional seven plays and omits two (243v-244r). To the sequence of plays depicting the life of Christ have been added five plays, one each on Christ's baptism and temptation, the resurrection of Lazarus, the priests' council, a feast of Simon the Leper, and Christ's washing of the disciples' feet at the Last Supper (fo. 243v-244r). In addition, Bale lists a play called *Imaginem amoris* and a translation of Thomas Kirchmayer's *Pammachius* (fo. 244r). Whereas in *Anglorum Heliades*, Bale designates his Christ-plays as being made up of books, he here designates them as comedies, while the remaining plays, including the extant biblical trilogy, retain their designation as books. Missing from this list are "Super Oratione Dominica" and "De Septem Peccatis."

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[13] Also see Fairfield 161-63 and Davies 209-13. Davies suggests that Bale wrote his own entry, including his play-list, in the fall of 1538 but revised the sections on Byrd in 1539 or 1540. This revised copy was given to a scribe (Fairfield 162).

Bale also prefaced a list of his Latin works by noting they had been dedicated to John Leland to whom Bale attributes their inspiration (243v). However, Bale did not preface his list of plays by repeating the assertion he had made in *Anglorum Heliades* that the plays had been written for the Earl of Oxford (243v). Nor, as might be expected, did he assert that the plays had been written for Thomas Cromwell. Bale repeated only the information that they were "In idiomate materno comoedias, sub diuerso metroru*m* genere" (243v).

The 1547 list also displays a shift in Bale's presentation of the nature of his plays. While the incipits of the plays which appear in this list and that of *Anglorum Heliades* have not been substantially revised, the titles of some of the plays have been revised to clarify their anti-papal stridency. In the *Anglorum Heliades* Bale listed two anti-papal plays, "De Traditionionibus Papistorum" and "De Traditione Thome Becketi," in the 1547 list he revised their titles and, in doing so, made clear the oppositional tenor of the plays: the plays became "De Thomae Becketti imposturis" and "Proditiones Papistaru*m*." This is not to say that Bale revised the plays to enhance their stridency. Rather, Bale revised the list in 1547 to present his plays, at a glance, as decidedly anti-papal. His omission from this list of his "Super Oratione Dominica" and "De Septem Peccatis," two plays perhaps more uneasily assimalable to his anti-papal project, also suggests this.

The 1547 list of plays is repeated, albeit with minor differences, in Bale's 1557 *Catalogus*. These lists present Bale's plays according to subject matter, implicitly cataloguing Bale's plays, as in the *Anglorum Heliades* list, into biblical-narrative and anti-papal categories, and slotted new plays to this organization. The repetition in Bale's *Catalogus* of the 1547 play-list without addition of any plays suggests that Bale had turned his creative production elsewhere. Indeed, a letter from John Ponet suggests that Bale had given up writing "lighter" fare for "weightier purposes." Yet the *Catalogus* provides a further elaboration on Bale's history of patronage: it is here that Bale notes that he received Cromwell's assistance as a result of the comedies Bale had put out.

A curious difficulty emerges regarding the dating of Bale's plays. All of the plays listed in *Anglorum Heliades*, Bale claims, were written for, or in the service of, the Earl of Oxford. The evidence that Oxford sponsored a travelling troupe appears slight, however, with only two ambiguous records of performance in England during the 1530s and 1540s. Ian Lancashire cites two references to troupes associated with de Vere. The first of these is a 1537-38 Thetford payment for which Lancashire cites Richard Beadle's transcript of the Thetford Priory Register; the second is at Plymouth in 1541-2 (Lancashire 407). The first record, however, is not certain. Although Beadle reports the priory's payment to the de Vere troupe in 1537/38 ("Plays" 7), it appears that Beadle misread the year as subsequent transcriptions by David Galloway and John Wasson, as well as by David Dymond, date this payment to 1538/39. Moreover, where Beadle reads the payment as to "jocatoribus domini schamberlain" ("Plays" 7) and understands "schamberlain" to refer to Lord Chamberlain (which de Vere was), Galloway and Wasson, as well as Dymond, transcribe the entry as a payment to "jocatoribus domini schaunler," claiming that the reference is to the Lord Chancellor (i.e. Audley) (Galloway and Wasson 114; Dymond 704). As for the second, the REED *Devon* volume does not list the record to which Lancashire refers nor does it record any performances by Oxford's troupe (Wasson, *Devon* 229-30, 507-8). On this evidence, Oxford's patronage of Bale did not extend to the sponsorship of a touring troupe but was limited to play-writing or to household performances. However, this does not rule out the possibility that Bale performed, or his plays were, at court under the organization of the Lord Chamberlain or in the Earl's household.

In any case, this evidence suggests that Bale certainly wrote plays, as Blatt contends, as early as 1534, although it is possible that he had written some of his plays earlier than this. Also suggested is that by 1536 a version of Bale's *King Johan* and *Three Laws* had been written for de Vere, or under his protection. This suggests that Bale's 1538 revision of *King Johan* took place in response to Cromwell's patronage. Perhaps *Three Laws* underwent a similar revision. That is, Bale revised his texts so that they were performable by a travelling troupe in various locations, not simply for great hall performance.

One of the implications of this is that Bale appears to have written the milder of his extant plays after he began touring with Cromwell's troupe. That is, Bale wrote the biblical trilogy in late 1538, as Davies suggests. Harris argues that Bale intended "the ambitious… recreating [of] the old cycle plays dealing with the events in the life of Christ into a series more in keeping with the new order of things in his native country"

(77). There are, however, three series of plays: the extant trilogy and two lost sequences. The first of these lost sequences is the fourteen-part life of John the Baptist, the second the series of eight plays depicting Christ's ministry, passion, and resurrection. In addition, two plays listed in the *Anglorum Heliades*, "Super Oratione Dominica" and "De Septem Pecatis", deserve consideration, too. As Johnston points out, the topics of these two plays were commonly linked in the medieval homiletic tradition, and it was "a standard interpretation of the prayer" to link one of the deadly sins to each of the prayer's seven petitions (Johnston, "Plays" 77). In *Mirk's Festial*, for instance, John Mirk divides the prayer into seven petitions, each of which is of use in "putting away" one of the seven deadly sins: the Pater Noster is made of "vij p*ra*yers þe whech yche man and woman han gret ned forto pray God for; for þat puttyth away þe vij dedly synnys, and getyth g*ra*ce of God forto haue all þat man nedyth forto haue necessary boþe to þe lyfe and to þe soule" (282; 282-87). By 1378, the instruction of the prayer to the laity, which according to Mirk a priest was bound by the "lawe yn holy chyrche" to do "ones oþyr twyse yn þe ȝere" (282), had been adapted into dramatic form in England: John Wycliff cited the York Pater Noster play as an example of the presentation of the prayer in the English vernacular, observing that

> freris han tauȝt i*n* englond þe pat*er*nost*er* i*n* engliȝsh tu*n*ge, as me*n* seyen i*n* þe pleye of ȝork, & i*n* many oþ*er*e cu*n*treys. siþe*n* þe pat*er*nost*er* is part of matheus gospel, as clerkis knowe*n*, why may not al be turnyd to engliȝsch trewely as is þis part? specialy siþe*n* alle c*r*iste*n*me*n*, lerid & lewid, þ*a*t shule*n* be sauyd, mote*n* algatis sue c*r*ist & knowe his lore & his lif. (429-30)

Johnston suggests that the York Pater Noster play—a day-long affair like the Corpus Christi play in place of which it was sometimes played—followed this homiletic tradition, incorporating some of the Corpus Christi pageants according to thematic connections between their content, the prayer's seven petitions, and the seven deadly sins ("Plays" 72, 76-80). Bale's "Super Oratione Dominica" and "De Septem Peccatis", then, participate in both the English homiletic and the English dramatic tradition to which the York Pater Noster play bears witness. In this light, Bale's drama appears less exceptional than traditional. Of course, the theological tenor of these two plays, as well as the Christ-plays, cannot be known. Bale's omission of "Oratione" and "Peccatis" from the *Summarium* and *Catalogus* lists suggests that he deemed them no longer suitable for his purposes, perhaps because they seemed to him too traditional.

In the eighteen months between Leland's plea for Cromwell to rescue Bale and Bale's performances before Cromwell in the 1538-39 winter, a playing troupe patronized by Cromwell began to perform in various cities and towns in England. This troupe, known as Lord Cromwell's players or the Lord Privy Seal's players,[14] began performing as early as 9 July 1536 when Cromwell was created Baron Cromwell but certainly by 8 September 1537 (Murray 36). The Mundus Book of King's College, Cambridge, notes that on the latter date the "mimis do*mi*ni Cromwell" were rewarded with 2*s*. for playing on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Nelson 112).[15] Cromwell's troupe also performed at Shrewsbury that year as they received a reward from the Shrewsbury Bailiffs and Chamberlains (Somerset 194-95). Although the exact date of the performance is uncertain, it must have occurred no earlier than 29 September 1536 and no later than 28 September 1537 as the Bailiffs' and Chamberlains' accounts' fiscal years began on Michaelmas (Somerset 194-95, 474). Similar evidence indicates that Cromwell's troupe performed at various locations throughout England over the course of the following year. Sometime between 24 June 1537 and 23 June 1538, the troupe appeared at Thetford Priory, receiving a reward of 3s. 4d. for their performance (Galloway and Wasson 104, 114; Beadle, "Plays" 7). In addition, the troupe played at Oxford (Elliott 80), Cambridge (Nelson 114-15), and Leicester (Bateson 41; House 124) between 29 September 1537 and 28 September 1538.[16] In August 1538, Cromwell's players returned to Shrewsbury and also played at Ludlow shortly after or before their Shrewsbury performance (Somerset 76, 196).[17]

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[14] In the records, the troupe variously referred to recorded as the "Seycretars players" (Bateson 41), "mimis do*mi*ni Cromwell" (Nelson 112), "lord Cromwell*es* players" (Nelson 114-15), or "Iocatoribus Domini Privyceal" (Galloway and Wasson 115).

[15] However, Nelson glosses mimis as minstrels when associated with a patron, and as players of a lower sort when unassociated (812). See Galloway and Wasson xvi-xvii for a

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discussion of Latin terms for players in which "mimi" is used more interchangeably. Minstrels did perform under Cromwell's patronage, however. Payments were made in Hunstanton (28 April 1538) and Thetford (1537/38) to Privy Seal minstrels (Galloway and Wasson 22, 114). As well, the 1538/39 Plymouth accounts record a payment of 3*s.* 4*d.* to "my lorde P*ri*vy seales s*er*vant a mynstrell and a nother of s*ir* Thomas Denys" (Wasson, *Devon* 228). Whether Cromwell's "servant" was a minstrel, however, is ambiguous.

[16] House suggests two possible 1537 dates for the Shrewsbury performance: either Rogation week or late August 1537. Again, there is a problem with dating. The Leicester performance would have taken place after 29 September 1537 in order to be recorded in the 1537/38 account books, that is, several months after the Shrewsbury dates that House suggests.

[17] The performance at Ludlow occurred sometime between 29 October 1537 and 28 October 1538. Given Ludlow's proximity to Shrewsbury, it is likely that the two performances at Shrewsbury and Ludlow were close in time.

Cromwell's players remained active in 1539-40. Between 24 June 1539 and February 1540, Cromwell's troupe performed at Thetford Priory for the second time, again receiving 3*s*. 4*d*. in reward. A payment of 3*s*. 4*d*. to "Iocatorib*us* do*mi*ni p*ri*vyceal" is recorded on a "*rough draft on loose sheet*" (Galloway and Wasson 115; Dymond 740). A corresponding entry, however, does not appear in the fair copy of the records, nor do Galloway and Wasson record this visit in their appendix under Cromwell's entry (115, 216). The entry is also absent from Beadle's transcript ("Plays" 7). Both of the rough-copy entries that bracket the entry recording payment to "iocatoribus Domini Privyceal" (which is the final entry on the relevant page of the loose sheet) are transcribed in the register's fair copy, with the first being the last entry on the relevant fair-copy page and the second the first on the following folio (Dymond 725, 740). It is likely, then, that the omission of the payment to Cromwell's troupe from the fair-copy of the register arises from an error in transcription in which the scribe began a new folio with the entry that begins a new leaf in the rough-copy. This appears more likely than arguing that Cromwell's troupe was not paid and thus did not perform, although it must be admitted that, as Dymond puts it, "Inclusion is of course a form of positive evidence, but exclusion may only mean that items are concealed under a general phrase or sum" (1: 16). Most probably, the troupe performed after midsummer in 1539, one of the last performances at the priory before the priory was handed over.[18]

As well, the troupe played once more at Cambridge between 29 September 1539 and the end of June 1540 (Nelson 119) and in two places in 1540: Maldon (Mepham,

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[18] The priory's fiscal year began on 24 June, the feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist (Galloway and Wasson 104), and the priory was handed over to Henry VIII's commissioners on 16 February 1540.

"Municipal" 170; A. Clark 182) and possibly York (Johnston and Rogerson 269), with both performances, presumably, taking place no later than Cromwell's execution on 28 July 1540.

Between mid-1537 and mid-1540, Cromwell's players, then, delivered at least twelve performances in eight different towns, with eight of these performances taking place between mid-1537 and the late summer of 1538. Three other performances— the two before Cromwell in September 1538 and January 1539 as well as the performance of *King Johan* at Cranmer's house in 1539—certainly involved Bale in some manner.

Despite performing under the protection of the Lord Privy Seal, the troupe does not appear to have merited reward from Cromwell himself other than the two payments to Bale. The troupe was curiously absent from the lucrative Christmas season at Cromwell's house. It may be that the troupe was paid under livery expenses or received payment as part of another entry. Curiously, until the 8 September 1538 performance by "Bale and his fellows," there are no references to this troupe in Cromwell's accounts for Christmas 1537-38 remains curious and perhaps the troupe was touring during that period. Cromwell's accounts record several payments to various troupes and minstrels, indicating Cromwell's interest in dramatic entertainment, but none to his own troupe. On 26 December 1537, The King's players were rewarded with 22*s*. 6*d.*, and the performers Robyn Drome and Wolf received 20*s*. *(Letters* XIV (2) 782).[19] The next day, the lord Chancellor's and the Marquis of Exeter's players were paid 20*s*. and 15*s*. respectively, and "Mr. Bryan's minstrels" received 15*s*. on 28 December *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). On 12 January 1538, the "children of the Chapel" received 7*s*. 6*d*. Between 21 January and 23

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[19] Also see Streitberger, *Court Revels* 278-80.

January, the Lord Warden's and the Duke of Suffolk's players received 20*s*. each, and the Lord Chancellor Audley's players performed again, receiving 10*s*. this time *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). On Candlemas, Nicholas Udall received £5, and two days later, on 4 February, Lord Cobham's players received 20*s*. *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). Cromwell paid for a masque in early March, rewarding Robyn Drome[20] and "his fellows" 20*s*. for "their waiting ij nyght*es* the same tyme…[Cromwell] made the king a Maske" (Streitberger, *Court Revels* 279). As well, John Portynare received £25 11*s*. 5*d*. for his direction of this masque (Streitberger, *Court Revels* 279). In April, a group of children under the direction of a Mr. Hopton's priest performed a play before Cromwell and were rewarded with 22*s*. 6*d*. (Streitberger, *Court Revels* 279). In addition, the Prince's, the Queen's, and Lord Lisle's players also played at court (Lancashire 382, 395, 400).[21] In the span of these six weeks, then, almost every active touring troupe performed at court, with the exception of the Duke of Norfolk's, the Earl of Sussex's, and the Earl of Derby's players (Lancashire 394, 401-2, 405).

As discussed above, Bale performed before Cromwell on 8 September 1538 and in January 1539. That month, or late in the previous December, Bale also played at Cranmer's house. Yet, like the previous year, Cromwell's expenses for dramatic entertainment in early 1539 were significant, and Bale and his fellows, while the only troupe rewarded by Cromwell during the 1538-39 winter, received a very small portion of those expenses. Cromwell undertook to present two masques for the king in the first two months of that year. For the first, perhaps a masque presented on New Year's or Twelfth Night, the Yeoman of the Revels, John Farlyon, received £6 5*s*. 4*d*. for the masque's costumes; the servants of Christopher "the Myloner" were paid 7*s*. 6*d*. while Christopher himself received £30 for the "charg*es* of the maske" (*Court Revels* 279-80). For their part, Farlyon's servants, received 20*s*. "for pains taken sundry times in masks" on 9 February 1539. In February 1539, Cromwell paid for "King Arthur's Knights," a masque by John Heywood, to be played for Henry VIII. While Cromwell's accounts are unclear as to whether only Heywood's masque was performed or whether it was accompanied by others as well, his accounts record that he paid a total £70 13*s*. 8*d*. in expenses towards this masque. Heywood received £5 10*s*. 5*d*. for his "costs," a sum similar to that paid to Udall the year before *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). Moreover, the expenses for this masque included £33 17*s*. 6*d*. to a painter "that made all the hobby horses and other things thereto belonging;" £13 17*s*. 11*d*. to a milliner and his workmen for "the stuff of the mask;" £9 2*s*. 6*d*. to John Dymoke for "eleven copper plates and other necessaries for my Lord's mask and for comfits when the lords dined;" and £6 7*s*. 6*d*. to "Mrs. Vaughan for the things bought of her for the masks" *(Letters* XIV (2) 782).[22] On 22 February, "Bargemen" received 16*s*. 8*d*. for transporting "Heywoode's mask to Court and home again" *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). In addition, the milliner, Christopher, received an additional 21*s*. 2*d*. on the last day of the month for "trimming of Divine Providence when she played before the King" *(Letters* XIV (2) 782). Whether Divine Providence was a character from Heywood's masque is impossible to tell from the accounts. On 20 March,

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[20] Streitberger has "Drowne" (*Court Revels* 279).

[21] Lancashire notes that the Prince's Players appear in the King's 1538 accounts; Lancashire includes Mr. Hopton's priest, too, although this performance was in April (394).

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[22] In comparison, one banquet during the Field of the Cloth of Gold cost £138 9*s*. 2½*d*. (Anglo 131n1), and Richard Gibson was paid £230 4*s*. 4*d*. for two entertainments on, or near, the same evening (Anglo 133n1).

Farlyon received £6 13*s*. 4*d*. "for 10 yds. Crimson satin, occupied at the masks;" each of these payments were made "By Mr. Richard's command" rather than by Cromwell's *(Letters* XIV (2) 782).

Cromwell's expenses on such revels were significant, and his Christmas schedule of revels rivalled those of the great nobility (Streitberger, *Court Revels* 145). In light of these expenses, the two payments to Bale and his fellows, which total £3 10*s*., appear minor even though they are the largest among the payments made to troupes. Indeed, if the quantity of monetary reward is indicative of a playwright's involvement in Cromwell's propaganda campaign, then Udall and Heywood, who each received more than £5 for their masques, have greater claims to that involvement than does Bale.

Nevertheless, Cromwell's evangelical tendencies were reflected in at least some of the plays whose performances he rewarded (Streitberger, *Court Revels* 147-48). Bale's plays, of course, prove such examples. Udall's 1537 play may have been his now lost *Ezechias*, a play similar to Bale's *King Johan* not only in its praise of a king's religious reform but also in its later performance before Elizabeth I (Streitberger, *Court Revels* 148).[23] According to a contemporary account, the play staged "that heroic deed of Hezekiah, who inflamed with zeal for the divine honor, crushed the brazen image of the serpent" (Edgerton qtd. in Streiteberger, *Court Revels* 148).[24] In *King Johan*, Bale too saw Hezekiah as a model for Henry VIII, declaring Hezekiah, along with David, Solomon, and Jehosophat, to be biblical precedents for Johan's own, rather than the

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[23] Unlike Bale, however, Udall suited his plays to the political and religious context. His 1553 play, *Respublica*, for instance, stages Mary's institution of order following the misrule of Edward VI's counsellors.

[24] Edgerton, William L. *Nicholas Udall*. New York: Twayne, 1965. 83.

Pope's, appointment of spiritual ministers (1509-15). That Udall's play took this tack suggests that Cromwell's household was in early 1538 a theatre for evangelical plays such as *Ezechias* or the plays Wylley had offered to Cromwell.

As noted above, Cromwell generously rewarded troupes under the patronage of others, but it is debatable how powerful his influence over the subject and tenor of the plays performed by such troupes would have been. As the repertoire of these troupes no longer survives, it is impossible to determine whether these plays were of an evangelical bent. There is evidence, however, that indicates that entertainments were to be of an anti-papal, if not precisely an evangelical, nature. In June 1539, for instance, a spectacular naval defeat of papal forces by English ones was performed before Henry VIII on the Thames (Anglo, *Spectacle* 269-70). The French ambassador, Marillac, who reported the Thames battle, later provided information that the such spectacles, which were intended "to show the people that the King would entirely confound and abolish the power of the Holy Father", were not only played at court but also throughout England: anti-papal sentiments in village celebrations had become so common that Marillac deemed it "superfluous" to report specific details (Anglo, *Spectacle* 270).[25]

Moreover, by 3 October 1538, Lady Lisle had directed John Husee to one "Felsted, silk dyer" in order to acquire both players' garments and the script of an evangelical play for performance in Calais (Husee; Byrne 237-38). Husee's fears that a script treating such "new ecclesiastical matters" would be "hard to come by" were confirmed when he met with Felsted (Byrne 237-38). Felsted suggested "Rex Diabole" to

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[25] Yet, as White notes, anti-papal processions in which Londoners "went dressed and masqued as cardinals, to the great displeasure of the pope, according to one French official" as early as 1533 (*Theatre* 194n10).

Husee, an interlude (now lost) already familiar to one of Husee's acquaintances (Byrne 237-38). Judging by Husee's response, the play did not quite meet Lady Lisle's demand for a play dealing with "nyw Scrypt*ure* matters" (Husee), but such plays, Husee reported, "be very dere / they asketh above xx^{s} for an Entrelywde" (Husee).[26] Whether Husee was successful in obtaining a play other than "Rex Diabole" is uncertain, but Husee did secure the players' garments. In April 1539, the ship carrying Felsted's garments back to London sunk, and having had so much difficulty satisfying Felsted's demands for reparation, Husee vowed "to deal no more with such merchants" (Byrne 437). That the religious conservative Lady Lisle, whom Foxe described as an "vtter enemy to Gods honor, and in idolatrye, hipocrisie, and pride incomparably euyll" (1570, 8: 1401), should seek an evangelical play suggests that a patron's own beliefs may have taken a backseat to the necessity of appearing to conform.

Yet the high cost of such plays suggests their scarcity. Such scarcity might be attributable to the danger the compilers of such plays feared or to a high demand for such plays. The market for such plays may very well have been a seller's market. As discussed in the previous chapter, the late 1530s saw a marked rise in the number of patronized troupes touring the southeast. These troupes would have required plays, and perhaps this increase in troupes accounts for the high demand suggested by the high cost of evangelical plays.

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[26] There is some discrepancy as to the asking price for these interludes. Husee's script is difficult to read, but the second "x" of his "xx^{s}" appears identical to the "x" in his "Rex." While Byrne's transcription gives the price as more than 20*s*. (1242 (p.238)), Twycross (7), who follows Neuss (Twycross 13n7, 8), gives 40*s*. *Letters*, Addenda, I.ii, 462-63, gives the figure as 40*s*., and Lancashire (201), Streitberger (4), White (72), and Leininger (71n33) appear to follow this source.

It is useful to compare the itinerary of Cromwell's troupe with others during these years. The 1537/38 itinerary of the Prince's players, which must have begun touring after Edward VI's birth on 12 October 1537, is similar to the itinerary for Cromwell's troupe. Both troupes performed in Shrewsbury in August 1538 and in Ludlow probably around then as well (Somerset 76, 196). The Shrewsbury records contain an entry noting payment of 22*s*. for either a single or several feasts (Somerset 196). The entry appears to link the Prince's and the Lord Privy Seal's players to a feast given in honour of the lord visitor, Richard Ingworth, who visited Shrewsbury in August 1538 (Somerset 660).[27] While the entry may record gross expenditures for several such feasts, the association of the Prince's and Cromwell's players suggests that they either travelled together or travelled the same or similar route, arriving at Shrewsbury at the same time. Both troupes also stopped at Leicester and Cambridge (Bateson 41; Lancashire 380, 382). The Prince's players toured through the southwest of England this year as well, visiting Exeter, Plymouth, and Southhampton (Lancashire 382). The Prince's players, moreover, played in Canterbury on 2 March 1538 and 27 January 1539 (Dawson 10).

The evidence of Bale's participation in Cromwell's propaganda campaign, then, is suggestive but it is not conclusive. While the coincidence of several events—of Bale and Leland's pleas for Cromwell's intervention in Bale's arrest; the appearance of Cromwell's Players at several venues throughout England, and the rewards Cromwell made to Bale and his fellows for performances in late 1538 and early 1539—certainly indicates Cromwell's support of Bale and his plays, it does not prove that Bale and his fellows performed as the troupe known as Cromwell's players, or even that they performed Bale's plays. It must be granted that the context in which Bale's performance at court does suggest that anti-papal entertainments were acceptable, if they were not demanded of those troupes and authors performing there. Udall's 1538 masque and Lady Lisle's search for a playscript dealing with "new scriptural matters" suggest that such plays were in demand.

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[27] The Prince's Players were paid 4*s*. 8*d*. on 23 September 1538 from the Chamberlains' Accounts at Rye (Louis 105) and 5*s*. on 2 March 1538 from the Canterbury City Chamberlains' Accounts (J. Gibson, *Kent* 149) and 6*s*. 8*d*. on 28 January 1539 (J. Gibson, *Kent* 150).

One of the important pieces of circumstantial evidence of Bale's participation in Cromwell's propaganda campaign is Richard Morison's proposal for the institution of annual anti-papal plays and festivities. Of particular concern here is Morison's advice that Robin Hood plays be "deleted and forbodden" and replaced with anti-papal material "deuysed to setforthe and declare lyuely before the peoples eies, the abhominyation and wickedness of the bysshop of Rome, monkes, Freres, Nonnes, and suche like, and to declare and open to them thobediences that yo*ur* subiectes by goddes and mans lawes owe unto your Maiestie" ("Perswasion" 18v-19r). Morison sees drama as particularly effective as he claims that "Into the co*m*en peple thynges sooner enter by the eies, then by the eares: remembryng moche better that they see then that they heare" ("Perswasion" 19r). Morison's comments are significant in that they appear to propose not only the devising of the sorts of plays Bale wrote but also the dissemination of such plays throughout England. Morison's proposal thus provides evidence, at the very least, of the discussion of such propagandistic projects within Cromwell's circle of clients. As a result, Morison's proposal has been critically understood to have causal force: Cromwell implemented Morison's proposal through his patronage of Bale, who performed his plays with Cromwell's players (White, *Theatre* 14).

Yet the dating of Morison's tract causes difficulties, particularly in terms of establishing the tract's precedence to Cromwell's propaganda campaign of the late 1530s. The British Library catalogue, for instance, dates Morison's treatise to 1540-46, and a draft version, calendared in *Letters and Papers*, is dated there to 1542. This latter date is based on internal evidence that notes that the draft "must have been written after the dissolution of the monasteries" (Anglo, "Early" 177). Activities similar to those proposed by Morison had appeared in England as early as 1533. That year, for instance, the Privy Council considered having sermons on the king's supremacy preached throughout the realm (Anglo, "Early" 177); moreover, anti-papal processions were made that year in which Londoners "went dressed and masqued as cardinals, to the great displeasure of the pope, according to one French official" (White, *Theatre* 194n10). Indeed, some of Bale's anti-papal plays were written as early as 1534 (Blatt 29). Anglo thus sees 1542 as too late a date for Morison's suggestions and proposes, therefore, that Morison might have composed the proposals at least in 1538, if not earlier, "that is before such ideas had been applied throughout the country and when they would have had the force of an original theory" ("Early" 177). Yet for Morison's proposal to indeed have the "force of an original theory," Morison would have had to compose his treatise in 1533 or earlier.

Geoffrey Elton offers an opinion that concurs with Anglo's, also holding an earlier date for the text's composition. Elton argues that while the "editors of *Letters and Papers*, for no obvious reason, chose the year 1542", a cancelled interlineated reference to Roger Cholmley suggests that Morison "was working on the book round about 1535 or

1536" ("Reform" 178).[28] This cancelled reference occurs in the context of a criticism of English lawyers' lack of rhetorical skill from which Cholmley, a "recorder of London from 1536 to 1544," is excepted ("Reform" 178). Morison's comment, Elton contends, "would surely come more suitably touching a man well known as a pleader rather than as a judge" ("Reform" 178). Yet Morison notes that the Pope "is not w*ith*out frendes and spis here emong us, who nowe and then as we see put forthe ther hornes and disclose themselves" ("Perswasion" 14v), making reference, it seems, to the Pilgrimage of Grace. This would put the date of the text's composition to late 1536 at the earliest, although 1537 seems more likely as the earliest composition date.

In any case, Elton discounts the influence which Morison's tract had on Cromwell's policy, considering Morison's tract as evidence of a concerted dramatic propaganda campaign to be based "on somewhat slender grounds" (*Policy* 186n1). Nevertheless, this is how Morison's tract has been understood in most critical treatments of Tudor drama. Indeed, most critics have followed Anglo's lead, seeing in Morison not only a reflection of "the actualities of anti-papal propaganda during the fifteen-thirties" ("Early" 177) but also the instigation of this propaganda. While Anglo tempers his judgment of the originality of Morison's proposals, he nevertheless urges a revision of the date of the text, based on the assumption that an earlier date is necessary to validate the "force of an original theory" ("Early" 177). If Morison's tract were to have the "force of an original theory", it would need to be predate these. Indeed, Anglo notes elsewhere that while it is "impossible to estimate what influence, if any, Moryson's [sic] views had upon contemporary propagandists… Cromwell himself fully appreciated the value of a full-scale propaganda campaign, such as that advocated by Moryson [sic], to help popularize measures affecting the daily lives of all the King's subjects" (*Spectacle* 266).

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[28] The dating to 1542 may, however, derive from a consideration of the paper's watermark. Briquet dates a similar watermark (no. 11386) to 1542, and Piccard dates a different but similar watermark (no. 1684) to 1543. Two other similar watermarks (nos. 1685 and 1687) are dated by Piccard to the late 1540s. Most intriguingly, Barry Adams identifies a watermark similar to that of Morison's "Perswasion" in the A-text manuscript of Bale's *King Johan*, citing Briquet's no. 11375, 11376, and 11385 (*John Bale's* 5). However, as variations of this watermark were extremely common both in northwest France and in England during the sixteenth century, these watermarks can offer only inconclusive evidence for establishing the dates of these manuscripts (Briquet 573; Heawood, "Sources" 451-52; Heawood, "Papers" 283).

The originality of Morison's proposal, however, lies not in its suggestion that drama and festive celebrations be employed as propaganda but in its idea that anti-papal celebrations require annual repetition for them to become truly effective. David Cressy understands Morison's tract in this light, considering Morison's text to belong more properly to the context of the 1540s than to that of the 1530s. Cressy removes Cromwell from his consideration, noting that Morison's tract addressed the king rather than Cromwell and that although Morison's "proposal was ignored in the 1540s…within half a century its principles had become common practice" (67). Indeed, Cressy's identification of Morison's concerns within the context of the 1540s (and perhaps later) deserves consideration.

Below, I consider Morison's proposals in light of their defense, rather than their proposal, of anti-papal books, songs, and plays performed in the late 1530s. Morison's consideration of the work of these plays proves to be less a digression from his topic than is generally thought and proposes not the implementation of anti-papal texts but the toleration of them in the face of opposition to them.

Morison's proposal survives in both a draft and a fair copy. The draft version, catalogued at the British Library as Cotton MS. Faustina. C. ii, fols. 5-22, is titled in Morison's hand, "A Discourse touching the Reformation of the Lawes of England," and an excerpt from this version was published by Anglo in 1957 as "An Early Tudor Programme for Plays and Other Demonstrations against the Pope." The fair copy, Royal MS. 18. A. L, lacks a title although the catalogue lists it as the "Perswasion to the kyng that the laws of the realme shuld be in Latin." As these titles indicate, the tract presents Morison's case that English law, the state of which according to Morison, was "disordered and uncerteyn", should be "gathered together and made certeyn…[and] myght be reduced into the latyn tonge" ("Perswasion" 3v).[29] In this, Morison follows Thomas Starkey, who made a similar proposal in his *Dialogue between Pole and Lupset* (Elton, "Reform" 176-78). Yet while this project comprises the tract's motivating subject, Morison's larger theme is the inculcation of subjects' obedience to their king. Thus, according to Morison, the primary benefit of such a codification of the law will be the eradication of disobedience within the commonwealth. According to Morison, the law is "a rule wherunto euery man ought to frame his livyng, a bridle to pulback his euill aspertions…a chayne to tye and lynke man with man in charite and loue, and…the piller that susteyneth and holdeth up euery co*m*en welthe and cyule socitie" (4r). As a result, the codification of the law into Latin will produce obedient subjects and a peaceful commonwealth. According to Morison, once English laws are codified, then "myght the iouthe be counsilled therein from the cradle," a pedagogical practice that not only would "breade and bryng forth many goodly and noble wittes" but also would "cause yo*ur* subiectes to florisshe in knowlage and lernyng" (11v). The codification of the law, then, enables its easy transmission to the youth of the realm who will benefit by their increase in knowledge and learning.

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[29] All subsequent citations are from "Perswasion" unless otherwise noted.

As his reproductive images—the cradle, breeding, bringing forth—imply, Morison's proposed codification of the law will not only produce obedient subjects but also successively reproduce such subjects. Morison asserts that

> all gouernours and rulers before our tyme desiryng the contynuaunce of any thyng in ther co*m*en welthes, myndyng it to be contynually delyuered from hande to hande, to go from succession to succession, thought it most expedient and necessary to instyll it into the heddes of iouthe assone as it myghte, euen from the uearie cradle. (12v)

That is, Morison envisions a process that bears fruit in the future, a process that depends on a youthful—and obedient—generation succeeding an older one. That the youth be taught the law is significant for Morison as such learning induces a "natural" compliance in adulthood more efficacious in compelling subjects' obedience to the king than force. A youth, Morsion contends, is "flexible redy and apte to recyue whatoseuer shalbe put into hym: so at noon other tyme can he receyue it, that it shall long contynue & remayne his" (12r). Such education over time produces a subject naturally compliant and obedient rather than a subject liable to disobey unless compelled by force:

> For those thyngs that be lerned in iouthe, be tourned into nature, and stik so faste therin, that it shalbe uearie harde to pull them out. That that is dryuen into man w*ith* force, shame, or feare of the lawes only will no lenger remayne, then the force or sworde hangeth ouer his hedde. (12r-v)

Morison here articulates the ideological reproduction of obedient subjects.

Curiously, Morison takes Irish scholars as an example of the strength of such indoctrination. According to Morison, as soon as these scholars, in their youth,

> had lerned the rudymentes & prynciples of Grammer, forthw*ith* they wer tought his [the Pope's] decrees and decretalls before all other thynges. And when they cam to studie the unyuersitees of this Realme beyng but yong...although in all other kyndes of lernyng they wer veraie asses, yet in this they did excell, able to reherse more textes by harte, then auncient students and olde fathers of thys Realme...This caused the Irisshe men to haue the bisshop of Rome in so great reuerence and estymation. This caused his power so long ther to contynue.[30] (13r-v)

Morison thus aims not only to convince Henry VIII by citing the efficacy of, in Morison's view, papist indoctrination but also to convince the king to adapt the practice to his own ends.

This theme of adaptation occurs several times in Morison's tract. Morison urges Henry VIII not to discount the viability of foreign practices for English ends. He notes, "as it is not impossible for an Italian taylour, but easy to make of an englisshe clothe, an Italian cloke: or for an englisshe taylour to make of an italian ueluet, an englisshe gowne: so is it not impossible but easy to tourne the nature of the cyuyle lawes into ours, and yet in no poynte chaunge any of ours" (24r). Shortly thereafter, Morison frames the work he has already completed in terms reminiscent of the recycling of material of the dissolved monasteries: "I trust the same [Morison's work] beyng dissolued and pulled in pieces, will serue to buylde the worke that is purposed" (25r). Following in this vein, Morison advises the institution of several festive celebrations of Henry VIII's "victory" over Rome, modelling each on either a familiar model or extant practice. Morison first suggests a yearly feast, modelled on Passover, to commemorate "that our sauyour Chryste, by his Moses you maiestie hathe delyvred us out of the bondage of most wicked pahrao of all pharaos, the bysshop of Rome" (16v). Noting the Calais processional celebration of Henry V's victory at Agincourt, Morison also proposes that Henry VIII's subjects make a "yearly tryumphe, make bonfyres, go in procession laudyng god w*ith* o*u*r mouthes and all kyndes of instruments, that it pleased hym to geve yo*u*r Ma*iestie* his mynyster victorie ouer our auncient enemye that wicked dragon the bysshop of Rome" (17v). Third, Morison advises the institution of a "yerely memoriall of the deystruction of the byshop of Rome out of this Realme" similar to that made by the Coventry Hoptide celebration of the defeat of the Danes. Modelling his fourth suggestion on the bishops' processes through their dioceses, Morison advocates a "yearly tyme appoynted partly to teache & preach the usurped power of the byssoppe of Rome, howe and where by he and his adherents went aboute to detroie the Realme" (18r). Indeed, this proposal was fulfilled in Edward VI's 1547 Injunctions, one of which required "all ecclesiastical persons having cure of soul" to "declare, manifest, and open, four times every year at the least, in their sermons and other collations, that the Bishop of Rome's usurped power and jurisdiction…was of most just causes taken away and abolished, and that therefore no manner of obedience or subjection…is due unto him" (Hughes and Larkin 393).

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[30] This passage provides the most suggestive phrase for the dating of "Perswasion" as Morison comments that these Irish students studied in England "as before x or xii yeres past many did" (13r). The passage appears to refer to a falling off of Irish attendance at English universities, but I have been unable to gather any information on or date for such an event.

Finally, Morison advises that Robin Hood plays, performed “In somer comenly on the holy daies in most places of yo*ur* Realme (18v). These plays should be “forbodden and deleted” (18v) because, according to Morison, they instruct their audiences in disobedience: “besides the lewdenes and rebawdry that there is opened to the people, disobedience also to yo*ur* offices is tought, whilest these good bloudes go about to take from the shirif of Notyngham one that for offendyng the lawes shulde have suffered execution” (18v). In their stead, other plays should be “dyvysed to setforthe and declare lyuely before the peoples eies, the abhomynation and wickednes of the bysshop of Rome, monkes, Freres, Nonnes, and suche like, and to declare and open to them thobedience that yo*ur* subiectes by godes and mans lawes owe unto you Maiestie” (19r). Implicitly, Morison understands all of these traditional festive celebrations as variations on the Irish scholars’ knowledge of decrees and decretals: these celebrations instruct their audiences—particularly their youthful audiences—through repetition, printing in their audiences the lessons that should be known by heart. Morison’s argument achieves “the force of original argument” not so much in his proposal that new plays be devised—such plays and entertainments had been played since at least 1533—but in his proposal that they be ritualized as annual celebrations. That is, the emphasis of Morison’s proposal rests not so much on the immediate effect of the performance of such plays and progresses as on their repetition over several years.

Morison also contends that such indoctrination must not proceed along positive lines only but that the people must also “knowe and discerne what is euyll” (13v). Thus, Morison understands the argument that since Henry VIII “hath abolisshed hym [the bishop of Rome], the people neade not to talke of hym, but if they wolde holde ther tongues eueryman wolde soon forget hym" as faulty (14r). Instead, Morison suggests, such policy is "neither godly, honest, nor profetable…but ueraie hurtefull daungerous and pernycyouse for your subiectes" (14r). Rather, in an apparent digression, Morison suggests it preferrable that

> the ungodlynes, hurtes, and euylls that haue come and maye come through hym to eu*er*y christen Realme wer daylye by all meanes opened inculked & dryen into the peoples heddes, tought in scoles to children, plaied in plaies before the ignoraunt people, songe in mynstrells songes, and bokes in englisshe purposely to be deuysed to declare thesame at large. For by these meanes the thyng prynted in mens hartes, is ther any englisshe man so oblyuyouse, that shall forget the same? (14v-15r)

To the extent that "Perswasion" deals with the larger theme of the indoctrination of youth, the digressive nature of Morison's detour through a discussion of drama and festivities disappears: Morison's proposal for the standardization of English law and its subsequent induction of peace and obedience to the commonwealth introduces Morison's proposal for the drama, which is an elaboration on the theme of subjects' obedience. Moreover, Morison's innovative proposal of yearly celebrations takes place after a defense of anti-papal plays, songs, and books. Morison, however, deals with several sub-themes as well, the most extended of which is his treatment of the importance of education for the production of loyal and obedient subjects. It is under this theme that Morison's consideration of plays occurs.

Morison's proposal counters a nascent or existing reaction against anti-papal texts. That is, while Morison advocates the invention of annual anti-papal celebrations, he defends anti-papal texts already in circulation. He argues that

> Playes, songes and bokes ar to be born with al, though they payne and vexe somme, specyally when they declare either the abhomynacion of the bysshop of Rome and his adherentts, or the benefites brought to thys realme by your graces tournyng hym and hys own [out] of it, they ar to be born w*ith* all, yea though som thyng in them be to be misliked. (16r)

The "playes, songes and bokes" to which Morison refers here exist already as they are to be "born with al." In other words, Morison advocates not their creation but their toleration. Indeed, Morison appears to have some experience with such texts and acknowledges their faultiness. Yet he maintains that these faults must be overlooked so that the texts can perform their more important ideological work. Morison likens the commonwealth both to a diseased body that "laboureth to expell the ache" in an injured limb rather than amputate the limb as well as to a field of corn whose farmer "dothe suffer the weades to growe, least he shulde destroie" the crop along with the weeds. Morison sees the king's rule of his realm in analogous terms: "so rulers somtyme do and must wynke at the small faultes of such ther subiectes as be endowed with excellent vertues, bycause they will not lose the use com*m*odyte and benefite of thother" (15v-16r). While he acknowledges that such books "shulde be syncere and alle poynts pure w*ith*out errour or doubtfull doctryne," Morison admits to the difficulty of fulfilling such a project: "but hard it is to make any thyng agenst papists so perfect, as som will not fynde faulte in it" (16v). Morison's argument here treats an existent object not a proposed one. Anti-papal texts have been written, have circulated, and have become, potentially, objects of censorship.

While the implicit argument against anti-papal plays, songs, and books appears general enough to be difficult to consider in any specific detail, it is salutary to consider responses to the sort of texts, particularly plays, Morison defends. Indeed, by the early 1540s, reaction to evangelical drama did arise, threatening and, in some cases, implementing suppression of that drama.

In his 1544 *Epistle Ehortatorye of an Englyshe Christian*, John Bale railed against the English authorities' treatment of evangelical players and minstrels, complaining that

> None leave ye unvexed and untroubled...note so moch as the poore mynstrels and players of interludes... So long as they played lyes and sange bawdye songes / blaspheming God and corrupting mennes consciences / [ye] never blamed them / but were ye verye well contented. But sens they persuaded the people to wershyp theyr Lorde God a ryght accordinge to his holye lawes and not yours / and to acknowledge Iesus Christ for their onlye redemer and sauer without your lowsye legerdemaynes / ye neuer were pleased with them" (xvi$^{r\text{-}v}$).

Bale's comment has long been seen as a response to the regulation of playing that the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion established. The Act instituted this regulation of drama in positive terms, declaring that "it shalbe lawfull to all and everye p*er*sone and p*er*sones to set foorthe songes plaies and enterludes, to be used and exercysed within this Realme and other the King*es* Domynions, for the rebuking and reproching of vices, and the setting foorthe of vertue; so allwaies the saide songes plaies or enterludes meddle not with interpretac*i*ons of Scripture, contrarye to the doctryne set foorthe (or to be sett furthe) by the Kinge*s* Majestie" (895). In his monumental study, *The Elizabethan Stage*, E. K. Chambers notes that Bale's statement provides "sufficient evidence" not only of the suppression of evangelical drama formalized by the Act but also of pre-1543 evangelical: "in every inn-yard and on every village green, the praises of the pure Gospel were sung, and Pope and priests were derided in play, at the bidding of the wily Privy Seal. Of this there is sufficient evidence in the passionate protest of Bale after Cromwell had fallen, and the players' mouths had been shut by the *Act* for the *Advancement of true Religion* in 1543" (1: 242). Harold Gardiner sees Bale's response as more resentful than passionate. In Gardiner's view, the 1543 Act was "bitterly resented by the Protestant element since it had deprived them a great advantage over the Catholic side, since the Catholics were already forbidden by their Church to interpret the Scriptures to their own fancy" (59). Yet while Bale wrote after the passage of the Act, he responded to violent reaction to evangelical playing that began prior to the Act. In his *Epistle Exhortatorye*, Bale lists several martyrs, including Richard Spenser and John Ramsaye (xiii^{v}), men whose deaths John Foxe also noted in his *Acts and Monuments*. While Bale does not explicitly connect Spenser's fate to his playing, he suggests this connection in general terms, complaining of the "impresonynge and burnynge of the seyd godlye ministers / be they wryters or preachers / players or syngers" (xix^{r}). Foxe, however, makes the connection explicit. He claims that Spenser, a former priest, converted to evangelical beliefs and "maryed a wife, and became a player in interludes" (1570, 8: 1376).[31] According to Foxe, Spenser died along "with one Ramsey and Hewet, which iij. were all condemned and burned" in Salisbury (1570, 8: 1376). The similarity between Spenser and Bale is striking: each of them converted to evangelical beliefs, married, became (or, in Bale's case, continued to be) involved in playing. Bale's comment, then, suggests an early 1540s reaction against evangelical playing that existed prior to the formalization of this suppression in the 1543 Act.

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[31] However, in 1563 Foxe noted only that Spenser had converted earned "his liuing with

Foxe, moreover, notes such persecution of players and singers prior to this Act. In his list of those persecuted after 1541, Foxe includes one Shermon, the Keeper of the Carpenters' Hall in Christ's parish, who was prosecuted "for procuryng an interlude to bee ope*n*ly played, wherein Priestes were rayled on, and called knaues"; Thomas Granger and John Dictier, both "Noted for common syngars agaynste the Sacramentes and ceremonies"; and Henry Patinson and Antony Barber for "maynteinyng their boyes to syng a song agaynst the Sacrament of the aultar" (1570, 8: 1377). The above offenses suggest that the entertainments these people offered were of a more doctrinal nature than the anti-papal texts Morison suggests. Yet the reaction against such activities nevertheless provides a context for Morison's tract.

As well, Bishop Edmund Bonner issued injunctions in 1542 forbidding the performance of

> any manner of common plays, games, or interludes, to be played, set forth, or declared, within their churches, or chapels, where the blessed Sacrament of the altar is, or any other sacrament ministered, or Divine Service said or sung; because they be places constitute and ordained to well disposed people for godly prayer, and wholsome consolation. (Frere 2: 88).

þ^{e} sweate of hys browes and labours of hys handes" (1563, Preface 617).

If this order was successful in banning plays from London's churches, it also may have had a hand in moving the staging of these plays to more private venues: several citizens hosted the performances of interludes in their homes, including a performance during Lent which must have been designed especially to offend traditional sensibilities (Brigden 344).[32]

In the mid-1550s, Bonner expressed concern over the clergy's participation in drama. In his 1554 London Diocese Visitation Articles, Bonner asks whether any clergy visit ale-houses or taverns, he inquires whether any "repair to any dicing houses, common bowling alleys, suspect houses or places, or do haunt or use common games or plays or behave themselves otherwise unpriestly or unseemly" (Frere 2: 333). Moreover, he distinguishes between "common games or plays" and, in a later visitation article, "privy" plays, associating such private plays, among other activities, with married priests. The thirteenth article asks "Whether there be any married priests, or naming themselves ministers, that do keep any assemblies or conventicles, with such like as they are, in office or sect, to set forth any doctrine or usage not allowed by the laws and laudable customs of this realm; or whether there be any resort of any of them to any place for any privy lectures, sermons, plays, games or other devices, not expressly in this realm by laws allowable" (Frere 2: 333). This identification of evanglelical playing is intriguing in that it associates it with married priests, suggesting that the playing of presumably evangelical plays commonly, if privately, involved the participation, if not organization, of evangelical ministers. A later article attempts to identify "any that hath printed or sold slanderous books, ballads or plays, contrary to Christian religion" (Frere 2: 354).

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[32] According to Brigden, these citizens were George Tadlowe, William Clyncheman, and Thomas Hancock (344). White identifies Hancock as the same one who, as Poole's parish priest, permitted the performance of a play in the parish church in 1551 (*Theatre* 139-40).

Moreover, William Turner, in his 1545 *Rescuyinge of the Romishe Foxe*, answers Stephen Gardiner's accusation that Turner objects to all images by turning the charge back upon Gardiner:

> Where as ye compare me vnto the Turc whiche forbiddethe open shewes and preachyng of Christe / i meruel withe what face ye call me Turkish in that behaff when as ye your self forbad the players of london (as it was tolde me) to play any mo playes of Christe / but of robin hode and litle Johan / and of the Parlament of byrdes and suche other trifles. (G2r)

Turner's charge resonates with Morison's proposal in several ways. Most obviously, Gardiner sees Robin Hood plays as providing innocuous or less controversial material for the players, a claim to which Morison objects. Moreover, Gardiner's preference of the Robin Hood plays provides a context for Morison's proposal. That is, Gardiner's encouragement of the playing of Robin Hood contributes to the argument Morison intends to counter with his proposals. Robin Hood plays, according to Morison, are far from innocuous: they are plays that teach disobedience to the king.

That Gardiner allegedly banned "playes of Christe" not only suggests Gardiner's desire for the London players to avoid controversial subject matter. His order also suggests that such "playes of Christe" were of an evangelical tenor. This evangelical playing in the 1540s suggests a venue for the plays Bale added to his list of 1547 plays.

Two later proclamations object to plays having moved from public to more private—"suspycyous darke & inconvenyent"—locations. In October 1544, Henry VIII issued a royal proclamation that the London Aldermen reiterated the following February (Hughes and Larkin 341-42; Mill and Chambers 291-92). The London proclamation complains of the

> manyfold and sundrye Enterludes and co*m*en Playes that nowe of late dayes haue been… more co*m*monly & besyle set foorthe and played then heretofore hathe bene accustomed in dyuers & many suspycyous darke & inconvenyent place*s* of this our most drad & most Benigne soueraign lorde the kinge*s* Citie & chamber of london wherein no suche playes ought to be played. (Mill and Chambers 291)

The Proclamation especially addresses London's youth who are "provoked" by plays "to the vniuste wastynge and Consumynge of theire maisters goode*s* the neglectinge and Omyssyon of theyre faithefull s*er*uice & due Obedyence to there said maisters" (Mill and Chambers 292). Moreover, this behaviour causes "Encrease off moche vyce synne & Idelnes & to the greate decaye & hurt of the co*m*men welthe of the said Citie as of Archerye & other laufull & laudable exercyses" (Mill and Chambers 292). This proclamation is significant because it brings together several discourses, including a moralizing economic view that I shall discuss more extensively in chapter six.

Besides the performances before Cromwell and Cranmer that can be certainly ascribed to Bale, and in addition to the 1560 Canterbury play discussed in the introduction, one other performance of Bale's plays and two other preparations for performance of Bale's plays are certainly known. Evidence survives for one performance of Bale's three extant biblical plays. In his *Vocacyon*, Bale tells us that

On the .xx. daye of August / was the ladye Marye with us at Kylkennye proclamed Quene of Englande / Fraunce and Irelande / with the greatest solempnyte that there coulde be devysed / of processions / musters and disgysinges / all the noble captaynes and gentilmen there about beinge present. What a do I had that daye with the prebendaryes and prestes abought wearinge the cope / croser / and myter in procession / it were to much to write.

I tolde them earnestly / whan they wolde have compelled me therunto / that I was not moyses minister but Christes / I desyred them that they wolde not compell me to his denyall / which is (S. Paule sayth) in the repetinge of Moyses sacramentes & ceremoniall s[c]haddowes (Gal. v). Whti that I toke Christes testament in my hande / & went to the market crosse / the people in great nombre folowinge. There toke I the .xiii chap of S. Paule to the Roma. declaringe to them brevely / what the autoritie was of the worldly powers & magistrates, what reverence & obedience were due to the same. In the meane tyme had the prelates goten .ii. dysgysed prestes / one to beare the myter afore me / and another the croser makinge .iii. procession pageauntes of one. The yonge men in the forenone played a Tragedye of Gods promises in the olde lawe at the market crosse / with organe plainges and songes very aptely. In the afternoon agayne they played a Commedie of sanct Johan Baptistes preachinges / of Christes baptisynge and of his temptacion in the wildernesse / to the small

> contentacion of the prestes and other papistes there. (Bale, *Vocacyon* 58-59)

Bale's description of this event highlights the extent to which he understood his drama in relation to Catholic practices. His walk to the market cross forms part of a procession, a procession increased by the addition of Catholic elements. Moreover, the performance of the plays by the "yonge men" suggests that the play was performed by a parish store.[33] The St. Michael Churchwardens' accounts from Chagford in Devon, for instance, record income from the "yongemen off the p*ar*ysche" for a Robin Hood play on 7 April 1555 (Wasson, "The End" 54), and the parish of Morebath also received income from the Young Men's store, a group which was comprised of "all bachelors of communicant age, which for men usually meant about fourteen years and above" (Duffy, *Voices* 26).[34] Alan J. Fletcher surmises that the Kilkenny Young Men were "an identifiable body of young men (often so described, incidentally in civic documents) who were banded together and organized by a town official, the Lord of Bullring" (170). These Young Men were trained by the Lord of Bullring for military service and musters; they also may have policed the city (Fletcher 170). Bale's drama thus participated in traditional forms of community, making that community visible to itself. Indeed, the point Bale insists on making here is the visibility of the obedient community in Kilkenny: his sermon reiterated the subject's duty to obey those ruling while his plays presented evangelical doctrine.

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[33] White suggests that this term refers to students of a school Bale may have operated.

[34] Duffy notes that Morebath's Young Men's store was the last of Morebath's "pre-Reformation institutions" to be dissolved (on 18 March 1548) as a result of the Chantry Act (*Voices* 120-22). They reconstituted themselves, however, in 1555 and held their first church ale on 5 July 1556 (*Voices* 161-62).

In his 1552 *An Expostulation or complaynte agaynste the blasphemyes of a franticke papyst of Hamshyre*, Bale rails against the actions of an antagonist who, in addition to allegedly threatening Bale with a dagger and having Bale brought before the Winchester sessions to answer the accusation that he had failed to hallow the font for a baptism, called a servant a "herytke and knaue" for practicing to play in Bale's *Three Laws* at Christmas 1551 (C2v-4v). In addition, the servant was required "in hys own stought name to do a lewde massage, whych was to call the compiler of that Comedie, both heretike and knaue, concludynge that it was a boke of most perniciouse heresie" (C3r). Bale defends the play against the charge that it is heretical, summarizing the play's depiction of

> how y*e* faythelesse Antichrist of Rome with his clergye, hath bene a blemysher, darkener, confounder, and poysener, of all wholsom lawes. And that wyth ydolatricall Sodometerie he hath dyfyled nature, by ambytyouse Auarice he that made Gods commaundeme*n*ts of non effecte, and with hypocrytycall doctryne peruerted Christes holye Gospell. (C3r)

Bale concludes his summary by asking, "Thys is wele knowne to al men. How commeth than an heresye, thus to report or wryte?" (C3r). Moreover, Bale implies that the play, were it heretical, previously would have been denounced as such as it "was imprynted about .vi. yeares ago, and hath been abroad euer sens, to be both seane and iudged of men, what it co*n*tayneth" (C3r). The circulation of the play in print form thus guarantees its orthodoxy against the accusation of the "franticke papist". At the time, Bale held a living at Bishopstoke so it is possible that he had a hand in the play's performance as well.

There is reason to remain cautious in asserting that Bale formed part of Cromwell's players and toured throughout England disseminating Cromwellian propaganda. First, the documentary evidence supports this assertion only circumstantially, and much of this evidence is contradictory in nature and difficult to reconcile. The date, for instance, of *Anglorum Heliades* lies between 1536 and 1539 but, even given this range, does not include plays Bale claims were compiled in 1538. Bale's dating of these plays may be motivated by concerns other than accuracy: the dates may have been intended to indicate their origin prior to the Six Articles and to associate them with, from Bale's 1547 perspective, a heyday for evangelicals in England. Bale's own shifting accounts of his history of patronage suggest his concern for reputation: an association with Cromwell may not have appeared as advantageous in 1547 as in 1558. Likewise, an association with de Vere might have been advantageous in the late 1530s but not later. The lost series of plays need not have originated under Cromwell's or de Vere's patronage: they must be dated to the period between the writing of *Anglorum Heliades* and the publication of the *Summarium*, that is between 1538 and 1547. This dating does not discount the possible origin in Cromwell's patronage but it opens up the possibility that the plays were written in exile, and that these lost plays were similar to those "playes of Christe" that Gardiner allegedly banned. Moreover, evidence of several performances of Bale's plays demonstrates them to have been performed in the 1550s and 1560s by members of local communities rather than by patronized troupes.

In addition, Morison's advice to the king need not be understood as advocating the institution of an anti-papal dramatic programme but as advocating the tolerance and continuance of anti-papal festivities, some of which might be deemed excessive from a doctrinal point of view. That is, Morison's advice retains its currency into the 1540s, especially in light of the conservative reaction against playing.

While this chapter has focused narrowly on Bale's patronage by Cromwell, the argument here has implications for our understanding of evangelical drama. First, evangelical drama was not exclusively performed by patronized troupes; it was performed by members of local communities. This was especially true of performances of Bale's plays in the 1550s and possibly in 1560. Moreover, Thomas Wylley's plays were performed by the children of his chapel, and Udall's *Hezekiah* play also was likely performed by children. Moreover, such evangelical drama continued to be performed in the 1540s as Gardiner's and Bonner's reactions attest.

The performers of such drama need not to have converted to evangelical doctrine to have participated although, of course, they may have. It seems doubtful that the children performing Wylley's or Udall's plays would have concerned themselves with the plays' doctrinal statements. The performers' participation signals not conversion but collaboration, in Shagan's sense, and concern for this collaboration underwrites Gardiner's ban on all, not simply evangelical, playes of Christ.

Chapter Three: "Badges and sygnes of baptym": The 1540 Maldon Play and John Bale's Biblical Trilogy

Despite Thomas Cromwell's fall and Bale's subsequent exile, the performance of controversial plays did not cease. As discussed in the previous chapter, the playing of evangelical drama continued in the early 1540s, occasioning regulatory responses not only from the king but also from ecclesiastical and civic authorities. While the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion aimed to regulate the doctrinal content of the plays it permitted to be performed, other attempts at regulation such as Edmund Bonner's in 1542 and Stephen Gardiner's in 1545, attempted to curb performances in churches and churchyards or to ban the performance of any "playes of Christe" (Turner G2r).

Gardiner's sweeping ban of "playes of Christe," or what Bale termed "christe*n* Comedyes" (*A Declaration* G1r), is curious in that it did not distinguish, as the 1543 Act did, between acceptable and prohibited religious plays, a distinction to be made, according to the Act, on the basis of whether a play meddled "with interpretac*i*ons of Scripture, contrarye to the doctryne set foorthe (or to be sett furthe) by the King*es* Majestie" (895). The sweeping nature of Gardiner's order is surprising, then, because it represents an attempt to curb all "playes of Christ" regardless of their doctrinal leanings. While many motives for the generality of Gardiner's ban suggest themselves—such plays were exclusively of an evangelical bent and thus heretical; such plays, whether evangelical or conservative, caused violent controversy to erupt in their audiences; or such plays' subject matter was thought unfit for dramatic representation—it is impossible to know certainly the specific motives for the ban.

Such "playes of Christe" appear, however, to have been large-scale productions usually staged by parishes or towns. Yet Gardiner's concerns suggest that these "playes of Christe" had been written as or adapted to a portable form performable by small groups of players rather than by the large casts typically required by community productions. Bale's biblical trilogy represents one such adaptation of these community plays for performance by a small number of actors.

In this chapter, I return to the topic of community drama and describe the preparations made for a "playe of Christe" performed in 1540 at Maldon, Essex. The preparations for this play were extensive, and my detailed description of them is intended to demonstrate the extent to which the production of such plays implicated people both from the general vicinity as well as from London, not only as participants in the play but as collaborators in the play's doctrinal bent, whatever it may have been.

As well, several strands of the previous chapters' discussion converge at the Maldon play. For instance, Thomas Felsted, the silk dyer approached on behalf of Lady Lisle by John Husee in order to rent players' garments and to acquire a play dealing with "new scripture matters," was hired to produce the play. It is possible that Felsted was known as a property player specializing in plays treating "new scripture matters" and that the Maldon production was such a play. In addition, Thomas Cromwell's players played in the town sometime shortly before the play was staged. As well, John de Vere, the fifteenth and evangelical Earl of Oxford had ties to the town, maintaining a manor there.

Finally, John Bale had been prior of the Carmelites at Maldon very early in the 1530s and claimed to have written biblical plays for de Vere, including a life of John the Baptist and three plays on the life of Christ. It is possible, then, that Bale's lost biblical plays were staged at Maldon in 1540.

In this chapter I explore Bale's adaptation of a peculiar detail of the Maldon play—the sale of liveries at the play—and his adaptation of this practice to an evangelical explication of baptism. Such liveries, as I discuss below, were sold at Robin Hood games, and Phillip Stubbes later decried this practice for its incorporation of participants into the ribaldry of the Robin Hood festivities. That this practice was adopted at the Maldon play intriguingly resonates, albeit in an uncertain manner, both with Gardiner's preference that players play Robin Hood plays rather than plays of Christ and Richard Morison's advice that Robin Hood plays be "deleted and forboden" and that other plays be devised to take their place. In his biblical trilogy—*God's Promises, Johan Baptystes Preachynge*, and *The Temptation of Our Lord*—Bale fuses an evangelical explication of baptism as a token of incorporation into the body of Christ with the sale of livery tokens as tokens that incorporated the audience into the collective staging of the play. In doing so, Bale adapts traditional community drama's incorporation of its participants into a collective responsibility, transforming this practice into a particularly evangelical mode of allegiance, affiliation, or, in Shagan's terms, collaboration.

Although discontinuous, the Maldon's Chamberlains' Accounts provide a relatively rich record of dramatic performances in the town. Records of early modern (or late medieval) drama in Maldon begin in 1447, when the Chamberlains' Accounts record a payment of an unspecified amount to "lusores" (A. Clark 181), and continue until a dispute in 1635 when certain players "were paid 6*s*. 8*d*. *not* to show their play" (Mepham, "Municipal Drama" 169).

As did many of the towns and parishes discussed in chapter one, Maldon contributed money to the plays of its neighbouring towns. In 1453 Maldon's Chamberlains made two payments totaling 3*s*.10*d*. to the "playeris" of two towns, Latchingdon and Sandon, and another 5*s*.2*d*. "in bere, mete, and costs" paid to the "mynstrallis of my lord Bourghcher" (A. Clark 181). Other towns, including Ulting and Stowe, received money "for bred & ale" at their plays. In addition, Maldon cooperated with other towns in staging large-scale productions. A large, and likely Maldon's last, town-play was staged in 1562, with another property player, Burles, boarding at the town's expense. Records from Chelmsford indicate that Burles staged plays there that year also.

Maldon was quite active in staging dramatic productions. In addition to the 1540 play discussed below, the town staged productions of a similar scale in 1544 and 1547. The town also held an inventory of costumes, purchasing vestments for £5 in 1562, renting them in 1563 to two men from Braintree, apparently for a play there. In the subsequent year, the costumes were sold outright for £9 to a Richard Josua (A. Clark 422). The 1570s record income from the sales of licenses to perform plays in the town.

On Relic Sunday (11 July) in 1540, the town of Maldon, Essex staged an elaborate and profitable play that not only employed many local men and women but also people from other towns as well, including a painter from Chelmsford and the London "property player," Thomas Felsted. While it cannot be known what play was performed at Maldon, the play's characters included John the Baptist, Christ, and probably some soldiers. The Chamberlains spent 1*s*. to have two "calveskynnes" prepared as John the Baptist's costume and 4*d*. "for a peire of glovis dressynge and for iij skynnes and dyinge of Crist's cote" (A. Clark 182). As a smith received 2*s*. for "makyng clene of 2 harnesses and mendynge of theme" (A. Clark 182), soldiers also were included in the cast of characters. The inclusion of these characters suggests that the Maldon play staged episodes from Christ's life, including his baptism, a Passion sequence, and a resurrection. W. A. Mepham suggests that the Maldon Chamberlains' expenses on rope indicate a baptism play in which "God speaks from Heaven" ("Municipal" 173). Moreover, the 6.5 pounds of gunpowder paid for by the Chamberlains provide some evidence of that a Resurrection episode formed part of the play. The surviving fragments of the play now known as "The Resurrection of Our Lord" show that gunpowder was fired as an effect at Christ's resurrection. A stage direction requires the four soldiers guarding the tomb to "fall / downe as / deade in /hearing / the gonnes shott / of & thunder / Iesus riseth throwynge of Death" (*Resurrection* 243).

The Maldon play required a substantial outlay of money. The total expenses for the play came to £6 11*s*.2*d*.[1] The play turned a profit of 10*s*. 7½ *d*., however, as the Chamberlains' collected a gross revenue of £7 1*s*. 9½*d*. Three lists provide these figures. The first lists the collections made by several men at or before the play and handed over to the chamberlains. Two towns—Great Dunmow and Chelmsford—contributed money, as did a John Bereman of London.[2] The other lists record expenses and are appended to the records, one written by Richard Aleyne and the other by Richard Debney. Aleyne's list records both labour expenses and major material expenses for the construction of the stage and/or scaffolds. The purchase of several pots and taps from a "Mystres Dawse", apparently for distribution of ale at the play, is included (A. Clark). Some costume expenses are also presented here, notably expenditures for John the Baptist's, Christ's, and the soldiers' costumes (A. Clark 182).

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[1] The total in the records, however, is £6 8*s*. 9½*d*.

[2] A John Bereman was assessed 20*s*. in the 1541 Subsidy roll for St. Margaret parish in Bridge Ward (Lang 32).

Debney's list records expenditures relating to the decoration of the stage, as well as expenses for performing the play and minor material expenses.[3] Gold foil, red lead, and yellow ocher were purchased, likely for making paint, and several quires of paper were used, perhaps for writing out the players' parts.[4] Close to twenty entries record purchases of nails or "takkynge nails", and over six pounds of gunpowder were bought. Minstrels were paid a total of 4*s*. 3*d*., in two separate expenditures,[5] and someone was rewarded with 4*d*. for "ridynge to Pryttellwell & to Rayleghe" (A. Clark 342), possibly to announce the play there.

Debney's list also records Felstede's payment, a whopping 25*s*. 4*d*., which alone accounts for close to twenty percent of the play's total expenses. The expenses for boarding him, his assistant, and two horses for seven days also are recorded, pushing the town's expenditure for Felsted's participation to 30*s*., or nearly a quarter of all expenses.

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[3] On the second list, some labor was also expensed. Two painters, one of which came from Chelmsford and employed an assistant, were paid. The town bought a load of "aspe", and paid 20*s*. to have someone saw it; Anthony Karver also received 5*d*. for a separate incident of "sawynge" (A. Clark 342). In addition, Thomas Wed received 18*d*. for six days' worth of work and someone named Dandy was paid 6*d*. for one days' worth of work. Robard Frynde received 20*s*. for an unrecorded service.

[4] This was done at the New Romney "new" play in 1561.

[5] One for 1*s*. 4*d*., the other for 3*s*.

Felstede, as discussed above, was involved in dramatic presentations as early as 1538-39, when he rented Lady Lisle several costumes for a Christmas interlude in Calais.[6] He also furnished costumes for the London Drapers' three 1541 midsummer pageants, including wigs, beards, gowns, caps, and capes (Davidson 77).

From these entries, we can reconstruct, to some extent, the preparations for the play. The construction of the stage and/or scaffolds must have begun by 27 June, as the head carpenter, "Ponde the carpenter" (A. Clark 182), received payment for fifteen days.[7]

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[6] For a fuller account of Felstede's activites, see Twycross, "Felsted." Twycross identifies several dramatic records relating to a Felsted, as well as two that give Felsted's first name as Thomas. The first mention is in 1521 for a Thomas Felsted's participation in the Midsummer Watch that year; the second is a 1546 instance when a Thomas Felsted stood bail for John Hilly (Twycross 4-5). Two other records should be added. The 1541 London Subsidy Roll records that a Thomas Felsted from the parish of Allhallows the Greater was assessed 10*s*. on the valuation of his goods and property at £20 (Lang 63). John Husee, Lady Lisle's servant and who had engaged to rent Felsted's costumes for a play's performance in Calais, wrote to Lady Lisle on 7 April 1539 after the ship carrying Felsted's garments had wrecked at Margate. Husee complained that he was "bound in x^{li} for it, and it is not to be doubted but seeing the garments are wet I shall have somewhat ado in it. And peradventure I shall be compelled to pay for all" (Byrne 428). Twycross speculates that this £10 was the value of Felsted's garments (8). The garments may have cost more to replace, as Husee seems to fear that he may be called to pay more than the £10 indemnity. In any case, if Felsted's rented playing garments alone (as Dillon suggests, Felsted may have owned more than costumes than he rented to Husee ("John Rastell's Stage" 38n19)) were valued at or near £10, it seems probable that he is the Thomas Felsted worth £20 and residing in Allhallows the Greater. The second record is Robert Felsted's will, probated on 11 December 1545 (Prerogative Court of Canterbury). Robert, a London "Barbour Surgeon" who resided in St. John street in St. Sepulchre parish, bequeathed his brother, Thomas Felsted, 6*s*. 8*d*. Two other brothers—Richard and Vyncent—are mentioned in the will, as are two sisters—Joane and Milsent. Robert left "my howse called <the> Horne situating in Sawcot widborowe in Essex" to his only son, also named Robert. "Sawcot widborowe in Essex" suggests that the house was located in the area between Salcott and Great Wigborough, Essex. Twycross suggests the village of Felsted as the eponymous home of the Felsted family; Robert Felsted's house, however, suggests that the family was based further east. In any case, either alternative is not far from Maldon, and Felsted nevertheless may have been, as Twycross suggests, "recommended to the Maldon churchwardens by a distant relative" (12).

[7] He was paid at a rate of 7*d*. per day

Two other carpenters worked under him, each working for three days but receiving a slightly higher daily wage.[8] Three men—Raf Howe, Roger Aboroughe, and Richard Wode—worked for six days each, with Aboroughe working an extra half-day (A. Clark 182).[9] In addition, a Chelmsford painter named Parker, along with his assistant, were paid for four days' work.[10] A second painter, Thomas Peyne, was paid 6*d*., probably for one days' work. Several labourers were also employed, perhaps as many as seven, for eight days' worth of work.[11] Someone named Dandy worked a day for 6*d*., and Thomas Wed, perhaps Felstead's assistant, was paid 18*d*. for six days' work. This brings the total number of worker-days worked to sixty-two, and the total labour expense may have been as high as £2. 0*s*. 2*d*.[12]

The carpenters had five loads of various timber—"wode", "aldere polis", and "borde" (A. Clark 182)—to work with, delivered by "Kynge of Byleye" and other carters.[13] As well, 2*s*. was paid to "John Coker of Haseleghe for serteyne bord that was occupied at the playe" (A. Clark 182).[14] Kynge was paid 3*d*. for two loads containing "borde" that he delivered to "Coker's house" (A. Clark 182), so perhaps these two loads were rented to the production and returned afterward. Another load of "aspe" is recorded on the second list. Thus a total of eight loads of timber are recorded, in addition to expenditures on lathe and sundry timber. As to the sort of stage constructed, three loads of wood were used for the construction of "skaffoldys" (A. Clark 182). The following year, however, a fragment of an entry notes "the stage tymbre from the Friers to Robard" (A. Clark 422). Whether this stage was constructed in 1540, however, remains unclear.

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[8] A second carpenter, Robard, was employed for 3.5 days work at 8*d*. per day. As well, Anthony Frencheman was perhaps a carpenter too, as he also received 8*d*. per day for three days' work, in addition to 12*d*. for "serteyn tymbre" that he supplied.

[9] Each received 6*d*. per day.

[10] 16*d*. for two days' work, and received an additional payment of 14*d*. (12*d*. to Parker, 2*d*. to "his mane") plus 1*d*. worth of "brede and mete", implying a further two days of work.

[11] One Clerke was paid 8*d*. for two days work, an anonymous laborer was paid 5*d*. "to helpe laye oute the tymbre" (A. Clark 182), and Anthony Karver received 5*d*. for "sawynge" (A. Clark 182, 342). As well, 20*d*. was paid to an unnamed recipient for sawing of a load of aspen that had been delivered for the cost of 6*d*. (A. Clark 342). Assuming that Karver's wage may be taken to be the going rate for a day's worth of sawing, then the total number of workdays to this point is forty-eight.

[12] This workday total excludes Kynge's work in carrying loads of wood, as well as the payment to Robard Frynde. The expense total includes Kynge's payments (which may include material costs) and excludes Frynde's payment.

In addition, six successive entries on the second list record expenditures on beer and "mete, drynke, and brede" for the play, including two meals, one on Saturday and the other on Sunday. The Sunday feast was the larger of the two as it cost 3s., whereas Saturday's meal cost 2*s*. 6*d*. In comparison, the food for Great Dunmow's Corpus Christi feast the previous year cost 12*s*. 9*d*. The Maldon dinners were thus considerably smaller. As well, the town prepared much less beer and ale than did the Heybridge Churchwardens in 1532, who paid for 684 gallons of beer for their play. By contrast, the

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[13] Kynge received a total of 45*d*.; 1*d*. was paid for "bred and drynke to the carters" (A. Clark 182). Undated payments made by Thetford Priory to various men for "carying" wood show that the Priory paid, on average, just over 5*d*. per load (Dymond 732).

[14] Kynge was paid 3*d*. for two loads containing "borde" that he delivered to "Coker's house" (182), whereas he received a total of 3*s*. 6*d*. for his other five loads. This seems to imply that Kynge was paid for both material and labour costs. If we assume that the cost of a delivery of a load, based on the two loads to Coker's house, is 1½*d*., then the material Kynge supplied cost 2*s*. 10½*d*. The delivery of the wood to Coker's house, however, does not necessarily imply that Coker's house was the site of the play. An entry from 1541 reads, "the stage tymbre from the Friers to Robard" (A. Clark 422). Given that plays were performed at the Carmelite friary, timber was delivered to its "owner" following the play's "occupying" of it.

Maldon Chamberlains spent 14*s*. 8*d*. for beer, with "mystres Peter" providing four "kylderkyns"[15] of double beer and four other beer, and the "wedowe Wyckham" providing four more pots of ale. Altogether this amounted to approximately 176 gallons of beer ((Mepham "Municipal Drama" 174). John Brewer's wife was paid 5*d*. for drink, apparently of some other sort than beer.

All told, then, the town paid money to at least twenty-five named people, most from the immediate area, for either material or labour. Another nine payments likely also went to local, albeit anonymous, people. These anonymous payments were for the meals, the dressing of skins, some carters, and whoever boarded Felsted. Of the twenty-two men that collected money from the audience only two—John Coker and Thomas Sammes—received payment from the town. From the records, then, at least forty-five people were involved in the play's production and, while a substantial portion of the play's expenses went to Felsted, most of the money spent found its way into the local economy.

Judging by the expenses and the number of people involved in preparing the play for performance, let alone the people involved in the performance itself, the play must have been quite spectacular. Indeed, the Maldon Chamberlains expected quite a crowd to attend. One of the more intriguing entries in the Maldon Chamberlains' Accounts suggest the number of people expected to attend the play: 5*s*. were spent "for xv hundred lyveries" (A. Clark 342). As well, two other payments were made for "pynnes" (A. Clark 342): one for one thousand pins at 7*d*. and 2*d*. spent for an undisclosed number, although based on the price for a thousand pins, the 2*d*. may have purchased 285 more. Such "lyveries" were commonly used in Robin Hood games. In Kingston-upon-Thames, for instance, expenses for livery badges and pins were reported several times in the thirty-five years (1503-38) for which we have extant records, with the two thousand badges the parish bought in 1520 marking the high-point, and the purchase in 1537 of six hundred, the low (MacLean, “King Games” 86). The parish also purchased pins, varying in quantity from seventeen hundred in 1509 to three thousand in 1536 (MacLean, “King Games” 86). While the number of liveries purchased provides an estimate of the number of people expected (or hoped) to attend, “exact numbers are not always given and even then may not reflect with absolute precision how many saw the king game” (MacLean, “King Games” 86). Nevertheless, that Maldon chamberlains purchased fifteen hundred of these liveries indicates that the chamberlains expected a large audience even if only a half the expected audience attended (Coldewey, “That Enterprising” 8).

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[15] A kilderkin, Mepham notes, is thought to be eighteen gallons ("Heybridge" 10).

Philip Stubbes, in his 1583 anti-theatrical text *The Anatomie of Abuses*, recalled that badges were worn during Lords of Misrule celebrations, describing them as “certain papers, wherein is painted some babblery or other of imagery work, and these they call ‘my Lord of Misrule’s badges’. These they give to everyone that will give money for them” (qtd in Wiles 11). People who refused to purchase and wear these badges were, Stubbes tells us, “mocked and flouted at not a little” (qtd in Wiles 11). Liveries and badges, within the context of Robin Hood plays, functioned as a marker of identity, signifying their wearers’ (non-wearers’) relation to the authority of the summer Lord. As Claire Sponsler argues, Stubbes’s objection to the badges suggests that Stubbes understood the purchase of such badges as an act of identification: “the symbolic incorporation effected by wearing these badges could have represented mass conformity as much as mass transgression” (39). Moreover, Stubbes recognizes “that wearing a livery badge is a mark of membership in an identifiable group, that is, it equals incorporation" (Sponsler 40). Sponsler understands these badges in terms of service to particular households, and the badges, in marking their wearers as serving a particular patron, construct a "network of horizontally rather than vertically organized social relationships and so created a relatively egalitarian grouping" (40). Livery badges, then, at least for Robin Hood plays, not only made particular groups visible to themselves but also incorporated individuals into a group, and, by extension, into that group's beliefs.

The Maldon liveries, then, performed similar work for the play, incorporating the audience into a collectivity sharing in—or collaborating with—the ends of the production as well as with the content of the play. It is this incorporation that Bale adapts in his biblical trilogy, in particular through the representation of baptism and repentance as tokens in *Johan Baptystes Preachyge*. The play concludes with Christ's reference to his adoption of a "lyverye token." Having identified himself as the "great graunde captayne" of his "poore tenauntes" (400), Christ then describes himself as their "gyde":

> I wyll go afore,   that they maye folowe me,
> Whych shall be baptysed   and thynke me for to be
> Their mate or brother,   havynge their lyverye token,
> Whych is thy baptyme. (410-14).

Christ here crucially marks affiliation, understood in feudal and familial terms, with the sign of baptism, the "lyverye token." Happé glosses the phrase as "having taken upon myself the livery or uniform of man. Here baptism is the livery" (148nB413). Seymour Baker House views the phrase similarly but takes "token" to be a noun rather than a verb. He argues that

> Christ refers to himself as the 'great graunde captayne'...of the people and baptism as the 'lyverye token' of the faithful..., imagery aimed as much at monastic dress as at the rebels who marched under the banner of Christ's Five Wounds [in the Pilgrimage of Grace]. The livery of Christians lay not in cowls or noblemen's colours, nor in taking up arms against Gospel preachers but, under the token of baptism, in submitting themselves in all humility to those, like Cromwell and the king, who favor a sundering of 'mennes tradycyons'. (132)

Bale thus adapts the liveries sold at the Maldon play to materially stage the affiliation between Christ and his followers.

The significance of tokens in general and of baptism in particular is established in Bale's *Three Laws* and in his biblical trilogy. The first play of Bale's trilogy, *God's Promises*, is the most structured of Bale's biblical plays, both in terms of its seven-act structure and in terms of his versification. In this play, Bale employs rime royal structure throughout. In each act, only two characters, Pater Coelestis and one of seven biblical figures—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and John the Baptist—appear onstage, and each of the seven acts follows the same dramatic arc: Pater Coelestis complains of man's sinfulness; the biblical figure pleads for mercy; and, before exiting, Pater Coelestis tempers his judgement and punishment, presenting the character with a sign or token signifying his mercy. Thus, Pater Coelestis presents Adam with a sign, telling him,

> For that my promyse maye have the deper effect
> In the faythe of the and all thy generacyon

> Take thys synge with it as a seale therto connect:
> 'Crepe shall the Serpent for hys abhomynacyon;
> The woman shall sorowe in paynefull propagacyon. (137-41)

Likewise, God presents Noah with a rainbow "as a seale or token clere" of a "everlastynge covenaunt" (262, 290). Abraham receives circumcision as a "sure seale to prove my promyse true" (395); God informs Moses that "The passover lambe wyll be a token just / Of thy stronge covenaunt" (527-28); David's failure to complete the construction of the temple serves as a "sygne" and for "a token specyall" (650); Isaiah is told to "Take thys for a sygne: a mayde of Israel / Shall conceyve and beare that lorde Emmanuel"(776-77); and, finally, John the Baptist is informed that a dove will alight on God's son as "one specyall token" (893).

The simple emblematic nature of these signs suggests that they could have easily been represented by actual stage properties, and the physical donation of objects would have added action (albeit slight) to a fairly undramatic play. More importantly, however, staging these bestowals would have advanced the pedagogical aims of the play. As Richard Morison noted in his advice that plays be employed to advance the anti-papal cause: "Into the co*m*en people thinges sooner enter by the eies, then by the eares: remembryng moche better that they see, then that they heare" ("Perswasion" 19r). Bale too considered drama in visual terms. In defense against the articles gathered against him in 1537, he likened a Harrowing of Hell play that he had "sett…furth" to "peynted clothes," and "glasse wyndowes" (qtd. in McCusker 7). As White points out, Bale commonly used "pictorial language… to shape popular religious beliefs and perceptions" (1). In Bale's *Three Laws*, Deus Pater presents each of the three laws with a prop. To

Naturae Lex, Deus Pater gives a heart; to Moseh Lex, stone tablets; and to Christi Lex, the New Testament (112 s.d., 122 s.d., 134 s.d.).

However, in the biblical trilogy, only one stage direction explicitly directs the actors to perform such a bestowing of a gift, and it instructs the actors to play out a particularly metaphorical bestowal: God is directed to touch John the Baptist's lips and give him a golden tongue (879 s.d.). Yet the dialogue indicates that characters use stage properties. Moses, for instance, refers to his staff when he pleads, "Lose not that people in fearcenesse of thyn yre, / For whom thu has shewed soche tokens evydent, / Convertynge thys rodde into a lyvelye serpent, / And the same serpent into thys rodde agayne" (452-55). Moses clearly brandishes a rod or a staff here, and, moreover, explains its significance in much the same way as he and the other characters refer to the other tokens given to them by God.

Indeed, the characters in *God's Promises* typically refer to the signs they have received using the demonstrative pronoun *this*, suggesting an object to which the characters gesture. Adam, for instance, tells God that the sentence he has received "From grounde of my hart thys shall not be removed" (176); Noah refers to the rainbow as "thys gifte thu hast geven me" (290); and Moses notes of the Passover lamb, "Never shall thys thynge depart from my remberaunce" (530). This last bestowal recalls Christ's giving of a lamb to John the Baptist in the Towneley baptism play (210 s.d.).

The giving of tokens and signs emerges as a theme not only in *God's Promises* but also in *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*. In that play, which follows *God's Promises*, the baptism performed by John the Baptist is represented as the bestowal of a sign. John admonishes Turba Vulgaris to "take my baptyme" and "lerne by thys sygne with hym to lyve and dye" (121, 124). John also instructs Publicanus that he is baptized "in token of repentaunce" (146) and advises, "Thynkynge by thys sygne ye are from hensfourth bounde / Vyces to resyst, acceptynge Christ for your grounde" (148-49). For Miles Armatus, John's baptism "doth represent / Remyssyon in Christ" (171-72) and works as if it were a seal, "Sealyng your pasport unto the hyghar place" (174). John also explicates his baptism as "a sygne of outwarde mortyfyenge" (191). Baleus Prolocutor opens his concluding remarks on the play by asserting, "Thys vysyble sygne do here to yow declare / What thynge pleaseth God and what offendeth hys goodnesse" (458-59). Baptism becomes a visible sign that declares its message.

It is salutary to note, without delving too deeply into the subtle distinctions made on the types and degrees of efficacy of baptism, that English evangelicals adopted an understanding of baptism that conceived of baptism as a sign that both signified a covenant between God and the church as well as the incorporation of the individual believer into the body of the church. Zwingli, for instance, understood baptism as "the covenant sign of the people of God, and it served as their badge of allegiance" (Bromiley 10), and Calvin later considered baptism as "an initiatory sign": "Like the Lord's supper, it was also a badge and attestation of the divine grace and seal of the divine promise" (Bromiley 11). Knox, too, later described baptism similarly. In his order of Baptism, which was based on Calvin's, Knox instructed that the minister "taketh water in his hand and layeth it upon the child's forehead" then prays, giving thanks that God of his "free mercy dost call our children unto thee, marking them with this sacrament as a singular token and badge of thy love" (Fisher 123).

Tyndale also described baptism by likening it to a sign or badge. In *Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale argued that all sacraments should be understood in this way, defining a sacrament as a "holy sign" which "representeth all way some promise of God: as in the Old Testament God ordained that the rainbow should represent and signify unto all men an oath that God swore to Noah and to all men after him, that he would no more drown the world through water" (108). Elsewhere, Tyndale described both baptism and the Lord's Supper as "the badge of our faith" by which "we shew ourselves to continue in our possession to be incorporated and to be the very members of Christ's body" (*Answer* 246).

In Tyndale's 1533 English translation of his *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, Erasmus admonishes his readers to recall the profession of loyalty and faith made by their baptism:

> Oh thou chrysten man remembrest thou not whan thou were professed & consecrate with the holy mysteryes of y*e* fountayne of lyfe/how thou boundest thy selfe to be a faythfull sowdyour vnto thy captayne Chryst / to whome thou owest thy lyfe twyse/bothe bycause he gaue it the/ & also bycause he restored it agayne to the. (A3v)

He reiterates this militaristic image, casting baptism as the moment in which his readers were physically identified as soldiers of Christ. He asks, "For what entent was the sygne of the crosse prynted in thy foreheed / but that as long as thou lyuest thou sholdest fyght vnder his standarde. For what ente*n*t were thou anoynted with his holy oyle / but that thou for euer shouldest wrastle and fyght agaynst vyces" (A4r). A marginal note alongside this passage draws the reader's attention to it, glossing the ritual crossing of the forehead and anointing with oil as "Badges & / sygnes of / baptym" (A4r). The idea that baptism incorporated the infant into the army of Christ was not made by the Sarum Manual's office of baptism. In the Sarum office, the priest explains the purpose of the crossing and anointing: "that thou mayest have eternal life and live for ever and ever" (173). The explanation of baptism given by Erasmus, coupled with the sense of baptism's signification as a badge, ultimately was ritualized in the 1549 Prayer Book. In the 1549 office of baptism, the priest was to make the sign of the cross on the infant's forehead and breast, "in token that thou shalt not be ashamed to confess thy faith in Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue his faithful soldier and servant unto thy life's end" (Fisher 90). The military image in the Prayer Book resonates with that of Erasmus's *Enchiridion* and of Christ's description of himself in Bale's *Preachynge* as a "great graunde captyne." Bale's play takes up this evangelical association of baptism with liveries and badges, merging it with the practice of selling liveries at community plays such as the one staged at Maldon.

Even though the content of the play is open to conjecture, the Maldon play certainly included a Baptism episode, and the extant Baptism plays warrant comparison, namely those from the York cycle, the Towneley manuscript, the N-Town compilation, and Bale's *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*. Unsurprisingly, all four of these plays explore, albeit to different degrees and from different doctrinal points of view, the sacramental nature of baptism. Moreover, all but the N-Town play bear evidence of concern over the exact nature of baptism's sacramentality. While the N-Town play does not display evidence of sixteenth-century revision, its insistence on the sacramental nature of penance makes it a valuable foil for the others, especially in terms of English debates in the 1530s over the doctrinal nature of penance.

All of the Baptism plays, albeit to varying degree, treat Christ's baptism as the institution of the sacrament of baptism. The Towneley play characterizes this institution in anachronistic terms, touching on the question of whether baptism must take place within a church, and stages not only the baptism of Christ but also his anointing with cream and oil. The York play stages Christ's baptism as enduing the baptismal water with Christ's grace for "euere and ay" (102). While the N-Town play focuses less on Christ's baptism than do the York and Towneley plays, it nevertheless presents Christ's baptism as the confirmation of baptism as a "sacrement þat nowe xal be" (64). The Towneley play's contextualization of baptism as but one of seven sacraments is echoed in the N-Town play's insistence on the sacramentality of penance.

The Towneley and York Baptism plays are of especial interest: the manuscripts of both plays bear evidence of mid-sixteenth century modification of the plays' treatment of the sacrament of baptism. Indeed, both plays were likely subject to the 1576 ban of plays "wherin the Maiestye of god the father god the sonne or god the holie ghoste or the administration of either the sacramentes of Baptisme or of the lordes Supper be counterfeyted or represented" (qtd. in Palmer, "Corpus" 226).[16] Like Gardiner's ban on all "playes of Christe," the York Commissioners' prohibition bans all such plays regardless of their doctrine.

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[16] Borthwick Institute, York, MS. HC.A.B.9, fol. 20.

In the York manuscript, for instance, two notes appear, suggesting that revisions had been made to the play to address its doctrinal content. The first declares, "Her wantes a pece newely mayd for saynt John Baptiste" (Beadle 182n49) while the second, "This matter is newly mayd and devysed, wherof we haue no coppy regystred" (Beadle 186n175+). As for the Towneley play, a stanza in which John the Baptist declaims that he anoints Christ with oil and cream and declares Christ's baptism a "tokyn" (199) of the other six sacraments is cancelled (Stevens 224). In the margin, someone has written, "corected & not playd" (Stevens 224). As Epp notes, a similar reference to the chrism earlier in the play (in line 115) escapes notice and, moreover, the enumeration of the six other sacraments might have been easily amended to number only one or two others ("Towneley"). Indeed, this emendation may very well have been made. Of the play's reference to the "vi" sacraments, Stevens notes that "the first letter, a badly formed v, [is] barely visible under ultraviolet lamp" (224). This suggests at least two revisions of the Towneley play: one made when only two sacraments were approved but when the chrism was still part of the baptismal rite.

The two plays differ thematically. The Towneley play emphasizes John's reluctance to baptize Christ while the York play, despite also treating John's hesitancy, does not make this hesitancy the dramatic focus as the Towneley play does. The Towneley play represents John's hesitancy as a crisis of obedience and shows John to vacillate between acquiescence to God's command and an objection that he is not worthy to baptize Christ. While John hesitates as well in the York play, his hesitation derives less from his sense of unworthiness (although this sense is present) than from his struggle to grasp the necessity of Christ's baptism.

The Towneley play contrasts John's humble hesitancy with the angels and Christ's insistence that the baptism is God's "ordynance" (111) and "commaundement" (120), a fulfulment of "Godys wyll and his bydyng" (93). Despite praying to God that "We ar, Lord, bondon vnto the" (57), John at first shies, albeit humbly, from the command to baptize Christ. He objects first that the baptism will not accord with his "understanding" of the practice in that it will not conform to proper practice: "By this I may well vnderstand / That childer shuld be broght to kyrk / For to be baptysyd in euery land" (86-87). The second angel replies by noting that the location matters less than God's will: "Here is no kyrk, ne no bygyng, / Bot where the Fader wyll ordan, / It is Godys wyll and his bydyng" (91-93). After agreeing to perform the baptism, John hesitates again, doubting that

> if I were worthy
> For to fulfyll this sacrament,
> I haue no connyng, securly,
> To do it after thyn intent. (129-32)

Moreover, he excuses himself from the baptism, fearing to touch Christ's body:

> therefor, Lord, I ask mercy:
> Hald me excusyd, as I haue ment;
> I dar not towche thi blyssyd body,
> My hart will neuer to it assent. (133-36)

John's dissension here occasions rebukes from Christ and the two angels which connect John's disobedience to a lack of faith. Christ advises John not to worry about his baptismal abilities as "My Fader hisself he will the teche" (138). Indeed, Christ subsumes

John's doubt to disobedience, noting that "My fader lyst may none appeche" (144). As evidence of God's will and pegagogical intervention, Christ points out that the two angels have been sent "In tokyn I am both God and man" (146), and since God wills Christ's baptism:

> I wold wytt who
> Durst hym agan-stand? Iohn, com on than,
> And baptyse me for freynde or fo,
> And do it, Iohn, right as thou can. (149-52)

The first angel takes up Christ's connection of obedience and faith, admonishing John to be

> buxom and right bayn,
> And be not gruchand in no thyng;
> Me thynk thou aght to be ful fay
> For to fulfyll my Lordys bydyng
> Erly and late, with moyde and mayn;
> Therfor to the this word I bryng:
> My Lord has gyffyn the powere playn,
> And drede the noght of thi conyng. (153-60)

This angel shortly after repeats this advice, admonishing John to "do as thou awe, / And gruch thou neuer in this degré / To baptyse hym that thou here saw" (173-75). John then agrees to "be Godys seruande" and "do as thous has commaunde" (178, 180). Yet John retains his fear of touching Christ but resolves, "I will not lose my mede; / Abyde, my Lord, and by me stande" (183-84).

While Towneley characterizes John's reluctance to baptize Christ by emphasizing the necessity of John's obedience and his trust that God's "cunning," rather than his own, works through him, the York Baptism play presents John's hesitancy in light of his failure to grasp the necessity of Christ's baptism. As does the Towneley Baptism play, the play presents two moments in which John hesitates to baptize Christ. In the first, John doubts his worthiness to fulfill the first angel's declaration John shall baptize Christ: "I am noȝt abill to full-fill / Þis dede certayne" (60-61). The second angel, like Towneley's first angel, counsels John to obey: "Þe aught with harte and will / To be full bayne / To do his bidding, all by-dene" (62-64).

John's second moment of hesitation in York, however, differs from the Towneley John's second hesitation. In York, John objects to Christ's call to baptize him by noting "me thynketh it wer more nede / Þou baptised me" (111-12). John goes on to wonder at the paradoxical demand of the baptism: "What riche man gose from dore to dore / To begge at hy þat has right noght? / Lord, Þou arte riche and I am full poure" (120-22). Where the Towneley John hesitates because he fears to touch Christ (albeit for similar reasons: "A knight to baptize his Lord King, / This task may be beyond my skill" (127-28)), the York John elaborates the situation in paradoxical rather than fearful terms. Granted, the York John does fear to touch Christ: "For the to touch haue I grete drede, / for doyngs dark" (144-45). Moreover, in the York play, the response to John's hesitancy comes in gentler terms than in Towneley. Christ simply agrees with John's interpretation of the situation and requests him to carry on nevertheless:

> Thou sais full wele, John, certaynly,
> But suffre nowe for heuenly mede,

Þat rightwisnesse be noȝt oonlye
Fulfillid in worde, but also in dede,
thrughe baptyme clere. (127-31)

In the Towneley play, John receives a succession of rebukes that highlight his disobedience.

In the York play, John more readily submits himself to the baptismal command: "I will be subjett nyght & day / as me well awe, / To serue my lord Jesu" (73-75). Several lines are missing from the play immediately prior to this response, and it may be that John's hesitancy received more elaboration in those lost lines. Nevertheless, the York John does condition his obedience to the command by seeking an explanation for the necessity of Christ's baptism. Noting that baptism's function is to "wasshe and clense man of synne" (78) and that Christ is free from sin, John wonders, "What nedis hym than / For to be baptiste more or myne / als synfull man?" (81-83).

While both plays present baptism as a sacrament, they focus on different aspects of this sacrament. The Towneley play insists on the ceremonial nature of baptism. As mentioned above, John foresees the means of baptism when he objects that there is no church present. Moreover, John baptizes with "In water clere" (41), and Christ comes to receive John's baptism—"to be baptysyd in water clere" (108)—and, in receiving it, to both institute baptism as sacrament and institute the rite of baptism. This institution takes place through the addition of the chrism. Christ tells John,

I com to the baptym to take,
To whome my Fader has me sent,
With oyle and creme that thou shal make

Vnto that worthi sacrament. (113-16)

Indeed, once John commences the baptism, he proceeds in two steps. He first baptizes Christ with water and in "*In nomine patris et filii…Et spiritus altissimi*" (187-89). He then anoints Christ with oil and cream:

Here I the anoynt also
With oyle and creme, in this intent
That men may wit, whereso thay go,
This is a worthy sacrament.
There ar vi othere, and no mo,
The which thiself to erthe has sent;
And in true tokyn, oone of tho,
The fyrst, on the now is it spent. (193-200)

The play thus differentiates between John's baptismal practices before and after his baptism of Christ, with the difference being the anointing with chrism and thus the institution of the first sacrament. Moreover, as the angels and Christ's assuaging of John's uncertainty as to how to properly perform the baptism makes clear, John receives his "connyng" from God himself. That is, the Towneley baptism play presents the baptismal ceremony that John follows as deriving from God's direction of John. According to the Towneley play, the baptism of Christ did not only institute sacrament of baptism but also insitituted the ceremony of baptism.

As well, the Towneley Baptism presents baptism as a call to God's service. Just as John's obedience was confirmed through his fearful baptism of Christ, so is the play's audience called to remember their baptism as a sign of obedience. John concludes the play with an address to the audience: "Thynk how in baptym ye ar sworne / To be Godys seruandys, withoutten nay" (285-86). Baptism, in the Towneley play, is a sacrament to be delivered by a particular procedure. However, John's final word on baptism is a call to remembrance of baptism as a pledge of service rather than a call to recognize baptism as a sacrament.

The York play also emphasizes baptism as a sacrament but does not do so by presenting Christ's baptism in terms of contemporary practice. That is, the York play explicitly describes the significance of baptism and how Christ's baptism functions as a sacrament. As mentioned above, John recognizes that baptism is undergone to "wasshe and clense men of synne" (78) but is unsure why Christ must be baptized. Christ responds that he will be baptized because "Mankynde may noȝt vn-baptymde go / to endless blys" (90-91). Christ reiterates this point later, telling John, "What man þat trowis and baptised be / Schall saued be and come to blisse, / Who-so trowes noȝt, to payne endles / He schalbe dampned sone" (162-65). Moreover, Christ asserts his baptism as a model for those who follow: as he has "taken mankynde / For men schall me þer myrroure make, / I haue my doyng in ther mynde, / And also I do þe baptyme take" (92-95). The York Christ thus foresees baptism to be necessary for salvation and, as such, he will be baptized as an example.

Like Towneley, the York play also represents Christ's baptism as instituting a different baptism in the future. The York Christ informs John that the second reason he will be baptized is so that "fro þis day / Þe vertue of my baptyme dwelle / In baptyme-watir euere and ay, / Mankynde to taste, / Thurgh my grace þerto to take always / Þe haly gaste" (100-105). Christ thus claims that his baptism will endow baptismal water with his "vertue", asserting that the water itself has some efficacy in the process. "Vertue" is a correction, however, inserted by John Clerke to replace the original term, "wittnesse" (Smith, *York Plays* 175n2; Beadle 184n101). Tyndale described baptism as a witness (Bromiley 11), and as the emendation significantly modifies the play's presenation of baptismal water: rather than memorial symbol, the water becomes efficacious as it retains Christ's "vertue."

While both plays identify John as a voice crying in the wilderness, the York and Towneley Baptism plays treat John's preaching differently. The York John does not address an audience directly. His opening speech, rather, is a prayer in which John complains that his preaching has been ineffectual: "Men are so dull þat my preching / Serues of noght" (6-7). John then recounts to God all that he has preached. Indeed, except for the final lines of the play—"Now sirs, þat barne þat marie bare, / be with ȝou all" (174-75)—the York John does not preach at all nor does he address the audience directly. In the Towneley play, however, John's first speech, although it concludes with a brief prayer to God (53-64), addresses the audience directly. The Towneley John also concludes the play with an address to the audience, announcing, "I wyll go preche both to more and les, / As I am chargyd securly" (273-74). He goes on to advise the audience to "forsake youre wykydnes, / Pryde, envy, slowth, wrath, and lechery" (275-76) and to "Think how in baptism ye are sworn / To be God's servant" (285-86). Of the two plays, then, the Towneley presents John the Baptist actively preaching the message of faithful service to God through avoidance of vice.

The N-Town Baptist play, on the other hand, explicitly foregrounds John's preaching of penance. The second stanza of the play introduces this theme. John preaches to the audience:

> Penitenciam nunc agite
> Appropinquabit regnum celorum:
> For your trespas penaunce do 3e
> And ȝe xall wyn hevy Dei Deorum. (14-17)

The emphasis on this theme, Spector notes, suggests a parallel with Greban's *Passion* "in which John's opening speech is punctuated by the exhortation 'Penitenciam agite'" (484n22/14-15). While the N-Town play shares many characteristics of the Towneley and York plays, its thematic emphasisis rests on the sacramentality of penance more than the other plays. Nevertheless, the sacramentality of baptism is indeed affirmed in the N-Town play: Christ informs John that "Baptym to take I come to the, / And conferme þat sacrement þat nowe xal be" (63-64). Moreover, Christ's baptism is to serve as an example for future believers: "þe vertu of mekenes here tawth xal be, / Every man to lere / And take ensawmple here by me, / How mekely þat I come to þe" (73-77). John begins his final sermon to the audience by explaining the significance of Christ's baptism, asserting that "Cryst, þe Sone of God, is become oure fere, / Clad in oure clothynge to sofer for us wo" (134-35). In this reference to Christ's clothing, Gail McMurray Gibson sees the culmination of the N-Town plays' development of the "resonant implication of the Christ's garment of Incarnation" (159). The reference, too, may indicate stage business surrounding Christ's baptism. Specifically, Christ may have disrobed and was clothed following his baptism as was the case in a late-fifteenth century French baptism

(*Baptism* 289 s.d.; 300 s.d.). Moreover, much iconographic representation of Christ's baptism depicts an angel standing beside Christ and holding a robe or a length of cloth signifying the chrism (Nichols 317-19). The important point, however, is that John identifies Christ as as "oure fere," an association signalled by the fact that he is "Clad in oure clothynge." This assertion is similar to that of Bale's Christ when he claims to be the audience's "mate or brother, havynge their lyverye token."

Despite the obvious importance of Christ's baptism to the N-Town play, almost one quarter of the play is devoted to John's sermon on the sacrament of penance. Following Christ's departure for his forty-day fast, John preaches on the elements of repentance: "With contryscyon, schryffte, and penauns, þe devyl may ȝe dryve" (151). John reiterates the association of the audience's clothing with that of Christ, admonishing the audience to "Clothe the in clennes, with vertue be indute, / And God with his grace he wyl þe sone inspyre / To amendyng of þi mys" (164-66). Such amends are to be made through confession and penance: "Schryfte of mowthe may bes þe saue, / Penauns for synne what man wyl haue, / Whan þat his body is leyd in grave, / His sowle xal go to blys" (167-70). The play's conclusion demonstrates its investment in asserting the sacramental nature of penance and that penance is accompanied by contrition and confession.

Bale's *Johan Baptistes Preachynge* responds to the other extant Baptism plays, but particularly to the N-Town play's treatment of penance. Of particular interest in Bale's play is John's admonition to Publicanus following his baptism. John informs Publicanus, "Be baptysed then in token of repentaunce, / And take to ye faythe with a newe remembraunce, / Thynkynge by thys synge ye are from hensefourth bounde /

Vyces to resyst, acceptynge Christe for your grounde" (146-49). In Matthew 3 of the Matthew Bible (1537), which derives from Tyndale's earlier translations, John preaches, "I baptyse you in water in token of repentaunce" (A2v). The corresponding passage in the Great Bible (1539) has been amended to read, "I baptise you in water vnto repentau*n*ce" (Aa2v). Bale's echo of Tyndale's translation suggests he had that text in front of him. The issue of repentance recalls More's objection to Tyndale's use of the term. In his translation of the bible, Tyndale chose "repentance" over "penance," justifying his choice in his rebuttal of More. Objecting to what he identifies as papist "juggling" of terms, Tyndale notes,

> And with confession they juggled; and so made the people, as oft as they spake of it, understand *shrift in the ear*; whereof scripture maketh no mention: not, it is clean against the scripture, as they use it....And in like manner, by this word *penance* they make the people understand holy deeds of their enjoining; with which they must make satisfaction unto God-ward for their sins: when all the scripture preacheth that Christ hath made full satisfaction for our sins to God-ward; and we must now be thankful to God again, and kill the lusts of our flesh with holy works of God's enjoining. (*Answer* 22-23)

By having John preach a message of repentance as opposed to penance, Bale follows Tyndale.

Bale's play presents a radical conception of penance and defines his view of penance in opposition to papal tradition. At the end of *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*, Baleus Prolocutor advises the audience to "Heare neyther Frances, Benedyct nor Bruno,

/ Albert nor Domynyck, for they newe rulers invent. / Beleve neyther Pope, nor prest of hys consent" (488-90). While Satan's disguise as a hermit in *The Temptation of Our Lord* has dramatic precedence as does Satan's vow to conspire Christ's downfall with Jewish authorities, Satan nevertheless declares himself to be aligned with the Pope: "The vycar at Rome I think wyll be my frynde" (337). Moreover, Satan informs Christ that the Pope

> shall me worshypp and have the worlde to rewarde;
> That thu here forsakest he wyll most hyghlye regarde.
> Gods worde wyll he treade underneth hys fote for ever,
> And the hartes of men from the truth therof dyssever.
> Thy fayth wyll he hate, and slee thy flocke in conclusyon. (338-43)

Baleus Prolocutor confirms this association and indentifies those that keep the scriptures "from the people" to be devils, asserting that "If they be no devyls I saye there are devyls non" (424). Moreover, "They brynge in fastynge but they leave out *Scriptum est*; / Chalke they geve for gold, soch fryndes are they to the Beest" (425-26). However, Baleus clarifies his apparent objection to fasting, declaring

> Lete non report us that here we condempne fastynge,
> For it is not true – we are of no soch mynde.
> But thys we covete: that ye do take the thynge
> For a frute of fayth as it is done in kynde,
> And onlye Gods worde to subdue the cruell fynde. (427-31)

Baleus thus differentiates between fasting as an expression of one's faith and fasting as a means of earning salvation. Baleus's care to point out his approval rather than his condemnation of fasting recalls the similar care he takes in condoning a particular sort of penance at the end of *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*. There, Baleus offers this gloss of John the Baptist's teaching:

> The waye that Johan taught   was not to weare harde clothynge,
> To saye longe prayers,   nor to wandre in the desart,
> Or to eate wylde locusts.   No, he never taught soch thynge.
> Hys mynde was that faythe   shuld puryfye the hart. (472-75)

He again conditions this *sola fide* assertion, implicitly condoning a particular sort of penance when he advises the audience,

> If ye do penaunce,   do such as Johan doth counsell:
> Forsake your olde lyfe   and to the true fayth applye;
> Washe away all fylth   and folowe Christes Gospell.
> The justyce of men   is but an hypocresye,
> A worke without fayth,   an outwarde vayne glorye. (479-83)

Baleus here redefines penance as a conversion experience, as repentance rather than a penitential action. It is a subtle maneuver as Baleus condones penance by explaining how it ought to be performed while reworking the performance of penance as a conversion to the "true fayth." Yet in doing so, Bale works within the generic framework established by the other extant Baptism plays. Bale's play delivers radical doctrine through a traditional form. His play makes the radical appear to be traditional

Of Bale's biblical trilogy critics often comment that it is among his less strident plays. Peter Happé, for instance, describes the plays as written in "a more elevated and less provoking style" than the earlier *Three Laws* and *King Johan* and argues that the trilogy's "more temperate tone" resulted from Bale's growing sense of the need for political caution as Henry VIII's doctrines shifted (*John Bale* 122). House argues that the "trilogy's relatively soft appeal" made it more palatable for "northern audiences… who lacked the stomach for the more strident Protestantism" of Bale's other extant plays (127). John D. Cox also notes that to "the uninitiated viewer, *Johan Baptystes Preachynge* may not have seemed very radical, because Bale clearly works within well-known conventions" (84). Nevertheless, Cox maintains that the trilogy is radical as in it not only did Bale costume Satan as a hermit but he "came as close as he dared to denying the salvific efficacy of baptism" (84). Yet despite this declaration, Cox acknowledges that this particular costuming innovation had precedent in the French *mystères* as well as in Skelton's *Magnificence*, conceding that this costume "detail is not necessarily a dead giveaway of Bale's reformed perspective" (227n6). Indeed, stage directions in the late-fifteenth century French *Baptism and Temptation of Christ* direct that in the Temptation episode Satan is to disguise himself as a hermit, a priest, and a king (699 s.d., 754 s.d., 808 s.d.). Bale's trilogy, then, is both radical and traditional: radical in its doctrine yet conservative in its employment of traditional staging devices.

Bale's biblical trilogy, particularly his *Johan Baptystes Preachynge* presents as its theme the incorporation of the audience into the body of the Christ through a logic inherent in evangelical sacramental thought and through reference to one of the practices involved in the production of communal drama. It must be admitted that the similarities between the Maldon liveries and Bale's "lyverye token" remain uncertain: there is no clear evidence to indicate that Bale's play was the Maldon play. Moreover, the metaphoric nature of Christ's livery token renders the reference understandable without the display of an actual token.

Yet if the similarities and circumstantial evidence do not suggest that Maldon play was Bale's, the similarities do suggest that Bale adapted the traditional playing practices exemplified at Maldon to evangelical content. By adapting traditional community drama's incorporation of its participants into a collectivity bound not only by its witnessing of a play but also by its incorporation into the play's ethos, Bale offers an evangelical drama that attempts to enact a similar mode of allegiance to evangelical doctrine. Bale's biblical drama thus reworks traditional dramatic forms to produce a collectivity bound, if only temporarily, by evangelical sacramental doctrine. Likewise, as is discussed in the following chapter, his *King Johan* reformulates parochial concern for poor relief as a national responsibility, producing a collectivity bound not by its care of the truly poor but by its care of the truly English poor.

Chapter Four: "Impoveryshyd and mad a beggar": Poverty and Widowhood in John Bale's *King Johan*

Just as Bale adapts the practices of parish drama to incorporate his biblical trilogy's audience into the evangelical congregation of the baptized, in *King Johan* he adapts the parochial responsibility for poor relief to achieve a similar purpose. By allegorizing England as a destitute widow who is preyed upon by Papal authorities, Bale urges the necessity of the play's audience to identify and to care for the truly English poor. While in *Johan Baptystes Preachynge* the purchase—literally or metaphorically—of Christ's baptismal "lyverye" serves to signal the audience's visible participation in the play's action and evangelical doctrine, the proper care of English poor signals in *King Johan* a participation in English sovereignty and a rejection of Papal authority.

Four-fifths of the way through John Bale's *King Johan*, the play's eponymous hero dies, a victim of Sedicyon's plot to murder him. Johan addresses his last words to his sole companion at his death, the widow—although not a widow through his death—Ynglond,[17] who vows to keep his "bodye for a memoryal" (2183). Johan's dying words reinforce the vow by casting it in terms of duty: "Than plye it Englande, and provyde for my buryall. / A wydowes offyce it is to burye the deade" (2184-85). Before she exits, Ynglond begins to perform this duty. She laments,

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[17] Although the play variously refers to this character as Ynglond, Englond, and Yngland, I retain this form throughout in order to avoid confusion.

> Oh horryble case that ever so noble a kynge
> Shoulde thus be destroyed and lost for ryghteouse doynge
> By a cruell sort of disguysed bloud souppers,
> Unmercyfull murtherers all dronke in the bloude of marters.
> Report what they wyll in their most furyouse madnesse,
> Of thys noble kynge muche was the godlynesse. (2187-92)

In this lament, Ynglond encapsulates her earlier praise of Johan's relief of the poor. She extols Johan's charitable actions, telling him, "Never prynce was there that made to poore peoples uses / So many masendewes, hospitals, and spittle howses / As your grace hath yet sens the worlde began" (2146-48). She also recapitulates the revisionist historiography that the preceding action of the play has staged: against the furiously mad histories reporting the contrary, the play, like Ynglond, memorializes Johan as a godly king who suffered martyrdom for his resistance to the Roman Church's authority.

Ynglond's parting eulogy sets the stage for the entrance of Veritas, who in continuing the theme of the eulogy, symbolically takes up and performs Ynglond's "wydowes offyce": "I assure ye, fryndes, lete men wryte that they wyll / Kynge Johan was a man both valeaunt and godlye" (2193-94). Indeed, Veritas recapitulates much of Ynglond's memorialization of Johan. He praises, for example, Johan's treatment of the poor:

> Gracyouse provysyon for sore, sycke, halte, and lame
> He made in hys tyme he made both in towne and cytie
> Grauntynge great lyberties for mayntenaunce of the same
> By markettes and fayers in places of notable name. (2208-10)

Moreover, Veritas asserts that Johan's works remain consequential, noting that "Though he now be dead, hys noble actes are alive" (2218). Such acts include the establishment of the offices of London's mayor and sheriffs, the construction of London Bridge, and the expulsion of Jews from England (2215-20). Indeed, Johan's commemoration also continues in the "Great monymentes…in Yppeswych, Donwych and Berye, / Whych noteth hym to be a man of notable mercye" (2212-13). In a way, Ynglond here returns as the audience's contemporary England, and Veritas to an extent affirms not only the truth of Johan's godliness (and the play's presentation of that godliness) but also the success of Ynglond in carrying out her "wydowes offyce."

Yet Veritas also calls attention to Ynglond's failure to effectively keep Johan's "bodye for a memoryal," as she had vowed. Veritas accuses Nobylyte, Clergye, and Cyvyle Order not only of murdering Johan but also of having since slandered Johan's memory:

> How have ye used Kynge Johan here now of late
> I shame to rehearce….
> Ye were never wele tyll ye had hym cruelly slayne,
> And now, beynge dead ye have hym styll in disdayne.
> Ye have raysed up of hym most shamelesse lyes
> Both by your reportes and by your written storyes. (2285-90)

Moreover, Veritas accuses these characters of having disfigured Johan's corpse: "I coulde shewe the place where yow most spyghtfullye / Put out your torches upon his physnomye" (2301-2). Both the slander and disfigurement of Johan suggest that Ynglond has been unsuccessful in her “wydowes offyce:” not only Johan’s memory but also his body itself has suffered abuse despite the survival of monuments commemorating him.

The abuse done to Johan’s body advances the play’s construction of Johan as a martyr, and throughout the play persecution and suffering are depicted as marks of the elect. Ynglond and Johan suffer in the play for their resistance to papal power and, as Sedicyon later gleefully recounts, “Gospell readers” presently suffer at the hands of the prelates, who handle the evangelicals “very coursely, / For on them they laye by hondred poundes of yron / And wyll suffer none with them ones for to common” (2543-45). The disfigurement of Johan’s corpse thus emphasizes Johan’s status as tormented martyr. But the disfigurement of Johan’s history also confers the status of martyr.

While the disfigurement of Johan’s body signals an unrestorable destruction, the disfigurement of his history demands contemporary attention. Veritas chastizes the audience on this point, exclaiming, “What though Polydorus reporteth hym very yll / At the suggestyons of the malicyouse clergye? / Thynke yow a Romane with the Romanes can not lye?” (2195-97). Veritas then addresses John Leland specifically, rousing Leland to “out of thy [slumbre] awake / And wytnesse a trewthe for thyne owne contrayes sake” (2197-98). Veritas thus calls for a historiographical restoration of Johan’s legacy, figuratively extending the fulfillment of Ynglond’s “wydowes offyce” to the contemporary audience. Veritas thus figures the restoration and correction of English history as collective responsibilities, and in the next chapter I explore Bale’s articulation of these responsibilities in his continuation of Leland’s rescue of English texts from the destruction of the Dissolution.

In this chapter, however, I explore the responsibilities owed to Ynglond on account of her widowhood. While Ynglond's widowhood most obviously suggests her experience of loss and commemorative duty, her widowhood more importantly connotes her destitution and depredation at the hands of her enemies. Indeed, the significance of Ynglond's widowhood escapes the allegorical sense the play attributes to it, which is to signal the absence of God from England. Ynglond explains to Johan that her husband is "God hym selfe, the spowse of every sort / That seke hym in faith to ther sowlys helth and confort" (109-10). As God "abydyth not where his word ys refusyd" (116), Ynglond's husband resides in exile, and she has been left destitute. Indeed, Ynglond pleads with Johan to "Late me have my spowse and my londes at lyberte" (1571), but Johan cannot grant her this wish. As I discuss below, Ynglond's claim to widowhood does not suggest God is dead but rather situates her within the context of social responsibility for widows and other destitute women. Through the figure of Ynglond, Bale represents England not as a geographical space but as a collectivity organized by its responsibility to care for figures such as Ynglond. While the play's conclusion emphasizes Ynglond's commemorative duties to Johan and the incorporation of the audience into these duties, Ynglond's treatment throughout the rest of the play incorporates the audience into the responsibility to care for England's poor.

Although her centrality to the play has long been recognized, Ynglond has not received much focused critical attention. Much of the critical attention paid to the play has focused on its contribution to the development of the English history play. In this light, Ynglond has been understood as a character that escapes the historicization that the play enacts. According to Irving Ribner, she properly belongs to the morality strain of the play's synthesis of the morality and the history play, functioning as the central figure of the morality play and with Johan as the central figure of the history play (34). Barry Adams sees Ynglond as "conceptually the play's most complex personage," functioning, on the one hand, as "the most comprehensive personification of England considered as a social and political entity" and, on the other hand, "a personification of abstract sovereignty" (*John Bale's* 148). Arguing that Henry VIII's break with Rome "entailed a desecularisation of national history" that produced England as "a realm with a difference," Peter Womack maintains that Bale's play "registers this newly distinct object of consciousness in the most literal way" (116). However, Ynglond is not simply an object of consciousness; she is also clearly an object of care. Not only does Ynglond allegorize the idea of a nation, she also objectifies this idea not simply in her material presence onstage but through the treatment she receives at the hands of the other characters. That is, Ynglond presents herself not only as objectified concept but as an object that demands particular relationships with the other characters.

Benjamin Griffin argues persuasively that the play stages a tension: "the sacramental disjunction of the temporal 'remembrance' from the eternal 'presence', and the disjunction of the historical event from the renewed propitiation, are reflected in the disjunction of individual identities and cosmic qualities: Stephen Langton is 'really' Sedition" (41). Bale's innovation, Griffin maintains, is that "In *King Johan* the particulars are treated as *derivable from* universals—'single' characters exist on *both* levels rather than on one alone" (42). According to Griffin, this disjunction historicizes the play's action. Moreover, the return to allegory at the end of the play buttresses this historicization. Griffin contends that the estate characters “are indeed shown recognizing their error; but when they do so, it is in this later world, more vaguely situated in time, with its clear implications of the present-day of Bale’s audience” (44). Allegorical characters dehistoricize; particular characters historicize.

Ynglond, however, does not come under Griffin’s analysis, suggesting that the character does not contribute to the historicization Griffin has in mind, just as Nobylyte, Cyvyle Order, Clergye, and Commynalte remain pan-historic characters. Ynglond proves to be a difficult character because she seems so historiographically modern, as evidenced by this statement by Griffin: “If England sacrifices King Johan, the sacrifice is not efficacious; Johan is not martyred ‘for’ anything. His death introduces no new time: England, regardless of his efforts, is to slump back into centuries of Popery” (43-44). Griffin here does not appear to have the character, Ynglond, in mind; rather, “England” stands here for the nationalized agents who cause King Johan’s death; Griffin’s “England” appears to represent the collective body comprised of the nobility, the clergy, the lawyers, and the commons.

Yet Bale’s Ynglond does not represent these things; she remains distinct from them. Moreover, despite seeming to be an allegorical representation of an abstract idea (or ideal), she displays unique characteristics that particularize her, not historically as she does not transform to a named historical character, but discursively. That is, her characterization as a poor widow particularizes her and is integral to her representation of the English nation.

Moreover, Ynglond appears unique in that she does not fit neatly or obviously into the categories in which the other characters may be slotted. Ynglond, is not clearly an estate character like Nobylyte, Clergye, Cyvyle Order, or Commynalte. Nor is Ynglond a historicized allegorical abstraction like the other pairs of disguised characters—Sedicyon/Stephen Langton, Usurpid Powre/Pope, Privat Welth/Cardinal Pandulphus, and Dissymulacyon/Simon of Swinsett—that, according to Ivo Kamps, "shut down any allegorical ambiguity with the historical concrete" by "gradually tak[ing] on historical flesh" (57).[18] King Johan, too, transcends historical concreteness, transforming from historical to allegorical character when the actor who has played King Johan doubles as Imperiall Majesty near the end of the play.[19] While Ynglond is linked thematically to Veritas—it is Veritas, by imparting Johan's "true" history to the audience, who continues the "wydowes offyce" Johan requires of Ynglond—the exigencies of doubling Ynglond with Veritas make this doubling scheme difficult if not unlikely.

Jacqueline Vanhoutte offers the most extended treatment of Ynglond, focusing on Ynglond's representation as "an immemorial parent whose claims to her children's affection are absolute" (41). Vanhoutte sees Ynglond as "a stable organism, moving through historical time and affected by historical events but not itself the product of such events. Although individuals like King Johan may be vulnerable to plots and may die,

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[18] See Cavanagh for a discussion of how the character Sedicyon remains ambiguous.

[19] Instructions for the doubling of King Johan and Imperiall Majesty are not given by the play-text, but this doubling-scheme provides ample room for a costume-change, if needed. For a discussion of the play-text's contradictory doubling instructions, see Adams "The Doubling." Compare Adams' resolution of this problem with Happé 1: 152-53. Also see Sider, who follows Happé's scheme. Sider argues that Bale's implicit doubling scheme emphasizes the opposition between doubled roles (373). Imperiall Majesty also assumes another historical concretisation: Bevington argues that Imperiall Majesty is "patently King Henry" (*Tudor* 104). Also see Kamps 65 for this view. Pafford and Greg, in light of their hypothesis of a late 1540s revision of the text, suggest that "there is a good deal to be said for regarding him [Imperiall Majesty] as personifying Edward VI" (xv).

[Ynglond] herself transcends mere phenomenology" (47-48). In other words, "Bale invokes medieval cosmographic representations only to dismiss them in favor of the geographically and politically bounded entity known as '[Ynglond]'" (48). Vanhoutte argues that "national integrity depends on the willingness of individual 'sowllys' to acknowledge themselves 'chylderne' to [Ynglond]" (48). Her argument relies on Sedicyon's disavowal of his relationship to Ynglond: "By refusing to be categorized according to nationality, Sedycyon signals his commitment to an alternate way of organizing social experience" (48). The play, however, does not work towards Sedicyon's (or any of the other characters') recognition of Ynglond as mother. Rather, the play presents Ynglond's rejection of maternity in favour of allegiance to her surrogate husband, Johan.

Representations of women and women's bodies were a contested part of the reformation in England. Claire McEachern sees the feminization of the nation as crucial to Bale's construction of the nation:

> what Bale's poetics of difference and resemblance demonstrates most of all is the *absolutely fundamental quality of gender to national identity in this period*. The figure of our country as 'she' is a commonplace of national affect: it connotes filial and romantic love and solicits loyalty and protection, as well as betrayal. For the Tudor-Stuart nation, it expresses the titilative simultaneity of difference and resemblance necessary to nationhood: the volatile contours of female figurality draw the permeable borders of the domestic. (29, McEachern's emphasis)

Mary Elizabeth Fissell echoes this sentiment in her discussion of the Reformation's effect on midwifery practices and on representations of pregnancy: "women's reproductive bodies were the material with which people fought battles of belief" (64). In his *Three Laws*, Bale feminizes the nation, highlighting its maternal characteristics. Fides Christiana advises the audience to

> Have a due respect unto your contreye natyve,
> Whych hath brought ye up and geven ye norryshment,
> Even from your cradles to these dayes nutrytyve,
> So that ye maye do, to her welth and preferment,
> Mynyster to her no hatefull detryment.
> A dogge to hys frynde wyll never be unlovynge;
> Lete reason in ye not lose hys naturall workynge. (2007-13)

Bale casts the "countreye natyve" as a mother whose care should be undertaken as it is natural to do so.

Yet the critical understanding Clergye, Nobilyte, Cyvyle Order, and Commynalte as Ynglond's children derives from the assertion of a particular allegorical logic rather than from the text. E. S. Miller, for instance, introduces these characters as "children of England and subjects of John" (802). However, the play presents an entirely different family picture even though it is clear that Ynglond is a maternal figure. For example, Johan refers to her "chylderes toyle" (418), and Ynglond acknowledges Commynalte as her "sonne" and promises Johan that she "wyll make [Commynalte] able to do ye dewtyfull servyce" (1573-74). Furthermore, Johan misrecognizes the clergy as Ynglond's children. He admonishes her, "They are thy chylderne; thow owghtest to say them good"

(68). Yet Ynglond replies by disavowing them as her children: "Nay, bastardes they are, unnaturall by the rood! / Sens theyr begynnyng they ware never good to me" (69-70). They "forsake Godes word…and unto the lawys of synfull men they leane" (79-80). The passage, admittedly, remains vague on their maternity as Ynglond disavows Commynalte later in play, telling him, "Yf thow leve thy kyng take me never for thy mother" (1610), and her assertion of the clergy's bastardy reflects a similar disavowal of them. Nevertheless, in his confrontation with Clergye, Nobylyte, and Cyvyle Order, Johan does not rebuke them for shirking their filial duty to Ynglond. Instead, Ynglond registers in Johan's harangue as a "pore woman" rather than as a mother. Moreover, Johan accuses Clergye of having bereft her of "her londes, her goodes, and of her pore chylderes toyle" (418). The accusation differentiates Clergye from Ynglond's children rather than including him as one of them.

Most significantly, Ynglond objects to Johan's submission to the Pope because she will lose her freedom as a widow. She attempts to sway Johan from his decision by pleading, "If ye love me, sir, for Gods sake do never so" (1716). Johan couches his response in maternal terms: "O Ynglond, Ynglond, shewe now thyselfe a mother; / Thy people wyll els be slayne here without nomber" (1717-18). Ynglond, however, rejects this categorization, focusing on her freedom as a widow instead. She upbraids Johan for his decision, claiming, "Of a fre woman ye have now mad a bonde mayd" (1766). This rejection of Johan's attempt to define her as a mother closely follows her disavowal of Commynalte as her son (1610).

Bale's emphasis of Ynglond's widowhood is thus integral to the play, and Ynglond's disavowal of familial ties foregrounds her claims as a widow—a symbol of the deserving poor—rather than her claims as a mother. In this, Bale's play appears similar to several other pieces of drama contemporary with Bale's and concerned with similar themes—the anonymous fragment "Somebody and Others", Thomas Kirchmayer's *Pammachius*, Sir David Lindsay's *Satire of the Thrie Estatis*, John Foxe's *Christus Triumphans*, and Nicholas Udall's *Respublica.* These plays also portray the harassment of widows and the despoiling of their goods as a central dramatic event. In these early plays, widowhood does not signal widows as romantic objects available for remarriage as the later Elizabethan and Jacobean widow-hunt plays do. Rather, in these early plays, widowhood signals a state of powerlessness that makes the characters vulnerable to depredation.

These plays also represent a continuation of the early Tudor tradition of pageants and interludes whose main theme is the restoration of despoiled and abused women to their health and to their wealth. In the late 1520s, Cardinal Wolsey witnessed a pageant in Boulogne in which a nun "called holy churche" was "violated" by "thre Spaniardes & thre Almaynes" before being rescued by Cardinal who "set her up of newe agayne" (Dillon 127). John Roo's play in at Christmas 1526 at Gray's Inn staged the following action:

> lord governaunce was ruled by dissipacion and negligence, by whose misgovernaunce and evil order, lady Publike wele was put from governance: which caused Rumor Populi, Inward grudge and disdain of wanton sovereignitie, to ryse with a great multitude, to expell negligence and dissipacion, and to restore Publik welth again to her estate, which was so done. (Dillon 121)

A tragedy played by children on 10 November 1527 showed "that the pope was in captivite and the church broughte under the foote, wherfore S. Peter appeared and put the Cardinal in authoritie to bryng the Pope to his libertie, and to set up the church agayn, and so the Cardinall made intercession to the kinges of England and of Fraunce, that they toke part together, and by their meanes the Pope was delyvered" (Dillon 131).
Anglo reports that on 5 January 1528 a play was staged in which the female characters, Religion, Peace, and Justice, lament their expulsion from Europe by "heresy, war, and ambition; and they detailed the iniquities perpetrated by the enemy, saying that they had no other refuge than in their most generous Father whom they besought to defend and protect them" (*Spectacle* 236). The play Thomas Wylley offered Thomas Cromwell, "Woman on the Rock, in the fire of faith affyning and a purging in the true purgatory," may also represent this genre.

Kirchmayer's and Foxe's plays, like *King Johan*, adapted the topos of the destitute woman but omited her restoration as the play's conclusion. Thomas Kirchmayer's *Pammachius*, a play Bale claimed to have translated and was performed in Cambridge in 1545 (Happé, "Introduction" 9), presents the suffering of two of its female characters, Truth and her companion, Free Speech. Free Speech reports that "my head has flowered with bumps, my hair has also been torn out and my face has been defiled with mud" (Kirchmayer IV.i). For her part, Truth suffers exile from realms ruled by Satan, before she is sent by Christ to join Theophilus in "rous[ing] the sleepy Germans" from their doctrinal slumber (Kirchmayer IV.iii). The final restoration of Truth does not take place in the play. In place of a fifth act in which the play's action would be resolved and Truth restored, Kirchmayer offers an epilogue which only suggests Truth's eventual (and actual) restoration: "Do not expect now, good spectators, that a fifth act is to be added to this play. Christ will act that out one day at his own time" (Kirchmayer Epilogue). Similarly, Foxe's *Christus Triumphans* omits the restoration of Ecclesia, which will be figured in her marriage to Christ, concluding not with the marriage but with her preparation for the marriage. By omitting the restorations of their destitute female characters, Kirchmayer and Foxe historicize their allegories by formally marking the present as incomplete. Bale's omission of Ynglond's restoration also marks the present as the moment in which Ynglond's restoration is always yet to come. Hence, the play incorporates its moment of performance into the ongoing history it represents.

Bale's *King Johan,* Foxe's play, Udall's *Respublica* and *Ralph Roister Doister*, and Lindsay's *Satire of the Thrie Estatis* develop the "despoilment of women" topos by portraying the female characters in question as women whose widowhood renders them susceptible to depredation and attack. While *Ralph Roister Doister*, a comedy, differs generically from the others, it too stages an attack (albeit comedic) on a widow and her subsequent restoration. In each of these plays, widowhood subjects the main characters to attacks motivated, in part, by the widows' wealth.

As Jennifer Panek, Elizabeth Hanson, and Ira Clark have shown, the pursuit of rich widows became a common theme in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Hanson argues that the rich widows in city comedy are relics of earlier dramatic practice. They "enjoy their extraordinary freedom and power because they are allegorical figures for wealth, survivals of morality plays and interludes in which money is frequently represented as a powerful woman" (210). Bale's widow possesses none of these qualities, being neither rich nor powerful. She is, however, similarly an object of masculine attention throughout the play. Whereas the widows of City Comedy allegorize a wealth achievable through marriage, Ynglond does not straightforwardly objectify wealth: her wealth has been stolen from her not acquired with her in marriage. The spoiling of Ynglond's wealth does not take place through remarriage; she signifies something other than wealth. Remarriage, as I argue, does become an important issue dealt with by the subtext of *King Johan*, but it does not do so as a device through which Ynglond's wealth is won.

Nevertheless, this characterization of her as a widow situates her within an economic discourse. By taking up the issues associated with the poverty of Ynglond, Bale frames the history of King John with the economic problem of poor relief. The discursive structure of this problem—the vocabulary in which it is articulated—forms a constellation of oppositions.. One of these oppositions places proper poor relief against improper poor relief. Bale's play far from offers a coherent policy on poor relief. Yet the play stages Ynglond's poverty as an effect of papal depredation. Moreover, the play stages the redress of poverty as the responsibility of the king although other members of the commonwealth—Nobylyte, Clergye, Cyvyle Order—must participate in Ynglond's relief. By casting Ynglond's poverty as an effect of papal power, and by making papal influence alien and unnatural, the play opposes English to Roman. That is, Ynglond's poverty exists as a result of foreign depredation of her wealth, and this foreign depredation establishes a national community whose wealth flows out of English hands and beyond English borders.

Ynglond's widowhood thus performs several functions. First, her widowhood grounds her poverty in biblical injunctions to care for the poor, especially for widows. In its heroicization of Johan's resistance to the Roman church and his care for Ynglond, the play casts Johan's proto-Protestantism in terms of the description of devotion in James 1: 27: "Pure deuocion & vndefiled before God the father / is this: to visyt the faderlesse and widdowes in their aduersite / & and to kepe him selfe vnspotted of the worlde" (Tyndale bb3r). Ynglond herself glosses Isaiah 1:17 in lines quoted above (Happé 1: 104), and also paraphrases Mark 12: 38-40 and Luke 20: 46-47 when she likens the clergy "to the wyckyd Pharyseys," quoting, "'Pore wydowys howsys ye grosse up by long prayers'" (Happé 1: 103; Adams 151; 64-65).[20] This association casts the clergy in the role of the Pharisees as they have robbed her, Ynglond claims, of her possessions. She informs Johan that "they take from me my cattell, howse and land, / My wodes and pasturs with other commodyetys" (62-63); later, Ynglond claims not only to have been "onpursed" by the Cardinal but also to have been "clene ondone by yowre false merchandyce, / Yowre pardons, yowre bulles, yowre purgatory pyckepurse, / Yowre lent fastes, yowre schryftes" (1617, 1625-27).

Second, Ynglond's poverty marks her as a true believer. In *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, William Tyndale argued that suffering in general was the sign of a true believer, and that poverty was one species of this suffering. He maintained that "Tribulation for righteousness is not a blessing only. But also a gift that God giveth unto none save his special friends" (9). Moreover, he argued that "Prosperity is a right curse and a thing that God giveth unto his enemies....The hypocrites with worldly preaching have not gotten the praise only, but even the possessions also and the dominion and rule of the whole world" (9).

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[20] Ynglond alludes to or cites scripture several times throughout the play. Her description of the clergy—"In syde cotys wandryng lyke most dysgysed players" (66)—derives, in part, from the reference to the "Scribes which love to goo in longe clothinge" (Mark 12: 38, Tyndale translation, StudyLight.org). In addition to the passages quoted, see line 86 for another instance in which Ynglond alludes to scripture.

That Ynglond exemplifies poverty is made clear from her entrance in widow's weeds; her widowhood associates her with poverty. She pleads with Johan to "waye a poore wedowes cause" (22-23) and to redress the causes by which she, referring to her costume, "apere[s]...so bareley" (59). Ynglond not only associates her widowhood with her poverty, but she associates both with Johan's duty as ruler to protect her:

> lett me have ryght as ye are a ryghtfull kyng,
> Apoyntyd of God to have such mater in doyng;
> For God wyllyth yow to helpe the pore wydowes cause,
> As he by Esaye protesteth in this same clause
>
> . . . .
>
> Seke ryght to poore, to the weake and faterlesse,
> Defende the wydowe whan she is in dystresse. (127-30, 133-34)

The mark of a king, according to Ynglond, is to defend his poor subjects. In a way, Ynglond inverts the admonition to render to Caesar what is Caesar's by laying out an injunction for the king to look to his subjects' welfare. Bale, however, ties material welfare and spiritual welfare together. A king's authority not only consists in but is marked by his defense of his subjects' wealth.

Although records for the early sixteenth century cannot provide a complete picture, extant poor relief records show that widows "were the commonest subjects of relief" (Slack 61-62). Moreover, "single women, who were almost always widows or wives abandoned by their husbands" formed a substantially large group vulnerable to poverty, in some cases doubling the number of dependently poor married women (Slack 75). These two groups—widows and abandoned wives—comprised sixteen percent of the poor population in Norwich in 1570 (Slack 79-80; Willen 562-63). Indeed, among the elderly poor in Norwich, widows and unmarried women outnumbered men by roughly twelve to one (Houlbrooke 212).

While the high incidence of poverty among widows suggests a correlation between the experience of widows and the rhetoric of poverty in which they presented their complaints, the rhetoric was also employed by "not so poor women" as well (Stretton, *Women* 186). Stereotypically viewed as the embodiment of a "poor, distressed, and weak individual," widows—even rich ones—could at times invoke this stereotype to further their cause (Mendelson and Crawford 175). This stereotype, and the financial relief it could motivate, was powerful enough that some women claimed to be widowed when they were not (Mendelson and Crawford 174). Moreover, such claims of poverty were treated skeptically, and some were revealed more as rhetorical ploys than accurate descriptions of the women's economic state (Stretton, *Women* 185-86).

Yet these appeals were countered by questioning not only the validity of the widow's claim to be poor but also the moral character of the widow. Tim Stretton reports that "Counsel for both plainffs and defendants drew upon stereotypical images to bolster their arguments, suggesting, for example, that widow opponents were loud, immodest and sexually incontinent, or that they were bad mothers guilty of shaming the memories of their late husbands (accusations of a type rarely levelled at widowers)" ("Widows" 205). Moreover, the stereotype of the lusty widow also was invoked to question the widow's sincerity: "While public expressions of grief affirm a widow's chastity and sincerity, over-expressive mourning promotes her sexual availability" (Phillipy 28). Widows thus often found themselves in a "double bind" in which their grief was read in two contradictory ways.

Of particular interest is the complaint of Mary Burges. Stretton reports that Mary, a widow, remarried a John Burges, who subsequently fled to Mary's "great impoverishment and utter undoinge" (qtd. in *Women* 181); Mary found herself in desperate straits, set out of doors and threatened with the loss of all her already unspoilt goods by Andice Phillips, against whom Mary was making her complaint. Stretton notes that

> Mary's desperate condition was not an incidental detail; it formed the backbone of her case. Her widowhood, her remarriage, her ruthless desertion at the hands of Burges, all had little obvious bearing on her suit against Phillips. But they provided the background to his mistreatment of her. Technically Mary was not a widow, but implicit in her narrative is the sense that her husband's desertion had left her as disadvantaged and exposed as a widow: after Burges exploited her, Phillips took advantage of her weakened state to deprive her of her possessions and livelihood. (Stretton, *Women* 181)

Mary's plea makes clear that to claim to be a widow was not necessarily to claim a technically factual status but to claim a disadvantaged and deprived status.

Mary Burges's recourse to the rhetoric of widowhood is significant in relation to Bale's play: Ynglond represents a category of the poor stereotypically and biblically held to be deserving of relief. Moreover, when Ynglond associates her widowhood with her poverty, she adopts a contemporary vocabulary whose pragmatic use is to win sympathy and support: as her husband has been exiled, she cannot technically be a widow.

Moreover, the rhetorical effect of claims of poverty and, especially, widowhood, were gendered. Analyzing the bills presented to the court of Requests, Tim Stretton identifies a gendering of particular "metaphors of power" (*Women* 187) implicit in the formulaic language of these bills. Claims of destitution and poverty, for instance, were more often made by women—by single women and widows in particular—than by men. While widows could employ the phrase "poor widow" to invoke "a panoply of sympathetic imagery," men lacked access to this particular vocabulary (Stretton, *Women* 183-84).

Extant records indicate such an overwhelming preponderance of poor women over men that Diane Willen suggests that early modern England experienced, if not a "feminization of poverty" (Willen 563), then a difficulty categorizing the deserving poor. As Willen argues, "Scarcity of resources even more than moral disapprobation enforced a narrow definition that focused on women, the elderly, and children" (564). Because the poor male population received assistance on an ad hoc basis rather than in an institutionalized manner, the "concept of a 'deserving poor' therefore created its own gender bias and resulted in gender differentiation in social policy" (Willen 564). While generalizations regarding an actual, absolute correlation between women and the category of the deserving poor cannot be asserted—single women who had never married, for instance, rarely received the relief accorded to widows (Froide 253-58)—the vocabulary employed to describe the deserving poor was gendered female. According to

Marjorie K. McIntosh, the latter half of the sixteenth century saw the poor described by "increasingly gendered language. The deserving poor of both sexes were represented as weak and dependent....The idle poor, by contrast, were associated with uncontrolled, potentially violent, and threatening masculinity" ("Poverty" 463).

This feminization of the problem of poverty counters, to some extent, the dangers attending the masculine associations with poverty, especially riotousness and rebellion. Indeed, some of the leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace had been styled Lord Poverty, Captain Poverty, Brother Poverty, and Master Poverty (Harrison 106; Bush 20).[21] These titles signalled that such movements originated in, and were led by, the poor (Bush 27). In actuality, these movements were not "movements of the poor and oppressed; rather they were movements of the privileged" (Bush 26), and, in effect, the references to poverty falsely suggested that "the poor and the commons were synonyms" (Bush 27). Nevertheless, these movements rhetorically cast their revolt as poverty's defense of traditional religious belief and practices as well as poverty's opposition to the Dissolution of the monasteries (Bush 29). The Pilgrimage of Grace was motivated, in part, by the idea that the Dissolution would "adversely affect the commonwealth by depriving poor men of alms" (Bush 31); the result of the Dissolution, according to the Lincolnshire articles, would be that "the poorality of your realm be unrelieved, the which as we think is a great hurt to the commonwealth" (qtd. in Bush 31). The idea that poverty would lead to—and that this cause could be allegorized in Captain Poverty figures—rebellion was thus acknowledged by the leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

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[21] The northern Captain Poverty revolts, while contemporaneous with the Pilgrimage of Grace, did not explicitly participate in the Pilgrimage. Their aims, however, were so similar to those of the Pilgrimage that M. L. Bush concludes that "the Captain Poverty movement should not be regarded as basically different from the rest of the Pilgrimage" (36). The so-called "captain's mass" on 25 October 1536 at Penrith was performed by Robert Thompson, who was styled the "Chaplain of Poverty." He entered the church at the head of a procession, leading the four captains of Charity, Faith, Poverty, and Pity (Shagan 94).

Commynalte's betrayal of Johan and Ynglond provides an example of the gendering of poverty that McIntosh suggests. That is, Ynglond, as embodiment of a feminized poverty, remains loyal while Commynalte, the embodiment of a masculinized poverty, turns overtly and violently rebellious, joining the army headed by the "capttaynes, Nobelyte and the Clargy" (1602). Indeed, the actions of Ynglond and Commynalte are rendered in gendered terms. The Cardinal orders Commynalte to "sett forth manfully" (1604); Ynglond, for her part, swears loyalty to Johan in terms, as Vanhoutte notes, reminiscent of a wedding ceremony (49): "I wyll not awaye from myn owne lawfull kyng, / Appoyntyd of God tyll deth shall us departe" (1621-22).

In making Ynglond a widow, then, Bale appropriates the convention of the widow as member of the deserving and obedient poor. While widows, of course, could participate in disruptive or rebellious behaviour, they appear to have remained at the forefront of those considered to be worthy of charitable relief. However, this status did not render widows immune to attacks on their character in order to discredit their claims. As mentioned above, the moral behaviour of widows was questioned by those seeking to discredit those claims.

Indeed, accusations of Ynglond's licentiousness resound almost immediately in *King Johan.* Sedicyon's first words in the play attempt to cast Johan and Ynglond's conversation as unseemly: "What, yow two alone? I wyll tell tales, by Jesus! / And saye that I se yow fall here to bycherye" (43-44). Indeed, as Dermot Cavanagh notes, Sedicyon represents "a discourse that interferes with healthy social cohesion…[and that] disseminates lies that destroy reputation" (180). Sedicyon undermines such social cohesion by raising charges of sexual misconduct both on the part of Ynglond and of Johan. Sedicyon thus calls Ynglond a "whore" and a "wedred wytche" who "shall rather kysse wher as it doth not ytche" (87, 95-96), and he suggests, through innuendo, that Johan's concern for Ynglond stems from less than ideal motives: "Yt is joye of hym that women so can cheryshe" (170). Sedicyon reiterates these slurs later in the play, slandering Ynglond as a "queane," a "callet," and a "harlot" whose "report is lyke as thu art," that is, false (1907, 1940, 1757-58).

Sedicyon's slander of Ynglond also registers in broader terms. Downplaying the severity of Ynglond's complaints, Sedicyon dismisses them as "bablyng matters" (156) merely "dyble-dable" and "byble-bable" (160, 161) spouted by "women that wepe with a hevy hart / Whan they in the churche hath lett but a lyttyll farte" (165-66). Thus, he sarcastically remarks, "Yt is as great pyte to se a woman wepe / As yt is to se a sely dodman crepe, / Or…a sely goose go barefote" (173-75). Later, he claims "It is a worlde to heare a foysh woman reason" (1882) and notes that Ynglond "Styll…must trattle; that tunge is alwayes sterynge" (1922).

Nevertheless, despite the general chauvinism of his attack, Sedicyon's slandering of Ynglond focuses on her sexual behaviour. Specifically, Sedicyon subverts the sympathetic effect of Ynglond's widowhood by presenting it as a disguise or ploy designed to gull Johan, insinuating that her supplication stems from an alleged and illegitimate pregnancy. Ynglond pleads with Johan to "Seke ryght to poore, to the weake and faterlesse, / Defende the wydowe whan she is in dystresse" (133-34). In an aside, Sedicyon notes, "I tell ye the woman ys in great hevyness" (135). Sedicyon's interruption extends the verse's couplet to a triplet here, tying his aside to Ynglond's plea through rhyme and undermining not only the content of Ynglond's language but also the form of the play's verse.[22] Thus, his claim that Ynglond is in "hevyness" responds both formally and linguistically to "faterlesse" and "dystresse" by drawing a logical connection between three rhymed words.

He takes a similar tack in his response to Ynglond's claim that "the faulte was in the clergy / That I, a wedow, apere to yow so barelye" (58-59). Sedicyon exclaims, "Ye are a Wylly Wat, and wander here full warelye" (60). Again, his accusation not only immediately follows, but its alliteration and rhyme link it to, in an attempt to rebut, Ynglond's claim of widowhood. Sedicyon thus suggests Ynglond's appearance before Johan as a "wedow" attired "barely" is but a "Wylly" ruse that she has crafted "warely." "Wat" may here have the sense of "hare" rather than of "person," the sense attributed to the word by both Adams (151) and Happé (1: 103).[23]

Moreover, by claiming Ynglond has "wandered" before Johan, Sedicyon identifies Ynglond as a vagrant, a characterization that implicitly attacks Ynglond's sexual morality and thus the validity of Ynglond's poverty. This opening scene thus sets the play's action firmly within the context of early modern debates on poor relief. These debates articulated the category of the poor into two categories: the deserving and the undeserving. In Sedicyon's attack on Ynglond's widowhood, two discourses converge, one of which is concerned with poverty and the other with sexual misconduct. Ynglond serves as an uncertain object: Sedicyon casts doubts not only on the validity of her claim to be a widow but also on her sexual reputation. The two attempts are not wholly separable from one another, and each plays off the other. Sedicyon's goal, of course, is to discredit Ynglond's claims in order that Clergye remain in Johan's favour.

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[22] For similar instances, see ll. 65-67 and ll. 72-74.

[23] The examples provided by the OED suggest that "wat" denoted a hare as prey, a sense that jibes with Sedicyon's accusation that Ynglond entices Johan to assist her.

Indeed, sedition was associated with idle vagabonds in the early draft, attributed to William Marshall, of the 1536 Poor Law (Elton, "Early" 58, 65). This draft noted that "ther be within this his Realme…a right grete multitude of strong valiaunt beggers, vacabundes, and idle persones of bothe kyndes, men and women" (Elton, "Early" 57). According to the draft, these vagrant women had but one option available to them in order to survive; the draft characterizes them as "Syngle women living by thabomynable vice of Lechery which shalbe founde loitryng in the Contrey" (Elton, "An Early" 62). Moreover, Sedicyon's charge of vagrancy foreshadows the criminalization of mobility invoked by Thomas Harman's 1567 text, *A Caveat for Common Cursetors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (Woodbridge 55-57).[24] Harman claims that vagabonds "under the pretence of great misery, dyseases and other innumberable calamites whiche they fayne through great hipocrisye do wyn and gayne great almes in all places where they wyly wander, to the utter deludinge of the good geuers, deceauinge and impouerishing of all suche poore housholders" (A2r). Not only does Sedicyon's charge that Ynglond "wander[s] here full warelye" presage Harman's fear of mobility, it also presciently chimes with Harman's description of those who "wyly wander," duping well-intentioned alms-givers. Sedicyon thus adopts a similar position to Harman by warning Johan against Ynglond's alleged deceit.

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[24] For the discussion of Harman's *Caveat*, I rely on Linda Woodbridge's text.

Sedicyon's accusations of vagrancy parallel the description of Widow Edith given by Walter Smith in his 1525 satirical text, *The Twelve Merry Jests of Widow Edith.* Contrary to the text's title, Edith is not actually a widow. Rather, she impersonates one in order to defraud her numerous dupes. Raised by her mother to avoid "any thing: / That sowned vnto good huswyfry, / But aye study to forge and lye" ([A3v]), Edith marries a man (on her mother's advice) but after "a yeare or two, …left hym, and away dyd go: / With a seruant of Erle of Wyltshyre" ([A3v]). She has a child by this man, and he deserts her after the child dies. Following this abandonment, she embarks on a series of adventures in which she defrauds several people of money.

Edith's pretended widowhood is central to most of her schemes: she claims to be a rich widow, promising either herself or her fictitious daughter (or sometimes both) in marriage or concubinage to several of her victims. Edith's widowhood operates as a disguise for her, a disguise that enables her to defraud others through its signification of her potential riches. *The Twelve Merry Jests*, however, constructs widowhood entirely as a con and thus exposes Widow Edith as a member of the undeserving rather than the deserving poor. In other words, Edith's pretense of widowhood demonstrates that "almost as insidious as vagrants pretending to disability were vagrants who pretended not to be vagrants: those who feigned respectability" (Woodbridge 198).

The attempt to distinguish between deserving and undeserving poor became a crucial element of poor relief. As Woodbridge notes, "the conceit of bringing hidden practices to light" was central to rogue literature (61). Several texts, like *The Twelve Merry Jests* and Harman's *Caveat*, contributed to this effort. Another such text was the 1509 book *Liber Vagatorum,* a text for which Luther provided a preface in 1528 or 1529.

The *Liber*, which Luther claims to have been written by "a fellow right expert in roguery" (3), exposes the ruses beggars and vagabonds employed to defraud alms-givers. Luther claims sympathy with those who had been defrauded, noting that he had "of late years been cheated and befooled by such tramps and liars more than I wish to confess. Therefore, whosoever hear these words let him be warned, and do good to his neighbour in all Christian charity" (4-5). The *Liber* claims to facilitate true charity by informing its readers how to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving beggars and thus divert their alms from the "devile" and donate their alms to appropriate recipients: Luther noted that the book "may help mankind to be wise, and on the look out for…the devil" (3). The book's value, Luther maintained, was that it instructed that

> princes, lords, counsellors of state, and everybody should be prudent, and cautious in dealing with beggars, and learn that, whereas people will not give and help honest paupers and needy neighbours, as ordained by God, they give, by persuasion of the devil, and contrary to God's judgment, ten times as much to Vagabonds and desperate rogues,—in like manner as we have hitherto done to monasteries, cloisters, churches, chapels, and mendicant friars, forsaking all the time the truly poor. (4)

The danger presented by vagabonds, then, is that they are indistinguishable from the truly poor; this indistinguishability hampers the true charity of Christians.

The *Liber* identifies twenty-eight types of beggars, the first of which the text describes as those who "come plainly and simply to people and ask an alms for God's, or the Holy Virgin's sake:—perchance honest paupers with young children, who are known in the town or village wherein they beg" (8). The text advises its readers that "it is proper to give" money to as "such alms are well laid out" (9). Of two other types of beggars, the Stabülers and the Hangmen, the text more ambivalently recommends that "Thou mayest give to them if thou wilt, for they are half bad and half good,—not all bad, but most part" (10; 32-33). The remaining twenty-five types of beggars are, however, unequivocally false beggars and undeserving of charity. The *Liber* details the elaborate disguises and theatrical performances delivered by some of these beggars, following these details with the formulaic pronouncement that such begging is false. Some of these beggars, for instance,

> leave their clothes at the hostelry, and sit down against the churches naked, and shiver terribly before the people...They prick themselves with nettle-seed and other things, whereby they are made to shake. Some say they have been robbed...some that they have lain ill and for this reason were compelled to sell their clothes...but all this is only that people should give them more clothes, when they sell...them, and spend the money with lewd women...and gambling. (30)

Another sort, the Voppers, "are for the most part women, who allow themselves to be led in chains as if they were raving mad; they tear their shifts from their bodies, in order that they may deceive people" (31). A subset of this type, the Vopperinae, "pretend that they have diseases of the breast. They take a cow's spleen, and peel it on one side, and then lay it upon their bosom—the peeled part outside—smearing it with blood, in order that people may think it is the breast" (32). These are a "wicked and false way of begging" (32). Others "take horses' dung and mix it with water, and besmear their legs, hands, and arms with it; thereby appearing as if they had the yellow sickness, or other dreadful disease. Yet it is not true" (41).

The second part of the *Liber* describes further practices by which the twenty-six types of false beggars practice deception. Some, pretending to be widows or widowers, "borrow children upon All Souls' or other Feast Day, and sit down before the churches as tho' they had many children, and they say 'these children are motherles' or 'fatherles,' but it is not true" (43-44). The text also advises readers to "beware of the pedlers who seek thee at home, for thou will buy nothing good of them, be it silver, haberdashery, spicery, or any other wares" (47).

In its revelation of the true and false sorts of beggars, the *Liber* introduces a radically skeptical view of poor relief. The *Liber* exposes the signs of poverty, madness, and disease as lacking any real referent; they signify nothing except disguise. In effect, the *Liber* paradoxically exposes false beggars by eliminating the object that false beggars, through signs and disguises, mimic. No truly diseased, mad, widowed, or orphaned beggars exist in the world posited by the *Liber*; only their simulacra exist. The true beggars are those that beg "plainly and simply" in the town in which they are known.

Such skepticism, as Woodbridge argues, was a "pivotal element in the shift away from individual charity to beggars and toward a state-sponsored relief system….Rogue literature thus did crucial cultural work, teaching readers to distrust their own judgment about who really needed alms" (275). The focus on the revelation of the deserving and the undeserving poor also appears in Simon Fish's 1529 text, *A supplicacyon for the beggers*. In that text, which Bale likely knew, Fish nationalizes the distinction between the two: England constitutes the deserving poor while agents of papal institutions constitute the undeserving poor (Happé 1: 14-15, 150; Adams 26n4).[25]

Where the *Liber Vagatorum* reveals the disguises and deceits of beggars and categorizes them according to their deservingness, Fish's *Supplicacyon* distinguishes between two sorts of beggars: the deserving and the papists. The first sort, the impotent and poor beggars, is comprised of "the foule unhappy sorte of lepres, and other sore people, nedy, impotent, blinde, lame, and sike, that live onely by almesse" (1v). The numbers of this sort of beggar have "daily so sore encreased that all the almesse of all the weldisposed people of this youre realme is not halfe ynough for to susteine theim" (1v), and it is on their behalf that Fish addresses the king. The second sort, the "gredy sort of sturdy idell holy theues" (3r), are comprised of "strong puisaunt and counterfeit holy, and ydell beggers and vacabundes" who have "craftily crept" into England, first entering "by all the craft and wilinesse of Satan" (1v). These beggars, moreover, appear in disguise: they are "not the herdes, but the rauinous wolues going in herdes clothing deuouring the flocke" (1v). More specifically, Fish identifies them as "the Bisshoppes, Abbottes, Priours, Deacons, Archdeacons, Suffraganes, Prestes, Monkes, Chanons, Freres, Pardoners and Somners" (1v). The determining characteristic of this sort of beggar, according to Fish, is their idlness: "setting all labour aside...[they] haue begged so importunately that they haue gotten ynto theyr hondes more then the therd part of all your Realme" (1v). These beggars, moreover, gather a tenth of all income and produce in the realm, looking "so narowly uppon theyr proufittes that the poore wyues must be countable to theym of euery tenth eg or elles she gettith not her ryghtes at ester [or she] shalbe taken as an heretike" (2r); they also take "almesse that the good christen people wolde giue vnto vs sore impotent miserable people" ([8r]). Fish implicitly identifies a third sort of beggar as well. This sort is primarily produced by the spirituality's licentiousness: the "monstruouse sort as of the baudes, hores theues, and idell people" ([8r]); Fish suggests that this sort is not quite as deserving of relief as the first sort but that they are not entirely responsible for their state, either.

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[25] On Fish's contribution to the Cromwellian recuperation of King John, see Levin 62-77.

Fish identifies several problems caused by the second sort. First, they burden the realm with tithes so that the true sort of beggars cannot be relieved nor can the people pay taxes to the king (2v). Second, the spirituality usurp the king's authority first by remaining outside the king's law and second by stealing the allegiance of the people: the spirituality "translate all rule power lordishippe auctorite obedience and dignite from your grace unto theim...[causing] your subjectes shulde fall into disobedience and rebellion ageinst your grace and be under theim" (3r-v). Fish sees King John as an example of this practice whereby the clergy "plucke awey obedie*n*ce of the people from theyre naturall liege lorde and kinge" (3v). Fish notes that King John, "this good and blissed king of greate compassion, more fearing and lamenting the sheding of the bloude of his people then the losse of his crowne and dignite agaynst all right and conscience had submitted him silf unto theym" (3r). Their power to disobey rests in the fact that bishops and abbots sit in Parliament. Moreover, Fish argues that the spirituality retain power by threatening to persecute those who oppose them with heresy (5r). Fish thus sees financial motivation behind spiritual (and political) practice. Fish's prime example is the doctrine of purgatory. He claims that "there is no purgatory but that it is a thing inuented by the couitousnesse of the spiritualitie onely to translate all kingdomes from other princes vnto theim and that there is not one word spoken of hi in al holy scripture" ([6r]). The falsity of this belief, Fish claims, is the reason why "they will not let the newe testament go a brode yn your moder tong lest men shulde espie that they by theyre cloked yposchrisi do translate thus fast your kingdome into theyre ho*n*des" ([6v]). Moreover, Fish is certain "that this purgatory and the Popes pardons is all the cause of translacio*n* of your kingdome so fast into their hondes wherfore it is manifest it can not be of christ, for he gaue more to the temporall kingdome, he hym silfe paid tribute to Cesar he toke nothing fro*m* hym but taught that the highe powers shuld be alweys obeid" ([6v]). Fish sees examples of how the spirituality do not submit themselves to the higher authorities in the examples of those that have escaped punishment (i.e. were not subject to the law) ([7r]).

Third, the spirituality morally depraves the realm through licentious behaviour. They employ "all the sleyghtes they may to haue to do with euery mannes wife, euery man*n*es doughter and euery mannes mayde that cukkoldrie and baudrie shulde reigne ouer all emong your subiectes, that noma*n* shulde knowe his owne childe that theyre bastardes might enherite the possessions of euern man to put the right begotten children clere beside their inheritaunce yn subuersion of all estates and godly order" (4r). Moreover, the spirituality "haue made an hundreth thousand ydell hores yn your realme" (4r) by offering good wages to prostitutes and bawds (4v): "Howe many thousandes doth suche lubricite bring to beggery theft and idelnesse whiche shuld haue kept their good name and haue set theim silues to worke had not ben this excesse treasure of the spiritualitie?" (4v). They are also the means by which the pox and leprosy are transmitted throughout England (4r). They have also created more beggars as they "make the wimen to runne awey from theire husbondes" and "bring both man wife and children to ydelnesse and beggeri" (4r-v). Fish sets this behaviour in ironic contrast to the spirituality's vows of chastity: "These be they that by theire absteyning from mariage do let the generation of the people when by all the realme at length if it soulde be continued shall be made desert and inhabitable" (4r). Such activity causes a "breche of matrimonie" in England, a breach that will be remedied only when the king "Set[s] these sturdy lobies abrode in the world to get theim wiues of theire owne, to get theire liuing with their laboure in the swete of theire faces...to gyue other idell people by theire example occasion to go to laboure" ([8r]).

Fish's suggestion for rectifying the situation is radical. He considers it futile to provide more poor relief: "whate remedy to releue vs your poore sike lame and sore bedemen? To make many hospitals for the relief of the poore people? Nay truely. The moo the worse, for euer the fatte of the hole foundacion hangeth on the prestes berdes" ([7v]). He urges Henry VIII to "bilde a sure hospitall that neuer shall faile to releue vs all your poor bedeme*n*" by relieving the spirituality of their powers. As noted above, he asks that they be set abroad to marry and to work ([8r]) and, failing that, "Tye these holy idell theues to the cartes to be whipped naked about euery market towne til they will fall to laboure that they by theyre i*m*portunate begging take not awey almesse that the good christen people wolde giue vnto vs sore impotent miserable people" ([8r]). By doing this, the "nombre of oure forsaid monstruous sort as of the baudes, hores theues, and idell people decreace," "matrimony [will] be moche better kept", the population will increase, the "comons [will] encrease in richesse. Then shall the gospell be preached. Then shall none bege oure almesse from vs. Then shal we haue ynough and more then shall suffice vs, whiche shall be the best hospitall that euer was founded for vs" ([8r]).

One of the interesting things about Fish's characterization of the spirituality as the undeserving poor is the degree to which the spirituality behaves "craftily" or through the "wiliness of Satan." Such formulations indicate that Fish considers himself to be revealing a state of affairs that is not immediately obvious. That is, Fish serves as informer to the deception of the spirituality, a deception not commonly or easily observed. One of the major problems with the spirituality, Fish implies, is that they do not appear to be what they actually are. The shapes they assume—"Bisshoppes, Abbottes, Priours, Deacons, Archdeacons, Suffraganes, Prestes, Monkes, Chanons, Freres, Pardoners and Somners" (1v)—disguise their true identities as "ydell beggars" and "holy theues."

Whether sedition was actually caused by vagrancy or poverty in general was a question of debate. Indeed, in the 1520s and 1530s, a number of writers turned to the issue, producing "a more thoughtful and nuanced approach to the problems of poverty" (McIntosh, *Controlling* 194). While hardly a cogent analysis of the problem of poverty, Fish's *Supplicacyon* addressed and contributed to the "growing perplexity with vagrancy" expressed in the late 1520s and early 1530s (Fideler 201). According to Linda Woodbridge, Fish's and other Reformation texts "influenced the emergence of beggary/vagrancy as a prominent public policy issue: rhetorically, in the welding of anticlericalism to the discourse of vagrancy; and materially, in the destruction of the Catholic Church as the agency responsible for the poor" (95).

The Poor Laws were by no means the only attempts made to regulate the poor; they constituted only a part of "a complex reticulum designed to resolve conflict and minimize forms of of social behavior seen as damaging to the community" (McIntosh, *Controlling* 24). Local responses to the problems posed by poverty and, more specifically by vagabonds, employed different means to regulate poor relief than those laid out in the Poor Laws, revealing a tension between tolerant and indiscriminate poor relief and poor relief based on the discrimination between the deserving and the undeserving poor (McIntosh, *Controlling* 83). Some communities punished those of its members who charitably assisted those deemed undeserving of charity (McIntosh, *Controlling* 83). Such an approach, however, does not suggest a callous approach to poor relief as "many of the communities whose courts were most energetic in reporting misbehavior among the poor were equally vigorous in their efforts to assist those needy people regarded as deserving" (McIntosh, *Controlling* 83). Moreover, the transition to a nationalized system of poverty relief achieved by the Elizabethan Poor Laws did not negate the religious significance of individuals' charitable deeds; such deeds were valued regardless of whether the beneficiary was considered deserving or not (McIntosh, *Controlling* 195).

Johan, for his part, dismisses Sedicyon's attempts to cast Ynglond as undeserving and instead takes up Ynglond's case, accepting her claims of poverty as valid. When taking her part against the estate characters, he refers to her as "pore England" (470) and as a "pore woman" (403). Significantly, Johan recognizes that Ynglond not only has been deprived of wealth but of her familial support: she has been robbed not only of her "londes, [and] her goodes" but also "of her pore chylderes toyle" (418). Moreover, Johan adopts Ynglond's account of the cause of her destitution. Johan accuses Clergye of impoverishing Ynglond "With yowre Latyne howres, serymonyes and popetly playes" (415), and he recites a list of practices including mortuaries, pardons, purgatory, and confession which not only "have made the people very assys" but which also, recalling

Ynglond's allusion to the devouring Pharisees, "dewore her and eat her upp attonnys" (424, 427). Nobylyte, according to Johan, has abetted Clergye and has "impoveryshyd / And mad a begger" of Ynglond (478-79). Tellingly, he connects Ynglond's treatment with Clergye's interpretation of Psalm 44: 10, of which Johan notes that "yt is ever yowre cast / For yowre advauncement the Scripturs for to wrast" (465-66). Johan accuses Clergye of presuming

> the Scripturs to confownd.
> Nowther thow nor the Pope shall do pore Englond wrong,
> I beyng governor and kynge her peple amonge
> Whyle yow for lucre sett forth your popysh lawys
> Yowre selvys to advaunce ye wold make us pycke strawes. (469-73)

Johan thus connects the material depredation of Ynglond to the "wrasting" of scripture. That is, the effects of the exile of scripture from England are played out on stage, with Clergye's interpretation of scripture underwriting the economic depredation of Ynglond that Johan likens to the Egyptian enslavement of the Israelites. Moreover, just as Ynglond has located Johan's authority in scriptural injunctions to care for the poor in his realm, Johan ties the wrasting of scripture to a diminishment of his authority. It is not simply Ynglond who suffers from Clergye's biblical interpretations but Johan as well: he includes himself—"ye wold make us pycke strawes"—among those suffering Clergye's attacks.

Johan's accusation that Clergye and the Pope "wold make us pycke strawes"[26] alludes to the episode recounted in Exodus 5 in which Pharaoh requires the Israelites to gather straw in order to make their own bricks. At the end of the first act, the Interpretour explicitly announces that the tropological significance of the play in relation to Exodus:

> Thys noble kynge Johan as a faythfull Moyses
> Withstode proude Pharao for hys poore Israel,
> Myndynge to brynge it out of the lande of darkenesse.
> But the Egyptyanes ded agaynst hym so rebell
> That hys poore people ded styll in the desart dwell... (1107-11)

The connection is made explicit in Commynalte's explanation that his own blindness is caused "For want of knowlage in Christes lyvely veryte" (1553). Ynglond informs Johan that such blindness causes disobedient subjects: "This spirituall blyndnes bryngeth men owt of the waye, / And cause them oft tymes ther kynges to dyssobaye" (1554-55). In other words, it is not so much poverty that causes disobedience as ignorance.

Commynalte reinforces this message, describing to Johan the two "impedymentes" to Commynalte's loyalty:

> The fyrst is blyndnes, wherby I myght take with the Pope
> Soner than with yow; for, alas, I can but grope,
> And ye know full well ther are many nowghty gydes.
> The nexte is poverte, whych cleve so hard to my sydes

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[26] Adams glosses this phrase as "triflers," referring to the *OED* (157). Happé notes that "probably the sense is 'to make us gather straws', i.e. force us to live only on what we can glean" (1: 111). Udall employs the phrase in the sense attributed by Happé: Avarice complains, "poor I, maie picke strawes / these hungri dogges will snatche all" (*Respublica* 314).

And ponych me so sore that my powre ys lytyll or non. (1560-64)

While Commynalte cites his poverty as a potential cause of disobedience, he answers Johan that his "substance" has disappeared "By pristes, channons and monkes, which do but fyll ther bely / With my swett and labour for ther popych purgatory" (1566-67). Again, Ynglond explains to Johan that Commynalte's blindness

ys but a syngnyficac[y]on
Of blyndnes in sowle for lacke of informacyon
In the word of god, which is the orygynall grownd
Of dyssobedyence which all realmies doth confound. (1582-85)

While Bale casts poverty as a cause of disobedience, he constructs poverty as a condition imposed on both Ynglond and Commynalte by the Roman Church.

The play's depiction of Ynglond as a destitute widow in need of relief—indeed suffering because of a failure to receive relief—works to disarm the connection between rebellion and poverty. Moreover, Ynglond's poverty is not linked to idleness; nor, for that matter, is Commynalte's. Instead, their poverty has its source elsewhere, in the avarice of the Roman church. To be sure, Bale's play posits a simplistic view of the causes of revolt; Bale also externalizes these causes, having them originate in Rome. Yet Bale's play works to construct relief of the true poor—the English poor—as the proper sort of participation in the English commonwealth.

Yet to term the relationship Bale demands from his audience *participation* masks the intensity of religious conflict during the period. For example, the vast material destruction of the Dissolution of the monasteries progressed in part, as Fish advocated, under cover of caring for the truly English poor. Moreover, so long as the opposition between the deserving and undeserving poor remained an allegorical opposition between Ynglond as the English church and Sedicyon as papal authority, such participation might be more truly understood to be collaboration.

However, by casting such participation in the economic terms of poor relief, Bale presents Ynglond as the moral nexus of an imagined flow of money. That is, inasmuch as Ynglond tokens the proper destination of English money, her widowhood signifies financial depredation in a financial context: Yngland is destitute on the international stage. As I discuss in the next chapter, Bale does indeed imagine England in this manner, lamenting the loss of English texts to foreign scholars and urging a restoration of England's past through care for its manuscripts.

Chapter Five: "No quyckar merchaundyce than lybrary bokes": John Bale's Commodification of Manuscript Culture[1]

In July 1560, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to John Bale seeking information regarding any "bokes of Antiquitie, not printed" that Bale may have had in his possession (Bale, "Letter to Matthew Parker" 17).[2] Bale replied that "hauock" had been made of his library seven years earlier when he had been forced to flee Ireland to exile on the Continent and had been "depryued of all that I had, by the papystes vndre quene Marye" ("Letter to Matthew Parker" 17). Bale, however, had since traced some of his books—"a great drye vessel full"—to Anthony Sellenger who had purposefully acquired them by "wurke of the Deuyll, that they shulde not yet come to lyghte" ("Letter to Matthew Parker" 17). On Sellenger's death, the books passed to Sellenger's brother and nephew, Robert and Warham Sellenger. Also falling to these two men, Bale informed Parker, was the continuance of the "deuyse of the Deuyll": Robert and Warham had since "dispersed and distributed" Bale's books "amonge the most obstynate papystes of all the whole contraye, to brynge them to naught" (Bale, "Letter to Matthew Parker" 17). Bale, ever ready to act against papist plots, had obtained "a lettre from the quenes majestyes counsell" requiring the Sellengers to deliver the books to Bale or inform him of their whereabouts so that he could complete "an Englysh chronycle, whych I haue begonne and not fynyshed" ("Letter to Matthew Parker" 17). Moreover, Bale claimed that more than eighty of his books still remained in Ireland, yet his "myserable state and pouertie is and hath bene suche, that I am able to do nothynge as yet, towardes the recouer of them" ("Letter to Matthew Parker" 18).

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[1] A version of this chapter has been published. Gerhardt, Ernst. "'No quyckar merchaundyce than lybrary bokes': John Bale's Commodification of Manuscript Culture." *Renaissance Quarterly* 60 (2007): 408-33.

[2] Parker's letter to Bale is not extant, but Bale received it on 18 July 1560. For more on the exchange between Bale and Parker, see Jones who argues that Parker wrote to Bale in response to a request from Elizabeth I, who in turn, was responding to a request from Flacius Illyricus. Also see Graham and Watson 3-4.

The irony that his own library, which at one point contained more than 150 volumes (Brett and Carely xi), or as Bale very practically noted, filled "ii great wayne loades" "Letter to Matthew Parker" 17), was appropriated out of the havoc and dispersal of the Dissolution seems to have escaped Bale. Collecting his books "in tyme of the lamentable spoyle of the lybraryes of Englande," Bale amassed his library, in contrast to the Sellengers' deceit, "through muche fryndeshypp, labour, and expenses" (Bale, "Letter to Matthew Parker" 17), and his library was comprised largely of books he had recovered

> in stacyoners and boke bynders store howses, some in grosers, sopesellars, taylers, and other occupyers shoppes, some in shyppes ready to be carryed ouer sea into Flaunders to be solde—for in those vncircumspect and carelesse dayes, there was no quyckar merchaundyce than lybrary bokes. (Bale, "Letter to Matthew Parker" 17)

Bale's lament that the Dissolution had converted monastic libraries into "quyck merchaundyce," along with other themes of the Parker letter—papist conspiracies to conceal books and manuscripts, Bale's determination to thwart such conspiracies, and Bale's penury—find an initial rehearsal in Bale's 1549 text, *The Laboryouse Journey &*

Serche of Johan Leylande. This text, a printed edition of Leland's 1546 New Year's Gift to Henry VIII, describes both Leland's and Bale's attempts—proposed as well as ongoing—to recover and rescue books dispersed in the Dissolution. Bale recycles Leland's New Year' gift, providing an invasive running commentary on Leland's original prose and adding dedications both to Edward VI and to the reader as well as a concluding catalogue of English authors. Recent criticism has discussed the text in terms of its representation of an English or even British nation through its insistence on aesthetic, institutional, and literary definitions of nationhood.[3] In addition to the points made in these discussions, *The Laboryouse Journey* is of interest for several reasons. First, it details Bale's concerns regarding the preservation of texts, arguing the importance of preservation in terms of moral economy. That is, Bale opposes the benefit manuscripts offer the commonwealth to the avarice that keeps these texts hidden. Subtending this opposition is Bale's construction of England as a nation whose borders are mapped by its treatment of manuscripts. This border-mapping takes place through Bale's adoption of particular ambiguities in mid-sixteenth-century commonwealth discourse, specifically the ambiguous terms, "profit" and "commodity".[4]

The Laboryouse Journey supplements Bale's substantial catalogues of British texts, providing a manifesto of sorts for these historico-literary catalogues. The first of these, his 1548 *Illustrium maioris Britannie Scriptorum... Summarium*, provides one of "the first attempts to shape a British (or even an English) tradition as an identifiable national tradition of letters" (Simpson 217). Compiled during Bale's first exile, the book catalogues British authors, dividing them into five groups of one hundred. Bale later expanded and reworked the *Summarium* during his second exile, publishing the first volume of his *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Britannie...Catalogus* in 1557, with the second following in 1559.

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[3] See Hudson, Ross, Simpson, Summit 1-15. For a discussion of the blurring between Bale's conception of an English and a British nation, see Schwyzer 60-75.

[4] Schwyzer notes in passing that "Bale's remarks on commodities find a close parallel in the *Discourse of the Commonweal*" (65n38). Schwyzer focuses his attention instead on the aesthetic ideology apparent in Bale's discussion of manuscripts (67).

Crucial to this expanded catalogue was the information Bale recorded in his notebooks, one of which survives as Bodleian Selden Supra 64. He likely began this notebook on his return to England in 1547 or 1548; its origin is thus contemporary with *The Laboryouse Journey.*[5] This text lists, under their authors, books that Bale had either read of in other texts or had actually handled in his tours of libraries in Norwich, London, and Oxford. Unlike either his *Catalogus* or *Summarium*, the *Index* reports where Bale encountered the listed texts, and thus proves to be a valuable resource in establishing, to some degree at least, a sociology of book ownership (Brett and Carley xiv). Indeed, the range of Bale's book owners is surprising, including "serious antiquaries, printers and stationers, and amateurs who owned a few books" (Brett and Carley xvii). Bale's *Index* witnesses "the possession of medieval works by laymen and amateurs in the sixteenth century" and has impelled critics to reevaluate the modern understandings of medieval book ownership (Brett and Carley xviii).[6] Bale himself seems to have been struck by the number of texts privately held by people in their collections, and he expresses his concern regarding these private collections in *The Laboryouse Journey.* Perhaps unsurprisingly,

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[5] In 1902, Reginald Lane Poole and Mary Bateson edited this notebook as *Index Britanniae Scriptorum.*

[6] Also see Hudson, who notes that Bale's work "offers important information about materials that were available in England between *c.* 1520 and 1557, materials that are much depleted now" (315).

Bale casts the possession and use of these manuscripts in cosmological terms, adopting and adapting Leland's original rhetoric of light and darkness to suit his own purposes.[7] Furthermore, Bale understands manuscript owners and users in terms of how they construct and participate in community, a national community circumscribed by its access and contribution to the common wealth. What should be made of this rhetoric of manuscript ownership? And how should this rhetoric be related to the sorts of sociality, communities, and networks that Harold Love and Arthur Marotti have identified with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuscript culture? These questions will be discussed below. First, however, it is necessary to briefly discuss the manner in which the Dissolution set in motion a particular sort of manuscript transmission.

The Dissolution was an immense project of destruction. As many as ninety laborers, in addition to tradesmen, were needed for the pulling down of monastic buildings. These demolitions, which when extensive required that the foundations be destroyed by undermining with props that were then set on fire, were so costly that John Freman proposed to Cromwell that partial destructions would prove more feasible (Aston 238-39). Freman suggested limiting the destruction to pulling "downe the rovys, batilments, and stayres, and lete the wallis stonde" and, moreover, funding this work through the appropriation and sale of the church bells and lead (Aston 241). The monasteries' destruction flooded the market with recyclable building materials and household goods, much of which was looted from the destroyed sites (Aston 239; Woodward 179-85). Michael Sherbrook, in his late-sixteenth-century history of the

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[7] Although Bale's concern in *The Laboryouse Journey* is with manuscripts, Bale's larger bibliographic project, his *Catalogus*, made use of print sources. See Hudson 319-27.

Dissolution recounts his own questioning of his father's participation in such looting. His father, despite "thinking well of the Religious Persons and of the Religion then used," responded, "What shoud I do...might I not as well as others have some Profit of the Spoil of the Abbey? For I did see all would away; and therefore I did as others did" (Sherbrook 125).[8]

Among the items dispersed were books from the monasteries' libraries. Bale lamented, as will be discussed in more detail below, that the least offensive practice of those who "purchased those superstycyouse mansyons" was to sell the monasteries' books to foreign book binders, "to the wonderynge of the foren nacyons" (Bale and Leland G3r). At the outset of the Dissolution, John Leland also had bewailed the foreign appropriation of monastic books, complaining to Cromwell that "the Germans perceiving our desidiousness and negligence, do send daily young scholars hither, that spoileth them [the monastic books], and cutteth them out of libraries, returning home and putting them abroad as monuments of their own country" (A. Wood 1: 68).[9]

The full extent of the Dissolution's dispersal cannot be known.[10] Leland managed to list the holdings of some dissolved libraries during the period 1536-42, as did as an anonymous cataloguer around 1530, but neither of these lists can be regarded as exhaustive as they list books from only 120 monastic houses (Fritze 279). Neither are the lists comprehensive as the inclusion of books in these lists was determined by the books' content rather than a strictly bibliographic concern. Theological and historiographical texts dominate these lists, reflecting Henry VIII's interests, and Leland and the anonymous cataloguer, "working on acquisitive rather than scientific principles," did not provide an accurate picture of the libraries' holdings (Fritze 279).[11] Nevertheless, Leland succeeded in rescuing some monastic books from dispersal or destruction. In *The Laboryouse Journey,* he claims to have

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[8] This incident also is recounted in Aston 240.

[9] Wood quotes from a 16 July 1536 letter from Leland to Thomas Cromwell Wood found "Among the *Papers of state*." The letter, however, has been lost. See Ross 75n4.

[10] For a summary of some of the monasteries' holdings, see Fritze 276-77.

> conserued many good authors, the whych otherwyse had ben lyke to haue peryshed, to no small co*m*modyte of good letters. Of þe which parte remayne in the most magnificent libraryes of your royall palaces. Part also remayne in my custodie, wherby I trust right shortly, so to describe your moste noble realme, and to publyshe the Maiestie of the excellente actes of your progenytours, hytherto sore obscured, bothe for lacke of empryntynge of such workes as laye secretely in corners. (C2r)

In his unpublished *Antiphilarchia* (CUL, MS Ee.v.14), he claimed that the royal libraries at Westminster, Hampton Court and Greenwich were founded in order to receive these rescued manuscripts (Carley, "The Royal" 275). In addition, a 1542 inventory of Henry VIII's Westminster library survives, listing at least one hundred manuscripts having monastic provenance (Carley, "The Royal" 276). This surviving catalogue suggests that some books were incorporated into the Westminster library from Henry VIII's collections at Greenwich and Hampton Court, collections that might have numbered close to five hundred volumes in their entirety (Carley, "The Royal" 277).[12]

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[11] Also see Summit 5-9. However, despite his obvious religious prejudice, Bale more inclusively catalogued British books in his *Catalogus*. For a discussion of Bale's inclusivity, see Hudson 315-19.

[12] For discussions of attempts to recover monastic manuscripts, also see Fritze; Carley, "John Leland"; Shrank 98-103; Simpson 3-13; Robinson.

Other evidence suggests that books from Henry VIII's library were dispersed after his death to collectors, implying that both the loss of manuscripts attributed to the Dissolution and the lack of libraries to house these manuscripts should be reconsidered. That is, it is a distinct possibility that many manuscripts were recovered during the dissolution only to be dispersed or destroyed after Henry VIII's reign (Carley, "The Royal" 281; Wallace 12). Nevertheless, the bulk of the books accessioned by Henry VIII's library were acquired prior to the Dissolution in an attempt to gather material, first to argue for Henry VIII's divorce and, second to support Henry VIII's break from Rome (Carley, *The Libraries* xxxix). Despite these attempts, a substantial portion of the monastic libraries entered economic circulation as goods valued for their materiality rather than for the texts written on their pages. They were sold or taken for use as wrapping paper, toilet paper, or stuffing for book bindings: "blawnsherres," an arrangement designed to frighten deer, were constructed from manuscript leaves (Ross 59), and service books found use in repairing wagons (Sherbrook 124).[13]

Such dispersal nevertheless also "implies the loss not just of individual volumes, but of systems of knowledge and social relationships through which such books were acquired, indexed, cross-referenced, stored, shared, circulated, copied, and discussed" (Wallace 10). Indeed, in *The Laboryouse Journey*, Bale documents this sense of loss and describes the heroics of English bibliophiles, praising their proper (and proto-Protestant) treatment of manuscripts. Bale notes, for instance, that Sir John Oldcastle "caused all hys workes to be coppyed oute by moste fayre wryters, at his owne great cost and charge, and so conuayed them into the lande of Beme, that they myghte be there preserued from destruccyon" (F3v). He praises "Humfrey the good Duke of Glocestre, [who] for the fauer he bare to good letters, purchased a wonderfull nombre of bokes in all scyences, wherof he frely gaue to a lybrary in Oxforde, a hondred and .xxix. fayre volumes" (F4r). Moreover, paraphrasing Thomas Gascoigne, Bale reports that

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[13] Whether the leaves of the books were used to patch wagon coverings or whether the boards of the book-bindings were used to mend the wagon itself is unclear. See Sherbrook 124n1 and Woodward 188. Also see Woolf, *Social* for a discussion of such recycling.

> the kynges here in Englande, were wonte to holde a great nombre of good writers within the monasteryes of their foundacyons, to non other ende, but only to coppie out the memorable workes of olde writers specyally of the hystoryanes and chronyclers, that they myghte in their lybraryes perpetually remayne, appoyntynge them great stypendes. And thys worthie example they had from tyme to tyme of their fathers and predecessours. But alas (sayth he) they now peryshe and come in great nombre to nought for want of renuynge. (F4r)

Bale characterizes himself as part of a contemporary group carrying on this tradition and similarly seeking to preserve manuscripts albeit through print rather than by collection into libraries:

> A fewe of vs there be, that woulde gladly saue the moste necessary monumentes of their dyspersed remnaunt. But wretched pouerte wyll not permyt vs, to shewe to our countrey suche a naturall and necessary benefyte. Neyther wyll they permyt vs theyr olde coppyes, whyche haue them in possessyon, but rather they suffre them to rotte vndre their handes. (F4v)

While the Dissolution's dispersal of manuscripts is a decidedly different sort of manuscript circulation than that described by critics such as Arthur Marotti and Harold Love, it is salutary to consider briefly the sort of community enabled through manuscript circulation. As Marotti and Love have shown, scribal publication and circulation of texts did not die with the advent of printing so much as acquire an enhanced cultural and social value. In Love's terms, manuscript circulation operated as a "mode of social bonding" that incorporated "individuals into a community, sect or political faction, with the exchange of texts in manuscript serving to nourish a shared set of values and to enrich personal allegiances" (Love 179, 177). Because of the material nature of manuscript circulation, these communities tended to "coincide with pre-existing communities—the court, the diocese, the college, the country, the circle of friends…, neighbours or colleagues, the extended family, the sect or faction" (Love 180). The maintenance of these communities "by two forms of exclusion, one operating vertically and the other horizontally", thus reflected both the vertical social structure and the horizontal links formed by allegiances, both religious and ideological (Love 178-79). While print also could form similar communities through the establishment of communities of readers, manuscripts seemed to retain or acquire value for their exclusivity, at least in relation to particular sorts of genres. Manuscript communities also distinguished themselves from their print counterparts through what Marotti designates as "a procedure…in which authorship could dissolve into group 'ownership' of texts" ("Introduction" 5).

Group ownership or circulation of manuscripts nevertheless differed from public or national ownership; group-owned texts remained private, circulating within relatively small and closed communities. Indeed, manuscript circulation acquired social value for the boundaries it demarcated. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, authors and printers had become highly conscious of the different degrees of publicity that both manuscript- and print-circulation could produce. Marotti points out that the converse value of manuscript circulation was the economic value that adhered to these texts when the boundaries of this circulation were ruptured. Richard Tottel's publication in 1557 of *Songs and Sonnets*, for example, is an early instance of such rupturing of group ownership of certain authors and their poetry. Tottel's miscellany disrupted lyric's relationship with manuscript circulation by "assert[ing] the public's right to the legitimate 'profit and pleasure' derivable from texts that had been socially restricted by 'ungentle horders up of such treasures': he reverses the received notions of gentle and ungentle in this formulation" (Marotti, *Manuscript* 215). Print capitalizes on the cachet of the privately transmitted lyric and recycles this lyric through print-circulation, a circulation that, in theory at least, demarcates a wider, more public, community of readers.

Thus, Tottel casts the rupture of manuscript circulation in moral terms, with himself taking the part of "sharer" against the "horders" of manuscripts. He states, "It resteth now (ge*n*tle reder) y*f* thou thinke it not euil don, to publishe, to y*he* honor of the english tong, and for profit of the studious of Englishe eloquence, those workes which the unge*n*tle horders up of such tresure haue heretofore enuied the" (Tottel, preliminary matter). He metaphorically conceives of the liberated poems in economic terms, seeing the honorable poems as both treasure and as profit. In other words, Tottel reconfigures the terms of manuscript circulation: private ownership of manuscripts becomes a hoarding up of a treasure that is more profitable when shared through printing. Tottel's address to the reader thus invokes terms similar to those that Bale invokes in his own intervention in a circulation system.

In *The Laboryouse Journey*, Bale highlights the distinction between manuscript- and print-circulation in order to demonstrate both his inclusion in Leland's circle and his proper stewardship of Leland's manuscripts (Harris 38);[14] Bale's discussion of Leland's proposal to write a history of England and Wales serves as an example of this. In this history, Leland would devote a book to each of England's and Wales' shires, so that "thys volume wyl enclude a fyfty bokes, wherof eche one seuerally shall conteyne the beginninges, encreases, and memorable actes the chiefe townes, and castelles of the prouince allotted to it" (E1r). Despite Bale's claims to know that Leland completed all fifty books, it appears that the work had been lost, as Bale declares the need to

> ernestly praye…that this noble worke be not cast away by som cruel caterpiller or papyst which disdayneth to further hys owne nacion, neither yet that it be destroyed by an ignoraunt keper or an ydel possessor. But that it may fortunably lighte into the handes of suche a good stuarde of hys, as is learned and louynge to his nacion, that our naturall bretherne and contrey men may ones tast of the swetnesse of so precyouse a frute, and not therof be depryued, to their inestymable discommodyte. (E1v)

Bale's publication of *The Laboryouse Journey* thus signals both the profitable rupture of a particular community defined by manuscript circulation (and, implicitly, Bale's access to such a community) and the potential loss that the selfish refusal to rupture such boundaries can cause. For Bale, manuscript ownership and the attendant responsibility of stewardship thus mark a proper relationship to the larger community, the commonwealth. This community, then, is represented as ruptured, divided into two groups, one marked by its Catholic disdain, ignorance, and idleness, the other by its education and patriotism. This sense of rupture is similar to the rhetorical fracturing of the nation that Patrick Collinson reads in "the prophetic mode" of Elizabethan sermons ("Biblical" 33). Such rhetoric, which

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[14] According to Jesse Harris, Bale may have been provided access to Leland's manuscripts by John Cheke.

> constructed and ostensibly united the nation in its shared religious relationship with God and moral responsibility before God, was almost designed to split, fragment, and, what was worse, dichotomize it, just as the protestant Reformation itself belied in its divisiveness its uniting affirmations and aspirations. (Collinson, "Biblical" 33-34)

Similarly, Bale's text places in tension the claims of an identity defined by private possession of manuscripts, an ownership that accrues no profit—to the commonwealth at least—against the claims of an identity circumscribed by a public access to texts, brokered through the technology of print, an educative access that generates profit for the commonwealth.

Bale highlights this rupture in his metaphor of the Reformation's enlightenment of a nation held in darkness. This metaphor relates not only to Bale's present but, as James Simpson argues, to historical periodization (216-18).[15] Thus, Bale's distinction between private and public uses of manuscripts aligns itself closely with his distinction between Catholic and proto-Protestant literatures, especially through the attendant historicization of these literatures. While Simpson contends, for instance, that Bale's "imagery of darkness threatens imperceptibly to spill into a description of the Protestant present" (224), it is precisely this spillage that enables Bale to articulate the threat that private use of manuscripts presents. For Bale, private use amounts to loss, and this process of loss, while symbolized most forcefully in the Dissolution, is decidedly *not* yet past.[16] One of Bale's strategies for representing this threat is to link private use of manuscripts to monastic practices. That is, he Catholicizes the private use of manuscripts. Conversely, by this logic, Bale's proposed strategies for making manuscripts public, primarily through print but also through the implicit pleas for an institutional library, become a Protestant project. Bale himself attempted a publication project along these lines in partnership with Robert Crowley (King 96-98). And the later work of Matthew Parker might be understood as a continuation of this proposed project, both in Parker's publication of historical texts and in the scope given him by the Privy Council so that "all

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[15] Simpson argues that Bale and Leland's text periodizes literary history as a response to the sense that "the recent past is receding rapidly from the official position of Church and State in the late 1530s and 1540s" (216). Bale and Leland "see themselves as writing on the boundary of one (positive) epoch, about another, negative period ending in the immediate past" (218).

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[16] As mentioned earlier, Carley suggests that, contrary to N. R. Ker's and C. E. Wright's assertions, monastic libraries were more successfully preserved at the Dissolution. The "problem was one of post-Henrician dispersal rather than a lack of initial retrieval" ("The Royal Library…" 281). Ker questions the efficacy of Leland's recovery attempts and contends that "Local collectors up and down the country were actually much more effective thatn the king in preserving monastic books" (xi-xii). According to Ker, the disappearance of monastic manuscripts under Edward VI should not be attributed to an evangelical purge but to the replacement of manuscripts by printed texts in order to alleviate overcrowded shelves (xv). While Wright doubts that any "concerted and organized effort," such as that proposed by Leland to Cromwell, was made to collect manuscripts from the dissolved monasteries, "a modified programme…did in fact bear some fruit" (161). Wright describes the continuance of manuscript dispersal into the mid-1560s, asserting that much of it occurred during Edward VI's reign (161-71).

'auncient records or monuments written' be made available to him or his deputies on demand" (Robinson 1069).[17]

It is, moreover, worth remembering that Bale's position at the time of writing was far from secure. This fact underwrites the financial concerns of the text, especially Bale's concern with his own poverty and the costs associated with Leland's, and Bale's own, searches. Bale had returned to England sometime in 1547 or 1548, and, despite taking up residence in the Duchess of Richmond's household along with several other Reformists including John Foxe, John Cheke, John Ponet, and John Philpot (Harris 37-38), he also sought the direct patronage of Edward VI: his *Illustrium...Catalogus* has two woodcuts of Bale presenting a copy of the book to Edward VI and, of course, *The Laboryouse Journey* is dedicated to Edward VI. Perhaps Bale sought an appointment to a position similar to the one Bartholomew Traheron received on 14 December 1549 when Traheron was made Royal Librarian. In this post, Traheron would receive a yearly stipend of 20 marks in order to "stock his [the king's] library of Westminster with notable books" (Carley, "The Royal" 277). Bale's repeated references to the poverty he found himself in, as well as his description of his researches at libraries in Norwich, Oxford, and London suggest the possibility that Bale was hopeful of this post, or a similar one, for himself. In any event, Bale seems to have been unsuccessful in this endeavor, perhaps because of his treatment of Sir William Paget in *The First Examinacyon of Anne Askewe* (Happé and King 6).[18] Nevertheless, Bale had access to the Royal Library and was able to record the books he saw there and copy an extant catalogue of Henry VIII's books (Carley, *The Libraries* 250-51).[19] Indeed, between 1549 and 1553, Traheron lent Bale the royal library copy of Matthew Paris' *Chronica*, which, although it remained in the "quenes maiesties lybrary," was, in 1560, in "the custodye of my lorde of Arundell" (Bale, "Letter to Parker" 29-30).[20]

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[17] See Woolf, *Reading* 36-54 for a discussion of the growth of printed histories and chronicles as commodities.

[18] Peter Happé and John N. King suggest that this was "in all likelihood because *The First Examinacyon of Anne Askewe* had attacked Sir William Paget for urging the

Nevertheless, Bale finds himself in an awkward position. On the one hand, he "dolorouslye lamente[s] so greate an ouersyghte in the moste lawfull ouerthrow of the sodometrouse Abbeyes & ffryeryes, when the most worthy monumentes of this realme, so myserably peryshed in the spoyle" and bemoans the fact "that men of learnyng & of perfyght loue to their nacyon, were not the*n* appoynted to the serche of theyr lybraryes, for the conseruacio*n* of those most noble Antiquitees" (A2v). Bale ascribes this negligence to covetousness, which "was at that tyme so busy aboute pryuate commodite,

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Protestant martyr to recant" (6), and Paget, occupying the office of Principal Secretary under Somerset, thus "was well placed to block Bale from advancement" (6).

[19] Curiously, Robert Crowley's 1550 edition of John Purvey's *The True Copye of a Prolog Wrytten about Two C. Yeres Paste by John Wicklife* bears evidence of Bale's collaboration. King sees the text as Bale's own attempt to publish "a popular library of English classics....*True Copye* exemplifies Bale's publication project" (100). Crowley's title notes that the text "is founde written in an olde English Bible bitwixt the olde Testament and the Newe. Whych Bible remaynith now in y*he* Kyng hys maiesties Chamber" (title-page). King argues that "Someone at court collaborated in the publication of the Wyclifite prologue" and Crowley must have been "admitted to the palace to make his accurate transcription" (98-99). Bale does not list this text in his catalogue of the Royal Library (Carley, *The Libraries* 253-64) but, in the *Index*, records that he saw this book at Crowley's shop (268-69). The text, at least under the title and incipit provided in the *Index* does not appear in *Summarium*. The manuscript from which Crowley transcribed the text, C.U.L. MS Mm. 2. 15., perhaps entered Edward VI's collection after 1548 as it was not part of Henry VIII's collection (Carley, *The Libraries* 297).

[20] Graham and Watson identify this manuscript as *Historia Anglorum*, BL, MS Royal 14 C. vii (52n203).

that publyque wealthe…was not any where regarded" (A2v). On the other hand, Bale notes that not all neglected the public wealth. He commends Henry VIII's "godly zele" for commissioning Leland "to ouerse a nombre of theyr sayde libraries" in order to avoid losing "infynyte treasure of knowledge, by the spoyle, which anon after folowed of their due suppression" (A2v-A3r). Thus Bale attributes the loss of "those most noble Antiquitees" not to the Dissolution itself but to the looting that followed. As Bale makes clear throughout this text, the threat of loss is decidedly not yet past. Indeed, Bale grudgingly admits that

> noble workes we muche lesse esteme in these dayes, than ded the popysh monkes and prestes for their ydle tymes. ffor they at the least permytted them a dwellynge place in their lybraryes, though it were amonge wormes and dust. We will not suffre them to abyde wythin our lande, but eyther we geue them leaue to rotte in vyle corners, or drowne them in our iakes, or els we sende them ouer the see, neuer to returne agayne. ([E7r])

He urges Edward VI to follow the example of his father and fund the recovery of these texts. Bale, ever seeking patronage, hints that he is the man to continue Leland's project as his bibliographical work will be completed "yf pouerte withstande me not" (D2r), proposing to "brynge…into the lyghte" manuscripts that have been "kept longe in the darkenes" (B2r). This transferal of texts from darkness to light symbolizes two of Bale's major concerns. First, Bale's characterization of England's history as a struggle from Catholic darkness to Protestant light is complicated by his discussion of manuscripts and text. While Bale attempts to mark a decisive break in England's history, radically differentiating himself and his contemporaries from the Catholic past, his attempt fails to the degree that manuscripts survive as remnants of the past. In Bale's terms, then, Catholic "darkness" does indeed persist in the present, and it is materialized in the (mis)treatment of manuscripts.

Second, and more significantly, Bale also associates darkness with privacy, light with publicity. Moreover, Bale extends these terms into the political sphere. That is, privacy becomes associated with private use while publicity marks the profit to the commonwealth. Withholding manuscripts, in Bale's view, withholds profit from the commonweal. He argues that "So wele is he worthy of perpetuall fame that bringeth a good worke to lyghte, as is he that fyrst ded make it, & ought alwaies to be reckened the second father therof. ffor as Vlpianus reporteth in his Pa*n*dectes, it is all one, a thynge not to be, and not to apere to the commen vse" ([F8v]). As Trevor Ross notes, light "symbolizes for Bale...the disseminatory and democratizing powers of print" while darkness symbolizes "not medieval inelegance but the widespread illiteracy of the manuscript age" (70). Like several of his contemporary Protestant authors, Bale thus casts the printing press as a tool of enlightenment.[21]

Bale, however, appends an array of binary oppositions to this initial opposition between darkness and light. Bale's text marks itself as transitional in its insistent play on the terms "commodity" and "profit," terms invoked similarly by a traditional humanist discourse and by an emerging mercantile discourse. Thus English literary texts appear in Bale's construction of national community both as trade-objects which circulate in an international economy and as ideal tokens of English identity itself. Indeed, the ideal quality of these English texts cannot sever themselves from their materiality and the economies to which the terms also relate.

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[21] John Foxe, for instance, claimed that "as pryntyng of bookes ministred matter of readyng: so readyng brought learnyng: learnyng shewed light, by the brightnes wherof blind ignoraunce was suppressed, errour detected, and finally Gods glory, with the truth of hys worde, aduaunced" (1570, 6: 838).

Bale describes his and Leland's work in terms of its value to the commonwealth, a value evoked in the terms, labour, profit, and commodity. Thus, Bale claims that Leland's labour sought "to profyte a commen wealthe" by saving "the profitable workes of many excellent wryters" (C1v), redeeming "them from dust and byrdfylynges, or pryuate vse to no profyte, and so bryng them fourth to a comme*n*wealth of godly knowledge and lernynge" (C2r). Leland, Bale argues, undertook his project so that "his natural contrey men, myghte knowe the sytuacion and hystorycall commoditees of them, and afterwardes that all men dwellynge vndre the worthy dominion of Englande, myghte of his studyouse labours take profyte" (Ei^{v}). In his address to the reader, Bale reiterates his history of manuscript dispersal, arguing that in addition to the destruction of manuscripts when the monasteries were pulled down, "Auaryce was the other dyspatcher, whych hath made an ende both of our lybraryes and bokes wythout respecte lyke as of other moste honest commodytees, to no small decaye of the commen welthe" ([A8r]). Bale's use of these terms here accords with an ideal view of the commonwealth: commodities are not considered so much in economic terms as they are in terms of designating what properly belongs to or is produced by a particular realm, kingdom, or commonwealth. Profit, too, carries an ideal connotation rather than the connotation of a surplus income.

However, Bale shades these connotations toward a more economic understanding. In an oft-quoted passage, he recounts the spoil of the monastic libraries, noting that

> A great nombre of the*m* whych purchased those superstycouse mansyons, reserued of those lybrarye bokes, some to serue theyr iakes, some to scoure theyr

> candelstyckes, & some to rubbe their bootes. Some they solde to the grossers and sope sellers, & some they sent ouer see to þe bokebynders, not in small nombre, but at tymes whole shyppes full, to the wonderynge of the foren nacyons. (G3r)

In this description, Bale emphasizes the manuscripts' utter materiality. Rather than having value for their textual content, they are reduced to their most basic material value. Bale makes it clear that he considers manuscripts as one of the materials the Dissolution introduced to the economic circulation.

This economic circulation was not primarily for the manuscripts' text, and as such, the manuscripts are reduced from proper to improper uses. These improper uses, it should be noted, include the export of these texts to foreign nations, either for publication under false authorship, as happened to a substantial portion of Leland's library (C4r-v), or for stuffing for book covers, both of which Bale considers subjection to foreign nations. He characteristically complains that

> Yf the byshop of Romes lawes, decrees decretals, extrauagantes, cleme*n*tines and other suche dregges of the deuyll, yea yf Heytesburyes sophlsmes [sic], Porphyryes vniuersals, Aristotles olde logyckes and Dunses dyuynyte, wyth such other lowly legerdemaynes, and frutes of the bottomlesse pytte, had leaped out of our libraries, and so become*n* couerynges for bokes comminge from the fore*n* nacyons, we might wele haue ben therwith contented. But to put our auncient Chronicles, our noble hystoryes, our learned co*m*mentaryes & hystoryes, our learned co*m*mentaryes & homelyes vpo*n* þe scriptures, to so homely an office of

> subieccyon & vtter conte*m*pte we haue both greatly dishonoured our nacyon, and also shewed our selues very wycked to our posteryte. (G3r)

Bale casts such export as a reduction of English sovereignty, at least in terms of what one might anachronistically call England's academic industry. Indeed, England appears to the foreign gaze as backward in many respects. The difficulty for Bale is that his allegiance to England conflicts with his sense that the foreign view of England is, to a large degree, true. The most substantial evidence of English backwardness is the Dissolution.

The foreign view of England bifurcates under Bale's examination. In the present, the foreign view casts a decidedly patronizing gaze on England, a gaze that, in part, constructs England's identity through historiography. Indeed, Bale categorizes the Catholic history of England as foreign; moreover, England's attempts to write its own past have been thwarted by the privatization of what properly belongs to England's public (however widely Bale understands this term). Bale's project, then, is to internalize Britain's historiographical construction through the publicity print can provide. He notes that Leland's

> hope was as myne is, and as is the truthe of the matter, that these thinges ones done, Engla*n*de whyche hath of the Italianes, and ffrench men be reckened a barbarouse nacyon, theyr Monumentes afore tyme not knowne, wyll apere from thens fourthe, equall with the prowdest of them, in prowesse, wysedome, eloquence, polycyes, and in all kyndes of learnynge. (E4v)

This sentiment also finds expression in *King Johan*, Bale's setting of English history on stage. The play meta-theatrically and meta-historically highlights the ways in which King John's proper history has been suppressed.

At the beginning of Bale's play, *King Johan,* the widow England informs King Johan that she "lokyst so wan and pale" (57) because the clergy, who "in ydlenes do lyve by other menns goodes" (36), has taken "my cattell, howse and land, / My wodes and pasturs, with other commodyteys" (62-63). King Johan rebukes England for speaking so poorly of the clergy, noting "They are thy chylderne; þou owghtest to say them good" (68). England retorts that "bastardes they are, [and] vnnatvrall" (69), reinforcing her earlier assertion that "they are the trees that God dyd never plant" (33).[22] The denial of parentage is mutual. When King Johan wonders that Sedition is "to Englond so vnnaturall: / Beyng her owne chyld" (177-78), Sedition replies,

> I had rather she were hedlesse.
> Thowgh I sumtyme be in Englond for my pastaunce,
> Yet was I neyther borne here, in Spayne nor in Fraunce,
> But vnder the pope in the holy cyte of Rome. (180-83)

From the outset of the play, then, it is made clear that the accusations England makes against the clergy depend on the degree to which sedition and the clergy are "unnatural," or the degree to which they do not properly belong to or in England. A secondary concern is the ease with which this belonging can be feigned: King Johan does not recognize either the clergy or Sedition as not properly English. Linked to this ability to discern the

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[22] From *The Laboryouse Journey*: "All plantes (sayth Christe) whyche my heauenlye father hath not planted, shall be plucked vp by the rootes, least anye longar the blynde leaders shoulde leade the blynde multytude. Math.xi" ([A8r]).

English-ness of either the clergy or sedition, is England's accusation of the clergy's theft. While the reference is fleeting, England notes that clergy steals her commodities, that is, what properly belongs to her, what the land naturally produces. Later in the play, Bale reiterates this thematic importance of parentage. Dissimulation promises Sedition that he "shalt haue a chyld of myn owne bryngyng uppe" (739). This child, Pryvat Welth, has had a successful career, first as a monk, then cellarer, then prior, abbot. He is now a bishop who "rydeth with an hondryd hors, / And…is lyke to be a cardynall" (745-46). Bale is at pains in this play to externalize the threat to England, to emphasize that the threat to England is Catholic. The theft of its commodities originates in Rome; all sedition and treason has foreign origins; indeed, covetousness is externalized as well: private wealth is first a bishop, then historicized as Cardinal Pandulphus. The externalization of this threat is germane to the play's context. Likely written by 1538 and performed in early 1539 (White, *Theatre* 29), the play supports the then ongoing Dissolution and casts Henry VIII's appropriation of monastic land as a reappropriation of what properly belongs to England and the crown, a restoration to England of her "cattell, howse and land … wodes and pasturs…[and]… other commodyteys" (62-63).

In *The Laboryouse Journey*, Bale reiterates this concern. He despairs that

> We sende to other nacyons to haue their commodytees, and all is to lyttle to feade our fylthye fleshe. But the syngular commodytees within our owne realme, we abhorre and throwe fourth as most vyle noysome matter. Auydyously we drynke the wynes of other la*n*des, we bye vp their frutes & spyces, yea, we consume in aparell their sylkes & their veluettes. But alas our owne noble monumentes and precyouse Antiquytees, whych are the

> great bewtie of our lande, we as lyttle regarde as þe parynges of our nayles. ([E7v])

Underlying Bale's rhetoric of light and darkness is the concept of the common weal or the public wealth, and Bale's representation of the ways in which manuscripts are hindered from contributing to the common weal's profit. A key term in relation to the common weal's profit is "commodyte," and Bale's understanding of this term demands consideration. The import of "commodyte" relates to the diverse writings of "commonwealth men," a group of writers who responded to the economic crisis of the 1540s and 1550s and advocated social reform to benefit the poorer classes. These writers "emphasize a number of moral and economic problems, [and a] concern with trade imbalance figures prominently in their analyses of poverty and dearth in England" (Perry 218). It is salutary, then, to turn to one of these writers, Sir Thomas Smith.

Smith, who began his career as a scholar at Cambridge, becoming in 1540 the first Regius Professor of civil law there and later named the Vice-Chancellor, occupied several high political offices (Dewar 20, 23). Smith found support in Protector Somerset, and in 1548, Somerset advanced Smith to the post of Second Secretary to the King (Dewar 32). However, when Somerset fell the following year, Smith was imprisoned in the Tower from October 1549 to February 1550 (Dewar 64-65). From 1562-66, he served as ambassador to the French court, and then returned home to a period of compelled retirement, as no offices were offered to him (Dewar 88-121). Instead, he occupied himself, in part, with an ultimately unsuccessful and costly scheme to manufacture copper (Dewar 149-55). He also plotted and attempted the colonization of Ulster, an adventure that resulted in the murder of his son (Dewar 156-70).[23] In early 1571, he was reappointed to the Privy Council and although he did much of the work of Secretary, he officially became Elizabeth's Principal Secretary only in July 1572 (Dewar 123).

While Smith's most famous work is probably his 1565 *De republica Anglorum*, his *Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England*, is, perhaps, the "most celebrated tract in Tudor social history" (Dewar 5).[24] The *Discourse*, written in the summer of 1549 but unpublished until 1581 (Dewar 52-53), consists of a series of dialogues in which several characters—a knight, a doctor, a merchant, a capper, and a husbandman—discuss the commonwealth's economic crisis and offer explanations for it. Smith, particularly concerned with the problem and effects of high inflation, locates inflation's source in England's importation of goods manufactured from exported English commodities and proposes that such goods be manufactured in England instead (Thirsk 14-17).

Smith understands England's commodities both in terms of their naturalness to England and in terms of the labour necessary to retain this natural quality, maintaining, for the most part, an ideal sense of the term throughout his text. That is, he uses the term commodity to designate those goods that properly and naturally belong to a particular region or realm. Thus, in Smith's view,

> God has ordained that no country should have all commodities but that that one lack, another brings forth, and that that one country lacks this year,

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[23] Also see Morgan for an extended discussion of Smith's Ulster venture.

[24] Dewar argues for Smith's authorship of the *Discourse* in the introduction to her edition of the text. For recent discussions of Smith's text, see N. Wood 211-35; Wrightson 154-58; Richards 101-06; Shrank 154-81; and Kendrick 169-97.

> another has plenty thereof that same year, to the intent men may know that they have need of another's help and thereby love and society to grow amongst all men the more. (62)[25]

Smith clearly has in mind the circulation of commodities within a realm. Nevertheless, he does not object to importing or exporting commodities; in fact, he sees international trade in terms similar to the intercounty trade described by the passage above. Smith has two major objections, however, to England's participation in such trade. First, England, in a way, recycles its valuable commodities, importing frivolous goods manufactured from its own exported commodities; second, the value of these imported goods resides in the labour.

Smith is troubled by the fact that these imports are manufactured from England's "own commodities" which England's citizens are forced to "then...buy...again" (65). Smith characterizes such repurchasing as a misguided policy "whereby we have devised a way for strangers not only to buy our gold and silver for brass and to exhaust this realm of treasure but also to buy our chief commodities in manner for naught" (69). He contends that "They make us pay at the end for our own stuff again for the strangers' custom, for their own workmanship and colors, and lastly for the second custom in return of the wares into the realm again" (65). Smith sees this practice as exploitative and goes so far as to liken England to a colonized gold mine. Noting that the streets along the Thames between the Tower of London and Westminster have become so crowded with shops selling frivolous imports, Smith wonders,

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[25] A royal proclamation dated 3 July 1550, similarly defines commodities as "such things as be brought forth and here given us by God ... perceived and enjoyed by the subjects of the same, to their utility and mutual benefit, among themselves in most plentiful sort and cheapness of price, before others, according as of ancient time hath been accustomed" (*Tudor Royal Proclamations* 495). Moreover, the proclamation locates the cause of inflation in export: "those commodities which ought specially to serve the turn and be employed to the use and sustenation of the subjects here inhabiting, are in overlarge manner conveyed into foreign regions ... much to the defraudation and impoverishment of the commonweal" (*Tudor Royal Proclamations* 495).

> What need they beyond [the] sea to travel to Peru or such far countries, or to try out the sands of the river Tagus in Spaine, Pactolus in Asia and Ganges in India, to get amongst them small sparks of gold or to dig the deep bowels of the earth, for the mine of silver and gold, when they can of vile clay, not far sought for, and of [pebble] stones and fern roots make good gold and silver more than a great many of gold mines would make? (64-65)

Smith thus characterizes England in colonial terms, ranking England's ongoing despoilment with foreign ventures in Peru and India. Smith, moreover, heightens this sense of England's despoilment by arguing that it originates in England's comparative stupidity. For Smith, foreign merchants' mining of England's commodities demonstrates the "fineness of strangers' wits, and the grossness of ours" (69). This "grossness" of wits is also exemplified in England's sufferance of "a continual spoil to be made of our goods and treasure… And specially, that will suffer our own commodities to go, and set strangers awork and then to buy them again at their hand" (65).

Such characterization of England finds analogous ones not only in Bale's text but also in Leland's complaint to Cromwell. As noted above, Leland complains that German scholars, perceiving English "desidiousness and negligence," "spoileth" monastic books in order to publish them as "monuments of"—and to the profit of—"their own country"(A. Wood 1: 68). For his part, Bale reiterates this sentiment, comparing the value

Italy derives from numerous editions of Gildas available in Venice and Rome with the loss England suffers from the paucity of English editions:

> The Venecyans more than lxxxviij. yeares a go for theyr co*m*modite coulde fatche them [manuscripts of Gildas] out of Irelande, & haue them yet commen both at Venys and Rome, accountynge them a very specyal treasure. We neyther seke the*m*, couete them, nor regarde them, though they be of our land the most precyouse Antiquitees and excellent memoryalles of learnynge…I pray God we may ones rightly way our owne slouthful neglyge*n*ce in thynges which myghte be greatlye to our honour. (Bale and Leland F8r)

According to Bale, England is thus susceptible to the accusation "that we are despysers of lernynge" (Bale and Leland B2r). For Smith, Leland, and Bale, England figures as a repository of a treasure that may be—and has been—taken without redress as England's inferior wit and learning succumb to superior foreign wiles and education.

Second, whereas Bale sees the circulation of manuscripts as a defining practice of two distinct English communities—a Catholic community that retains the manuscripts privately and a Protestant one that makes the manuscripts public—Smith sees the circulation of commodities as the demarcation between two differently interested communities. In Smith's view, two regions—the metropolitan center and the provincial periphery—treat commodities differently, the former with private interest in mind, the latter with the commonwealth's interest in mind. Thus, London plays an ambiguous role in Smith's discourse. While he describes the city as the "head of this empire" (82), Smith also portrays London as the cause of much of England's problems. It is the place, "where such excesses, by reason the wealth that is of all this realm is heaped up…be most used" while "in other parts commonly of this realm, the law of necessity keeps men in good case, for exceeding either in apparel or fare" (82). London wastes its wealth, unfortunately, on such fashionable items as "painted cruses, gay daggers, knives, swords, and girdles" (64). Not only does such spending facilitate the flow of "treasure" out of England, but it also threatens the masculinity of English men. Smith contends that

> we were as much dreaded or more of our enemies when our gentlemen went simply and our servingmen plainly, with out cut or garde, bearing their heavy sword and buckler, on their thighs instead of cuts and gardes and light dancing swords; and when they rode, carrying good spears in their hands, instead of white rods which they carry now, more like ladies or gentlewomen, then men, all which delicacies make our men clean effeminate, and without strength. (82-83)

Importantly, it is the foreign view of England that Smith considers here. While England was at one point dreaded by its enemies, the foreign gaze now reveals England to be effeminate and, implicitly, worthy of the despoilment of its commodities.

While Smith's objection to imported goods is also rooted in a "deep prejudice [which] lurked against goods that held value only by virtue of the labour applied to them" (Thirsk 14), this prejudice is subordinate to Smith's identification of foreign labour as the primary cause of the commonwealth's problems. Even as he contends that many imported items "serve no purpose necessary" (64), Smith conditions this moral judgment by noting that such frivolous goods might be manufactured in England instead. Thus, England imports "a thousand…things that might either be clean spared or else made within the realm sufficient for us" (63-64), and Smith lists several "trifles that we might either clean spare or else make them within our realm" (63). Smith goes as far as to suggest that, ideally, "I would that nothing made of our commodities...should be brought from beyond the sea to be sold here, but that all these should be wrought within this realm" (122). Smith's objections, then, are directed as well to the foreign labour that produces them: these imports are of "no value of themselves but only to the workers of the same" (65).[26] Were English labour to be employed to finish and refine English commodities into goods,

> inestimable treasure should be saved within this realm. And then it could not grow to the profit of the subjects but it must needs grow also to the profit of the King. And in my opinion, they do not best provide for His Grace's profit that procure only a present commodity but rather a commodity that may endure the longest without grief of his subjects. (67)

Smith thus makes English labour visible in the light of the profit appropriated by foreign labour. That is, Smith advocates English production of English commodities in order to ensure that both commodities and profit—here understood both financially and ideally (as the commonwealth's commodity)—remain in England.

Smith, however, overwrites the labour that produces English commodities in the first place, conflating labour with natural resources. English commodities are proper to England because they originate there—Smith makes no distinction between origination and production—and Smith objects to paying for foreign labour because this labour alienates England's commodities from itself. That is, English commodities are transformed by foreign labour to foreign profit, a profit identified with English loss of both money and identity. English commodities and labour become visible in negative terms, through both a demeaning foreign gaze and a foreign alienation of English commodities. Labour, in Smith's view, remains the means by which England can reappropriate these commodities and make them culturally and economically profitable to the nation.

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[26] The 1581 print edition makes the objection to labor more explicit as Smith there sees these goods having, "no value of them selves, but only for the labours of the workers of the same" (25v).

Bale's text, too, overwrites labour. Whereas Smith subsumes labour under the natural production of commodities and urges its re-nationalization, Bale identifies English commodities as the products of the past and labour as a present transformation of these commodities into national profit. The loss England suffers in the present—the loss of profit, both materially and culturally—is redressed by English scholarly labour. Bale's project demands the re-nationalization of scholarly labour, labour that must be funded in the present, just as it was in the past: "Se how studyouse and laboryouse men were in those dayes, not onlye for the conseruacyon of their lerned mennyes labours, but also that other nacyons shoulde haue profyte of them. Muche altered are we from that golden worlde, now adayes" (Bale and Leland F2v). In the past, kings "were wonte to holde a great nombre of good writers.... appoyntynge them great stypendes" (Bale and Leland F4r). Bale, like Smith, argues not only for the preservation of England's commodities but also for a repatriation of the labour implicit in the production of those commodities.

The convergence of economic and humanist senses of profit, commodity, and labour suggests a tension between the material book (as commodity, in the mercantile sense) and the ideal book as an ideal, as textuality rendering an idealistic commodity (in the sense of "benefit"). Bale commodifies the materiality of the manuscript while retaining the "text" of the manuscript as a contribution to the common wealth. The text turns on the pun "commodity": it functions both in terms of "use-value" and as a saleable item. As saleable item, it appears in Bale's construction of nationhood as a token of transaction. It literally circulates within an economy based on the international trade of commodities: spices, cloth, and wine. A humanist discourse that invokes the terms "profit" and "commodyte" underwrites Bale's text; in this discourse, however, the ideal quality of these terms cannot sever themselves from the more material concerns and economies to which the terms also relate. In Bale's argument for the conservation of England's ancient monuments, there is an underlying convergence between an ideal, public, Protestant, and humanist profit and a material, private, Catholic profit. Bale adopts the rhetoric of writers such as Sir Thomas Smith in his formulation of English manuscripts as tokens of English identity. In doing so, Bale presents a vision of a commonwealth whose borders, in part, are constructed culturally as well as economically.

Conclusion

By the late 1520s, parish playing in Kent and Sussex had declined from its height in the decade between 1515 and 1525, and the analysis I have presented here corroborates other recent studies which argue that the early stages of the English Reformation were not anti-theatrical in nature. While the 1536 and 1538 Injunctions likely accelerated this decline, these reforms do not appear to have been anti-theatrical in nature nor explictly targeted at drama. Performances by patronized playing troupes surged in the mid-1530s, and the total number of plays performed (or at least the number of performances rewarded in the records) approximated, if not exceeded, the total number of performances before the Injunctions. The common mode of performance did change, however, and performances by towns, town players, and unassociated players practically disappeared, replaced by performances by patronized troupes.

Critical attention has focused on the patronage of travelling troupes as a means to disseminate patrons' confessional beliefs, particularly in the context of Thomas Cromwell's propaganda campaign in the late-1530s. Yet it is worthwhile considering why the travelling troupe would present itself as the most suitable medium for such a propaganda campaign. Property players such as Thomas Felsted appear to have been figures important to the drama performed by both towns and patronized troupes, and the organization or regulation of such property players conceivably could have offered the opportunity to revise town plays to suit the needs of evangelical propaganda. That Bale attributed most of his lost biblical play-sequences to the patronage of John de Vere, the fifteenth, and evangelical, Earl of Oxford, suggests that patronage might indeed have worked to adapt town-plays to suit the new learning. The role of property players might be explored further.

Yet the confessional tenor of the plays performed by these patronized troupes remains uncertain. While Bale's probable involvement with Cromwell's players suggests that at least some of these plays expressed evangelical beliefs, it remains uncertain that all troupes sponsored by evangelical patrons, let alone those sponsored by conservative patrons, would necessarily perform evangelical drama. As I have noted, the conservative Lady Lisle had difficulty obtaining a play dealing with "new scripture matters" in 1538. An older interlude appears to have been played in place of this new play. Moreover, that the conservative Lady Lisle would demand such a play questions the assumption that a patron's confessional leaning transparently dictates their choice of drama. Other considerations may have affected patrons' direction of their troupes' repertoires. In addition, Lady Lisle presumably tried to obtain this play for performance by the Lord Warden's players, a troupe patronized by Lord Lisle. This particular troupe had a lengthy history of performance in Kent and Sussex that pre-dates the Reformation. That their entire repertoire should entirely change seems unlikely although, of course, possible.

The nature of the drama performed by the patronized troupes in Kent and Sussex also comes under question because, other than those indicating their performance at Canterbury in 1538 and at Cranmer's house, no records are yet known to indicate that

Cromwell's players toured in these counties. This raises several questions. If the towns in Kent and Sussex were particularly receptive to evangelical reforms, why would Cromwell's players, who must have relied on such rewards for income, not tour their evangelical plays there? If Cromwell's players did in fact tour there but were not rewarded for these performances, why did other troupes receive rewards? Did those troupes perform less-strident or even non-evangelical plays or were rewards based on local affiliation with the troupes' patrons rather than on the content of the plays? As the repertoires of these troupes do not survive, such questions may be unanswerable. Yet these questions are central to determining what role drama played in the early stages of the Reformation.

While my analysis of Kent and Sussex is suggestive, further research should extend to other regions of England. It may be that Kent and Sussex were exceptional in the prevalence of town drama evident there, and similar studies of other town accounts will add detail to the analysis. Once the records from Norfolk and Suffolk are published by the Records of Early English Drama series, studies of these records will be particularly valuable as town drama there appears to have been staged as regularly and on as large a scale as the towns studied here.

However, the analysis itself requires methodological refinement. The entries that provide the data for the analysis vary in their temporal precision in a number of ways that make it impossible for the analysis to suggest precise dates. Moreover, I have compared entries from Dover's chamberlains' accounts with entries from the other towns' churchwardens' accounts. The difference between Dover's pattern of rewards and the other towns may be attributable to this.

Cromwell's support of Bale suggests that at least some and possibly a substantial portion of the increased number of patronized players and playwrights were drawn from the religious who had converted to the new learning. Bale and Thomas Wylley provide examples of such converts who sought patronage for their drama. In particular, those whose adoption of the new learning was accompanied by their marriage may have turned to drama as a means to make money. Bale's marriage surely dictated the necessity of his patronage; the player-martyr Richard Spenser was also married as was Lewis Wager, the Calvinist author of *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*. Indeed, Edmund Bonner's 1554 Articles associated married priests with the private performance of plays in addition to sermons and lectures. Bonner's concern suggests that evangelical drama survived in the performances made by those Bonner sought to identify in his articles. That such plays as Bale's or Wager's had been adapted or written to accommodate the limited numbers of a troupe—the conventional four men and a boy—also ensured that these plays could be performed, rather than simply read aloud, by a small number of performers.

Official concern for private playing increased in the 1540s, and a 1544 Royal proclamation and a similar 1545 London order limited the times and places plays could be performed. These orders couched their regulation of playing in nostalgic terms, casting contemporary playing in decadent terms and protesting that "Playes that nowe of late dayes haue been by dyuers and sondrye p*er*sones more co*m*monly & besyle set foorthe and played then heretofore hathe bene accustomed in dyuers & many suspycyous darke & inonvenyent place*s*" (Mill and Chambers 291). The order goes on to prohibit the performance of all plays except those played "in the houses of noble men or of the lorde

Maire Shryves or aldermen...or of the substancyall & sad Co*m*iners or hed p*ar*issheners...or in the open strete*s* of the said citie as in tyme paste it hathe bene vsed & accustomed or in the co*m*en halle*s* of the Companyes felowshipps or brotherhedde*s* and in theire co*m*en assembles & presence at tymes mete and conveyent for the same and in none otherwise" (Mill and Chambers 292). The order does not address the doctrinal content of such plays but rather notes the general decadence of these plays. According to the order, such plays cause "Encrease off moche vyce synne & Idelnes & to the greate decaye & hurt of the co*m*men welthe of the said Citie as of Archerye & other laufull & laudable exercyses" (Mill and Chambers 292). This attention to the "suspycyouse darke & inconvenyent places" in which plays were performed warrants further discussion, especially in relation to Bonner's earlier attempt in 1542 to ban plays from churchyards, especially during divine service succeeded in driving performances to less public spaces.

While Bale takes up this moralization of the common and the private in *The Laboryouse Journey*, other plays deserve further attention for their treatment of this distinction. Several of these plays advance a form of religious accommodation or tolerance as their themes. The anonymous *Resurrection of Our Lord*, for example, advocates such policies. In response to Caiaphas's and Annas's pleas that Christ be executed, Pilate abjures himself from ecclesiastical concerns:

> My lords, concernynge the lawes, of yo^{r} private God
> which *Caeser* doth suffer you, to kepe as you thinke good
> ys a thinge pertaynes not, att all to my office
> therfore I cannot tell you, what your lawe ys
> but as for that thinge, wherto I am appoynted

> to see true iustice, amoungst you executed
> or that no insurrection, or rebellion may a rise
> through tumult or gatherynge, or any other wise
> as doth appertayne, to my office and dignytie
> as this Iesus, whom you, of many things accused
> in suspecte of seditiosnes, by vs was condemned. (143-53)

Pilate thus defines the state as disinterested in matters of religion, permitting the worship of a "private God" so long as "no insurrection, or rebellion may a rise." In both plays, religious views are to be tolerated: the worship of God is to be a private matter, one that does not pertain to the commonwealth. It is such a privatization of religious belief that causes Bonner concern in 1554. While the *Resurrection* was clearly a town-play as it requires at least fourteen actors, the adaptation of biblical drama to the traditional doubling-schemes of the interludes made playing by "four men and a boy" possible not only for patronized troupes but also for "private" groups such as those Bonner identifies in his articles. Bale's adaptation of community drama to troupe-form so that these plays would be performable by small numbers of actors is significant because it privatized biblical drama, making it performable, as Bonner feared in the 1550s, in "private" places.

I have argued that the critical focus on Bale's service to Cromwell's propaganda campaign has overshadowed Bale's continued unpatronized performance of his plays at a local level and that these unpatronized performances cast evangelical drama as a subversive genre capable of enacting or mimicking, on a smaller scale, the incorporative practices of the larger town plays. Bale's drama achieves importance for its mediation of these different modes of performance, and Bale's drama owes a debt not only to the interlude tradition but also to conservative religious drama, and the evangelical negotiation of this influence requires further investigation. Bale's *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*, for instance, merges evangelical definitions of baptism's sacramentality with traditional playing practices so that the donation of tokens signals at once a theological argument, stage-business, and an attempt to affiliate the audience through the commonality of some of these tokens. The traces of this traditional practice remain in Bale's play, with traces such as Christ's "lyverye" more readily recognizable as metaphor than material practice.

Yet in some instances these traces concern matters of doctrine rather than of staging. Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*, for instance, stages Mary's conversion in terms similar to the Digby *Mary Magdalene*: both plays stage the exorcism of seven devils from Mary. In Wager's play, however, Christ raises Mary from where she has collapsed and then asks, "Canst thou beleue in God, the maker of all thing, / And in thee his onely sonne, whom he hath sent?" (1405-6). Mary answers by reciting articles of her belief: "I beleue in one God, Lord and heauenly kyng, / And in thee his onely sonne with hearty intent. / Good Lord I confesse that thou art omnipotent" (1407-9). What is striking about this scene is that it echoes the pre-1552 Prayer Book's (and Roman) order for baptism in which the priest exorcises the child before baptizing her. Martin Bucer objected to the 1549 Prayer Book's inclusion of the exorcism, advising that the "words of exorcism and adjuration against evil spirits require to be changed to words of prayer" (Fisher 102). Moreover, Mary's pronouncement of her articles of belief also echo the ritual recital of both the Lord's Prayer and the Creed by all present (Fisher 92). Wager's play thus retains traces of the traditional dramatic representation of Mary's exorcism (although this derives from scripture), it also retains traces of conservative baptismal practices. The presence of traditional or conservative allusions in evangelical religious drama warrants fuller investigation of the apparent difficulty evangelical playwrights had in conforming to shifting, sanctioned doctrine. Such remnants of the past might have been most effectively dealt with by attempting to ban, as Gardiner did, all "playes of Christ."

Bale's representation of Yngland as a widow gathers together several of these strands of influence. First, Yngland appears as the traditional destitute woman set upon by vices, a character-type which appears in several early Tudor interludes as well as in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*. Bale's presentation of Yngland as a widow demands her ethical treatment both in biblical terms and in terms that resonate with contemporary associations of widowhood with poverty and poor relief. I have argued that Bale's association of Yngland with England's deserving poor attempts to incorporate the audience into a collectivity organized by its responsibility not only to recognize the causes of but also to relieve the poor's suffering. Yngland thus figures as an allegorical token not of a geographical space but of a sphere of moralized social practice. Moreover, Ynglond's disappearance from the stage implicates the audience in Bale's call for Leland to wake from his slumber: the restoration of Yngland is not staged because it is, like the restoration of Truth in *Pammachius* and the marriage of Ecclesia in *Christus Triumphans*, a future event dependent on the audience's actions. Whereas collective responsibility to both a material church and the universal church was inherent in the social practice of community drama and and this collective responsibility was identified in the network of contributions made by other towns to town plays, Bale recasts this responsibility in terms of an English church and an English commonwealth.

I have avoided consideration of Bale's collapse of British and English history. Although this is an issue of current debate and merits fuller discussion, I have not discussed this issue in greater detail here as my focus has been on Bale's representation of a sphere of collective responsibility constructed through the oppositional categories of public and private, profit and commodities, and Papal and English. While Bale's conflation of these terms in *The Laboryouse Journey* contributes to a tradition of the conflation of British and English that deserves investigation, it does not affect my study in general.

Yet Yngland serves as an early example of a character-type that became very common in Elizabethan and Jacobean city comedy. This connection deserves fuller treatment than it has received in this study, and Yngland's widowhood might also be explored in relation to Shakespeare's early history plays. In *Richard III*, for instance, the image of England as a destitute and embattled woman also appears. In Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Buckingham attempts to convince Gloucester to take the throne, rhetorically appealing to Gloucester's sympathies by presenting England as a destitute woman. Buckingham suggests Gloucester will be able to restore England's wholeness and rescue her from historical oblivion:

> This noble isle doth want her proper limbs;
> Her face defac'd with scars of infamy,
> And almost shouldered in the swallowing gulf
> Of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion.

Which to recure, we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the sovereignty thereof. (3.7.119-25)

Buckingham's plea works somewhat ironically given Gloucester's own deformed limbs and his treatment of women in the play, especially of Mistress Shore, a woman marked by infamy. Nevertheless, Buckingham raises a potent image, and Richmond later adopts this imagery himself when he announces his restoration of a scarred England. He claims that

England hath long been mad, and scarred herself:
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,
The father rashly slaughtered his own son,
The son, compelled, been butcher to the sire. (5.7.23-26)

Richmond then promises to restore England to her beauty, praying that his marriage will "Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace" (5.7.33) and that civil war will never return to "make poor England weep in streams of blood" (575.37). Both Buckingham and Richmond objectify "poor England" as an embattled woman whose restoration will occur through Richmond's promised marriage to Elizabeth.

Yngland's allegorical tokening of an object which organizes collective responsibility as a sphere of social practice resonates in Bale's plea in *The Laboryouse Journey.* There, Bale casts English manuscripts and, implicitly, English history, as objects demanding restoration. While Bale implies such a demand in *King Johan,* he makes this demand explicit in *The Laboryouse Journey.* Bale frames the collective responsibility to restore English manuscripts in terms of the moralized economy of the commonwealth in which private profit competes with common value. These terms signify ambiguously: on the one hand, Bale articulates private profit in financial terms and, on the other, common value in moral terms. Yet Bale casts English history as a collective responsibility.

John Bale adapted the staging practices of traditional parish drama to his biblical and historical drama. In doing so, the town-play form was made playable by a smaller number of actors, and this adaptation made these biblical plays performable by small numbers of unpatronized members of local communities. It is not clear how effective such plays were as evangelical drama staged by patronized travelling troupes. Yet Bale transformed the parish drama's strategies of audience incorporation and expanded the scope of collective responsibility which parish drama encouraged its audience to fulfill. Bale expanded this collective responsibility to national scope but maintained the importance of social practice in fulfilling this national responsibility.

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