

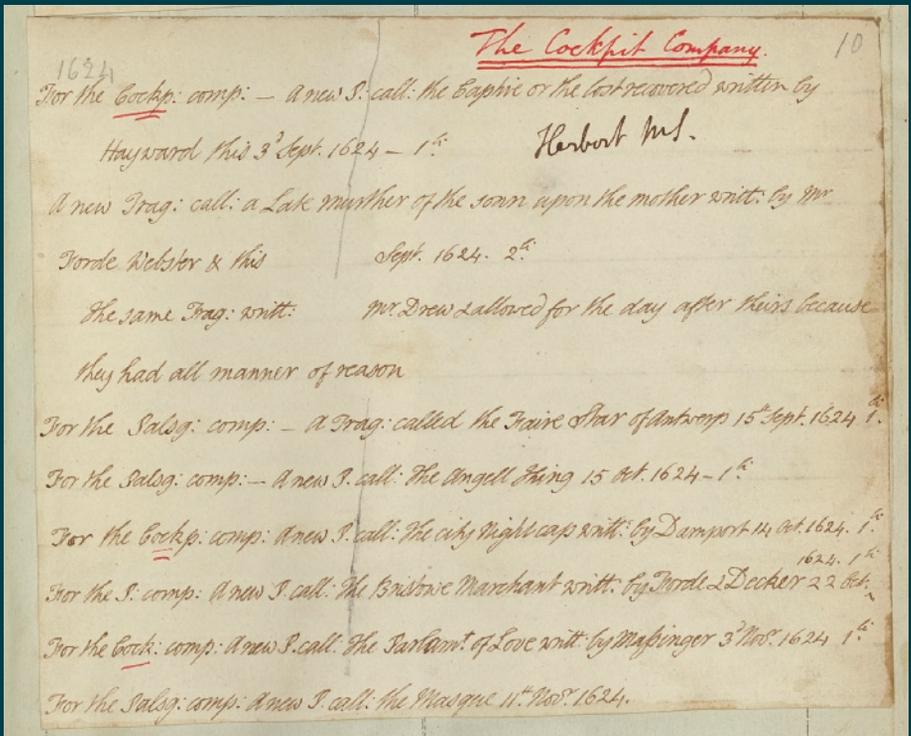
# LOSS AND THE LITERARY CULTURE OF SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

Edited by

Roslyn L. Knutson

David McInnis

Matthew Steggle



EARLY MODERN LITERATURE IN HISTORY

General Editors: Cedric C. Brown and Andrew Hadfield

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Loss and the  
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*For the friend we lost on December 11, 2019:  
John H. Astington*

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Cover image: Folger W.b.156, *Scrapbooks of J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps* [manuscript], [19th century], page 149. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

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## A NOTE ON CONVENTIONS

Throughout this volume, extant play titles appear in italics; the titles of lost plays are differentiated through the use of quotation marks.



## Introduction: Coping with Loss

*Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis and Matthew Steggle*

People who write books nowadays about this subject [the history of literature], great and small, generally handle it in a most regrettable way. They treat us like children: they serve up cabbage that has been reboiled a thousand times about authors whose works survive—but not a word about those whose works have perished. Yet if we are not acquainted with the latter, it is impossible to understand anything about the nature, origin, development or maturity of ideas, in other words, their History, still less the praiseworthy qualities and merits of the surviving authors.

—Daniel Wytttenbach, *Bibliotheca Critica* (1808)<sup>1</sup>

As early modernists with an interest in the literary culture of Shakespeare's time, we work in a field that contains many significant losses: of texts,

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of contextual information, and of other forms of cultural activity. No account of early modern literary culture is complete without acknowledgment of these lacunae, and although lost drama has become a topic of increasing interest in Shakespeare studies, it is important to recognize that loss is not restricted to playtexts alone. In this collection of essays, we strive to produce a meaningful alternative to the “reboiled” cabbage approach to literary history and attempt to deal with lostness in a plurality of forms. It has now been a decade since we created the *Lost Plays Database* to raise the profile of lost drama and stimulate new work in this fascinating but ephemeral area of inquiry, and we therefore consider it timely to take stock of the developments in how scholars have been coping with loss, both in our own field and in cognate fields. In what follows, we reflect on how our colleagues who work on the Classics have dealt with loss; we provide a brief overview of the exciting developments we have witnessed in the study of early modern drama; and we explain how we hope the present volume will push the scholarly conversation in new directions. We aim to develop further models and techniques for thinking about lost plays, public and private, from London and beyond; but also of other kinds of lost early modern works, and even lost persons associated with literary and theatrical circles.

### §

We may be at least partially reinventing the wheel in our attempts to cope with loss. Working with substantial lacunae in the canon has long been a daily reality for students of classical literature. How have these scholars addressed the challenge and what—allowing for the significantly different context—might we learn from their experiences?

In the early nineteenth century, when Wyttenbach was lamenting the reboiled cabbage of literary history, his advocacy of attending to lost and fragmentary plays still represented a minority position among classicists. In 1761, for example, when Johann August Ernesti edited the complete works of Callimachus—most of whose writings survive only in fragments, if at all—he complained that (in Rudolf Kassel’s recent summary) he would “always prefer to nourish his spirit with the content and style of works that have been preserved in full, rather than with the mouldy stench of recondite glosses.” Although he admitted “that one ought not to ignore this stuff (*ista*) completely,” because there may

be philological benefits, he “had no desire to tire himself out with the drudgery involved.”<sup>2</sup> By contrast, Matthew Wright, in his recent study of lost Greek tragedy from the end of the classical period, has argued that “careful study of the lost works can lead to a reappraisal of the whole genre,” noting that Greek tragedy “possessed much more breadth and variety than we can appreciate if we only ever look at the tiny number of plays that survive.”<sup>3</sup> Wright argues that “it is safest to avoid making any sort of *qualitative* judgement” given the “insufficient material on which to base a judgement,” but insists nonetheless that “a complete and representative history of classical tragedy must incorporate these so-called minor playwrights, and that it must attempt to take them seriously, treating the fragments of their work without prejudices or preconceptions.”<sup>4</sup>

What changed for the classicists, that they could move from Ernesti’s position to that of Wyttenbach and sustain it through to the current scholarship of Wright and others? Rudolf Kassel largely attributes the legitimization of the work of the nineteenth-century “fragmentologists”<sup>5</sup> to Friedrich August Wolf, who argued in *Kleine Schriften* (1869) that “We need, as far as possible, to repair the gaps in the course of <literary> history caused by these great losses, and to restore the framework of this superb body of literature by bringing together the various references to lost works.”<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere Wolf likened his project to the reconstruction of at least “a ground plan of a building that has fallen into ruins after the loss of so many works.”<sup>7</sup> As Kassel argues, such an “all-embracing view of classical studies ... meant that no collector of fragments would ever again need to spend time justifying his activity.”<sup>8</sup> An important implication of Wolf’s work, then, was a shift away from aesthetics and unity to a recognition of the instrumental value of gathering as many building blocks as could be had, so as to reconstruct a “framework” or “ground plan” to support the surviving literature appropriately.

Kassel’s survey of nineteenth-century fragmentology and its rise to legitimacy, published in 1991, has now been extended by David Harvey, who examines the study of Greek fragments from the nineteenth century onwards.<sup>9</sup> His survey implicitly offers a number of precepts relevant to the study of lost early modern texts. Harvey notes that Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker’s three-volume consideration of the contexts of dramatic fragments (1839–1841),<sup>10</sup> though at times highly conjectural in its reconstructions, received praise for its transparent handling of sources and disclosure of assumptions, which permitted readers to check Welcker’s conclusions.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, August Nauck’s rebuke (in 1856) of reconstructionists who took too much liberty with their fragmentary sources potentially remains salient today in early modern circles: “Those who

profess the ingenious art of dreaming up whatever they want should look elsewhere for interpreters of their dreams.”<sup>12</sup> Whereas Wolf had earlier rallied to establish “a ground plan of a building” by attending to lost texts, Nauck cautioned against reconstructed plots of lost plays from unreliable evidence, likening it “to the construction of buildings without a firm foundation, which will soon collapse.”<sup>13</sup> Nauck’s project of editing the tragic fragments of the Greek stage proved Herculean in its own right, especially the preparation of a second, revised edition of the *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*; he admitted in 1889 that “the work that I have undertaken is of a kind that cannot be successfully carried out by one single person, nor even within a single century by a cooperative effort.”<sup>14</sup>

Attention to fragments has altered the perception of classical authors’ literary outputs in important ways: prior to the discovery of papyrus pieces beneath the tomb of Sheikh Ali-Gamman in Egypt in 1928, it had not been clear why Aeschylus had been praised in his own day for his satyr plays (a genre which was not represented in his pre-1928 corpus). In fact, the only prior witness to the genre was Euripides’ *Cyclops*, but the 1928 excavations yielded fragments of more than half a dozen plays by Aeschylus (three of which were satyr plays), and around seventy more examples of satyr plays by other playwrights, thus radically transforming scholars’ perceptions of the classical output in that mode of writing.<sup>15</sup> Similar correctives to the perceived prevalence or absence of genres or types of plays in the early modern canon have begun to emerge, but there is doubtless scope for many more revisions of received narratives.<sup>16</sup>

The reliability of fragments as historical documentary evidence varies (of course) depending on whether they originate in early drafts of the lost text, in subsequent adaptations, or in excerpts produced for other purposes. The example of the preserved fragments of Sappho is instructive in this regard. Recent estimates suggest that Greek scholars in Alexandria in the third and second centuries BC edited nine or ten papyrus scrolls of Sappho’s poetry, amounting to approximately 10,000 lines, of which only 650 lines have survived.<sup>17</sup> These surviving fragments are to be found in a diverse array of sources ranging from lines quoted in a treatise on literary composition (fr. 1) to a song incised on a third-century-BC potsherd (fr. 2) and a fifth-century lexicon of rare words (fr. 117A). Some fragments (e.g., fr. 5) have been “substantially improved” by the discovery at Oxyrhynchos, Egypt of papyrus fragments in a rubbish mound in the early twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> New fragments have come to light within existing university collections, at Cologne University in 2004 and in the

Green Collection at Oklahoma City (2011), further enriching our knowledge of Sappho's poetry. Some fragments (e.g., fr. 34) are notable for being known primarily from sources which are at a remove of several centuries from Sappho's own time, such as the Byzantine scholar Eustathios, in his twelfth-century commentary on the *Iliad*. (Suddenly Restoration knowledge of Elizabethan plays seems very immediate and reliable.) Other sources, though equally distanced in time from Sappho, retain the aura of antiquarian authority: the Greek author Plutarch (frs. 31 and 55), philosopher Aristotle (fr. 137), geographer Strabo (fr. 35) and physician Galen (fr. 50) knew and commented on fragments of her work. But as Sappho's most recent editors, Diane J. Rayor and André Lardinois, note: "like modern scholars, [ancient scholars] hated not to be able to give an answer and therefore deduced unknown details from better known ones. One should therefore always assess how likely it is that the ancient scholars could have known certain facts."<sup>19</sup> A preservation bias (see Matthew Steggle's chapter in this volume) is detectable inasmuch as treatises on style (Aristotle) aim to preserve the "best" or most "eloquent" phrasings, and collections of *sententiae* preserve ethical maxims or epithets (Stobaeus), and so forth.<sup>20</sup>

Harvey observes a number of methodological characteristics of classicists operating in this domain. For example, he notes how traditional textual scholarship changed in the context of fragments, where emendation gave way to more elaborate conjecture, and close reading was de-emphasized: "it was no longer a matter of attempting to put right a corrupt text, but of filling lacunae (most often at the beginnings and ends of lines, because of the way in which documents were folded before they were thrown away)."<sup>21</sup> This focus necessitated the creation of an agreed set of transcription conventions for epigraphic documents, but also fostered a spate of creative interpellations by scholars keen to fill in the blanks in a fragmentary source. Harvey accordingly proposes the need for a parallel text edition of fragments alongside the editorially embellished/completed versions.<sup>22</sup> Among the lost English plays, Fletcher and Shakespeare's "Cardenio" is almost unique in attracting this kind of desire for editorial reconstruction (though *Pericles* has famously included an interpellated scene since the 1980s); the challenge articulated by Harvey has been addressed somewhat differently in the New Oxford Shakespeare edition of "Cardenio" through the use of blank lines, spaces, square brackets, and marked deletions.<sup>23</sup>

Fiona McHardy, James Robson, and David Harvey emphasize the symbiotic relationship between fragments and extant drama, noting that “fragments require a context” but also that “they may provide a ‘context’ themselves in that they can also help us better to understand non-fragmentary sources.”<sup>24</sup> Such contexts vary considerably. Focusing on Aeschylus’s *Psychagogoi* and Sophocles’ *Polyxena*, Ruth Bardel debunks the widely held assumption that the three ghosts who appear in the extant Greek tragedies (in the *Persae*, the *Eumenides*, and the *Hecuba*) represent the extent of ghostly presence on stage; on the contrary, she shows that “the fragmentary evidence, both textual and visual (and archaeological) suggests ... that the ghost theme was a popular one.”<sup>25</sup> James Robson considers metatheatrical evidence: “Aristophanes twice depicts tragic poets in the act of composing text.”<sup>26</sup> How seriously should we take the references to play titles (for plays not known to exist) in Francis Beaumont’s *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, or the implication in Thomas Dekker’s *Satiromastix* that Ben Jonson played a character named Zulziman at the Swan or the Paris Garden theater? Has the legitimacy of such metatheatrical allusions, or the qualitative difference between evidence originating in the diegetical world of a fiction versus historical documentary evidence in the archive, been the subject of sustained critical attention yet?

Harvey concludes his survey with a list of precepts or recommendations for future directions in the study of classical lost plays and fragments, including a call for increased direct access to the relevant historical evidence, greater searchability in the format of new scholarship, and the reprinting of seminal secondary texts that have long been unavailable.<sup>27</sup> The *Lost Plays Database*—the project from which this current book has developed—aims to serve these purposes in the early modern context; it also anticipates Harvey’s recommendation of increased collaboration among scholars, including early-career researchers, to advance the field. (Nauck implied in 1889 that collaborative, long-term scholarship was the response required to the challenge of working with lost plays, and our experience as editors of the *LPD* confirms this.) Harvey would also welcome an English translation of key works of German scholarship. Although some of the nineteenth-century German scholarship of the early modern English stage has trickled down to the English speaking world via mediators (including, most recently, June Schlueter and Anston Bosman),<sup>28</sup> more work is needed in terms of making the early seventeenth-century German redactions of English plays available. Lukas Erne and colleagues are translating the Shakespeare adaptations, and the

*LPD* is supporting the translation of “The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter” (c.1598; discussed in David McInnis’s chapter for this volume), but Harvey’s wish for classicists has a largely still unaddressed parallel for early modernists.

Harvey’s final recommendations involve creative responses to the lacunae in the canon, calling for gaps in fragmentary drama to be filled with new writing as per the example of David Wiles’s fleshing out of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* to produce a viable text for performance.<sup>29</sup> Wiles calls such an enterprise a “lacunose production,” and it may merit further investigation by early modernists. David Nicol drafted a scene from “A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia” for the “Shakespearean Scene Writing” workshop led by Scott Maisano at the 2015 meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America in Vancouver, Canada. Freyja Cox Jensen encouraged residents of Collumpton to respond creatively to the historical records of the lost plays, “Cox of Collumpton” (1599) and “Page of Plymouth” (1599), as part of the *Being Human* festival activities in 2017.

## §

Lost plays have achieved new visibility among early modernists, especially in repertorial studies of company commerce. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, compiling the first study of the Queen’s Men since the chapter in *The Elizabethan Stage* by E. K. Chambers (1923), added the titles of five lost plays to company lists in *The Queen’s Men and their Plays* (1998): “Felix and Philomena,” “Five Plays in One,” “Phillyda and Corin,” “Three Plays in One,” and “Valentine and Orson.” Yet they did not include these on their repertorial A-list, even though all have solid documentary evidence of ownership by the Queen’s Men.<sup>30</sup> Further, they did not tag “The Seven Deadly Sins” by the Queen’s star comedic player, Richard Tarlton, as lost or include it on the A-list, even though circumstantial evidence of ownership by the company exists.<sup>31</sup> Further yet, they did not mention another item given on Shrove Tuesday, 1585: “An Antick playe and a comodye.” This offering, missing not only a text and author but also title, invites categorization with the textless, authorless, nameless plays given by the Queen’s Men at moot halls and great houses in the provinces during their heyday in the 1580s. These items approximate William Ingram’s “unknowns,” that is, losses for which we have nothing “other than our assumption that [they] must have existed.”<sup>32</sup>

In *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (2014), Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean offered the first book-length history of the company whose patron was Fernando Stanley, Lord Strange (later, the fifth earl of Derby). With the book of accounts kept by Philip Henslowe at the Rose playhouse at hand, they gave equal treatment to lost and extant plays in the company repertory, 1592–1593. The Henslowe manuscript was published by Edmond Malone, who added it to his ten-volume *Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* in 1790. In an edition in 1845, John Payne Collier called Henslowe's book a "diary," and the name has stuck. Both Malone and Collier annotated Henslowe's playlists, sorting recognizable titles from those previously unknown. They agreed that the presence of "hamlet" in the June offerings at the playhouse at Newington confirmed that there had been a pre-Shakespearean dramatic version of the Hamlet story.<sup>33</sup> Malone was confident that "harey the vj" was not Shakespeare's *I Henry VI*; Collier was not so sure.<sup>34</sup> Neither lumped as many of Henslowe's titles with extant plays as did F. G. Fleay, who in 1891 identified the Newington "hamlet" with Q1 of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Fleay called Q1 "the Corambis *Hamlet*").<sup>35</sup> W. W. Greg rejected many of Fleay's more fanciful identifications of lost plays as extant ones but did not renounce the practice, confidently embracing the lumping of "The Wise Man of West Chester" with *John a Kent and John a Cumber*.<sup>36</sup> More cautious about erasing Henslowe's titles, Manley and MacLean use the likely narrative content of Strange's Men's lost plays to suggest staging and marketing strategies. For example, they link the story of "Bendo and Ricardo" with its repertorial mate, *The Jew of Malta*. In the lost play, a felonious architect (Bendo) falls into a cauldron of boiling oil, as does Barabas in Marlowe's play. That cauldron was still in inventory at the Rose in 1598. By exploring the history of the title character of "Harry of Cornwall" (Henry of Almaine), Manley and MacLean show that the lost play served as prequel to the roughly contemporary *Edward I* (1591) by George Peele (company unknown). The quasi-pairing of "Harry of Cornwall" and *Edward I* was further serialized to include *Edward II* in the repertory of Pembroke's Men in 1592 and the somewhat later *Edward III* (company unknown).

The lost plays in the repertory of the Chamberlain's/King's Men present a greater challenge to theater historians because of the company's player, sharer, and poet, William Shakespeare. The trend in nineteenth-century scholarship was to separate the repertory of the Chamberlain's/King's from contemporary counterparts such as the Admiral's Men

and elevate the quality of offerings to justify received wisdom that Shakespeare's company attracted a higher class of playgoer. Robert B. Sharpe made this desire manifest in *The Real War of the Theaters* (1935). Relying heavily on Henslowe's playlists and payments for 1594–1603, Sharpe argued the case for Shakespeare's company's superiority by pitting the lost plays against extant ones: those in the sprawling repertory of the Admiral's Men were evidence of a business model based on "proletarian appeal" whereas those in the compact and focused Chamberlain's repertory had a "comparatively aristocratic trend."<sup>37</sup> To make the comparison, Sharpe scorned such lost Admiral's plays as "Bellendon," "Cutlack," and "The Siege of London" for their reliance on legends and "a strong comic element" and celebrated the Chamberlain's preference for Shakespeare's "patriotic, warlike English historical plays."<sup>38</sup> In 1962 Bernard Beckerman accomplished a tectonic shift in attitudes toward repertorial commerce in *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599–1609*. He declared that "[o]nly an idolatrous love of Shakespeare can lead us to conclude that from 1599 to 1609 the Lord Chamberlain's Men produced appreciably fewer plays than the other companies did."<sup>39</sup> However, he gave the Chamberlain's lost plays short shrift, offering what must have seemed an epitaph at the time: "we need be grieved little by the disappearance of 75 per cent of the plays" because they were "filler," that is, "chaff" to be winnowed out by the repertory system.<sup>40</sup>

In current scholarship on the Chamberlain's/King's repertory, there is a residue of old-fashioned bias against lost plays but also an increasing acceptance of these offerings as discrete and viable commercial properties. The status of three titles illustrates the tenacity of yesterday's attitude toward the identification of titles without texts. Most familiar is the case of "Love's Labor's Won," which Francis Meres listed among "the most excellent" of comedies by William Shakespeare (1598).<sup>41</sup> E. K. Chambers expressed the reasoning behind Shakespeareans' erasure of Meres's title, agreeing that it was "most natural to take this as an alternative title for some extant play."<sup>42</sup> But he did not like Fleay's choice of *Much Ado About Nothing* and settled after some fretting on *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>43</sup> With barely a doubt, Chambers identified "Oldcastle" as "certainly or probably" the first part of *Henry IV* and "Robin Goodfellow" as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.<sup>44</sup> Another four plays—"Cloth Breeches and Velvet Hose," "The Spanish Maze," "Gowrie," and "Richard the 2"—illustrate acceptance as discrete plays but not full integration into the company's repertorial commerce.<sup>45</sup> Another pair is poised between old and

new opinions, in part because their company attribution is questionable. Sharpe had accepted “Hester and Ahasuerus” as a Chamberlain’s play but considered it an orphan in terms of future acquisitions of biblical plays.<sup>46</sup> Martin Wiggins, dating the play pre-1592, considers its migration to the Chamberlain’s Men after June 1594 probable, but there is no confirming evidence of subsequent performances.<sup>47</sup> For generations, the play documented by a plot called “The Secound parte of the Seuen Deadlie Sinnes” had a date and company affiliation: it belonged to Lord Strange’s Men, c. 1591–1592. In 2004, David Kathman replaced that attribution and date, arguing that the Chamberlain’s Men had the play (and by implication, its first part) in 1597–1598.<sup>48</sup> Among those scholars accepting Kathman’s reassignment, the presence of a two-part serial comprised of playlets on the seven deadly sins in the Chamberlain’s active repertory is evidence that the old perception of that repertory as mostly Shakespearean and therefore mostly classier than its competitors needs rethinking. Yet another lost play, “The Freeman’s Honour,” suggests a further diversification of the company’s repertory and target audiences in a celebration of the Company of Merchant Taylors by way of dramatizing one of their heroes.<sup>49</sup>

## §

How we cope with loss has much to do with how we understand loss. English drama was not defined solely by its textuality. It remained part of a lively tradition of embodied, event-based entertainment, knowledge of which was distributed across the various stakeholders of the early modern theater: the players, playgoers, theatrical impresarios, patrons, governmental officials, and others, all of whom retained a working knowledge of the plays being performed. By fetishizing the recovery of playtexts, we stand to ignore a potentially greater loss: the dramaturgy, performance history, and other related facets of a lively dramatic event. Such loss affects those plays typically classified as “extant” just as much as those whose playtexts have perished. In our earlier volume, *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England* (2014), we focused exclusively on drama that does not survive. Most of the lost drama that concerned us then had originated in the public, commercial theaters of London, and although we attempted to shift the use of the terms “loss” or “lost” away from an exclusive application to playtexts, it is fair to say that the idea of a “lost play” was still largely synonymous with an absent playtext in 2014.

Since 2014, there has been a good deal of work published which has, in different ways, developed the conversation on lost plays. In 2014, for instance, Martin Wiggins's *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* had only reached Volume 4. At the time of writing, though, nine of the projected eleven volumes are completed, and the picture of British drama as a territory, including plays both lost and extant, is much richer as a result. In addition, new research work, almost inevitably in dialogue with Wiggins, has gone after the titles of single lost plays, and much of this work uses corpora including EEBO-TCP as the tool of choice. For instance, a play called “Telomo” was performed at court in 1582. Domenico Lovascio has used EEBO-TCP to show what that sequence of letters demonstrably means in Renaissance texts, demonstrating that it is likely to denote one of the Ptolemies, something which is itself a key to further understanding of the play. The Admiral’s Men’s “Vayvode” of 1598 certainly featured a ruler somewhere in Southeastern Europe: recent work by Misha Teramura has strengthened the case that the ruler in question might be John Hunyadi, “surnamed Vaiuoda,” according to John Foxe. Once again, this revitalizes the play, enabling it to be read in terms of the known reputation of Hunyadi in early modern England. As for “The Peaceable King, or the Lord Mendall,” revived at the Red Bull in 1623 and not otherwise known, David Nicol has shown that “Mend-all” is a nickname associated with Jack Cade, while the phrase “the peaceable king” might well be very politically loaded by 1623, given the growing criticism of James’s reluctance to intervene politically in events in mainland Europe.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, an attempt by one of this volume’s editors to document a lost play from the 1590s, the “Comedy of A Duke of Ferrara,” associated with the *Englische Komödianten*, has opened up questions about the international traffic and recycling of dramatic ideas and even whole plays.<sup>51</sup>

Most of the plays discussed so far are anonymous, something which reflects the way in which work on plays as recorded dramatic performances, rather than literary texts in *Collected Works*, destabilizes the usual construction of the dramatic canon. However, other lost plays work has gone after particular playwrights, reconsidering their careers in terms of not just their extant plays but their known lost ones: Robert Wilson and Henry Chettle, both writers with large bodies of lost work, are among the authors whose *oeuvre*, it turns out, looks rather different when seen from this more holistic angle.<sup>52</sup> Even more conventionally canonical authors can still appear in surprising new guises when seen from the

perspective of lost plays, be that through reconsideration of their sources, or re-examination of the documentation around their censorship, in the case of recent work on Jonson and Nashe's "The Isle of Dogs."<sup>53</sup> Thomas Dekker has had not one but two articles largely about "Phaethon," his lost (and perhaps rather unexpected) Ovidian spectacular of 1598.<sup>54</sup> Even Christopher Marlowe has a lost play on the edge of his canon, the improbably titled "The Maiden's Holiday."<sup>55</sup>

And work on that most canonical of authors, Shakespeare, has started to acknowledge the importance of lost plays. Todd Borlik, for instance, has discussed the possible relationships between *The Merchant of Venice* and the lost play "Pythagoras."<sup>56</sup> *Collected Works*, too, are starting to acknowledge that the lost plays in the Shakespeare corpus—"Love's Labor's Won" and "Cardenio"—must be considered relative not solely to the canonical plays of Shakespeare, but also to the wider picture of Renaissance drama in which being lost is the norm rather than the exception.<sup>57</sup>

Our aim in preparing *Loss and the Literary Culture of Shakespeare's Time* is to broaden the scope of the scholarly conversation and to think about loss more generally, beyond drama and beyond London. The book is divided into two sections. Taking its cue from Henslowe's subtle distinction—made in an inventory list of 10 March 1598—between the terms "gone and loste," the first section expands our idea of lostness ("lostness, *n.* The condition or state of being lost", *OED*) from how it was conceived in 2014.<sup>58</sup> It opens with Misha Teramura's powerful theorizing of lostness via a surprising focus on Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, and textual corruption as a form of loss in canonical poetry, rather than ephemeral drama. Paul Werstine's chapter on lost playhouse manuscripts also steers conspicuously clear of the kinds of lost plays encompassed by the 2014 volume: each of the plays he discusses is conventionally regarded as extant, but by analyzing the variety of manuscripts that an "extant" play has nevertheless lost in the process of composition, licensing, performance, and publication, he calls attention to the fragility of the documentary record even where scholars have traditionally assumed themselves to be on most stable ground. In her reconsideration of Richard Edwards' "Palamon and Arcyte" plays (1566), Jeanne McCarthy urges caution over whether we can even assume that there were manuscripts for all performances. As we know well from previous scholarship, when manuscripts for plays did exist, they could easily become lost, but in her chapter for this volume,

Kara Northway documents the fascinating formal process and conventions demonstrably in place for attempting to recover a lost playtext in the early modern period. Kris McAbee draws a Henslovian distinction between early modern ballads, including those sung in or alluded to in plays, that have become “lost” but are not quite “gone.” She argues that “the vibrant ballad culture that so profoundly influenced the literary landscape of Shakespeare’s time is largely lost in print form” but survives musically, in oral culture. Drawing on “big data” and quantitative analysis, Alexandra Hill concludes this first section with her chapter on loss as framed by a systematic approach to the numerous genres of writing entered for publication in the Stationers’ Register.

A further cue from Henslowe provides an elegant connection to the second section, though this time the Henslovian inspiration comes from a portion of his diary pertaining to the wider world, beyond the theater. Interspersed among Henslowe’s records of repertorial scheduling and payments to playwrights are a series of spells and incantations; our section title, “To know wher a thinge is...,” is excerpted from the heading for Henslowe’s remedy for locating lost property (which involves inscribing the names of the three magi into virgin wax and sleeping on the tablet so that the property’s whereabouts will be transmitted to the sleeper through dreams).<sup>59</sup> Section 2 contains a series of essays exploring what it might mean to “find” something. The first three chapters focus on individuals involved in the production of literary culture. William Ingram’s provocative piece relates the paradoxically “fruitful” yet “not at all helpful” results of his quest for insights into the lost stage player (or perhaps conman) George Hasell, known only from a single document dated 1584. Ingram’s chapter teases out some of the implications of the conceptual distinction between information and knowledge; his online appendix, which accompanies this volume, presents his rich account of Hasell’s life. Ian Donaldson ruminates on a different kind of loss: death, and the cultural practices of commemoration, with a particular focus on a notorious failure of the very memorializing mechanisms that ought to preserve the deceased’s identity. His object of inquiry is a miniature deathbed portrait discovered in 1847, which bears the word “Shakespeare” on its frame. David Kathman re-examines historical and contemporary attributions of “The Freeman’s Honour,” a lost Chamberlain’s Men play, to the scrivener Wentworth Smith and the herald William Smith (the only documentary evidence frustratingly referring to the playwright merely as “W. Smith”).

The remaining chapters in this section question what it even is that we are looking for, blurring ontological categories in their search for “answers.” Matthew Steggle continues Donaldson’s interest in death and mortality but does so via paleontology and the recovery of fossils, which he offers as a productive metaphor for working with loss and fragile documentary evidence. Paul Whitfield White attempts a census of a generic category that has hitherto remained largely invisible or underappreciated: biblical plays. David McInnis looks abroad to Germany, where plays lost in England were sometimes preserved in German, thanks to the efforts of touring English players. He works with a new (the first) English translation of a German play that is otherwise lost to the Anglophone world, “The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter” (c.1598), and examines its inter-repertorial connections with the various London playing companies of the late 1590s. Finally, Lucy Munro and Emma Whipday explore the use of “verbatim theater” techniques to “ask new questions of early modern texts,” bringing archival research into fruitful dialogue with contemporary theatrical practice to “reappraise both the matter and construction” of a lost play. Their chosen example is “Keep the Widow Waking” (1624), by Thomas Dekker, John Ford, William Rowley, and John Webster.

We hope that collectively the chapters assembled here open up the very concept of “lostness” in startling new ways that stimulate further research on the literary culture of Shakespeare’s time and encourage Shakespeare scholars to return to their preferred objects of inquiry with a Coleridgean “freshness of sensation” in the representation of familiar things.<sup>60</sup>

## NOTES

1. Daniel Wyttenbach, *Bibliotheca Critica*, vol.3, part 3 (Amsterdam, 1808), 48; Rudolf Kassel, trans., “Fragments and Their Collectors,” in *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens: Greek Tragic Fragments*, eds. Fiona McHardy, James Robson, and David Harvey (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, rpt. 2008), 9–10n. Wyttenbach’s Latin reads: “*Horum enim quamdiu non singulorum & universonum quidquid superest & mentionum & reliquiarum sigillatim collectum & uno loco expositum fuerit, tamdiu de iustae Literarum Historiae confectione desperandum erit. Nunc poenitet nos ut eam vulgo tractent hodie, qui & majores & minores de ea libros scribunt: agunt nobiscum quasi cum pueris: reponunt recoctam milies cramben de Scrip-toribus, quorum opera supersunt: quorum perierunt, de his altum silentium: quamquam sine horum cognitione, nullo in doctrinarum genere, origo, progressus, perfectio, id est Historia, neque adeo ipsorum superstitum*

*laudes et merita intellegi queant.*” Wyttenbach’s reference to “reboiled cabbage” recalls Juvenal’s seventh satire, lines 150–154 (see Susanna Morton Braund, ed. and trans., *Juvenal and Persius*, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014], 310–311).

2. Kassel, “Fragments and Their Collectors,” 9.
3. Matthew Wright, *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy, Volume 1: Neglected Authors* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), x.
4. Wright, *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy*, xiv–xv. Even as he abstains from making value judgments on these lost Greek plays from his centuries-removed vantage point in the present, Wright nevertheless cites the contemporaneous praise and honors for writers of lost plays as indices of the esteem in which those writers were once held. Such writers include Astydamas the Younger, author of 240 plays and winner of fifteen major festival prizes, who was honored with a bronze statue (in the Theatre of Dionysus), the base of which—including part of the writer’s name—is still extant (*The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy*, xv). Clearly there was no “mouldy stench” to his plays in his own day. Comparably, Francis Meres’s singling out of Richard Hathway for his comedies and Thomas Dekker for his tragedies in 1598—no comedy by Hathway or tragedy by Dekker is known to predate Meres’s comments—might serve an analogous function of offering insights into perceived quality during the playwrights’ own lifetimes (Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* [London: Cuthbert Burby, 1598, STC 17834], Oo3v).
5. Kassel, “Fragments and Their Collectors,” 16.
6. Kassel, trans., in “Fragments and Their Collectors,” 17 from *Kleine Schriften in Lateinischer und Deutscher Sprache*, vol. 1, ed. G. Bernhardt (Halle, 1869), 467 (“*tenor rerum tantis iacturis interruptus, quoad fieri potuit, integrandus est et iunctis variis deperditorum operum notitiis egregii corporis compages restituenda*”).
7. Kassel, trans., in “Fragments and Their Collectors,” 17.
8. Kassel, “Fragments and Their Collectors,” 17–18.
9. David Harvey, “Tragic Thrausmatology: The Study of the Fragments of Greek Tragedy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens*, 21–48.
10. Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien mit Rücksicht auf den epischen Cyclus geordnet* (Bonn, 1839–1841).
11. Harvey, “Tragic Thrausmatology,” 25.
12. August Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1856), viii, qtd. in Harvey, “Tragic Thrausmatology,” 26. On the fanciful reconstruction of “ur-plays” by early modernists, see Roslyn L. Knutson’s chapter, “Ur-Plays and Other Exercises in Making Stuff Up,” in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 31–54.

13. Harvey, "Tragic Thrausmatology," 29.
14. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1889), ix, qtd. in Harvey, "Tragic Thrausmatology," 29.
15. Harvey, "Tragic Thrausmatology," 34.
16. On the potential for non-extant drama to substantially transform our sense of extant drama, see David McInnis, "Lost Plays from Early Modern England: Voyage Drama, A Case Study," *Literature Compass* 8.8 (2011): 534–542; Paul Whitfield White, "The Admiral's Lost Arthurian Plays" and Misha Teramura, "Brute Parts: From Troy to Britain at the Rose, 1595–1600" in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. McInnis and Matthew Steggle, 148–162 and 105–126 respectively.
17. Diane J. Rayor and André Lardinois, eds., *Sappho: A New Translation of the Complete Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 7. Reference to fragment numbers (fr.) quoted in what follows pertain to this edition.
18. Rayor and Lardinois, eds., *Sappho: A New Translation*, 100.
19. Rayor and Lardinois, eds., *Sappho: A New Translation*, 2.
20. Wright, *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy*, xix–xx. Indeed, utility provides a significant advantage in terms of a text's survival; only eleven of Aristophanes' forty plays survive—by a very large margin the most MSS are found for *Wealth*, which is completely untypical of his work being not very obscene and having few topical references (thus making it conducive to teaching purposes). Next come *The Clouds* and *The Frogs*, useful because they feature celebrities (Socrates in *Clouds*; Euripides and Aeschylus in *Frogs*). The few other survivors are mostly in lucky single MSS.
21. Harvey, "Tragic Thrausmatology," 33.
22. Harvey, "Tragic Thrausmatology," 34–35.
23. Taylor, ed., "Fragments of *The History of Cardenio*," in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works (Modern Critical Edition)*, eds. Taylor, Jowett, Bourus, and Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3133–3177. The only other substantial attempts at conjectural reconstruction of lost English plays seem to be those by Charles J. Sisson based on the exceptionally rich accounts preserved in Star Chamber records (*Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936]).
24. Fiona McHardy, James Robson, and David Harvey, "Introduction," *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens*, 2.
25. Ruth Bardel, "Spectral Traces: Ghosts in Tragic Fragments," in *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens*, 84.
26. James Robson, "Aristophanes on How to Write Tragedy: What You Wear Is What You Are," in *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens*, 173.
27. Harvey, "Tragic Thrausmatology," 46–47.

28. For example, June Schlueter, "Across the Narrow Sea: The 1620 Leipzig Volume of English Plays," in *The Text, the Play, and the Globe: Essays on Literary Influence in Shakespeare's World and His Work in Honor of Charles R. Forker*, ed. Joseph Candido (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016), 231–250; Schlueter, "New Light on Dekker's *Fortunati*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 67 (2013): 120–135; and Anston Bosman, "Renaissance Intertheater and the Staging of Nobody," *ELH* 71.3 (2004): 559–585.
29. See Wiles, "HY]ψ[IPYLE: A Version for the Stage," in *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens*, 189–207. Harvey cites the example of Anthony Payne producing a version of Elgar's 3rd Symphony based on the composer's sketches ("Tragic Thrausmatology", 47n).
30. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91–93. Four of the five are documented by entries in accounts from the Office of the Revels from Christmastide to Shrovetide, 1584–1585 (Albert Feuillerat, ed., *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* [Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908], 365). The entry in the Stationers' Register for the fifth ("Valentine and Orson") says that it had been played by the Queen's Men.
31. Both Gabriel Harvey (*Fovre Letters*, 1592) and Thomas Nashe (*Strange Newes*, 1592) refer to Tarlton and the play. Though hesitant about the lostness of "Seven Deadly Sins," McMillin and MacLean were first among recent scholars to push back against the long (undocumented) scholarly association of Tarlton's play with the plot entitled "The Secound parte of the Seuen Deadlie Sinnes."
32. William Ingram, "Lost Plays and Other Lost Things: Ways of Being Lost," in this volume, pp. 131–138.
33. Malone, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (London: H. Baldwin, 1790), 1.2.294; Collier, *The Diary of Philip Henslowe: From 1591 to 1609* (London: The Shakespeare Society, 1845), 35.
34. Malone, 1.2.291; Collier, 22.
35. Frederick Gard Fleay, *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama 1599–1642*, 2 vols. (1891; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1962), 2.33.
36. W. W. Greg, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, 2 vols. (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904, 1908), 2.#62.
37. Robert B. Sharpe, *The Real War of the Theaters* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1935), 25.
38. Sharpe, 34, 40. Further, Sharpe disdained the Admiral's penchant for biblical plays such as "Nebuchadnezzar," "Jephthah," and "Samson" (28–29) in comparison with the Chamberlain's, with whom he agreed "that plays on Bible subjects would [not] appeal to their clientele" (28).

39. Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe 1599–1609* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 14.
40. Beckerman, 16.
41. Francis Meres, *Palladis tamia*, Oo2v.
42. E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), 1.272.
43. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 1.273; Fleay, *Biographical Chronicle*, 2.182. Even T. W. Baldwin, with a document in his hand proving that a play called “loves labor won” had been printed by 1603, continued in the belief that the text behind the title was *All’s Well That Ends Well* (*Shakspeare’s Love’s Labor’s Won* [Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957], 15).
44. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 1.272.
45. For a sample of scholarly attitude toward these plays as viable commercial properties, see Richard Dutton, who substitutes *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for “Robin Goodfellow” and does not incorporate “The Spanish Maze” or “Gowrie” into arguments about plays at court (*Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016], 62, 237 n27). For others, a lost play is a blank slate: Andrew Gurr calls “Gowrie” a “fiasco” that “in 1604 misplayed the role that *King Lear* filled much better at court in 1606” (*The Shakespeare Company 1594–1642* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 172, 177), whereas James Shapiro calls it “an immediate hit,” hinting that Shakespeare might have played the king (*The Year of Lear* [New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2015], 205).
46. Sharpe, 28. Paul Whitfield White is not so sure; one implication of his chart of biblical plays (see “Online Resources”) is that the Admiral’s were not the only adult company to market this subject matter.
47. Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 11 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–), #801.
48. David Kathman, “Reconsidering *The Seven Deadly Sins*,” *Early Theatre* 7.1 (2004): 13–44.
49. See “William Smith, ‘The Freeman’s Honour,’ and the Lord Chamberlain’s Men,” by David Kathman in this collection.
50. Domenico Lovascio, “Leicester’s Men and the Lost *Telomo* of 1583,” *Early Theatre* 20.1 (2017): 9–26; Misha Teramura, “The Admiral’s *Vayvode* of 1598,” *Early Theatre* 18.1 (2015): 79–99; David Nicol, “*The Peaceable King*, or *The Lord Mendall*: A Lost Jack Cade Play and Its 1623 Revival,” *Early Theatre* 19.1 (2016): 137–145; for ten more examples, and some attempts at theorization, see Matthew Steggle, *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England: Ten Case Studies*

- (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015); see also Laurie Johnson and David McInnis, "Thomas Cavendish on the Early Modern Stage?" *Notes & Queries* 65.4 (December 2018): 557–560.
51. Matthew Steggle, "The 'Comedy of a Duke of Ferrara' in 1598," *Early Theatre* 19.2 (2016): 139–56.
  52. David McInnis, "Robert Wilson and Lost Plays," *Performance as Research in Early English Theatre Studies: The Three Ladies of London in Context*, <http://threeladiesoflondon.mcmaster.ca/contexts/DavidMcInnis.htm>; Roslyn L. Knutson, "Henry Chettle, Workaday Playwright," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 30 (2017): 52–64.
  53. Misha Teramura, "Richard Topcliffe's Informant: New Light on *The Isle of Dogs*," *Review of English Studies* 68 (2017): 44–59; David McInnis, "Lost Plays and Source Study," *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study*, eds. Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter (NY: Routledge, 2018), 297–315.
  54. Todd A. Borlik, "Hellish Falls: Faustus's Dismemberment, Phaeton's Limbs and Other Renaissance Aviation Disasters," *English Studies* 97 (2016), 254–276, 351–361; Matthew Steggle, "Philip Henslowe's Artificial Cow," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 30 (2017): 65–76.
  55. Matthew Steggle, "Marlowe and Lost Plays: The Case of 'The Maiden's Holiday'," in *Christopher Marlowe, Theatrical Commerce, and the Book Trade*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Roslyn L. Knutson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 243–257.
  56. Todd A. Borlik, "Unheard Harmonies: *The Merchant of Venice* and the Lost Play of Pythagoras," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 29 (2016): 191–224.
  57. See for instance, the citation of the *Lost Plays Database* in the *New Oxford Shakespeare* (2016): Gary Taylor and Rory Loughnane, "The Canon and Chronology of Shakespeare's Works," *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion*, eds. Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 422. See also David McInnis, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays: Reimagining Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
  58. R. A. Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 317.
  59. Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, 39.
  60. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Chapter IV," *Biographia Literaria* (London, 1817), 1.85.

PART I

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“Gone and LOST”:  
The Nature and Forms of Lostness



## Shakespeare's Ruined Quires

*Misha Teramura*

As scholars of early modern drama know, the field of lostness is characterized not by a dichotomy but by a spectrum, one in which the category of “lost” seamlessly blends into “extant.” At one end of the spectrum, there are plays that are known only by their titles, such as many of those named in Henslowe’s diary or the Stationers’ Register. There are plays from which snatches of dramatic dialogue have been preserved, such as the objectionable lines quoted in the 1601 Star Chamber trial concerning “The Death of the Lord of Kyme,” or the fifteen mysterious passages quoted in John Cotgrave’s miscellany *The English Treasury of Wit and Language* (1655).<sup>1</sup> There are plays for which fragments of the script have survived by chance, such as the scene from the play about the Duke of Florence that was used as wrapping paper for a bundle of letters, or the page from a play of the gullible tapster used as endleaves for a copy of Homer’s *Odyssey*.<sup>2</sup> There are plays whose narratives we can glimpse in the written accounts of playgoers such as Thomas Platter and Simon Forman.<sup>3</sup> There are plays whose scenic structure is outlined in extant playhouse plots, such as that of Thomas Dekker and Henry

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Chettle's "Troilus and Cressida," or in written synopses like the argument of "Meleager."<sup>4</sup> There are plays for which an entire "part" is preserved: the part of "Poore" from an early seventeenth-century comedy performed at Oxford and the part of God from a mid-sixteenth-century religious play performed in Herefordshire.<sup>5</sup> Several plays survive in *nearly* complete forms, such as the eroded manuscript of Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* or the unfinished transcription of the Cambridge play *Machiavellus*.<sup>6</sup> While both of those are manuscripts, even plays that found their way into print are not guaranteed to survive intact: all that remains of Munday's civic pageant "Camp Bell" is a single quire from the only extant copy of the 1609 quarto.<sup>7</sup> Even perfectly preserved textual witnesses do not necessarily represent the text as originally composed or performed. We would not classify plays like *Tamburlaine* or *Sejanus* as lost, yet the former was redacted by its publisher (stripped of "some fond and friuolous Ieftures") and the latter edited by Ben Jonson to remove the contributions of his original coauthor, both presenting in print a substantially different text (presumably) than audiences would have seen performed on stage.<sup>8</sup>

Even without deliberate intervention, the very transition from manuscript to print often potentially introduced or revealed moments of textual loss. In the first quarto of Shakespeare's first printed play, *Titus Andronicus*, the catchword "But" at the bottom of G4<sup>v</sup> does not correspond to the first word on H1<sup>r</sup>, suggesting that at least one line of verse in the manuscript copy was dropped: most modern editions represent the missing line as an open gap in the text framed by brackets.<sup>9</sup> Similar conventions for depicting textual lacunae can even be found in early modern printed works themselves. For example, a pair of empty parentheses in the 1603 quarto of *Patient Grissil* seems to "signify the printer's inability to deal with indecipherable copy," while dashes throughout the 1647 folio text of Nathan Field, John Fletcher, and Philip Massinger's *The Honest Man's Fortune* apparently indicate that "either the copy was defective at that point, or it was illegible" (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).<sup>10</sup> Such practices are reminiscent of the similar convention of scribes leaving blank spaces when their copy was apparently unreadable, such as those found in the manuscripts of *Bonduca*, *The Faithful Friends*, Edward Alleyn's part for Orlando, and others.<sup>11</sup>

However, if some pockets of lostness in printed books and manuscripts were acknowledged by their makers and made explicit to their readers, another category of lostness was not: the textual crux. Examples from the Shakespearean canon are myriad and familiar, such as when two print

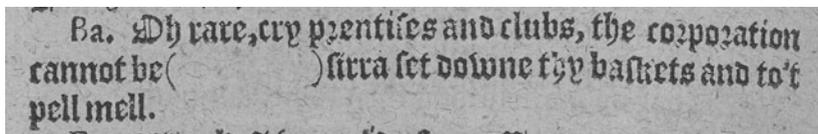


Fig. 2.1 Thomas Dekker et al., *The Pleasant Comedie of Patient Grissill* (London, 1603), Folger STC 6517 copy 1, portion of sig. H2<sup>v</sup>. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library

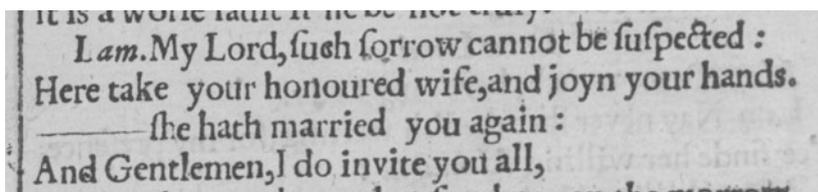


Fig. 2.2 *Comedies and Tragedies* Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen (London, 1647; Wing B1581), portion of sig. 5X2<sup>r</sup>. Northwestern University Library, L Kestnbaum B379p

witnesses disagree over the reading of a line. Did Othello refer to the “bafe *Indian*” (Q) or the “bafe Iudean” (F)? Was Hamlet’s flesh “too too fallied” (Q2) or “too too folid” (F)? Even more problematic than such moments of textual variation are the moments when the printed text offers no plausible options at all, as in Q2 *Hamlet*’s incomprehensible phrase, “the dram of eale / Doth all the noble subſtance of a doubt / To his owne ſcandle.”<sup>12</sup>

The world of print was necessarily plagued with fallibility. John Jowett, in a contribution to *The New Oxford Shakespeare*, offers a bleak assessment of the situation for editors: “Early modern print was a postlapsarian medium. It was notorious for its degradation of the text; as Anthony Grafton puts it, ‘Readers, publishers and correctors agreed that printing, whatever its other qualities, was one great kingdom of error.’”<sup>13</sup> So too did authors. In the epistle appended to *An Apology for Actors*, Thomas Heywood bitterly referred to William Jaggard and the “infinite faults eſcaped in my booke of *Britaines Troy*, by the negligence of the Printer, as the miſquotations, miſtaking of fillables, miſplacing halfe lines, coining of ſtrāge and neuer heard of words.”<sup>14</sup> While stationers sometimes recognized and emended their errors in errata lists, this was hardly ubiquitous and authors like Heywood often found that printed volumes could misrepresent their authorial intention. Indeed, even when a printed

text represented a high degree of fidelity to the manuscript copy, the contingency of the print shop almost invariably meant that some portion of the printed book rendered the author's intended text lost.

This essay is a sermon on the condition of lostness in early modern literature, and it takes as its text one of Shakespeare's most celebrated poetic passages: the opening quatrain of Sonnet 73.

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang...<sup>15</sup>

For William Empson, that fourth line—with its evocative imagery, emotional impact, and historical resonance—perfectly exemplified the most fundamental kind of poetic ambiguity, in which multiple meanings overlap in the reader's mind to produce the richness of uncertainty. As his opening case study in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, the line became Empson's *locus classicus* for the idea that “the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry.”<sup>16</sup> Half a century later, the influential historian of the Reformation Eamon Duffy invested the line with a similarly grand significance. For Duffy, the line was a spiritual *cri de cœur*: in “Shakespeare's one-line evocation of the ruins of England's monastic past, the ruins of England's Catholicism [...] cried out against the cultural revolution which had shaped the Elizabethan religious settlement.”<sup>17</sup>

If the fourth line of Sonnet 73 has been among the most familiar and cherished single lines of Shakespeare's poetry, we may be momentarily taken aback when encountering it in the earliest quarto of *Shake-speares Sonnets*, printed in 1609 by George Eld (Fig. 2.3).

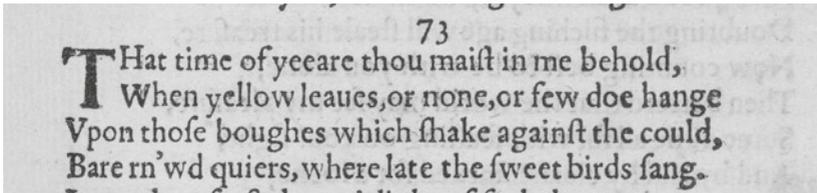


Fig. 2.3 William Shakespeare, *Shake-speares Sonnets* (London, 1609), portion of sig. E4<sup>r</sup>, Folger Shakespeare Library STC 22353 (Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library)

Where we expect the familiar *ruined*, we find instead an unpronounceable concatenation of characters: “rn’wd.” Once the initial shock subsides, we may appreciate how hauntingly apropos it seems to be. The word, as it appears in its first publication, is a kind of textual wreck: *ruined* is itself ruined.

For scholars of early modern literature, such typographical errors are familiar and can be traced to the work of one figure: the compositor. As Joseph Moxon wrote in his comprehensive account of the art of printing, it was the compositor who was trusted with the task of textual transmission, reading his copy, visualizing the word he wished to set (perhaps with orthographic alterations), selecting the appropriate metal types, and arranging them on his composing stick:

having read, he falls a Spelling in his mind; yet fo, that his Thoughts run no faster than his Fingers: For as he spells A, he takes up A out of the A Box, as he names n in his thoughts, he takes up n out of the n Box, as names d in his thoughts he takes up d out of the d Box; which three Letters fet together make a Word, viz. And; fo that after the d he fets a Space...<sup>18</sup>

Of course, this was hardly an error-proof process. Although Moxon emphasized the rigorous diligence that the compositor must exercise in following his copy, even the printer Moxon himself could not avoid exemplifying the fallibility of compositors when introducing that very section<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 2.4).

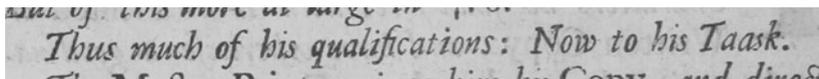


Fig. 2.4 Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises... The Second Volume* (London, 1683; Wing M3013), portion of p. 198. Boston Public Library, RARE BKS G.676.M87R v.2

At the very moment that the author makes us aware of the compositor's job, the printed text itself exhibits the trace of the compositor's task performed imperfectly.<sup>20</sup> The 1609 *Sonnets* easily yields a survey of the kinds of errors compositors might commit: we find superfluous letters (e.g., "attended" for *attended*), omitted letters ("fcond" for *second*), mixed letters ("ftainteh" for *staineth*), turned types ("119" for *116*), and fouled cases ("of" for *of*), where a certain type (such as a long "f") has mistakenly been put into the sort-box of a similar-looking type (such as "f").<sup>21</sup>

Such unavoidable material realities condition our engagements with early modern printed texts and sit in tension with the ways that these texts sometimes imagine themselves in immaterial terms. This is especially true of the vision of poetry expressed in the *Sonnets* themselves. As the sequence repeatedly claims, poetry is the vessel that will preserve the essence of the speaker's beloved addressee through the mutability of time:

But thy eternall Sommer fhall not fade,  
[...]  
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'ft,  
    So long as men can breath or eyes can see,  
    So long liues this, and this giues life to thee... (Sonnet 18.9, 12–14)

Throughout the volume, the sonnets' repeated self-descriptions of their own "eternall lines" posit the preservation of the text far into a distant future, or, as Sonnet 55 suggests, to the eschatological termination of time: "So til the iudgement that your selfe arife, / You liue in this, and dwell in louers eies" (55.13–14). It is no coincidence that this particular sonnet begins with Shakespeare's most extravagant articulation of the theme, echoing Horace and Ovid's classical versions of the same boast: "Not marble, nor the guilded monument, / Of Princes fhall out-liue this powrefull rime" (55.1–2). Implied by the speaker's claims that his work will prove more permanent than mere matter is the assumption that what allows for poetry's endurance is precisely its immateriality, an identity not anchored to any single object but one that can be disseminated through different physical instantiations across space and time.

However, not every sonnet conceives of itself in the same terms. At a crucial turning point in the sequence, just before the speaker abandons the procreation campaign of the first seventeen sonnets, he imagines the

“age to come” reading his poems incredulously, doubtful that anyone could be so beautiful: “So should my papers (yellowed with their age) / Be scorn’d, like old men of leffe truth then tongue” (17.9–10). The sonnets here are depicted in their specific material instantiations, inscribed on paper subject to decay over time: as Katherine Duncan-Jones wryly comments, “No accommodation is made for fresh transcriptions or printings.”<sup>22</sup> This glimpse of literary text as embodied and perishable, subject to Time’s injurious hand, immediately precedes the *Sonnets*’ first vision of literary immortality in “eternall lines,” and arguably casts a shadow over the subsequent articulations of its Horatian and Ovidian claims for endurance: what would happen if the poems remain all too subject to their own materiality?

The image of yellowed papers repeats itself subtly in our “rn’wd” Sonnet 73: “When yellow leaues, or none, or few doe hange / Vpon those boughes” (2–3). The commonplace of autumnal foliage as an emblem of age here resonates with an image of the poems themselves: the yellow leaves are not merely the graying hairs of the speaker, but a specific synecdoche of the poet’s material products, aging alongside their author.<sup>23</sup> We are given license to pursue these connotations when, in the next line, the boughs are referred to as “Bare rn’wd quiers”: the word “quiers,” in its original spelling, offers parallel denotations, at once *choirs* (its most explicit sense, referring to ecclesiastical architecture), but also, as editors have frequently noted, *quires*—a gathering of sheets (leaves) constituting a whole or part of a book, a word in common usage in both manuscript and print. With this sense in mind, the line as a whole polysemously superimposes bodily and arboreal decay with textual ruin.

But what *is* textual ruin exactly? While the *Sonnets* invoke the idea of the physical deterioration of pages, early modern readers knew that textual ruin could take a variety of forms. One model could be found in the corpus of classical literature as inherited by the Renaissance. As Andrew Hui has discussed, early humanists were painfully aware how little of the writings of Greece and Rome survived the passage of time intact, the ruined textual remains of antiquity matching the architectural ruins they could see around them.<sup>24</sup> Petrarch, for example, bemoaned the fact that some of Cicero’s writings were “so mutilated and disfigured that it would almost have been better for them to be lost.”<sup>25</sup> By this standard, certain texts, such as Horace’s *Odes* or Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*—not to mention Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*—would seem to have made good on their predictions of literary immortality, evading time’s injurious hand to become monuments

more lasting than bronze. Of course, the very idea of textual endurance has a corollary: if the survival of an immaterial poem requires repeated transmission over time and space, so too is that poem's textual integrity inextricably dependent on the fidelity of the means of transmission. In an earlier age of manuscript dissemination, Geoffrey Chaucer directly articulated this anxiety when, after sending his poem *Troilus and Criseyde* out to posterity—"Go, litel bok"—his mind immediately turned to the dangers of transmission: "So prey I God that non myswrite the, / Ne the mys-metre for defaute of tonge."<sup>26</sup> In an attempt to forestall such miswriting, Chaucer addressed a poem to his scribe Adam, urging him to "wryte more trewe," and chastising him for his frequent errors: "So ofte adaye I mot thy werk renewe, / It to correcte and eke to rubbe and scrape, / And al is thorough thy negligence and rape."<sup>27</sup> The textual ruin that Chaucer so anxiously feared was not simply the wholesale disappearance of his poem, but the erosion of his poetic voice through inaccurate scribal reproductions. In the Renaissance, such dangers were immediately apparent in the philological labors taken to recover corrupted classical texts: the poetry of Ovid and Horace may have survived, but the accretion of errors in the transmitted texts that Renaissance humanists received only served to emphasize how fallible textual reproduction could be. And although the technology of print brought the promise of mass production of identical copies, the fallible scribe was replaced by an equally fallible compositor. In all cases, the authenticity of the poet's voice is potentially undermined—ruined—in the very act of reproduction by which the text is ostensibly made immortal.<sup>28</sup>

Appropriately, "rn'wd" of Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 is an emblem of this kind of ruined quire of text, "where late the sweet birds sang." The pure presence of aesthetic creation at its source, direct and unmediated, is replaced by the conspicuous absence of that presence and the imperfect trace—memory, inscription, reproduction—of that original, authoritative poetic presence. In the case of "rn'wd," what we have instead is an indecipherable hieroglyph, an ideogram that signifies nothing clearly other than textual ruination itself. While the speaker of the *Sonnets* can elsewhere boast that his verse will survive until the end of time, "rn'wd" emblemizes the fact that, even immortal, the materiality of these poems guarantees that they are, to some extent, always already ruined.

Perhaps things are not really this dire. While the vulnerability of early modern literary texts is familiar to scholars of the period, so too is the longstanding editorial project of emendation, the effort to redeem the

text from its state of ruination. Whereas the first generation of Shakespearean editors could perform heroic feats of emendatory imagination, such as Theobald's "a babbled of green fields" in *Henry V*, the twentieth-century developments of the New Bibliography sought to turn the art of emendation into a kind of science, attempting to use a rigorous knowledge of the printing house "to strip the veil of print from a text by analyzing the characteristics of identified compositors."<sup>29</sup> Even as literary scholars have, at least in theory, remained conscious of the provenance of the objects of their study, the editorial developments of the twentieth century at their most optimistic could in effect imply that certain textual problems could be definitively solved. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the case of Sonnet 73: where once we had "rn'wd," modern editions restore *ruined*, recovered from its ruinous state to complete one of the most celebrated lines of Shakespearean poetry: "Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." So patently correct is the beloved familiar reading that even the Oxford *Textual Companion* is uncharacteristically silent on the issue.

However, such confidence was not always the case. When Edmond Malone and George Steevens produced the first scholarly text of the *Sonnets* in 1780, the editors readily admitted their difficulty with the Quarto's "Bare rn'wd quiers," quoting the original with the bemused comment, "from which the reader must extract what meaning he can."<sup>30</sup> The closest thing to an authority we have for our traditional reading of *ruined* is John Benson's notoriously faulty collection *Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare* (1640). It is in Benson's hybrid version of Sonnet 73—sutured to Sonnet 77 under the picturesque title "Sunne Set"—that we find the familiar reading of the line: "Bare ruin'd quires, where late the sweet birds fang."<sup>31</sup> Benson represents how one attentive seventeenth-century reader made sense of the textual mess of Sonnet 73's fourth line. But to what extent does this emendation hold up to modern standards?

In its defense, the reading of *ruined* has excellent poetic credentials. The *Sonnets* are filled with resonating language of waste, decay, and disrepair. Outside of Sonnet 73, we encounter four variations on the word: *ruin* (64.11), *ruining* (125.4), *ruinate* (10.7), as well as *ruined* itself in Sonnet 119: "And ruin'd loue when it is built anew / Growes fairer then at firft" (10–11). If we take Sonnet 73 to refer to a wasted ecclesiastical building, the same image appears elsewhere in the Shakespeare canon (and with the telling lexical parallel) near the ending of *Titus Andronicus*, when Aaron anachronistically seeks shelter in a "ruinous monastery."<sup>32</sup>

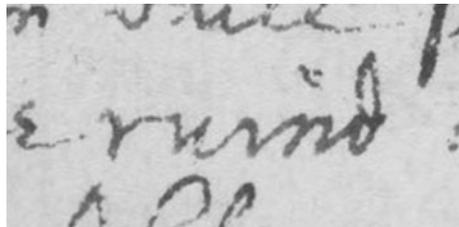
Similarly, the word is used in a botanical context in *Richard II*'s allegorical description of England as a garden: "her fairest flowers choked up, / Her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined..."<sup>33</sup> On these grounds, the case for "Bare ruined choirs" is as persuasive as its thematic appeal is irresistible. However, the bibliographic arguments for *ruined* are less certain.

In her magisterial edition of the *Sonnets*, Katherine Duncan-Jones offers the following explanation:

Q's 'rn'wd' is one of several errors of reversal made by Compositor B in sigs. E1<sup>v</sup>–E4<sup>v</sup>; cf. 'end' for *due* in 69.3; cf. also, 'wiht' for *with*, 23.14, also the work of Compositor B; and 'stainteh' for *staineth*, 33.14, this time Compositor A. Here there is also a minim error, the MS having presumably read 'ruin'd' or 'rvin'd'.<sup>34</sup>

According to Duncan-Jones, Compositor B commits two errors. First, he misreads the text: where the original manuscript has *ruin'd*, he misconstrues the minims *ui* as single *w*. (A manuscript of Donne's poetry prepared in 1632 to be used as a printer's copy suggests how this kind of minim error might be possible: see Fig. 2.5.<sup>35</sup>) After misreading the manuscript as *rwn'd*, Compositor B retrieves five types from his case—*r*, *w*, *n*, apostrophe, and *d*—but in the process of setting the line of type in his composing stick, he mixes the order of the three middle types. As a result, what ends up printed on the page is "rn'wd." The idea is appealingly comprehensive, yet it rests on the premise that Compositor B committed two independent errors in quick succession, first misreading the manuscript and then mistakenly mixing his types. However, a more significant problem with this reconstruction is in its account of how Compositor B misread the manuscript.

**Fig. 2.5** Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS 966.5, portion of p. 288



To understand any compositorial error, there are three sites to consider: what the original manuscript read, what the compositor intended to set, and what actually ended up on his composing stick. Of the various kinds of compositorial errors we encounter in the *Sonnets* volume, there are manual errors, such as dropped types, redundant types, mixed order of types, and fouled cases: here, the compositor imperfectly sets the word that he intended to set. There are also lexical errors, such as when the compositor misreads his copy or misremembers the word when he reaches for his types: here, the compositor has correctly set the word that he intended, but it happens to differ from what his copy read.<sup>36</sup> Duncan-Jones's analysis of "rn'wd" in Sonnet 73 is dependent on an understanding of what the compositor intended to set: namely, the word *ruyn'd*. Here we encounter a problem. Even if a compositor could be prone to manual and lexical errors, Moxon describes that a central part of his job was to understand what it was he was printing and, if necessary, "*to discern and amend the bad Spelling and Pointing of his Copy.*"<sup>37</sup> Even apart from the "error of reversal," Duncan-Jones's account requires that the same compositor who had correctly set the word *ruin* and its derivatives four times in the same volume was, in Sonnet 73, content to select types for a combination of letters that patently do not form a real word, the conjectural *ruyn'd*.<sup>38</sup> He must have *intended* to set a nonsense word.

A defense and revision of Duncan-Jones's argument might make recourse to orthographic considerations: perhaps the *w* of "rn'wd" represents not a minim error, but rather a botched attempt to set the same word spelled differently. The *OED* does list several forms of the verb *ruin* in or before the seventeenth century that include a *w*: e.g., *rewen*, *rewin*, *reywin*, *rowin*, *rwyn*, etc. Accordingly, Paul Hammond, in his original-spelling edition of the *Sonnets*, offers the following account: "The noun 'ruin' was often spelt 'ruwyn' (*OED*) so the MS perhaps read something like *ruwynd*: Q's *n* would be an easy misreading of the MS, or a turned *u*."<sup>39</sup> A turned *u* is indeed a very common compositorial error. Nevertheless, it's difficult to reconstruct exactly what Hammond believes happened. While his explanation accounts for the first three letters and the last, we are left alone to imagine what became of the remaining two. If the manuscript read what he suggests it did (*ruwynd*), the compositor would have had to neglect to gather two types (*y* and *n*), in addition to misplacing the apostrophe and mistakenly setting an *n* instead of a *u*—although that last step could be excluded if we are prepared to imagine a compositor intending to set a nonsense word.

Regardless of the probability of Hammond's scenario, either of the two arguments I've discussed may be more persuasive if we accept the possibility that someone—either the scribe of the manuscript or Compositor B—did or was prepared to spell the word *ruined* with a *w*. However, these spellings of the word *ruin* and its derivatives appear to occur less often than Hammond suggests. Indeed, his claim about the frequency of *w*-spellings is undermined when we consult the *OED*'s examples, in which such forms appear exclusively in texts produced in Scotland, which a search on EEBO-TCP corroborates as representative. Nor does it seem likely that a compositor in George Eld's shop would have opted for a *w* spelling: not only are all of the other instances of the word in the 1609 *Sonnets* spelled conventionally, but the same is true of the other books that Eld printed at the same time.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the manuscript did, as we have assumed, read *ruined*, but Compositor B misread the word and attempted to set a different word. As Peter W. M. Blayney has noted in comparing Nicholas Okes's 1613 edition of *Sir Antony Sherley His Relation of His Travels into Persia* with its manuscript source, Okes's compositor misread the word "ruineinge" (i.e., ruining) in his manuscript copy as "rinueinge" and standardized the spelling in print as "renewing."<sup>41</sup> Perhaps George Eld's compositor made a similar mistake, misreading his manuscript's *ruined* as *rinued*, which he attempted to set as *renew'd*. This might seem to be the most plausible explanation, but again it requires the compositor to neglect entirely collecting two vowels in addition to making the transposition error in his placement of the apostrophe in the center of the word.

There are, thus, three distinct theories trying to account for how Compositor B read the word *ruined* in the manuscript and printed "rn'wd," all of which approach the question from a position of certainty about what the manuscript read—what Shakespeare intended—and attempt to rationalize the inherited, beloved reading from the ruined impression on the page. Yet all, I'd like to suggest, have serious problems of plausibility. Shakespeare may have written *ruined* in Sonnet 73. But the efforts of bibliographic analysis to provide certainty fall short: "rn'wd" remains an intractable epistemological challenge.

Sonnet 73 is a poem about presence on the threshold of becoming absence. "That time of yecare thou maift in me behold": the speaker is in the winter of his life, a fading sunset at the close of day, the last embers of a small fire. It is the knowledge that this presence is fading away that should motivate the poem's addressee to a more intense love.

It is necessarily an elegiac poem. But the appearance of “rn’wd” in its fourth line succinctly emblemizes what we might take to be the elegiac quality that attends the ruined quires of all early modern texts. We long for authorial intention and presence (where late the sweet Bard sang?) but the materiality of the text constantly reminds us that this presence is elusive and, at times, irrecoverable.

To speak of “lost works” is a kind of scholarly convenience. While it makes good sense to distinguish those works with a substantial surviving textual witness from those without, even extant texts partake of the category of lostness to some degree. Perhaps there are documents that we might look to for escape from this dismal vision, such as texts prepared by an author’s own hand. One might hope, for example, to solve the tangled textual situation of *A Game at Chess*, with its nine conflicting textual witnesses, by the fact that Middleton himself produced an autograph copy of the entire play, held at Trinity College, Cambridge.<sup>42</sup> And yet even this direct authorial presence eludes our desires for textual stability: the carelessness of Middleton’s transcription results in a wide range of errors, from mistaken words to the omission of a whole scene integral to the play’s plot.<sup>43</sup> Where we might hope to find sweet birds singing, we find, yet again, bare ruined quires. Even the single fragment of dramatic writing scholars take to be in Shakespeare’s own hand, the Hand D additions to *Sir Thomas More*, contains a moment of palaeographic obscurity in the final line of More’s great speech to the rioting crowd: “and this your momtanish inhumanity.”<sup>44</sup> The word that appears to represent *mountainish* lacks the requisite number of minims, leaving some scholars to interpret the word conjecturally as *Mohamedanish* (“momtanish”) or *Mauritanish* (“moritanish”).<sup>45</sup> Even at the very moment of composition,<sup>46</sup> the material inscription of the literary text obscures authorial meaning.

Reacting against the ambitions of the New Bibliography, some scholars have taken a more positive view of the materiality of early modern texts, focusing on the meanings generated by the ambiguities and complexities of print and manuscript rather than trying to tear them away to access some imagined authorial intention.<sup>47</sup> And yet such a position, with its optimistic embrace of what survives, departs from the views of early modern authors themselves, such as Thomas Heywood, who railed against the “infinite faults” committed by his printer. In our scholarly language of

loss, we describe the phenomenon of textual degradation with an affective connotation that would have been easily recognizable to early modern writers. Indeed, to evaluate the spectrum of lostness from the extreme end of pure authorial presence, we must appreciate that few if any works of early modern literature give us complete and unobstructed access to the author's textual intention. It is only with some irony, then, that one might reach an elegiac conclusion: when it comes to the literary culture of Shakespeare's time, all is lost.

## NOTES

1. James Stokes, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Lincolnshire*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 1,269–304 (*Lost Plays Database*, “The Death of the Lord of Kyme”); Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–], #1295); Wiggins, “Where to Find Lost Plays,” in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 266–270. Of the eighteen passages listed by Wiggins, three are identified in Joshua J. McEvilla, *Cotgrave Online: A Commonplace Reader* (revised October 2018), *The Shakespeare Authorship Page*, eds. Terry Ross and David Kathman, <https://shakespeareauthorship.com/cotgrave>.
2. Antony Hammond and Doreen Delvecchio, “The Melbourne Manuscript and John Webster: A Reproduction and Transcript,” *Studies in Bibliography* 41 (1988): 1–32, at 1; Arthur Freeman, “The ‘Tapster Manuscript’: An Analogue of Shakespeare's *Henry the Fourth Part One*,” *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 6 (1997): 93–105, at 99.
3. Basle University Library, A λ V 8, fol. 683<sup>r</sup> (*LPD*, “Play of a Maiden's Suitors”); Wiggins, *British Drama*, #1200); Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 208, fol. 201<sup>r-v</sup> (*LPD*, “Richard the 2”); Wiggins, *British Drama*, #1635).
4. British Library, Add. MS 10449, fol. 5 (*LPD*, “Troilus and Cressida”); Wiggins, *British Drama*, #1182); Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Eng 1285, fols. 3<sup>r</sup>–4<sup>r</sup> (*LPD*, “Meleager, Publii Ovidii Nasonis”); Wiggins, *British Drama*, #593).
5. Houghton Library, MS Thr 10.1, fols. 21<sup>r</sup>–46<sup>v</sup> (*LPD*, “Play of Poore”); Wiggins, *British Drama*, #1824); E. K. Chambers, “Processus Satanae,” in *Malone Society Collections 2.3* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), 239–50 (*LPD*, “Processus Satanae”); Wiggins, *British Drama*, #382).
6. Huntington Library, MS HM 500 (Wiggins, *British Drama*, #866); Bodleian Library, MS Douce 234, fols. 40<sup>v</sup>–58<sup>v</sup> (Wiggins, *British Drama*, #1090).

7. STC 18265, preserved in British Library, General Reference Collection C.33.e.7 (Wiggins, *British Drama*, #1595).
8. [Christopher Marlowe,] *Tamburlaine the Great* (London, 1590; STC 17425), sig. A2<sup>r</sup>; Ben Jonson, *Seianus His Fall* (London, 1605; STC 14782), sig. ¶2<sup>v</sup>.
9. See, for example, Eugene Waith, ed., *Titus Andronicus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 4.3.32.
10. Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to Texts in 'The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker'*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1.164; MacDonald P. Jackson, "Empty Parentheses and Bowed Legs in Webster and Dekker," *N&Q* 63 (2016): 537–541; Cyrus Hoy, "The Honest Man's Fortune," in Fredson Bowers, ed., *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966–96), 10.8. On the subject of illegible authorial manuscripts in the printing house, see Percy Simpson, *Proof-Reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 33–37.
11. For a dissenting view on the lacunae in the *Bonduca* manuscript, see Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 91–94.
12. William Shakespeare, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (London, 1604; STC 22276), D1<sup>v</sup>.
13. John Jowett, "Shakespeare and the Kingdom of Error," in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Critical Reference Edition*, 2 vols., eds. Gary Taylor et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.liv; Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2012), 79.
14. Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London, 1612; STC 13309), G4<sup>r</sup>.
15. Katherine Duncan-Jones, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, rev. ed. (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010), 73.1–4.
16. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 2nd ed. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1947), 2–3.
17. Eamon Duffy, "Bare Ruined Choirs: Remembering Catholicism in Shakespeare's England," *Theatre and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare*, eds. Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay, and Richard Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 40–57, esp. 41.
18. Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises... The Second Volumnne* (London, 1683; Wing M3013), 212–213.
19. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, 198.
20. It appears that the compositor planned to spell the word using three types, including an "as" ligature, but then accidentally picked up an excessive "a" type.

21. See, respectively, STC 22353, K2<sup>v</sup> (*A Lover's Complaint*, 78), E3<sup>r</sup> (Sonnet 68, line 7), C3<sup>f</sup> (Sonnet 33, line 14), H1<sup>f</sup> (Sonnet 116), K3<sup>v</sup> (Sonnet 152, line 14).
22. Duncan-Jones, ed., *Sonnets*, 17.9n.
23. John C. Coldewey, "'Bare rn'wd quiers': Sonnet 73 and Poetry, Dying," *Philological Quarterly* 67 (1988): 1–9, esp. 3–4. My argument in this paragraph overlaps with Coldewey's.
24. Andrew Hui, *The Poetics of Ruins in Renaissance Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).
25. Francesco Petrarca, *Selected Letters*, 2 vols., trans. Elaine Fantham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 445 (*Familiars* 24.4); cf. Hui, *The Poetics of Ruins*, 4.
26. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, V.1786, 1795–1796, in Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 584.
27. Chaucer, "Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn," lines 4–8, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 650.
28. For another, more optimistic interpretation of error and transmission in the *Sonnets*, see Matthew Zarnowiecki, *Fair Copies: Reproducing the English Lyric from Tottel to Shakespeare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 129–149.
29. Fredson Bowers, *On Editing Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Dramatists* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Library, 1955), 87. See also Gabriel Egan, *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text: Twentieth-Century Editorial Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 47.
30. *Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays Published in 1778 by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens*, 2 vols. (London, 1780), 1.639. The comment is Malone's.
31. STC 22344, F5<sup>v</sup>–6<sup>f</sup>.
32. Waith, ed., *Titus Andronicus*, 5.1.21.
33. Charles R. Forker, ed., *Richard II* (London: Arden, 2002), 3.4.45.
34. Duncan-Jones, ed., *Sonnets*, 73.4n. Carl D. Atkins similarly characterizes "rn'wd" as an error of transposition: see "The Importance of Compositorial Error and Variation to the Emendation of Shakespeare's Texts: A Bibliographic Analysis of Benson's 1640 Text of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*," *Studies in Philology* 104 (2007): 306–339, at 319. For the distinction of compositors, see MacD. P. Jackson, "Punctuation and the Compositors of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, 1609," *The Library*, 5th series, 30 (1975): 1–24.
35. Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS 966.5, p. 288 ("Hee ruin'd mee, and I am re-begott"). The so-called O'Flahertie Manuscript is represented as siglum H6 in the *Donne Variorum*.

36. In the case of Duncan-Jones's example *end* for "due" (69.3), the compositor has retrieved the correct types but arranged them into a wrong word.
37. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, 198.
38. An account similar to Duncan-Jones's, yet potentially more economical, is suggested in Wells and Taylor's original-spelling Oxford edition, which gives "ru'ind": see Stanley Wells et al., eds., *The Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 861. The logic implicit here (although it is not discussed in the *Textual Companion*) is that it was a different minim misreading (*u* is misread as *n*, and *in* as *w*), before the apostrophe was misplaced. Cf. Coldewey, "'Bare rn'wd quiers,'" 9, n13. Of course, this account still assumes a compositor who is content to set a nonsense word.
39. Paul Hammond, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets: An Original-Spelling Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 254.
40. I have consulted the EEBO-TCP texts of Chapman's *The Conspiracie, and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron* (1608; STC 4968), *Philip Mornay, Lord of Plessis his Teares* (1609; STC 18153), and Edward Grimeston's translation of *The Low-Country Common Wealth* (1609; STC 15485).
41. Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear and Their Origins*, Volume I: Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 280, citing Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 829, fol. 120<sup>r</sup>; STC 22424, C2<sup>r</sup>.
42. Trinity College, Cambridge, MS O.2.66. For an overview of the textual witnesses for the play, see Gary Taylor, "A Game at Chess: General Textual Introduction," in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*, eds. Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 713–720.
43. T. H. Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess* (Oxford: Malone Society, 1990), xi–xii (n8).
44. British Library, Harley MS 7368, fol. 9<sup>r</sup>; W. W. Greg, ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Oxford: Malone Society, 1911), 78 (line 263).
45. John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011), 6.156n.
46. However, on the possibility that the Hand D additions might represent a form of transcription, see Grace Ioppolo, *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood: Authorship, Authority and the Playhouse* (London: Routledge, 2006), 106–108.
47. For one of the earliest essays in this mode, see Robert Graves and Laura Riding, "A Study in Original Punctuation and Spelling," from *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927); reprinted in *The Common Asphodel: Collected Essays on Poetry, 1922–1949* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949),

84–95. The work of Randall McLeod has been instrumental in the later development: see especially “Spellbound: Typography and the Concept of Old-Spelling Editions,” *Renaissance and Reformation* n.s. 3.1 (1979): 50–65; “Unemending Sonnet 111,” *SEL* 21 (1981) 75–96; and (as Random Clod) “Information on Information,” *Text* 5 (1991): 241–281. For major theoretical statements, see Margreta de Grazia, “The Essential Shakespeare and the Material Book,” *Textual Practice* 1 (1988): 69–86; de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993): 255–283, esp. 262–266. For a different kind of experiment in close-reading manuscripts, see Jonathan Walker, “Reading Materiality: The Literary Critical Treatment of Physical Texts,” *Renaissance Drama* 41 (2013): 199–232.



## Lost Playhouse Manuscripts

*Paul Werstine*

W. W. Greg's teaching that acting companies possessed, in addition to unusable "foul papers," just single manuscripts of plays called "prompt-books" that were, on the one hand, censored, licensed, and signed by the Master of the Revels or his deputy and, on the other hand, fully regularized and marked up by a bookkeeper so as to guide performance was for a long time and continues to be influential. It is the basis, for example, for Andrew Gurr's notion of maximal and minimal texts, which undergirds, among other writings, Lukas Erne's particular conception of Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist.<sup>1</sup> Even scholars who have recognized that the term *prompt-book* and the kind of theatrical manuscript that it designates did not come into existence until long after Shakespeare's time nevertheless continue to postulate that for every play some company once possessed just a single document very much of the sort Greg imagines: the licensed MS marked up by the bookkeeper—or the "valuable, unique, licensed manuscript," "the playbook itself."<sup>2</sup> With this postulation necessarily comes another: that this document in the case of almost every play has been lost. There are a couple of playhouse MSS that approximate

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Greg's idealized conception, but most playhouse MSS are of a different order that calls into question the first postulation just described. In this paper I will examine some of these extant MSS; as a challenge to Greg's conception of regularity and standardization in playhouse practices involving MSS, I will emphasize repeatedly the sheer variety of playhouse MSS. Furthermore, I will attempt to show why scholars might think in specific cases that there once was in existence at the same time more than one playhouse MS per play. By doing so, I will thus be suggesting that we have lost some particular playhouse MSS, there being in existence now only a single playhouse MS for any particular play. Such loss is hardly surprising because with just over a hundred MSS of English Renaissance plays still surviving (these being of all kinds, playhouse and otherwise), we have lost manuscripts of the great majority of plays of whose existence we have evidence.<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to see how a reader of Greg's most influential books—*Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses* (1931), *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (3rd ed. 1954 [1942]), and *The Shakespeare First Folio* (1955)—would come away with the idea that there could be only a single playhouse MS of any play. In the first book Greg affects a strictly historical choice of word for this MS, using “the Book” to refer to it, taking the term from the inscriptions to be found on two playhouse MSS, “The Book of Iohn A kent & Iohn a Cumber” and “The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore.”<sup>4</sup> Greg writes of “*the Book*” at least nine times to refer his conception of a single playhouse MS of a play, although he also uses “*the prompt copy of a play*,” “*the authoritative playhouse copy*,” and “*the prompt book*.”<sup>5</sup> In the second book Greg writes of “*the prompt copy*,” “*the official ‘book*,” “*the theatrical fair copy*,” “*the fair copy made for theatrical purposes*,” “*the prompt-book*” some seven times, and “*the ‘book*.”<sup>6</sup> In the third book the drumbeat goes on: “*the prompt-book*” almost twenty times and “*the prompt-copy*” three times (italics mine in all cases, these lists probably being incomplete).<sup>7</sup> When Greg allows for more than one playhouse MS of any play it is only because he cannot imagine companies putting up with “the serious inconvenience of illegible prompt-books” simply to avoid having “fresh copies” made. “We ought perhaps,” he says, “to allow for the occasional duplication of prompt copies.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, Greg imagines, as will Terri Bourus after him, the creation of successive copies of *the* playhouse MS, Greg postulating the need to arise in the playhouse itself, Bourus seeing the need if the play were to be published.<sup>9</sup> For both, though, there is at any one time one MS—and

one kind of MS, the official “book,” for use in the playhouse. For support of the idea that a “book” would be duplicated only when the need to replace it in the playhouse became evident, Greg could have invoked the case of the surviving MS of *The Honest Mans Fortune*, at the end of which Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, writes “*This Play. being an olde One and the Originall Lost was reallowd by mee.*”<sup>10</sup> (The first licensed playbook of *The Honest Mans Fortune* is thus the first lost play MS noted in this paper—others to follow.)

In Greg’s understanding of the transmission of a play from playwright to acting company to state censor, back to company and then into parts and backstage plot, and finally onto the stage, there is no need for more than a single playhouse MS. According to Greg’s paradigm, the playwright gives the company a MS “representing the play more or less as [he] intended it to stand, but not itself clear or tidy enough to serve” the needs of the playhouse because it contains “loose ends and false starts and unresolved confusions.” The playhouse bookkeeper then transcribes or has transcribed this manuscript to provide a fair copy annotated and cut for performance. “Either the foul papers [Greg’s name for the playwright’s MS] or the fair copy might be edited by the book-keeper with a view to production, and the fair copy would later be submitted for licence.”<sup>11</sup> Once licensed this MS becomes the source of parts and plot and the guide to performance.

As Greg well knew himself, his paradigm and its constituent elements are idealizations that are resisted in many ways by surviving documentary evidence. The documents relevant to Greg’s paradigm and to my challenge to it are to be found in Philip Henslowe’s Papers, in the transcriptions of Sir Henry Herbert’s Office Book, and in the eighteen surviving playhouse MSS, listed here:

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>Barnauelt:</i> | John Fletcher and Philip Massinger’s <i>T&lt;he&gt; Tragedy of S<sup>r</sup> Iohn Van Olden Barnauelt</i> , British Library MS Additional 18653 (August, 1619) <sup>12</sup> |
| <i>Beleene:</i>   | Philip Massinger’s <i>Beleene as you List</i> , British Library MS Egerton 2828 (May 6, 1631) <sup>13</sup>  |
| <i>Bordeaux:</i>  | ?Robert Greene’s [ <i>John of Bordeaux or The Second Part of Friar Bacon</i> ], Alnwick Castle MS 507 (1590–1600) <sup>14</sup>  |
| <i>Captives:</i>  | Thomas Heywood’s [ <i>The Captives</i> ], British Library MS Egerton 1994, 3rd play (September 3, 1624) <sup>15</sup>  |

- Charlemagne*: [Charlemagne or the Distracted Emperor], British Library MS Egerton 1994, 6th play (?1604–1607)<sup>16</sup>
- Embassador*: Thomas Dekker's *The Welsh Embassador*, Cardiff Public Library MS 4.12 (1623–1624)<sup>17</sup>
- HMF*: Nathan Field, John Fletcher, and Philip Massinger's *The Honest mans Fortune*, Victoria and Albert Museum MS Dyce 25.F.9 (February 8, 1624/1625)<sup>18</sup>
- Ironsides*: *Edmond Ironside The English King*, British Library MS Egerton 1994, 5th play (1593–1624)<sup>19</sup>
- Kent*: ?Anthony Munday's *Iohn A kent & Iohn a Cumber*, Huntington Library, HM 500 (?1587–1596)<sup>20</sup>
- Lady = mother*: Henry Glapthorne's *the Lady = mot<ber*, British Library MS Egerton 1994, 9th play (October 15, 1635)<sup>21</sup>
- Lanchinge*: Walter Mountfort's *The Lanchinge of the Mary ... Or the Seamans honest wife*, British Library MS Egerton 1994, fifteenth play (June 27, 1633)<sup>22</sup>
- Moore*: ?Anthony Munday's, Henry Chettle's, ?Thomas Heywood's, ?William Shakespeare's, and Thomas Dekker's *Sir Thomas Moore*, British Library MS. Harl. 7368 (1586?–1605?)<sup>23</sup>
- Noble Ladys*: *The 2. Noble Ladys, and The Converted Coniurer*, British Library MS Egerton 1994, eleventh play (1619–1623)<sup>24</sup>
- Parliam<sup>t</sup>*: Philip Massinger's *The Parliam<sup>t</sup> of Love*, Victoria and Albert Museum MS Dyce 25.F.33 (November 3, 1624)<sup>25</sup>
- SM/LT*: ?Thomas Middleton's *The second Maydens tragedy* [or *The Lady's Tragedy*], British Library MS Lansdowne 807 (October 31, 1611)<sup>26</sup>
- Sodderd*: John Clavell's *The Sodderd Cittizen*, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office MS 865/502/2 (1628–1630)<sup>27</sup>
- Waspe*: *The waspe*, Alnwick Castle MS 507 (1636–1640)<sup>28</sup>
- Woodstock*: [The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second or Thomas of Woodstock], British Library MS Egerton 1994, 8th play (c. 1590–?1610)<sup>29</sup>

These few sources may seem a shallow pool from which to draw in resisting Greg's paradigm, but they are more plentiful than were the sources on which Greg himself drew in originally constructing his paradigm in

1931. Then he was not yet sufficiently acquainted with either *Bordeaux* or *Wasp* to make use of them in characterizing how the single playhouse MS of any play might look. And he was yet to learn of the survival of *Sodderd*.<sup>30</sup>

From Henslowe's papers we learn, courtesy of the hapless playwright Robert Daborne, that the transmission of a play from playwright to stage was not necessarily as linear as Greg's paradigm represents it to be: "J have took extraordinary payns w<sup>th</sup> the end & altered one other secan in the third act which they have now in parts."<sup>31</sup> Sometimes the bookkeeper, rather than waiting until the playhouse manuscript was returned to him by the Master of the Revels, went ahead and had parts transcribed for the actors before the playwright finished writing the play. The Master Sir Henry Herbert (writing in 1633, long after Daborne) was aware of such practices when he wrote to Edward Knight, bookkeeper of the King's Men in the 'twenties and 'thirties, to say "Purge ther parts, as I have the booke" and "The players ought not to study their parts till I have allowed the booke."<sup>32</sup> In those cases when a company was having parts transcribed at the same time that the Master was reviewing the play, there would be the necessity for more than one playhouse MS.

Greg's paradigm is further disturbed by the surviving playhouse manuscripts. Only four have both mark-up for production and license, for Greg the two essential elements of the official "book." These are *SM/LT*, *Beleene*, *Lanchinge*, and *Lady = mother*. However, contrary to Greg's presumption of a normative playhouse MS, the quantity and kind of mark-up differ widely even among these few MSS that conform even in this narrow way to Greg's expectations. *Beleene* and *Lady = mother* each contain in their mark-up directions that warn actors and occasionally others to be ready soon to take the stage, but *SM/LT* has none. These warnings in *Beleene* are no more than occasional, but in *Lady = mother* the nearly perfect consistency with which they are supplied is matched only in one other extant playhouse MS, *Wasp*. In both *Beleene* and *Lady = mother* bookkeepers pay attention to act division in their mark-up, but in *SM/LT* the bookkeeper ignores it. Dating from 31 October 1611, when Sir George Buc licensed it, *SM/LT* belonged to the King's Players after they had occupied Blackfriars and had begun to observe act breaks; its scribe divides the play into acts and scenes, but for whatever reason the bookkeeper, unlike the later King's bookkeeper Edward Knight in *Beleene*, pays these divisions no mind in his annotations. Against Greg's paradigm, in which the "book" is a scribal copy, two of these are in the handwriting

of their authors—Philip Massinger’s in *Beleeue* and Walter Mountfort’s in *Lanchinge* (the latter, I acknowledge, quite the special case, being no more than propaganda for the East India Company that is unlikely to have been played more than once or twice).<sup>33</sup>

Several other surviving playhouse manuscripts may once have contained licenses as well as the mark-up and cuts that permit us to identify their provenance as the playhouses. The most likely to have been licensed is *Parliamt*, a copy by an identifiably playhouse scribe<sup>34</sup> and therefore a document supporting, at least in this single respect, Greg’s paradigm: from its last leaf a strip of paper has been cut; it is assumed to have contained the license of the Master of the Revels.<sup>35</sup> (More about *Parliamt* later.) All of the following MSS may once have included licenses; all have suffered damage at the end, where the Master of the Revels or his deputy invariably inscribed the license:

<i>Kent</i> ,	its last leaf gone altogether and only the top inner corner of its second last leaf remaining <sup>36</sup> ;
<i>Bordeaux</i> ,	its last leaf severely torn, with little of the text on it still to be read <sup>37</sup> ;
<i>Woodstock</i> ,	the end of the play gone because of the destruction of one or more leaves at the back of the MS <sup>38</sup> ;
<i>Ironsides</i> ,	although damage to the final leaf is comparatively slight <sup>39</sup> ;
<i>Sodderd</i> ,	only a fragment of the upper part of the last leaf surviving, with no sign of any handwriting on either side of it, and only a narrow strip of the second last leaf, with handwriting visible only on the recto <sup>40</sup> ; and
<i>Waspe</i> ,	the conclusion of the play gone, with the loss of an indeterminate number of leaves from the back of the MS. <sup>41</sup>

Another possibility is *Barnaulet*, with too little space, it seems, on the last of its surviving leaves for a license. This MS shows evidence of water damage to several of the last of its surviving leaves; we might think then that water has claimed leaves that once stood after these, one of which could have contained the state censor’s license.<sup>42</sup> And yet another is *Noble Ladys*, even though there is sufficient room on the last extant leaf for a license. There is good reason to believe that two final leaves are missing from the end of the playbook. As judged by the Malone Society editor of the MS, Rebecca G. Rhoads, watermarks in the paper indicate that the MS originally consisted of twelve sheets folded into a single gathering

of twenty-four leaves. Now only twenty-one leaves survive, with one evidently missing from near the beginning of the MS and two from the end. One of these leaves missing from the back perhaps once bore the Master of the Revels' license.<sup>43</sup>

Even if all eight of the MSS just listed are inferred once to have included licenses, only five would fit Greg's paradigm of *scribal* transcripts containing both license and mark-up for production: *Bordeaux*, *Woodstock* (if it is scribal; see Note 38), *Ironsides*, *Sodderd*, and *Barnaulet*. (However, the mark-up differs so widely among these MSS that it is misleading to suggest that they can be digested in any single class. Bookkeepers' notes in *Woodstock*, *Ironsides*, and *Sodderd* all pay attention to act division, which gets no attention from the bookkeepers in *Bordeaux* or in *Barnaulet*; four of the MSS contain notes of actors' names, but not *Sodderd*; in three MSS playhouse personnel call explicitly for props, but not in *Ironsides* or *Sodderd*; there are warning directions in *Woodstock*, but none in the other MSS.) As indisputably authorial MSS, *Wasp* and *Noble Ladys*, even if they were licensed, fall outside Greg's paradigm. So too may *Kent* if Anthony Munday was the author as well as the transcriber of the extant MS, as is impossible to know; the MS is in Munday's handwriting, and his signature appears on the badly torn last leaf, although the signature is in a different ink and a different style of handwriting from those to be found in the play's text, and the last torn leaf also bears a date "Decembris 1590" (or perhaps "1595" or "1596") in yet a third ink and not in Munday's handwriting. It is far from clear then what Munday's purpose was in signing the MS—whether to establish his authorship of the play or to underwrite whatever once may have accompanied the date inscribed by another party.<sup>44</sup> (According to Greg's thinking, we would be inclined to judge that for *Wasp*, *Noble Ladys*, and possibly *Kent*—if it is holograph—we've lost scribal fair copies that would have been made for the purpose of submission to the Master of the Revels for his licensing.) In light of the unremitting complexity and indeterminacy attending the extant documentary evidence, one can understand and sympathize with Greg's inclination to erect a simple paradigm and at the same time remain suspicious of the paradigm for departing so widely from the evidence. As Greg himself once quoted from Alfred North Whitehead, "Seek simplicity and mistrust it."<sup>45</sup>

If we leave behind Greg's paradigm, which is obviously disputable, in trying to judge whether any of these eight MSS just discussed may once have contained licenses and thus may have been *the* theatrical MS of a

play, another consideration may be brought to bear. If the MSS in question bear evidence of the intervention of the Master of the Revels in their texts, that is, if their texts were officially censored, then these MSS may well have been licensed. If there is no evidence of censorship, then the likelihood that a MS was licensed approaches, although it does not quite reach, zero. It is the cases of *HMF* and perhaps *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* that might keep open the narrowest possibility that a MS might have been licensed but not censored. While both these scribal transcripts contain at least some mark-up for production, *HMF* is not, strictly speaking, licensed; rather it is noted in the words of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, as having once been licensed: “*This Play. being an olde One and the Originall Lost was reallowd by mee.*”<sup>46</sup> *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* almost certainly was licensed; as I wrote above, from its last leaf a strip of paper has been cut; it is assumed to have contained the license of the Master of the Revels.<sup>47</sup> However, in addition to having once borne a license, it also may have been censored by the state, although we cannot be sure. The word *whore* is censored in it, but it is impossible to establish how many different hands are at work in this MS or to establish the identity of any of them as that of the state censor.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, since *HMF* is neither censored nor, in the most literal terms, licensed and since *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* was almost certainly licensed and may have been censored, neither MS forbids us from supposing that MSS that were left uncensored are unlikely to have been licensed.

Of the eight MSS in question as having possibly lost their licenses through the damage suffered by the leaves at the back of them, only *Woodstock* and *Barnaelt* show signs of a Master’s attention<sup>49</sup>; they are therefore the only ones we need think seriously may have been licensed. If, as seems very likely, none of the extant MSS of *Kent*, *Bordeaux*, *Ironsides*, *Sodderd*, *Waspe*, and *Noble Ladys* was ever licensed, yet if, as also seems very likely, all of these plays saw performance, then we have lost licensed MSS of all six of these plays. Furthermore, in *Bordeaux*, *Ironsides*, and *Sodderd*, we have a class of playhouse MSS of a kind Greg refused to acknowledge—scribal transcripts annotated for production but bearing no licenses.

To this new class of scribal transcript with a bookkeeper’s production notes but with no license we could add the even more curious case of *Charlemagne*, a scribal MS annotated by a bookkeeper and also censored by Sir George Buc, but not licensed.<sup>50</sup> We might speculate that the absence of a license from the MS is a sign of Buc’s disapproval of or refusal to license the play. However, were he at all like his predecessor, Edmund

Tilney, we would not be left to wonder, as we are with *Charlemagne*. When Tilney refused to license *Sir Thomas Moore*, on fol.3<sup>a</sup> of the MS he let everyone know that he was refusing: “<Leaue out> y<sup>e</sup> insur<rection> wholly & y<sup>e</sup> Cause ther off & <b>egin w<sup>t</sup> S<sup>r</sup> Tho: Moore att y<sup>e</sup> mayors sessions w<sup>t</sup> a reportt afterwardç off his good servic’ don being’ Shriue off Londõ vppõ a mutiny Agaynst y<sup>e</sup> Lũbardç only by A shortt reportt & nott otherwise att your own perrilles E Tyllney.”<sup>51</sup> David McInnis has kindly supplied me with a comparable instance, a license for an anonymous and lost play from the Office Book of Sir Henry Herbert, in which again the censor leaves us in no doubt about his views: “A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia, the <prophaness left out> ... may be acted <els not for the> companye at the Curtune.”<sup>52</sup> In the absence of any such comments from the extant copy of *Charlemagne*, censored by Buc, we might well think he allowed the play to be performed and that there may then have been a lost licensed MS of it.

I wind up this discussion by way of considering the three extant playhouse MSS associated with the Lady Elizabeth’s (or Queen of Bohemia’s) Players at the Cockpit in 1623–1624, the implications of these MSS for our conjecturing the loss of still other MSS, and these three extant MSS as instances of the variety and multiplicity of playhouse MSS. The three are MSS of Thomas Heywood’s *Captives*, Thomas Dekker’s *Embassador*, and Philip Massinger’s *Parliam<sup>t</sup>*, the first a holograph and the latter two both in the hand of an anonymous theatrical scribe. Both *Captives* and *Embassador* contain quantities of production notes, *Captives* with more than any other extant playhouse MS. *Embassador* is peculiar among such MSS because its production notes are in the same hand as the rest of the MS. Surely in the case of *Embassador* there was once another copy that served as an exemplar for the theatrical scribe who copied from it both its text and its theatrical mark-up. Neither *Captives* nor *Embassador* bears a license, even though there is plenty of room at the end of both MSS for one. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe in either case that the Lady Elizabeth’s Players would have lavished such attention on plays and then never sought licenses so that they could actually perform them. The readiest answer to this conundrum is to suppose that the company sent the censor now-lost copies. Herbert does indeed record that he licensed *Captives*,<sup>53</sup> though he is silent about *Embassador*. The third of the Lady Elizabeth’s MSS, *Parliam<sup>t</sup>*, is the obverse of *Captives* and *Embassador*.

*Parliam<sup>t</sup>* contains only a single production note and seems in the opinion of all who have studied it once to have borne a license that was subsequently cut out of the MS. Herbert records licensing it,<sup>54</sup> and thus we can conclude that *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* was performed. Because *Captives* and *Embassador* indicate that the Lady Elizabeth's Players used for production at the Cockpit MSS that contained extensive mark-up (even if not always of the same kind), we might presume that there was once a second copy of *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* with such production notes.<sup>55</sup>

### §

To sum up the suggestions of our MS losses:

1. first licensed MS of *HMF*, to the former existence of which no less an authority than Sir Henry Herbert, already twice quoted in this discussion, testifies;
- 2–7. licensed MSS of *Kent*, *Bordeaux*, *Ironsides*, *Sodderd*, *Waspe*, and *Noble Ladys*—all six MSS evidently having become damaged at the back, where licenses may once have stood, but all unlikely to have borne licenses because they contain within their texts no trace of the state censor's attention;
8. licensed MS of *Charlemagne*: since Sir George Buc did attend to the extant MS of the play but did not license it (undamaged at the back it seems not to have lost a license), we have reason to think he may have licensed another MS of the play;
- 9, 10. licensed MSS of *Embassador* and *Captives*: the extant MSS bear no licenses but heavy mark-up for production, and we have some reason to suspect that the company that owned these plays, the Lady Elizabeth's (or Queen of Bohemia's) Players at the Cockpit in 1623–1624, employed in their playhouse two MSS of the same play, one licensed and another with production notes;
11. MS of *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* with annotations for production: for the reason just given with regard to *Embassador* and *Captives*. For *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* we evidently have what was once the licensed MS.

## NOTES

1. Andrew Gurr, "Maximal and Minimal Texts: Shakespeare v. the Globe," *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999): 68–87; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
2. Terri Bourus, *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 194–195. This postulation also vitiates the conclusion to John Jowett's argument in "Exit Manuscripts: The Archive of Theatre and the Archive of Print," *Shakespeare Survey* 70 (2017): 113–122.
3. Grace Ioppolo provides a list in *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare: Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood* (London: Routledge, 2006), 5–7.
4. W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots: Actors' Parts: Prompt Books*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 1.192.
5. Greg, *Dramatic Documents*, 1.193, 194, 201, 202, 210, 212 (thrice), 214; 192; 196; 199.
6. W. W. Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942; 3rd ed., 1954), 27–28; 30; 31; 31; 33 (3 times), 34, 47 (3 times), 48; 48.
7. W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 107, 108, 116 (twice), 120, 132 (twice), 137, 142, 146, 151, 154, 157, 165 (twice), 168 (twice), 172, 174; 107, 146, 154.
8. Greg, *Editorial Problem*, 44, 25.
9. Bourus, *Young Hamlet*, 194–195.
10. Grace Ioppolo, ed., *The Honest Man's Fortune*, Malone Society Reprints (London: Malone Society, 2012 [for 2009]), 89.
11. Greg, *Shakespeare First Folio*, 106, 142, 33.
12. T. H. Howard-Hill, ed., *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelte by John Fletcher and Philip Massinger*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1979).
13. Charles J. Sisson, ed., *Believe as You List*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1928 [for 1927]).
14. W. L. Renwick, ed., *John of Bordeaux or The Second Part of Friar Bacon*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1936 [for 1935]).
15. Arthur Brown, ed., *The Captives by Thomas Heywood*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1953).
16. J. H. Walters, ed., *Charlemagne or the Distracted Emperor*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1938 [for 1937]).
17. H. Littledale, ed., *The Welsh Ambassador*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1921).
18. See Note 10 above.
19. Eleanore Boswell, ed., *Edmond Ironside or War Hath Made All Friends*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1928 [for 1927]).

20. Muriel St. Clare Byrne, ed., *John a Kent & John a Cumber*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1923).
21. Arthur Brown, ed., *The Lady Mother by Henry Glapthorne*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society 1959 [for 1958]).
22. J. H. Walters, ed., *The Launching of the Mary by Walter Mountfort*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1933).
23. W. W. Greg, ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1911; rpt. 1961, 1991).
24. Rebecca G. Rhoads, ed., *The Two Noble Ladies*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1930).
25. K. M. Lea, ed., *The Parliament of Love*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1929 [for 1928]).
26. W. W. Greg, ed., *The Second Maiden's Tragedy 1611*, Malone Society Reprint (London: Malone Society, 1910 [for 1909]).
27. J. H. P. Pafford, ed., *The Soddered Citizen*, Malone Society Reprints (London: Malone Society, 1936 [for 1935]).
28. J. W. Lever, ed., *The Wasp or Subject's Precedent*, Malone Society Reprints (London: Malone Society, 1976 [for 1974]).
29. Wilhelmina P. Frijlinck, ed., *The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second or Thomas of Woodstock*, Malone Society Reprints (London: Malone Society, 1929).
30. Greg, *Dramatic Documents*, 1.355–356, 360. *Sodderd* first came “to the notice of students” in 1932, a year after Greg published *Dramatic Documents*; see Pafford, ed., *The Soddered Citizen*, v.
31. W. W. Greg, ed., *Henslowe Papers* (London: Bullen, 1907), 73.
32. N. W. Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 183.
33. Walters, ed., *Launching*, xi–xii. Greg, ed., *Second Maiden's*, vi, identified this MS as scribal; Arthur Brown did the same for the *The Lady Mother* in his edition, vi. Walters identified the author Mountfort's handwriting in *Launching* in his edition, vi–vii, and George Warner identified the author Massinger's hand in *Beleue* (“An Autograph Play of Philip Massinger,” *The Athenaeum* 3821 [19 January 1901]: 90–91).
34. *Parliam<sup>t</sup>* is in the same handwriting as *Embassador*, which contains a quantity of production mark-up in the same handwriting—an indication of the connection of the scribe in question to the playhouse.
35. G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941–1968), 4.807.
36. Byrne, ed., *Kent*, vi. Byrne assumes that Munday, in whose hand the play is transcribed, is at least an author, if not the author of it (vii).
37. Renwick, ed. *Bordeaux*, vi, where Renwick also identifies the MS as scribal.

38. Frijlinck, ed., *Woodstock*, v. For Frijlinck, the MS is scribal (xiii, vii); for A. P. Rossiter, ed., *Woodstock: A Moral History* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), 178–180, it may be scribal or authorial. For William B. Long, “‘A bed / for Woodstock’: A Warning for the Unwary,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 2 (1985): 91–118, the handwriting identified as scribal by Frijlinck belongs to one of the several players who together created the play.
39. Boswell, ed. *Ironside*, vi, [xxvii]. For Boswell, the MS is scribal (vi).
40. Pafford, ed., *Soddered*, vii. For Pafford, the MS is scribal (viii).
41. Lever, ed., *Wasp*, v, provides speculation that “probably not more than one sheet [two leaves] has been lost” from the back of the MS. Lever identifies the MS as authorial (viii).
42. Howard-Hill, ed., *Barnavelte*, iv. The MS is scribal in the hand of Ralph Crane (Greg, *Dramatic Documents*, 1.268).
43. Rhoads, ed., *Ladies*, v. Rhoads identifies the MS as authorial (vi).
44. Greg wrote that the signature stands in “marked contrast with [other signatures of Munday’s that have been] preserved” (*English Literary Autographs, 1550–1650* [London: Oxford University Press, 1932], Plate XI). However, Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 245–246, found a signature by Munday on a legal document that closely resembles the signature in *Kent*. Sir Edward Maunde Thompson (“The Autograph Manuscripts of Anthony Munday,” *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 14 [1915–1917]: 325–353) determined the date was not in Munday’s hand. John Payne Collier, the first editor of the MS, read the date as “Decembris 1595” (*John a Kent and John a Cumber: A Comedy*, Shakespeare Society of London Publications, No. 47, 1851 [Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1966], 62); Greg (“Autograph Plays by Anthony Munday,” *Modern Language Review* 8 [1913]: 89–90) and its second editor, Byrne (51), as “1596”; and I. A. Shapiro (“The Significance of a Date,” *Shakespeare Survey* 8 [1955]: 100–105) as “1590.” E. A. J. Honigmann logically insisted that the date, whatever it reads, cannot even be assumed to have been inscribed on the date it names and therefore cannot be assumed to identify when Munday transcribed the play (“*John a Kent and Marprelate*,” *Year’s Work in English Studies* 13 [1983]: 288–293). G. R. Proudfoot argued that Munday transcribed the play as a theatrical scribe, rather than as its author (*Shakespeare: Text, Stage and Canon* [London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001], 86–87).
45. W. W. Greg, *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar & Orlando Furioso*, Malone Society Extra Volume (London: Malone Society, 1922), [iii].
46. See Note 10 above.
47. See Note 35 above.

48. Lea, ed., *Parliament*, 69. Lea argues for just a single corrector working only on Acts 4 and 5 (xiv–xv), but I found it impossible to reduce the corrections and changes to the work of a single hand (Werstine, *Playhouse Manuscripts*, 310).
49. Frijlinck, ed., *Woodstock*, xx–xxi; Howard-Hill, ed., *Barnavelte*, vii–x.
50. Walters, ed., *Charlemagne*, vi, argued “that the manuscript is a fair copy made the author himself.” However, a more detailed analysis indicates that the MS is probably scribal (Werstine, *Playhouse Manuscripts*, 257–258).
51. Greg, ed., *More*, 1n.
52. Bawcutt, ed. *Control and Censorship*, 141–142.
53. Bawcutt, ed. *Control and Censorship*, 155.
54. Bawcutt, ed. *Control and Censorship*, 157.
55. For more on these three MSS, see Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts*, 299–310.



## Richard Edwards' "Palamon and Arcyte" and the Semi-Textual Basis of Playing

*Jeanne H. McCarthy*

In this chapter, I raise the possibility that the recording of a title in the early records need not imply that there was ever a playtext as such to lose. In a theatrical culture, dramatic treatments or bits might circulate or might migrate into later plays through means other than textual remnants. In particular, I consider here some of the difficulties that arise when speculating about the identity of a given performance piece, whether in terms of genre, plot, presumed theatrical practice, or even the very assumption about the existence of originary papers or text, based merely upon a surviving title alone. Two particular contexts invite such scrutiny: the children's troupes' self-consciously innovative, bookish tradition; and that of the very different university tradition when its occasional entertainments attempted to emulate the practices of the court. In particular, I wish to explore what can and, as importantly, what cannot be determined about the textual basis for chapel children author and musical director Richard Edwards' "Palamon and Arcyte," which he prepared to be performed on

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two successive nights by college members at Oxford University in the hall at Christ Church College for Queen Elizabeth's visit to the university in 1566. A close reading of surviving accounts of this title's performance suggests that too little can be safely extrapolated from what is known about the varying levels of oral and textual modes among widely varying categories of players after the mid-century to assign the category of "play" to this performance or even to assume the necessity of a complete, original material script to performers functioning within the mixed oral and textual aesthetic practices prevalent in the period. "Palamon and Arcyte" thus presents a cautionary tale suggesting a need to maintain a certain level of skepticism before assuming that there must have been a text to be "lost" behind every performance title recorded.

After all, a text or script appears not to have been a focus of the accounts of the 1566 productions even though, given the significance of the royal visit, Edwards' Oxford entertainment generated three contemporary accounts, two written in Latin by college men Nicholas Robinson and John Bereblock, and one in English by Miles Windsor.<sup>1</sup> The accounts, Ros King claims, "provide us with some of the most detailed information about plays in performance for the entire early modern period."<sup>2</sup> Even so, none provides a careful or reliable description of dialogue, plot, or genre. Instead of offering summaries of scenes or acts, Windsor's account highlights the events of the week and the Queen's comments on the actors' performance, Robinson's addresses the preparations, and Bereblock's provides background on the source. While this division of labor might seem promising, difficulties arise. As King notes, "Windsor's anecdotes and Bereblock's ... scarcely match at any point."<sup>3</sup> Robinson's Latin descriptions of the changes to the hall for the three planned performances, including the erection of stages, houses, and special entrances for the Queen, moreover, introduce multiple confusions (where *theatrum* may mean a portable stage, scaffolding for audiences, or stands, for instance). Most significantly, not one of the accounts provides a reliable "script." In her effort to flesh out the content of what was actually staged, including offering some reasonable conjectures about casting possibilities, King thus exercises a move others have used: she assumes that what was lost so closely followed Chaucer's narrative that its content could be all but inferred. Similarly, Siobhan Keenan has surmised that the "play" that was performed on the two nights would have closely followed its Chaucerian source in genre and retained the elevated tone of Chaucer's tale. Arguing that it was designed to counsel Elizabeth to

entertain a marriage proposal, she also concludes that "Edwards' romance implicitly counselled the Queen to accept [Emilia's] destiny": marriage.<sup>4</sup>

The accounts offer little confirmation of such plausible inferences, however. Instead, all three reports emphasize spectacle, particularly masking and pageant-like elements that required such special effects as a funeral pyre, songs, and a hunt whose horns and mimed hounds echoed so convincingly outside the hall that several students clambered to the windows to witness the show. There were also gorgeous costumes borrowed from the Royal Wardrobe. One actor, likely playing Emily, wore a robe that reportedly had belonged to Queen Mary. Similarly, a cloak that was worn by the character Perithous (the friend who intervenes on Arcyte's behalf to gain his release from prison) receives particular attention as it was recognized as having belonged to Edward VI.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the only lines from the performance to survive are words spoken that were *not* part of the script and (albeit questionably) a song, "Emily's Lament from 'Palamon and Arcite'."<sup>6</sup> Windsor is the source for the (presumably) unscripted exchange between the Queen, Edwards, and the audience member who interrupted the action to object to the tossing of the costume for Perithous (borrowed from the Royal Wardrobe) onto the funeral pyre at the conclusion of the performance. When he reportedly cried out, "Will ye burn [th]e King Edward cloake in the fyre?," the author interjected, "Go fool ... he knows his part," and the Queen reportedly chimed in with "What are you [to interject]? ... He ... plays his part."<sup>7</sup> When the staging of Theseus' hunt in the courtyard, presumably an elaborate aural affair, led some boys in the hall to rush to the windows to oversee the event, Windsor again recorded their unscripted cry, "nowe nowe" and the Queen's equally unscripted laughing remark on their gullibility: "oh excellent ... those boyes ar readye to leape oute of ye windowe to follow ye howndes."<sup>8</sup> Likewise, in lieu of recording memorable lines from any scripted speeches uttered that evening, Windsor and Bereblock (and later, John Stowe) recount a shocking, fatal accident that occurred just before the first evening's performance, the consequence of renovations undertaken to create a separate entrance for the queen. A crowding at the entrance caused one of the newly altered side walls to fall so that "in the crush the side wall collapsed,"<sup>9</sup> resulting in the deaths of a scholar, a brewer, and a cook, and a brief suspension of the performance while the Queen's physician attempted to assist the injured.<sup>10</sup>

This tragic event appears not to have overshadowed the comic pleasures of the play, however. Edwards' addition of at least one character,

a Lord Trevatio, to his Chaucerian source, may point to a comic addition that played upon the illusion of improvisation. In her reading, King detects scripted comedy in an amusing anecdote in which the actor playing the part, John Dalaper, seemingly dropped his lines.<sup>11</sup> No record of his scripted lines survives, but his comic extratextual interjection apparently has, albeit somewhat imperfectly. He either swore “by ye masse” or “Godes blutt I am owte,” and indecorously offered to entertain the ladies “by whistling a hornpipe” while the Queen’s “line,” “Goo thy way ... what a knave it is,” invited him to leave the stage.<sup>12</sup> The laughter at the performer Dalaper’s indecorum may well reflect a judgment passed on his bad acting, but, as King suggests, the reference to him as a “knave” could suggest that this “Lord” was instead a clown, in the mode of the “country gentleman” type, and the resort to a rustic hornpipe the sort of thing that reflects the insertion of a comic “theatergram” or modular dramatic unit.<sup>13</sup>

There are other hints that Edwards’ entertainment did not adhere to the tone of Chaucer’s romance (or even for that matter, what the conventional tone of staged romance entertainments actually was at the time).<sup>14</sup> Tolerance for comic disruption within the plot can be detected in the accounts. Contrary to modern critics expecting consistency with Chaucer’s decorum, one report declares that the Queen “laughed ... hartelie” at the performance. In his *Chronicles* (1570), the learned antiquarian John Stowe likewise referred to the shows as “the Comodie entituled Palemon and Arcet.”<sup>15</sup> A brief summary of the story in one of the accounts, moreover, suggests that Edwards presented the rival suitors’ melancholic despair as intentionally “ridiculous.”<sup>16</sup> Indeed, many details point to a very free adaptation of Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*, complicating efforts to reconstruct the missing text. In this regard, Edwards’ approach to Chaucer may have a kinship with the later inclusion of a comic shrew-taming subplot featuring a Welsh couple and the clownish servant Babulo in the Admiral’s Men’s adaptation of another serious tale told by Chaucer, *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissell*, also labeled a comedy on its title page.

Bereblock provides a minimal description of the events or episodes presented on the two nights. He relates how the first evening began with the good friends “wretchedly perishing for the love of one and the same maiden Emily,” followed by the liberation from prison of Arcite and his return in disguise as Philostrates, then Palamon’s escape from prison by “trick[ing] the guard with a potion,” the two rivals’ encounter and battle

in the woods, and concluding with a hunt and the entrance of Theseus who, in response to the "prayers of the women who had by chance been with him," "decrees a duel" and "orders they prepare to fight on the fortieth day." The description of the events on the second day both begins and ends with what initially appears to be an actual report of the production: Bereblock observes that after "Everyone sat down; a great silence followed. At that point both knights were present on the stage for the appointed day, each flanked by the strongest guard"; and, again, at the play's end, he observes, "the maiden is given to Palamon, and that deed performed before the now very crowded theatre was approved with incredible shouting and applause from the spectators, and on this night those shows were set forth."<sup>17</sup> And yet, between these references to the audience, the "report" on "those shows" appears to drift from direct observation to offer, as King observes, a reader's review and insights, such as an explanation of the characters' "state[s] of mind."<sup>18</sup> It also posits the implementation of such impossible casting demands as: "On one side was Emetrius, king of India, under whose protection was Arcite. *A hundred soldiers* followed him...."<sup>19</sup> Bereblock's summary, then, rather than simply describing what was actually performed, seemingly includes a reader's overview of the plot from Chaucer (or Boccaccio). It also may suggest the persistence of oral performance modes and conventions in court performances, and even those authored by chapel personnel.

Even in the hyper-literate subculture of the grammar or choir school, oral conventions persisted in the tradition's apparent tolerance for variable textual fidelity, authorial "liberty," novelty, and innovation. Famous boy-troupe authors such as Nicholas Udall, John Lyly, Richard Edwards, and, in the case of *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584), George Peele, frequently asserted the prerogative of authorial infidelity to appropriate legends and history, to expand upon even biblical stories, and, indeed, even to recast endings in their newly conceived dramas. They reshaped their textual sources for a variety of reasons, whether to promote contemporary religious or political doctrine, to provide selective flattery of a patron, to enact a creative classical imitation, or to express novel understandings of classical/neoclassical genre. In Peele's masque-like *Arraignment*, Elizabeth rather than Venus receives the apple and, with the ensuing Trojan War avoided, an era of peace ensues. In Lyly's version of the story of *Endymion* (printed 1591), the mortal is the suitor and the moon goddess is the one uninterested in her inferior lover. When, as Master of the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel, Edwards produced his only surviving play,

*Damon and Pithias* (1564–1565, printed 1571), he diverged from the tragic story of friendship to incorporate Terentian-styled comic subplots and thereby, as King observes, introduced “the truly multiple plot into English drama.”<sup>20</sup> Beyond all these examples, given that expansions upon plot and assertions of authorial liberty rather than fidelity are more clearly associated with oral cultures than primarily textual ones, critics investigating lost plays might aim to allow for such differing aesthetic principles in their search for texts. As David McInnis advises, “when looking for sources, we should be looking for variation and synthesis, not necessarily similitude.”<sup>21</sup> Such a recommendation is even more apt when theater’s mixed culture of oral transmission is taken into account.

Yet such an allowance of oral conventions when reconstructing the performance tradition is rare, and conceptions of “textual transmission” continue to shape arguments about influence or source studies. Walter Ong rightly noted in *Orality and Literacy* that “For most literates, to think of words as totally dissociated from writing is simply too arduous a task to undertake.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, attempts to identify the nature of the relationship between Edwards’ “Palamon and Arcyte” with later iterations of the title, like the similarly lost “palamon and arcete” recorded in Henslowe’s diary as performed by the Admiral’s Men in 1594,<sup>23</sup> cannot escape a primarily textual standard. Misha Teramura summarizes such expectations in his *Lost Plays Database* entry on the Admiral’s Men’s version of the title when he cites Andrew Gurr’s “abandoning” of previous claims of a possible link between the two as representing the “current critical view” that “it was quite usual for more than one writer to dramatise a famous story.”<sup>24</sup> Teramura also recalls a purely textual relationship when he speculates that the Admiral’s Men’s version of the play may have “obliquely” echoed the treatment of “the subject” of the story of the tragic friendship of Palamon and Arcyte in Edwards’ text. That treatment, he conjectures, may be inferred or “illuminated” in turn by recalling Edwards’ treatment of tragedy in yet another surviving text, his earlier *Damon and Pithias* and his discussion of dramatic form in its printed prologue.<sup>25</sup> And yet, despite the critical habit of insisting upon literal textual reproduction when imagining what is presumed to be the “script” for a now-lost play, and at the same time to assume distinction with later iterations of the title, there may be even less reason than usual to apply that textual aesthetics to the “lost” “Palamon and Arcyte.”

Even in *Damon and Pithias*, the treatment of the text or of intertextuality is hardly consistent. This play and prologue demonstrates Edwards’

own high level of textual literacy and familiarity with a wide range of texts but also a highly oral aesthetic of variation and repetition. Thus, in the Prologue, Edwards reports that he had based his earlier tale of a legendary friendship on multiple true "histories" and truthful legend, so that it is, though fictional, "no legend-lie" (l. 31). Something novel for the period, he then claims that the printed text (all except the prologue) reflects what was actually presented before the Queen. The contrast to "Palamon and Arcyte" seems all the more significant since *Damon and Pythias*, with its clear embrace of textual conventions, is set within a context that emphasizes the novelty of the experiment. Indeed, when Edwards goes on to provide a fairly learned defense of an aesthetics based on a knowledge of Horace's discussion of decorum, this interest in dramatic rules is represented as new. This defense builds upon an earlier warning to the readers that what they are about to read is a departure from his usual offerings and that any longing for his more typical "comical ... toying plays" and "masks" will be frustrated since his "muse" had now "forced" a change (ll. 4–9). He calls this "new" form of entertainment a "tragical comedy" (l. 45), a mix of classical ideals which Teramura (quoting Sir Philip Sidney) rightly calls a "mongrel genre."<sup>26</sup> As the mixed-genre designation suggests, Edwards uses others' texts, classical rules, and decorum somewhat freely. He borrows and incorporates into his comic subplot surrounding the affairs of a clownish collier a variety of Plautine farcical elements including trickster boyish servants and other arguably inappropriate conventional Roman comedy tropes such as the parasite and clever slave who wins his freedom. The classically informed play also incorporates quasi-improvisatory musical and comic skills, perhaps drawing upon, as J. S. Farmer observes, Edwards' fame as "the best fiddler, the best mimic, and the best sonneteer of the Court."<sup>27</sup> Edwards' eclectic synthesis of a variety of sources, genres, and modes appears to reflect his attempt to engage in an innovative merging of oral and literary understandings of performance. Having previously produced brief comic "toys" for which no texts have survived, Edwards' uncertainly embraces a new aesthetics modeled on classical textuality. The heightened attention to the novelty of the experiment and its association specifically with chapel children hardly affirms Edwards' conversion to the necessity of a textual ground for all performances, however; a point that surely has some bearing on assessments of the piece he produced for the Queen's visit to the university.

A related issue here that is likewise relevant to identifying the nature of the university production is the extent to which early modern entertainers actually conceived of their performances as plays. Other than in the so-called “children’s companies,” after all, evidence of a pervasive bookish approach to dramatic performance is hardly as strong as scholars often pretend. Early plays performed by school or chapel child actors and authored by such individual writers as John Heywood (*The Playe of the Wether*), Nicholas Udall (e.g., *Jacke Jugler* or *Roister Doister*), John Lyly (e.g., *Endymion*), Ben Jonson, John Marston, et al., were, as E. K. Chambers famously noted, far more likely to survive into print than any performed by professional players. His findings suggest a strong literary aesthetics in the educative tradition. By contrast, the relatively poor level of play survival in the popular culture may reflect something different; it may point not simply to inadequate means of conservation but instead to the prevalence of oral practices and modes “authorship,” performance, and transmission.<sup>28</sup> Indeed the high rate of supposed “failure” for any given title to reach print in the alternative, so-called popular or professional tradition until the late 1580s works against the assumption that playmaking defined by the accumulation of papers was always equally an established convention of “adult” performance. When considered in the light of the variability in literacy rates in the period,<sup>29</sup> spotty book or play survival could be an indication that actor practices varied so that, at least on some occasions, performances were not strictly dependent upon playbooks but rather upon primary and secondary oral conventions of story-telling.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, even within the particular context of the self-consciously literate and book-centered playing tradition of the grammar schools and chapel choirs, as I have shown, an imperfect alliance between titles and stable playbooks is sometimes detectable, as in the variety of “toys” and songs that have not survived. That variability should be kept in mind when considering a performance that was intended to be performed primarily by college students or courtiers. As noted above, surviving accounts of Edwards’ university performance offer a complicated picture of the textual nature and afterlife of this entertainment and even its status as a “play.”

Researchers commonly identify the words “play” and “drama” in medieval and early modern records with material texts. Notably, Lawrence M. Clopper, observing the historical difference between medieval and contemporary uses of theatrical terminology, defines “drama” as an “enacted and staged *script*,” an “enacted *text*,” and elsewhere as an

“enacted *script* that contains, or if it is a fragment, that once contained, an entire narrative; that is, a text and a performance” (emphasis added).<sup>31</sup> If distinguishing “plays” from other kinds of performance is one difficulty his work attempts to address, it is nonetheless the case that even as he allows that “an enactment need not have a script to be a dramatic representation,” he argues that the textuality of medieval and early modern drama is what distinguishes a play performance from an “event.”<sup>32</sup> This understanding that a *text* is inherent to definitions of drama is itself encoded in organizational names like the “Early English Text Society” and has become so habitual that, in his discussion of the faddish, often collaboratively written “witch play” in the seventeenth century, David Nicol defines a play simply as “a text.”<sup>33</sup> Yet a text-based dramatic tradition is marked by discontinuities. Noting that knowledge of printed *classical* drama was restricted to the sphere of rhetoric and rhetoricians, for instance, Clopper finds that in the English tradition, “the quintessential ‘dramatic’ text was the [biblical] *Song of Songs*,” even if, he allows, as “a mystical text,” it lacked the “visual signs” of what we would later recognize as a dramatic text.<sup>34</sup> Further complicating assumptions of a performance practice that required a dramatic text is that a resurrection of a performance piece could actually be extratextual. A significant feature of Louise George Clubb’s concept of “theatergrams” or “moveable theatrical units such as dialogue structures, plot motifs, character dyads, and topics” in her analysis of the influence of the Italian drama on early English theater is that these structures could be accessed merely through attendance at a “performance” or via an actor’s or playwright’s “interactions with ... fellows” and not exclusively through the intermediary of “printed drama.”<sup>35</sup> In such exchanges, the oft-assumed “genetic” connection between print, manuscript, and performance is, significantly, not always easy, necessary, or even possible, to establish.

Such evidence further raises the possibility that differing kinds and levels of literacy among performers must be taken into account when asserting that a surviving title or reference to an entertainment had, at some point in time, a correspondence to, or been in part a product of, a unified *playtext*. Is it even safe to assume a playtext exists when the venue is the court, as when, for instance, a record references “An Inuention called ffue playes in one presented and enacted before her *maiestie* on Twelفة daie at nighte in the hall at Grenewich by her highnes seruauntes wheron was ymployed a greate cloth and a battlement of canvas and canvas for a well and a mounte .xv ells of sarcenet .ix yardes of sullen cloth of gold

purple”)?<sup>36</sup> Is it equally or more safe when a similar reference emerges in the university annals? When, for instance, a Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, informs the Earl of Leicester that “We have also in readinesse a playe or shew of the destruction of Thebes, and the contention between Eteocles and Polynices for the gouernement thereof,” is it certain that this show or play, one slated to be performed on 15 May 1569 but which may not have taken place, was ever originally set down as a fully *scripted* play?<sup>37</sup> Is it clear, when Thomas Crosfield records in his diary in 1633 that players performed a number of entertainments throughout the town of Oxford “for money,” including two evidently popular set pieces or fragments from “The witches of Lancashire ouer against ye Kings Head [Oxford], their 1. Meetings 2. Tricks,” that such players had a perception of performances as faithful to an originating text?<sup>38</sup> Can we assume that any or all of these varying fragmentary entertainments met Clopper’s assumption of an “entire narrative”? Finally, can we presume that “our English players” always performed faithfully from full texts when, as late as 1582, George Whetstone describes them as “tied to a device,”<sup>39</sup> when “device,” according to the *OED*, meant not a play but something more like a plan, design, or “scheme” (*OED* 1a, 1b, 6); a “purpose or intention” (*OED* 2); a motto, emblem, or “legend” (*OED* 8, 9, 10); and even a “mask” (*OED* 11)?

Any inference of a script-based, studious preparation of parts for “shows” depends overwhelmingly upon a virtually unquestioned tenet that early amateur and professional players would have been equally comfortable with the technologies of a text-based script and, significantly, a now-settled faith in the textual literacy, and uniformity, of the player’s art. John Astington, Simon Palfrey, and Tiffany Stern have all suggested that an ability to read and a habit of studying parts was a requirement for becoming a player in the period,<sup>40</sup> maintaining further that since “the distinctions [in professionalism] among the various [playing] groups are often not sharp” any player would have been expected to be a literate one.<sup>41</sup> However, evidence of such a universal embrace of text-based performance where authors claim that the printed play was a record of what was performed is hard to find prior to the 1600s, except in the children’s tradition. That authors working with child actors in general expected their actors to perform faithfully from “books” is also evidenced by the fact that such authors were more likely than adult company authors to publish their plays. Further confirmation of the prominence of the author and book in the children’s tradition is humorously depicted in the Induction to

Ben Jonson's Chapel Children play *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), where the child actors complain of the typical author who hovers backstage to "prompt us aloud, stamp at the book-holder."<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, however, the relationship between actor and text is far less certain. The humorous treatment of the uneven textual mastery of the text by the mechanicals performing "Pyramus and Thisbe" before Theseus' court in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the differences in Costard's, Moth's, Armado's, and Holofernes' performances of Worthies in their court entertainment in *Love's Labor's Lost*, for instance, highlights the varying degree of literacy and acting competence even within a given group of players.

References to the uneven quality of the performances of university men even relatively late in the era point to an imperfect assimilation of a textual aesthetics in university productions. This evidence suggests that even the scholars involved in the performance of "Palamon and Arcyte" in 1566, though clearly capable readers, would not necessarily have aimed to become proficient actors of unified playtexts. The universities endorsed performance when, in addition to providing necessary recreation, it also promoted learning, audacity, and mastery of Latin and rhetoric.<sup>43</sup> As the critic Christopher Marlow observes, college plays "fulfill[ed] a social rather than a literary function."<sup>44</sup> Patrons of university performance such as the Earl of Leicester so distinguished these kinds of performance from public plays that students were forbidden by statute to see "common stage players" perform.<sup>45</sup> Assuming that fully scripted texts were universally the basis of all performances requires a leap of faith that evidence does not always allow. No clear connection between the existence of a title or text and a text-based performance practice, for instance, can be found in the records of university performance between 1485 and 1580.<sup>46</sup> During these roughly one hundred years, only ten *titles* even appear in the records of university "plays": three of those entries refer to Latin plays by Terence and Plautus, and the descriptive term for a fourth that appears prior to 1565, "St. Mary Magdalene" (1506–1507), is "unknown." The length or form of rare titles like *Wylie Beguylie* (1566–1567) or the later "Destruction of Thebes" (1568–1569), which was said to be "in readiness" but not clearly performed, is also unclear. Of the surviving thirty-nine playtexts associated with Oxford authors, only seventeen were in English, and all but one of these, *Caesar and Pompey* (c. 1595–1606), clearly date to the seventeenth century. Early plays by non-Oxford authors are similarly rare at the university. Among the extra-murally authored plays performed at Oxford, just three had been performed in English by 1581–1582. The

two that date to the 1560s, John Bale's *Three Laws* at Magdalen in 1560–1561 and Edwards' *Damon and Pithias* at Merton in 1564–1565, do not appear, therefore, to have set a meaningful precedent in vernacular playing at the university.<sup>47</sup> Contrary to previous arguments, then, some key distinctions among the various groups of performers and differences in their approaches to performance can be detected in the universities' early theatrical productions. At the very least, given that the performance of fully scripted plays in English at Oxford in the period in question was very rare indeed, the performance ideals to which a learned audience expected the college or court entertainments to adhere must have been at least partially oral.

Records of the 1566 production of "Palamon and Arcyte" suggest that Edwards' entertainment was likely consistent with such a tradition. Preparations do not appear to confirm the kinds of activities one expects from the use of a playbook. Thus, although Edwards was in Oxford for two months prior to the royal visit (he would fall sick and die within months of the performance, by October of that year), there is no suggestion that the time was devoted to actor rehearsals. Commentators on the performance, as noted above, emphasized the more spectacular elements and the music. Moreover, "those shows," unusually for a play performance, were scheduled to be performed in two parts on two successive nights. In the event, due to the Queen's pleaded exhaustion, these two parts were eventually shown on 2 and 4 September, without a significantly discernible concern that such an extended pause might interfere with the audience's perception of coherence or unity.

It is, of course, possible that a text of a full play, perhaps even one with a comic subplot like that which occurs in *Damon and Pithias*, was once in existence, and then, perhaps because of Edwards' sudden death a few months after the performance, such a play-like manuscript was lost. However, an alternative possibility is that the nature of the plan or plot for the performance was more like Edwards' "toys" and maskings that similarly did not require or survive in printed form (perhaps because such entertainments did not demand consolidation into something like a play) than his extant play, which did. Such might explain how Edwards' work might have had a kind of afterlife, although one that differs slightly from what one typically expects from a written, coherent playtext. It "obliquely" may have influenced, for instance, the later popular title(s) "palamon & a'ssett," "palaman & arset," "pallaman & harset," and "palamon," that appear in Henslowe's accounts as having been performed at

the Rose by the Admiral's Men four times in 1594.<sup>48</sup> Current expectations of textual transmission have led critics to conclude that there would be no necessary relationship between these two versions and, as well, none between these two and a later iteration of the story in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which some consider an "anti-romance." The insistence upon difference may well depend on whether we continue to impose expectations of a literal text and imagine that the 1566 performance was originally set down in a coherent sequence of authorial papers.

Admittedly, the later *Two Noble Kinsmen* (c. 1613–1614) makes no direct reference to Edwards' earlier version of the plot, to the chapel tradition, or to the Admiral's Men's piece; instead, the Prologue claims direct descent from Chaucer. Even so, there are hints that this dramatization retains some of the mixed oral–textual aesthetics evident in the earlier chapel children master's treatment of Chaucer's narrative, and as well, his chapel playing tradition generally. While the possibly only surviving "text" from the earlier performance, a verse contained in a seventeenth-century manuscript attributed to "Edwards" entitled "An Elegie on the death of a Sweetheart,"<sup>49</sup> is not in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's play, the play nonetheless incorporates the kinds of songs and music that were long conventional in chapel productions. As with known chapel plays, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, as Lori Leigh observes, is "unusual in its large number of female roles"; if all the roles were filled, the production would have required between ten to fifteen boy players, and many of them singers.<sup>50</sup> It contains, moreover, many references to schools, schoolboys, "school-doing," and schooling, and a schoolmaster appears in its jailer's daughter subplot. Furthermore, during the rehearsal of the schoolmaster's directed morris in 3.5, when the dancers discover that they lack one woman, the Fourth Countryman reacts to the botched effort with a line that recalls Trevatio's blunder that lapsed into his hornwhistling: "We may go whistle; all the fat's i'th' fire."<sup>51</sup> No single line or schoolboy allusion would necessitate finding Edwards' play as necessarily a textual source for this one, but so many raise the possibility that his earlier treatment of the story in the school tradition may have shaped or influenced the play that has survived, raising interesting possibilities of transmission that go beyond the recycling of an original playtext. Though the "Palamon and Arcyte" performance cannot be said to be a kind of ur-*Kinsmen* play,<sup>52</sup> denying a connection *at all* between the two pieces is problematic.

Playmaking was called “compiling” on the title page of Henry Medwall’s *Fulgens and Lucrece* and that particular approach to dramatic authorship appears to have persisted, alongside an alternative notion that would indeed result in relatively fixed plays, until late in the period.<sup>53</sup> As in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, when, in 2.2, Hamlet famously asks a player if he could “for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in’t [*The Murder of Gonzago*],”<sup>54</sup> and then in the performance interjects yet more lines to serve, virtually, as an additional “chorus” when it was performed, the alteration and reinvention of a source play could occur at any moment in a given entertainment’s or title’s afterlife. Shakespeare’s recycling of a “known” Italian plot within his own English tragedy thus offers some context for the critical challenge of dealing with the variation and imperfect identification of play titles throughout the records. It also suggests the persistence of theatergrams in a culture that was not yet so uniformly text-centered. Many plays seem to have had afterlives, albeit imperfectly or incompletely and in ways that go beyond text or document survival. The title characters of Edwards’ own *Damon and Pithias*, for instance, appear in Jonson’s absurd puppet play in *Bartholomew Fair*, and Grim the Collier, a character in Edwards’ subplot, also reemerges as a popular figure in a number of later plays. The pathetic song thought to have been Emily’s in Edwards’ “Palamon and Arcyte,” which includes the lyrics, “Rock me asleep in woe, / you wofull Sisters three: / Oh, cut you off[f] my fatal threed,” is the apparent source of mocking allusions in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and 2 *Henry IV*.<sup>55</sup> The extent to which these various echoes of earlier plays can be “lump[ed]” or “split” to invoke Astington’s terms,<sup>56</sup> may depend on whether or not we are willing to consider “survival” in more general terms, such as a nod to the partial circulation of treatments, including the assignment of particular speeches to particular characters, stagings, expansions of the plot, use of mask elements, incorporation of a comic subplot, conceptions of scenes as comic, or the incorporation of songs and spectacular scenic devices like palace walls. A survival may exist without insisting upon textual remnants or memorial reconstruction, especially if the resemblance is as imperfect as Windsor’s recollection of Dalaper’s oath as either “by the masse” or “Godes blutt.” In such a context, Edwards’ indeterminately scripted entertainment may not necessarily have been technically lost, but passed down in set-pieces in the manner of theatergrams and to have been adapted to suit differing performance venues.

After all, the history of the Renaissance theater is as defined by these kinds of resurrections or revivals as it is by innovations and variety. "Drolls" performed during the Puritan-enforced closure of the theaters after 1642, and created by extracting scenes, speeches, or bits from existing plays, recall the earlier extractions and reuses of plays. In its representation of mid-century theatrical practice before that depicted in the *Hamlet* example noted above, the play called *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* (c. 1592) contains a reference to a fictional troupe whose performed play turns out to be a recombination of at least two other titles in the players' "repertory," and Henslowe's diary includes references to both "five" and "three plays in one." Some drolls appear to have been recycled Elizabethan jigs,<sup>57</sup> and so had something in common with those extra-dramatic bits performed at the end of longer plays. The freedom to detach and recombine the best or most memorable parts of plays or the ability to regard the printed play as less than sacrosanct has roots in early oral practices that invite a broader understanding of dramatic literacies, of "source," intertextuality, and survival versus lostness than critics typically allow. Indeed, if, by the 1580s, increasing literacy rates within the population alongside patronage of learned drama by Elizabeth coincided with an era of increasing theatrical professionalization and play publishing, theatrical entertainments in the still vitally oral, visual, and aural theatrical culture of the sixteenth century retained modes of transmission and performance that were not exclusively textual. Survivals of lost plays or performances may yet be partially traceable even if a full text is not found—or never existed.

## NOTES

1. See *REED: Oxford*, eds. John R. Elliott, Jr., and Alan H. Nelson (University); Alexandra F. Johnston and Diana Wyatt (City), 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press and The British Library, 2004), 1.113–147. The accounts include Miles Windsor's "Narrative," 1.126–135; Nicholas Robinson's "Of the Acts Done at Oxford," 1.135–141 and translation in 2.977–978; and John Bereblock's *Commentary*, 1.136–141 and translation in 2.979–983.
2. Ros King, *The Collected Works of Richard Edwards: Politics, Poetry and Performance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 66.
3. King, *Collected Works*, 79.

4. Siobhan Keenan, "Spectator and Spectacle: Royal Entertainments at the Universities in the 1560s," in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, eds. Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86–103, esp. 99.
5. J. S. Farmer, *Dramatic Writings of Richard Edwards* (London, 1906), 185. See also *REED: Oxford*, 1: 147. *The Wardrobe of the Robes Day Book* account does not specify which "pleye before her maiestie" used the "Apparell that was late Quene maryes."
6. See *REED: Oxford*, 1.142–143. A digitization of the manuscript is now available within the relevant *LPD* entry: [https://lostplays.folger.edu/Palamon\\_and\\_Arcite\\_Part\\_2](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Palamon_and_Arcite_Part_2).
7. Windsor, fol. 118r–v; quoted in King, *Collected Works*, 83.
8. *REED: Oxford*, 1.129.
9. King, *Collected Works*, 66.
10. Windsor, fol. 119v; see King, *Collected Works*, 78–79.
11. King, *Collected Works*, 80. For another interpretation of these details, see John R. Elliott, "Early Staging in Oxford," in *New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 68–76, esp. 72.
12. Keenan, "Spectator and Spectacle," 100; see also *REED: Oxford*, 1.128.
13. On "theatergrams," see Louise George Clubb, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 6. Invitations to rethink the relationship between sources and Shakespeare and "questions of literary transmission and theatrical production," inform Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter's "Introduction," in *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study: Audiences, Authors, and Digital Technologies*, Routledge Studies in Shakespeare, eds. D. A. Britton and M. Walter (New York: Routledge, 2018).
14. See Paul Whitfield White, "The Admiral's Lost Arthurian Plays," in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 148–161; Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
15. See *REED: Oxford*, 1.141.
16. King, *Collected Works*, 80.
17. *REED: Oxford*, 2.981–982; emphases added.
18. King, *Collected Works*, 79.
19. *REED: Oxford*, 2.981; emphasis added.
20. King, *Collected Works*, 87.
21. David McInnis, "Lost Plays and Source Study," in *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study*, eds. D. A. Britton and M. Walter, 297–315; here, citing 301.

22. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: 30th Anniversary Edition* (1982; rpt., New York: Routledge, 2002), 14.
23. Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary: Commentary*, ed. W. W. Greg, Part 2 of 2 (London: A. H. Bullen, 1908), 168.
24. Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 208; cited in Misha Teramura, "Palamon and Arcite" (Anonymus 1594), *Lost Plays Database*, 20 June 2016, [https://lostplays.folger.edu/Palamon\\_and\\_Arcite](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Palamon_and_Arcite).
25. See Teramura, "Palamon and Arcite," *Lost Plays Database*.
26. Teramura, "Palamon and Arcite," *Lost Plays Database*.
27. Farmer, *Dramatic Writings*, 162.
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31. See Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play, Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 2, 6, 11.
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35. Clubb, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, 8, 7.
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  43. See Christopher Marlow, *Performing Masculinity in English University Drama, 1598–1636* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 40–44, 139.
  44. Marlow, *Performing Masculinity in English University Drama*, 40–44.
  45. Marlow, *Performing Masculinity in English University Drama*, 139.
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  47. See *REED: Oxford*, Appendix 6, 2.800–840, and Appendix 8, 2.846–852.
  48. See Misha Teramura, “Palamon and Arcite” (Anon. 1594), *Lost Plays Database*, [https://lostplays.folger.edu/Palamon\\_and\\_Arcite](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Palamon_and_Arcite). See also Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue, Vol. 3: 1590–1597* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), #966. Farmer claims Henslowe also purchased a “book” of the play in 1594; see his *Dramatic Writings*, 85.
  49. Hyder E. Rollins, “A Note on Richard Edwards,” *The Review of English Studies* 4.14 (April 1928): 204–220.

50. Lori Leigh, *Shakespeare and the Embodied Heroine: Staging Female Characters in the Late Plays and Early Adaptations*, eds. Michael Dobson and Dymna Callaghan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 23.
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52. See Roslyn L. Knutson, "Ur-Plays and Other Exercises in Making Stuff Up," in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 31–55.
53. As Greg Walker observes, "The first printed edition, produced by John Rastell at some point between 1510 and 1516, states on its title page that the interlude was 'compiled by master Henry Medwall, late chaplain to the right reverent father in God, John Morton, Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury'"; see Greg Walker, *The Oxford Anthology of Tudor Drama*, ed. Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 57, 60.
54. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, *The Arden Shakespeare*, 3rd ser. (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 2.2. 476–478.
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57. Dale B. J. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642–1660* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 149.



“I haue lost it”: Apologies, Appeals,  
and Justifications for Misplacing  
*The Wild-Goose Chase* and Other Plays

*Kara J. Northway*

Neither a borrower nor a lender be,  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend  
—*Hamlet*, Q2

...[W]hat we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,  
Why then we rack [inflate] the value.  
—*Much Ado About Nothing*

The *Lost Plays Database* quite reasonably excludes John Fletcher's *The Wild-Goose Chase* (1621), as a script exists today.<sup>1</sup> The play, however, was temporarily lost for at least five years, 1647–1652, and evidently longer, perhaps sometime after the 1632 revival. “Lostness,” as Matthew Steggle has argued, “is in fact a relative term.”<sup>2</sup> In Humphrey Moseley's prefatory

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letter to Francis Beaumont and Fletcher's *Comedies and Tragedies* (1647), the stationer regretted having to omit this play, "long lost, and I feare irrecoverable, for a *Person of Quality* borrowed it from the *Actours* many yeares since, and (by the negligence of a Servant) it was never return'd; therefore now I put up this *Si quis*, that whosoever hereafter happily meets with it, shall be thank-fully satisfied if he please to send it home."<sup>3</sup> With the Blackfriars closed, the unspecified "home" in this de facto lost-item flyer was the printshop. Indeed, after another, or the same, unnamed nobleman "Retriv'd" the play, Moseley printed it in 1652 for the "private Benefit" of two King's Men, John Lowin and Joseph Taylor, who wrote the prefatory letter addressing drama-lovers.<sup>4</sup> Despite acknowledging a "Crime committed," the actors delicately sidestepped both their own culpability for mismanaging manuscripts, which they claimed previously to "*preserv[e]*" as "Trustees," and the story of loss and rediscovery by the villain and hero.<sup>5</sup>

These paratexts referencing *Wild-Goose Chase*, alongside other public lost notices and apologies, reveal beliefs about responsibility and consequences for losing a play. Moseley's letter drew on two early modern textual forms, one folded within the other and both familiar to printers: first, a subgenre of epistles dedicatory and addresses to readers calling attention to lost texts—a tradition I label "lost-sheep paratexts"—and second, a *si quis*. The histories of these public modes of discourse, 1579–1653, show that both allowed writers to announce, and sometimes appeal for return of, lost items, as well as to voice lingering suspicions, point fingers, or, in the case of lost-sheep paratexts, justify one's own role. Moseley and the actors capitalized on these useful functions, minimizing the forms' negative associations with deceit, in order to make *The Wild-Goose Chase*—and by extension Fletcher, the theaters, and the acting profession—increase in estimation and reputation and "by *buriall*, more *glorious* grow."<sup>6</sup>

The paratexts tradition to which Moseley's letter belonged shared concerns about parts of an opus lost, or nearly lost, before printing. For example, in the preface to his *Workes*, King James championed the "*commendable*" efforts historically of authors and editors to collect the diverse manuscripts of an opus into "*great Volumes*," thereby "*preserving that in a Masse from perishing, that might easily be lost in a Mite*."<sup>7</sup> He reasoned that "*if euery Author had set out his owne workes together in his owne time*," authorship controversies would be averted and the editor's expense and challenge of tracking down lost writings reduced, marveling, "*how doe wee labour to recouer Bookes that are lost*?"<sup>8</sup> James echoed other lost-sheep

paratexts that warranted print to prevent loss due to the author's death or to time decaying books into "moths-meat."<sup>9</sup> Some paratexts described actual loss caused by shipwreck; plague-quarantined papers; a translator's "careles[ness]"; a servant's "negligence"; or theft (a Terence comedy "*gelded of the three Latter Acts*").<sup>10</sup> Frequently, these paratexts held three wrongdoers answerable: actors, printers, or a named or unnamed "*Person of Quality*" in an authorized or unauthorized manuscript coterie.

In *The English Traveller*, Thomas Heywood rebutted King James's argument by explaining the obstacles playwrights faced, namely actors: "*True it is, that my Playes are not exposed vnto the world in Volumes, to beare the title of Workes, (as others) one reason is, That many of them by shifting and change of Companies, haue beene negligently lost, Others of them are still retained in the hands of some Actors, who thinke it against their peculiar profit to haue them come in Print.*"<sup>11</sup> Heywood's word "*negligently*" indicated fault and undermined actors' claims of good stewardship. Moseley's 1647 paratext did mention the role of the King's Men, who had worked with Heywood on the *Ages* plays, but Moseley skirted liability issues.

Paratexts also censured printers: a "parcell of Copy" from a religious treatise "by negligence of the Printer was lost."<sup>12</sup> In the publication of *The Fleire*, the printer Francis Burton lost the dedication of playwright Edward Sharpham and replaced it with his own. In a tone neither playful nor ironic, he apologized both to the reader and author for his irresponsibility:

The Author is ... whereabouts I cannot learne; ... I had of him before his departure an Epistle or Apological praeamble ... directed vnto you, which should haue bin in this Page diuul'gd, and (not to ieast with you ...) I haue lost it, remembering none of the Contentes.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to Burton, Moseley failed to accept blame as the printer, regardless of his stated intent: "I meane to deale openly."<sup>14</sup>

Those in manuscript circles misplaced and sometimes helped to recover documents. William Twisse identified the remiss borrower of his religious treatise: Sir Francis Pile. Eventually, unbeknownst to Twisse, his text "*arrived*" in London, having passed through a stationer's hands.<sup>15</sup> Upon return by a third party (Mr. Gilbert), Twisse rejoiced: "*my stray sheep, which I gave for lost, was found.*"<sup>16</sup> Another religious tract was lost "*by meanes of a private Copy long agoe communicated unto a Friend, ...*

by I know not what miscarriage.”<sup>17</sup> A history of rebellions was “without my privity carried ... beyond the Seas ... and unexpectedly returned.”<sup>18</sup> Prince Henry lost a treatise on magnetism—twice. One copy “was either mislaied or embeseled”; four years later, he “sent earnestly vnto mee [the author] for an other Copie: which also he receiued... . But what is become euen of that also I know not.”<sup>19</sup> In a collection of John Knox’s writings, John Field’s dedication queried Anne Prouze directly about possession of a letter by Knox:

if you haue any thing, besides those that I haue receiued already, you will communicate them with me. He maketh mention in a letter to you, of the last parte of this Treatise, if you haue it, I praye you giue it againe to the Church... . And if by your selfe or others, you can procure any other his writings or letters, ... be a meane that we may receiue them.<sup>20</sup>

To avoid public shame, Moseley left out the names of the gentleman and servant in the manuscript circle responsible for losing *The Wild-Goose Chase*. What Moseley added to the form was the *si quis* appeal, which shared affinities with previous lost-sheep paratexts like Field’s.

Those who had lost property could follow available protocols for recovering it, namely, the use of a public lost-item flyer, called a *si quis*. Latin for “if anyone,” a *si quis* was a notice, often posted on a door, announcing offers of employment for and by clergy and servingmen.<sup>21</sup> Following Roman practices, *si quisses* also advertised lost items. Not surprisingly, large-ticket items such as horses or jewels were often sought with a *si quis*, but many advertised lost items were documents or books. The contexts and language in these *si quisses* have received scant attention. Tiffany Stern distinguishes *si quisses* from playbills: “The *si quis* advertisement begins diffidently, conditionally, ‘if’. Playbills, against *si quisses*, would have looked bold and forthright: they inform rather than wonder.”<sup>22</sup> But *si quisses* did not always begin with “*si quis*,” and they contained a lot of information about attitudes toward loss. The controlling metaphor in George Wither’s 1648 poem *A Single Si Quis* exposes the desperation motivating the person who posted, “Of private searches, therefore, being wearie, / I set up now, a Si quis,” as well as the economic payoff for those who responded to the “if anyone” query, “his reward.”<sup>23</sup> The public *si quis*, then, it seems, was the last resort.

To “set up” a *si quis*, one visited a printshop. As Peter Stallybrass has shown, printing broadsides sustained early modern stationers’ work, but

few survived, e.g., one in ten thousand English ballads.<sup>24</sup> To ensure wide readership, customers ordered folio-sized, single-sheet jobs, such as for petitions, meeting notices, playbills, advertisements, legal forms, and *si quisses* in duplications numbering in the hundreds or thousands—including one for “200 notices for St Paul’s Church.”<sup>25</sup> For approximately seven shillings, 250 broadsides could be printed in an hour, an affordable advantage for middling professionals trying to recover lost items quickly.<sup>26</sup>

Because of its visibility by almost all Londoners, the prime location for *si quisses* was a door inside St. Paul’s nave, known as the *si quis* door.<sup>27</sup> So conspicuous was the door that it was difficult to ignore or to post onto without detection, as contemporary allusions indicated. In *The Guls Horne-booke*, Thomas Dekker advised gallants to avoid looking at *si quisses* at St. Paul’s: “presume not to fetch so much as one whole turne in the middle Ile, no nor to cast an eye to Si-quis doore (pasted & plaistred vp with Seruingmens supplications).”<sup>28</sup> For his audience, Dekker used “plaistred vp” to suggest the disproportionate number of advertisements displayed, helping us grasp the ubiquity and appeal of the *si quis* form.<sup>29</sup>

Latin schoolbooks taught both the relevant social context for putting up a *si quis* and the grammatical construction, in English and Latin:

*praeceptor* maister *heri* yesterday *amisi* I lost *quendam* a certaine *libellum* little booke *quem*.... *Igitur* therefore *rogo* I desire *te* you *vt* that *admonneas* you admonish *condiscipulos* the schoole-fellowes *vt* that *si* if *quis* any one *fortè* by chaunce *inuenerit* shall here-after finde (or hath found) *eum* it *restituatur* hee restore it *mibi* to mee.<sup>30</sup>

Another contemporary Latin textbook, *Corderius Dialogues*, prescribed *si quis* etiquette.<sup>31</sup> In Cordier’s forty-fifth dialogue, “Langine” learns what happened to the penknife his friend “Roland” had just given him:

*L.* Yea truly it is a passing good one (me wretch!) it wanted but a little but that I had lost it.

*R.* Hoe, ... how fell that out?

*L.* When I returned from abroad it fell from mee in the street...

[o]ut of my sheath, which I had left open unwisely.<sup>32</sup>

Langine admits carelessness, but also posts a manuscript *si quis* to recover the gift:

R. How gottest thou it againe?

L. I set up a little paper straightway on the leaves of the gate and a certaine boy of the sixt forme brought it mee after dinner.<sup>33</sup>

In the margin annotating Langine's lines here appear alternative phrasings, a regular feature throughout to promote Latin practice and English eloquence: "\*I had fixed or fastned to. \*a *siquis*, or note. \*to the. \*boards" (IIv). Langine and Roland agree on ideal *si quis* outcomes, praising the Samaritan from the sixth form and lamenting the sin of those who fail to return lost items:

R. I would all were so faithfull, who finde things lost.

L. Truly there are few who doe restore, if so be that it be a thing of any worth.

R. And yet that is commanded, namely, by the Word of God.

L. What else? For it is a kind of theft, if any man retaine anothers goods, being found, so that he can know to whom it is to be restored.

R. But most men thinke themselves to possesse by right, whatsoever lost thing they shall finde.

L. Truly they doe erre most grievously.<sup>34</sup>

The dialogue ends with a realization of multiple benefits reaped from loss. The boy who returned the penknife received material and verbal rewards to reinforce good behavior: "I gave him a sextant and a few walnuts. I praised him moreover, and I advised him in a word or two to do so always."<sup>35</sup> Langine at first maintains that had the penknife been indeed lost, he would have "taken it patiently, and have bought mee another," but, when pressed, immediately confesses the emotional toll he would have experienced, "griefe."<sup>36</sup> The boys recognize the benefits to themselves of moral reflection on *si quis* decorum and temporary loss: "See how much the losing of my penknife hath profited us."<sup>37</sup> Despite this translation training, throughout the period, authors continued to gloss or clarify in context the phrase *si quis*. The moral and cultural attitudes—and apprehensions—about *si quisses* and accountability, however, were deeply engrained, and schoolbooks exemplify how boys were taught to spin ideas about loss with some rhetorical dexterity.

Though ephemeral by nature, some contemporary *si quisses* survive and reveal not just the contexts, but also the generic language of the *si quis* in practice in a range of print media. For instance, a *si quis* announced

a missing box of rings with the title "Things lost the 24. of December. 1614."<sup>38</sup> Several contemporary *si quisses* can be found in advertisements from the government-issued *Publick Adviser* (1657). Similar to Craigslist or newspaper classifieds, this pamphlet provided information about available housing, employment, transportation, crime, and lost items. The *si quisses* for lost objects were formulaic: the item missing, the use of the word "lost," the exact date of loss, the last known location, a meticulous description of the item, the "if anyone" phrasing, a specific or implied monetary reward, and the address for delivering items or information. The following example illustrates the form:

*A Watch lost.* On the fourth of *August* about nine of the clock in the evening, there was lost between Temple-Bar and *Lincolns-Inn-Gate* i[n] *Chancery Lane*, a Watch in a gold Case, on the back whereof is engraven (*Abraham van Bentham fecit*) with a green satten Ribbon instead of a Chain, whereto was fastened a gold Seal-Ring on which was engraven a flaming Heart, pierced through with a Dart; any that can give notice thereof shall have 40 s for their pains. The notice to be given at the Office of Publick Advice in *Fulwoods Rents*.<sup>39</sup>

Occasionally, hesitation about whether something was lost or stolen accompanied these particularities. A 1624 *si quis* originating from the Privy Council wavered about two basins from Whitehall chapel, which were at once "lost" and "lately taken off," and either "double Guilt, Chased, hauing the Armes of Queene MARY, and M. R. engrauen ... in the Bottomes" or already silver "moulten into Lumpes."<sup>40</sup> Regardless, such intimate detail about each object—including weights, sizes, distinctive decorations, the artisan, a person's marks or initials, estimated value, or idiosyncrasies ("bound in with a Tape upon the wrong side")—made personal identification unmistakable.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the fact that a description of a unique object could have given away the identity of those submitting advertisements, the *Publick Adviser* printed a policy assuring readers "*loath to have their names ... published ... [T]here is no necessity of entering their Occasions in their own names, but they may have notice given to the World under other names, or no names at all.*"<sup>42</sup> Anonymity, or even pseudonymity, was encouraged. Still, the Office did not hesitate to list names of thieves if foul play was suspected, such as the perpetrator answerable for "lost" rings: "The party

who performed this notorious Cheat passeth at present under the name of *Jones*.”<sup>43</sup>

The same *si quis* formula was regularly used for notices about lost books and documents. One *si quis* for lost books listed individual titles, book sizes, and bindings: “LOST ... the First and Second Volumes of *Monasticon Anglicanum*, in large Folio ... . And *Camden’s Britannia*, bound in smooth Calves Leather, and Letter’d on the Back.”<sup>44</sup> In *si quis*ses for lost documents, the burden of detail was transferred to the manuscripts, including writing accessories; genres of documents; the condition of manuscripts (sealed or unsealed); types of paper; words written; and even identifying handwriting, as excerpts show:

Lost on Wednesday the 12 of August, 1657 on *Ludgatehill*, one large Letter-case of blew Turkish Leather, faced with yellow Sarcenet, having within it, one Letter of Attorney, two Bonds for performance of Covenants, one Judgment for the small summ, and five or six Letters that are broken open

A Letter Case lost about the 22 of *April* last, betwixt the *Old Jury*, the *Old Exchange* and *Broad-street*, in which are several Papers and Accompts, mentioning the name of [C]bri[st]opher Willoughby

upon *Thursday* last, there was lost one Indenture, written with a small hand writing in Parchment, the Seale being lapped about with brown paper, the Indenture fouled up in a Paper

If any one hath taken up three Fines or Writs, with several peeces of Parchment annexed to them, lost on Wednesday, [etc.] ...<sup>45</sup>

Given that many of the lost items were legal documents, readers sense immediately the papers’ value. Unlike owners providing estimated values that might have been helpful for identifying diamonds (“all very clean, about one grain three quarters, valued at: 6 l”), the owners of lost documents had to decide values subjectively, and owners named rewards ranging from five to twenty shillings, commensurate with rewards for other found goods.<sup>46</sup>

Yet, even with promised rewards, the *Publick Adviser* printed many of the same listings over consecutive weekly issues, suggesting that responses were not forthcoming and items remained lost. Nicholas Breton’s prefatory letter in *A Poste With a Madde Packet of Letters* expressed some of the cynical (fictional) attitudes of the finder of lost documents: “it was his [the carrier’s] happe with lacke of heed, to let fall a Packet of Idle

Papers; ... being my fortune to light on it."<sup>47</sup> From this perspective, losing an item was just tough luck: the owner did not care sufficiently for goods, and the finder consequently got a windfall. In the *Astrologaster* (1620), John Melton counseled readers to reject luck as a factor in loss and instead to accept loss with perspective: in the end, a lost item was trivial, "*naught*."<sup>48</sup> Nor should readers ascribe it undue meaning: "What ill lucke is there in losing a Hose garter, except it be to put a man to the charge to buy a new payre?"<sup>49</sup> Such a stoic attitude was useful given the prevalence of loss contrived through fraud. Melton's book documented fortunetellers, who stole, then collected a finder's fee, a conspiracy blasted in the subtitle: [*T*]he Arraignment of Artlesse Astrologers [...] that cheat many ignorant people vnder the pretence of [...] finding out things that are lost. Melton showed how some loss was not merely petty theft, but the result of trades systematically exploiting people's losses.<sup>50</sup>

Skepticism about the possibility of honest dealing characterized the earliest allusions to the phrase *si quis* in English language literature, especially satirical pamphlets and plays. The *si quis* was the recourse of those who were desperate or deceitful, even the devil; and what it advertised was overly embellished and especially exaggerated services. In the 1592 pamphlet *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage*, Robert Greene anatomized conycatchers who, to rob ignorant men, used women like advertisements:

these street walkers wil iet in rich garded gowns, queint periwigs, rufs of the largest size, ... their cheekes died ..., thus are they trickt vp, and either walke like stales ... or stande like the deuils *Siquis* at a tauern or alehouse, as if who shoulde say, if any be so minded to satisfie his filthie lust, to lende me his purse, and the deuil his soule.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, in the epistle dedicatory to *Haue With You to Saffron-Walden*, Thomas Nashe ridiculed Richard Harvey for a lifetime of widely distributing his doggerel: "when he was but yet a fresh-man in *Cambridge*, he set vp *Siquis-ses*, & sent his accounts to his father in those ioultung Heroicks."<sup>52</sup> A marginal note next to the word "*Siquis-ses*" explained the term, conflating service and lost-item denotations:

*Siquis*  
a bill for  
anythi[n]g  
lost.<sup>53</sup>

Above all, Greene and Nashe referenced *si quisses* to connote someone shady who publicly advertised something puffed up or hollow.

Similarly, the desperate characters Shift in Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1600), Noose in John Marston's *What You Will* (1607), and Geographus in Barten Holyday's academic play *Technogamia: or The Marriages of the Arts* (1618) post *si quisses* for service. In a move akin to falsifying qualifications on a résumé, Shift has, "for the aduancement of a *Siquis* or two[,] ... varied himself" in two *si quisses*, hoping one will "take."<sup>54</sup> Advertising for a new, lower position is Noose's only escape from a dissolute master: "my end is to paste vp a Si quis."<sup>55</sup> Frantic for vocation, Geographus, "in a consumption," "is come to putting vp a *Siquis* already for want of custome."<sup>56</sup> In *Technogamia*, the playwright not only developed onstage action that involved posting, removing, tearing, and reassembling *si quisses*, suggesting more desperation, but also had characters recite two *si quisses* promising undeliverable services: fluent polylingualism ("If there be any Gentleman, that ... intertaynes a desire of learning [seven] languages, ... he shall, to his abundant satisfaction, ... repaire to the signe of the Globe") and cures for fifteen ailments, including plague and blindness ("If there be any man woman, or child, that's affected with any disease, ... repaire to the signe of the Vrinall").<sup>57</sup> An incredulous Choler comments, "he that performes all this, must be a god or a deuill."<sup>58</sup> Thomas Tomkis's comedy *Lingua* (1607) featured a *found-items* flyer. Upon discovery of a crown and robe, Tactus wonders about their owner; when told to "Set vp a *Si quis* for it," he protests, "alls mine owne."<sup>59</sup> These examples of *si quisses* in plays illustrate how playwrights highlighted onstage cultural anxiety about the integrity of such public advertisements of loss.

Offstage, commercial playhouses took heed to keep playbooks, properties, and costumes from exiting the building, including placing responsibility for the welfare of property directly onto actors' shoulders. Philip Henslowe and Jacob Meade's draft contract with actor Robert Dawes (1614) exemplifies these precautionary measures: "if the said Robert Dawes (shall carry away any propertie) belonging to the said Company, ... he the said Robert Dawes shall and will forfeit and pay unto the said Phillip and Jacob ... ffortie pounds."<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, vital playhouse documents went missing, perhaps because of sheer numbers of manuscript copies in circulation, as William Proctor Williams has proposed (see Werstine in Chapter 3 of this volume for additional commentary).<sup>61</sup> Manuscripts were disseminated not only in the theaters and

printshops, but also among drama-loving circles, according to Richard Dutton, who, mentioning Moseley, argues for a "commonplace and ... long-standing" practice of circulating transcripts of professional companies' plays from the 1590s to 1642.<sup>62</sup> In 1623 and 1625, the King's Men lost licensed copies of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Honest Man's Fortune*, but John Heminges gave "his worde" and Joseph Taylor made an "intreaty," respectively, persuading Sir Henry Herbert to relicense the plays without one-pound penalties.<sup>63</sup>

In 1597, one such lost company playbook was found by an actor from another troupe. Hoping to profit, Martin Slater stumbled upon and kept a playbook that actor Thomas Downton had lost ten days earlier. After Slater's company performed the play, Downton sued Slater for over thirteen pounds and was awarded almost all of the damages.<sup>64</sup> As in the larger culture, lost documents had price tags. In these lost-play situations, actors used their persuasive abilities to avoid suffering serious losses of assets.

In the context of evidence from lost-sheep paratexts, *si quisses*, and playhouse misplacements, the paratexts concerning *The Wild-Goose Chase* displayed savviness about the value of lost items. Situated within Moseley's fairly conventional lost-sheep paratext is his *si quis*, which itself respected the long list of generic expectations. Moseley's *si quis* incorporated the following elements: the declaration of an item missing, the writer's use of the word "lost," an approximate date when the loss occurred ("a few years back"), the phrase "*Si quis*," the mentioning of the genre of the document ("tis a *COMEDY*"), a potential reward (the finder "shall be thank-fully satisfied"), and an implied location for return.<sup>65</sup> In anticipation of readers' mistrustful cultural associations, Moseley promised, "here is not any thing *Spurious*." Martin Wiggins speculates that the copy eventually returned was "probably (but not necessarily) the one originally loaned by the company."<sup>66</sup> I disagree: Moseley omitted identifying details about the *Wild-Goose Chase* manuscript normally expected in a *si quis* for a lost document. Thus, Moseley used "*Si quis*" quite literally; he was not seeking the nobleman's particular lost copy, but an alternate copy from *anyone*, or "whosoever," in a manuscript community "happily [by chance]" coming across the play. Moseley used his highly visible prefatory letter to broadcast a play's lost status and put out a subtle call for any available copies.

Like the *si quisses* for lost papers, Moseley also determined a value for his document, in this case, a lost Fletcher playscript. In doing so, Moseley shed light on a possible micro-economy for manuscript copies

of playscripts produced for the sort of coterie readers of plays that Dutton described. Moseley promised readers that he was not merely reprinting “scattered pieces,” namely the singly published plays, which readers already owned, and he further reassured readers that the actors had owned the plays he was printing: “I had the Originalls from such as received them from the *Authours*.” Moseley let slip the difficulty of managing the printing: “unlesse you knew into how many hands the Originalls were dispersed.” He claimed that the manuscripts were already expensive: “those [actors and noblemen] who own’d the *Manuscripts*, too well knew their value to make a cheap estimate of any of these Pieces.” He then made a curious statement: “Heretofore when Gentlemen desired but a Copy of any of these [unpublished] *Playes*, the meanest piece here ... cost them more then foure times the price you pay for the whole *Volume*.” Moseley was referring to paying scribes or actors for manuscript copies of unpublished plays for the pleasure of “private friends.” If the cost for this access was already expensive, “foure times” the average Folio cost of fifteen shillings, how much more was the price of a lost manuscript, and, in effect, how “thank-fully satisfied” would Moseley have been to receive it?<sup>67</sup> Early modern readers of Moseley’s letter might have recalled the parable in which “hee reioyceth more of that [lost] sheepe, then of the ninetie and nine which went not astray.”<sup>68</sup> In the scribal playscript economy, a lost play was more valuable.

Lowin and Taylor’s 1652 prefatory letter in *The Wild-Goose Chase* made clear the play’s high value, namely as “*Rich Remains*” and “rare issue.” The actors not only omitted altogether the story of the nobleman’s return of the play, alluding only to a “happy [fortunate] opportunitie,” but also eclipsed the donor, claiming the play as *their* “offering.”<sup>69</sup> A 1597 state record suggests actors were assumed to know about access to a play from the company repertory and copying. After arresting actors for performing a slanderous play, the Privy Council demanded that they disclose “what *copies* they have given forth of the said playe and to whom [italics mine to emphasize the plural].”<sup>70</sup> Lowin and Taylor did apologize and accept the blame for a “Crime,” not that of losing Fletcher’s play, but of the “presumption of offering” it. Their exaggerated humility undercut the dedication’s conventional purpose to praise the work. Beyond begging the reader’s charity, the actors, “in our Ruin,” converted the purpose of the epistle to a soapbox, attributing the loss of the play to the “cruell Destinie” of the theaters’ closure, which rendered them “*Mutes and Bound*.” Nonetheless, they complained that their economic and social misfortunes

had been overstated: "our Miseries have been sufficiently *Clamorous* and *Expanded*." In sum, Lowin and Taylor were not desperate. Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram assert that the 1648 ordinance closing the theaters, because of "its classification of *all* actors as 'Rogues' ... with the abolition of any legitimacy attaching to the Royal Patents[,] ... effectively destroyed their [actors'] professional status."<sup>71</sup> In concluding the letter "So *Exeunt*," the actors reasserted their occupational identity before their signatures, demonstrating resilience in the face of loss, but also showcasing their rhetorical talents that could turn loss to their own advantage.

That Moseley asked readers to search for a play called *The Wild-Goose Chase* may appear too fitting. Wither accused some printers of "purposely delay[ing]" publication for self-interest and of "annex[ing] Additions to bookes formerly imprinted, and increas[ing] the pryces of them accordingly."<sup>72</sup> Did Moseley in 1647 strategically post a false *si quis* in order to revive sales and increase Folio prices in 1652? Five years would seem a long time to pull off an astrologaster's scam, stealing a play from the public and then "finding" it for an additional fee. On the question of culpability for lost plays, actors, however, are on less secure ground. Heywood's accusations of "*negligen[ce]*," in other words, lack of expected duty in caring for his artistic property, as well as of outright defiance, suggest a larger professional shortcoming that accounts for Lowin and Taylor's artful dodge, opacity, and defensiveness about their occupational ethos. On the other hand, for busy actors managing multiple plays in a company's repertory at any given time, actors established reliable workarounds: an ability to talk their way out of lost-text problems; multiple back-up manuscript copies in circulation; and established professional and social bonds with playwrights (Heywood continued to work with companies despite their recklessness). As scholars gain new understanding that early modern property and documents were lost in various ways besides inattention or decay—the reasons for lost plays that theater historians have traditionally assumed—we may also need to rethink actors' flexible, and seemingly indifferent mentality toward loss; that is, in Melton's words, "What ill lucke is there in losing a play, except it be to put a man to the charge to buy a new play?"

## NOTES

1. *Lost Plays Database*, ed. Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2009), <https://lostplays.folger.edu>.
2. Matthew Steggle, "Lost, or Rather Surviving as a Very Short Document," in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (London: Palgrave, 2014), 72–83, 72.
3. Humphrey Moseley, "The Stationer to the Readers," in Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1647), EEBO, A4<sup>r</sup>. Italics in any quotations are original unless noted.
4. John Fletcher, *The Wild-Goose Chase* (London, 1652), EEBO, t. p., A1<sup>r</sup>. See also Rota Hertzberg Lister, ed., *A Critical Edition of John Fletcher's Comedy, The Wild-Goose Chase* (New York: Garland, 1980).
5. John Lowin and Joseph Taylor, "The Dedication: To the Honour'd, Few, Lovers of Drammatick Poesie," in John Fletcher, *The Wild-Goose Chase*, A2<sup>r</sup>; John Lowin, et al., "To the Right Honovrable Philip Earle of Pembroke and Mountgomery ...," in Beaumont and Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies*, A2<sup>r</sup>; A2<sup>f</sup>.
6. James Ramsey, "On Mr. Fletchers *Wild-Goose Chase Recovered*," in Fletcher, *The Wild-Goose Chase*, A4<sup>r</sup>.
7. James I and IV, *The Workes* (London, 1616), EEBO, STC 993:11, B1<sup>v</sup>; B1<sup>r</sup>; B2<sup>v</sup>.
8. James I and IV, *The Workes*, B2<sup>v</sup>; B2<sup>f</sup>.
9. For authors' deaths, see John Dod and William Hinde, *Bathshebaes Instructions* (London, 1614), EEBO, STC 6935, A3<sup>v</sup>; for time's destruction, see Petrus Ramus, *Via Regia ad Geometriam*, trans. William Bedwell (London, 1636), EEBO, STC 15251, A3<sup>v</sup>.
10. William Bullein, *Bulleins Bulwarke of Defence* (London, 1579), EEBO, STC 4034 C3<sup>r</sup>; E.C.S., *The Gouernment of Jreland* (London, 1626), EEBO, STC 21490, A2<sup>f</sup>; Tomaso Garzoni, *The Hospitall of Incvrrable Fooles* (London, 1600), EEBO, STC 11634, A2<sup>f</sup>; Roger Williams, *A Briefe Discourse of Warre* (London, 1590), EEBO, STC 25733, A2<sup>v</sup>; Terence, *The Two First Comedies*, trans. Thomas Newman (London, 1627), EEBO, STC 23897, A2<sup>f</sup>. A servant's negligence may have occurred while working on behalf of a member of a manuscript circle since collectors sometimes tasked their literate household servants with copying manuscript literature (Marcy L. North, "Household Scribes and the Production of Literary Manuscripts in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, n. 4 [2015]: 133–157, 137–138).

11. Thomas Heywood, *The English Traveller* (London, 1633), *EEBO*, STC 13315, A3<sup>f</sup>.
12. Martin Blake, *The Great Question* (London, 1645), *EEBO*, Wing B3134, π.
13. Edward Sharpham, *The Fleire* (London, 1607), Huntington Library, STC 22384, A3<sup>r-v</sup>.
14. Moseley, "The Stationer to the Readers," A4<sup>f</sup>.
15. William Twisse, *A Treatise of Mr. Cottons* (London, 1646), *EEBO*, Wing T3425, A2<sup>f</sup>.
16. Twisse, *A Treatise of Mr. Cottons*, A2<sup>f</sup>.
17. Edward Reynolds, *Meditations* (London, 1638), *EEBO*, STC 20929a, A2<sup>v</sup>.
18. William Prynne, *The Antipathie of the English Lordly Prelacie* (London, 1641), *EEBO*, Wing P3891A, [¶4]<sup>v</sup>.
19. William Barlow, *Magneticall Aduertisements* (London, 1618), *EEBO*, STC 1444, A3<sup>r</sup>; A3<sup>f</sup>.
20. John Knox, *A Notable and Comfortable Exposition* (London, 1583), *EEBO*, STC 15068, [A2]<sup>v</sup>.
21. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1st edn., 1911, s.v. "si quis."
22. Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 53.
23. George Wither, *A Single Si Quis* (London, 1648), *EEBO*, Wing W3191A, A2<sup>r</sup>; A2<sup>f</sup>.
24. Peter Stallybrass, "'Little Jobs': Broad-sides and the Printing Revolution," in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, eds. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 315–341; for "jobbing," see 320, 322, 331, 340; for survival rates, see 318, 326, 332.
25. For broadsides engaging wide audiences, see Angela McShane, "Ballads and Broad-sides," in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture Vol. 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 339–362, 341; for paper size, see 339. For range of print jobs, runs, and notices commissioned for Paul's, see Stallybrass, "Little Jobs," 333, 334–335, 338.
26. For costs, see McShane, "Ballads and Broad-sides," 347; for speed of printing, see James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450–1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 23.
27. Roze Hentschell, "The Cultural Geography of St. Paul's Precinct," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 633–649, 643–644.
28. Thomas Dekker, *The Guls Horne-booke* (London, 1609), *EEBO*, STC 6500, D3<sup>f</sup>. See also Ben Jonson, *The Comicall Satyre of Euery Man Ovt of His Hvmor* (London, 1600), *EEBO*, STC 14767, H2<sup>v</sup>.

29. *OED*, 3rd edn., 2006, s.v. 2.c. “plaster, v.”
30. Johannes Posselius, *Dialogves* (London, 1623), *EEBO*, STC 20129, A4v; note English words appear in blackletter and Latin in roman typescript.
31. While author Mathurin Cordier was French in origin, the translator, John Brinsley, was an English educational theorist. Brinsley drew on local and European ideas for his many manuals and translations, which he produced for an audience of provincial English schoolmasters (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. “John Brinsley,” by John Morgan). After its initial publication in 1614, the *Dialogves* was reprinted five times in seventeenth-century England.
32. Mathurin Cordier, *Corderivs Dialogves*, trans. John Brinsley (London, 1636), *EEBO*, STC 5764.2, I1<sup>r-v</sup>. To facilitate reading, I omitted all asterisks, glosses, and brackets except where indicated; on the purpose of marginalia, see A5<sup>r-v</sup>.
33. Cordier, *Corderivs Dialogves*, II<sup>v</sup>.
34. Cordier, *Corderivs Dialogves*, II<sup>v</sup>.
35. Cordier, *Corderivs Dialogves*, II<sup>v</sup>.
36. Cordier, *Corderivs Dialogves*, II<sup>v</sup>.
37. Cordier, *Corderivs Dialogves*, I2<sup>r</sup>.
38. “Things Lost the 24. of December. 1614” (London, 1614), *EEBO*, STC 23952.7.
39. *The Publick Adviser*, nos. 1–19 (London, May 19–September 28, 1657), no. 12, *EEBO*, Thomason / E.912[1], etc.
40. Privy Council, “Whereas There Is and Hath Been Yeerely” (London, 1624), *EEBO*, STC 8722; Tract Supplement / C10:1[13].
41. *Publick Adviser*, no. 10.
42. *Publick Adviser*, no. 5.
43. *Publick Adviser*, no. 9.
44. “Lost or Stol’n, the First and Second Volumes of *Monasticon Anglicanum*” (London, n.d.), *EEBO*, E4:2[148].
45. *Publick Adviser*, nos. 13, 2, 3, 2.
46. *Publick Adviser*, no. 9.
47. Nicholas Breton, *A Poste With a Madde Packet of Letters* (London, 1602), *EEBO*, STC 3684, A1<sup>r</sup>.
48. John Melton, *Astrologaster* (London, 1620), Huntington Library 59477, STC 17804, H2<sup>v</sup>.
49. Melton, *Astrologaster*, G3<sup>v</sup>.
50. Melton, *Astrologaster*, G4<sup>r</sup>.
51. Robert Greene, *A Notable Discouery of Coosenage* (London, 1592), *EEBO*, STC 12280, C3<sup>v</sup>.
52. Thomas Nashe, *Haue With You to Saffron-Walden* (London, 1596), *EEBO*, STC 18369, A3<sup>v</sup>.
53. Nashe, *Haue With You to Saffron-Walden*, A3<sup>v</sup>.

54. Jonson, *Euery Man Ovt*, H2<sup>v</sup>; H2<sup>v</sup>.
55. John Marston, *What You Will* (London, 1607), *EEBO*, STC 17487, E4<sup>v</sup>.
56. Barten Holyday, *Technogamia: Or the Marriages of the Arts* (London, 1618), *EEBO*, STC 13617, C3<sup>f</sup>.
57. Holyday, *Technogamia*, C2<sup>f</sup>; C3<sup>v</sup>.
58. Holyday, *Technogamia*, C3<sup>v</sup>.
59. Thomas Tomkis, *Lingva* (London, 1607), *EEBO*, STC 24104, B3<sup>f</sup>; B3<sup>f</sup>.
60. Walter W. Greg, ed., *Henslowe Papers* (London: Bulen, 1907), 124–125.
61. William Proctor Williams, "What's a Lost Play? Toward a Taxonomy of Lost Plays," in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. McInnis and Steggle, 17–30, 18.
62. Richard Dutton, "The Birth of the Author," in *Texts and Cultural Change in Early Modern England*, eds. Cedric C. Brown and Arthur Marotti (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1997), 153–178, 164.
63. N. W. Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623–73* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 57, 142.
64. Scholars have tried to contextualize the case of Slater "discovering" Downton's play in light of similar instances that characterize his personal history as an actor, manager, company spokesman, and provincial tour leader. However, scholarly evaluations of that history waver from, on the one hand, "a person perhaps more than usually alert to potential business opportunities" (William Ingram, "Playhouses Make Strange Bedfellows: The Case of Aaron and Martin," *Shakespeare Studies* 30 [2002]: 118–127, 121) to, on the other, "a tricky man" (Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, *The Child Actors* [New York: Russell and Russell, 1964], 226) who was "shameless in his dealings with his fellows" (Richard Dutton, *Shakespeare's Theatre: A History* [Hoboken: Wiley, 2018], 146). Indeed, archival evidence presents a checkered picture of Slater on the record for possessing items he was not expected to have: a verdict of "not guilty" for holding stolen clothing; a punishment for touring with fake licenses; as well as sponsorship of an orphan's debt (see biographies in Mark Eccles, "Elizabethan Actors IV: S to End," *Notes and Queries* 40.2 [1993]: 165–176, s.v. "Slater, Martin"; Edwin Nungezer, *A Dictionary of Actors* [New York: AMS, 1929], s.v. "Slater, Martin"). When five playbooks went missing in 1597, the Admiral's Company simply paid the finder, Slater, who had recently quit, for this "theft"; the company did a similarly unremarkable sale with Edward Alleyn in 1602 (Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 32; *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes, 2nd edn. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 332). A company could also retaliate in kind, taking matters into its own hands, just as the King's Men did in 1603–1604, in

“steal[ing]” *The Malcontent*, or, what the character playing Henry Con-dell called, “the book [that] was lost” (George K. Hunter, ed., “Intro-duction,” in *The Malcontent [by] John Marston* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999], 6; Marston [and John Webster], *The Malcontent*, Ind. 73).

Instead of the perspective of the finder (Slater), the perspective of the *loser* (Downton) who was a relatively straight shooter, sheds new light on the case. According to legal records, Downton misplaced the play on 1 December 1597, and Slater found it on 10 December; Slater’s company staged the play on 1 March 1598 (Hillebrand, *Child Actors*, 224; see also *Placita Coram Rege*, roll 1351; Trinity Term, a<sup>o</sup>, 40 Eliz., part 2, m. 830b). What circumstances in late 1597 led up to Downton’s choice of the legal route over other options? On 6 October 1597, fresh from the Pembroke’s Men, who dissolved after the “Isle of Dogs” scandal in July, and with a new baby at home, he signed up to play exclusively with Henslowe, receiving 3d (Foakes, ed., *Henslowe’s Diary*, 240). Apparently, transitioning to the new job challenged Downton’s finances. During the month of November, he received five loans from Henslowe (£7-25-0 for two cloaks pawned on the 2nd; 10s on the 12th; 5s on the 16th; 5s on the 20th; and 40s on the 24th); Henslowe gave him 5s to receive legal counsel two days after his play was found (Foakes, ed., *Henslowe’s Diary*, 72–73). Downton promised to pay back £2 in December, but he borrowed 30s more with Gabriel Spencer for legal costs on 8 March (Foakes, ed., *Henslowe’s Diary*, 77). While Downton did not recover the full estimated use value he originally estimated at £13-6-8, I argue that the amount he did ultimately as a result of the lawsuit receive, £11-11-0, would have enabled Downton to repay Henslowe in full the £11 owed (in the diary, the entire debt is cancelled), and Downton could keep the change for his troubles (for legal awards, see Hillebrand, *Child Actors*, 224). In sum, perhaps the real opportunist arising from this 1597 lost play was Downton.

65. Moseley, “The Stationer to the Readers,” all quotations here and below from A4<sup>r</sup>.
66. Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), #1990.
67. Jean-Christoph Mayer, “Early Buyers and Readers,” in *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare’s First Folio*, ed. Emma Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 103–119, 105.
68. Matt. 18:12, AV.
69. Lowin and Taylor, “The Dedication,” all quotations here and below from A2<sup>r</sup>.

70. "[Meeting] Monday, in the Afternoone," *Calendar of State Papers, Elizabeth I*, vol. 27, *CSP Online Database*, PC 2/22 f.345.
71. Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram, eds., *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 135.
72. George Wither, *The Dark Lantern* (London, 1653), *EEBO*, Wing W3152, A1r; *The Schollers PvrATORY* (London, 1624), *EEBO*, STC 1055:03, B7<sup>r</sup>.



## Like a Virgin: Lost and Reborn Ballads

*Kris McAbee*

Virginity by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept,  
it is ever lost.

—Parolles, *All's Well That Ends Well* (1.1.130–132)<sup>1</sup>

“The Merry Maid of Middlesex,” a broadside ballad that appeared sometime between 1663 and 1674, tells a tale of compiling loss.<sup>2</sup> The ballad’s full title summarizes the plot, explaining that she “had seven Suitors, she her self so said,” but that “through her Mothers means” lost all of them. By the end of the ballad, the maid has little reason to be merry. Her desperate desire to lose her virginity only culminates in losing all seven of her suitors. However, the loss in this ballad is not limited to the merry maid’s sad fate. As with many ballads, the loss is material and textual too. The tune imprint notes that the ballad is to be sung to “a dilicate Northern Tune: Or, The Maid that lost her way.” While many ballads identify non-standard tune titles, scholars such as Claude Simpson have successfully tracked down the tune referents for alternate titles.<sup>3</sup> However, sadly, this poor maid has so lost her way that no one has yet identified a standard

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tune to which this ballad could be sung. The tune imprint apparently alludes to an older ballad titled “The Maid that lost her way,” a ballad which is, unfortunately, now quite lost as well. Despite the fact that “The Merry Maid of Middlesex” is extant (in three editions, at that), this ballad nonetheless exhibits the intrinsic threats of loss when it comes to the ballad as a material and cultural artifact. As multimedia ephemera, whole ballads necessarily experience loss from multiple angles, where the relative success of a ballad in the marketplace may mean the loss of the textual product, just like “The Maid that lost her way.”

In this chapter, I explore early modern broadside ballads as lost texts. As artifacts of cheap print, the majority of extant broadside ballads were preserved by contemporary collectors and, later, nineteenth-century antiquarians. For example, Samuel Pepys is responsible for the largest collection, at over 1800 broadside ballads, a compilation which he began in the 1680s when he acquired John Selden’s collection of several hundred ballads. The preponderance of printed ballads, those that did not make it into such collections, met a variety of other fates: some were pasted on tavern or household walls, others used as pie-liners, pipe stuffing, or toilet paper. As Alexandra Hill has shown, the majority—around 75%—of ballads printed between 1557 and 1640 have been lost. Moreover, she notes, “While the sixteenth century accounts for 69% of the total number of ballads entered in the Register, this represents only 17% of the surviving ballads.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the vibrant ballad culture that so profoundly influenced the literary landscape of Shakespeare’s time is largely lost in print form.

However, the tales printed in these ephemeral broadside ballads often drew from folklore and song traditions and, likewise, their stories lived on in oral culture after printed ballads were used up or destroyed. Years or even decades later, these tales might then re-emerge on a new broadside—with new language, a new tune, or new ornamentation. The ephemeral nature of broadside ballads means that the early modern period conceived of ballads as being inevitably lost, but not gone. The role of ballads in early modern culture does not show that they were so transitory that they were forever verging on obsolescence; instead, while the consumption of individual broadside ballads might mean the loss of the material artifact, the ballad itself would regenerate in “excellent new” forms.<sup>5</sup>

To examine how the early modern period conceived of ballads as both inevitably lost and yet ultimately proliferating, I first investigate the reference to a lost ballad in Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost* as a dramatization of the multifaceted and regenerating existence of ballads. I then take up an established metaphor comparing the proliferation of print to sexual reproduction to consider the case of broadside ballads, which, like virginity in Parolles' articulation, "by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, [...] is ever lost."<sup>6</sup> To characterize broadside ballads as a commodity whose material loss leads to an eventual re-emergence, I draw from ballads' frequent—and often cheekily ironic—representations of virginity as something which not only can be but will be and must be lost. Being so lost results in reproduction, especially when functioning as an object of economic exchange.

*Love's Labor's Lost* provides a clear example of this phenomenon in which a ballad once lost is born again. Before Don Adriano de Armado decides to "turn sonnet"—as do all of the besotted gentlemen of Navarre—the fantastical Spaniard seeks a ballad to woo the beguiling country wench, Jaquenetta (1.2.184). "Is there not a ballet [ballad], boy, of the King and the Beggar?" he asks of his clever page, Moth, who replies, "The world was very guilty of such a ballet some three ages since: but I think now 'tis not to be found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for the writing nor the tune" (1.2.109–114). Though Moth suggests that the ballad is not the most suitable text for wooing, Armado designs to "have that subject newly writ o'er" for his purposes and his detailed, grotesquely florid version of the tale amusingly appears later in the play (1.2.115).

Moth explains that Armado's sought-after ballad, "The King and the Beggar," is lost. If Armado's "newly writ o'er" ballad correctly identifies the subject of the lost "King and the Beggar" ballad, it refers to the legendary tale of King Cophetua, who was shot by Cupid and fell in love with a beggar whom he saw through his window, thereupon abandoning his previous hatred of all women. As Armado's telling would have it,

The magnanimous and most illustrate king Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenelophon; and he it was that might rightly say, Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothanize in the vulgar,— O base and obscure vulgar!—videlicet, He came, saw, and overcame: he came, one; saw two; overcame, three. Who came? the king: why did he come? to see: why did he see? to overcome: to whom came he? to the beggar: what saw

he? The beggar: who overcame he? the beggar. The conclusion is victory: on whose side? the king's. The captive is enriched: on whose side? The beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial: on whose side? the king's: no, on both in one, or one in both. I am the king; for so stands the comparison: thou the beggar; for so witnesseth thy lowliness. (4.1.64–80)

Armado's version, in his characteristically bombastic style, emphasizes the mismatched nature of his desired relationship by lowering Jaquenetta's status to that of a beggar and, of course, elevating his own to that of a king. The ballad of the King and the Beggar appeals to Armado because it allows him to make this comparison. However, what evidence we have about the content of this ballad, lost as it is to Moth, suggests that Armado rather misses the ballad's point: namely, Cupid's irresistible power. When alluded to by the much more insightful and linguistically nimble Mercutio, this ballad merely uses the incongruous pairing of the king with beggar to mock the supremacy of "Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so trim, / When King Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid" (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2.1.12–14). Apparently, Moth further knows enough about the content and tune of the ballad he proclaims lost to discourage Armado from employing it, asserting that it would not "serve" Armado's intended analogy.

While Natalie Roulon argues that the language of extant versions of this ballad may influence the overall logic of the play, today scholars can find no extant version of the ballad earlier than the first quarto of 1598 of *Love's Labor's Lost*, and we have little reason to believe such a previous ballad would bear much resemblance at all to Armado's "newly writ o'er" account.<sup>7</sup> Armado's prose letter to Jaquenetta is, after all, not much of a ballad. Instead, its parody of ostentatious linguistic gestures has more in common with other literary forms. Emma Smith, noting that "his mannerisms seem to burlesque the elaborate styles of a number of well-known Elizabethan writers," names Philip Sidney, John Lyly, and Gabriel Harvey as the most prominent among these.<sup>8</sup> In this sense as well, Armado's revision of a supposedly lost ballad tale dramatizes the crucial role that ballads play as intertexts across the early modern literary landscape.

The earliest extant version of the King Cophetua tale appears as the ballad, "A Song of a Beggar and a King," in Richard Johnson's *The Crown Garland of Golden Roses set forth in Many Pleasant new Songs and Sonnets* (1612). This is the version Thomas Percy collects (with minor changes) in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). The story is

retold, with only some of the same language, in several different editions of broadsides all printed in the late seventeenth century and titled “Cupid’s Revenge.”<sup>9</sup> This later title more acutely describes the thrust of the tale used to demonstrate the immense power of Cupid over mortals who might attempt to reject love.

And yet, despite being lost, this ballad is perhaps Shakespeare’s most frequently referenced. In *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, Ross W. Duffin cites “King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid” as Shakespeare’s most prevalent ballad intertext. He recognizes “five citations in four different plays,” including the two references in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* and the *Romeo and Juliet* allusion above, alongside Benedick’s contempt for both love and balladry: “pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker’s pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid” (*Much Ado About Nothing* 1.1.252–253). He also credits Falstaff’s “O base Assyrian knight... / Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof” as an allusion to the ballad (*2 Henry IV* 5.3.101–102).<sup>10</sup>

In *Reliques*, Percy leaves out the *Much Ado* allusion but includes the other citations. However, he rather complicates the matter for the *Henry IV* reference, noting that William Warburton’s 1747 edition of Shakespeare cites as the source of Falstaff’s quote “an old bombast play of ‘King Cophetua.’” Percy does not dismiss Warburton’s claim simply because such a play is not to be found, acknowledging that many plays were staged but never printed. He connects Warburton’s citation of the lost “King Cophetua” play to when

Ben Jonson says, in his Comedy of *Every Man in his Humour*, act iii. Sc, 4: “I have not the heart to devour thee, an’ I might be made as rich as King Cophetua.” At least there is no mention of King Cophetua’s riches in the present ballad [in Johnson’s *Crown Garland*], which is the oldest I have met with on the subject.<sup>11</sup>

Jonson’s allusion to the King Cophetua story in terms of riches does not definitively remove a lost ballad from the list of potential candidates of sources any more than it confirms a lost play as the source; both are, after all, lost and we have no text prior to Jonson’s 1598 play on which to rely. Instead, the allusion to King Cophetua’s riches confirms that there are associations with the King and the Beggar tale circulating in Shakespeare’s cultural milieu that cannot be tracked down to any specific, extant text.

The exact genre of the tale to which Jonson alludes may not be ascertainable, but this example further proves how ballads and plays shared a vibrant intertextual relationship, as indeed Armado's allusion to the ballad suggests.

Late Elizabethans clearly held a certain fascination for the King and the Beggar tale. In addition to the above allusions to the lost ballad—and potentially a lost play—Helen Sewell, in her study of ballads referenced by Shakespeare, includes a reference in *Midsummer Night's Dream* 4.1. This scene depicts Oberon's orders to Puck to sort out the mismatched pairing between his queen Titania and the ass-headed Bottom, although the exact language she sees as the allusion is unclear.<sup>12</sup> Percy and Sewell both also point out the reference in King Henry's comic response to the Duchess of York's supplications toward the end of *Richard II*: "Our scene is alt'ed from a serious thing, / And now chang'd to 'The Beggar and the King'" (5.3.79–80).<sup>13</sup> However, Walter Foreman argues that this moment instead alludes to George Chapman's 1596 play, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, in which the eponymous character takes on many disguises, including that of a beggar, before tricking his way into becoming king of Egypt.<sup>14</sup> Foreman uses this interpretation to reconsider the date of *Richard II*, placing it—or if nothing else, the insertion of the lines—after Chapman's play of 1596, disputing the other evidence dating *Richard II* no later than 1595.<sup>15</sup> *Richard II*'s King Henry does switch the title from Armado's "The King and the Beggar" to "The Beggar and the King," perhaps further supporting Foreman's claim that the allusion is not to the lost ballad; on the other hand, perhaps the changed syntax is simply more felicitous for supporting Henry's jaunty couplet. After all, Johnson's *Crown Garland* preserves the title as "A Song of a Beggar and a King," so Armado's self-interested reference to the title of the lost ballad provides the exception rather than the rule. In any case, both references make sense in context. And, given the prevalence of allusions to the lost ballad in other plays, it is likely that these lines would call to mind the ballad rather than Chapman's play for some in the audience at *Richard II*.<sup>16</sup>

The energy surrounding the lost "King and the Beggar" ballad in Shakespeare's plays of the 1590s continued in other plays that predate Johnson's 1612 *Crown Garland*.<sup>17</sup> Duffin finds that the song beginning "When Sampson was a tall young man" in Chapman, Jonson, and Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605) not only is a parody of the well-known ballad "A Ditty of Sampson, Judge of Israell," but also uses a tune and

some text that correspond with “A Song of a Beggar and a King” in Johnson’s *Crown Garland*.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Duffin finds a resemblance between this ballad and “The Second Song” in *The Faery Pastoral, or Forest of Elves* (c. 1603), noting the melodic equivalence as well as “The phrase ‘on a day,’ and the character of Cupid shooting arrows” as commonalities.<sup>19</sup>

And so, the “lost” ballad of *Love’s Labor’s Lost* is evoked in multiple plays of Shakespeare’s time. It then proliferates in different editions as “Cupid’s Revenge” decades after its appearance in Johnson’s anthology, but what is likely the earliest explicit reference we have to this ballad—in Armado and Moth’s discussion of it—*already has it as lost*. While Johnson’s is the earliest extant version of the ballad, Duffin has tracked down an old lute tune corresponding to the ballad’s meter. This evidence supports the existence of a song prior to the 1580s that parallels the version in Johnson’s collection: “There are not many known ballad tunes that fit [the metrical pattern of the ballad in Johnson], but one that does so admirably, *The Old Almain* (itself a variant of *The Queen’s Almain*), actually survives in the Dallis Lute Book (1583–1585) as *The King of Africa*, providing a striking but heretofore unrecognized connection to the African King Cophetua and his ballad.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, the lute song whose melody seems to best fit the earliest printed version of “The King and the Beggar” ballad in Johnson’s *Crown Garland* (1612) was set down in lute tablature and identified with the title “The King of Africa” as early as 1583.<sup>21</sup> What Duffin’s discovery adds to the case of this ballad is apparent confirmation that some sort of sung version of the King Cophetua tale existed prior to Shakespeare’s overt reference to it in ballad form. In the absence of a Stationers’ Register entry to date the emergence of this tale as a broadside ballad, Armado and Moth’s conversation about this always already missing ballad demonstrates lostness as a precondition for the ballad form of the lute song, allowing it to have new life in later print.

Ballads that do survive today demonstrate that ballad culture is frequently self-referential about both their production and their eventual loss to the marketplace. Perhaps the most prominent example of ballads’ meta-commentary on their own circulation appears in an early seventeenth-century ballad, “Turners Dish of Lenten Stuff,” which parodies the London street cries of various tradesfolk hawking their wares.<sup>22</sup> Of course, ballads were also sold in the streets through this hawking practice—by singing snatches of the ballads themselves. “Turners Dish” remediates these cries into a ballad, which itself would then be sung to be sold; in

this way, the ballad demonstrates a recursive pattern of performance and material textuality as linked commodity that epitomizes ballad culture.

The final stanza of “Turners Dish” dramatizes the metacommentary on the ballad’s role in the marketplace:

the world is ful of thred bare poets,  
 that live upon their pen:  
 But they will write too eloquent,  
 they are such witty men.  
 But the Tinker with his budget,  
 the begger with his walled,  
 And *Turners* turnd a gallant man,  
 at making of a Ballet.

Unlike King Cophetua’s beggar-turned-queen, the beggar here has no social mobility. Instead, Turner, the author, boasts that unlike elite poets or even the tradesmen he parodies in his petty poetry, he has achieved economic success. Ironically, Turner achieves such success and social mobility by commodifying aspects of the very trades he mocks. While an extant copy of this ballad is available precisely because it was repeatedly sold—perhaps to an original customer before John Selden and then to Samuel Pepys—“archival” is not the standard fate for ballads, whose sale means they will likely be repurposed and lost. The ephemerality of the London cries parodied in the ballad’s text mirrors the intrinsically transitory survival of the ballad as material text.

“Turners Dish” conflates the ballad itself with its own promotion in the market, a phenomenon at work even more explicitly in the 1628 ballad titled, forthrightly, “Come buy this new ballad.”<sup>23</sup> Here, the speaker accuses a new group of people in each stanza—from rich men, to upstarts, to Papists, to women in general—of various forms of hypocrisy. The ballad’s tune, “He tell you but so” embraces the speaker’s provocateur role. Moreover, the title performs the role of the hawker, becoming itself a cry of London, by explicitly selling the commodified perceptions of the balladeer. The ephemerality of the text as well as its reproduction are coded integrally into the ballad’s commodification: buying “this ballad” will require the printing of another.

The examples of “Turners Dish” and “Come buy this new ballad” reveal that ballads’ self-referential language associates their performance as objects of exchange with their commodification and loss to the marketplace. To recall the apparent metaphor offered by Parolles’ depiction of

virginity in the epigraph above: if the broadside ballads were kept precious and intact, protected from the vagaries of economic exchange, they would not proliferate in new printings. In fact, ballads themselves explicitly link the commodification of the text with the commodification of women, even at their most self-referential. Consider a ballad in Pepys' collection known as "The New Corant," which depicts how Jonney convinces Jenny to marry him by offering her money and various goods.<sup>24</sup> The full title is:

The New Corant;  
 Or the merry wooing of Jonney and Jenny.  
 Young Men and Maids if here be any,  
 You'l say this ballet is worth a penny  
 You shall it hear if you will stay.  
 You know the price, buy them away.

This fuller title anticipates the ballad's didactic ending which ties the purchasing of the ballad to the reproductive sex of Jonney and Jenny:

And so for to conclude  
 I do young men advise  
 chuse not a maid to rude  
 But one of a handsome size,  
 And so come let us kiss  
 and make no more delay  
 this Ballets a penny a peice  
 So buy them all away  
 then up with aly aly  
 then up with *Mary* and *Nan*,  
 Now *Johnney* doth lye with *Jenney*  
 and so the World began.

Keep buying this ballad, the speaker suggests, and the world will keep repopulating.

Indeed, virgins (like Jenney before she submits to Jonney) and their marketability are a hot topic in extant broadside ballads. For example, a late seventeenth-century ballad promotes "A Market for young Men: / OR, A / Publick Sale in sundry Places in and about London, where young / beautiful Virgins and graz'd Widows are to be sold for Clip'd Money, at rea- / sonable Rates."<sup>25</sup> The joke here is on the pecuniary euphemism

“cracked within the ring.” According to Gordon Williams’ *Shakespeare’s Sexual Language: A Glossary*: “Two rings [enclose] the inscription around the coin’s circumference. When a crack extended past the inner ring the coin lost currency. The phrase was often used of loss of virginity or sexual reputation, with *ring* acquiring anatomical significance.”<sup>26</sup> Notably, the ballad evokes clipped money, which is below market value: the ballad encourages men to purchase women at reasonable rates, using older coins from which some silver had been clipped off, thereby devaluing the coin. This ballad responds, in ethos if not directly, to an earlier ballad called “An Excellent New SONG, Called, / Rare News for the Female Sex. / Or, Good Luck at last,” which proclaims, “Come maids be of good chear, for joyful news I hear, / *Now e’ery Lass that means to pass must all be puncht this Year.*”<sup>27</sup> This refrain references the Great Recoinage Act of 1695, which required that every older coin that had not yet been clipped must be “punched,”—that is, punctured so as not to remove any silver, but to mark it as being of full value.<sup>28</sup> The ballad thus conflates virginal women with coins losing value and mockingly provides the “joyful news” for young women that they must all also be penetrated to retain their virginal value.

Other ballads less explicitly link virgins themselves to economic exchange but nonetheless commodify maidenheads. “A Marvelous Medicine to cure a great Pain, / If a Maiden-head be lost to get it again,” explains how and where maidenheads can be purchased, with the dubious promise that they can be restored.<sup>29</sup> After listing a series of complicated cures (some of which were, not coincidentally, considered abortifacients at the time), the ballad concludes:

Lo these are our Medicines for Maidens each one  
Which in their Virginitie amisse somewhat fell:  
Pray if ever you hear them make moan  
And gladly would know the place where I dwell  
At the sign of the whip and Eggshell  
Neer Pancake Alley on Salisbury plain  
There shall they find remedy using this well  
*Or else ner recover their Maiden head aga[in.]*

The speaker, hawking his services, presents maidenheads as being inevitably lost, but possibly regained if you know where to spend your money. However, the difficulty of such a restoration is encoded in the material conditions the ballad describes. Salisbury Plain is famously

remote, bare and full of robbers.<sup>30</sup> Pancake Alley is unlikely to be found anywhere on Salisbury Plain. Likewise, the sign of the “Egshell and the Whip” is referenced in the 1630 ballad “London’s Ordinarie” which provides a litany of pub signs and the various demographics who frequent each establishment.<sup>31</sup> One stanza explains:

The Keepers will to the white *Hart*,  
 the Mariners unto the *Ship*:  
 The Beggars they must take their way,  
 to the *Egshell* and the *Whip*.

This ballad suggests that the Egshell and the Whip is associated with beggars. Thus, the instructions in “Marvelous Medicine to cure a great Pain” imply that once you have lost your virginity, you will be among the beggars, looking for a remedy which literally cannot be found.

The complexity of what it means to lose a maidenhead—or a ballad—comes to the fore in “The Crafty Lass of the West: Or, A Pleasant Ditty of a Modest Maid, Who Mortgag’d Her Maiden-Head for a High-Crown’d Hat.”<sup>32</sup> The eponymous crafty lass enters an economic exchange, trading her virginity for a fashionable accessory. The ballad mocks her craftiness, since she and her mother both occupy a confident stance around the functions of female sexuality while, ironically, they fundamentally misread the nature of virginity as recoverable once lost. The lass delights after the initial exchange, “A Hat I have and Money too!” Her mother, predictably, chastises her daughter for incorrectly bargaining while the lass enjoys the results of the deal:

Why sawcy Slut, her Mother said,  
 How was the good Shop-keeper paid?  
 He had my Maiden-head, quoth she,  
 Which has been long a Plague to me.

The ballad participates in an early modern dialogue that is uneasy about the status of virgins, who should be protective of their virginity and yet simultaneously should be encouraged to get married and reproduce. “The Crafty Lass of the West” aligns itself with other humorous ballads in this discourse that mock the pressures of women plagued by their maidenheads, including ballads that ironically invoke the threat of greensickness unless the woman finds a suitable mate.<sup>33</sup> So, while the crafty lass

is relieved to be rid of her maidenhead, the ballad further pursues the joke about literalizing maidenheads as an object of exchange by depicting the mother's irate advice that her daughter should return the hat and "fetch her Maiden-head again."

The shopkeeper happily obliges, leading to the culmination of the jest: as he restores her maidenhead to her, the crafty lass cries, "Thrust it in further Sir, I pray, / For fear I loose it by the way." The deep irony of calling the lass "crafty" in this instance pairs with the absurdity of the notion that having sex again will restore her maidenhead. Yet this double irony underscores and performs the commodification of women's bodies. As such, the ballad dramatizes the way that women are treated as vendible goods—not just in economies of sex and marriage but also in a ballad market that trades on the image of "marketable" virgins, reproducing this image even as the virgins, as well as the ballads that depict them, are "lost" to the marketplace.

In *All's Well That Ends Well* the reprobate Parolles also participates in this discussion about the tenuous nature of virginity. While the ballads emphasize the way that virginity is a marketable commodity, Parolles more explicitly links virginal loss with reproduction. However, the dialogue offered by ballads that demonstrates the commodification of virginity likewise engages how market forces result in reproduction, much as the ballads about the marketing of broadsides imply the necessity of print reproduction to sustain an ephemeral commodity. When Armado and Moth discuss the apparent loss of the King and the Beggar ballad, they do so because the ballad's form, an original material aura—whether a printed broadside or a particular phrasing of the tale—is no longer accessible to them despite the ease and alacrity with which Armado reproduces the ballad's form—the tale itself—with new matter.

Thus, early modern conceptions of the loss of both ballads and maidenheads hinge on a tension between the ephemerality of matter and the reproducibility of form. In the mid-seventeenth century, in the heyday of the broadside ballad, Thomas Hobbes confronts this enigma by rearticulating Plutarch's version of The Ship of Theseus Paradox:

For if, for example, that ship of Theseus, concerning the difference whereof made by continual reparation in taking out the old planks and putting in new, the sophisters of Athens were wont to dispute, were, after all the planks were changed, the same numerical ship it was at the beginning; and if some man had kept the old planks as they were taken out, and by

putting them afterwards together in the same order, had again made a ship of them, this, without doubt, had also been the same numerical ship with that which was at the beginning; and so there would have been two ships numerically the same, which is absurd. But, according to the third opinion, nothing would be the same it was; so that a man standing would not be same he was sitting; nor the water, which is in the vessel, the same with that which is poured out of it. Wherefore the beginning of *individuation* is not always to be taken from either matter alone, or from form alone.<sup>34</sup>

In short, if Theseus had a ship that needed repairs over time, and we eventually replaced every piece of that ship with new materials, would it still be Theseus's ship? It would be Theseus's ship in form. Moreover, if we had saved every piece we took out of the ship to replace, and then we built a ship of all of those original pieces, would that newly assembled ship be Theseus's ship? It would be Theseus's ship in matter. We now in fact have two ships of Theseus, one of form, one of matter. This is the continuing paradox in which the early modern period comfortably resides when it depicts the loss and replication of ballads and virgins as commodified objects of exchange.

## NOTES

1. All references to Shakespeare's plays are to G. Blakemore Evans, ed. *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
2. This date range is provided by the English Short Title Catalog, citation number R214176. Three editions of this ballad are available on the English Broadside Ballad Archive, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu>: EBBA 33272, National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.720; EBBA 34626, Houghton Library, Huth EBB65H, 2.184; EBBA 35325, Houghton Library, 25242.67, 2.125.
3. *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966).
4. Alexandra Hill, "The Lamentable Tale of Lost Ballads in England, 1557–1640," in *Broadsheets: Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (Boston: Brill, 2017), 442, 452.
5. I discuss the titling of reprints and revisions of old, longstanding ballads as "excellent new" in "Resuscitability and 'Excellent New' Early Modern Verse," in *New Technologies and Renaissance Studies 2* (ACMRS, 2014), 199–216.
6. See, for example, Elizabeth Mitchell's essay, "William Hogarth's Pregnant Ballad Sellers and the Engraver's Matrix," in *Ballads and Broad-sides in Britain, 1500–1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), where Mitchell uses early

- modern meanings of “matrix” to connect the printer’s matrix and the womb.
7. Natalie Roulon, “‘King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid’ and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*: Echoes of the Ballad in the Play,” *Notes and Queries* 65.4 (2018): 521–524.
  8. Emma Smith, *Shakespeare’s Comedies* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 100.
  9. These include: EBBA 21038, “Cupid’s Revenge: OR, An Account of a King who slighted all Women, at length was constrained to Marry a Beggar, who proved a very fair and vertuous Queen,” c. 1675–1696, Magdalene College, Pepsy 3.42; EBBA 30992, “CUPID’S REVENGE; OR An Account of a KING, who slighted all Women And at length was forced to marry a BEGGAR,” c. 1700, British Library, C.20.f.9.278–279, Roxburghe 3.278–279; EBBA 33406, “CUPID’S REVENGE, Or, An Account of a KING who slighted all Women, and at length was forced to Marry a Beggar,” date unknown, National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.736; EBBA 33408, “CUPID’S REVENGE; Being an account of a certain Indian King who slighted and despised the most wealthy and beautiful Women, and at length was obligated (by the force of love) to marry a Beggar,” date unknown, National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.738; EBBA 35446, “Cupid’s Revenge: / OR, An Account of a King who slighted all Women, at length was constrained to Marry a Beggar, who proved a very Fair and Vertuous Queen,” c. 1683–1716, Houghton Library EC65.A100.690v2, 1.7–8; EBBA 35447, “CUPID’S REVENGE An Account of a King who slighted all Women, at length was constrain’d to marry a Beggar, who proved a very fair and virtuous Queen,” date unknown, Houghton Library, Hazlitt EC65.A100.690v2, 1.9–10.
  10. Ross W. Duffin, *Shakespeare’s Songbook* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 238.
  11. Thomas Percy, *Percy’s Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (New York: Dutton, 1910), 187.
  12. Helen Sewell, “Shakespeare and the Ballad: A Classification of the Ballads Used by Shakespeare and Instances of Their Occurrence,” *Midwest Folklore* 12.4 (1962): 227.
  13. Percy, 187; Sewell, 227.
  14. Walter C. Foreman, “‘The Beggar and the King’: An Allusion Pointing to the Date of *Richard II*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 24.4 (1973): 462–465.
  15. Evidence for 1595 as the date of *Richard II* includes the 1595 publication of Daniel’s *Civil Wars*, an apparent source for the play, as well as Sir Edward Hoby’s December 1595 letter to Sir Robert Cecil inviting him to witness a private showing of “K. Richard.”

16. Stephen J. Brown sees this reference to the beggar and the king as internal to the logic of *Richard II* and notes how others of Shakespeare's plays, especially *King Lear*, focus on an ironic and revealing encounter between a king a beggar. See, "Shakespeare's King and Beggar," *Yale Review* 64 (1975): 370–395.
17. Matthew Steggle (personal correspondence) identifies a reference in contemporaneous poetry as well, in Marston's 1598 *The Scourge of Villanie*:

Goe buy some ballad of the Faiery King,  
 And of the begger wench, some rogie thing  
 Which thou maist chaunt vnto the chamber-maid  
 To some vile tune, when that thy Maister's laid. (53–56)

John Marston, "In Lectores prorsus indignos," *The scourge of villanie Three bookes of satyres* (London: I. R., 1598).

18. Ross W. Duffin, *Some Other Note: The Lost Songs of English Renaissance Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 224–225.
19. Duffin, *Some Other Note*, 586.
20. Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, 238.
21. Thomas Dallis, *The Dallis Lute Book; The Dublin Virginal*, Trinity College Dublin, IE TCD MS 410, 213.
22. EBBA 20092, c. 1612, Magdalene College, Pepys 1.206–207.
23. EBBA 30030, 1628–1629, British Library, C.20.f.7.36–37, Roxburghe 1.36–37; EBBA 36205, 1628–1629, Manchester Central Library, BR f 821.04 B49, Blackletter Ballads 2.31.
24. EBBA 21308, 1674–1679, Magdalene College, Pepys 3.293.
25. EBBA 21264, c. 1695–1703, Magdalene College, Pepys 3.250; EBBA 21894, c. 1695–1703, Magdalene College, Pepys 4.234.
26. Gordon Williams, *Shakespeare's Sexual Language: A Glossary* (London: Continuum, 1997), 85.
27. EBBA 21197, c. 1672–1696, Magdalene College, Pepys 3.184; EBBA 22348, 1696, Magdalene College, Pepys 5.426.
28. For a popular analysis of this ballad, see Lili Loofbourow, "Restore Your Virginity the 17th-Century Way," *The Hairpin* (November 10, 2010), <https://www.thehairpin.com/2010/11/restore-your-virginity-the-17th-century-way/>.
29. EBBA 30849, 1658–1664, British Library, C.20.f.9.200, Roxburghe 3.200.
30. Edward H. Sudgen, *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925), 447.

31. EBBA 20086, c. 1634–1658, Magdalene College, Pepys 1.192–193; EBBA 30153, c. 1619–1629, British Library, C.20.f.7.212–213, Roxburghe 1.212–213.
32. EBBA 21674, c. 1675–1696, Magdalene College, Pepys 4.7; EBBA 33175, c. 1675–1696, National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.197; EBBA 35153, c. 1675–1696, Houghton Library, Huth EBB65H, 1.52.
33. See, for example, “The Maids Complaint for Want of a Dill Doul”: EBBA 21716, 1681–1684, Magdalene College, Pepys 4.50; EBBA 34199, c. 1680–1690, National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.1459.
34. Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Philosophy* (1655) Part II, Ch. 11, §7.



## Rediscovering Lost Literature in the Stationers' Company Register

*Alexandra Hill*

In the opening prologue to *The Return from Parnassus: The Scourge of Simony* (1606), the third in a trilogy of comedic plays performed at Cambridge University, Momus addresses the audience with a familiar trope:

What is presented here, is an old musty showe, that hath laine this twelfe-moneth in the bottome of a coale-house amongst broomes and old shows, an invension that we are ashamed of, and therefore we have promised the Copies to the Chandlers to wrappe his candles in.<sup>1</sup>

While said in jest on this particular occasion, the problem of loss—whether by chandlers or other means—remains a significant stumbling block for numerous other early modern works.

Analysis of surviving books has, understandably, dominated work on early modern print. Use and format, however, are critical factors behind the loss of print with survival often favoring large tomes that may have spent the last few centuries lying untouched and unread on a library shelf. By contrast, more popular single-sheet ballads, though more likely to be

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reprinted, spent most of their short lives being passed around and pasted on tavern walls. This has a fundamental impact on our understanding of early modern print culture, and it raises the question of the extent to which surviving works represent the books printed and read during the period.

One way to redress the balance is to rediscover lost works. Loss can refer to a physical loss, either in manuscript or print, or to a cultural loss indicating an element of performance or audience which is extremely difficult to recreate. In the context of this chapter, the focus will be on lost printed editions rather than the loss of manuscript or theatrical versions of works.<sup>2</sup>

There are many ways to rediscover lost works. Martin Wiggins describes how it was possible to identify “lost” play manuscripts within previously unexplored archives as well as in more well-cataloged collections.<sup>3</sup> The same is true for poems for which there was a strong manuscript culture during the early seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> Thanks to the work of countless bibliographers and researchers, printed works extant in collections across the UK and North America are well documented in the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC).<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, there may still be unique copies to be discovered in other institutions and private collections. Beyond the hunt for fragments or physical copies, there are also a number of mathematical and document-based techniques for finding the titles and numbers of books which were printed but do not survive in modern-day collections.<sup>6</sup>

The focus of my analysis is on a document that is relatively well-known to students of early modern print in England: the Stationers’ Company Register. Under the printing monopoly of the Stationers’ Company, book production was centered in London with a limited number of masters and presses. When stationers wished to print a book, they paid for the work and entered it in a Register. As a result, the Stationers’ Company Register contains almost all the non-privileged books authorized to be printed during the Elizabethan, Jacobean and early Caroline periods.<sup>7</sup> By cross-referencing entries in the Register with records of extant copies in the ESTC, researchers can create a list of books printed but no longer traceable to an existing copy. Such a list provides new data on the titles available, showing the sheer variety of books on which printers were willing to risk time, capital, and resources. For the more ephemeral works such as jobbing print and single-sheet items, the Register is often the only indication that they were printed at all.

Entries in the Register provide a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data that can be used to explore the lost literary world of early modern England and to help understand the reasons behind loss and survival. Unlike other contemporary documents and catalogs, which only provide evidence of an individual collector's or printer's collection or output, entries in the Register cover a wide range of genres and subjects from a variety of stationers. For this chapter, the focus will be on dramatic and non-dramatic fictional works. These are integral parts of Shakespeare's literary world and represent almost a fifth of entries in the Register. Printed dramatic works, especially those with famous writers, survive well; during the period 1557–1640, 80% of playbook entries can be traced to a surviving copy. But what about other works of prose and verse which were published alongside plays and interludes?

### THE LOST ARE FOUND: USING THE STATIONERS' COMPANY REGISTER

The Stationers' Register is not new to researchers of lost print, having been transcribed by Edward Arber at the end of the nineteenth century and cited in *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640*, Edward Arber, ed., vols. I–IV (London: Privately printed, 1875–1877), hereafter referred to as Arber I, II, III, or IV. Tessa Watt and Angela J. McShane have used the Register to study lost ballads, while Holger Schott Syme (for one) has used the entries to analyze printed playbooks.<sup>8</sup> The Register is also referenced in records of the *Lost Plays Database* and listed by William Proctor Williams as one of the main sources for lost plays along with Henslowe's diary and court documents from the Offices of the Chamber and Revels.<sup>9</sup> In my recent monograph, I analyzed the Register systematically for the first time to provide a list of all the books entered between 1557 and 1640 which no longer exist.<sup>10</sup>

The Mystery of Stationers, which was founded at the beginning of the fifteenth century, encompassed workers from across the book industry including illustrators and bookbinders.<sup>11</sup> Printers became members after the arrival of moveable-type printing in England in 1476, although it was not until the reign of Mary I, when the more affluent independent reformist printers fled the country, that the stationers grew in influence.<sup>12</sup> In 1557 the Worshipful Company of Stationers was incorporated. Unfortunately, the original incorporation charter is lost, but copies show that it

was through this document that members of the company were granted a monopoly over printing in England as well as the power to search and seize illegally printed books.<sup>13</sup> Once again, the members of the Company represented a number of different groups in the printing business including printers, publishers, and booksellers. Many of these roles overlapped, with some members working as a mixture of all three: between 1595 and 1619 stationer Ralph Blower acted as both printer and bookseller as well as paying for entries in the Register.<sup>14</sup>

The print industry was centered in London with a limited number of presses and masters. The Company was responsible for regulating print and this involved keeping a Register at Stationers' Hall of the books members were printing. The stationers' year ran from July to June and, out of the decades of records, the only years missing are July 1571–June 1576.<sup>15</sup> The earliest entries consisted of the name of the stationer making the payment, the title of the work, and the cost. Over the years, entries became more descriptive, including additional information such as the name of the writer or the original language, as in the following entry for Richard Field, dated 9 May 1593:

Entred for his copie a booke intituled *The Theater of fyne Devises conteyninge an hundred morrall Emblemes* translated out of French by THOMAS COMBE / aucthorised vnder the hand of master MICHAEL MORGETRODE.....vj<sup>d</sup> S.<sup>16</sup>

The minimum entry fee was originally 4d, changing to 6d after 1586. Entries with higher license fees indicate the printing of a particularly large or expensive work, which is more likely to survive. The most expensive license for a fictional work was for the satirical verse *Ship of Fooles* (1570) entered by John Cawood in 1567–68 for 2s 6d.<sup>17</sup> It is not surprising why this almost 700-page folio with illustrations survives in large numbers.<sup>18</sup> What is more thought-provoking is why *The pitifull histori[e] of two loving Italians* published in the same year survives, albeit in a single copy, given that it was only a fifty-six page octavo.<sup>19</sup>

The Register was a form of pre-publication censorship, meaning that certain books needed to be authorized by an ecclesiastical official or, for plays entered post-1606, by the Master of the Revels. The level of official scrutiny fluctuated over time and was heavily dependent on the approach of the monarch or religious licensors, with new regulations in both 1586 and 1637.<sup>20</sup> This inconsistency in the implementation of regulations has

raised questions over the reliability of an entry as evidence of a license or authorization to print an edition. Although the exact meaning is not always clear, an entry in the Register did represent permission from the Company to print and there were harsh punishments for any member who printed without a license or who printed another member's work.<sup>21</sup> Even if there were times when a stationer entered a book preemptively but never printed it, this practice was only likely for large projects that fell through, rather than for the cheap print which is statistically the most likely to be lost.<sup>22</sup>

Entries can represent multiple editions of a work and there are precedents for using entries in the Register as evidence of a lost first edition. A well-known example is that of *Jack of Newbery*, a prose narrative that survives in an eighth edition but whose first edition can be traced back to the entry made by Thomas Millington on 7 March 1597.<sup>23</sup> Millington also entered a ballad, now lost, with a similar title four months later. The ballad possibly formed part of an advertising strategy once the larger work went on sale.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Wye Saltonstall's *The Country Mouse, and the City Mouse*, a version of Horace's fable, was entered by Michael Sparke on 31 March 1636 but only survives as a second edition from 1637 and a twelfth edition from 1683.<sup>25</sup> The caveat to the readers in the second edition is particularly pleasing:

This fable is no fine device,  
But an old Fable of two Mice,  
Which desires no commendation  
But to be read for Recreation.  
For these Mice may talke in season,  
Having eaten many a Reason,  
Therefore if the Reader likeum,  
*Mus novum accipit amicum.*  
Which is to say, the Mice intend,  
To count that Reader a new friend.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, the Register cannot provide a list of all the books printed in early modern England. The Register does not include books printed under patents and privileges awarded to individual stationers. For example, there was a King/Queen's printer for official print, who did not require a license for every proclamation published.<sup>27</sup> The register does not contain illegally printed works or, until 1637, multiple editions. It is

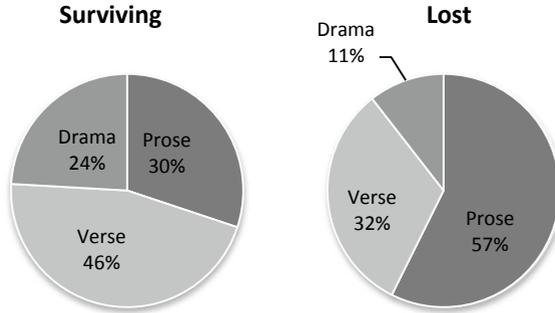
also possible that books were not entered for other reasons, but for the relatively small fee a license was a good investment. Entries gave the stationer the right to print a book as many times as he liked throughout his life and could be passed on to widows and heirs. A deceased member's books could also be assigned to other stationers for a fee.

The basic method I used for analyzing entries in the Register involved creating a database of all the entries based on Arber's transcription.<sup>28</sup> I then cross-referenced entries in the Register with records of extant copies from the ESTC to create a list of books that were printed but no longer survive. I also consulted databases such as *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) and *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (EBBA) in order to match records with more accuracy.<sup>29</sup> At the end of the process, the data revealed that almost half of the books entered in the Register between 1557 and 1640 cannot be traced to an extant copy.<sup>30</sup>

## DRAMATIC READING

Dramatic texts are incredibly important in the study of authorship and the stage, particularly during the heyday of the theater during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In spite of their cultural significance, however, plays and interludes make up only 4% of titles entered in the Register between 1557 and 1640. The number is low but not surprising given that playbooks were relative newcomers in the world of print compared to other more traditional non-fictional and religious texts. Nevertheless, within the context of fictional works, dramatic texts represent a quarter of the entries traced to a surviving copy (see Fig. 7.1). More importantly, many of the surviving texts can be found in multiple copies, further inflating the place of dramatic texts in the corpus of early modern books.

Survival can be attributed to a number of overlapping factors including the role of format, genre, and collecting. Smaller texts tend to survive best when they are saved by a diligent collector and bound up in a larger book. A good example is that of the Thomason Tracts, a collection of over 20,000 news tracts and pamphlets collected and bound together in 2000 volumes by the bookseller George Thomason.<sup>31</sup> While playbooks were frequently printed in smaller formats such as quarto and octavo, they do not fall into the same category of cheap print as tracts and pamphlets.<sup>32</sup>



**Fig. 7.1** Relative survival and loss rates of the drama, prose, and verse works entered into the Stationers' Company Register, 1557–1640

Meanwhile, the format and interactive nature of interludes, shorter dramas which were often printed to be performed, may help explain the lower 66% survival rate.<sup>33</sup>

The impressive 80% survival rate for playbooks is likely down to the collectible nature of the genre. Unlike other more prevalent and often more period-specific texts, early modern plays represent only a small percentage of the books printed.<sup>34</sup> Although the concept of the author has increased in importance since the early modern period, almost half the dramatic works were entered with the name of the writer. This is mainly because a play manuscript was an expensive purchase and a stationer would want to create a detailed entry to protect their investment.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, analysis shows that a book entered with a writer's name was more likely to survive. While almost half of the entries traced to a surviving copy were entered with a writer's name, this was true for only a third of the now-lost items.

It is fascinating, but not surprising, that printed plays survive far better than their manuscript counterparts. The simple truth is printed editions ran into hundreds of copies while there may only be a handful of manuscript versions.<sup>36</sup> The durability of print over the manuscript or performed version is also borne out in contemporary evidence. In a preface addressed to Robert Keyser, one of the managers of the Children of the Queen's Revels, bookseller Walter Burre relates the story of saving the play *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* in print after it had failed on the stage:

you afterwards sent it to mee, yet being an infant and somewhat ragged, I haue fostred it priuately in my bosome these two yeares, and now to shew, my loue returne it to you, clad in good lasting cloaths, which scarce memory will weare out, and able to speake for it selfe.<sup>37</sup>

David McInnis and Matthew Steggle have already shown how the number of extant stage plays is greatly outnumbered by the number of identified lost plays.<sup>38</sup> It is unfortunate that printed editions cannot be relied upon as evidence of performed versions although the popularity of the printed version of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* may explain why the failed play returned to the stage later in the century.<sup>39</sup>

Even if a dramatic text does survive in print, the Register can provide additional evidence of who performed it and where, even when the information is not printed in surviving editions. The title page of *A Courtly Masque; The Device Called the World Tost at Tennis* (1620) advertises the masque as having “beene divers times presented” by Prince Charles’s Men.<sup>40</sup> The entry in the Register is more specific, describing the work as being “acted at the Princes Armes.”<sup>41</sup> The Princes Arms was a tavern in 17 Fleet Street in London with known links to Princes Henry and Charles; the top floor, referred to as Prince Henry’s Room, was rumored to have been used by the young princes for council meetings.

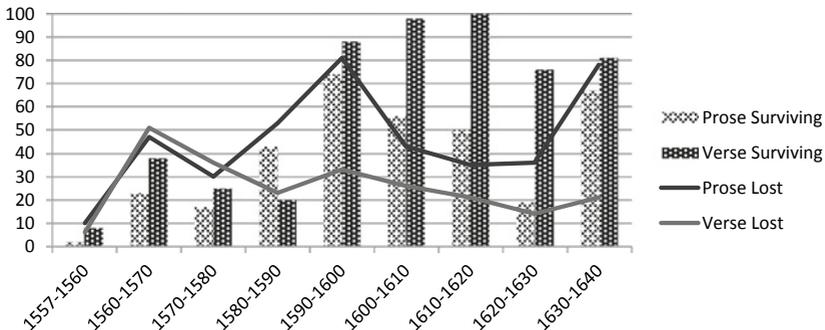
The Register entries are invaluable when it comes to rediscovering entire genres of print which cannot be traced to a single surviving copy. Playbills were single-sheet items used by players and companies to advertise upcoming performances.<sup>42</sup> We know the format of playbills as they were part of a patent dispute over the printing of broadsheets in 1621.<sup>43</sup> Playbills are even mentioned in contemporary dramas. In one scene in *Histrion-mastix* (c. 1602), a player (Belch) is seen putting up “text billes for playes” by a Captain.<sup>44</sup> It is unclear if Belch is using printed playbills and the lack of any surviving copies pre-1640 suggests that bills were written in manuscript. The Register, however, records a number of entries for “billes for players” entered and assigned to different stationers. The first entry was made by John Charlewood in 1587 who paid 2s 6d for the license, suggesting that a good amount of print was expected.<sup>45</sup> After Charlewood’s death in 1593, the right to print playbills was assigned over to James Roberts.<sup>46</sup> The bills continued to change hands after members’ deaths, being assigned to William Jaggard in 1615 and bought from his daughter-in-law Dorothy (wife of Isaac Jaggard) by Thomas and Richard Cotes in 1627.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the license for printed playbills continued

to be bought and assigned across the decades suggests that they were a valuable commodity for a printer. It is also interesting to note how the stationers who held the license were all printers of dramatic texts. Roberts, Jaggard, and Cotes in particular all printed editions of William Shakespeare's work.<sup>48</sup>

### A MOST PLEASANT HISTORY OF PROSE AND POETRY

Given the relatively high survival rates of dramatic texts that were entered in the Register, it is time to look at other works of verse and prose fiction which were not so fortunate. Out of the 1529 entries of verse and prose works entered in the Register, only 58% can be traced to an extant copy. This amounts to over 600 lost editions.<sup>49</sup> The number is far higher when including broadside ballads but they are excluded here as they are a distinct form of print, mixing both dramatic and non-dramatic elements and—with by far the lowest rate of survival of only 10%—already have many pages devoted to them.<sup>50</sup>

Figure 7.2 demonstrates the changes in loss and survival over the decades for verse and prose works. While the percentage of these works entered did not radically change, the survival rate between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries rose from 48 to 67%. More noteworthy is the fact that the survival rate of prose works entered is only 46% whereas for verse works the rate is 69%. The higher survival rate of verse



**Fig. 7.2** Comparison of the loss and survival of prose and verse works entered in the Register, 1557–1640

books can be attributed partly to changes in taste. While similar numbers of prose works were entered in both centuries, more verse texts were entered in the seventeenth century when the chances of survival were higher. Changes in an entry over the two centuries, however, cannot be the only reason as, in an analysis of lost books printed in French based on sixteenth-century bibliographies, Alexander S. Wilkinson noticed a similarly higher loss of prose works compared to verse and dramatic works.<sup>51</sup>

Delving more deeply into the entries provides comparisons for survival between genres. Over 70% of epigram books entered can be traced to a surviving copy. Books of epigrams were collections of short poems, often with satirical or moral meanings, expanded from the Classical tradition.<sup>52</sup> Books could contain hundreds of poems with the author of *Chrestoleros* (1598) keen to emphasize the value for money he felt his book of epigrams gave compared to other forms of print:

Reader thou think'st that Epigrams be rife,  
Because by hundred they are flocking here.  
I reade an hundred pamphlets; for my life  
Could I finde matter for two verses there?  
Two hundred ballets yielded me no more,  
Besides barraine reading and conference.  
Besides whole legends of the rustie store,  
Of stories and whole volumes voyde of sense.  
And yet the Printer thinks that he shall leese,  
Which buyes my Epigrams at pence a peece.<sup>53</sup>

It is a very different story at the other end of the survival spectrum. Small story booklets, later known as chapbooks, developed out of the ballad tradition. Unlike many other forms of verse and prose they consisted of only a few pages, were cheap to buy, and easy to read.<sup>54</sup> Some titles of lost booklets include “Sir John Barlicorne” (1634), “A pill to purge Melancholly. or a discourse betweene Tell tale and heare all” (1637), and “Cupids progresse &c” (1640), all entered by well-known ballad booksellers.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, only a fifth of these entries can be traced to an extant copy. Survival frequently favors elite texts whereas the Register provides evidence of other types of print that were accessible to a wider range of readers and consumers. It implies that literacy was more widespread than is evidenced by surviving literature alone.<sup>56</sup>

While the numbers provide an overall view of entry, loss, and survival, titles provide information on the loss of individual texts. The danger with only having a title is that it is easy to get dragged down the rabbit hole looking for clues as to its meaning especially when titles reveal aspects of early modern life beyond the book trade. One such title is “A fancie on the fall of the Dagger in Cheape,” entered by John Wolfe in 1582 but now lost.<sup>57</sup> A quick search reveals that the “Dagger in Cheape” is a reference to the Dagger Inn in Foster Lane in London’s Cheapside.<sup>58</sup> The inn itself is gone but is mentioned in a number of contemporary works. In *The Penniless Parliament of Threed-bare Poets* (1608), the anonymous writer comments to a group of soldiers:

For I will prove it, that a Mince Pie is better than a Musket; and he that dare gaine-say me, let him meete me at the Dagger in Cheape with a Case of Pewter-Spoones, and I will answere it.<sup>59</sup>

The inn was famous for its pies with visual puns of the meal appearing on tradesmen’s tokens for the inn in the late seventeenth century.<sup>60</sup> The inn was close to Stationers’ Hall and was also noted in plays of the period.<sup>61</sup> In *Histrion-mastix* (c. 1602), as Belch watches the Captain exit he comments “and please you let them be dagger pies,” while in Ben Jonson’s *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) Iniquity comments that the apprentices take money from their masters “to spend it in pies, at the *Dagger*, and the *Wool sacke*.”<sup>62</sup>

Loss of print means a loss of reaction to contemporary events.<sup>63</sup> “A sadd Sonnet of Thomas Crowe late One of the y[e]omen of her Majesties Guard, wrytten by One of his fellowes” was entered by Ralph Hancock on 24 February 1593.<sup>64</sup> While the printed sonnet is lost and there are no other references to the author or the event in the Register, the repercussions can be traced in contemporary documents. In a letter written to the Sheriff of the Peace in Middlesex in 1593 the writer pleads for the release of Claves Cornelius, a man from the Low Countries “brought in[to] question about a murther that was comitted upon one Crowe, a Yeoman of the Guard to Her Majestic.” Even though he was acquitted by law he had yet to be released half a year later.<sup>65</sup>

The Register is also useful for discovering the working titles of books and providing an insight into their creation. Poet and translator Josuah Sylvester (1563–1618) wrote a collection of elegies on the death of his patron Prince Henry Frederick, the firstborn son of James I, entitled *Lachrimæ Lachrimarum. Or the Distillation of Teares Shede for the*

*Untymely Death of the Incomparable Prince Panaretus*.<sup>66</sup> The entry made by stationer Humphrey Lownes Junior on 27 November 1612, entered only three weeks after Henry's death, lists the original title as "Lachrymæ Domesticiæ. A viall of hous[e] hold teares shedd over prynce Henryes hearse." The final title of the printed book is grander and feeds on the national feeling of loss that gripped England after the death of such a popular prince so young.

The entry also describes the work as written "by his hignes fyrst worst Poett and pencioner."<sup>67</sup> Josuah Sylvester was the first professional poet to receive an annual pension from Prince Henry, collecting £20 a year from 1609 until the Prince's death in 1612.<sup>68</sup> The 1610s were a particularly successful decade for verse with survival rates reaching playbook levels. This was in part due to the printing of collectible panegyric verse following the death of Prince Henry in 1612, which accounts for 10% of the entries.<sup>69</sup>

"ALAS; WHAT IS ALL THY GLORY BUT A SHORT  
PLAY, FULL OF MIRTH TILL THE LAST ACT,  
AND THAT GOES OFF IN A TRAGEDIE"<sup>70</sup>

So what can be rediscovered through analysis of entries in the Stationers' Register? For the world of early modern drama, prose, and verse, the Register provides the titles of over 700 works that were entered during the period 1557–1640 that can no longer be traced to a surviving copy. Over half of the lost items were works of prose with verse and dramatic texts having much higher overall survival rates.

The high survival rate of printed playbooks, although allowing for plenty of textual research, potentially obscures the overwhelming rate of loss for manuscript versions of early modern plays. Even for surviving works the titles can provide clues as to original titles and players that may not make it to the printed edition. For example, when George Chapman's play *The Gentleman Usher* was entered by Valentine Sims in 1605 it was listed as "Vincentio and Margaret" after the two main protagonists.<sup>71</sup>

Beyond the titles, the numbers show fluctuations in loss and survival as well as in changing tastes and genres over the decades. It is only after the 1590s that any significant numbers of dramatic works were entered in the Register. The evidence also demonstrates the varying loss rates within

the individual genres. Interludes and story booklets are greatly underrepresented through surviving copies compared to epigram collections and playbooks. For more ephemeral print such as playbills, for which there are no surviving copies, the Register is invaluable.

The entries of drama, verse, and prose works in the Register represent only a fraction of the data that has been rediscovered. The Stationers' Company Register is a fascinating resource for lost print, providing invaluable evidence of books printed in a range of genres and formats as well as additional context to surviving works and the printers, publishers, booksellers, and writers involved in creating them. Analysis of the Register provides a list of thousands of lost editions including ballads, news items, jobbing print, religious texts, and non-fictional works. The addition of lost works to existing data is fundamental in filling the gaps left by the vagaries of survival. As the study of the Register proves, there is more out there yet to be discovered.

## NOTES

1. Anonymous, *The Returne from Pernassus; or the Scourge of Simony Publicly Acted by the Students in Saint Iohns Colledge in Cambridge* (London: G. Eld for Iohn Wright, 1606), sig. A2.
2. Manuscript and oral culture play a large part in survival with the tunes of early modern printed ballads surviving long into the nineteenth century thanks to the oral tradition, see Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 411.
3. Martin Wiggins, “Where to Find Lost Plays,” in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 255–278.
4. Andrew McRae, “Manuscript Culture and Popular Print,” in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Vol. 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131.
5. <http://estc.bl.uk/>.
6. For a range of techniques and analyses, see Flavia Bruni and Andrew Petegree, eds., *Lost Books: Reconstructing the Print World of Pre-Industrial Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
7. Certain genres, such as law books, were held under privilege by both stationers and non-members of Company allowing them to publish works without entering them into the Register. Certain institutions such as the universities of Oxford and Cambridge also had their own printers that were not regulated by the Company.

8. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 42; Angela J. McShane, *Political Broadside Ballads of Seventeenth-Century England: A Critical Bibliography* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011); Holger Schott Syme, “Thomas Creede, William Barley, and the Venture of Printing Plays,” in *Shakespeare’s Stationers: Studies in Cultural Bibliography*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 27.
9. [https://lostplays.folger.edu/Works\\_Cited](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Works_Cited). William Proctor Williams, “What Is a Lost Play? Towards a Taxonomy of Lost Plays,” in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, 19–20.
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PART II

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“To know wher a thinge is”:  
Searching for Answers



# Lost Plays and Other Lost Things: Ways of Being Lost

*William Ingram*

## PREMISES

No historical fact is capable either of philosophical proof or of direct demonstration. Under these circumstances the development of method and the suggestive use of evidence become of really serious importance by the side of the careful chronicling of ascertained results.

—W. W. Greg<sup>1</sup>

Greg's place in theater history is well established, even as we brush aside such cautions as he offered us in 1908. In the passage above he listed three things “of really serious importance” to theater historians, the first

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**Electronic supplementary material** The online version of this chapter ([https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36867-8\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36867-8_8)) contains an essay on the life of George Hasell, which is available to authorized users.

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of them—and the one least in favor at the moment—being “the development of method.” Stephen Jay Gould, nearly a century later, said much the same thing: “Facts have no independent existence in science, or in any human endeavor; theories grant differing weights, values, and descriptions, even to the most empirical and undeniable of observations.”<sup>2</sup>

What Greg the humanist and Gould the scientist shared was their sense that information by itself was inert, that its conversion to knowledge was requisite, and that such conversion was the result of an informed procedure—“method” to Greg, “theory” to Gould—that was capable of being made explicit. Information by itself—what Peter Holland has called our discipline’s “traditionally positivist accumulation of data,” and what Ronald Vince has called “the documentary imperative”—is in this view inert.<sup>3</sup>

But if information invites various interpretations, its absence invites even more various interpretations. While the absence of information is itself information, this particular kind of information-about-absence requires a special sort of methodological approach. The second of Greg’s things of serious importance is “the suggestive use of evidence,” and we probably will need to rephrase that as “the even more suggestive use of non-evidence.”

We may be suspicious of a phrase such as “the suggestive use of,” but we know the activity better by its modern technical term “massaging.” And the massaging of data is required because data, by itself, often doesn’t “make sense,” and we need it to make sense in order to fit it into our desired narratives. As Charles Martindale says, “there is nothing outside the discourses of history by which accounts of the past can be tested or checked. There is no independent access to historical ‘reality’ outside the discourses which constitute it.”<sup>4</sup> So what Greg imagined as “method” reduces, in our own day, to discourse, and discourse often reduces in turn to rhetorical deftness, which means that, in practice, information becomes inseparable from its presentation.

## I

There are two ways of being lost. One we can know about, the other we can’t. We can know something is lost if we have evidence that it once existed; a name, a reference. We can properly call those things “lost.” But we can’t call something lost if we don’t know anything about it other than our assumption that it must have existed. These things are simply

“unknowns.” And all the evidence suggests that in our discipline the “unknowns” outnumber the “lost” by a considerable margin.

One of the unknowns is how many commercial plays were staged in London during the period of our interest. A currently popular estimate is 3000, though that strikes me as low. Of those 3000 (or more) plays, the texts of only a pitifully small handful—a recent estimate is 543—have survived. That means we have a sample of about one-sixth of the corpus we profess to discuss, and we generalize about that corpus—“early modern plays”—on the basis of that surviving one-sixth. We also know something about roughly 744 playtexts that are identifiable as lost.<sup>5</sup> But even adding the extant playtexts and known lost plays together—despite our knowing almost nothing about the lost plays beyond, in many cases, their titles—we still know even less, indeed we know nothing, about almost sixty percent of what was actually seen on stage during that period.

One index of this loss is Thomas Heywood’s claim in 1633 to have “had either an entire hand or at least a main finger” in 220 plays.<sup>6</sup> That number alone is almost half the known corpus of surviving texts. And we have no clue whether all these unknown plays—the great bulk of Heywood’s 220 plays and all the other missing plays as well—were very much *like* the few that have survived, or whether they perished because they were *unlike* those that survived. As McInnis and Steggle say of surviving plays, “their very survival makes them untypical.”<sup>7</sup>

So what is principally lost to us as theater historians is information. Not the loss or mutability of slippery information embedded within existing texts, as postmodernists would have us believe. Those are appropriate concerns, but not in this context. We are concerned with the loss of information *about* those texts, along with the loss of the texts themselves and the loss of information about the people and places that had a relationship to those texts, information that would provide (that much misused word) context.

By information I don’t mean knowledge; the latter results from the application of thought to the former, and can take various forms, often influenced heavily by the rhetoric of its presentation. We have no commonly agreed procedure for assessing this process, other than expressing or withholding our individual approbation of its results.

And on that topic the postmodernist does have something to tell us. A common practice among theater historians is to construct coherent narratives out of whatever data they choose to work with. Narratives about loss, while centered upon absent data rather than present data, still seek

for coherence. And the coherent narrative, when well-wrought, can be a pleasure to read, even dangerously seductive. In this sense postmodernists are useful to theater historians because they remind us that our coherent narratives, by the very fact of their being coherent, are falsifications, the result of our imputing meaning to data and thereby turning data into a structure of facts that cohere. We do this because we quite reasonably want our narratives to make sense, to succeed.

But we may sometimes go too far, confusing coherence with closure, and the result will be the sort of scholarship we've all encountered in our discipline, by scholars who are at pains to show that they know how things really were, who declare their narratives to be the last word needed on whatever the topic may be. This approach is unfortunate, because there's always more than one way to interpret (or assign meaning to) data, always more than one way to explain the phenomena that engage our interest; and the goal of theater history research is not to shut down alternative readings but to encourage them. Jonathan Goldberg, a postmodernist, advises caution about the narratives we ourselves construct; their value "lies in their contingency, not in some security or consolation they may offer."<sup>8</sup> It's this false sense of security that allows narratives to harden into positivist or essentialist metanarratives, readings of data that become mistaken for truth.

The theme of this volume is lost plays and other kinds of loss, a difficult topic, because a narrative about what isn't there poses a special challenge. The editors of this volume recognize this, and have invited us to "develop models and techniques for thinking about lost plays and other lost early modern works." The emphasis here is clearly upon lost texts. Why texts? Because texts are our stock in trade. Texts are what we teach, what we critique, what we profess. When they exist they're tangible, reproducible, editable. When they don't, they're a special problem. Though we acknowledge that the teleology of playtexts is performance, and we know that early modern playwrights wrote plays intending them to be performed, those performances were evanescent, variable, unpredictable, all the things texts aren't, or aren't meant to be. Perhaps that's why we aren't equally moved by the absence of any useful data about early performances, even of the texts we have. And given that most playtexts were performed more than once, the number of lost performances far outweighs the number of lost playtexts.

But the fact is that theater historians have to contend not only with lost playtexts and lost performances, but also with lost playhouses, lost

stage players, lost wig makers and carpenters and investors, and their lost wives and children; and they are all lost because we have lost (or have not yet found) the information that would tell us more about them. We have fantasies about how much more we would know if we had such information.

But such fantasies can be misleading. Readers of the news recently learned of the recovery of the remains of what has been identified as the Curtain playhouse. The early announcement by the staff of the Museum of London Archaeology (a section of the Museum of London) that the playhouse appeared to be rectangular has since become a topic of controversy, with arguments offered on both sides, and subsequent hesitation even from some MOLA staff. But the initial announcement has achieved much wider circulation than the later uncertainty, and we will be told for years to come that the Curtain was a rectangle. The “View of the Citie of London from the North,” c. 1599, though ambiguous, suggests it was round, as does the Chorus in *Henry V*, who calls it a “wooden O.” Round, rectangular; the truth of the matter is still lost.

We all know about the marriage license issued to William Shaxpere and Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton. There is such a license; that’s information. But it’s not a fact; it’s dismissed as an error because we prefer the narrative about Ann Hathaway of Shottery.

Cuthbert Burbage declared in 1635 that his father James was the first builder of playhouses, and our current narrative positions the Theater as the first playhouse built in greater London in 1576. Recent evidence suggests that Jerome Savage’s playhouse at Newington Butts may have been in operation before the Theater, but theater historians from Chambers onward have preferred James Burbage, who had a famous theatrical son, to Jerome Savage, who didn’t. So again the less satisfying alternative narrative disappears.

The playhouse at Newington Butts is truly lost, buried beneath the Elephant and Castle shopping center, and not likely to be excavated any time soon. Not only its shape but even its name is lost to us, though the leases to the premises speak of a structure “called the plaie howse,”<sup>9</sup> which may be either a generic statement about what kind of building it was or evidence that its name was in fact the Playhouse. These are two alternative possibilities, two narratives, and we can’t reasonably reject either one.<sup>10</sup>

## II

My own experience of lostness has taken the form of a long essay. Not about a lost playtext, or even the context of a lost playtext, but about a lost stage player. His name was George Hasell, and his story is a partial refutation of what I've just said. Heretofore theater historians have known nothing about George Hasell except that his name occurs in a document long known to scholars but whose meaning is almost impenetrable. It's a record of the arrival of two different companies of stage players at the town of Leicester, on two separate days in the same week in 1584, and of the seeming controversy between them, to the extent that the Leicester town clerk was able to understand and record it.

On Tuesday 3 March 1584—Shrove Tuesday—the Leicester town clerk noted that a company of stage players had arrived asking license to perform. They showed,

for there aucthoritye ... an Indenture of Lycense from one Mr Edmonde Tylneye esquier Mr of her *Maiesties* Revelles of the one *parte*, and George Haysell of Wisbiche in the Ile of Elye in the Countie of Cambridge gentleman on the other *parte*. The w<sup>ch</sup> indenture is dated the vj<sup>th</sup> daie of februarye in the xxv<sup>th</sup> yere of her *maiesties* Raign [*i.e.* 1583] ... The forsed Haysell is nowe the chefe playor &c.

And three days later—on Friday 6 March 1584, three days into Lent—another company of players arrived at Leicester:

Certen players came before Mr Mayor ... who seyde they were the earle of wosters men: who seyde the forseyd playors [*i.e.*, the Tuesday players] were not lafully aucthorysed, & y<sup>t</sup> they had taken from them there *commissions*. but it is vntrue, for they forgat there box at the Inn in leicester, & so these menn gat yt & they sea the seyde Haysell was not here hymself & he sent these to Grantom to the seyde Haysell, who dwellithe there.<sup>11</sup>

One is hard pressed to untangle the syntax of this passage. But my principal interest is the mention of “George Haysell,” a name otherwise unknown in the history of the early theater. (Chambers and others spell it Hasell, as will I.) Like many a lost stage play, Hasell is a lost person; we know his name, and the document suggests that he—like a lost play—had some relation to a company of players; but we know nothing else about

him. His name is connected with the early theater in this one document only, in which he is said in the earlier entry to be from Wisbech, Cambs, and in the later entry to be from Grantham, Lincs. So who was he?

Unlike playtexts, people usually leave documentary traces of their passage through life, so a search for information about George Hasell the person is likely to be more fruitful than a search for similar information about a hypothetical lost play perhaps called “The Tragical Historie of George Hasell.” Some years ago I was piqued enough by the puzzle of George Hasell to go on a search for him. My search was simultaneously very fruitful and not at all helpful. I found enough documents to tell me a great deal about George Hasell, much of it interesting, some of it fascinating, but none of the documents told me anything at all about his connection with a company of stage players said to belong to the Master of the Revels, or indeed about his relationship to any aspect of early theater or drama. In other words, although I had found Hasell, in this important respect he is still lost.

I cobbled together a found-but-still-lost narrative of what I had learned, and the result is an essay of some 11,000 words in which I trace Hasell’s life from his early manhood right up to the 1584 document cited above, and in which I convey both a great deal of information about George Hasell and not really anything useful at all about George Hasell’s connection with stage players, if indeed there was one. It was a frustrating essay to write—it shines light everywhere except where I want it to—and is perhaps equally frustrating to read. By courtesy of the publishers, you can find my essay on the found-but-still-lost George Hasell in the online appendix accompanying this volume.

So, if you’re up to the challenge, read it. You’ll learn a lot about George Hasell, and some of what you learn will have something to do with theater history, but you’ll have to figure out what that is. Much of the essay is what’s called “social history”—as any biography would be—so perhaps it will be boring to theater historians. But the whole of this volume is about projects on the ragged edge of discourse, where our discipline runs out of stuff to work with, and where our narrative desires and the available data are unhappily married. Perhaps, out here on the edge of the darkness, we must rethink the narrow bounds of our sub-discipline, too long limited to the history of playhouses and of playing companies, and contemplate a more holistic approach, in which theater history expands into economics and demography and cultural practices until it becomes indistinguishable from social history.

## NOTES

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2. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 759.
3. W. B. Worthen and Peter Holland, eds., *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xvi; Ronald Vince, "Theatre History as an Academic Discipline," in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, eds. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 7.
4. Charles Martindale, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19–20.
5. These figures are from David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, "Nothing will come of nothing? Or, What can we learn from plays that don't exist?," in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.
6. Thomas Heywood, "To the Reader," in *The English Traveller* (London, 1633), sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.
7. McInnis and Steggle, "Nothing will come of nothing?" 2.
8. Jonathan Goldberg, *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts* (NY: Methuen, 1986), 7.
9. Chapter library, Canterbury, Register W23, f.292<sup>v</sup>.
10. Laurie Johnson proposes that one can indeed be rejected: "The Two Names of Newington Butts," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 68.2 (2017): 192–198.
11. I am grateful to Mrs. G. C. Parkes of the Leicestershire Record Office for furnishing me with photocopies of the original document (Leicester Hall Papers, BR.II/18/1, ff. 38 and 42) from which the present extracts have been reproduced *literatim*. The text in Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), 2.221–222, is based upon earlier printed sources and continues their errors.



## Ludwig Becker's Shakespeare

*Ian Donaldson*

Ludwig Becker is chiefly remembered today for his role in the doomed expedition led by Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills that set out in 1860 to explore a vast tract of eastern Australia, still largely unknown at that time to European settlers, that stretched from Melbourne in the south to the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north. In April 1861, eight months into the long journey, Becker, aged fifty-three, was to die of scurvy and heat exhaustion at Bulloo River in Southern Queensland while awaiting the return from the Gulf of an advance party led by Burke and Wills. Other members of the ill-fated expedition had died along the way, or were soon to do so. The leaders themselves were to perish after a series of tragic misunderstandings on their homeward journey. One member of the original expedition would later be found by a rescue party and brought back to Melbourne, but there were no other survivors. Becker's detailed records of the expedition are preserved today in the State Library of Victoria, along with his meticulous drawings of desert landscapes, of owlet moths and dragon lizards and flycatchers and skinks and beetles and "a parasite found in the armpit of a gecko," and

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of the shimmering lines of camels that had been imported, at his suggestion, from India to accompany the expedition. A century later Becker's drawings were to inspire a famous series of paintings by Sir Sidney Nolan of this bizarrely heroic journey.<sup>1</sup>

Artist, geologist, zoologist, ethnographer, musician, ventriloquist, mimic, Becker was "one of those universal geniuses who can do anything," as one dazzled admirer—Lady Denison, wife of the local Governor—declared after meeting him in Hobart soon after his arrival in Australia in 1851.<sup>2</sup> It was in quite another field, however, that Becker's name had recently gained international prominence. For shortly before leaving his native Germany for Australia Becker had made two startling discoveries that had caught the attention of Shakespearean scholars across the world. What he had found were not any lost plays by Shakespeare or any of his contemporaries. Becker was not in any sense a textual scholar, and playbooks were of lesser interest to him than other kinds of material objects, that seemed to offer a more tangible, visible connection with the historical past. His discoveries came at a time of intense interest within the Shakespearean world in material culture and systems of knowledge: in skulls and skeletal remains, in craniology and phrenology, in busts and portraits and other forms of artistic representation; in items and sciences that might be thought in some sense to reflect or illuminate Shakespeare's phenomenal genius.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1840s, while employed as Court Painter to Archduke Ludwig III in Darmstadt, Becker had begun to assemble an impressive personal collection of coins, antiquities, and geological and zoological specimens, many of which he had gathered on fossicking expeditions along the Rhine Valley. His collection contained paintings and drawings from various parts of Europe, including (it was said) works by Rembrandt, Raphael, Cranach, and an unknown member of Van Dyck's studio. Leaving the Archduke's employment a few years later in order to look after his brother Karl, then gravely ill with typhoid in Mainz, Ludwig spent his spare hours in the many antique shops of that city, hunting for further treasures to add to his collection. It was in one of these shops in 1847 that he made the first of his thrilling discoveries: a miniature portrait in oils which bore on its frame the single heart-stopping word "Shakespeare." The portrait showed a man on his deathbed—or a man already dead, perhaps, laid out ceremoniously upon a bier—his head encircled with a laurel wreath. In the background was a burning taper, along with a date painted in gold: "1637" (Fig. 9.1).



**Fig. 9.1** Deathbed portrait, 1637, oils, 10.5 cm × 14 cm, artist unknown (*Photo* Dagmar Eichberger; image courtesy of Christian and Andrea Vogel, Affolterbach)

There was one troublesome feature of this fascinating work, however, that needed to be explained, as Becker soon came to realize. Why should a deathbed portrait of William Shakespeare, who died in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1616, display so prominently by the dead man's bedside the date, "1637"? Becker eventually hit on an answer to this small puzzle. The miniature portrait—the kind of work at which he himself as a portraitist also excelled—was not (he decided) an original, but a copy of an earlier now-lost portrait of Shakespeare painted at the time of his death. And there was another even more exciting possibility, as he came to realize. The portrait might not be based on another painting at all. Its original might well have been "an existing death mask or statue": a three-dimensional cranial model of Shakespeare, that, when discovered, would bear even closer witness to the physical appearance of the world's most famous writer. The challenge, which Becker now eagerly seized, was to track down and show to the world this priceless item.

In a small pamphlet published in Edinburgh shortly before his departure for Australia in 1850 Becker was to describe his search for this object and its surprising outcome.<sup>4</sup> The provenance of the miniature portrait he had bought in Mainz, he had reasoned, might furnish a clue as to the

present location of the original work from which he was now convinced the portrait had been copied. As a first step, he had secured two letters authenticating the purchase. The first was from the antiquary who had sold him the portrait, S. Jourdan, who in a formal statement dated 17 March 1847 and duly witnessed by the city's mayor declared that he had obtained the picture "*showing Shakespeare on his deathbed*" at an auction of the deceased estate of Count and Canon Francis von Kesselstatt, a local nobleman and dignitary of the church, in 1842. In a second letter dated 28 February 1847 Professor Nikolaus Müller, Supervisor of the Mainz Gallery, stated that he had been a long-time friend of the late Count, and that the Kesselstatt family had for many generations lived in and near Cologne: "which city, as is well known, maintained a brisk trade in works of art with London for almost three hundred years." The portrait had been in the family's collection for more than a century, Müller went on, together with other portraits of famous figures such as Martin Luther, Gustavus Adolphus, Philipp Melanchthon, Henry IV, and Albrecht Dürer. The portrait that Becker purchased (Müller continued) had been a particular favourite of the Count's. It was "a small oil painting – a sort of miniature in oils, painted in the seventeenth century" and "represented a very celebrated Englishman, lying on his deathbed, in state." Müller had had no doubt about this man's identity: "I remarked at the time that, in the features of the deceased, I instantly recognized those of that great European dramatic author, William Shakespeare, of Stratford, and on his deathbed, alas! in 1616." Other experts who inspected the family collection had readily agreed with this identification: "among all the numerous *savants*, antiquaries, and eminent artists visiting Graf Kesselstatt's gallery," Müller declared, "not the least doubt existed as to the authenticity of the picture of Shakespeare, to which many affirmed the sketches they had seen in England bore strong resemblance. The Count had furthermore "refused some very handsome offers" from would-be purchasers of the portrait, whose value, in both cultural and monetary terms, was evidently high.<sup>5</sup>

Becker's speculations about the possible existence of a three-dimensional model for the portrait received an unlooked-for boost when he learnt "that a plaster of Paris cast of some kind had been in the possession of the Kesselstatt family, but that on account of its melancholy appearance it had been treated with little consideration, and what had become of it no one knew." Might this have been the original likeness of

Shakespeare from which the deathbed portrait was copied? An item seemingly answering to this description was listed in the catalog prepared for the auction of the Kesselstatt estate in 1842, but the details of its sale and subsequent whereabouts were entirely unknown. Believing that the cast must have been bought by one of the many art dealers then operating in Mainz, Becker began a methodical trawl through the city's shops. In 1849, after two years' diligent searching, he found what he took to be the long-lost object "in a broker's shop, among rags and articles of the meanest description." It was a plaster cast of the face of a man of late middle age and unknown identity, with a lean nose, high domed forehead, and a general air of brooding intellectualism. A few hairs from his trim moustache and goatee and from his eyebrows still clung to the plaster. His eyes were shut, and a small blob of plaster, either as the result of a technical mishap or in accurate representation of an actual physical flaw, adhered to his left eyelid. Inscribed on the back of the mask was an inscription that appeared to confirm Becker's wildest hopes: "+Ao Dm 1616." The mask had evidently been cast in the very year of Shakespeare's death.

Convinced that it indeed represented the features of William Shakespeare, Becker brought the mask with him to England in 1849 to seek the opinion of the distinguished paleontologist Richard Owen, Hunterian Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Physiology at the Royal College of Surgeons. Owen responded with great interest. This was a genuine death mask from the early seventeenth century, he agreed, which might well represent the true face of William Shakespeare. It was probably cast by the Dutch-born sculptor Marcus Gheerhaert Janssen (also known as Gerard Johnson) to serve as the model for his funerary bust of Shakespeare in colored limestone, completed some time between 1616 and 1623, which stands to this day in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church at Stratford.

One vital piece of confirming evidence, however, was lacking. There was no indication as to how the mask had made its way from the west midlands of England into Germany's Rhineland, where it had so recently been found; whether indeed—as a more skeptical observer might add—it was therefore the death mask of an Englishman at all, let alone the death mask of William Shakespeare. The question of the death mask's migration to Germany was to prompt much speculation in the years that followed. Perhaps, as James Hain Friswell proposed in 1865, some member of the Kesselstatt family had been in England in the years following Shakespeare's death, perhaps in a diplomatic capacity, had spotted the mask

while there, purchased it from Janssen—who, having completed his bust, had no further use for it—and brought it home to Germany to adorn the family collection. Friswell's theory rested entirely on guesswork. There was no evidence to suggest that any member of the Kesselstatt family had ever visited England around this time or indeed, so far as he or his contemporaries were aware, in subsequent years.

When Ludwig Becker on the eve of his departure for Australia offered to sell the death mask to the British Museum for the sum of £5000, Richard Owen was asked to evaluate the purchase. Despite his instinctive belief that the mask was a genuine impression of Shakespeare, Owen hesitated. Could the question of its provenance be settled, he said, then the mask would-be worth twice the sum that Becker was asking. In the light of these uncertainties, however, he could not assure the Museum that the price was warranted. And the purchase as a consequence fell through.

Becker sailed from Liverpool for Australia on 12 November 1850 on the *Hannah*, a ship chartered by his friend William Gardner, a philanthropic Englishman who was bringing to Van Diemen's Land at his own cost a number of British and German free settlers, including a dozen unmarried young women, as "a donation to the colony." Becker was dejected by recent political events in Germany and dogged, as ever, by financial problems. He had tried to sell his art collection to his former employer, Archduke Ludwig III of Darmstadt-Hesse, but his offer had been rejected; now the British Museum had similarly declined the death mask. He decided nevertheless to leave the mask behind at the Museum along with the small deathbed portrait he had found in Mainz. A month before his departure he gave the following instructions for the security of these treasured objects:

### **Power of Attorney**

I the undersigned during my absence from London appoint Dr J. J. Kaup to protect the interest of the Shakespeare mask as well as in the small picture depicting Shakespeare on his death bed with the date 1637 and two original documents concerning Shakespeare in this respect that the above-mentioned objects are not to be sold for less than five thousand pounds sterling. Those objects are my property and are looked after by Charles König in the British Museum or by Professor Owen under lock and key.

Ludwig Becker, Painter  
London, 15 October 1850

I attest to the signature of Painter Becker  
 J. Erxleben                      Johann Schmidt

Becker continued to believe that these precious items would ultimately bring him fame and fortune. “What are Ch. König and Prof. Owen doing?” he wrote impatiently to his friend and former teacher, the paleontologist and zoologist Johann Jakob Kaup to whom he had entrusted these objects on 27 October, less than a fortnight after signing the power of attorney. “How is my Shakespeare? Not to be sold under £5000.” “How is it in London?” he asked again on 21 April 1851, having safely arrived in Van Diemen’s Land. “How is the portrait of Shakespeare? If I come back and it is still unsold, I will smash it into a thousand pieces and sell it retail in North America.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1856 Richard Owen was to move from the Royal College of Surgeons to join the British Museum as Superintendent of its Department of Natural History. Despite his lingering doubts about the provenance of the cast, Owen allowed it to be displayed at the Museum for many years as “Shakespeare’s Death Mask,” and to be similarly exhibited at the tercentenary celebrations of Shakespeare’s birth in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1864. After Ludwig’s death, he returned the mask together with the deathbed portrait to his brother, Dr. Ernst Becker, a man whose skills and talents were nearly as diverse as Ludwig’s.<sup>7</sup> The mask was to remain in the possession of the Becker family until 1960, when it was bought by the city of Darmstadt. It is now on permanent display in the library of Darmstadt Castle, where it remains an object of continuing public curiosity and conjecture.

The Darmstadt death mask has been more thoroughly researched within Germany and more fully accepted there as an authentic representation of the face of William Shakespeare than it has in the country of its putative origin, where it is still regarded with skepticism by leading art historians and Shakespeare scholars.<sup>8</sup> Professor Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel of the Universities of Marburg and Mainz has led the case for the mask’s acceptance, showing that (contrary to previous belief) a member of the Kesselstatt family did indeed visit England after Shakespeare’s death—though in March 1775, very much later than Friswell had conjectured—and might well at that time have purchased not only the mask but also the miniature deathbed portrait, and brought them both back to Germany. She has subjected the death mask and the Stratford funerary bust to extensive comparative testing, and concluded that they

probably represent the same person. She has compared the plaster blob on the mask's eyelid with a similar disfigurement revealed on four portraits associated with Shakespeare, and argued that Shakespeare died of a rare form of ocular cancer. A follower of her researches has meanwhile proposed, more startlingly, that the mask shows that Shakespeare, like Marlowe, suffered a violent death, stabbed in the eye by some sharply pointed instrument. These theories join numerous others which in recent years have come forward as the true explanation of Shakespeare's death.<sup>9</sup>

### §

While the Darmstadt death mask continues to provoke popular interest and scholarly controversy in this fashion, little is heard of the small deathbed portrait, now in private ownership in Germany, whose discovery first so startled the world, and first set Ludwig Becker off on his eager quest for its supposed original and prototype. To judge from its careful presentation, probably devised a couple of centuries after its execution, this little work must have been regarded in its heyday as an object worthy of special attention.<sup>10</sup> Measuring 10.5 cm by 14 cm, it is painted in oils on an undetermined ground. A loose textile border of the gold-coloured braid has later been placed around the work, which has then been set in a beveled black velvet surround (10.5 cm × 14 cm), with the inscription "Shakespeare" embossed in gold letters on a green leather panel below. The whole ensemble has then been boxed within a traveling case of red leather decorated in gold (16.5 cm × 17 cm) with four folding flaps and a small ring at the back to allow the work to be hung. The uppermost flap which acts as a tongue to the case is heavily worn, suggesting that the portrait has been exposed repeatedly, perhaps for display at different locations.

The status of this miniature portrait has shifted significantly over the years. Taken at first to be a genuine representation of Shakespeare of whose authenticity "not the least doubt existed" (as Professor Nikolaus Müller had declared), it was soon demoted to the humbler role of a copy, painted twenty-one years after the event it depicted, whose sole value was to flag the possible existence of another, still-undiscovered, representation that might with luck turn out to be the real thing. Once the death mask had been discovered, the chief function of the portrait, so it seemed, was to vouch for the genuineness of the mask. "The picture in the possession of Dr Becker," as the American scholar John S. Hart put it in 1874, "has

in itself little value. Its chief value lies in its connection with the mask. It gives to the mask the undisputed testimony of an unbroken and accepted tradition in the Kesselstadt family, for more than a century, connecting it with Shakespeare." When he first set eyes on the death mask, Hart was convinced that it was indeed the model for the portrait: "there can hardly be a doubt, there hardly *is* a doubt," he declared, "that this cast of 1616 is the original from which was painted the picture of 1637."<sup>11</sup>

Closer scrutiny, however, suggested otherwise. Copyists, for a start, don't ordinarily display in such a prominent fashion the date at which their copy is being made—especially when it is so much at odds with the date of the event they are depicting. There are significant differences furthermore in the facial features shown in the cast and those in the portrait, as other observers were beginning by now to remark. Before long another candidate was to emerge as the possible subject of the little painting. "I do not think the picture represents the same person as the Mask," wrote J. Parker Norris in 1884, "and am in favour of agreeing with those who regard it as a portrait of Ben Jonson." Ben Jonson, who died in August 1637—the year shown in the background of the portrait—certainly looked like a more plausible nominee. Not only did this identification seem to explain the date shown in the painting, it also made sense of the laurel wreath encircling the dead man's head. For Jonson, who had been awarded a royal pension in 1616 to serve as King James's laureate poet, had been depicted with the laurel by other artists: a portrait by Robert Vaughan (engraved around 1627) shows Jonson wearing a wreath, as does the engraved portrait by William Marshall that serves as the title page of John Benson's edition of Jonson's translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, published in 1640. It seemed apt that a picture of Jonson on his deathbed in 1637 should show him similarly garlanded. There is (on the other hand) no authenticated portrait of Shakespeare wearing the laurel in his lifetime, nor was he commonly associated at that time with the laureate tradition.<sup>12</sup> That seemed to settle the matter, and the miniature that Becker had found came soon to be seen as a portrait not of Shakespeare but of his old friend and rival, Ben Jonson. This nowadays has become the conventional explanation of the portrait, accepted by those who believe that the death mask represents William Shakespeare as well as by those who think it does not.

There is just one problem, however, with this identification. The man portrayed in the miniature does not really *look* much like Ben Jonson as he appears in other portraits of the time, and as he is elsewhere described

during this last period of his life. The gaunt figure stretched out on the bed scarcely conforms (for a start) with Jonson's own depiction of himself in those years as a man of grotesque size, "a tardy, cold,/ Unprofitable chattel, fat and old,/ Laden with belly," who "doth hardly approach/ His friends, but to break chairs, or crack a coach" (*The Underwood*, 56.7–10). Jonson seems to have started life as a skinny man, if Thomas Dekker's teasing references can be trusted in his 1601 comedy *Satiromastix*, in which the character of "Horace" (alias Jonson), is taunted for failing to equal the stature, both literary and physical, of the Roman poet he is aiming to emulate: for "Horace was a goodly corpulent gentleman, and not so lean a hollow-cheeked scrag as thou art" (5.2.291–293). As the years went by, however, Jonson was to put on weight, both literally and as a writer. By 1619 he speaks wryly of himself as a middle-aged man increasing in girth and declining, correspondingly, in sexual appeal.

Oh, but my conscious fears  
 That fly my thoughts between,  
 Tell me that she hath seen  
 My hundred of grey hairs,  
 Told seven-and-forty years,  
 Read so much waste, as she cannot embrace  
 My mountain belly, and my rocky face;  
 And all these through her eyes have stopped her ears.  
 ("My Picture Left in Scotland", *The Underwood*, 9.11–18)

Jonson was still physically strong: he had walked all the way from London to Edinburgh the previous summer, and at the time he wrote this poem was just setting off on his journey home. Yet his weight was nearing twenty stone (280 pounds), as he ruefully reports in two later poems, *The Underwood*, 54 and 56. The "palsy" (or probable stroke) that he suffered in the late 1620s restricted his mobility and further affected his weight. Jonson refers with stoical humor to these matters when writing to another of his portraitists, Sir William Burlase ("My Answer", *The Underwood*, 52). His monstrous size, he knows, is too large to be truly captured in art, but perhaps Burlase, a tactful friend, can find some way of holding it in, as the massive wine cask in Heidelberg Castle—eleven thousand pounds in weight, as Jonson's friend Thomas Coryate had reported—is encircled by twenty-six huge hoops of iron.

Why? though I seem of a prodigious waste,  
 I am not so voluminous and vast  
 But there are lines wherewith I might be embraced.

'Tis true, as my womb swells, so my back stoops,  
 And the whole lump grows round, deformed, and droops,  
 But yet the tun at Heidelberg had hoops....

Jonson seems to have remained fat to the end of his life, his love of food and drink unabated, as visitors to his house in Westminster observed. James Howell, his next-door neighbor, speaks of a “solemn supper” given by Jonson in the 1630s in which “there was good company, excellent cheer, choice wines, and jovial welcome” (Letter (n)). Cared for in the last stage of his life by a woman of similar disposition, “neither he nor she took much care for next week,” said his friend George Morley, “and would-be sure not to want wine, of which he usually took too much before he went to bed, if not oftener and sooner” (Life Records 95 (d)).

The black hair and drooping moustache of the deathbed figure are also at variance with Jonson’s reported and depicted appearance in his final years. The “grey hairs” the poet had spoken of while in Scotland in 1619 had by now changed to white: “time hath snowed upon his pericranium,” James Howell reported to his friend Sir Thomas Hawkins a year before Jonson’s death (Letter (n)). The moustache in the portrait is also incongruous. Throughout his life Jonson was teased for the sparseness of his facial hair. “Thou hast such a terrible mouth, that thy beard’s afraid to peep out,” says Tucca scornfully to Horace in *Satiromastix*, showing a portrait of the Roman poet that Jonson was hoping to emulate:

but look here, you staring Leviathan, here’s the sweet visage of Horace;  
 look, parboiled face, look: Horace had a trim long beard, and a reasonable  
 good face for a poet, as faces go nowadays... (5.2.276–282)

“Here lies honest Ben/ That had not a beard on his chin” was a humorous epitaph “by a companion written” that Jonson later recited to William Drummond (*Informations*, 474–475), who also recorded elsewhere Jonson’s banter with the King on this subject: “King James asking B. Johnson why his beard was so meagre cut. he replied that his Patron was Saint Cut-beard” (*Democritie: A Labyrinth of Delight*).

Is it possible—it’s tempting to ask, in the light of these mounting disparities—that the figure in the miniature portrait that Ludwig Becker found in Mainz is neither William Shakespeare, as the inscription proclaims, nor Ben Jonson, as is nowadays commonly said, but someone else altogether? And if so, who might that someone be?

### §

Ben Jonson was not the only notable person who died in England in 1637, and the date shown in the portrait that Becker discovered in Mainz does not in itself establish the identity of its subject. Here’s another possible candidate, drawn from that year’s departing contingent, for the figure depicted in Becker’s small painting.

On 4 December 1637 the learned and gentle Nicholas Ferrar—who, as Izaak Walton reported, “got the reputation of being called Saint Nicholas, at the age of six years”—died in the small Cambridgeshire village of Little Gidding, whose religious community, fondly recalled in modern times by T.S. Eliot, he had co-founded and led since 1626. Before settling at Little Gidding Ferrar had traveled widely in Europe, mastered half-a-dozen languages (and “in some degree understood twenty-three”), held a fellowship at Clare College, Cambridge, and rejected the chair of Geometry at Gresham College, London, in order to immerse himself more fully in the affairs of the Virginia Company, of which he rose in time to become Deputy. Though he had shrewdly furthered its interests during his term as MP for Lymington, the Virginia Company was disbanded in 1624, prompting Ferrar and his family to move *en masse* to the depopulated village of Little Gidding. Here, with the same organizational drive and efficiency he had shown in the world of business, Ferrar devised rules and practices for the new community based on High Church Anglican principles and the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>13</sup>

A portrait commonly attributed to Cornelius Johnson (also known as Cornelius Jansen, Janssen, or Jonson van Ceulen) now in the possession of Magdalene College, Cambridge, shows Nicholas Ferrar as a slight but trim figure with a full head of dark hair and a well-grown moustache and goatee (Fig. 9.2). He is soberly clad in a dark robe and wide ecclesiastical collar, and looks with polite attentiveness toward the viewer. At a first inspection he seems to resemble—more closely than any surviving authenticated portraits of Shakespeare or Ben Jonson—the figure in the deathbed portrait that Ludwig Becker discovered in Mainz. The shape of



**Fig. 9.2** Portrait of Nicholas Ferrar (the Younger) by Cornelius Janssen (By permission of the Master and Fellows of Magdalene College Cambridge)

the nose, mouth, and eyebrows, the growth and color of the hair, moustache, and goatee in the two portraits are not dissimilar, and the apparent age of the man portrayed on the deathbed tallies more nearly, one might think, with that of Ferrar, who was 44 years old at the time of his death, than of Jonson, who died at 63. But what further evidence, if any, can be found to confirm this initial impression?

Something is known, as it happens, of the manner in which Nicholas Ferrar died, or was reputed to have died. A man of fragile health, Ferrar imposed upon himself routines of punishing severity, which according to

the hagiographical account of his life written after his death by his brother John increased in rigor as he approached the end. Disdaining a bed, he would rest briefly in the evenings on a bear skin spread on the floor, rise at one in the morning for prayer, spend the remaining hours in godly works and meditation and composition of his final study, *Contemplations on Death*. Sensing its immanence and wishing to leave no trace of the frivolous tastes he had indulged while alive, Ferrar gave orders three days before his death for the removal from his study of “three large hampers full of books, that stand there locked up these many years. They are comedies, tragedies, heroic poems, and romances: let them be carried to the place marked out for my grave, and there, upon it, see you burn them all immediately.”

Dying at this time was a well-practiced art, its various stages and rituals carefully set out in manuals such as Jeremy Taylor’s *Holy Dying* and reflected in writings such as the *Lives* of Izaak Walton.<sup>14</sup> John Ferrar’s account of his brother’s dying acts of piety, renunciation, and composure has much in common with these well-established traditions. Portraiture too played its part in the celebration of godly dying, and deathbed portraits form a significant sub-set within this commemorative genre.<sup>15</sup> John Donne (as Walton tells the story) famously ordered that “a choice painter” be “got to be in a readiness to draw his picture” as he posed in his winding-sheet, standing on an urn “with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might show his lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned towards the east, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our saviour, Jesus.” “In this posture,” says Walton, “he was drawn at his just height,” the picture serving as a reminder to Donne himself of his own mortality and to later observers as a model of exemplary composure in the face of death.<sup>16</sup>

“Postures” of this sort might be consciously adopted by the dying person or subsequently invented by the artist or chronicler—as seems likely in the case just cited, of Donne’s dying acrobatics, and of Van Dyck’s celebrated portrait of Venetia Digby on her deathbed in May 1633 “the second day after she was dead,” when (so it was reverentially reported) she was found “in the same posture” in which she had gone to sleep, her body retaining its natural sweetness.<sup>17</sup> Van Dyck and Ben Jonson appear to have competed in their respective efforts—through painting, and through poetry—to console their patron, Sir Kenelm Digby, after Venetia’s death, Jonson in his poetic sequence “Eupheme” (*The Underwood*, 84.4 “The Mind”) dismissing the claims of the painter to depict

the true qualities of such a virtuous figure, which, he maintained, could be captured by the poet alone.<sup>18</sup>

If the subject of the miniature work that Becker discovered in Mainz is not Ben Jonson but Nicholas Ferrar, then the posture is shown in that portrait interestingly conforms to that which Ferrar is said to have adopted in his final hours. With his family gathered around the bedside (so John Ferrar reports) his brother Nicholas fell into “a fine slumber” from which it was thought he would not awaken.

But afterwards he, on a sudden casting his hands out of the bed with great strength and looking up and about with a strong voice and cheerful said: “Oh, what a blessed change is here! What a change is here! What do I see! Oh, what do I see? O let us come and sing and praise the Lord and magnify his holy name together ...”.

While all stood somewhat amazed and loath to interrupt him if he should say more, he laid himself down most quietly, putting his hands into the bed, laid them by his side and then shut his eyes and in this posture lay, his legs stretched out, most sweetly and still.

And “in this posture” Ferrar then ultimately expires: “*most sweetly*,” for like Venetia Digby and like all true saints—in accord with a tradition satirically recalled some centuries later by Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*—his sanctified body defied the usual processes of physical corruption and decay.

## §

But if the Mainz portrait is really of Nicholas Ferrar, an obvious question arises. Why should the leader of a religious community who is not known to have written poetry of any distinction at any stage of his life, and who in his dying days zealously ordered the destruction of all literary works from his library, be depicted on his deathbed adorned with a laurel wreath? The answer may turn on the significance of the wreath in this portrait, which is customarily seen as a token of poetic achievement but in Christian symbolism carried a more complex signification. For Christians, the evergreen laurel was a token of everlasting life, the “crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter, 5.4), the “crown of life” (Rev. 2. 10), whose rewards were unlike those for which earthly competitors—poets, athletes, and emperors—contested. “Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown,” writes Paul, “but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor. 9. 25). The

crown depicted in the Mainz portrait, if this reading is correct, is thus a token not of poetic accomplishment but of godly living and dying.

Donne himself had explored the significance of these symbols in his poetic sequence, *La Corona*, as he begs his Creator to grant him a heavenly, not an earthly, reward:

But do not, with a vile crown of frail bays  
Reward my muse's white sincerity,  
But what thy thorny crown gained, that give me,  
A crown of glory, which doth flower always...

At the time that he wrote these lines Donne was already moving from his early secular attachments toward a career in the higher reaches of the Anglican church. "Since he was made doctor," so Jonson reported of Donne a few years later, he "repenteth highly, and seeketh to destroy all his poems"—showing much the same spirit of renunciation that Ferrar was later to display toward his once-loved books (*Informations*, 95–96).<sup>19</sup>

### §

All of which prompts a final conjecture in a story that is already, perhaps, quite speculative enough. *La Corona* is a work that left a strong impression on Nicholas Ferrar's friend George Herbert, to whose mother, Magdalen, Donne had sent the manuscript, which she kept as a treasured possession among her private papers until her death. Herbert recalls the theme of *La Corona* in his poem "A Wreath," where like Donne, he rejects the garland conventionally bestowed on the poet, and constructs instead a poem of repeated and interlocking verses—a form known technically as a *crown*—not for his own coronation but as an offering to God.<sup>20</sup> "A Wreath" is the final poem in *The Temple*, a collection that lay by Herbert's bedside, still unpublished, as he himself lay dying in his last parish, the little village of Bemerton near Salisbury.<sup>21</sup> Hearing of his friend's illness (so Izaak Walton reports) Ferrar sent Edmund Duncon, a Norfolk clergyman who was staying with him, from Little Gidding to Bemerton to see how Herbert was faring. After some days of prayer and conversation with the dying poet, Duncon was about to return to Little Gidding (says Walton), when Herbert asked his departing visitor "to deliver this little book to my dear brother Ferrar.... desire him to read it: and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul, let

*it be made publick: if not, let him burn it.*" This was the manuscript of *The Temple*, containing "The Wreath." When he received and read the collection, Ferrar (so his brother John reported) was profoundly affected, and "many and many a time read over and embraced and kissed again and again" the work; "he said he could not sufficiently admire it, as a rich jewel as most worthy to be in the hands and hearts of all true Christians that feared God and loved the Church of England." Ferrar was the first known reader of *The Temple* and it was through his contrivance and persistence that the collection was finally published, despite initial objections by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, in the year of Herbert's death, 1633.

Four years later Ferrar himself lay dying. Whoever chose to paint him at that moment on his bier or deathbed—if anyone did really paint him, if the deathbed miniature is indeed a portrait of Ferrar—chose also to show him then wearing a laurel crown: a symbol that might have carried particular meaning for Herbert's friends and family and to the community at Little Gidding. The artist, so this small touch suggests, might thus have been someone with intimate knowledge of that circle: such as the unknown painter, sometimes said to be Cornelius Johnson, of a now-lost portrait of George Herbert himself, from which other surviving portraits of the poet are thought to derive.<sup>22</sup> While the deathbed portrait that Ludwig Becker discovered may not then depict either William Shakespeare, as Becker believed, or Ben Jonson, as later scholars have assumed, it may perhaps have a no less intriguing connection with other literary figures of their day including not only Donne and Herbert but, in a further reach, Henry Vaughan and Andrew Marvell, whose poems "The Garland" and "A Coronet" consciously recall both "La Corona" and "The Wreath." And if these guesses have substance, in a longer perspective the portrait glances forward, in the more distant future, to T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, with its meditation on the spirit of Nicholas Ferrar and the community of Little Gidding.<sup>23</sup>

## §

Ludwig Becker's story is a tragic one, of course, but like certain other stories of loss—of lost explorers, lost children, lost domains, lost portraits, and lost plays—it is curiously intertwined with a counter-story about discovery. Becker's miraculously preserved sketchbook, with its exquisitely detailed drawings of creatures and landscapes never before seen by white

observers, is like a hitherto neglected record from the archives, that opens new vistas of social behavior or theatrical performance; a reminder that, in our dealings with the past, despite the inevitable erasures of history, something is still to be found: that, in the suggestive title of a recent study, *traces remain*.<sup>24</sup>

Not all traces from the past, however, as the seeker after lost things quickly discovers, are equally to be trusted. Becker's belief that the items that he had stumbled upon in the antique shops in Mainz in the 1840s were likenesses of Shakespeare was almost certainly deluded; yet the magnetic pull of Shakespeare's name and genius proved in the end too hard for him to resist. So too it had evidently proved to be for the unknown earlier owner of the portrait who, in despite of contrary evidence within the picture itself, had confidently added the inscription "Shakespeare."

If the portrait that Becker found in Mainz, then represents (alas!) neither Shakespeare nor Ben Jonson, then this story may nevertheless still have its own compensating counter-story of discovery. For the figure in this portrait at least has a possible name, identity, and history: and if the purpose of a deathbed portrait is to preserve the memory of its virtuous subject, this is what finally matters; all is not lost.

## NOTES

1. On Becker's life and work see in particular Marjorie Tipping, *Ludwig Becker: Artist and Naturalist with the Burke and Wills Expedition* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1979), *A Letter From Australia: Ludwig Becker*, trans. Thomas A. Darragh, ed. Darragh and Manfred Kohler (Bacchus Marsh: Garravembi Press, 1993); Thomas A. Darragh, *Ludwig Becker: A Scientific Dilettante: His Correspondence with J. J. Kaup and Others* (Canberra: Australian Academy of Science, 1998); Eva Meidl, *A Donation to the Colony: The Epic Voyage on the "Hannah" of German and British Free Settlers and Their Contribution to Van Diemen's Land* (Lindisfarne, Tasmania: Forty Degrees South, 2004); Martin Edmond, *The Supply Party: Ludwig Becker and the Burke and Wills Expedition* (Adelaide: East Street Publications, 2009). On Burke and Wills's expedition more generally, see Ian McLaren, "The Victorian Exploration Expedition and Relieving Expeditions, 1860–1," *Victorian Historical Magazine* (1959): 209–253; Alan Moorehead, *Cooper's Creek* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963); Tim Bonyhady, *Burke and Wills: From Melbourne to Myth* (Balmain, NSW: David Ell Press, 1991); Sarah Murgatroyd, *The Dig Tree* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2002).

2. Sir William and Lady Denison, *Varieties of Vice-Regal Life*, ed. Richard Davis and Stefan Petrow (Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 2004), 170–171.
3. Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Part V, Victorians: XIII, Masks, Bones, and Portraits. The materialist passion has re-emerged in recent years in Shakespeare studies: see in particular Neil MacGregor's brilliant study, *Shakespeare's Restless World* (London: Allen Lane, 2012). Becker continued to collect skulls in Australia, but was properly cautious of contemporary attempts at cranial classification: Tipping, *Ludwig Becker*, 19–20; James Bonwick, *The Wild White Man and the Blacks of Victoria* (Melbourne: Fergusson & Moore, 1863), 30–31.
4. Becker's pamphlet is printed in full by J. Hain Friswell, *Life Portraits of William Shakespeare* (London: S. Low & Marston, 1864), 19–22. See also John S. Hart, "The Shakespeare Death Mask," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* 8 (July 1874): 304–316; William Page, "A Study of Shakespeare's Portraits," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* 10 (September 1875): 558–574; J. Parker Norris, *The Death Mask of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: Franklin Printing House, 1884); Sir Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (London: J. Murray, 1899), 539ff.; Frederick J. Pohl, "The Death Mask," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.2 (Spring 1961): 115–125; Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel, *The True Face of William Shakespeare*, trans. Alan Bance (London: Chaucer Press, 2006), 99–118.
5. Hammerschmidt-Hummel questions the accuracy of Müller's testimony: *The True Face*, 102.
6. Darragh, *Ludwig Becker... Correspondence with J. J. Kaup*, 519, 509, 514.
7. Anne M. Lyden, *A Royal Passion: Queen Victoria and Photography* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2014), 109–110; Martyn Downer, *The Queen's Knight* (London: Bantam Press, 2007), 194.
8. See e.g. Stanley Wells's online comments of 2 September 2010, <http://bloggingshakespeare.com/stanley-wells-shakespeare-death-mask>; Marcia Poynton, "National Identity and the Afterlife of Shakespeare's Portraits," in *Searching for Shakespeare*, ed. Tarnya Cooper (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2006), 217–225.
9. Simon Andrew Stirling, *The Faces of Shakespeare: Revealing Shakespeare's Life and Death Through Portraits and Other Objects*, <http://www.gold.ac.uk/glits-e/glits-e2013-2014/the-faces-of-shakespeare-revealing-shakespeares-/>.
10. Dagmar Eichberger of the University of Trier and Heidelberg has kindly examined and photographed this portrait for me. I am greatly indebted to her for her generous help and counsel. I am grateful to Martin Butler, Gerard Hays, Karen Hearn, Tom Nicholson, Robyn Sloggett, and Irena Zdanonowicz for further suggestions about the portrait.

11. Hart, "The Shakespeare Death Mask," 307, 306.
12. Karen Hearn discusses early "Images of Ben Jonson" in the online edition of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012; online edition, 2014–15); hereafter *CWBJ*. All citations of Jonson's work refer to this edition. Marshall's portrait of Jonson was engraved three years after the poet's death. Whether he had ever met Jonson (or Shakespeare) is unknown. The first known representation of Shakespeare as a "laureate" is Marshall's frontispiece portrait (crudely adapted from Martin Droeshout's 1623 first folio engraving) for John Benson's 1640 edition of the *Poems*, which shows the poet clutching some laurel twigs. Mark Griffiths has recently claimed that an image of a bearded man with a wreath around his forehead found in John Gerard's, *The Herbal: Or General History of Plants*, published in 1598, is the first and only demonstrably authentic portrait of Shakespeare (*Country Life*, May 2015). The garlanded head has been more plausibly identified as a representation of the ancient Greek botanist and pharmacologist Pedanius Dioscorides. See the online debate in the *TLS* blog, 19 May 2015 (Michael Caines, "Shakespeare, naturally").
13. Lynette R. Muir and John A. White, eds., *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar: A Reconstruction of John Ferrar's Account of His Brother's Life* (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 1996); Bernard Blackstone, ed., *The Ferrar Papers: Containing a Life of Nicholas Ferrar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938); Izaak Walton, "George Herbert" in *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert & Robert Sanderson*, ed. George Saintsbury (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950); H. P. K. Skipton, *The Life and Times of Nicholas Ferrar* (London: Mowbray, 1907); Nicholas W. S. Cranfield, "Nicholas Ferrar," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Kate E. Riley, *The Good Old Way Revisited: The Ferrar Family of Little Gidding, c. 1625–1637*, PhD thesis, University of Western Australia (Perth, 2007).
14. Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Lucinda McCray Beier, "The Good Death in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement*, ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989).
15. Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c. 1500–c. 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), ch. 5, "Examples of Virtue".
16. Walton, "John Donne", *Lives*, 78. Walton's story is not to be found in the first edition of his *Life* of Donne in 1640 but is added to the enlarged and revised version in 1658, and as Helen Gardner has shown, seems highly

- improbable: “Dean Donne’s Monument in St Paul’s,” in *Evidence in Literary Scholarship*, ed. René Wellek and Alvaro Ribeiro (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 29–44. On this episode see further David Piper, *The Image of the Poet: British Poets and Their Portraits* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 28–31.
17. Sir Kenelm Digby, *Loose Fantasies*, ed. G. Gabrieli (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1968), 241.
  18. Joe Moshenska, *A Stain in the Blood: The Remarkable Voyage of Sir Kenelm Digby* (London: William Heinemann, 2016), 357–361.
  19. *La Corona*, I. 5–8, in *John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 2; Ian Donaldson, “Perishing and Surviving: The Poetry of Donne and Jonson,” *Essays in Criticism* 51 (January 2000): 68–85.
  20. On the positioning of “The Wreath” within *The Temple* see *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 644.
  21. Walton, “George Herbert,” *Lives*, 307ff.; John Drury, *Music at Midnight: The Life and Poetry of George Herbert* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 72–78, 87.
  22. See e.g. Drury, *Music at Midnight*, plate 24, caption. Might Cornelius Johnson, then, who was living at this time with a wealthy Flemish patron at Bridge, near Canterbury in Kent, perhaps be the unknown painter of the deathbed portrait that Becker discovered in Mainz? Karen Hearn, the leading authority on Johnson’s work, is doubtful, noting that all of this artist’s surviving miniature portraits are oval or circular images of head and shoulders, unlike the Mainz portrait; and that in Britain the favoured medium for miniature portraits tended to be watercolour, not oils, often applied to vellum or to paper sometimes stuck on to card.
  23. Deathbed portraiture enjoyed a modest vogue in Britain in the 1630s. Other examples include *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of His First Wife* (1635) by John Souch (Manchester Art Gallery), *The Salstonstall Family* (1636–1637) by David Des Granges (Tate Britain), and the unidentified National Portrait Gallery deathbed portrait (c. 1640), once thought to represent James Scott, Duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch. The fashion was not unique to Britain: deathbed portraits are to be found at this time in Spain, the Netherlands, and elsewhere in Continental Europe.
  24. Charles Nicholl, *Traces Remain: Essays and Explorations* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).



## William Smith, “The Freeman’s Honour,” and the Lord Chamberlain’s Men

*David Kathman*

The number of known lost plays associated with the Admiral’s Men is by far the most of any playing company during the reign of Elizabeth I. The main reason for this is the diary of Philip Henslowe, which contains a rich mine of box-office receipts and payments to playwrights, primarily concerning the Admiral’s. In contrast, no comparable source survives for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, and as a result theater historians can identify only a handful of that company’s lost plays. The *Lost Plays Database* currently lists eight titles associated with the Chamberlain’s Men, and several of these are doubtful, since they may have been alternative titles for Shakespeare plays (“Love’s Labor’s Won,” “Robin Goodfellow”), or may not have been a play at all (“The Tartarian Cripple”).<sup>1</sup>

One lost play that can be attributed more confidently to the Lord Chamberlain’s Men is “The Freeman’s Honour.” That play is known only from the dedication to another play, *The Hector of Germany, or the Palsgrave Prime Elector*, printed in 1615 and performed two years earlier in

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association with the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Frederick, Elector Palatine. In that dedication, the playwright, “W. Smith,” tells Sir John Swinnerton that “as I haue begun in a former Play, called the Freemans Honour, acted by the Now-seruants of the Kings Maiestie, to degnifie the worthy Companie of the Marchanttaylors, wherof you are a principall Ornament, I shall ere long, make choyce of some subiect to equall it.” The reference to “the now-servants of the King’s Majesty” implies that the company in question is the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, thus dating the play to before March 1603.<sup>2</sup>

Anything else that can be gleaned about “The Freeman’s Honour” depends largely on the identity of the playwright, “W. Smith.” For many years, scholars assumed that this was Wentworth Smith, who appears in Henslowe’s diary collaborating on numerous plays for the Admiral’s and Worcester’s Men in 1601–1603, and this assumption was maintained (tentatively) in the play’s initial entry in the *Lost Plays Database*. However, a variety of fairly strong circumstantial evidence indicates that the W. Smith who wrote *The Hector of Germany* (and thus “The Freeman’s Honour”) was William Smith (c. 1550–1618), Rouge Dragon Pursuivant in the College of Heralds. This attribution has gained some currency since I included it in the entries for William Smith and Wentworth Smith in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, but the full array of evidence has never been published, though some of it appeared in a paper I wrote for the 2005 Shakespeare Association of America meeting in Bermuda.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I will summarize that evidence (including some new information) and discuss the implications of William Smith’s authorship for the theatrical and historical contexts of “The Freeman’s Honour.”

Such a discussion must begin with *The Hector of Germany*, since it is the only extant play by our W. Smith. The play is a militaristic historical romance set in the late fourteenth century during the reign of Edward III of England, in which Robert the Palsgrave, Palatine of the Rhine, comes off his sickbed and, with the help of Edward III, defeats the Bastard (Henry of Trastomare) and restores the Duke of Savoy to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. The title page of the 1615 quarto says that the play had been “publicly Acted at the Red-Bull, and at the Curtayne, by a Company of Young-men of this Citie” (63), and the dedication to Sir John Swinnerton, former Lord Mayor of London, declares that the play had been “made for Citizens, who acted it well” (67).<sup>4</sup>

The prologue reiterates the play’s connection to citizens and apprentices, and also makes a point of disavowing any topical interpretations.

Specifically, the author tells his audience that the Palsgrave of this play is not to be identified with the current Palsgrave, Frederick V, who had just come to England and married Princess Elizabeth:

Our Authour for himselfe, this bad me say,  
 Although the *Palsgraue* be the name of th'Play,  
 Tis not that Prince, which in this Kingome late,  
 Married the Mayden-glory of our state:  
 What Pen dares be so bold in this strict age,  
 To bring him while he liues vpon the Stage? (1-6)

Such a strenuous denial suggests the exact opposite of what its words literally say. In fact, as Hans Werner has shown, there are very good reasons to believe that the audience was supposed to see a direct connection between the Palsgrave of this play and Frederick V. Numerous things done by the Palsgrave of the play, such as traveling to England and receiving the Order of the Garter, have no basis in historical fact but had just recently been done by Frederick, as the audience would have been well aware. Werner further argues, convincingly in my view, that this play was written as a piece of propaganda to identify Frederick with the militant Protestantism represented by the recently deceased Henry, Prince of Wales, eldest son of King James I.<sup>5</sup> Henry had originally been scheduled to play an important role in his sister's wedding festivities, but he died on 6 November 1612, only three weeks after Frederick arrived in England. Werner also suggests that *The Hector of Germany* can be identified with the "missing masque" from the wedding festivities whose existence has been deduced from contemporary evidence. This missing masque was apparently dropped for being too militaristic, because it "cast the Palatine match in terms of a religious crusade backed by the sword"—a description which fits *The Hector of Germany* quite well.<sup>6</sup>

*The Hector of Germany* also has close ties to another allegorical play that was performed by apprentices around the time of the royal wedding—R. Taylor's *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl*, printed in 1614 with a title page declaring that it had been "DIVERS TIMES / Publickely acted, by certaine / London Prentices." That play is a farce centering around a usurer named Hog, who is tricked by the young gallant Haddit into giving up his daughter Rebecka's hand in marriage. As with *The Hector of Germany*, the prologue makes a point of denying any topical intent, but there is contemporary evidence to the contrary, with Sir John Swinner-ton, the dedicatee of *The Hector of Germany*, being the main target of

*The Hog*'s satirical jibes. On 23 February 1613, Sir Henry Wotton wrote to Sir Edmund Bacon that "On Sunday last at night" (21 February), sixteen apprentices had put on a secret performance of *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* at Whitefriars, but somebody had tipped off the sheriffs, who raided the performance and carted the players off to Bridewell. According to Wotton, the city wits "will needs have Sir *John Swinerton* the Lord *Maior* be meant by the *Hog*, and the late Lord Treasurer [Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury] by the *Pearl*."<sup>7</sup>

Those identifications seem odd at first glance, given that Robert Cecil had died nine months earlier on 24 May 1612, but Swinnerton and Cecil had been involved in a longstanding feud that was still simmering in February 1613. For several years Swinnerton, with the help of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, had been battling with the Great Farmers of the Customs and other royal patent holders in an attempt to crack down on abuses by patentees and get the King's bloated finances under control. Northampton's main opponent in this endeavor was his fellow Privy Councilor Robert Cecil, who continued to be identified with the patentees after his death. Cecil's allies took to attacking Swinnerton's character, and this continued after Swinnerton became Lord Mayor on 29 October 1612. On 5 January 1613, Swinnerton was charged with fraudulently charging usurious rents on the farm of sweet wines, which had been mortgaged to the City of London, and with using his position as Lord Mayor to prevent the redemption of these mortgages. *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* was performed the following month, and the identification of the character Hog with Swinnerton makes sense in light of the recent accusations against him.<sup>8</sup>

With this background in mind, we can consider the evidence for the authorship of *The Hector of Germany*, and thus of "The Freeman's Honour." First of all, it is worth noting that for more than 200 years after the play's publication, every writer who expanded the playwright's name invariably gave it as "William" Smith, and at least one of them specifically identified him as William Smith the herald. The earliest of these writers was Edward Phillips in *Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum* (1675), who says that William Smith was the author of "a tragedy entitled *Hieronymo*; so also the *Hector of Germany*." Twelve years later, in 1687, William Winstanley copied Phillips's statement verbatim in *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*.<sup>9</sup> A play named *The First Part of Ieronymo. With the Warres of Portugall, and the life and death of Don Andrea* was published by Thomas Pavier in 1605 with no author's name given. This play is a

sort of prequel to Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and is broadly similar to *The Hector of Germany* in its militarism and loose approach to historical fact; in fact, these two are among only a handful of plays classified by Alfred Harbage in his *Annals of English Drama* as "pseudo-histories."<sup>10</sup>

The next writer to weigh in on the subject was Gerard Langbaine, in *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691). Langbaine lists William Smith as "An Author that lived in the Reign of King *James* the First, who publish'd a Play, call'd *Hector of Germany*, or *The Palsgrave Prime Elector*." Langbaine adds that "Our Author writ another Play, called *The Freeman's Honour*, to dignify the Worthy Company of *Taylors*; but whether ever it was printed or no, I know not." Finally, Langbaine writes that "This Author joyned with One *W. Webbe*, in writing a Book, called *The Description of the County Palatine of Chester, Lond.* 1656. Hieronymo is ascribed by Mr. *Philips* and *Winstanley*, thro' their old Mistake, to our Author; it being an Anonymous Play."<sup>11</sup> The William Smith who cowrote *The Description of the County Palatine of Chester* was, in fact, William Smith the herald; three different manuscripts in his handwriting survive, and a version of these was printed along with a separate manuscript by William Webb for the 1656 volume.<sup>12</sup> Langbaine does not say where he got this information, but he does not accept just any attribution willy-nilly, as shown by his rejection of Phillips and Winstanley's attribution of "Hieronymo."

The 1812 edition of *Biographia Dramatica*, revised by Steven Jones, has the following entry for "Smith, William":

This gentleman wrote, in the reign of King James I. three dramatic pieces, whose titles are,

1. *Hector of Germanie*. Hist. Play. 4to. 1615.
2. *Freeman's Honour*. Play.
3. *St. George for England*. This was destroyed by Mr. Warburton's servant.

The second of these, we believe, never appeared in print, being only mentioned in the epistle dedicatory of the other.

Coxeter queries, whether this author is not the William Smith, rouge dragon pursuivant at arms, spoken of in *The English Topographer*, p. 2.<sup>13</sup>

Jones does not list either "Hieronymo" or *The Description of the County Palatine of Chester* among Smith's works, but he does list a third play, "St. George for England." This play is not extant, but was included in

the list of plays supposedly burned by William Warburton's cook in the early eighteenth century; there it is listed as "St. Geo. for England by Will. Smithe."<sup>14</sup> Jones also tentatively puts forth the identification of the playwright with William Smith the herald, citing the antiquary Thomas Coxeter (1689–1747). Here the identification is not presented as a fact, but the description of Smith as rouge dragon pursuivant at arms (rather than as the author of *The Description of the County Palatine of Chester*) suggests that Coxeter was not relying on Langbaine for his speculation.

John Payne Collier in his *Annals of the Stage* (1831) was the first scholar to suggest in print that the W. Smith of *The Hector of Germany* might be Wentworth Smith, whose existence as an Elizabethan playwright had been discovered in the 1780s along with Henslowe's diary.<sup>15</sup> By the late nineteenth century, the scholarly momentum was decidedly in favor of Wentworth Smith. William Hazlitt tentatively supported that identification in 1892, while E. Irving Carlyle's article on Wentworth Smith in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and Leonidis Warren Payne's 1906 edition of the play—both of which attributed the play to Wentworth Smith and dismissed the candidacy of William Smith—effectively cemented a consensus that would last for nearly a century.<sup>16</sup>

However, when we look at the play in its original context, a fair amount of circumstantial evidence suggests that Langbaine and Coxeter were right, and that the playwright was indeed William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant in the College of Heralds. For one thing, the play deals with German history and is partially set there. Not only was William Smith a student of history, but he had lived in Nuremberg, Germany from 1571 to 1591, married a German wife, and written treatises called "How Germany is deuyded into 10 Kreises" and "A breef description of the famovs Cittie of Norenberg in High Germany."<sup>17</sup> Payne points out several inaccuracies in the play's history and suggests that the author could not have been familiar with Germany, but Werner shows that these were deliberate anachronisms inserted to serve the play's propagandizing purpose by identifying the Palsgrave of the play with Frederick V and/or Prince Henry, and the play's other characters with contemporary players in European politics.<sup>18</sup>

The author of *The Hector of Germany* and "The Freeman's Honour" was also quite familiar with the London livery companies and the world of freemen/citizens. As discussed earlier, the quarto of *The Hector of Germany* was dedicated to a former Lord Mayor of London (Swinnerton, a freeman of the Merchant Taylors), and the dedication makes a point of

saying that because the play was "made for Citizens, who acted it well; I deemde it fitte to bee Patronizde by a Citizen."<sup>19</sup> "The Freeman's Honour," based on its title, was presumably about citizens and livery companies, and given that Smith tells Swinnerton that he wrote the play "to degnifie the worthy Companie of the Marchataylors, wherof you are a principall Ornament," Martin Wiggins suggests, quite plausibly, that it was written for the installation of Merchant Taylor Sir Robert Lee as Lord Mayor on 29 October 1602.<sup>20</sup>

As it turns out, William Smith was himself a citizen, free of the Haberdashers, and he showed a lifelong interest in the London livery companies. His earliest datable work, "A breffe discription of the Royall Citie of London, capitall citie of this realme of Englande," is signed "By William Smythe, citizen and Haberdasher of London, 1575," and includes a lengthy and detailed description of the annual Lord Mayor's Show.<sup>21</sup> In 1605, he compiled a manuscript entitled "The XII Worshipfull Companies or Misteries of London, with the Armes off all of them that have bin L. Mayors for the space of almost 300 yeares of every Company particularly." He dedicated the manuscript to Sir Thomas Low, the Lord Mayor of London at the time, writing that "I had determined long ago, to haue presented [these collections] vnto yo<sup>r</sup> good L<sup>PP</sup>," and noting "y<sup>e</sup> manifold kindnes alreedy receaved at yo<sup>r</sup> L<sup>PP</sup>s handes."<sup>22</sup> This is reminiscent of W. Smith's statement to a former Lord Mayor, Swinnerton, that "I hauing receiued some fauours from you, for priuate things, thought it might be acceptable, to giue you some Honor in Print," though admittedly such sentiments were common in dedications.

William Smith the herald showed a strong interest throughout his life in pageantry and spectacle. As noted above, his earliest known manuscript includes an elaborate description of the Lord Mayor's Show, the same event for which "The Freeman's Honour" may have been written. He also exhibited an interest in the Order of the Garter and the attendant ceremony which took place each year; among Smith's manuscripts in the Bodleian Library is "Orders for the Feast of St. George," a history of the Garter ceremony through 1608.<sup>23</sup> The Garter ceremony is depicted in *The Hector of Germany* (ll. 1062–1089), when Edward III (the historical founder of the Order of the Garter) bestows the order on Robert, the play's Palsgrave. This incident has no basis in fourteenth-century history, but was inserted to remind the audience of the ceremony on 7 February 1613, a week before the royal wedding, in which Frederick V was presented with the Order of the Garter.<sup>24</sup> As an important member of the

College of Heralds and Garter historian, Smith was probably present at that ceremony.

On top of all this, William Smith the herald had documented connections to the Lord Chamberlain's Men. For one thing, George Carey, the company's patron from 1597 to 1603, was also one of Smith's patrons; in about 1594, Smith dedicated a presentation copy of his "A breief description of the famovs Cittie of Norenberg in High Germany" to Carey.<sup>25</sup> Smith also knew at least two members of the Chamberlain's Men, as shown by a report he wrote in 1605–1606 for his primary patron, the Earl of Northampton, called "A Brieff Discourse of ye causes of Discord amongst the officers of Armes."<sup>26</sup> This report details Smith's many complaints against his fellow heralds for allegedly shoddy work, and comes down particularly hard on painters and engravers who provided people with coats of arms they did not deserve. Among his specific complaints are these:

Phillips the Player had graven in a gold Ring: the Armes of S<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Phillip Lord Bardolph, w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> sayd L. Bardolphs cote quartred. Which I shewed to M<sup>r</sup> York, at a Seall gravers shopp in foster Lane. Pope the player would have no other armes, but y<sup>e</sup> Armes of S<sup>r</sup> Tho. pope Chancelor of ye Augmentacons.<sup>27</sup>

The players referred to here are Augustine Phillips and Thomas Pope, both leading members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men who died in 1605 and 1603, respectively.<sup>28</sup> While Smith's account of the two players is hostile—not surprising given his reportedly difficult personality—he appears to have known them well enough to be aware of their personal doings and their claims about their coats of arms.

One final connection between William Smith and *The Hector of Germany* has to do with Smith's patron—Henry Howard, the Earl of Northampton. As noted above, Smith addressed his 1605 report on heraldic irregularities to Northampton, expressing himself in unusually blunt language. Northampton had long been a critic of inflated heraldic honors and social climbers who falsely claimed arms for themselves, and in his capacity as a commissioner for the office of Earl Marshall (from 1604), he was in a position to do something about it.<sup>29</sup> As we saw earlier, Northampton was also a patron and ally of Sir John Swinnerton, the satirical target of *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* and the dedicatee of *The*

*Hector of Germany*. Thus, if William Smith did write *The Hector of Germany*, then the play was written by one of Northampton's protégés and dedicated to another one.

This summary has, I hope, indicated the strength of the case for William Smith's authorship of *The Hector of Germany*, and thus also of "The Freeman's Honour." Regardless of whether one accepts that attribution, it is possible to deduce a fair amount about the latter play. In the dedication to *The Hector of Germany*, Smith says that he wrote "The Freeman's Honour" "to degnifie the worthy Companie of the Marchant-taylors," so presumably the Merchant Taylors were central to that play, and it is reasonable to think that the "freeman" of the title was a Merchant Taylor, possibly a fictionalized and heroic version of a real historical Merchant Taylor (much like the main characters of *The Hector of Germany*). One possible candidate is Sir John Percyvale (d.1503), the first Merchant Taylor to serve as Lord Mayor of London, who founded a free grammar school in Macclesfield, and whose widow Thomasine also founded a grammar school in her birthplace of Week St. Mary, Cornwall as well as numerous charities.<sup>30</sup>

As noted above, a Merchant Taylor, Sir Robert Lee, was installed as Lord Mayor of London on 29 October 1602, and this would have been a good occasion for an initial (and only?) performance of "The Freeman's Honour" by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Assuming that the herald William Smith was the playwright, his connection to the company's patron George Carey, combined with his status as a historian of civic London and its livery companies, goes some way toward explaining how he got the job. From a modern perspective, Smith may seem like an odd choice to write a play for such a high-profile event, given that his only other known play would not be written for another decade. But the situation is less odd if Smith had already written "Hieronymo" (attributed to him by Edward Phillips in 1675), and/or "St. George for England" (which was supposedly extant in the early eighteenth century), or possibly one or more of the many other now-lost plays written for the London professional theater around that time. Given how many plays from the period have disappeared, there are undoubtedly quite a few men who wrote plays but are not known as playwrights today; occasionally, as with William Smith, it may be possible to rescue them from literary obscurity.

## NOTES

1. See the entries for “Admiral’s” and “Chamberlain’s” in the “Auspices” section of the *Lost Plays Database*, eds. Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2009+), <https://lostplays.folger.edu>.
2. W. Smith, *The Hector of Germany, or the Palsgrave Prime Elector* (London: Thomas Creede for Josias Harrison, 1615). The only modern edition of the play is Leonidas Warren Payne, ed., *The Hector of Germanie or the Palsgrave Prime Elector* (Philadelphia, 1906).
3. David Kathman, “Smith, William (c.1550–1618),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., October 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25922> (henceforth ODNB); Kathman, “Smith, Wentworth (bap. 1571),” ODNB, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25919>; and Kathman, “London Politics and the Authorship of Two Jacobean Plays.”
4. I have taken these quotations from Payne’s 1906 edition of the play, with page numbers in parentheses.
5. Hans Werner, “*The Hector of Germanie, or the Palsgrave, Prime Elector* and Anglo-German Relations of Early Stuart England: The View from the Popular Stage,” in *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. R. Malcom Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 113–132.
6. Werner, 130. The evidence for the missing masque is discussed by Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England’s Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1986), 177–183.
7. Quoted by D. F. McKenzie in the Malone Society edition of the play (Oxford, 1972 for 1967), vi.
8. D. F. McKenzie summarized the case for identifying Swinnerton with Hog in his Malone Society edition of the play (vii–viii), drawing heavily on Evelyn May Albright, “A Stage Cartoon of the Mayor of London in 1613,” *Manly Anniversary Studies in Language and Literature* (1923): 113–126.
9. The quotation from Phillips comes from Payne’s edition of the play, 8.
10. Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama, 975–1700* (Philadelphia, PA, 1940); the second (1964) and third (1989) editions of the Annals retain Harbage’s label for both plays.
11. Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (Oxford, 1691), 488–489.
12. These are Ashmolean MS No. 765 (dated 1597), Rawlinson MSS B. No. 282 (dated 1585), and Rawlinson MSS B. No. 283, all at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.
13. Stephen Jones, *Biographia Dramatica; Or, a Companion to the Playhouse* (London, 1812), 677.

14. The list is in British Library Lansdowne MS 807, and is discussed at length by W. W. Greg, "The Bakings of Betsy," *The Library*, 3rd series, 2.7 (1911): 225–259.
15. John Payne Collier, *Annals of the Stage*, 3 vols. (1831), 3.272.
16. W. Carew Hazlitt, *A Manual for the Collector and Amateur of Old English Plays* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1892), 101.
17. Nigel Ramsay, "William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant," in *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England*, ed. Nigel Ramsay (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2014), 26–45, provides the details of Smith's residence in Nuremberg. The first treatise mentioned is Harleian MS 994; "A breefe description" survives in three copies, cited below in note 25.
18. See Payne, 26–34, and Werner, esp. 123–129.
19. Payne, 67.
20. Martin Wiggins, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), #1361.
21. Guildhall Library MS 2463. A later, revised version of this manuscript, dated 1588, is in the British Library as Harleian MS 6363. A description of G.L. MS 2463, with a transcription of the description of the Lord Mayor's Show, was printed in Sir Egerton Brydges, *The British Bibliographer*, vol. 1 (London, 1810), 539–543.
22. Bodleian Library, Top. Gen. e.29. Two other versions of this manuscript are in the Guildhall Library, as MS 2464 (dated 1605) and MS 2077 (dated 1609).
23. Bodleian Library, Gough Berks. MS 12 is Smith's autograph copy of the manuscript, with the additions through 1608; Ashmolean MS No. 1108 is another copy not in Smith's autograph.
24. Werner, 122.
25. The copy dedicated to Carey is Lambeth Palace Library MS 508; other copies are British Library MS Add. 78167 and Nuremberg Stadtbibliothek, Nor. H. 1142.
26. Folger MS V.a.157 is a rough draft of the report, including the address to Northampton. Folger MS V.a.199 is a fair copy of the same document, although without the address, which was probably written on a separate cover.
27. Folger MS V.a.157 (not paginated).
28. E. A. J. Honigmann and Susan Brock, *Playhouse Wills 1558–1642* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 72–75; Kathman, "The Burial of Thomas Pope," *Notes & Queries* 53 (2006): 79–80.
29. Pauline Croft, "Howard, Henry, Earl of Northampton (1540–1614)," *ODNB*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13906>.
30. Matthew Davies, "Percyvale, Thomasine (d. 1512)," *ODNB*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2819>.



## They Are All Fossils: A Paleontology of Early Modern Drama

*Matthew Steggle*

In thinking about lost plays, it is hard to avoid metaphors of death and mortality. After all, lost plays seem to be, by almost tautologically obvious definition, plays that do not survive. All our language about extant and extinct plays—even that pair of adjectives—conditions us to see them in terms of life and death, to see plays whose dialogue is available as the living objects, and plays without their scripted dialogue as dead. Thus, W. W. Greg used “theta,” the Greek letter of death (*thanatos*), to catalogue known lost plays; thus, generations of scholars thought about lost early modern texts only to mourn them, “hid in death’s dateless night.”<sup>1</sup> And yet this is a metaphor, and one that silently privileges the dialogue of a play above all its other elements. It is no coincidence that one of the opening examples above is taken from the work of Greg, a lynchpin of the New Bibliography movement who promoted (if one might generalize) an essentially bibliographic understanding of early modern drama. Anyone approaching early modern drama from the perspective of cultural studies

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more widely will dispute the unexamined assumption that the preservation, or otherwise, of a play's scripted dialogue is the only measure by which it might be said to live or die.

In this essay, I want to defamiliarize the metaphor of mortality and preservation by exploring an alternative analogy in which all textual traces of early modern drama, both playscripts and other forms of record, are in effect fossils of dead originals. I will argue that the language and conventions of paleontology can be helpful when thinking both about the lost and the extant drama from this period. In particular, that discipline provides a vocabulary for imagining the extent to which even plays conventionally regarded as extant are preserved only in partial and contingent records. Paleontology offers a way to address the methodological problems implicit in interpreting a whole early modern "media ecosystem"—as one might say—from its scattered surviving fossils.

## FOSSILS

A good place to start is with Charles Darwin, as transmitted by his great modern interpreter Stephen Jay Gould:

The majority of fossil mammals are known only by their teeth.

Darwin wrote that our imperfect fossil record is like a book preserving just a few pages, of these pages few lines, of the lines few words, and of those words few letters. Darwin used this metaphor to describe the chances of preservation for ordinary hard parts, even for maximally durable teeth. What hope then can be offered to flesh and blood amidst the slings and arrows of such outrageous fortune? Soft parts can only be preserved, by a stroke of good luck, in an unusual geological context—insects in amber, sloth dung in desiccated caves. Otherwise they quickly succumb to the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to—death, disaggregation, and decay, to name but three.

And yet, without evidence of soft anatomy, we cannot hope to understand either the construction or the true diversity of ancient animals.<sup>2</sup>

Here Gould airs Darwin's famous comparison of the fossil record to a mutilated and largely lost work of literature, giving it extra spice by the double invocation of *Hamlet*, which is *par excellence* the literary text of loss, fragmentation, and forgetting. But Gould also lays out a foundational idea of paleontology which is ripe for application to early modern drama: that the surviving evidence is necessarily only a tiny subset of the

“ideal” set of evidence, and a subset whose very preservation makes it untypical. The project of this chapter is to pursue that idea, reversing Darwin’s analogy from fossils back into cultural history once again.

A fossil is an impression left by an ancient living creature. In the classic case, some material from the animal’s body itself has been caught up in sediments and those sediments are later, over geological timescales, compressed deep underground and hardened into rock before eventually becoming exposed again at the earth’s surface. Alternatively, the record left by the animal is a trace fossil, not in fact part of its body but something else (footprints, droppings, or the like) but thereafter the process of preservation is the same. Space does not permit a proper overview of the study of fossils in this chapter, but there are three well-known general principles that are relevant here: one to do with the nature of fossils, the other two to do with the circumstances of their formation and preservation.

Firstly, in a fossil the organic material has been replaced by mineral. When you handle a fossilized dinosaur bone, the material in your hands is not bone but a piece of rock that has taken on the shape of the bone that was there before. When you handle a coprolith, a piece of fossilized dinosaur excrement, you handle stone, not fecal matter. Fossils are inherently proxies for a missing original: in the language of literary criticism, they are metaphors.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, fossils are a selective record in respect of what parts of an animal they record. The hard parts of animals—teeth, bones, and shells—are much more likely to give rise to fossils than the soft and fleshy parts, which only in extraordinary conditions leave any trace in fossiliferous rock. This means that many types of animal, such as jellyfish or worms, are almost completely invisible in the fossil record, except indirectly in trace fossils which record their activity. And often only teeth survive. As Gould notes, most known fossil mammals, for instance, are not known from skeletal bone fossils at all, but only from fossilized teeth that despite their small size encapsulate extensive information about the animal’s likely lineage, size, and diet.

The third general principle is that some entire environments are much better represented in the fossil record than others. A typical fossil bed, for instance, originates in the sediments of a shallow body of water, where falling sediment or a mudslide buries a section of the river or sea floor, trapping and preserving the shapes of the organisms that dwell there.

Land animals are not necessarily in such beds, or only rarely. Denizens of the deeper seas are unlikely to be in those beds at all.

So fossils are only ever proxies, and there is preservation bias to consider—differential preservation of parts of animals, differential preservation of entire environments. For all three of these reasons, paleontologists are very aware that they are working with a fossil record which is *not* straightforwardly representative of past ecosystems.<sup>4</sup>

### THE EARLY MODERN THEATRICAL ECOSYSTEM

There is an obvious potential utility in these principles, and this model, for early modern drama, where information for many aspects of the theatrical experience is largely missing, and of the playtexts themselves only a minority are preserved. This is true even of what is arguably the best-attested part of early modern drama, the commercial theater. Fig. 11.1 illustrates what we know about that field.

Early modern commercial-theater plays  
(estimated numbers)

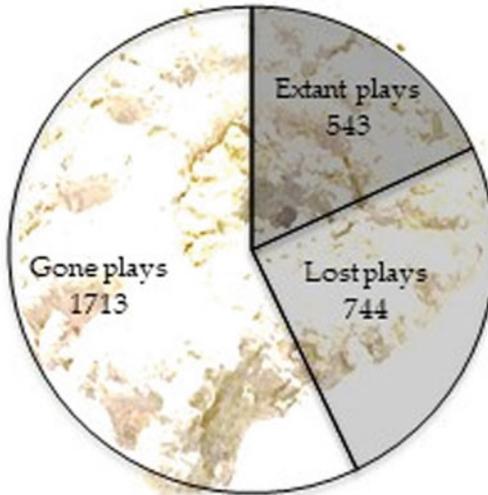


Fig. 11.1 Estimated numbers of commercial-theater plays

It has often been stated that in the lifetime of the commercial playhouses—roughly 1567–1642—around 3000 different plays must have been written and staged in them. (Someone, I hope, at some point, will engage in a detailed recalculation of that figure, but that seems like a good starting point.) Of these, around 543 survive as playscripts, and around 744 are identifiable “lost plays.” But the majority of the plays from the period have disappeared leaving no trace at all. We could usefully call these “gone plays,” and by definition they are ones that we cannot name or identify. Compared to them, the 744 “lost plays” are still among the better-documented plays from the period. In short, our record of past drama, even within the narrow world of the commercial theater, is very partial and incomplete.<sup>5</sup>

What then are the hard parts of plays, the pieces that are most likely to be fossilized? By a very large margin, the hardest parts of an early modern play are play titles. Obviously, one might think, all 543 extant ones have a title. In fact, as we shall see later in this paper, not quite all of them have one, and the readers may wish to tire their brains now by thinking of the exceptions and what they have in common. But the vast majority of extant plays do have a title, and indeed many of them have two, and some three or four.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, a large majority of the identifiable lost plays—over a thousand in all, around 744 of which stem plausibly from the world of the commercial theater—have a title of some sort. In fact, in most cases the title is how they can be singled out and identified. Records in the Stationers’ Register, as well as Henry Herbert’s *Office-Book*, almost invariably revolve around the title of a play, and in many of these cases the titles are what survive when the rest of the organism is gone.<sup>7</sup> Brief, distinctive, and intelligible (to an extent) without their context, play titles are also recorded embedded within many other forms of text: letters, poems, sermons. Of course, there are some plays which are still identifiable despite having lost both their dialogue and their title, and the *Lost Plays Database*, for instance, describes, at the moment, around a dozen examples, preserved in a fragment or a passing allusion. But the majority of identifiable lost plays have a contemporary title, so that the overall figure for titles from the commercial theater is, for the sake of argument, well over a thousand. In terms of my initial analogy, these are the teeth, the most durable part of the animal.

After titles, the next hardest part of a play seems to consist, surprisingly, of its dialogue, so that if titles are the teeth, then dialogue is the bones. In 543 cases, or about one in six of our estimated population, all (or rather,

a large sample, an extensive snapshot) of that dialogue is preserved. This group, in fact, is what scholars mean when they talk about the “extant plays”: they mean the ones whose dialogue substantially survives. But in addition to these what we might call complete skeletons, there are also fragments of dialogue from both extant and lost plays surviving within many other deposits. Playtexts themselves, incorporating quotations from and allusions to other plays, are one example; commonplace books, both in manuscript and print, are another, forming extensive collections of dialogue fragments.<sup>8</sup> Some of these sources are in print, such as John Cotgrave’s *English Treasury of Wit and Language*.<sup>9</sup> Others are in manuscript, such as those being collected and explored by the *DEX* project.<sup>10</sup> So dialogue, as a complete skeleton or as scattered individual bones, is a fairly durable feature.

A little less durable still are the other forms of textual material described by Tiffany Stern as “documents of performance.” These include song texts; song musical settings; inset letters; prologues and epilogues; and, at the very rare end, material such as Arguments, almost entirely missing from the print records and not often recorded in manuscript.<sup>11</sup> All of these, as Stern notes, have different rates of loss and survival, and are found sometimes as part of a more extensive playtext and sometimes completely detached.

One rare item that I want to pay particular attention to, in this context, is the cast list: not a mere list of characters, which is a fairly common feature—Tamara Atkin and Emma Smith note hundreds in their exemplary analysis of that form—but a list which identifies what actor took what part in a play’s production.<sup>12</sup> Cast lists are a good deal more fragile than character lists. David George counts around thirty-five examples from early modern drama of all sorts, both in print and manuscript, to which might be added a few new recent finds such as the print copy of Richard Brome’s *The Antipodes* (1640) annotated with a handwritten cast list.<sup>13</sup> The strange thing about a cast list is that, when preserved, it is a literary object in a bibliographical context, susceptible to the kinds of formal analysis practised by Atkin and Smith: what roles are listed, in what order? Who played what role, and what clues does that information and the presentation of it give about the meaning of the play? But at the same time, the structure that a cast list represents was present in some form in all performances of an early modern play, in all plays performed, and this makes it different from a mere character list. A character list could be considered merely a textual object, produced (possibly) by a secondary

agent by means of analysis of the playscript, and still interesting for how it reads that play and how it uses the textual conventions of character lists to impose meaning upon it. But a cast list, on the other hand, is a shadow of something beyond the mere playscript.

A cast list was implicit in all performances of an early modern play. What I mean is that that performance had a specified cast, ready in advance, and a prearranged and agreed set of roles for them to play. Even if that list were never written down—which seems possible but practically unlikely—it still existed, as an idea, because it was a necessary precondition for performing something intelligible to its audience. Thus, cast lists are qualitatively different from character lists, because they are textual features tied to the play *qua* performed event rather than *qua* timeless textual object.

Cast lists are also part of a slippery continuum together with the other more indirect evidence that permits reconstruction of casting. For instance, theater plots, such as that of “Frederick and Basilea,” give a good deal of casting information quite directly: are they a form of cast list?<sup>14</sup> Then there are all the ascriptions and allusions in playscripts themselves; allusions in non-dramatic material such as actors’ eulogies; and all the other steadily more indirect evidence out of which evidence of casting can be collected. At what point does this casting evidence cease to be the play? Again there might be a useful analogy with fossils—that distinction between fossils made from an animal’s body, to fossils made from its behavior—although that distinction too is a hazy one when considering something like a footprint.

And there are other soft structures, as well, since even cast lists only tell us about the actors on stage. But there are also the non-acting personnel whose labor goes into a play. One extraordinary example here is provided by “The Knight of the Burning Rock,” a play acted at court by the Earl of Warwick’s Men in 1579. The company outsourced the making of the costumes and props to the Office of the Revels, with the result that we know a lot about the manufacture of its central special effect, a burning rock within which a character was imprisoned, even down to the fact that it required 6d of coal for heating to ensure that the paint was dry in time for the performance. As Martin Wiggins records, we can put names to almost forty people—tailors, carpenters, painters, and wiredrawers—who were paid for work on that play and the two others it was prepared along with. All other plays will have had a similar (though almost certainly

smaller) structure of theater workers behind them, a structure which is only visible in exceptional cases such as this one.<sup>15</sup>

Historians of the whole of early modern drama should be, and are, very interested in such things, and related topics such as acting techniques; special effects; music; costumes; and audience composition and behavior. They should be interested, too, in the fuller picture of the entertainments, jigs, feats of activity, and so on within which the plays took their place. These paratheatrical entertainments are, in my analogy, like the worms and jellyfish, in that they are events with little in the way of textual hard parts to be preserved in the first place. But that does not mean that they were not important parts of the theatrical ecosystem.

## PRINTING

So the surviving corpus of evidence about Renaissance drama comprises many examples of some parts of a play—titles and dialogue—and far fewer examples of some of the softer ones. And this line of thinking might lead one to think harder about the mechanisms of preservation by which these fossilized objects reach us. The bulk of the material we have about early modern drama comes through one particular and specific fossilization process: the early modern printing house.

Early modern printed texts, I will suggest, have many of the qualities of fossils. On one level, they are literally mineralized objects preserving the contours of a manuscript original. Printers' ink preserves the footprints, as it were, of the moveable type: the moveable type is itself a reproduction, set up into patterns determined by a handwritten manuscript that is by now almost invariably destroyed. Just as fossilization is in its mechanism a form of printing, so printing is a form of fossilization. It is entirely appropriate that the limestones of Solnhofen, famed because their fine-grained structure enables the preservation of minute details in their fossils, are also sought after, for that same fine-grainedness, for use in lithographic printing.<sup>16</sup>

What is more, printing is a very good form of fossilization. It produces robust and durable objects with a good chance of survival in modern times. Indeed—and this is one point where the metaphor does not work exactly—while fossilization creates only two copies of each lost original, the cast and counterpart, printing produces multiple copies, so that while each individual copy is at risk of partial or total destruction, the chances

are better that at least one complete, or one composite copy can make it to posterity. Of course, the fact of having been printed does not guarantee the survival of even a single copy of that print run. Sole survivors such as the first quarto of *Titus Andronicus*, or outside drama the single surviving leaf of the second edition of *Venus and Adonis*, speak to the large number of printings which one may reasonably infer have not left even a single copy behind them.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, printing tends to record complete-seeming, well-articulated skeletons of plays. And there is an obvious cause of this: half a play is not obviously a commodity sufficiently vendible to repay the cost of setting up in print. Rare exceptions, such as Jonson's "Mortimer His Fall," printed as one element of a Folio aimed at Jonson completists, prove the point.

But as this last observation starts to suggest, there are some unusual constraints on what causes a playtext to be printed in the early modern period, and what elements are most likely to be printed in that process. Just as only an untypical subset of modern films are novelized, so only an untypical subset of early modern plays get printed. It is a truism that early modern printing is driven by market forces, broadly defined, so that publishers will only invest in the printing of texts that are expected to make money for them, or to recoup their costs in other forms of reputational benefit. Publishers are under no obligation to print the plays that are most significant or successful in the theater. Nor are they under any obligation to print those plays faithfully as they were performed. Richard Jones, for instance, simply didn't print the comic scenes that were part of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*:

I haue (purposely) omitted and left out some fond and friuolous Iestures, digressing (and in my poore opinion) far vnmeet for the matter, which I thought, might seeme more tedious vnto the wise, than any way els to be regarded, though (happly) they haue bene of some vaine conceited fondlings greatly gaped at, what times they were shewed vpon the stage in their graced deformities: neuertheles now, to be mixtured in print with such matter of worth, it wuld prooue a great disgrace to so honorable & stately a historie.<sup>18</sup>

How many other systematic siftings-out are there in the printed record that are not explicitly identified as this one is? Conversely, Jonson's *Every Man Out* advertises itself precisely for containing more material than was

in the play's public performances, and similar examples could be multiplied. These cases might prompt the same question in reverse: how, systematically, does print differ from the playtexts as acted in terms of adding extra material? And the printing environment itself changes considerably through the early modern period, particularly as regards playbooks, for instance with the emergence of the "paper stage" in the commonwealth print marketplace.<sup>19</sup> So, in terms of the fossil analogy, each stratum of deposition has slightly different characteristics in terms of what it preserves and how. Again, there are questions of preservation bias.

It would seem, then, that there is a useful division between the relatively few surviving manuscript playbooks—contemporary, authentic, and the real thing—and their printed fossils. But manuscript playbooks and play-fragments, too, have some of the properties of fossils, things preserved in particular ways at particular moments. To take an obvious example, when one thinks of relatively recent re-emergences of manuscript playbooks, one thinks of amateur dramatists such as William Percy, Mildmay Fane, Jane Cavendish, and Elizabeth Brackley—members of stable and wealthy aristocratic dynasties who preserved their family papers. In terms of my initial analogy, organisms from these environments are unusually likely to have their dialogue recoverable in manuscript compared to, say, plays for apprentices. *Mutandis mutatis*, the same argument can be applied to records of otherwise completely lost paratheatrical entertainments such as those by acrobats. For instance, Elizabeth's court has left detailed, systematic financial records such as the Accounts of the Office of the Revels and the Declared Accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber. Acrobats in that environment—particularly acrobats whose performances also entailed some item of unusual expense—are more likely to leave some sort of trace compared to similar entertainers at institutions whose financial accounts have not survived so completely, such as regional great houses or London inns.

Another very nice illustration of the contingent nature of the transmissional process of even manuscript sources lies in that question raised earlier in this chapter: what are the extant plays that do not have extant titles? And why? The plays in question include those conventionally referred to as *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, *Thomas of Woodstock*, *The Two Noble Ladies and the Converted Conjurer*, and *John of Bordeaux*. In each case the mechanism involved is the same. All of these did not survive in seventeenth-century print editions, but rather depended upon a single manuscript until a much later scholarly edition. In their particular cases,

the title was (most likely) written upon the first page of that manuscript, the part which attracts the most wear and tear. In each case the title page was lost before the volume attracted the attention of scholars, with the result that the titles supplied are in each case editorial. A similar attrition, but of the back pages, accounts for why a number of manuscript plays lack their conclusions. That mechanism of preservation as a single battered manuscript has produced specimens which although well-preserved in other ways have some systematic weaknesses in respect of their titles and conclusions. What is more, as Tiffany Stern has argued, any extant playtext, whether print or manuscript, is best thought of as a snapshot of (some members of) a set of documents at a moment in their development. So even a manuscript playtext has some of the qualities of a fossil.

### LAGERSTÄTTEN AND MUDSLIDES

Paleontology, as I say, is constantly aware of these problems of preservation bias. It attaches, therefore, great importance to *lagerstätten*, those rare deposits where the conditions prove to be just right for preservation of softer organic material: the Solnhofen limestones, or the fine-grained Burgess Shale.<sup>20</sup> The fossils recorded there of the soft parts both of known and unknown species are particularly valuable. Early modern drama studies has its *lagerstätten* too.

One of the most important is Henslowe's diary, that day-to-day document, preserved through unusual historical circumstance, which gets us unusually close to the early modern theatrical experience. All of Henslowe's diary could be thought of as a *lagerstätte*, but perhaps particularly the inventories of properties, in which otherwise unrecorded parts of the theatrical experience leave a trace, albeit sometimes a cryptic trace. It should be noted that whereas most of Henslowe's papers survive in manuscript, these inventories exist only in the printed transcriptions made by their editor, Edmond Malone, the originals having since disappeared. In practice we mostly engage with those transcriptions themselves, and even with the extant manuscripts, in second- or third-generation remediations, through later editions of the diary or at best through electronic facsimiles. Arguably, fossilization is even a useful metaphor for the forms of remediation which are endemic in this field.<sup>21</sup> With that caveat, I turn to an extract from Henslowe's inventories which shows these soft parts in action.

- *Item*, ij fanes of feathers; Belendon stable; j tree of gowlden apelles; Tantelouse tree; jx eyorn targets.
- *Item*, j copper targate, & xvij foyles.
- *Item*, iiij wooden targates; j greve armer.
- *Item*, j syne for Mother Readcap; j buckler.
- *Item*, Mercures wings; Tasso picter; j helmet with a dragon; j shelde, with iij lyones; j eleme bowle.
- *Item*, j chayne of dragons; j gylte speare.
- *Item*, ij coffenes; j bulles head; and j vylter.
- *Item*, iij tymbrells, j dragon in fostes.
- *Item*, j lyone; ij lyon heads; j great horse with his leages; j sack-bute.
- *Item*, j whell and frame in The Sege of London.
- *Item*, j pair of rowghte gloves.
- *Item*, j pooptes miter.
- *Item*, iij Imperial crownes; j playne crowne.
- *Item*, j gostes crown, j crown with a sone.
- *Item*, j frame for the heading in Black Jone.
- *Item*, j black dogge.
- *Item*, j cauderm for the Jewe.<sup>22</sup>

This extract gives impressions of soft parts, including soft parts connected to numerous identifiable plays. Some of the plays mentioned are otherwise completely unknown, such as “The Siege of London.” Some, such as “Bellendon,” are otherwise known only from a tooth, insofar as Henslowe’s diary elsewhere preserves its title. Actually, like an animal tooth, that title itself encapsulates a good deal of information in concentrated form, enabling identification of the likely source and possible analogues for the story. Nor is the title the only information that the diary gives us when it mentions it; it also gives us information about days it was performed, takings it earned, and other sorts of company context.<sup>23</sup> In broad terms, then, “Bellendon” is a documented lost play, and this prop is a valuable piece of evidence that bears on what exactly happened in it.

And then there are some plays mentioned in the inventory which are known from a complete fossilized skeleton: indeed, the *Doctor Faustus* mentioned in this passage is known from two such skeletons, the A-Text and the B-Text, somewhat incompatible with one another. *Doctor Faustus* is an interesting example, too, because it is also known from dozens of other fragmentary fossils, in the form of contemporary quotations,

allusions, and anecdotes, suggesting that it was a highly successful organism in its era. But the prop dragon gives us another angle on *Doctor Faustus* again, different from that given in either of the extant texts and complementary to that family of other traces left by the play.

Finally, also on this list are properties that cannot (yet) be ascribed to any identifiable play, such as the three imperial crowns. But even if they cannot be mapped to a particular play, and must remain *dissecta membra*, they are still not uninformative: one could argue, for instance, that they document a wider condition of Henslowe-era drama as a form, namely, an interest in displaying crowned emperors, an interest that we would normally seek to demonstrate from extant dramatic scripts. So all of Henslowe, but particularly these inventories of properties, could be thought of as a *lagerstätte*.

Conversely, what are the mudslides of early modern drama, the catastrophic events that cause the preservation of a whole group of fossils at once? These events are particularly valuable because they give a common context for all the organisms found fossilized together there. I offer three examples of such events.

The first relates to the short-lived and provocative company, the Children of the Queen's Revels. In its short life it acquired, from various sources, a number of plays which it performed at the Whitefriars playhouse. Around 1609, it collapsed in litigation, and a group of at least seven plays owned by them including *Cupid's Whirligig*, *The Dumb Knight*, and *Ram Alley* appeared in print between 1607 and 1611. These seven plays clearly have some of the properties of a group, including mutual self-plagiarism and some seemingly consistent features of style. They are like a set of skeletons of dinosaurs who perished in a single catastrophic episode.<sup>24</sup>

Secondly, on 9 December 1621, the Fortune playhouse burned down. The fire destroyed not merely the theater but also—it is often thought—the stock of playbooks of the Palsgrave's Men, with the result that they had to commission, over the next two or three years, an exceptionally large number of new plays. Those plays leave traces primarily in the licensing records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels. (In turn, those licensing records themselves survive only as indirectly preserved fossils, in later transcriptions.) The fossils resulting from the fire are of less impressive quality than those resulting from the demise of the Children of the King's Revels. They consist of sixteen titles and one entire playscript,

Thomas Drue's *The Duchess of Suffolk*. Nonetheless, their common origin in the aftermath of a known disaster gives them again some of the properties of a group.

Finally, two years after the Fortune playhouse fire, a single event overwhelmed no fewer than thirty-six whole playtexts, fossilizing them in print. Eighteen of these fossils are of species known from one or two other complete skeletons, and most of the rest of the skeletons can be identified with other fragmentary fossils of some sort—a title in the Revels accounts, an allusion within another literary text. That so many skeletons, and so many of especial interest to us, are entombed by a single event makes this event of particular celebrity. Shakespeare's First Folio, in short, can be thought of as one of the biggest and most significant mudslides of early modern drama.

Flippant though it seems, this comparison draws attention to aspects of the First Folio plays that have received increasing interest in recent years. For instance, an earlier view of the Folio's textual history could be caricatured as thinking that the First Folio is based upon twenty-year-old foul papers which had been gathering dust on a shelf somewhere in the owner's personal library. Now, though, scholars have a much keener sense of the possibilities of revision after the first performance, especially in the case of such possibly rewritten plays as *Macbeth* and *Measure for Measure*.<sup>25</sup> The texts of the First Folio are dynamic objects caught at a moment in time in 1623, rather than things static from the moment when they left the author's quill thirty or twenty years earlier.

Secondly, we might think about preservation bias. The First Folio dragged into print a number of texts which had not previously been printed, and which might well never have made it into the early modern print marketplace were it not for this exceptional and singular event. At least one of the new ones—*Antony and Cleopatra*—had clearly been on the edge of being printed before, since there is a Stationers' Register entry, but for most there is no comparable paper trail. Which are the ones that we only have because of the unusual nature of the Folio project? They will arguably reflect aspects of early modern theater that are more widely under-represented in the quarto record.

Table 11.1 counts all plays which we now consider canonically Shakespeare's, plus plays where the print edition in question assigned it to Shakespeare, although we would now reject that attribution. Thus, 11 history plays were in print by 1622 which are associated with Shakespeare: seven which are now canonical, plus *Lochrine*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *The*

**Table 11.1** Plays with Shakespeare attributions in print, by genre

	<i>In print by 1622</i>	<i>In print by 1623</i>	<i>% change</i>
Histories	11 (7)	14 (10)	+18 (+43)
Tragedies	7 (6)	13 (12)	+86 (+100)
Comedies	7 (6)	17 (15)	+143 (+183)

*Troublesome Reign*, and *Sir John Oldcastle*, each of which bore a title-page ascription to Shakespeare or to W.S. The 11 (7) in the first cell of the table reflects this data, the 11 being the total number of plays and the parenthetical 7 referring to the canonical plays within that grand total.

To those numbers the printing of the First Folio adds three new history plays: *King John*, *1 Henry VI*, and *Henry VIII*. Thus, the First Folio increases the size of the pool of printed Shakespeare history plays by around 18%, or 43%, if one counts only plays now considered canonical—impressive in itself, but still slight compared to its effect in the other two main genres of its extended title.

The effect on tragedies is more drastic. The Folio prints six new tragedies—*Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon*, *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Macbeth*—increasing the number of “Shakespeare” tragedies in print by 86% and doubling the number of Shakespeare tragedies which we would now consider canonical. More electric still is the effect on Shakespeare’s printed comedies, which up to 1623 had consisted of five plays which feature again in the First Folio, plus *The Puritan* and *Pericles*. The Folio, though, adds ten new comedies: *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and (although there is room for argument about its main genre) *Cymbeline*. None of these had hitherto managed to force their way into the print marketplace, upon which their preservation would usually depend. Perhaps, in the fullness of time, some of them might have been financially viable in their own right as quarto publications, but that scarcely a third of canonical Shakespeare comedies had made that transition before 1623 suggests that not all of those we have would have been preserved had they not been sucked in by the unusual circumstances of the 1623 publication.

Of course, to argue that the 1623 Folio is a historically contingent publishing project, and that Shakespeare's literary afterlife could have turned out otherwise, is to push at an open door: this has ably been demonstrated in recent work.<sup>26</sup> My point in pursuing the metaphor of a mudslide here is to suggest a wider possibility that in normal circumstances early modern quartos under-represent the comedies of the early modern theater. This brief example points the way to a wider project: to start to think systematically about preservation bias in the evidence to do with the corpus of early modern drama.

## CONCLUSION

The idea of scripts and records of early modern plays as fossils of once-living creatures is just a metaphor, and like all metaphors an imperfect one which breaks down if pushed too far. But it gives a valuable alternative way of thinking about the corpus of evidence that is available to work with. In particular, it strikes against the ubiquitous and dominant metaphor in earlier theater history, in which plays with extant scripts are "alive" while lost plays, and other forms of entertainment, are dead and categorically unknowable.<sup>27</sup> Instead, this chapter returns to one of the emerging ideas of lost-play studies, that lostness when it comes to early modern plays is a continuum not a sharp division. Just because scholars do not have the scripts does not mean we can know nothing about the 744 lost plays of the early modern commercial theater, just as having a script for 543 does not equate to having full information about them. And the scripts that exist must always be seen in the context of preservation bias and a theatrical ecosystem for which evidence is not straightforwardly preserved.

This seems like a gloomy counsel of despair, in which culture, red (like Tennyson's Nature) in tooth and claw, reduces the drama of the past to broken stony fossils.<sup>28</sup> But the possibilities opened up by the metaphor are more positive than that. As one early modern playwright wrote, "*Comedies* are writ to be spoken, not read: Remember the life of these things consists in action."<sup>29</sup> Like paleontologists, those who study drama work with records of past organisms in order better to understand current life-forms. It is performance that is the living creature.

## NOTES

1. Quotations from David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, eds., *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 17, 245.
2. Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (London: Vintage, 2000), 60–61.
3. This simplifies a complex question, since there is work currently on the possibility of recovering organic chemistry such as DNA from fossil material, but as a basic principle, fossils look and feel like stone.
4. For all this see Gould, *Wonderful Life*, esp. 60–62, and also Jan Zalasiewicz's very readable *The Planet in a Pebble: A Journey into Earth's Deep History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
5. For fuller rationalization and discussion, see McInnis and Steggle, eds., *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*.
6. Recent attempts to theorize play titles include Andrew Gurr, "What Is Lost of Shakespearean Plays, Besides a Few Titles?" in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. McInnis and Steggle, 55–71; also Steggle's essay in the same volume; Gerald Baker, "The Name of Othello Is Not the Name of Othello," *Review of English Studies* 67 (2016): 62–78.
7. Again, it is notable that the preservation of play titles varies from source to source: some, such as the regional civic financial accounts collected by REED, or the Revels and Chamber accounts, give much helpful information but only very rarely name the plays performed.
8. Some lost plays indeed are quoted over and over again in extant drama: See "The Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek," in *Lost Plays Database*, eds. Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2009–), <https://lostplays.folger.edu>.
9. See the excellent recent online edition by Joshua J. McEvilla, <http://shakespeareauthorship.com/cotgrave/>.
10. *DEx: A Database of Dramatic Extracts*, <https://dex.itercommunity.org/> under the leadership of Laura Estill.
11. Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); on the world of early modern theater songs, see Ross W. Duffin, *Some Other Note: The Lost Songs of English Renaissance Comedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2018).
12. Tamara Atkin and Emma Smith, "The Form and Function of Character Lists in Plays Printed Before the Closing of the Theatres," *Review of English Studies* 65 (2014): 647–672.
13. David George, "Pre-1642 Cast Lists and a New One for *The Maid's Tragedy*," *Theatre Notebook* 31.3 (1977): 22; Joshua J. McEvilla, "The Original Salisbury Court Players of Richard Brome's *The Antipodes*," *Notes & Queries* 59 (2012): 168–171.

14. "Frederick and Basilea," *Lost Plays Database*.
15. Records summarized by Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–), #659.
16. See Gould, *Wonderful Life*, 63–64.
17. Franklin B. Williams, "Lost Books of Tudor England," *The Library* 5.1 (1978): 1–14; Alexandra Hill, *Lost Books and Printing in London, 1557–1640* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
18. Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great* (London: Richard Jones, 1590), A2<sup>r</sup>–A2<sup>v</sup>.
19. Recent work in this field includes Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647–72* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Marissa Nicosia, "Printing as Revival: Making Playbooks in the 1650s," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 111.4 (December 2017): 469–489.
20. See Gould, *Wonderful Life*, 60–61.
21. For a primer on remediation and the study of early modern literature, see Ian Gadd, "The Use and Misuse of Early English Books Online," *Literature Compass* 6.3 (May 1, 2009): 680–692.
22. R. A. Foakes, ed. *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 361–362.
23. See Matthew Steggle, *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), Chapter 4.
24. Joseph Quincy Adams Jr., "Every Woman in Her Humor and *The Dumb Knight*," *Modern Philology* 10.3 (1913): 413–432; Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queens on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
25. See Thomas Middleton, *The Collected Works*, Gen eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
26. See Emma Smith, *The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015).
27. For an excellent counterexample, see Munro and Whipday's chapter in this volume.
28. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 56.15–16.
29. John Marston, *Parasitaster, or The fawne* (London: T. P. for W. C., 1606), A2<sup>v</sup>.



## “Histories out of the scriptures”: Biblical Drama in the Repertory of the Admiral’s Men, 1594–1603

*Paul Whitfield White*

A critical commonplace of early modern theatrical history is that biblical drama, like all “religious” drama, declined during the Elizabethan period. The evidence given for this claim is not only the cessation of the medieval mystery cycles but also the survival of only two fully scripted biblical plays after 1588: Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge’s *A Looking Glass for London and England* and George Peele’s *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe. With the Tragedie of Absalon*. However, recent lost-play studies have demonstrated that, with respect to the professional stage at least,

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biblical drama may not have declined but *increased* in popularity. By my count, eleven or twelve plays of professional auspices are considered biblical from 1558 to 1587, whereas at least twice that many are identifiable from 1588 to 1603 (see the supplementary table online, “Biblical Plays with Adult Professional Companies, 1558-1603”). These lost plays are spread across no fewer than five different companies, but most of them belong to the Admiral’s Men. Due to the book of accounts kept by Philip Henslowe at the Rose and Fortune playhouses (famously known as Henslowe’s diary), there is documentation of the repertory of the Admiral’s Men covering some nine years of their activity (1594–1603).<sup>1</sup> Plausibly, therefore, the acquisition of biblical plays by the Admiral’s Men serves as a model for the repertorial practice of other adult troupes in London for whom we do not have such a detailed history.

My discussion starts by examining the methodological challenges of identifying and determining the content of lost biblical plays, challenges that help explain why their modest but significant place in late-Elizabethan drama has been often misunderstood and unappreciated. I argue further that—while play producers and audiences alike were aware that the stories they presented and the heroes they depicted were in some sense “sacred” (and possibly a little controversial on stage as such)—the biblical drama of the Admiral’s Men was not recognized as a distinct *genre* but rather blended in with other plays of the period as “comedy,” “tragic-comedy,” and “histories.” Consistent with those broad terms, surviving texts and contemporary comment indicate that such offerings were generically composite, intermixing narrative conventions from the Bible itself with elements of chivalric romance, folklore, and other sources, as one finds in other drama, popular literature and visual art of the period. I also contend that professional biblical drama may have been quite spectacular, at odds with the theory prominent in earlier generations of scholarship that Protestantism was deeply suspicious of visual effects. As such, these plays were part of the religious culture of the period and should not be seen as purely secular.

### LOST BIBLICAL DRAMA: EVIDENCE, METHODOLOGY, AND IDENTIFICATION

Most scholarship on early modern drama and the Bible either avoids any substantive treatment of lost plays of the period (three books in the last decade on Bible-drama relations say little or nothing) or perpetuates

outdated assumptions about Protestant opposition, state censorship, and the secularization of those biblical plays surviving suppression.<sup>2</sup> Studies dealing more precisely with matters of theater history have treated late-Elizabethan biblical drama briefly. Only one scholar, Annaliese Connolly, has examined its significance.<sup>3</sup> The pioneering work of Martin Wiggins's *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* and the *Lost Plays Database* has added to the list of possible biblical plays. Titles in the Admiral's stock for the period 1594–1603 that scholars have identified as plausibly biblical are as follows: part 1 of "The Seven Days of the Week" (1595, Wiggins #1003); part 2 of "The Seven Days of the Week" (1596, Wiggins #1029); "New World's Tragedy" (1595, Wiggins #1009); "Nebuchadnezzar" (1596, Wiggins #1050); "Adam and Eve" (c. 1597, Wiggins #1093); "Poor Man's Paradise" (1599, Wiggins #1201); "Judas" (1600) and "Judas" (1602, Wiggins #1316), "Pontius Pilate" (1602, Wiggins #1318), "Jephthah" (1602, Wiggins #1332), "Tobias" (1602, Wiggins #1333), "Samson" (1602, Wiggins #1338), "Joshua" (1602, Wiggins #1358), and "The Four Sons of Aymon" (1602, Wiggins, #1375).<sup>4</sup> Several of these are easy to identify as biblical because they are named after familiar characters from scripture such as Joshua, Jephthah, and Samson. But even familiar names can be ambiguous. There are two famous Judases in the Bible: Iscariot and Maccabeus; which one do the Judas plays feature? Each might depict a different historical figure. On the other hand, might not the two Judas titles refer to one play? The "lumping" and "splitting" of play titles is a common problem encountered in lost-play research, as John H. Astington has demonstrated.<sup>5</sup> As I will later explain, the titles of the 1602 "Judas" and "Pilate" titles might also refer to a single play. Further, "Nebuchadnezzar," although it does not raise questions of duplication illustrated in the above list, might be one and the same as "The Play of the Prophet Daniel" performed by the English troupe of Robert Browne (a former Admiral's player) or an associate of his touring the Continent in the late 1590s and after.<sup>6</sup>

Misidentification of a title character is another potential problem. Andrew Gurr assumes that "Aymon" in "The Four Sons of Aymon" refers to King Amon of Judah from the second Book of Kings.<sup>7</sup> However, Amon had only one son, Josiah, and he was Amon's successor to the throne. Wiggins (#1375) makes a convincing case that the play is based on a medieval tale set in the reign of Charlemagne the Great c. AD 800. Analogues such as these and other circumstantial evidence are especially critical in assessing those titles in Henslowe's diary that are *not* named

after a character, as will be shown with several of the Admiral's titles from the 1590s. Once a title is established as a probable or almost certain biblical play, the reconstruction of its contents and reception (where that is possible) draws on the wealth of source material beyond Henslowe's diary. In addition to other theatrical materials such as extant plays and contemporary comment on them, there are sources related to the Bible including poems, ballads, prose fiction, treatises, sermons, and the visual arts. Nevertheless, the reality of lost-play scholarship is that scholars must live with levels of uncertainty that extend beyond title-identification to subject matter and how it is handled.

### THE ADMIRAL'S LOST BIBLICAL PLAYS 1594–1599

Let me illustrate the problem of identification with reference to two play titles in the Admiral's repertory that have not traditionally been considered biblical. They are "The Seven Days of the Week" and "The Second Week" (Wiggins's modernized titles; alternatively shortened in Henslowe's diary as "the weacke" and "the 2 wecke"). To modern ears, the titles do not point obviously to any scriptural narrative. Moreover, the extant text of an Oxford Christmas "show" (1604) in which "the seven days of the week" are allegorical characters might suggest a play in the morality vein.<sup>8</sup> Yet, for an Elizabethan audience raised on biblical catechisms, popular homilies, ballads, and even religious puppet plays, the phrase "the seven days of the week" would have brought to mind the seven days of creation. Further, as Lily B. Campbell suggested in 1958 and Wiggins has recently supported, the two plays suggest a link to a pair of epics on the creation of the world and the seven ages of biblical history written by Huguenot poet Guillaume Du Bartas: *La Semaine* ("The Week," 1578) and *La Seconde Semaine* ("The Second Week," 1584).<sup>9</sup> Following Genesis 1:1–8, Du Bartas's *La Semaine* is divided into seven sections of approximately 700 lines, corresponding to the seven days of creation. The sequel follows St. Augustine's division of history into seven ages following the seven days of creation. Du Bartas's epics were widely influential on early modern dramatists including Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare; they are second only to the Bible itself as a source for Peele's biblical play *David and Bathsheba*. Thomas Lodge, though evidently not familiar with Du Bartas at the time he cowrote *A Looking Glass*, subsequently translated a series of commentaries on the poems.<sup>10</sup> If part 1 of "Seven Days of the Week" depicted the creation

and fall of Adam and Eve, as I am assuming here, the "Eves bodeyes" in the Admiral's apparel list of 1598 would have been appropriate.<sup>11</sup>

The numerological motif of the two-part "Seven Days of the Week" is evident in several contemporary works such as "Four Plays in One" (1593) and "The Seven Deadly Sins" (c. 1597). Indeed, Wiggins suggests their action may follow a pattern used in the pair of "Seven Deadly Sins" plays, formerly assigned to Strange's Men at the Rose c. 1591–1592 but reassigned recently to the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Theater c. 1597–1598.<sup>12</sup> The extant plot of "2 Seven Deadly Sins" reveals that it focuses on three of the seven sins—envy, sloth, and pride—which are staged successively. Wiggins infers from the Plot of part 2 that part 1 dealt with the other four sins. He suggests that the four-and-three split may have also applied to the two-part "Seven Days of the Week," and that "indeed one pair of plays may have got the idea from the other" (#1003). One assessment is clear: part 1 of "Seven Days of the Week" was extraordinarily popular and long-running at the Rose. It premiered as a "ne" (i.e., presumably new) play at the Rose on Tuesday 3 June 1595.<sup>13</sup> It appeared an additional twenty-one times over the next eighteen months, finishing on 31 December 1596, an extraordinary run (*HD* 30–35).<sup>14</sup> At its first performance, "Seven Days of the Week" took in £3.10s and earned in excess of £3 on three subsequent occasions, making it among the most financially successful plays recorded in Henslowe's diary. The second part took in £3 at its premiere performance on 22 January 1596 and 24s at its second show on 26 January (*HD* 34).

Part 1 of "Seven Days of the Week" was joined in the Admiral's 1595–1596 repertory by another quite profitable "ne[w]" play that appears to be biblical. Recorded as "The World's Tragedy" for four performances, beginning on September 7, it is called "The New World's Tragedy" (though it is conceivably a revision or even a sequel) for the seven occurrences through April 1596.<sup>15</sup> Coincidentally in 1596, Francis Sabie published a narrative poem entitled "The Olde Worlde's Tragedie" about the world's destruction in the time of Noah, "old world" used in the sense of II Peter: 2:5: "[God] Neither hath spared the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person a preacher of righteousness, and brought in the Flood upon the world of the ungodly."<sup>16</sup> "The New World's Tragedy" may have dwelled on the post-flood Noah of Genesis 9, a drunken and vengeful patriarch who curses the offspring of his son Ham for mocking his nakedness. Note the old world/new world dichotomy in Thomas Adams' biblical commentary on II Peter: "Who would thinke to find *Noah*, that

father of the new world, lying drunken in his Tent? Or that a little Wine should doe more than a whole deluge of water? That he who was not perverted by the bad examples of the old world, should now begin a new example of sin to the new world?"<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the first catastrophic event to occur in this "new world" after the flood was the collapse of the Tower of Babylon during the reign of Ham's great-grandson and the Bible's first tyrant, King Nimrod. Interestingly, both of these tragic stories are connected to the "new world" of the Americas, since Protestants, notably Du Bartas in *The Colonies*, identified Noah and his immediate descendants as prototypes of the overseas explorers and migrants who colonized the western hemisphere.<sup>18</sup>

So far, I have proposed that the Admiral's staged three or four biblical offerings in 1595 and 1596: the two-part "Seven Days of the Week" plus "The World's Tragedy"/"The New World's Tragedy" (a single or paired drama). Their comparative success may have prompted the company to acquire others. One, late in 1596, was "Nebuchadnezzar" (Wiggins #1050). Marked "ne" at its first recorded performance on December 18, it enjoyed seven more showings through March of 1597. The account of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 1–6 features the ingredients of a box-office success: a Tamburlainean tyrant; a hero in the prophet Daniel who rises from condemned Jewish exile to governor after correctly interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dreams; a spectacular golden idol; the trial of the fiery furnace; the lions' den; and the king's fall, conversion, and restoration to power. The "daniels gowne" in Alley's handwritten list of apparel (*HD* 292) and the "j lyone skin," "j lyone," and "ij lyon heades" in the Admirals' 1598 property list may apply to this play (*HD* 319, 320).<sup>19</sup> Its receipts of 22s on average for its eight performances reinforce the opinion on its popularity; for a performance during Christmastide (December 27, St. John's Day), the play returned 68s to Henslowe.

Two plays named in sources other than Henslowe's diary belong to the 1590s. One, "The Play of Adam and Eve" (1597), is named in *Pleasant Notes Upon Don Quixote* (1654) where Edmund Gayton scoffs at its lack of verisimilitude (e.g., Eve is accompanied in paradise by two maid-servants). In the same context, Gayton mentions two extant professional offerings, *Doctor Faustus* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. The former was certainly in the repertory of the Admiral's Men in the 1590s, and the latter might have been.<sup>20</sup> Another play from the 1590s is "The Poor Man's Paradise" (1599). The title "derives from St. Jerome, who uses the phrase *paradisus pauperis* in reference to 'Abraham's bosom' in the

biblical parable of Dives and Lazarus" (Wiggins #1201). However, other than that allusion and the popular adaptation of this parable in sixteenth-century drama, there is no additional evidence to indicate its story or company affiliation.

### GOSPEL-ERA TITLES AFTER 1600

Around 1600, when the Admiral's company moved from the Rose on the bankside to the Fortune playhouse in Middlesex, Henslowe's records indicate an interest in gospel-era themes, possibly for the first time. "Judas" appears as a title in May 1600 and December 1601, the latter entry followed on 3 January 1602 by a purchase of cloth (*HD* 135, 185, 186). About a week later on 12 January 1602, Henslowe recorded a payment to Thomas Dekker for additions to a play featuring "Pontius Pilate" (*HD* 187). The plays are truly extraordinary in that their titles name gospel characters. Depicting New Testament villains was not in itself problematic, but representing Christ himself or any of the saints—i.e., the disciples and apostles such as Paul—would have been highly controversial. Popular print, including pictures, went through that crisis earlier in Elizabeth's reign and as Tessa Watt asserts, being caught merely with a picture of a thorn-crowned Christ could generate strong suspicions of "popery" from the intensely anti-Catholic English from the 1570s onward.<sup>21</sup> Although censorship regulations did not strictly forbid it, no actor (to my knowledge) walked the boards of a London playhouse stage from 1567 onward in the person of Jesus Christ. But a New Testament Judas was different. On 27 May 1600, William Haughton was lent 10 shillings "in earnest" for "A Boocke called Judas" (*HD* 135). That's the last we hear of Haughton's connection with the play. The meager sum to Haughton has led scholars to conflate this play with the one for which William Bird and Samuel Rowley received £1 "In earnest" on 20 December 1601; a payment to them of £5 "in fulle payment for A Boocke called Judas" follows a few days later on December 24 (*HD* 185). A clear indication that the late December 1601 play was produced is the authorization of 30s to buy cloth for "Judas" on 3 January of 1602 (*HD* 186).<sup>22</sup>

As I suggested above, the "Judas" titles, along with "Pilate," pose difficult problems of identification that are worth considering in more detail. The heroic tale of Maccabeus, a military champion of the Jews in their pre-Christian war with Syria, was familiar to audiences from Maccabees I: 2–9 and II: 2–15 (widely read in churches) and from populist narrative

poetry and pictorial art featuring Maccabeus among the Nine Worthies. Holofernes impersonates him with great comic effect in “The Pageant of the Nine Worthies” in *Love’s Labor’s Lost*.<sup>23</sup> Maccabeus’s story also fits in well with the Admiral’s repertory, which achieved commercial success in other plays of military conquest featuring the Nine Worthies including a pair of plays featuring Godfrey of Boulogne in 1594–1595 and the purchase of “The Life of Arthur, King of England” in April–May 1598. After the Admiral’s Men left for the Fortune, Worcester’s Men leased the Rose and presented a play sometime around October 1602 with two *biblical* worthies: Joshua as well as David would have been characters in the drama that featured the hanging of Absalom, perhaps with a rope and pulleys (*HD* 217).

However, I believe the case for Judas Iscariot as villain/hero is especially compelling. First, Judas is historically the prototype for the stage Jew, which proved popular and commercially successful in earlier Alleyn and Henslowe productions of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* (c. 1589), a play that was revived at the Fortune just six months or so before “Judas” made its debut in the summer of 1601 (*HD* 170). What strengthens the Iscariot case is the name of a second gospel villain documented in Henslowe’s diary on 3 January 1602, a mere seven days after the costume order for Judas: “pd vnto Thomas deckers at the apoyntmente of the company for A prologe & a epiloge for the playe of ponescioues pillet ... xs” (*HD* 187). The dates of the records for plays with the characters of Judas and Pilate are so close that they invite explanation as a newly composed sequence of plays on these two gospel villains whose accounts, in the Book of Mathew, immediately follow one another. However, many scholars see Pilate as an older play, based on Edmond Malone’s speculation about a 1598 inventory listing a jerkin and cloak for “My Lord Caffes,” i.e., Caiaphas (*HD* 319, Wiggins #1318). This is possible, yet problematic: if “Caffes” is a garbled version of “Caiaphas,” Caiaphas must have been a character in the play. Perhaps, but not necessarily. In the gospels, the two are not identified by name in the same scene, although of course Judas does plot with Jewish leaders. Moreover, the stories of Christ’s two most notorious betrayers, prior to their ever having met Jesus, were widely disseminated through oral transmission and print, via ballads, chapbooks, and pictorial art in early modern England, with the medieval legend of his life essentially intact. As Paul Baum shows in extensive research on the Judas legend, the lives of Judas and Pilate were closely related, with numerous medieval manuscripts on Pilate either preceding

or immediately following the legend of Judas.<sup>24</sup> Therefore the Admiral's Men, following the familiar storytelling tradition, might have paired up two plays on the gospel villains at the beginning of 1602.

It is possible, however, that there are not two Admiral's plays on Judas and Pilate here but one. In a popular broadside ballad, "The Dream of Judas' Mother Fulfilled," Pilate plays a central role in the story "as king [who] then reigned" over Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup> He employs and protects Judas after the latter kills his own stepbrother, favors him as his "chief minion," then unwittingly arranges for Judas's marriage to his own mother after he murders his father in an orchard (sound familiar?). In other words, Pilate is central to the Judas story. In another account it is Pilate who pays Judas for the betrayal of Christ; both end their lives by committing suicide. It is entirely conceivable, then, that the Admiral's "Judas" features Pilate in this way or deploys a double-plot interweaving narratives centered on the two villainous characters. This hypothesis would account for the appearance of "Pilate" in the diary so quickly after "Judas" and there being no separate playbook on record. Wiggins, who is struck by the swiftness with which expenses for a "Pilate" play seem to have followed the "Judas" production, entertains the single-play idea only to downplay its possibility; he does see Thomas Dekker's prologue and epilogue for "Pontius Pilate" arising from a need for a "special introduction and framing," due to the sensitivity of the subject matter.<sup>26</sup> However, this reasoning is equally applicable to a Judas play, possibly more so.

Given these possibilities with respect to the Judas/Pilate plays, several scenarios present themselves. The least likely, I believe, is that there were three plays. Haughton's 10 shillings for penning his "Judas" in 1600 is a meager sum and suggests an advance for a script that was shelved. However, the odds increase a little if Haughton was writing a play on Judas Maccabeus, since back-to-back plays on Iscariot—the presumed subject of a play linked with Pilate in 1601/1602—makes little sense commercially. The second scenario is that the Admiral's staged only one play centering on Judas Iscariot *and* Pilate. But this hinges on Henslowe calling the play "Judas" three times (20, 24 December 1601; 3 January 1602), then referring to it as "Pilate" on 12 January 1602. The most plausible scenario remains that the script for the 1601/1602 "Judas" was started by Haughton in 1600 and finished by Bird and Rowley some eighteen months later. Presumably, the Admiral's Men thought this would match up well with "Pilate," quite likely an earlier play, and so they commissioned a freshly written prologue and epilogue defending its religiously

sensitive subject matter. It was written by Thomas Dekker, himself an expert in the composition of religiously controversial drama. Also favoring Pilate as an appropriate topic for a single play is that a “common picture” of the early seventeenth century was the *Ecco Homo* with Christ being brought forth by Pilate and shown to the Jews; it was included among the paintings in the gallery of Lambeth Palace (home to the Archbishop of London) and was the only New Testament scene published in Thomas Warren’s series of woodcuts in 1656.<sup>27</sup>

### GENRE, STRUCTURE, AND THE OTHER BIBLICAL PLAYS OF 1602

Did playwrights and popular audiences think of these plays generically as “biblical plays”? The six known instances in which biblical drama is discussed in late-Elizabethan writings do not use the terms “biblical plays” or “scriptural drama.” The closest to a generic label is the reference by John Northbrooke in 1577 to “histories out of the scriptures,” condemning “the long suffering and permitting of these vaine plays.”<sup>28</sup> Two years later, the anonymously written *Second and Third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters* (possibly penned by Anthony Munday, subsequently an author of plays), refers to “The reverend word of God & histories of the Bible, set forth on the stage.” When a generic label is applied to plays featuring biblical stories and characters, it is “interlude” or “enterlude” (see the online table provided with this chapter); some use “comedy,” one uses “sacred comedy” (“*geistliche komoedien*”), two use “tragedy,” two use “tragicomedy,” and one uses “holy history” (*heiligen historien*).<sup>29</sup> What this suggests is that while audiences may have immediately recognized the subject matter of a biblical play by its title—“Jephthah,” “Judas,” or “Sodom and Gomorah”—the dramatists did not privilege generic labels over the subject matter of their works. That in turn further suggests that plays on biblical topics were not typically controversial; they were simply comedies that dealt with biblical rather than, say, classical or “Arthurian” subject matter.<sup>30</sup>

If “Judas,” like “The Dream of Judas’s Mother,” is based on a medieval legend, then it may be ruled out as a “trial of Christ” or a “crucifixion” play in the cycle play tradition. The focus in the legend on family relations, marriage, and murders recalls Elizabethan domestic tragedy, but indications of a climactic hanging scene with its emphasis on spiritual anguish and divine retribution recall the horrific endings of Marlovian

tragedy.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Henry Chettle's "Tobias," staged in the summer of 1602, is called a "Comedy" in Henslowe's itemized monthly payment to the Master of the Revels (*HD* 296).<sup>32</sup> The Book of Tobit is initially structured as two narratives, one focusing on old Tobit, whose blindness and religious persecution prompts his Job-like plea for God to end his life, and the other centering on his young cousin Sarah, herself driven to despair by a demon who kills her seven husbands on their wedding nights. The double plots are connected in chapter three when God sends the angel Raphael to cure Tobit's blindness but only after the angel accompanies the old man's son to Sarah's home and ejects the demon to secure their marriage.<sup>33</sup> Did the Admiral's production, therefore, follow the popular ballad, "Tobias of Nineve," in relating only the romantic plotline of Tobias and Sarah, or did it follow an already established tradition in Protestant Europe of encompassing the frame narrative involving old Tobit? A summer civic drama on "the Story of Old Toby" staged between 1564 and 1567 in Lincoln, possibly modeled on a Tobit play in the Low Countries, evidently featured the fuller narrative. Described by Tessa Watt as "one of the four most popular biblical subjects of the sixteenth century," the Tobias story features supernatural beings (a guardian angel, a demon), talismanic objects, and miracles, along with an orthodox spiritual lesson on exercising fortitude in adversity; in other words, an appeal to popular Elizabethan religion.<sup>34</sup>

From "Tobias" I turn to "Samson and the Benjamites," described as a *tragica comoedia* by foreigner Frederic Gerschow who witnessed its performance on Tuesday 14 September 1602.<sup>35</sup> Wiggins proposes that the play may have been structured around Samson's relationships with women, which would enable the play to weave in a tragic love story about the Benjamites. Samson's early failed marriage to the Philistine woman led to his slaughtering single-handedly the Philistine army with a jawbone, the rendezvous with the harlot in Gaza occasioned his carrying the gates of Gaza on his shoulders up the mountain, and of course Delilah's divulging the secret of his strength, his long hair, led to imprisonment and eventually the scene where he pulls down the Temple walls on himself and all around him.

"Samson," like the other two biblical plays of 1602 on patriarchs from the Hebrew Bible ("Jephthah" and "Joshua"), would likely have been viewed as a "history" or "chronicle" play because its subject matter centers on a larger-than-life historical/biblical hero who exhibits great feats of physical strength and moral courage. As with the "Samson" subject

matter, women figure significantly in the stories. “Jephthah,” written by Anthony Munday and Thomas Dekker, probably dramatized the life of a charismatic military general who, in exchange for victory over the powerful Ammonites, makes a pact with God to sacrifice the first thing that greets him when arriving home from battle. That turns out to be his only daughter.<sup>36</sup> The story would have been an ideal vehicle for martial display and military action, juxtaposed with the great pathos of a father for his daughter.<sup>37</sup> The Elizabethan divine William Perkins voiced another theme of the biblical Jephthah: an orphan born out of wedlock. Jephthah was a model of godly obedience for “base-born men.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, class status must have been one of the appealing features of Samson, Jephthah, and Joshua to the middling audiences at the Fortune: all three men rose to glory and greatness from relatively humble or obscure backgrounds.

The mightiest and most fearsome of biblical warriors was Joshua (Moses’s successor), whose series of military conquests across Canaan secured a homeland for Israel’s twelve tribes. The story was tailor-made for a play in the conqueror mold of *Tamburlaine*. Like Marlowe’s Scythian hero, Joshua rose from obscurity to become an invincible champion; his army stormed across Canaan, invading towns and kingdoms, brutally killing their inhabitants and burning their houses to the ground. Also like *Tamburlaine* he was a scourge of God who ordered his captains to tread on the necks of captured kings before executing them (Joshua 10:24). There was, of course, a fundamental difference. *Tamburlaine*, whose role as God’s scourge is partly modeled on the Assyrian tyrant recounted in II Kings 18 and Isaiah 10:24–26, was on the Elizabethan stage a divinity-mocking infidel whose pursuit of warfare is for self-glorification, while Joshua in dramatic form was probably a “holy” warrior, an obedient vessel of God’s will sent to lead and protect the Israelites. Perhaps, then, *Tamburlaine* was the *anti*-Joshua play, as might have been the two-part “Tamar Cham,” which the Admiral’s Men apparently revived at approximately the same time as “Joshua” in September 1602.<sup>39</sup>

The holy image of Joshua, accentuated by his translated name “Jesus” in all English Bible editions of Hebrews 4:10 and Acts 5:3,<sup>40</sup> blended with a character drawn from chivalric romance: “Duke Joshua” of the Nine Worthies, featured with his special “coat of arms” in poems, ballads, pictures and heraldry books. The “parfight armory of Duke Joshua,” writes Gerard Leigh in *Accedence of Armourie* (1562) (a heraldic handbook), is “partie bend sinister, or, and gules, a backe displayed, sable.”<sup>41</sup>

It seems likely that not only Joshua, but also King David—another of the biblical Worthies—would have been identified on stage by their coats of arms. In addition, both warriors offered insignia for the players' helmets, breastplates, and shields as well as for war flags and standards flaunted in battle scenes.<sup>42</sup>

These "histories out of scriptures," which focus on a single patriarch or warrior hero from the Hebrew Bible, are distinguishable from the two-part "Seven Days of the Week" noted earlier. Their basic design is within the tradition of the "ages of history" play. The "ages of history" format, which is central to the medieval mysteries, survived in early modern England in the Cornish *Creation of the World* (1611), John Bale's *God's Promises* (1578), and a puppet show called "The Chaos of the World" or "The Beginning of the World," which was taken on tour in the 1620s but almost certainly performed in earlier decades. Such puppet plays featured scenes centering around Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace, and the fall of Nineveh. New Testament scenes depicted the Virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus, and the story of Dives and Lazarus.<sup>43</sup>

### STAGING OF THE ADMIRAL'S BIBLICAL PLAYS

A play of "Samson" has generated considerable interest from stage historians because of a reference in *The Family of Love* (1606) to the hero's carrying the gates of Gaza on his shoulders: "Beleuee it we sawe Sampson beare the Towne gates on his necke, from the lower to the vpper stage, with that life and admirable accord, that it shall neuer be equaled." Since the Fortune is not known to have steps from the main stage to the upper, it generally assumed that actor playing Samson carried a large prop of gates on a ladder up to the balcony level.<sup>44</sup>

How was a biblical comedy such as "Tobias" performed? It is possible to get a sense of how from "the Story of Old Toby" performed multiple times from the early Elizabethan Lincoln version. The Lincoln script does not survive but its sizeable prop list does, including several items similar to those in Henslowe's possession: "a tombe with a Coueryng," portable cities (with towers), a "Sara Chambre," and "a hell mouth" with a lower jaw.<sup>45</sup> In both, the tomb prop might have been associated with the coffin Sara's father prepared for young Tobias, suspecting he would not survive his wedding night. The wedding night scene may have also featured the hell-mouth through which the demon, Asmodeus, entered to arrive at

Sara's chamber before his expulsion by the angel Raphael. In November 1602, Henslowe's hell-mouth could have been used for *Doctor Faustus*, supposedly revised by William Bird and Samuel Rowley into the 1616 text (known as the B-text) when "hell is discovered" in the final scene.<sup>46</sup> And what about the scriptural Tobias's dog that is along for the journey?<sup>47</sup> Dogs appear in the mid-Tudor *Jacob and Esau*, and of course there is Crab in *Two Gentlemen from Verona*.<sup>48</sup>

With respect to the staging of "Judas," some indication may be provided by Thomas Lupton's interlude *All for Money* (published 1578) where late in the action "Judas commeth in like a damned soule, in blacke painted with flames of fire and with a fearfull vizard;" he proceeds to deliver an extended Faustus-like soliloquy, lamenting his predestined damnation, yet he is conscience-stricken by his devotion to sin and impenitence. Accompanied by Dives and condemned for greed, he is driven off stage making "a pitifull noyse" by the allegorical Damnation.<sup>49</sup> A more spectacular and macabre ending for Judas is suggested by the cycle plays, which take their cues from the Book of Matthew (27:5), in which his suicide by hanging is reported, and the book of Acts, in which "he hath thrown down himself headlong, he brast [burst] asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out" (Acts 1:18).<sup>50</sup> At mid-sixteenth-century Coventry, the Smiths ordered "a new hooke to hang Judas" for their Judas play, while the Sausage-makers' production, "The Hanging of Judas," may have featured the gut-spilling moment as a string of sausages.<sup>51</sup> Simulated grotesque killings of course were routine on the early modern stage and carried out in sophisticated technological fashion, as Philip Butterworth has recently shown.<sup>52</sup> I have already referred to the rope and pulleys Henslowe ordered for the hanging of the protagonist in the Worcester's "Absalom" play late in 1602. Henslowe's word, "poleyas," suggests two poles with the rope suspended between them and used to depict Absalom's death resulting from catching his famous hair in an oak tree while fleeing the battlefield. William Bird and Samuel Rowley, who had teamed up for the "Judas" play in December 1601, collaborated again in November 1602 to revise *Doctor Faustus* (HD 206).<sup>53</sup> Might they have applied what they composed for the damnation scenes of Judas and Pilate's death to the final moments of *Faustus*, producing the spectacular scene in the B-text of the reprobate's violent ending in the presence of devils and to the sound of thunder and shrieks of terror?

## CONCLUSIONS

What are the contributions of this run of biblical plays by the 1594–1603 Admiral’s Men and by other late-Elizabethan London companies? And what about the concentration in the year 1602? There is simply not a broad enough sample of drama (and titles) from all the companies operating around this time to know for sure that the Admiral’s and other troupes were *not* performing, say, five or six scriptural plays a year. What we do know is that four major late-Elizabethan troupes in London did stage them.<sup>54</sup> As discussed here, the titles indicate subject matter drawn largely from the Hebrew Bible and the Apocrypha, centering on exemplary heroes and heroines popularly treated elsewhere in sermons, pamphlets, and broadside ballads; dramatists appear to have steered clear of the gospel narratives centered on Christ, presumably because these were deemed inappropriate for dramatic representation. Moreover, the evidence seems to challenge the widely embraced theory by Murray Roston that the drama gradually moved down the rungs of sanctity from New Testament, to Old Testament, and finally to apocryphal subjects.<sup>55</sup> In this and other respects, the plays of the late-Elizabethan period differed from the civic cycle plays of York, Chester, Coventry, and elsewhere. If the London playhouses offered their own contracted version of the “stages of history play” in the two-part “The Seven Days of the Week,” they also appeared to have explored subjects not treated in the older scriptural drama: for example, Samson, Nebuchadnezzar, and Tobias. On the other hand, biblical drama blended in with the mainstream of Elizabethan drama generically, with a fairly representative range of comedies, tragedies, tragicomedies, and histories. Audiences would have immediately recognized their stories as *biblical* and considered them distinctive in that one respect, but my argument is that in other ways they blended right in with the rest of the drama and therefore would not have been deemed controversial by most playgoers.

The commercial appeal of heroic, strong-willed warrior princes such as Joshua, Jephthah, and David is obvious. These figures played to the patriotic, militant—some would say puritan—Protestantism of the “citizen” audiences at the Fortune and perhaps the Rose as well, who also enjoyed the Foxean plays of parts 1 and 2 of “Cardinal Wolsey,” “Lady Jane,” and “Sir John Oldcastle,” to name but a few. To John Astington, they suggest “some kind of public opinion formation” orchestrated by a company

whose patron, the Lord Admiral, may have favored James VI of Scotland as the Queen's successor: "The virtues of the Old Testament heroes and patriarchs were to be hoped for in a new monarch who would maintain the political and religious integrity of the nation."<sup>56</sup> "It is tempting to think," Andrew Gurr writes with respect to the prominence of biblical titles in the Admiral's Fortune repertory in 1602, "that the impulse came from Alleyn wishing to assert his Christian credentials"; Gurr adds, "[c]onceivably he was already starting to think of his great donation, the College of God's Gift, and wanted to set out shows on stage that might counter the fuss about his most famous roles, 'that atheist Tamburlaine' and his revivals of *Faustus*."<sup>57</sup> The biblical theme in the 1602 repertory—with nearly one in five plays featuring a scriptural story—may also have had something to do with the special relationship Alleyn set up with the parishioners of St. Giles without Cripplegate (where the Fortune was built), who wrote a letter to the Privy Council expressing their appreciation to the builders of the new playhouse for contributing a generous weekly sum to the church's poor rate (*HD* 289). The vicar of St. Giles at the time was Lancelot Andrewes, a far cry from the puritan preachers who occupied the pulpit of Alleyn's home church of St. Saviour's Southwark, and a dining companion of Alleyn's when he retired from the stage.<sup>58</sup> The extent to which Alleyn—like the playwrights Dekker, Marston, and Heywood—became more pious with age is open to debate, but both he and his father-in-law were active in parochial leadership during their long careers.<sup>59</sup>

I do not argue here that biblical drama was ever a large part of the professional drama repertory, but it makes up an historically important segment. In 1602, five Admiral's plays on biblical subjects were five plays too many for Henry Crosse who, writing the following year, may have been referencing them: "must the holy Prophets and Patriarkes be set vpon a Stage, to be derided, hist, and laught at? or is it fit that the infirmities of holy men should be acted on a Stage, whereby others may be inharted to rush carelesly forward into vnbrideled libertie?"<sup>60</sup>

## NOTES

1. It is also possible that, prior to 1594, an earlier configuration of the Admiral's Men had *David and Bethsabe* in repertory.

2. The three books on biblical plays are Thomas Fulton and Kristen Poole, eds., *The Bible on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Adrian Streete, ed., *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings: 1570–1625* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Peter Happé and Wim Hüskén, eds., *Staging Scripture: Biblical Drama, 1350–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). Earlier work includes Ruth Blackburn, *Biblical Drama Under the Tudors* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971); Michael O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
3. Annaliese Connolly, “Peele’s *David and Bethsabe*: Reconsidering Biblical Drama of the Long 1590s,” *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 16 (October, 2007) 9.1–20, <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/si-16/connpeel.htm>. Connolly’s newer study, “Biblical tragedy: George Peele’s *David and Bethsabe*,” in Daniel Cadman, Andrew Duxfield, and Lisa Hopkins, eds. *The Genres of Renaissance Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 29–50, was published after the present chapter was completed, and has not been consulted.
4. Martin Wiggins in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–), vols. 1–4. I identify specific plays in the text and the accompanying online table by Wiggins’s item numbers. Wiggins does not give a separate entry to the 1600 “Judas”; I explain below why it should not be ruled out as a separate play.
5. See John H. Astington, “Lumpers and Splitters”, in David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, eds., *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 84–102.
6. As argued by E. K. Chambers in *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), II, 284. For more on the opportunities and problems of lost plays associated with English performers in Germany, see David McInnis’s essay in this collection and Wiggins #798.
7. Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare’s Opposites: The Admiral’s Company, 1594–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 42.
8. The show is one of the entertainments within the group of texts known as *The Christmas Prince*, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 136–151 (ll. 4154–4646). See also Matthew Steggle, *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 34.
9. Lily B. Campbell, *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 240; Wiggins, #1003 and #1029.
10. Du Bartas’s reception in early modern England has been examined most recently in a series of articles by Peter Auger, based on his Oxford thesis, “British Responses to Du Bartas’ *Semaines*, 1584–1641,” D.Phil. Thesis,

- Oxford University, 2012. See also Anne Lake Prescott, "The Reception of Du Bartas in England," *Studies in the Renaissance* 15 (1968): 144–173. For an overview of the English translations, see Susan Snyder, ed. "Introduction," *The Divine Weeks and Works of Guillaume de Saluste, Sieur du Bartas*, trans. Josuah Sylvester, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), I, 70–71.
11. R. A. Foakes, ed. *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 318. Further citations from this edition of Henslowe's diary are indicated in the text by *HD* and page number.
  12. Early twentieth-century theater historians including E. K. Chambers and W. W. Greg differed somewhat in their choice of dates but both were persuaded that the presence of Richard Burbage's name in the plot of part 2 of "The Seven Deadly Sins" and that plot's apparent residence among the papers of Edward Alleyn at Dulwich College meant that the plays had to belong to some time in 1591–1592, that is, before an alleged quarrel between the Alleyn and Burbage families that would have made it impossible (in scholarly opinion) for these two players to perform in the same play (for Chambers, see *The Elizabethan Stage*, 3.497; for Greg, see *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots: Actors' Parts: Prompt Books* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931], 18–19, 110–113). In "Reconsidering *The Seven Deadly Sins*," (*Early Theatre* 7.1, 13–44), David Kathman revisits and revises that opinion, assigning the plot to the Chamberlain's Men and dating it 1597–1598. Andrew Gurr challenges Kathman's conclusions in "The Work of Elizabethan Plotters, and *2 The Seven Deadly Sins*" (*Early Theatre* 10.1 [2007]: 67–87), to which Kathman replies in "*The Seven Deadly Sins* and Theatrical Apprenticeship" (*Early Theatre* 14.1 [2011]: 121–139).
  13. Henslowe's marking of "ne" appears more often than not to indicate the initial performance in the maiden run of a play so marked; for other options of interpretation, see Foakes, ed., xxxiv.
  14. Wiggins is unsure of the assignment across the two parts of performances on 25/6 February and 26 November (#1003, #1029), but here those showings are assigned to part 1.
  15. Greg considers the two titles to indicate one play (*Henslowe's Diary*, 2 vols. [London: A. H. Bullen, 1904, 1908] 2, #77) as does Foakes (index [342, 345]). Faced with the two apparently legitimate titles, Wiggins proposes a "Fall of Man" storyline if the play was really "The World's Tragedy" or one dealing with the Americas, if it was "The New World's Tragedy" (#1009).
  16. Sabie published the poem with two other biblical poems on familiar biblical play themes. The full title is *Adams complaint: The olde*

- worlde tragedie. David and Bathsheba* (London, 1596). For the biblical quote, see Bishops Bible online: <https://studybible.info/Bishops/2%20Peter%202>. On the term "olde world," the Geneva Bible discounts the notion that God made an entirely new world: "Which was before the Flood: not that God made a new world, but because the world seemed new" (Geneva Bible online at Bible Gateway: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+2&version=GNV>).
17. *A Commentary or, Exposition Vpon the Diuine Second Epistle Generall, Written by the Blessed Apostle St. Peter* (London: Jacob Bloome, 1633). Ordained "to beginne the world againe," the drunken, post-flood Noah is the subject of Henry Smith's 1591 *First Sermon of Noahs Drunkennes* (London: William Kearny, 1591), sig. B3.
  18. This parallel, and the precise connection between Noah as the first colonizer and Nimrod as the cursed "Babel-builder" who corrupted the world after the flood are made in the 1598 English edition of *The Colonies*, a section of *La Seconde Semaine* translated into English by William Lisle with extensive explanatory glosses of the poem by Simon Goulart (1598). In a gloss on Du Bartas's identifying Noah as the first colonizer, Simon Goulart writes that "the partition of the earth which *Noe* made, was to his posteritie a token of Gods great blessing, which neuerthelesse the Babel-builders for their part haue turned into a curse"; "*Nymrod*" is the chief among the latter. *The Colonies of Bartas*, trans. William Lisle (London: R. Field, 1598), 5. *The Colonies*, along with Lisle's translation of *Babilon*, also excerpted from *La Seconde Semaine* and featuring the story of Nimrod and the Fall of Babylon, were dedicated to the patron of the Lord Admiral's Men, Charles Howard. A biblical play featuring overseas travel, colonization, and possibly tyranny as well fits well with the Admiral's repertory and the interests of its company patron.
  19. I would like to thank David McInnis and Matthew Steggle for bringing the apparel reference to my attention.
  20. The bodice for Eve ("Eves bodeyes") in the Admiral's stock is the reason Wiggins considers "The Play of Adam and Eve" as a possible repertory item for the company (#1093). The Admiral's Men prepared "a playe of bacon" for the court in December 1602, and Thomas Middleton wrote a prologue and epilogue for the show (Foakes, ed., 207), but opinion on the identity of that "bacon" play is not unanimous.
  21. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Protestant Piety 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 167.
  22. This is precisely one week after the Admiral's performed at court (27 December 1601), so "Judas" missed the Christmas season and probably premiered at the Fortune sometime in January. For the Admiral's court appearance, see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 4.114.

23. See Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version: 1611–2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 43–46; Watt, 212–216.
24. Paull Braum, “The Mediæval Legend of Judas Iscariot,” *PMLA* 31.3 (1916): 481–632; see also Lawrence Besserman, “Judas Iscariot,” in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 418–420.
25. *The Dream of Judas’ Mother Fulfilled, Together with His Sinful Life and Deserved Destruction*, Roxburghe Ballads III.737 (London, 1730). I quote from the 1730 edition, but the ballad’s storyline may be traced back to the Middle Ages. See Braum, “The Mediæval Legend” and Besserman, “Judas Iscariot,” 420. *The Dream of Judas’ Mother Fulfilled, Together with His Sinful Life and Deserved Destruction*, Roxburghe Ballads III.737 (London, 1730). I quote from the 1730 edition, but the ballad’s storyline may be traced back to the Middle Ages. See Braum, “The Mediæval Legend” and Besserman, “Judas Iscariot,” 420. The story of Judas’s mother is also told by Thomas Heywood in *Gynaikeion* (1639), 177–178, which also speaks to its currency among early modern playwrights.
26. Wiggins is reluctant because “each man seems too minor a figure in the other’s story to have been a natural choice of alternative title” (#1318).
27. Watt, 173n.
28. John Northbrooke, *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine Playes, or Enterluds... Are Reproved* (London: Bynneman, 1577), 92. The other references appear in [Anthony Munday], *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters* (London, 1580), 125; Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), 140; Henry Crosse, *Vertues Common-Wealth: Or the High-Way to Honour* (London, 1603), sig. 3P<sup>r</sup>.
29. It is worth noting that many of these generic labels derive from descriptions of continental versions.
30. Plausibly, though biblical plays intuitively reminded audience of the cycle plays, they were by the 1590s simply conventionally generic plays (tragedies, histories, and comedies) depending on their biblical subject matter. Put another way, these plays were more “of a piece” with the rest of the commercially offered drama of the 1590s/1600s than one might think if one mistakenly assumes biblical plays are strange leftovers of an archaic tradition.
31. Wiggins suggests it might be a “romance” (#1316); the *Lost Plays Database* for “Judas” calls the play a “biblical history.”
32. This follows a long Protestant tradition traced to Martin Luther’s description of the apocryphal books of Tobit and Judith as “comedies blessed to God.” See Glenn Ehrstine, *Theater, Culture, and Community in Reformation Bern: 1523–1555*. *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 85

- (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1 (see also 21–22). Luther's endorsement opened the floodgates of biblical drama in Protestant Europe. His comments led to the widespread belief attributed to him that Tobit was originally written as a dramatic work of fiction.
33. "And Raphael was sent to heal them both, that is, to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and to give Sara the daughter of Raguel for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit" (Book of Tobit, 3:17).
  34. Quotation is from Watt, 202. The White Swan Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon about 1570–1580 featured "painted scenes" from the story of Tobit (Watt, 209–210).
  35. The Gerschow reference comes from Gottfried von Bülow, "Diary of the Journey of Philip Julius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, Through England in the Year 1602," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* n.s. 6 (1892): 1–67, 10–11; see also "Samson," *Lost Plays Database* and Wiggins, #1338.
  36. For numerous wardrobe expenditures on this play, see *HD* 200–3. The Bishops Bible features a woodcut of the moment Jephthah sees his daughter on returning from battle.
  37. There were two great academic tragedies on Jephthah known in Tudor England by George Buchanan and John Christopherson, but perhaps the most reliable source for plotting is Munday's own *The Mirror of Mutabilitie* (London, 1579), where Jephthah serves as an object lesson in foolish oath-taking. This was a standard interpretation established in Protestant terms by most influential biblical commentator in England, John Calvin.
  38. William Perkins, *A Cloud of Faithfull Witnesses* (London, 1608), 501; cited in Michelle Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Elizabethan Stage* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 96.
  39. Samuel Rowley was paid £7 on 27 of September 1602 for the latter play (*HD* 205). Just five days after the Admiral's purchased "Joshua," on 2 October, Henslowe paid Alleyn £4 for "his Boocke of tambercam" (*HD* 205). See the entry for "Tamar Cham, Parts 1 and 2" in the *Lost Plays Database* for references to these plays as squarely in the *Tamburlaine* tradition. For *Tamburlaine's* influence on Peele's *David and Bathsheba* and other biblical plays, see Connolly, "Peele's *David and Bethsabe*."
  40. The *Bishops' Bible*, the *Geneva Bible*, and the *KJV* as well, all name Joshua "Jesus" in Hebrews 4:8. See also Acts 7:45.
  41. Gerard Leigh, *The Accedence of Armourie* (London, 1562).
  42. Might audiences at the Fortune have viewed Joshua's plundering, town burning, and massacres with the same moral neutrality as they viewed similar actions carried out by colonial explorers in Africa and the New World? Stephen Greenblatt's discussion of Marlowe in chapter 5 of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) remains one of the best topical analyses of violence in *Tamburlaine*.

43. See Paul Whitfield White, *Drama and Religion in English Provincial Society: 1485–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 193–194.
44. Ladders of course were commonly used in siege scenes of the period. We cannot be sure that the allusion is to the Admiral's play, but if it is, it indicates that biblical plays continued to be staged in the commercial playhouses as late as 1606 or 1607, the probable date of *The Family of Love*.
45. James Stokes, ed. *Records of Early English Drama: Lincolnshire*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 1.187.
46. "Hell is discovered" appears to be one of Bird and Rowley's "additions" to the B-Text. See David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen, eds., *Doctor Faustus: A- and B- texts (1604, 1616)*, Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), B-Text, V.ii.120.2n.
47. Book of Tobit, 5:16 and 11:4.
48. For stage directions prescribing dogs in *Jacob and Esau* and for references to their appearing in other drama, see Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 120, and references cited there. The black satin dog costume used in "The Black Dog of Newgate" was a Worcester's Men item, so it is probably not applicable here (Foakes, ed., 224). The dog suit was made of 8½ yards of black satin. See also the *Lost Plays Database* for "The Black Dog of Newgate" and Wiggins, #1381.
49. Thomas Lupton, *All for Money* (London, 1578), sigs. E2-3.
50. *Geneva Bible* (London, 1599), "The Book of Acts," 1.18–19. One story about the death of Pilate was that he too was suicidal and hanged himself.
51. Jonathan Gil Harris, "Product Placement in Artisanal Drama," in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 45.
52. Philip Butterworth, *Magic on the Early English Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 174–175.
53. See also Bevington and Rasmussen, "Introduction," *Doctor Faustus*, 62–77.
54. Strange's Men had *A Looking Glass* (1592), Chamberlain's staged "Hester and Ahasuerus" with the Admiral's in 1594, Admiral's produced "Nebuchadnezzar" with great success in 1596 along with their six in 1602, and Worcester's an "Absalom" play, possibly Peele's *David and Bathsheba*, the same year.
55. Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London, 1968), 118–120.
56. I'm quoting from John H. Astington, "A Jacobean Ghost, and Other Stories," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 17 (2005): 37–54, 51. See also the entry on "Samson" in the *Lost Plays Database*.

57. Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites*, 41, 42.
58. S. P. Cerasano, "Alleyn's Fortune: The Biography of a Playhouse, 1600–1621," PhD thesis (University of Michigan, 1981), 75–76.
59. "The Parish of St Saviour, Southwark Vestry Minutes 1582–1628," eds. William Ingram and Alan Nelson, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~ingram/StSaviour/vestry-minutes-450.html>. Henslowe was chosen vestryman in 1607 (p. 410), churchwarden in 1608 (p. 414), in 1609 (p. 421) in 1614 (p. 454), and in 1615 (p. 467). Alleyn was chosen vestryman in 1608 (p. 414); churchwarden in 1610 (p. 426) and in 1616 (p. 473). At various times both were auditors of the churchwardens' books and surveyor of lands.
60. Henry Crosse, *Vertues Common-Wealth: Or the High-Way to Honour* (London, 1603), sig. 3P<sup>r</sup>.



## Magic Mirrors, Moors, and Marriage: A Lost English Play Surviving in German

*David McInnis*

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, English plays were performed on the Continent and translated into German by traveling English players, including the troupe led by Robert Browne and John Green (the former being Edward Alleyn's Worcester's Men colleague in the early 1580s), and another led by Thomas Sackville. These included plays by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Heywood, Dekker, Beaumont and Fletcher, Markham, and Massinger.<sup>1</sup> Many of these German redactions have been lost entirely and some exist in unique manuscript versions, but others were printed and even reprinted. Occasionally, a play written for the English commercial theaters survives, remarkably, only in German, thanks to this phenomenon. "The King of England's Son and the King of Scotland's Daughter" (*Eine schöne lustige triumphirende Comoedia von eines Königes Sohn auß Engellandt vnd des Königes Tochter auß Schottlandt*) is one such paradoxically absent–present lost play, and it bears the marks of being deeply immersed in the theatrical activity of London in the

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1590s, including the marks of Shakespearean influence. The printed German play is thus an exceptionally valuable record of a now-lost English play that would have been performed on a London stage (the Rose, Swan, Curtain, or Boar's Head, presumably) c.1597–1598, before being acquired by a company of traveling English players who recast the play in German for performance on the Continent. There, the play was performed at the court of Maurice, Landgrave of Hesse, in Kassel in March 1607 (a court official's letter relates that the players were dissatisfied with their payment),<sup>2</sup> was revived at the Court of Saxony in Dresden in 1626, and again, this time as a puppet play, in Danzig in 1668.<sup>3</sup>

The play owes its preservation in German to the publication of *Engelische Comedien und Tragedien*, an octavo volume printed in 1620 (and reprinted in 1624), probably at Leipzig, and probably edited by Friedrich Menius (1593–1659). Martin Wiggins outlines the book's significance succinctly:

[I]n the 1620 Leipzig volume, we have a small collection of English plays which paradoxically both survive and remain lost: their qualities as dramatic works, orchestrations of narrative and character, incident and staging, are still amply available, but not a word of their original spoken text. Somebody should set about translating them back into English.<sup>4</sup>

The Leipzig volume includes eight plays that were performed by English players in Germany:

- “Esther and Haman” (*Comoedia. Von der Königin Esther vnd hoffer-tigen Haman*);
- “The Prodigal Son” (*Comedia. Von dem verlorren Sohn in welchen die Verz[w]eiffelung vnd Hoffnung gar artig int[r]oducirt warden*);
- “Fortunatus” (*Comoedia. Von Fortunato vnnnd seinem Seckel vnd Wünschbütlein, Darinnen erstlich drey verstorbene Seelen als Geister, darnach die Tugendt vnd schande eingeführet werden*);
- “The King of England's Son and the King of Scotland's Daughter” (*Eine schöne lustig triumphirende Comoedia von eines Königes Sohn auß Engellandt vnd des Königes Tochter auß Schottlandt*);
- “Sidonia and Theagenes” (*Eine kurtzweilige lustige Comoedia von Sidonia vnd Theagene*);
- “Nobody and Somebody” (*Eine schöne lustige Comoedia von Jemand vnd Niemandt*);

- “Julio and Hyppolita” (*Tragaedia, Von Julio vnd Hyppolita*); and
- “Titus Andronicus” (*Eine sehr klügliche Tragaedia von Tito Andronico vnd von der hoffertigen Kayserin, darinnen denckwürdige Actiones zu befinden*).

In addition to “The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter,” the first two of the plays printed in this volume also appear to correspond to otherwise lost English plays. “Fortunatus” and “Nobody and Somebody” are German versions of extant English plays (Dekker’s *Old Fortunatus*, 1599, and the anonymous *Nobody and Somebody*, 1605).<sup>5</sup> Uniquely in the volume, “Sidonia and Theagenes” is of German origin and has no known English counterpart. The only plays that have been translated into English are, unsurprisingly, the ones with clear Shakespearean connections: “Titus Andronicus” and “Julio and Hyppolita” (cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*).<sup>6</sup>

“The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter” is thus the most neglected but also potentially the most rewarding of further investigation in that its title reveals relatively little but its surviving German playtext yields a great deal of information. Because this lost English play survives in a hitherto untranslated German redaction, it is possible to restore it to its repertorial context. In this chapter, I explore the play’s connections to Shakespeare’s Prince Hal (as he appears in the *Henry IV* plays and as he matures in *Henry V*) and *Romeo and Juliet* in particular. To do so, I rely on a translation by the German playwright and director, André Bastian. The play has not been translated into English previously; Bastian’s translation will be published in association with the relevant entry in the *Lost Plays Database*.<sup>7</sup> Because the plays in the Leipzig volume were performed in German by traveling English actors who may have produced the translation themselves, and because the plays are significantly redacted versions of the English, scholars generally acknowledge that on the Continent, English blank verse was “reduced to flat German prose.”<sup>8</sup> The German text is thus most valuable as a record of dramaturgy, narrative and character development, rather than as a poetic achievement. Accordingly, the translation that Bastian has prepared is a literal, working translation of the Early New High German into modern English.

In what follows, I provide an overview of the play’s plot and attempt to situate the play in its theatrical moment in late-1590s London. The play is without a major source, and can thus be seen in some sense as being original.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, its numerous borrowings of tropes

and conventions from English drama of the period undermine this ostensible originality and draw attention to the absolute interconnectedness of the London commercial repertories from which it originated. In the study of lost plays, conjectural reconstruction of narratives forms the usual basis for such observations, but here, at least, is one situation in which the documentary evidence is considerably more concrete. The ontologically ambiguous “The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter”—lost in English, extant in German—thus provides theater historians with new evidence of the significant degree of recurring motifs and duplicated subject matter across London companies’ offerings.

### §

As the play opens, England and Scotland are at war. The elderly King of England offers a distinctly Tamburlainean boast that he and his soldiers have razed and burnt to the ground everything they have encountered. His haughtiness is matched instantly by that of his son, Serule, the Prince of England, who vows to continue fighting on behalf of England until he kills the King of Scotland with his own hand. The Scottish king berates the English for their allegedly unmotivated violence against his kinsmen, but the English king is unfazed, blaming present strife on the Scottish king’s pride, and noting that just as “[t]he world can only tolerate a single sun,” so too England and Scotland can “only tolerate a single king.” Unification of England and Scotland is at stake, but the resolution is not expected to be achieved diplomatically. A bloody but inconclusive battle ensues (offstage) and the English sustain great losses. The English prince, famed for his valor, seeks permission to fight the Scottish king one-to-one, as England’s appointed champion, thereby avoiding more widespread casualties, and his father begrudgingly yields. Serule departs to seek out the Scottish king, but his provocative declarations are answered by the Scottish king’s daughter, Astrea, who vows to “avenge the grief and ... fight against you like a ferocious tiger” if her father fails to show up. Serule is struck by the princess’s beauty and lets his sword fall to the ground; the goddess Venus proves more than a match for the god Mars. The only children of the warring families fall in love at first sight, much to the princess’s shock: “where has it ever been heard that someone has been so embraced by love for his enemy’s daughter?” The young lovers exchange oaths and “consider what we’ll further do, so the dangerous war may find an end and our fathers too may turn to peace and harmony.”

Faced with the unenviable choice of allegiance to their fathers or to each other, they choose love, electing to each persuade their respective fathers to agree to a truce: “If we can achieve this, we’ll be blissful, and afterwards, everyone will say: two secret lovers have destroyed a horrid war that way.”

When the English king next appears, a year-long truce has been engineered, but the threat of war lingers: if the Scottish king doesn’t cede power to England within that year, the military campaign will resume. Serule returns to London, pining for the Scottish princess. He hatches a plan to enable the lovers to be reunited: he will seek his father’s permission to undertake a Grand Tour of the Continent, but disguise himself and secretly visit the Scottish princess instead. Reports of Serule’s melancholy have reached the king, who now demands to know the cause of the young prince’s disposition. The prince initially implies that the king must be mistaken (“how can it be possible that any man is happy at all times? The sky changes from time to time. It’s bright and clear at one time, at another time, it’s dark and gloomy. The same happens in a man”), then claims the cause of his sadness is a fear that the king will not grant him “a request that has been weighing on my soul”: namely, an application for permission to travel to France and beyond, to “go out into the world and test myself to see and learn the mores and languages of many countries.” The king is reluctant to grant this permission, citing the need for his son to lead the “dangerous and bloody war” against the Scots shortly, but ultimately allows the prince to depart on condition that he return in time for battle “and that you won’t go on a journey farther than to Italy.” He adds a variation of the typical *ars apodemica* advice about appropriate behaviors while abroad, urging his son to exercise caution specifically against interacting with Scots.

The prince departs, accepting an offer of treasure from his father but presently dismissing all but one of the two hundred servants that were to accompany him. He and the servant travel north (offstage: “*They go inside; after a little while, they re-emerge*”) until they’re forty English miles from the princess’s castle, then the prince gives the servant new orders:

[H]ere in this forest lives a man who’s well experienced in necromantic arts that he has no equal anywhere. It’s therefore my will that you head off to him and ask him to take you on—a poor journeyman who has nothing to eat—and that he accepts you as his servant; and this for these reasons: if the King, according to his habit, were to ask the sorcerer, and he reveal to

the King that I were with the Princess at the court, you should reveal this thing immediately to the Princess and make her know about it.

The servant agrees to the stratagem, and the third act opens with the necromancer conjuring on stage: “*He makes a circle around him with a stick, opens the book, [and] makes the sign of the cross many times to and fro.*” He explains that he has “twelve spirits” who “must reveal everything to me, and I can send them in a moment to Italy, Germania, Spain, India; and what my heart craves they must and can bring me.” Like the servants of Marlowe’s necromancer, Doctor Faustus, they can fetch winter fruit instantly, but the magician strangely goes by another Marlovian name: Barrabas.<sup>10</sup> When Serule’s servant interrupts him, Barrabas threatens to exile the servant to the Bohemian Forest. The apologetic servant professes a childhood desire to study the black arts and offers his service in exchange for instruction; Barrabas is tempted by the offer but explains that he does not begin to teach his servants necromancy unless they’ve served him faithfully for one whole year.

A peculiar soliloquy from Barrabas follows, in which he summarizes recent events that are not actually included in the printed play; this may constitute evidence that the German play (as published) has been cut; Wiggins describes the events described by Barrabas as the “relic of a subplot in the original.”<sup>11</sup> Barrabas explains that the King of Spain’s famously beautiful daughter has been abducted. The king is heartbroken and has offered to make a prince out of anyone who finds his daughter, but none can. The desperate king has accordingly turned to Barrabas for help. Even a mighty Sultan has heard of the Spanish princess’s beauty and has fallen in love with her, but the Sultan’s request for her hand had been rejected, and Barrabas has established that the Sultan has vowed to take the princess as his consort by force. Moreover, one of Barrabas’s former students in necromancy has wished himself into the princess’s presence and taken her back to the Sultan. Barrabas promises to punish his former student for abusing his magical powers, swearing to frame him by placing him and the princess in the King of Spain’s bed together, discovery of which will mean certain death for the student. (It is later revealed that the student is “cut up in four pieces” when caught; presumably this was the kind of stage business that was possible and popular, as when the scholars find Faustus’s limbs “torn asunder” in the B-Text of Marlowe’s play).<sup>12</sup> He then departs to advise the Spanish king that the princess has been found,

but explicitly rejects the promised reward of becoming prince in favor of continuing to “live alone in this merry and common little wood.”

Meanwhile Serule, disguised as a fool and riding a hobbyhorse, seeks to gain access to the Scottish princess at court. He so pleases the Scottish king with his antics that the king bestows the “fool” on his daughter, to entertain her in his absence. After testing the Scottish princess’s love, the English prince reveals his true identity to her. The king seeks out Barrabas, to inquire as to which of the princess’s suitors will win her hand in marriage. Barrabas produces a magical mirror. As the king peers into the glass for a glimpse of who the successful suitor will be, a violin plays and the Scottish princess and the “fool” are seen dancing on stage. Although the servant is not shown spying on Barrabas and the Scottish king, he apparently has, and has sent word urgently to the princess. She urges the prince to abandon the fool’s motley for another disguise, and he flees just in time. The Scottish king orders the massacre of all remaining fools in the kingdom, so that none shall marry his daughter. The prince has escaped successfully, but hatches a new plan to get close to the princess. He “*puts on a black dress and ties a gauze onto his face*”<sup>13</sup> and disguises himself as a Moor, then attempts to sell “three precious jewels” to the king. The king leaves his daughter in charge of evaluating the jewels, thus providing the lovers with another opportunity to converse. The princess again fails to recognize her lover in his “foreign attire”; he wagers that he can both deduce the source of her depression and cure her of it (which he does by disclosing his identity).

Having had all the fools killed, the king returns to Barrabas to have his fortune told again. This time the magic mirror reveals the princess dancing with a Moor, to the outrage of her father, who finds himself in Brabantio’s position in the opening scenes of *Othello*:

As I saw before, it was a fool, and now it is a black devil and Moor! Should it be possible that I witness now such a shame on my daughter? Should she get a Moor or Morian? No, I’d rather burn her ten times in fire.

The princess is again forewarned of her father’s discovery and wrath; Serule departs conspicuously so that the guards know that the “Moor” has left, and the king, arriving too late, declares that “[a]ll Moors that come after this one will not get away alive.”

The Scottish princess now dresses as a nun to avoid detection and tries to find her lover in the countryside, but she's caught up in the war preparations as the King of England advances with his men; an English soldier finds her hiding behind a tree, sees through her disguise instantly and captures her on behalf of the king. (It is striking that the princess is incapable of seeing through her own lover's disguises, but is herself so readily recognized by others.) The Prince of England has likewise been taken prisoner and brought to the Scottish king. During the final confrontation, neither king is willing to surrender, and both their children are produced as prisoners. The Scottish king forces the captive English prince to drink poison "against all war customs." The English king threatens to kill the Scottish princess in retaliation, but draws his sword back from her chest as she lies prostrate in front of him, declaring to his enemy that "it's impossible for me to kill this innocent creature so miserably and to be a tyrant like you." The princess rises, runs to the poisoned prince, and kisses him; to everyone's surprise, he revives. "[I]t wasn't poison but only a sleeping potion," the Scottish king confesses. The two kings, noticing now their children's mutual affection, bestow their blessings on the couple's imminent wedding.

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The narrative of this Anglo-German romance, or pseudo-history, is a somewhat convoluted grab-bag of popular motifs from the Elizabethan theater, but it forms a coherent enough story. The romance of Serule and Astrea and the hardships they face in pursuing love against the backdrop of the feud between their respective countries would have been a familiar trope to playgoers in London. They would have encountered precisely this phenomenon in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, a play that had probably been revived quite recently (judging by an allusion in John Marston's *The Scourge of Villanie*, 1598), and one that appears to have also been in the repertory of Robert Browne's touring company in Germany from around 1604.<sup>14</sup> Most obviously, *Romeo and Juliet* appears to inform the ending of "The King of England's Son and the King of Scotland's Daughter," where the revival of the English prince, Serule from his apparent poisoning is redolent of Juliet's role, though in this case the usual denouement of the *liebested* myth is averted and the children genuinely succeed in burying their parents' strife.

Instead of a Veronese, Catholic setting, however, this play offers the Anglo-Scottish conflict as its framework. If Wiggins' conjectural dating of the English version of the play to 1598 is right—the *Romeo and Juliet* allusions point to a slightly wider window of 1597–1599, but 1598 is reasonable—there are good reasons why Scotland would be of interest to a London audience at that time. In April 1598, George Nicolson—an English agent at Edinburgh at the time—wrote a letter to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, in which he alludes to a London play featuring anti-Scots sentiment: he expresses regret “that the Comediens of London shoulde in their play, scorne the king and people of this lande.”<sup>15</sup> Robert Greene's *Scottish History of James IV*, with its dramatization of an English invasion of Scotland (and its supernatural elements) had also been published that year, although it was possibly a decade old by that point.<sup>16</sup> In September of the following year (1599), Henslowe advanced money to Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Henry Chettle, and another playwright, on behalf of the Admiral's Men, for a tragedy about “Robert II, King of Scots.” The titular character was, in Ian Donaldson's words, “the founder, at least in a nominal sense, of the Stuart royal dynasty,” and a play about him would have likely addressed succession anxieties: Robert's father had married the king's daughter, and Robert appeared the likely successor to the throne in the absence of a male heir until the future David II was born.<sup>17</sup> Robert subsequently became Regent of Scotland to the infant David until David's early death finally enabled Robert himself to be crowned king. At the turn of the century, the English–Scottish relationship would of course have been topical for London audiences with the possibility looming that James VI might succeed Elizabeth I, and in this context the Scottish princess's name, Astrea, is an intriguing choice, given its association with Elizabethan iconography and the virgin goddess of justice.<sup>18</sup> The Scotland of this German redaction warrants further attention in that it is patently not merely a cold, remote, and northern foil to England, but a truly transnational site: Scotland in the Anglo-German play is very much part of a European/North African intercontinental world in which Moors, a Sultan, Spanish royalty, and the Bohemian forest are all interconnected (just as in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where Scotland is on the trade routes to Aleppo and the perfumes of Arabia). Interestingly from the point of view of recurrent motifs in early modern drama, in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare, too, would dramatize a Scottish king ordering massacres and consulting supernatural agents for predictions of the future.

I also see a series of parallels in plot which suggests to me a connection between “The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter” and the Fortunatus legend, which had been dramatized by the mid-1590s (when Henslowe recorded a series of performances of a lost Admiral’s Men play or plays on Fortunatus), and which was dramatized again by Thomas Dekker as *Old Fortunatus* in 1599 (also for the Admiral’s company). When Serule’s servant attempts to ingratiate himself to the necromancer Barrabas and agrees to serve him for a full year in exchange for training in the black arts, the servant’s declaration that a year’s service would be a small price in exchange for “so much power that, where one wants to be, one could be right away” recalls the fantasy of instantaneous transportation associated with Fortunatus’s wishing-hat, which enables the wearer to wish himself through the air to any location of his choosing. The parallel is strengthened by the fact that Barrabas’s former student, in a misuse of his necromantic power, magically appears in the presence of the Spanish princess and whisks her away through the air, against her will. In Dekker’s play, Fortunatus’s younger son, Anelocia, exploits the magical transportation powers of the wishing-hat stolen from a Sultan, to abduct the English king’s daughter in strikingly similar circumstances. (Such circumstances may well have occurred in the earlier, lost Fortunatus play or plays too.)

When Serule disguises himself to gain access to the princess at the Scottish Court, it is curious that two suitors to the princess (“Dulgus and Tinar”; the Earl of Douglas and a Scandinavian noble, “Einar,” perhaps, as Wiggins suggests?)<sup>19</sup> are provided a cue to exit, and so must be present throughout this scene, but are not provided with an entrance, let alone any dialogue or action. The competition over the princess, especially by foreign and exotic dignitaries, is a common enough trope in 1590s drama: the princes of Morocco and Aragon as Portia’s suitors in *Merchant of Venice* (1596) are among the more famous examples, but if Dekker’s *Old Fortunatus* is any guide to the contents of the lost Fortunatus play performed in 1596, that play may also have featured the Prince of Cyprus, a Frenchman (Orleans), and Fortunatus’s son Anelocia all vying for the affection of the English princess Agrippine. The play seen by Thomas Platter at the Boar’s Head or Curtain in September or October 1599 is the most explicit rendition of the subject matter. Platter noted in his diary:

On another occasion not far from our inn, in the suburb at Bishopsgate, if I remember, also after lunch, I beheld a play in which they presented diverse nations and an Englishman struggling together for a maiden; he overcame them all except the German who won the girl in a tussle, and then sat down by her side, when he and his servant drank themselves tipsy, so that they were both fuddled and the servant proceeded to hurl his shoe at his master's head, whereupon they both fell asleep; meanwhile the Englishman stole into the tent and absconded with the German's prize, thus in his turn outwitting the German....<sup>20</sup>

The titles of the lost "Love of an English Lady" and the more successful "Love of a Grecian Lady" (both Admiral's, by 1594) seem likely to have deployed a similar motif.

Besides the Fortunatus parallels (and allusions to Marlowe's *Faustus*, noted above), the Barrabas plot with its onstage conjuring may have offered the company producing this play a variation on the supernatural fascinations of the Friar Bacon plays in the Admiral's and Strange's repertoires; the anonymous "Witch of Islington" (Admiral's, c.1597); and Drayton and Munday's "Mother Redcap" (Admiral's, 1597), among others. Barrabas's use of a magic mirror (or prospective glass) to help the Scottish king look into the future and predict who will woo the princess Astrea is particularly interesting in this regard. The split-screen effect, which stages the viewer and the subject of the vision simultaneously, is strongly reminiscent of the device used in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* to allow those in Oxford to spy on those in Fressingfield.

Finally, the English prince's disobedience of his father, and his manufacturing of excuses to shirk his obligations to family and the state in order to pursue his romance with the Scottish princess, offers another point of repertorial contact. Behind Serule's request, made to his father, to travel to France (really a ruse to enable him to see his beloved in Scotland) lies a loose engagement with the parable of the prodigal son, who demanded his inheritance prematurely and "took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living" despite his father's warnings about the dangers of temptation.<sup>21</sup> A comedy of "The Prodigal Son" was printed alongside "The King of England's Son" in the 1620 volume, and had been in the repertory of English players in Germany since at least 1604 (see Paul Whitfield White's online appendix of "Biblical Plays with Adult Professional Companies, 1558–1603" for this volume). Shakespeare made great use of the Prodigal Son story by applying it to

Prince Hal, the youthful and reckless son of King Henry IV. Hal, of course, eventually grows up and shuns his rambunctious friends (including Falstaff) when he accedes to the throne upon his father's death, and in the Anglo-German play, the threat to the kingdom posed by Prince Serule's youthful indulgence in pursuing love when he should be preparing for war is ultimately contained because he is poised to marry the Scottish princess and thereby unite the warring countries.

Despite the play's exclusively German documentary record, both for performance and print history, "The King of England's Son and the King of Scotland's Daughter" appears to be related to the commercial London playhouses of Shakespeare's day: internal evidence suggests cutting and adapting, and thus a close relationship between the German text and the lost English original. The German version has been trimmed for performance, whereas the longer English text evidently included Astrea's two suitors, the subplot of the abducted Spanish princess and the Sultan, and gave the name "Runcifax" to the magician (who becomes known instead as "Barrabas" in the German playtext). Redundant stage directions in the German may constitute editorial intervention by Menius, but may also suggest staging possibilities and episodes cut from the lost English version, thereby implying that the German text is relatively close to its precursor (rather than being substantially rewritten or altogether adapted).<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare would likely have known the original play and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, if not the original owners of the piece, would have had to respond to it with their repertorial offerings.

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New evidence about Elizabethan staging practices is hard to come by, but here for consideration is an entirely new specimen of Elizabethan drama preserved in another language. Shakespeare's interest in filial disobedience and the nature of authority—first, in the form of the star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliet, who defy their feuding families, and subsequently in Prince Hal's legendary embodiment of the prodigal son parable—are particularly relevant to this lost play. By presenting an English prince and a Scottish princess who not only fall in love but are able to bring about a union of their respective countries and end their fathers' feuds, the play offers a variation of Shakespeare's love-tragedy that remains romantically optimistic—naively so, perhaps—about the power of love. This is quite

distinct from but related to the strategic union of Henry V and Katherine of France in which the French princess wonders if it is “possible dat I sould love de *ennemi* of France?”<sup>23</sup> Prince Serule’s willful misleading of his father and prioritization of personal desire over what is acknowledged to be his vital role in the country’s military efforts offers a variation of the Hal legend in which the prodigal son’s fitness for eventual accession to the throne is implicitly critiqued throughout. There is no known sequel in which Prince Serule becomes King of England in parallel to Hal becoming Henry V, but the prospect of imminent marriage to Astrea and the unification of the kingdom at least offers the assurance of political stability. Where Day and Chettle’s two-part “Conquest of Brute” plays of 1598 offered playgoers at the Rose a national origin story in the form of a mythological British history in the Galfridian tradition, “The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter” offered its audiences a fictionalized historical precedent for the unification of what James I referred to in 1604 as “Great Brittain.”<sup>24</sup>

“The King of England’s Son and the King of Scotland’s Daughter” does not appear to have been a substitute for *Romeo and Juliet* or the Henry plays, however. It would be misleading to liken it to the spate of conqueror plays by playwrights who sought to emulate and attenuate the controversial *Tamburlaine* plays throughout the late 1580s and early 1590s. Both the German versions of *Romeo and Juliet* and “The Prodigal Son” were in repertory together when traveling English players (probably Browne’s troupe) petitioned the authorities in Nördlingen in the hope of performing there in 1604; their justification for performing was to assemble a young audience and, through such plays, “teach them by example to fear God and honour their parents.”<sup>25</sup> Presumably each play continued in the repertory of the English players, alongside “The King of England’s Son,” for all three seem to have possibly been performed at the Court of Saxony in Dresden in 1626, and the “Prodigal Son” play was of course printed in the same volume as “The King of England’s Son” in 1620. Taken in conjunction with the various other dramas noted in my contextual plot summary above, this ontologically paradoxical play (lost in English, extant in German) makes an unusually rich contribution to our understanding of Shakespeare’s depictions of troubled or distracted youth in the 1590s, augmenting our understanding of the milieu in which Shakespeare was operating.

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## NOTES

1. See Pavel Drábek and M. A. Katritzky, “Shakespearean Players in Early Modern Europe,” in *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, ed. Bruce R. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2.1527–1533; Simon Williams, “Seventeenth-Century Beginnings: The English Comedians,” *Shakespeare on the German Stage, Volume 1: 1586–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 27–45; June Schlueter, “New Light on Dekker’s *Fortunati*,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 67 (2013): 120–135; Schlueter, “English Actors in Kassel, Germany, During Shakespeare’s Time,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 10 (1998): 238–261; Willem Schrickx, *Foreign Envoys and Travelling Players in the Age of Shakespeare and Jonson* (Wetteren: Universa, 1986); and Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Account of English Actors in Germany and the Netherlands and of the Plays Performed by Them During the Same Period* (London, 1865). Most recently, Lukas Erne has led a project at the University of Geneva (with Florence Hazrat, Kareen Seidler, and Maria Shmygol) which will make available new translations of four German Shakespeare plays: [www.unige.ch/emgs](http://www.unige.ch/emgs). This project is supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation and will be published in two volumes by Arden Shakespeare.
2. As June Schlueter notes (“Across the Narrow Sea: The 1620 Leipzig Volume of English Plays,” in *The Text, the Play, and the Globe: Essays on Literary Influence in Shakespeare’s World and His Work in Honor of Charles R. Forker*, ed. Joseph Candido [Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016], 237–238), the manuscript can be found in the Hessian State Archives (Hessisches Staatsarchiv) in Marburg, Germany and has been transcribed in Richard P. Wülcker, “Englische Schauspieler in Kassel,” *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* 14 (1879): 360–361.
3. See Martin Wiggins, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 11 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–), #1102.
4. Wiggins, “Where to Find Lost Plays,” in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 265.
5. See my edition of *Old Fortunatus* in the Revels Plays series for details of the relationship between Dekker’s play and the German version.

6. A new translation of the German “Titus” play by Lukas Erne and Maria Shmygol will be published by Arden Shakespeare (see Note 1 above). Older translations of “Titus” are available in Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Account of English Actors in Germany and the Netherlands and of the Plays Performed by Them During the Same Period* (London: Asher and Company, 1865) and in Ernest Brennecke and Henry Brennecke, *Shakespeare in Germany 1590–1700, With Translations from the German of Five Early Plays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964); “Julio and Hyppolita” appears in Brennecke only.
7. I rely on Bastian’s translation in what follows. A digitization of the German printing is available via the *Lost Plays Database*; a transcription of the German text of the play was reprinted in Julius Tittmann, *Die Schauspiele der Englischen Komödianten in Deutschland* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1880); Flemming, *Das Schauspiel der Wanderbühne*, vol. 13; and Manfred Brauneck, ed., *Spieltexte der Wanderbühne, vol. 1: Englische Comedien und Tragedien*, [1620] (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970).
8. Brennecke, *Shakespeare in Germany*, 10.
9. Drábek and Katritzky agree that the play is “without an obviously identifiable source,” but liken it to a “generic group of romantic disguise plays” including *Mucedorus*, which they hint is a close relative of sorts (1531).
10. The name “Barabbas” would also have been familiar to early modern audiences as the name of the prisoner whom Pontius Pilate released instead of Jesus (see, e.g., Mark 15:6–15). Stranger still, the necromancer is listed as “Runcifax” in the list of *dramatis personae*, but the name is not used in the text itself; evidence that the playtext has undergone some significant alterations. As Albert Cohn notes, the name “Runcifax” “strongly reminds us of ‘Runcifall the Devil,’ in [Jacob] Ayrer’s ‘Beautiful Sidea’ [c.1595],” a play with analogies to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, cx).
11. Wiggins #1112.
12. Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus: A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*, eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 5.3.7.
13. On the English stage’s use of black gauze to simulate racial alterity, see Ian Smith, “Othello’s Black Handkerchief,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 64.1 (2013): 1–25, esp. 10ff. Although Smith finds evidence of racial alterity being depicted through the use of material (“pleasance,” a fine, gauze-like fabric) in court entertainments in England, and infers Shakespeare’s familiarity with such practices even at a time when the application of cosmetics had advanced and were widely used in public theaters to simulate blackness, he does not present explicit evidence of public-theater use of textile corporeality. Instead, he observes that “the explicitly material

forms of racial impersonation derived from the court tradition significantly influenced [Shakespeare's] conceptualizations of race at specific moments" and that "For Shakespeare ... the technique of the material body coexisted with that of skin painting" (12, 13). Smith accordingly suggests that "Rather than posit a narrative of increasing technical improvements in racial impersonation, the evidence suggests simultaneous imitation practices where the textile body, whether as an immediately tangible stage presence or as an item remembered from earlier performances, reinforces and materializes blackness within the economy of early modern racial discourse" (13). The present use of gauze in a lost English play of c.1598 seems to provide new evidence to support Smith's claims of the currency of this textile use in public theaters.

14. See Roslyn Lander Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company, 1594–1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), 63; Wiggins #987; George Oppitz-Trotman, "Romeo and Juliet in German, 1603–1604," *Notes & Queries* 62.1 (2015): 96–98.
15. National Archives, SP 52/62/19, fol. 19<sup>v</sup>. See also James Shapiro, "The Scot's Tragedy and the Politics of Popular Drama," *English Literary Renaissance* 23 (1993): 428–449, esp. 433.
16. See Wiggins #854.
17. Ian Donaldson, "Robert II, King of Scots (lost play)," in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* 7 vols., Gen. eds. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.232.
18. The name appears only in the list of *dramatis personae* printed with the play. Shakespeare too was interested in succession, first with Prince Hal succeeding his father, Henry IV, and later with *Hamlet*.
19. Wiggins #1112.
20. Clare Williams, *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599* (London: J. Cape, 1937), 166.
21. King James Bible, Luke 15:13.
22. Wiggins #1112; Schlueter seemingly overlooks these aspects of the text when she suggests that "[b]ecause there is no known English source play; because the names of two of the characters—Morian and Barrabas—are also the names of characters, respectively, in the *Titus* play in the 1620 collection and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, which was also performed in Germany; and because the play is compact, requiring only six actors, one wonders whether the players themselves might have contrived it" ("Across the Narrow Sea," 237).
23. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 5.2.155, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Spelling Edition*, Gen. eds. Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

24. See Misha Teramura, "Brute Parts: From Troy to Britain at the Rose, 1595–1600," in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, 127–147; James I styled himself King of Britain in *As often as we call to minde the most ioyfull and iust recognition made by the whole body of our realme...* (London, 1604) (STC [2nd ed.]/8361).
25. Wiggins #595; see also Schlueter, "Across the Narrow Sea," 232.



## Making Early Modern “Verbatim Theater,” or, “Keep the Widow Waking”

*Lucy Munro and Emma Whipday*

[A]s touching whether those speeches or the like have binne acted in the [...] play, or not, this deponent can doth not now well remember[.]<sup>1</sup>

This essay explores the ways in which archival research might combine with contemporary creative practice to illuminate the study of lost plays. It focuses on Thomas Dekker, John Ford, William Rowley, and John Webster’s domestic tragedy “A Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother,

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or *Keep the Widow Waking*,” originally performed at the Red Bull playhouse in early autumn 1624. The play was based on two recent and scandalous crimes: the murder by Nathaniel Tindall of his mother, Joan, in May 1624, and the forced marriage of a wealthy widow, Anne Elsdon, to a fortune-hunter, Tobias Audley, in July.<sup>2</sup> The murder and “marriage” appear to have supplied Dekker, Ford, Rowley, and Webster with material for tragic and comic plots, and while the play itself is lost, aspects of its narrative can be discerned from surviving legal documents. These include a wealth of material arising from the legal processes that the forced marriage provoked; this material, and its relationship with “*Keep the Widow Waking*” (as the play is better known), forms the subject of this essay.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary “practice as research” workshop at the London Shakespeare Centre on 6 May 2017, which brought together verbatim theater practitioners, historians, and literary scholars, we examine the texts and performances that created “*Keep the Widow Waking*” and its archival traces, and explore the ways in which the practices of verbatim theater might provoke us to return to the archive and the play itself with fresh questions. In so doing, we use the forced marriage plot of “*Keep the Widow Waking*” to demonstrate the possibilities of fusing practice as research with archival research, to create a new approach to early modern lost plays, asking how we might use performance to illuminate a canon where the playtexts themselves no longer survive. We also introduce new documentary material that gives us access for the first time to Anne Elsdon’s own voice, material that helps us to unpick some of the assumptions that have informed previous approaches to the play.

The details of the events that inspired “*Keep the Widow Waking*,” and the legal processes that they triggered, have been known for nearly a century thanks to C. J. Sisson, whose account of the play was published first in a two-part essay in *The Library* (1927–1928) and then as a chapter in *Lost Plays of Shakespeare’s Age* (1936).<sup>3</sup> Sisson’s interest was provoked by his discovery of a case among the Jacobean records of the Court of Star Chamber, in which the Attorney General sued Audley and others on Elsdon’s behalf. The defendants included not only Audley and the men and women who helped him to ensnare Elsdon but also a dramatist, Thomas Dekker; a stationer and ballad-maker, Richard Hodgkins; and two men involved with the finance and management of the Red Bull playhouse, Aaron Holland and Ralph Savage. The Attorney General alleged that not only had Audley conspired to force Elsdon to marry him, but that he had also instigated the creation of the stage play, performed at the

Red Bull, and a two-part ballad—preserved in the Bill of Information—that sought to put his actions in a favorable light and “scandalize & disgrace [...] Anne Elsdon & make her ridiculous to the world.”<sup>4</sup> Sisson based his account of “Keep the Widow Waking” on these materials and documents from the Middlesex Sessions that showed that the forced marriage and the Tindall murder had come before that court on the same day, 3 September 1624.<sup>5</sup>

As the Star Chamber documents outline, on 21 July 1624, Elsdon and a friend, Martha Jackson, went with Audley at his invitation to the Greyhound Tavern in the Blackfriars. For the next six days, Elsdon was kept captive by Audley and his associates, moved from tavern to tavern and kept almost continuously drunk and drugged. On 22 July, they extracted from her a promise that she would marry Audley “by ioyning their hands together when she was senceles and not able to vtter any words”; on July 23 a marriage license was procured, and Nicholas Cartmell, a church of England priest who was one of the conspirators, performed a ceremony of marriage. Audley then allegedly undressed and “went to bedd to her,” attempting to give the impression that the marriage had been consummated. Elsdon was finally returned to her house on July 26, after it had been ransacked by Audley and others. Elsdon’s son-in-law, Benjamin Garfield, instigated legal proceedings at the Middlesex Sessions, and Audley and one of his associates, Mary Spenser, appeared before the court in September.<sup>6</sup>

We can draw on evidence unavailable to Sisson to create fuller picture of the events and legal processes in the Elsdon case. The play was licensed by the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, on 13 September 1624, as “A new Trag: call: a Late murther of the sonn upon the mother” (an image of a nineteenth-century transcription of this licensing note can be seen on the cover of the present book). It appears to have been licensed in a hurry to capitalize on the scandal of Nathaniel Tindall’s trial and execution; Herbert also records a rival play by Thomas Drue that was probably written for the Elector Palatine’s Men at the Fortune: “The same Trag[edy] writ[ten by] M<sup>r</sup>. Drew & allowed for the day after theirs because they had all manner of reason.”<sup>7</sup> Laura Gowing has discovered another suit in which Audley sued Elsdon at the Consistory Court of London in September 1624 for a restitution of his marital rights; she deposed in self-defense on October 30, arguing vehemently that Audley “had not the use of her bodie carnallie” and that she “hath and doth desist from lyving & cohabitinge with [...] Tobie Awdley

as with her husband as lawfully she maie doe as she believes being never married unto him.”<sup>8</sup> A month later, on 26 November 1624, the Attorney General entered the Bill of Information against Audley in Star Chamber. This case was still ongoing in summer 1626, when witnesses were examined by the prosecution, but by this time both Elsdon and Audley appear to have died. Audley was remanded on 17 January 1625,<sup>9</sup> after which time he disappears from the documentary record, and we have discovered that Elsdon made her will on November 29. Carefully signing with her mark on each page, and fixing them together with her seal, she describes herself as “sicke in body but of good and perfect mynd and remembrance, (Laud and prayse be therefore given to almighty God[]).” She sets out the disposal of her estate, which she treats as hers alone, making no mention of Audley.<sup>10</sup>

New documentary evidence that allows us access to Elsdon’s own testimony opens up fresh approaches to “Keep the Widow Waking”; we are also interested in how alternative research practices might allow us to go further than archival work alone. McInnis and Steggle have previously observed that “[t]he ephemeral nature of lost plays has prevented them from becoming the primary focus of literary scholarship,” as “textual analysis cannot be performed without a text”; similarly, it is difficult to use performance as an approach without a surviving playtext.<sup>11</sup> Yet, as Andy Kesson has argued, practice as research is valuable as a “methodological challenge” to “the primacy of the text,” drawing our attention to “choices, possibilities, and opportunities.”<sup>12</sup> This essay uses practice as research to call attention to such choices in the absence of a playtext, exploring the possibilities of imaginative reconstruction using “verbatim theater,” a theatrical practice, or method, by which playwrights use verbatim transcripts of “real” voices to create a playtext; these transcripts might be borrowed from existing records, or might be transcripts of interviews conducted for the purposes of the production. This form of creative practice often draws on trial accounts, which are themselves inherently theatrical; as we discuss further below, it is therefore particularly apt for a play inspired by criminal proceedings.

“Keep the Widow Waking” is an appropriate case study for this kind of reconstruction both because such a range of records survive, and because of its genre: domestic tragedy. This ephemeral, sensational, and topical genre, often based on recent “true crimes” reported in cheap print, is represented by surviving plays such as *Arden of Feversham* (auspices uncertain; printed in quarto in 1592, 1599, and 1633), *A Warning for*

*Fair Women* (Chamberlain’s Men; printed in quarto in 1599), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (King’s Men; printed in quarto in 1608 and 1619), and *The Witch of Edmonton* (Prince Charles’s Men, 1621; printed in quarto in 1658). However, lost plays with titles and/or source materials suggestive of the genre may provide a more complete picture of its conventions and the extent of its popularity: the anonymous “The Cruelty of a Stepmother” (Sussex’s Men, 1578); “Murderous Michael” (Sussex’s Men, Whitehall, 1579); Dekker and Ben Jonson’s “Page of Plymouth” and Henry Chettle and Dekker’s “The Stepmother’s Tragedy” (Admiral’s Men, 1599); “Cox of Collumpton” and William Haughton and John Day’s “The Tragedy of Merry,” also called “Beech’s Tragedy” (Admiral’s Men, 1600).<sup>13</sup> The titles of these plays are all reminiscent of those of surviving domestic tragedies in containing at least some of the following: the genre of “tragedy,” an English location, the surname of a (male) protagonist (either murderer or victim), and generalized categories of erring women. Furthermore, from the titles, dates and companies of these lost plays, we can trace a pattern of interest in local protagonists, familial tragedy, and murder, that is suggestive of a generic trend.<sup>14</sup>

Partial reconstructions of plots, character lists, properties, and even staging are possible for some of these plays. The anonymous pamphlet *Sundry Strange and Inhumaine Murthers Lately Committed* (London, 1591) appears to have been the source text for “Page of Plymouth” (Sean Benson has used this pamphlet to attempt an imaginative reconstruction of the plot of the play itself), and the anonymous ballad *The Lamentation of Master Pages Wife of Plimmouth* (date unknown) offers what is probably a later version of the narrative.<sup>15</sup> The ballad *The Lady Isabella’s Tragedy; or, The Step-Mothers Cruelty* (date unknown) may have some relationship to “The Cruelty of a Stepmother” or to “A Stepmother’s Tragedy” (or, indeed, to both).<sup>16</sup> Wiggins provides tantalizing details from surviving evidence; for example, in “Cox of Collumpton,” a stage post is required, as “Peter bashes his brains out on one,” while the plot of “Murderous Michael” somehow involves a “painted chest.”<sup>17</sup> “The Tragedy of Merry” may be in some way related to the scenes on the same subject in Robert Yarrington’s *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (printed in 1601); indeed, Whipday has previously staged the “Merry” scenes from *Two Lamentable Tragedies*.<sup>18</sup> The other “lost” domestic tragedies have therefore prompted various kinds of imaginative reconstruction and analysis—from Benson’s textual speculations, and Whipday’s staging of a related playtext, to Wiggins’s properties in search of a text.

This essay suggests a new approach to complement these strategies: the use of a particular creative practice, “verbatim theater,” to illuminate archival research, in a collaboration between scholars and practitioners. It draws on an interdisciplinary workshop in which two playwrights—Harriet Madeley and Emma Whipday—staged “verbatim” scenes drawing on the Star Chamber and Consistory Court records with the assistance of four actors—Simona Bitmate, Virginia Denham, George Johnston, and Andrew Murton—and the input of the other symposium participants.<sup>19</sup> We aimed to apply the methods of verbatim theater to the surviving texts in order to ask questions both of the texts that survive and of those that do not. We did not aim to recreate the lost early modern play, but, rather, to explore how contemporary creative practice might enable scholars to ask new questions of early modern texts, opening up “the rich contingencies of our reading of the theatrical past.”<sup>20</sup> In applying modern theatrical techniques to early modern materials, we sought to embrace what Stephen Purcell has called “encounters with strangeness,” bringing early modern voices verbatim to a contemporary, historically informed workshop via the work—and voices and bodies—of practitioners.<sup>21</sup>

“Verbatim theater”—which is today generally preferred to the alternative term, “documentary theater”—refers to the origins of the dialogue in words that are transcribed or recorded “verbatim” and then edited and arranged by a playwright; it is therefore “not a form, it is a technique.”<sup>22</sup> Madeley describes “the immediacy of verbatim theatre [...] the sense that a real person is speaking directly in their own voice, unmediated by the voice of the playwright.”<sup>23</sup> Although contemporary verbatim theater draws only rarely on historical materials, one of its founding practitioners in the mid-twentieth century, the director Peter Cheeseman, rooted his company’s “documentaries” in the social and political history of Staffordshire and the Potteries, where his Victoria Theatre was based. The best known of these works—*The Knotty* (1966), a history of the North Staffordshire Railway—focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, drawing on written sources and interviews with members of the local community.<sup>24</sup> However, one of the earliest, *The Staffordshire Rebels* (1965), drew on letters, pamphlets, songs and other sources relating to the English Civil War, many of them made newly available in the mid-1960s through the work of historians on local records and correspondence.<sup>25</sup> This “early modern verbatim theater” formed part of the background to our own experiments.

The fact that “Keep the Widow Waking” drew on criminal events also links it with twenty-first-century verbatim theater practice. Madeley has previously used stories of true crimes as source material for her verbatim piece *The Listening Room* (2017), inspired by the concept of “restorative justice,” where victims and perpetrators of violent crimes enter into a dialogue. She describes this process, “founded as it is upon the act of storytelling and listening,” as “inherently theatrical,” noting that “restorative justice is so much about empowering people to understand and deliver their own narratives.”<sup>26</sup> The court records related to Anne Elsdon’s case are likewise inherently theatrical. Depositions were oral, spoken to scribes that recorded them, and they often include reported speech; Elsdon, for instance, reports both her friend Martha Jackson’s denial that a promise of marriage had been made and Audley’s response: “she for her *part* knew no suche matter whie then *quoth* the said Awdley you are not my freind yt were better you were gon then to be here for you doo more harm then good.”<sup>27</sup> These voices were, of course, mediated by the questions asked and by the legal formulas that shaped their answers, as well as the conventions that shaped the records themselves. Thus, our own verbatim theater experiments were not attempts to “recover” lost voices, but rather, to mediate these voices further—changing third person depositions into first person, removing legal phrasing, cutting, editing, and rearranging—to create a new dramatic fiction that ventriloquizes those voices. Madeley suggests that verbatim “characters” can be more unexpected than their fictional counterparts: “they tend to be more idiosyncratic, altogether more surprising [...] the things they say tend to be unruly, often veering away from conventional demands of tone and narrative.” The workshop scenes offer an alternative to the early modern creative work that has been prompted by Elsdon’s case—the ballad and the lost play—in which the voice of Elsdon has been ventriloquized by the male playwrights and libelous balladeer. In the workshop scenes, published here as an online Appendix to the present volume,<sup>28</sup> we reinstate her voice (albeit in a mediated form), offering a corrective to the conventionally “lusty widow” offered by the ballad, and to the extent to which her voice has slipped out of the record.<sup>29</sup>

Madeley’s scene performs a literal silencing of Anne Elsdon, as she becomes stupefied with drink. Madeley focuses on the accounts offered by Audley in his answer to the Attorney General’s Bill in the Star Chamber and Elsdon in her answer in the Consistory Court, “as theirs were in the most direct conflict with one another, and they were the ‘characters’ with

the highest stake in the story.” She places these conflicting accounts in a courtroom, which involves “a certain amount of dramatic license,” both because the court processes did not require their copresence, and because both died during the legal process. This enables the scene to focus on directly contradictory moments of testimony, to dramatic effect:

- ANNE: The answer unto him was then that I would never marrie...  
 TOBIAS: I, desyring her consent in the way of marriage, shee very willingly agreed thereunto.  
 ANNE: I tould him that word was farr from my hart.

This effect is heightened by the way in which Madeley inserts verses from the ballad between extracts from their testimony; in the workshop staging, she “asked the audience to sing it, partly to shake them out of the polite silence expected of twenty-first-century audience members and imagine themselves as contemporary with the characters, and partly to allow them to experience the tension of feeling complicit in Anne’s abuse.”<sup>30</sup> This complicity is foregrounded by an instability of tone that prompted some laughter from the workshop audience: Madeley was interested in the role of Elsdon’s narrative as what may have been the “comic” plot of the lost play (as we discuss further below), and wanted “to exploit the tension between a story that is both comic in function and profoundly distressing in content.” The distressing nature of the content becomes apparent in the scene as Anne is gradually silenced, and physically confined, by the drink forced upon her, until eventually, the voices of others—from the voice of her would-be husband, to the ballad-singer allegedly commissioned by him, and those who take up the ballad-singer’s song—drown out her own. Her final, chilling stage direction reads: “*Anne Elsdon sits in the centre. From this point, she does not move.*”

Whipday’s scene is likewise alert to the ways in which Anne is deprived of speech, incorporating the voices of witnesses who interrogate her descent into speechlessness. John Snowe recalls how, in spite of forced drinking and secretly administered drugs, Anne still has “sense and memory enough left her” to declare, “If I would marry, I could have men of good worth and Audley is a boy and a beggar, and I will have none of him”—a powerful statement of refusal in which Anne recognizes both her own economic and sexual power, and her marital freedom. Yet, after being further drugged, Anne “could not so much as speak, nor was able

to discern what was said or done unto her.” She is only able to utter “Oih, oih” on being congratulated on her marriage, and her captors must puppet her lolling head to force her to nod in response to her questions. However, even when reduced to a senseless state, Anne is still able to make her voice heard: a local woman, Sara Pickes, whose home adjoins the tavern, recalls:

I did hear a woman crying out in the room:

*ANNE*: I will go home, I will go home!

*SARA PICKES*: Making great moan that she was detained there again her will[.]

Anne vocally disturbs the neighborhood peace in ways that imprint themselves on the minds of her witnesses, ensuring their later testimony. Even when reduced to total inarticulacy, Anne’s very sounds (“Oih, oih”) have legal weight, as they suggest her inability to consent to the marriage.

Anne’s is not the only female voice to be brought to the fore. Whipday excludes Tobias’s own words, so that his speech only occurs when mediated by the memories of another, and instead draws on a range of depositions to explore the experiences of numerous witnesses, all in some way implicated in Anne’s suffering. John Snowe recalls that Edward Hyde’s wife “confess[ed]” to him the volume of drink poured down Anne’s throat “with weeping tears.” Sara Pickes’s nameless daughter “used some speeches against” the conspirators when Anne’s cries disturb the household peace, causing them to shut the window. And Anne recalls her friend Martha likewise struggling against drink and drugs to deny Audley’s suit:

*ANNE*: [...] as ill as she was then made answer & said:

*MARTHA*: For my part I know no such matter.

In foregrounding Elsdon’s words, and the voices of the witnesses supporting (and occasionally disputing) her account, Madeley and Whipday offer a corrective to the ownership of the narrative taken by Audley and his confederates, staging the rich multiplicity of narratives and voices involved in this sensational crime.

Madeley and Whipday’s verbatim theater thus enables us to come back to the lost play and ballad with a fresh set of questions and a new perspective that emphasizes Elsdon’s voice and agency (however compromised),

the tonal and generic instability that the events encourage in their dramatization, and the multiplicity of narratives that were available to the playwrights. The ballad advertises the play in its final lines, “The play will teach you at the Bull, / To keepe the widdow wakeing,”<sup>31</sup> and it has often been treated as a straightforward summary of its action, perspective, and generic approach. Yet, although Sisson may be right to assert that “[t]here is no good reason for refusing its evidence, even though it be an advertisement,” it may be less useful as a guide to the play’s genre and tone than to its plot.<sup>32</sup>

The ballad narrates the seduction of a rich widow with many suitors by a young man who pretends to be a gallant. Accompanied by a lawyer disguised as his tutor, the young man plies the widow with wine, ensures a priest is on hand to conduct the service, and consummates the marriage; when his new wife recovers, and complains that he has married her for her money, he attempts to comfort her by boasting of his sexual prowess. It views the widow’s tale as humorous, advising “yong men that are poore, / come take example here,” in a comic variation on the genre of “warning” ballads, in which gallants are warned to avoid being tempted by wealth, or widows are addressed as potential victims. This ballad, in contrast, advises potential tricksters to be on the look-out for such opportunities. It downplays the severity of the young man’s crime, suggesting (in a play on the refrain) that he was able to “to keepe the widdow wakeing” in bed, and that it was only when she learned that he took her “more for pelfe, / than love” that she felt herself deceived. This contrasts with the evidence of servants and companions in the legal record, which suggests that Anne was unconscious at the point the marriage was forcibly consummated, and also contradicts Anne’s own testimony that the consummation never took place.

The tonal and generic gap between the ballad and the legal documents offers the possibility that the ballad’s conventionally comic attitude to a duped wealthy widow may not have reflected the multiplicity of (unconventional) voices made available onstage. The prosecution in the Star Chamber case was interested in whether phrases or events had been lifted directly from real life via local gossip or, perhaps, the hearings of the Middlesex Sessions. John Snowe, for instance, reported

That hee heard the said Tobias Awdley and the defendant Rogers ‘Hide’ after they had *procured* the license for the marrieing of him the said Awdley and the said Anne Ellesden together ‘for’ that they tould those *which*

graunted the said license, that it was for an ould bedridden woman. But as touching whether those speeches or the like have bin~~ne~~ acted in the [...] play, or not, this deponent ~~can~~ doth not how well remember[.]<sup>33</sup>

In one scene of the play, one of the boys of the Nag’s Head tavern dressed himself “in [...] wenches apparel” and told Elsdon that “he had brought her a Basket of Apricockes from one of her tennantes wherevppon one knocking with a pot the said boy cried anon anon *Sir*.”<sup>34</sup> Witnesses were asked about the “real” events that lay behind the sequence and their representation on stage. Snowe did not remember the apricots, but he recalled that

one of the boyes of the said Taverne did then by some ‘manner’ of speeches or accion pretend vnto the said Anne that hee came from one of her Tenautes, *which* was done in a deriding manner, while the said Anne remained in her distemperature, but who caused the said boy to doe so, this deponent knoweth not. And this deponent further saith, that another boy in another roome of the said howse did knocke with a pott, as if they wanted wine, and then the boy that counterfeited the said message answered, anon, anon, *Sir* and hee saith that hee this deponent hath seene the same manner of knocking, and answering anon anon *Sir* acted at the Redd bull, in the play there called *Keepe the Widow Waking*.<sup>35</sup>

The dramatists appear to have fused Elsdon’s story with established dramatic structures. As Subha Mukherji notes, the “tavern crowd seem to be revisiting the Boar’s Head Tavern in Eastcheap,” the setting of a similar scene in *1 Henry IV*, in which Francis the drawer is forced to call “Anon” repeatedly by Prince Hal.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, Shakespeare’s play is likely to have been staged by the King’s Men in 1624, given that they performed “The First Part of Sir John Falstaff” at court on 1 January 1625, and it may have been fresh in the memories of Dekker, Ford, Rowley, and Webster.<sup>37</sup> The scene in “Keep the Widow Waking” is more complex, offering both a mockery of Elsdon’s social and financial status—vividly set against her “distempered” state, ravaged by drink, drugs, and lack of sleep—and a punch line in which the vintner’s boy’s disguise is shattered because he steps out of his role to answer the call to perform his usual duties. It suggests that the play may not have viewed Elsdon as its only target—the pointlessness and cruelty of the joke affects both her and the humiliated vintner’s boy who, like her, is manipulated by the conspirators.

The scene also suggests something of the complexity of the way in which the play may have dealt with questions of gender. It inserts a self-conscious performance of femininity—and the failure of that performance—into a play that already dealt with gender stereotypes such as the mother (in the murder plot) and the widow. It is also noticeable that the events surrounding the forced marriage of Anne Elsdon and the murder of Joan Tindall may have required as many as six significant female roles—Elsdon, Tindall, Martha Jackson, Mary Spenser, Margery Terry and, possibly, Elsdon's daughter Elizabeth—and the finished play would have been unusual in its attention to the experience of older women. Moreover, as a domestic tragedy of two plots, one of which staged a domestic murder, and the other of which may have contained elements of comedy in its treatment of an older and vulnerable woman, it bears fruitful comparison with another tragicomic domestic tragedy, with which it shares three of its authors: Rowley, Dekker, and Ford's *The Witch of Edmonton*, written three years earlier for the same playing company, Prince Charles's Men.

*The Witch of Edmonton* couples a fictional narrative of murder and bigamy with a "witch" plot, based on a pamphlet detailing the magical crimes of Elizabeth Sawyer, along with a third, comic plot concerning the activities of the witch's familiar. Like the Elsdon story, *The Witch of Edmonton* presents material that is (to return to Madeley's phrasing) "both comic in function and profoundly distressing in content." The "witch" narrative contains moments of comedy, takes seriously the charges against Sawyer, and ends triumphantly with her execution. However, the play also explores her actions and motivation, and the social causes of her misery, with greater sympathy than its source, Henry Goodcole's moralizing pamphlet, *The Wonderful Discovery of Elizabeth Sawyer, a Witch* (1621). If "Keep the Widow Waking" had anything in common with *The Witch of Edmonton*, it may have combined the ballad's comic cruelty with sympathy, offering an alternative to the straightforward silencing and marginalization of the widow's voice that the ballad performs. Thus, if the ballad indeed offers a faithful recapitulation of the play's plot, it may have been similar to the Alice Arden ballad, which provides almost a scene-by-scene summary of *Arden of Faversham*, but which also offers a more conventional version of Alice as a repentant murderess than the radical play, in which Alice declares that "Love is a god, and marriage is but words."<sup>38</sup>

Steggle suggests that, "rather than mourning the lost content of our 744 lost plays [...] we should instead be concentrating on the content

from them that we do have.”<sup>39</sup> In the case of “Keep the Widow Waking,” our access to the accounts of Elsdon’s forced marriage is likely to far exceed that of the original playwrights. This material is itself inherently theatrical—in its courtroom set-up; in its multiplicity of voices; in its trickery and make-believe; in its cast of bawds, an ambitious young scoundrel, a potentially lusty widow, a dangerous doctor, and a degenerate minister; and in its spatial imagination. The depositions often resemble city comedies in charting the illicit movements of the conspirators across the spaces and parishes of the city. Yet they also offer many of the generic features of domestic tragedy, in their obsession the spaces and boundaries of the home and the tavern: the private room where the conspirators make Elsdon drunk; the kitchen where her neighbor Martha Jackson is forcibly kept; the locked front door that prevents Elsdon’s flight; the other tavern servants sent away that they might not be witnesses; the room where Sara Pickes is disturbed by tavern noise; the keys to Elsdon’s own home that are pilfered from her pocket as she lies drugged; and the bedchambers where the marriage may or may not be forcibly consummated. These texts offer greater access not only to Elsdon’s voice, but also to her economic agency in a tale that continually threatens to rob her of agency over her narrative, her speech, her body, her home, her money, her reputation, and her very status as widow.

It is fitting, therefore, that in the preparation of this essay, after the workshop and our attempt to bring the seventeenth-century verbatim drama of “Keep the Widow Waking” into dialogue with its twenty-first-century equivalent, Munro should have discovered a final piece of evidence in the shape of Elsdon’s will.<sup>40</sup> Composed in November 1625, after the probable death of Audley earlier that year, it represents Elsdon’s concerted attempt to control her legacy. She emphasizes her relationship to her closest family, leaving the bulk of her estate to Benjamin and Elizabeth Garfield—the latter being left her land in Romford and elsewhere “To haue and to hould to her the said Elizabeth Garfeild, her heires and assignes forever”—and their children, and asking to be buried beside another daughter, Mary Arnold, “in the vault within the *parish* Church of *Sainct* Sepulchres London.”<sup>41</sup> She also leaves bequests of 20 shillings each to the “poore people” of Saint Sepulchre (where her own home was located), Saint James, Clerkenwell (where Benjamin and Elizabeth Garfield lived), and Romford (where she owned property inherited from her father) to pay for bread on the day of her funeral, and larger bequests of £30 to each parish to fund gifts of bread twice a year at Christmas and

Easter “forever.” She also leaves legacies to a group of “freinds” to pay for mourning clothes to wear at her funeral, and forgives the debts of a large group of men and women, some of whom are required to spend the equivalent money on mourning clothes.

Despite the circulation of the ballad and play, and the ongoing discussion of the case in Star Chamber and elsewhere, Audley did not get the final word; Elsdon carefully plans her funeral as a public spectacle that will present her not as the lusty widow of the ballad, but as a wealthy and charitable widow, an object not of derision but of civic pride. Viewed together, the court records, the ballad, the play, the will, and our verbatim experiments suggest the range of ways in which the experiences of one woman connected with broader tensions within Jacobean society: tensions surrounding gendered stereotypes and female speech, agency and sexuality; class distinctions and social climbing; London’s gossip networks, witnesses, and potential anonymity; and the politics of marital consent. Combining archival research with contemporary creative practice has enabled us to ask broader questions about the ways in which this society might reflect these tensions onstage and to reappraise both the matter and construction of “Keep the Widow Waking.”

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## NOTES

1. Deposition of John Snowe in Attorney General v. Tobias Audley, et al., Court of Star Chamber, 1624–1625, The National Archives (TNA), STAC 8/31/16, Depositions, fols 6<sup>r-v</sup>.
2. Joan Tindall was buried at Saint Mary, Whitechapel, on 27 May 1624, the register noting that she was “murdered by Nathaniel her sonne” (London Metropolitan Archives [LMA], P93/MRY1/001).
3. “*Keep the Widow Waking: A Lost Play by Dekker*,” *The Library*, 8 (1927–1928), 39–57, 233–259; *Lost Plays of Shakespeare’s Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 80–124. For a summary of the evidence

- see the entry for “Late Murder in Whitechapel, or Keep the Widow Waking,” in *Lost Plays Database*, eds. Roslyn Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2009+), <https://lostplays.folger.edu>. Other important accounts include Jennifer Panek, *Widows and Suitors in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 111–123; Elizabeth Hanson, “There’s Meat and Money Too: Rich Widows and Allegories of Wealth in Jacobean City Comedy,” *ELH* 72 (2005): 209–238; and Subha Mukherji, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 186–192.
4. Bill of Information in Attorney General v. Audley, et al., TNA, STAC 8/31/16.
  5. Register of Prisoners Delivered for Trial, 1621–1629, LMA, MJ/GB/R/003, fols 128b, 129b; Sessions Roll: Sessions of the Peace, September 1624, LMA, MJ/SR/0630, fol 235. See Sisson, *Lost Plays*, 92.
  6. MJ/SR/0631, fols 87, 235. See Sisson, *Lost Plays*, 92.
  7. N. W. Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 154. Herbert’s licensing note (from Folger MS W.b.156) is reproduced on the cover of the present volume.
  8. Consistory Court of London, Personal Answers Books, LMA, DL/C/0193, fols 138<sup>r</sup>-41<sup>r</sup> (141<sup>r</sup>). We are very grateful to Professor Gowing for sharing this material and allowing us to cite it here.
  9. See Sisson, *Lost Plays*, 93.
  10. LMA, MS 9052/6, number 123.
  11. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, “Introduction: *Nothing* Will Come of Nothing? Or, What can We Learn from Plays That Don’t Exist?,” in *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, eds. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1–15, 6.
  12. Andy Kesson, “Acting out of Character: A Performance-as-Research Approach to *The Three Ladies of London*,” in *Performance as Research in Early English Theatre Studies: The Three Ladies of London in Context* (2015), <http://threeladiesoflondon.mcmaster.ca/par/AndyKesson.htm>.
  13. See Martin Wiggins in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–), #653, #661, #1199, #1207, and #1215; detailed accounts of “Page of Plymouth,” “The Stepmother’s Tragedy,” “Cox of Collumpton,” and “Thomas Merry (Beech’s Tragedy)” appear in the *Lost Plays Database*.
  14. For fuller discussion of how playhouse competition informs generic trends, see Roslyn L. Knutson, “Toe to Toe Across Maid Lane: Repertorial Competition at the Rose and Globe, 1599–1600,” in *Acts of Criticism*:

- Performance Matters in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, eds. June Schlueter and Paul Nelsen (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 21–37.
15. Sean Benson, *Shakespeare, Othello and Domestic Tragedy* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), 9–17.
  16. *The Lady Isabella's Tragedy; or, The Step-Mothers Cruelty* (London [n.d.]), Pepys Collection, Magdalene College Library, University of Cambridge: Pepys 2.149.
  17. Wiggins with Richardson, #661 and 1215.
  18. See Emma Whipday and Freyja Cox Jensen, “‘Original Practices and Historical Imagination’: Staging *A Tragedie Called Merrie*,” *Shakespeare Bulletin* 35 (2017): 289–307.
  19. The playwrights were given photographs of all of the Star Chamber documents, with transcriptions from the Bill of Information, Tobias Audley’s part of the joint and several Answer, the Answers of Margery Terry and Ellis Worth, and the depositions of John Snowe, Martha Jackson, Sara Pickes, and John Davies; a transcription of the Answer of Anne Elsdon in the Consistory Court case; and Sisson’s chapter in *Lost Plays*.
  20. W. B. Worthen, “Introduction: Theorizing Practice,” in *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*, eds. W. B. Worthen and Peter Holland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1–7, 7.
  21. Stephen Purcell, “Practice-as-Research and Original Practices,” *Shakespeare Bulletin* 35 (2017): 425–443, 439.
  22. Will Hammond and Dan Steward, “Introduction,” in *Verbatim Verbatim: Contemporary Documentary Theatre*, eds. Will Hammond and Dan Steward (London: Oberon, 2008), 7–13, 9.
  23. Personal correspondence, April 30, 2018.
  24. For a concise overview of the “documentaries” and Cheeseman’s role in the development of verbatim theater see Graham Woodruff, “‘Nice Girls’: The Vic Gives a Voice to Women of the Working Class,” *New Theatre Quarterly* 11 (1995): 109–127.
  25. The programme for *The Staffordshire Rebels* (Victoria Theatre Archive, Staffordshire University) includes a list of “PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF THE MATERIAL USED IN THE SHOW,” which includes D. A. Johnson and D. G. Vaisey, eds., *Staffordshire and the Great Rebellion* (Stafford: Staffordshire County Council, 1964) and S. R. Gardiner, ed., *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
  26. Harriet Madeley, cited in “The Listening Room,” *Criminal Law and Justice Weekly* 181.6 (February 18, 2017), <https://www.criminallawandjustice.co.uk/features/Listening-Room>.
  27. LMA, DL/C/0193, fol. 139<sup>v</sup>.

28. See the online Appendix for this chapter ([https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36867-8\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36867-8_14)).
29. On recovering female voices, see also Jennifer Richards, “The Voice of Anne Askew,” *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* 9 (2017), <http://www.northernrenaissance.org/the-voice-of-anne-askew>.
30. Harriet Madeley, personal correspondence with the director, 30 April 2018. It is intriguing to note that a recording of the ballad with its original tune, “the blazing torch,” by the Dufay Collective, that accompanies Christopher Marsh’s book, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), includes the responses of a rowdy audience who join in with the refrain of “keep the widow waking.” The recording can be downloaded from the “Additional Content” section of the “Resources” tab at <http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/history/british-history-after-1450/music-and-society-early-modern-england>.
31. Bill of Information in Attorney General v. Audley et al. The ballad is set out as prose in the Bill; we have relined it.
32. Sisson, *Lost Plays*, 107.
33. Deposition of John Snowe in Attorney General v. Audley et al., Depositions, fols. 6<sup>r-v</sup>.
34. Deposition of Thomas Dekker in Attorney General v. Audley et al., Depositions, fol. 48<sup>v</sup>.
35. Deposition of John Snowe in Attorney General v. Audley et al., Depositions, fol. 6<sup>r</sup>.
36. Mukherji, *Law and Representation*, 190.
37. Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 159.
38. *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden* (London, n.d.), Roxburghe Collection, British Library Roxburghe 3.156, 3.157; Anonymous, *Arden of Faversham*, ed. Martin White (London: A&C Black, 1982), 1.98–104.
39. Matthew Steggle, “Lost, or Rather Surviving as a Very Short Document,” in *Lost Plays*, ed. David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, 72–83, 81.
40. LMA, MS 9052/6, number 123.
41. Mary Arnold made her own will on 9 March 1625. See TNA, PROB 11/147.

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