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'For precious friends hid in death's dateless night.'

Louise George Clubb
An inspiring voice that eloquently chronicled the confluence
of diverse early modern cultural storylines.

John Denton
Whose friendship, cultural insight and steady care have supported
JEMS from the beginning, accompanying and shaping each word along the way.

Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti

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'We … have great cause of thankfulness'
(*Henry V*, 2.2.33)

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Editorial

Georgina Wilson
University of York (<georgina.wilson@york.ac.uk>)
Zachary Lesser
University of Pennsylvania (<zlesser@english.upenn.edu>)

The Politics of Book History: Then and Now marks the rising scholarly scrutiny of the political structures that shape the fields of bibliography and the history of material texts. To talk about politics is to talk about 'actions concerned with the acquisition or exercise of power, status, or authority' (OED, *politics n.* 3a). When Milton turns 'now again to Politics' in *Eikonoklastes*, the word signals a shift in the discussion towards the authority held by the monarch. But the politics of early modern texts, both in their own moment and in how we use them today, are not limited to what they say about government. This special issue of *JEMS* takes on a broad range of politics: enslavement, patronage, race-making, disability, queer identities, and much else. Our investment in book history means that we also attend to the politics of the production of the texts that disseminated these ideas. How do indexing, prefacing and cataloguing, targeted publishing and retailing, reprinting, digitising and transcribing contribute to the structures of 'power, status, or authority' built and dismantled in early modern texts?

Noticing the increasing politicisation of literary scholarship, John Guillory attributes this phenomenon to the increasing politicisation of the *profession*, in which precarious humanities scholars ham up the 'topicality' of their research in the chase after ever-elusive jobs (2022, 74-79). For Guillory this results in a two-fold contraction of the field: both temporally, to modern or contemporary literature, and generically, 'to the form of representation – prose narrative – most amenable to interpretation within a political thematic' (76). Neither such contraction is on display here, as the readings of 'early modern' literature stretch from the mid-sixteenth-century scientific manuals of Jacques Besson to the late-eighteenth-century reprints of Sarah Trimmer's natural history manual for children, with George Herbert's poetry, the plays of Shakespeare and Milton's epic in between. More importantly, what these essays make clear is not the adventitious imposition of contemporary 'topicality' on unyieldingly early modern texts, but rather structures of power (between printers and patrons, librarians and collectors, digital keyers and editors) that emerge from diachronic and material objects of study.

The 'then and now' part of our title asserts the long lives of books, the fact that these objects index shifting ideas about knowledge, power and authoritative or non-conformist reading, a history in which our readings and encounters continue to play a part. The production processes foregrounded in this special issue of *JEMS* span from the initial printing of early modern texts to their reprinting, circulation and archiving in nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century institutions; the articles that follow account not only for texts' first editions but for their *longue durée* both analogue and digital. The politics of book history are continuously being remade just as our objects of study are reshaped by the catalogues and critical essays that frame them. The aim of *The Politics of Book History: Then and Now* is to account for the longer timelines of books' politics, broadly conceived: to acknowledge both the structures (of patronage, of paid labour, of enslavement) in which books were written, printed, edited, and sold *and* the intellectual and material frameworks in which these books are read and written about today.

One such framework is the injection of energy into the term Critical Bibliography, no longer defined as 'the science of the material transmission of literary texts' (Greg 1912, 48) but as the movement to '(re)shape our histories of the book and bookish objects' with critical theory (Maruca and Ozment 2022, 232). Once signalling the search for answers (a 'science'), Critical Bibliography now prioritises questioning our questions. Those we might ask of books today – whose labour contributed to this book? what kinds of oppression created the money to make and buy it? what kinds of identity are being constructed and excluded in the dissemination of this text? – reflect the priorities of our own moment, but their answers are to be found in the material qualities of texts that long precede us. Evidently, modern understandings and experiences of sexuality, race, ableism, nationalism, patronage, and non-conformism are different to those that circulated in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. But the texts under discussion here are caught up in these longer histories, and asking where these texts came from as physical objects means asking the same of the political structures they reflect and contain.

Despite the temporal ambition of the essays that follow, their geographic reach is more restricted. These essays cover books primarily made in England, Scotland, North America, and Europe; the exception is to be found in Margaret Maurer's contribution which foregrounds the labour of the digital keyers of Proquest's database Early English Books Online (EEBO), who were located in the Philippines and India (although even in this case the books being digitised and transcribed are primarily English-language and printed in the British isles). Maurer's article dwells on the erasure of this labour from EEBO's self-description, and this erasure of geographically 'distant' work can also index the failure of this special issue of *JEMS* to attract the notice of scholars working from and on the global south. The narrow geographic reach of the present volume speaks to the politics of its own moment in which, despite the possibility of collaborating with remote colleagues digitally, and despite increased emphasis in the discipline on 'global' forms of research, our field still tends geographically to delineate both scholars and objects of study, with some encouraging recent exceptions (see Gillespie 2020; Barnes and Goodman 2024). That the circulation of this special issue's call for papers largely stopped short of reaching scholars working in non-Anglophone countries suggests there is much more work to be done. Nonetheless, various articles in the present volume are attuned to what happens when books cross borders. Sarah Sprouse and Sarah Valles foreground the Scottish readership for a manuscript miscellany previously mined for its Donnean contents, while Jessica Linker shows how books that are reprinted, or more accurately rewritten, for American audiences following their English success imagine and construct national identities.

In asking us to read a miscellany as a whole rather than for its individual poems, and in questioning the limits of a text that multiplies through its reprinting, both of these articles about place

also raise the question of scale. Book historians tend to be sedulous in distinguishing between the copy, the issue, the edition, and the work. The scale at which we read assumes something about the significance of the thing in hand: this particular copy is worth your attention above all the others, or, this is an intellectually significant text regardless of its particular material form. The chosen scale of analysis also lets in and excludes the different power structures available in the transmission of texts. Tom Clayton and Consuelo Gomez show how the addition of paratextual material changes consecutive editions of the 'same' texts; they each work at this scale to show what new kinds of authority are asserted in the shift from one edition to the next.

What happens if we read not at the scale of editions but entire collections? Alice Wickenden discusses the provenance of the Hans Sloane collection in the British Library, exposing the difficulty of learning and teaching about the roots of this collection in the slave trade. Such a discussion involves less close reading of the lines of poems, and more reading of the curatorial and cataloguing material that surrounds them. Collections demand different kinds of reading – where did it come from? how do we know? – that reflect not only the named and famed individuals who so often steal the limelight of provenance history, but the often invisible and underpaid labour of cataloguers and librarians tasked with the huge responsibility of finding and recording answers to these questions.

In that shift from Hans Sloane to the community of cataloguers and librarians who take care of his collections today, we register another tension in the present volume between the Davids and Goliaths – the literary giants and the ants – whose stories are told in the articles that follow. Kate Ozment foregrounds the labour of Rebecca Field, a once-invisible eighteenth-century printer, to show more broadly how women's labour is erased from catalogues today. The little-known Henry Hills might have been more well known had the 'biography' promised in *The Life* come down to us as something other than 'a (failed) reprint of a reprint of which no original copy has survived', as Michael Durrant writes. Durrant puts under a microscope the granular detail of these texts' lives while making a broader point about the representation of sexuality both in the methods of book history and in its objects of study. Justin Kuhn's article uses the relatively well-known (among early modern book historians) publisher Humphrey Moseley to argue for publishers' political dexterity across their lifetime. Moseley is thus, like the less-studied Henry Hills and Rebecca Field, indexical of a wider trend.

But some of the work here attaches itself to outliers. Taylor Hare's article is at first glance about Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but it is less about Milton or the literary quality of his work than it is about his amanuenses and the slave labour that underwrote the funds for the first braille edition of the poem. The existence of such an edition, and thus the kind of reparative scholarship on display here, is only made possible by the canonical status of Milton that put his work to the front of the queue in making 'literature' more accessible to a wider readership. Canonicity and the economics of slavery intersect in Emma Smith's contribution, too, which tracks the changing prices of Shakespeare's First Folio over time to show how the value of rare books – and to some extent the English antiquarian book trade with Shakespeare at its pinnacle – was invented by the wealth generated in England by the slave trade. As Smith notes, her kind of analysis is only possible for an intensely canonical book whose travels between hands and across borders has been so well documented, and Shakespeare's cultural status (for better or for worse) increases the strength of the argument. Would we be as convinced by an argument based on the prices of a book by a now-forgotten author even if we had the evidence to make it? In another article that raises the stakes of Shakespeare's canonicity, Breanne Weber close-reads the Shakespearean quotations found in the fundraising cookbook put out by the Seton Guild of Hyattsville, Maryland. The effect is to demonstrate how 'the Bard' both bestowed cultural status and was deployed in the demeaning 'exoticisation' of people and foodways.

Tracking the changing status of Shakespeare and Milton in print – as tools to chisel away at the relative value of labour and social status, of authors and their commodified works – means noticing the oscillating politics of these objects of study over time. Shakespeare and Milton are staples of an undergraduate literary education but their status is deployed by the authors here to question our ways of reading rather than to affirm them. That is to say, their durability as texts that 'should' be read arises from their pliability to absorb new directions in the field. Our thinking changes, and these texts come with us. The articles that follow are arranged to foreground the journey of books through time and how and why they have landed on our shelves, in our institutions, and on our bedside tables in the formats and editions that they have.

The present volume opens with two articles that reflect broadly on the fundamental question of how we access the early modern texts we study. The tools that enable us, at the most basic level, to read early modern texts – facsimiles and transcriptions, hard-copy and digital catalogues – delineate and restrict as much as they enable that access. Many early modernists rely heavily on EEBO, whose democratic effect is to make legible tens of thousands of rare books to scholars who would otherwise be precluded from reading them by travel costs, institutional affiliation, time constraints, and so forth. Yet Maurer's article foregrounds the political infrastructures, and other forms of exclusion, that make EEBO possible: the way it foregrounds in its 'about' pages the work of 'editors' based at elite western institutions while pushing into the background the digital keyers based in India and the Philippines. While we are often reminded that EEBO is not a neutral database because of the way it excludes or glosses over certain textual features, our opening article makes clear the politics of the institutional organisation itself, and thus of the research tool that undergirds most current book history scholarship on early modern English books. Turning to another crucial access tool in early modern scholarship, Kate Ozment shows how a mistake in the English Short Title Catalog (ESTC), the primary digital reference for the study of pre-1800 English printed books, mis-records how one book came into being by naming the printer Rebecca Field as 'Richard' Field. Tracing how this error multiplies across the numerous other catalogues that use the ESTC as their source, Ozment mines the archive for the biography of Rebecca Field. Ozment's work attends not only to this one mistake but to the underlying presuppositions about the authority of the ESTC that propagate this error, presuppositions that urgently need to be undone by the kind of feminist bibliography on display here. Together, these two articles show the kinds of power structures, subjective histories, assumptions and inequalities which shape our ability to encounter early modern objects of study in the first place, while offering reparative and activist ways to critique and redress those politics.

Having established the political structures of the very tools which enable access to early modern texts, the second part of the present volume moves into close-readings of such texts. The first category of articles, 'Origins', asks us to notice where texts have come from and how their current location – within archives, libraries, digital infrastructures, or miscellanies – can (if we pay attention) reveal important narratives about the past. Taking seriously the notion of looking to *then* to comprehend the *now*, this section moves backwards in time from the digital tools of our opening section to the contemporary analogue archive. Alice Wickenden's article explores how the British Library documents the origins of two collections that originally belonged to Sloane and John Bellingham Inglis. What we might think of as the factual work of 'provenance studies' is shown to be thoroughly imbued with politics. The British Library and British Museum cannot curate and describe these collections and their one-time owners neutrally, and the 'griefwork' of recognising the oppressive past of our objects of study becomes part of the archival encounter. This essay on entire collections is followed by one that reads a single copy assembled in the seventeenth century, namely the Dalhousie manuscripts.

Previously read only as containers of Donne's poetry and therefore predominantly 'English' in origin, Sprouse and Valles suggest that these manuscripts were compiled in Scotland for a Scottish readership. Compilation is one origin point among many in the making of manuscripts. Shifting this co-ordinate from England to Scotland invites new ways of reading that resist the canonical gravity of Donne's verses and the rigidity of national borders as constructed in the ways we imagine textual production.

The next section considers the politics of 'Textual Labour': the diachronic process of making that brings books into being. Highlighting the disjuncture in the value afforded to different kinds of labour, Taylor Hare describes the enslavement that funded the 1855 braille edition of *Milton's Poetical Works* versus the broadly celebrated making of that edition as a project of democratisation and increased accessibility. Milton's own dependence on his amenuenses is increasingly noted to ask what it meant to 'author' *Paradise Lost.* This nineteenth-century edition raises the stakes of noticing what kinds of work make textual production possible. The presence of slavery in the rare books trade also threads through Emma Smith's article, which asks 'what did a First Folio cost and how much was that?' The answer is that the First Folio – and the numerous other rare books whose prices rocketed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – cost the lives of many enslaved people whose labour lined the pockets of wealthy families able to establish and assert their cultural status through the purchase of rare books.

Our third category thinks about a particular kind of textual labour – 'Publishing' – whose affordances are both aesthetically broad and historically particular. Tom Clayton shows how the indexes added to George Herbert's *The Temple* completely transform its intended and actual use, transformations that ultimately map onto the growing status of the book as a literary text. Initial indexes to *The Temple* assumed a clerical readership who mined the book for 'answers' to theological quandaries, and so these indexes resist that literary sense of open-endedness for which we now read and teach this collection. Indexes reflect and dictate reading: publishers shape our objects of study and in doing so shape the methods of close reading deployed by scholars of theology, literature, and the history of the book. Conseulo Gomez is interested in another kind of unstable paratext, dedications, that also allow a book to signify differently over time. Gomez shows how the rewriting of paratexts for Jacques Besson's *Theatrvm instrvmentorvm et machinarum* (first printed in 1572) changed who it was for: this time reflecting not a shift from 'clerical' to 'literary' readers, but from Protestant to Catholic. Publishing becomes an inherently political act: a form of labour that is also an act of service or patronage. These dedications assert the cultural status of both the works they precede, and the owners to whom they are being given; these manuals show the political value of books as sources of cutting-edge knowledge that helped their publishers, writers, and patrons assert themselves in early modern Europe. Returning to London, Justin Kuhn shows us how the publisher Humphrey Moseley also used books to keep abreast of the tides of power in the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars. Moseley's business acumen and professional loyalties oscillated between republican and royalist networks as the moment required. Kuhn encourages us to read across the full careers of publishers, whose political loyalties emerged from different doors at different moments. In so doing, he shifts the argument that many of these articles make about books onto the people who made them, insisting that the *longue durée* of a publisher's life reflects a changing political environment.

While Humphrey Moseley was a political publisher in flux, then, the final section of the present volume focuses on the fluctuating identities of the 'readers' made and imagined by early modern books. 'Readerly Identities' consists of articles that resonate overtly with some of the most divisive political contests of our own moment, but the articles that follow do not anachronistically tape current ways of thinking onto early modern print and paper. Post-indus-

trial globalisation has resulted in both the building and the dismantling of borders, and Jessica Linker's article, which examines the 'reprints' of George Fisher's *Instructor: or Young Man's Best Companion* and Sarah Trimmer's *Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* for an American audience, shows how such reprints constructed and reflected differences between American and British readerships. Even as these books travelled across borders, their reprinting – which comes to be a mode of rewriting – asserts divisions between American and British identities that rely on gender, wealth, and the colonial and post-colonial relation between provinces and metropole. Breanne Weber's work on Shakespearean cookbooks maps the cultural status of the predominately white women whose recipes are included in these nonprofessional printings. While purportedly a work of charity that seeks to make money for other disadvantaged women, the Seton Guild Cookery Book shields its constructs of race behind the 'poetry' of Shakespeare. Like the braille Milton discussed by Taylor Hare, this book both provides agency and community to a partially disenfranchised group, but it does so at the cost of further marginalising those already more harshly disadvantaged than they. This section finishes with an essay about sexuality, a category that has more recently come to the fore of book history in the form of Queer Bibliography (see Noble and Pyke 2024). Michael Durrant traces the four surviving copies of Henry Hills' *The Life*, which have come down to us in a non-linear mode that resists the kind of stemmatic 'lineage' often deployed in textual bibliography and genetic criticism. The material forms of these books reflect the representations of Hills's own sexuality to be found within them, in which his Ranter politics were bound up with his queer identity.

Just as this special issue of *JEMS* foregrounds how new material forms can transform old texts, and how new scholarly interests can interrupt old narratives and make different aspects of these texts newly visible, so too our own organisation of these essays might easily have been different. Other threads weave their way through the present volume, which highlight both newer and long-standing conversations in book history. Paratexts, for example, have been established as significant sites of meaning-making since Gerard Genette's foundational 1987 book, followed more recently by Helen Smith and Louise Wilson's 2011 edited collection, Deborah Shuger's 2022 monograph on Biblical paratexts, and many others. The articles here about the indexes of George Herbert's *The Temple*, the paratextual material of sixteenth-century European manuals and even the catalogue entries for Hans Sloane's donations enter this established conversation, but provide a timely intervention that intersects with the concerns of our moment around power and its slippage. Conversations around labour could be said to begin with the early twentieth-century establishment of bibliography as a discipline, with scholarly investigations into printshop practices and work habits, the structural organisation of and conflicts within the printing guilds, and the history of industry and manufacturing in the book trade. Here this work is made new by an emphasis on forms of power and exploitation that were largely invisible then, and by the incorporation of new forms of digital textuality and the labour that accompanies its production and dissemination. One pay-off of integrating the study of textual materiality into literary studies, art history, and the histories of science or theology is to foreground the work of contemporary archivists, cataloguers, and collectors as well as the early modern printers, binders, and typographers whose decisions and skills intervened in the making of a text and its semiotic force. Such scrutiny re-assesses whose work is and has historically been valued, and broadens the cast of figures brought into the spotlight by textual production.

While joining established yet fast-shifting scholarly debates around paratexts and labour, this special issue of *JEMS* also contributes to more recent theorising of the roles that access tools play in shaping our encounter with material texts. What does it mean to have a searchable digital database; how do such technologies enable and disable readings in contrast with those available to

early moderns? *The Politics of Book History: Then and Now* contributes as much to these nascent but urgent questions as it does to those of longer standing. The two-fold temporality that drives the present volume – a concern with the 'then' and the 'now' – extends to its participation in scholarly dialogue. Our arguments and claims are over thirty years in the making and yet the depth of these veins are such as to make it possible to continually strike new material.

This special issue of *JEMS* drives the cutting edge of our discipline while acknowledging the prior scholars and book-makers whose work has made new ways of thinking possible. The articles that follow also take this Janus-faced approach to their objects of study. *The Politics of Book History: Then and Now* is committed to the *longue durée* of early modern books, and yet it casts that *durée* as a circle rather than a line, drawing attention to the simultaneously backwards and forwards vision of texts, editions, reprints, catalogue entries, and digitisations, resisting any teleological narrative. Such are the politics of book history today. The articles contained in the present volume strive towards reparative and democratic forms of scholarship that nevertheless anticipate their interruption by new ways of thinking, of reading, of doing book history, that await us when 'now' becomes 'then'.

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Part One

Accessing Then from Now

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Facsimiles and Transcription EEBO-TCP and Narratives of Textual Production

Margaret C. Maurer
Dartmouth College (<Margaret.C.Maurer@dartmouth.edu>)

Abstract

Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP), a searchable database of XML-encoded transcriptions of over 60,000 early English books, has transformed how scholars research and teach early modern texts. This immense archive of digital facsimiles was transcribed and encoded by keyers in India and the Philippines. Despite the keyers' centrality to the project, EEBO-TCP and its vendors do not disclose the keyers' wages, labor conditions, or precarity. Examining absences, omissions, and rhetorical maneuvers on the Text Creation Partnership (TCP) website, the article argues that its rhetoric reinforces colonial epistemologies by situating its knowledge production in the United Kingdom and United States while decentering the keyers' expertise, scholarly labor, and essential role. Ultimately, the labor of digitization must be brought to the forefront in order to understand how digital texts are material and political; otherwise, digital archives will reproduce colonial epistemologies and cultural imperialism in the production of the digital cultural record. Finally, highlighting the work of scholars of critical digital humanities and critical archival studies, the article concludes by considering alternative approaches to digital creation and collaboration that center people, relationships, and process.

Keywords: Archives, Bibliography, Digital Humanities, Digitization, Labor

Is it not possible,
that a Book may be Writ in the East-Indies,
Printed in the West-Indies,
yet may be approved or disapproved of in London?
Daniel Phillips, *Proteus redivivus*, 1700

Daniel Phillips, describing how early modern books and their production move across borders, imagines a hypothetical book whose creation and readership spans across the globe.[1] A quick

[1] Daniel Phillips, a Quaker doctor, uses this example to counter a critic who questions how a book could be written in Scotland, published in Holland, and censured in London. For more on Phillips, see Cadbury 1968.

search on Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) can easily pull up Phillips' words, first printed in London 'in *White-Hart-Court* in *Gracious Street*, 1700', but the ease of finding this digital facsimile belies its production through a series of time- and labor-intensive remediations: the microfilm series of Early English Books (EEB), the digital images of Early English Books Online (EEBO), and the searchable text of EEBO-TCP.[2] The digital facsimiles of EEBO and EEBO-TCP have transformed how scholars research and teach early modern texts;[3] not only do these facsimiles enable new and innovative modes of research, but the transcriptions are freely available online, providing unprecedented access to early modern English writing. Additionally, scholars of early modern book history and digital humanities have observed that these digital facsimiles are themselves bibliographic and material objects of study in their own right.[4]

Beginning in 2000, Early English Books Online (EEBO) collaborated with the newly-created Text Creation Partnership (TCP) to produce a searchable database of XML-encoded transcriptions of over 60,000 English books, the majority of which date from before 1700. Funded by ProQuest – which owns the microfilms of EEB and the digitizations of EEBO – and 150 libraries,[5] the project's commercial-nonprofit partnership was heralded as 'a model for future collaborations between libraries and other content companies' (Blumenstyk 2001).[6] Library partners and ProQuest subscribers received initial access to transcriptions before their eventual public release, with the project concluding in 2020.[7] The resulting transcriptions are now free and available online, though the ProQuest version of the database that places the searchable text of EEBO-TCP alongside EEBO's digital images still requires a subscription. EEBO-TCP's online availability further enables its widespread use in and influence on early modern studies.

The EEBO-TCP database – all 60,000+ texts – was not the product of a computer program like optical character recognition (OCR). Instead, each text was transcribed character-by-character by humans. More specifically, EEBO-TCP partnered with third-party vendors, offshoring this labor of transcription and mark-up to keyers in India and the Philippines. Because editors only proofed 3-5% of each transcription, the foundation of EEBO-TCP (and the many projects and papers derived from EEBO-TCP) is these keyers' unedited work.[8] Despite the keyers' centrality to the project, EEBO-TCP and its vendors do not disclose the keyers' wages, labor

[2] On the construction of EEB and EEBO, see Kichuk 2007; Gadd 2009; Mak 2014; Gavin 2021; Lesser 2019.

[3] Because of the slippage between original and facsimile texts, especially in citational practices, it is difficult to gauge precisely the full impact of EEBO and EEBO-TCP on the field of early modern scholarship. Blaney and Siefring 2017 observe that academics fail to cite digital resources like EEBO-TCP, preferring to cite the original print source rather than the digital intermediary.

[4] As the acronym expands, so too does the distance between the printed book and facsimile, and with each remediation, the possibility of error increases. On EEBO, see Kichuk 2007; Gadd 2009; Mak 2014; Lesser 2019; Misson 2021; Misson and Singh 2022. Often, through error, the process of remediation is made visible (see Trettien 2013).

[5] For a full list of library partners who funded the project, see 'Our Scholarly Partners', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/about-partner-libraries/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[6] The *Text Creation Partnership* website further notes that one goal was pooling resources and 'collaborat[ing] with commercial providers, rather than constantly bargaining and competing with them' ('Home Page', *Text Creation Partnership*, <https://textcreationpartnership.org/>, accessed 1 December 2024).

[7] The works were released in two phases: Phase I (2000-2009; released to the general public in 2015) and Phase II (2009-2019; released to the general public in 2020). EEBO-TCP is no longer actively transcribing, and as of August 2020, the project is currently concluded, barring future funding ('About EEBO-TCP', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/tcp-texts/eebo-tcp-early-english-books-online/>, accessed 1 December 2024).

[8] While 5% is usually cited as the minimum amount of text that an editor should quality check, both in pages and in bytes, the instructions in 'Calculating error rates for EEBO data' notes that for 'very large books … only 3% rather than 5% of the whole' needs to be checked ('Calculating errors rates for EEBO data', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/docs/errors/errors1.html>, accessed 1 December 2024).

conditions, or precarity. This absence of information is not only troubling, but indicative of a larger trend on the TCP website to minimize the keyers' role and location. Examining the TCP website, I argue that its rhetoric reinforces colonial epistemologies by situating its knowledge production in the United Kingdom and United States while decentering the keyers' expertise, scholarly labor, and essential role. The United States and United Kingdom, along with their institutions and individuals, are credited as the authors, centers of knowledge production, and scholarly authority, while keyers in India and the Philippines are largely omitted, their individual contributions subsumed in collective and opaque language. EEBO-TCP has revolutionized early modern studies, but it is also a revolution in that it is cyclical, retracing the colonial epistemologies contained within the early modern texts it replicates. It is not simply that the TCP should update their website; instead, examining the absences, omissions, and rhetorical maneuvers of the TCP website demonstrates the necessity of bringing the labor of digitization to the forefront to understand how digital texts are material and political. Otherwise, digital archives like EEBO-TCP will continue to reproduce colonial epistemologies and cultural imperialism in the production of the digital cultural record. Finally, highlighting the work of scholars of critical digital humanities and critical archival studies, I conclude by considering alternative approaches to digital creation that center people, relationships, and process.

Phillips' words gain new resonance when read as a digital transcription on EEBO-TCP. Phillips imagines the world centered on London, balanced between two seemingly interchangeable Indies to the east and west. While the labor of book production can be exported to British trading posts or colonies, the readers who evaluate the book's merit are located in England. Of course, this resonance is an anachronistic premonition that is only possible through hindsight. At the same time, the offshoring of scholarly labor to formerly colonized countries cannot be divorced from early modern English worldviews that sought to construct hierarchies of racial and national identities. However, I begin with Phillips not only because he imagines book production across continents intoned with colonial ambitions, but because his rhetorical question – 'Is it not possible…?' – might also inadvertently invite us to imagine new approaches to constructing digital archives and projects.

An EEBO-TCP user might assume a computer generated the text through OCR; both HathiTrust and Google Books, for example, use OCR to generate transcriptions.[9] However, the EEBO database, comprised of black-and-white scans of microfilm of pre-1700 texts, proves difficult for OCR, and, furthermore, OCR would not generate XML-encoded files.[10] Until 2019, TCP's website featured the banner: 'Transcribed by hand. Owned by libraries. Made for everyone'.[11] The website and other TCP-affiliated materials[12] repeatedly note hand-typed transcriptions as a selling point, emphasizing the necessity and accuracy compared to OCR.[13] However, even if an

[9] Burkert 2023 discusses how many textual databases, including HathiTrust and Google Books, rely on invisible labor. Further, Gray and Suri 2019 demonstrate that OCR does not necessarily elide the human labor of character input, as artificial intelligence needs to be taught how to read and human workers sometimes supplement character input to substitute or complement computer-generated characters.

[10] 'Results of Keying instead of OCR', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/using-tcp-content/results-of-keying/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[11] *Text Creation Partnership*, captured on 15 September 2019 by the *Internet Archive Wayback Machine* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190915042804/http://www.textcreationpartnership.org:80/>, accessed 1 December 2024).

[12] For example, Welzenbach 2012, which serves as a cited source for both the Folgerpedia and Wikipedia pages on TCP.

[13] In the 2007 TCP Executive Board Meeting Minutes, EEBO-TCP's financial success is contrasted with lower sales from Evans-TCP and ECCO-TCP '(for a variety of reasons, chiefly the presence of OCR text in both projects)'. These minutes are now stored on the *Internet Archive Wayback Machine* (<https://wayback.archive-it.org/5871/20190806191838/http://www.textcreationpartnership.org/tcp-board-meeting-minutes-2007-10-30/>, accessed 1 December 2024).

EEBO-TCP user was familiar with these materials – perhaps by attending a talk or browsing the website, Folgerpedia, and Wikipedia – it would not be clear whose hands did the transcriptions.

EEBO-TCP outsourced transcription and mark-up to for-profit vendors: Apex CoVantage, SPi Global, Aptara, and AEL Data.[14] These Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) companies offshored the labor of transcription to thousands of keyers in India and the Philippines.[15] As Peter C. Herman observes, offshoring is associated with cutting production costs *and* exploitation:

> These are not countries known for high wages or worker benefits. EEBO-TCP, in other words, is made possible by the same global economy that grants the first world cheap clothing and affordable electronics. We rely, in other words, on outsourced, cheap labor for our comforts and now, it seems, for our sometimes recondite scholarship. (2020, 215)

Herman articulates the implications of offshoring when he describes these locations as synonymous ('in other words') with workers having less protections and being paid less than workers located in the United States or United Kingdom, where EEBO-TCP's editors are based. Herman's observation gestures towards a compounding effect; if users recognize certain practices (offshoring) or countries associated with these practices (India or the Philippines) as exploitative, this might deter companies from naming these practices or countries – even if it does not deter them from benefitting from these practices.

James Misson and Devani Singh critique Herman's observation, saying that it is 'imprudent' for early modern scholars to speculate on keyers' wages and labor conditions based solely on the country where the keyers are located. Misson and Singh observe that his

> reaction … seems prompted only by the locations of the keyers, whose workplaces are "not countries known for high wages and worker benefits." This question of the conditions under which the EEBO-TCP work was performed is a legitimate one, but it is one which we believe is best pursued by researchers with the expertise to appropriately contextualise the socio-economic situation of the keyers. In the absence of information about the companies' practices, it is imprudent for early modernists to imply that the EEBO-TCP keying contracted out to offshore companies took place under problematic labour conditions by virtue of their location in particular countries. (2022, 525)

It is worth bringing to the forefront that, despite this critique, Misson and Singh join Herman in advocating that EEBO-TCP should provide greater transparency regarding the keyers' roles, including credit for individual keyers. That said, here they interpret Herman's concern with labor practices as solely extrapolated from the countries where the keyers live. However, Herman's references to the 'global economy' and 'outsourced, cheap labor' make it clear that his apprehension is not merely in response to particular countries, but how the commodities

[14] While some sources only list Apex CoVantage and SPi Global, all four companies are listed on 'TCP staff', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/tcp-staff/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[15] While *outsourcing* refers to the practice of contracting with a third-party company, *offshoring* in particular refers to the practice of moving part or all of a business abroad 'usually to take advantage of lower costs' (OED, *offshore v.,* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/266790>, accessed 1 December 2024). Sources differ as to whether or not there are hundreds or thousands of keyers and coders who have worked on EEBO-TCP. It is unclear if these differing terms are due to an increase of cumulative workers over time or if the specific number of keyers is unknown to some sources. While the TCP website says 'hundreds', Paul Schaffner writes that he indirectly supervised 'thousands of taggers and keyers' as the production manager of EEBO-TCP. See 'TCP staff', *Text Creation Partnership* (<https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/tcp-staff/>, accessed 1 December 2024); and Paul Schaffner's candidate statement for TEI Council, 'TEI Elections 2007' (<https://www.tei-c.org/Vault/MembersMeetings/2007-info/mm40.html>, accessed 1 December 2024).

of the Global North rely on labor from countries in the Global South. After all, EEBO-TCP did not partner with universities in India or the Philippines, but hired multinational BPO companies that offer offshored services to clients in the United States and United Kingdom.

Misson and Singh assert that early modern scholars should defer to other researchers and refrain from speculating about the labor practices behind EEBO-TCP. While interdisciplinary collaboration with experts in other fields will certainly provide much needed perspectives and insights, I do not believe that scholars who use and benefit from EEBO-TCP can simply abdicate in the 'absence of information'. If we limit our critiques of labor practices to the information that companies provide, it hardly incentivizes these companies to be transparent. Further, as Roopika Risam writes in her groundbreaking *New Digital Worlds*, 'The legacies of colonialism that have been shaping knowledge production for centuries continue to prevail, and they do so through the existing state of the digital cultural record. Those of us who are equipped with the capacity for humanities inquiry have a responsibility to intervene' (2018, 139). EEBO-TCP has fundamentally changed the study of early modern English texts, enabling new avenues for teaching and research – including my own research. I can distinctly remember joyful, *eureka* moments when EEBO-TCP enabled me to make a connection that enriched my research and shaped my understanding of the early modern world. I am an American scholar of early modern knowledge production and book history whose work has directly benefited from the keyers who hand-typed EEBO-TCP; in the present article, I rely on my training as a humanities scholar to read the TCP website against the grain to consider how the knowledge production of digital archives can replicate colonial epistemologies.

Central to my methodology, as well as the methodologies of many scholars whose work I admire, is the understanding that absences *are* information (see Hartman 2008 and 2019; Klein 2013; Fuentes 2016; Ozment 2020; Miles 2021). Offshoring, in particular, is a practice that thrives in absences. I join Herman, Misson, and Singh to advocate for greater transparency around EEBO-TCP's keyers. At the same time, I recognize that the people behind EEBO-TCP may not even have information about the keyers' wages, working conditions, or precarity, as offshoring companies often present themselves as a convenient black box that generates a desired output for a certain rate. In the absence of this information, however, I have chosen to examine how the TCP website presents the narrative of EEBO-TCP's creation, attending to how the keyers' role is discussed or elided. As Misson and Singh observe, EEBO-TCP's use of offshoring is not a secret (2022, 525); at the same time, the language of the TCP website often omits or diminishes the project's reliance both on the practice of offshoring and on the keyers' central scholarly labor.

The TCP website asserts: 'Our policies were imbued with a librarian's attitude toward content: a resolve to prepare materials *without agenda or bias*' (my italics).[16] This purported neutrality, of course, is itself an agenda, which imagines the role of a librarian or archivist as passive stewards – or even as the servile 'handmaidens of historical research'– rather than active agents in the construction of historical narratives (see Cook 2007, 170). In the case of EEBO in particular, Bonnie Mak expertly documents how its labor-intensive construction reflects particular political agendas, beginning with the Short Title Catalogue's creation (2014; see also Gavin 2021).[17] Mak can only excavate part of EEBO's history, noting a lack of transparency:

[16] 'About the Partnership', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[17] Created at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Short Title Catalogue provided a framework for EEBO, and in turn, EEBO-TCP. Critiques of EEBO's construction, including Mak's, tend to focus on how it might uphold, rather than challenge, historical narratives of heritage and nation. Amy Earhart probes how digital archives, including EEBO, tend to focus 'on technological innovation, not on innovative restructuring of the canon' (2012, 314). Earhart

'In eliding the social processes that constitute the digitizations, not only are the politics of the final product in EEBO obscured, but so too is the possibility of a historical understanding of the project itself. [This] produces the effect of fact: The performance of EEBO becomes the performance of knowledge' (2014, 1520). EEBO, and subsequently EEBO-TCP, derives a supposed apolitical authority and unfettered access to the past by erasing the politics of its own creation. What is visible to an EEBO-TCP user (EEBO-TCP's content and presentation) is reliant on what is not visible (EEBO-TCP's use of offshored labor).[18]

Scholars from intersecting disciplines have considered how offshoring digital labor reinforces colonial pasts and neocolonial futures by obscuring the human labor necessary to create and maintain digital products. The digital not only means labor can be performed anywhere, but also conceals human intervention through real and supposed automation, including in social media content management (Cherry 2016; Roberts 2019), AI programming (Gray and Suri 2019; Perrigo 2023), and 'farming' in online games (Tai and Hu 2018). This phenomenon – called 'virtual work' (Cherry 2016, 71), 'ghost work' (Gray and Suri 2019, ix), 'masked labour' (Mak and Pollack 2013, 218), and 'artificial artificial intelligence' (by Jeff Bezos; see Jeff Bezos qtd. in Pontin 2007) – hides human labor within the supposed capacity of a machine, such that a user cannot differentiate between what is human- or computer-generated. It is no wonder that Amazon's marketplace for gig-based digital work is named the Mechanical Turk.[19] Amazon Mechanical Turk workers, necessary yet devalued, are paid pennies for completing tasks (Risam 2018, 130).

Risam discusses the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk within the digital humanities, arguing that, while digital humanists have considered the ethics of collaboration within the university, 'there has been less critical interrogation of the role of exploited and casualized labor from the Global South in propping up digital humanities projects of the Global North … [and] the tension between fiscal challenges and ethical labor practices in the production of digital humanities scholarship' (44).[20] The digital collaborations of tenured scholars, precarious scholars, graduate students, undergraduates, librarians, and staff within universities requires conscientious conversations about positionality and power and clear agreements about how each person's work will be acknowledged and properly compensated.[21] While outsourced labor that is obscured by technology might seem like an easier alternative – as Lilly Irani observes, some users of Amazon Mechanical Turk describe the results as being 'like magic' (2015, n.p.) – the use of outsourcing and offshoring digital labor creates more numerous and greater ethical considerations.

The EEBO-TCP keyers' transcription and mark-up should not be understood as a human simply replacing the automated, monotonous work of a machine. Like other 'ghost work', the keyers are employed precisely because their skills, knowledge, and analysis are necessary; even if the work that they undertake is seemingly repetitive, it is not rote. Transcribing a black-and-white

considers how digital projects often receive funding for the supposed significance of their contents, and in turn, the traditional white, male, European canon is reproduced as the digital canon that can be easily accessed and queried.

[18] See also Mak 2016 on offshoring, labor, and the digital humanities.

[19] Amazon Mechanical Turk takes its name from an eighteenth-century chess-playing automaton, which was revealed to be a hoax: hidden within the machine was a human chess master who performed the machine's supposed tasks. Geoghegan 2020 provides an overview that traces orientalism from the chess-playing automaton to Amazon's Mechanical Turk. On how Amazon Mechanical Turk operates, see Hitlin 2016; Cherry 2016.

[20] Risam (2018) discusses the use of crowdsourced labor on digital marketplaces such as Amazon Mechanical Turk but does not specifically address the use of third-party BPO companies for digital archives or digital humanities projects.

[21] For examples of best practices and considerations for digital humanities projects navigating the power dynamics of collaboration within a university setting, see the 'Collaborators' Bill of Rights' 2011; 'A Student Collaborators' Bill of Rights' 2015; Risam, Snow and Edwards 2017.

scan of a microfilm of an early book is scholarly labor that requires interpretation, engagement, creativity and practice. Further, the keyers were tasked with the editorial work of XML mark-up. As Misson and Singh highlight, 'the assigning of division types required many of the skills normally associated with textual editing. Besides letter-by-letter transcription, keyers were also applying historical and bibliographical knowledge to the analysis of early modern content and its context' (2022, 514-515). And because (as mentioned above) EEBO-TCP's editors completed quality checks on only 3-5% of the content, the overwhelming majority of EEBO-TCP has been shaped by the keyers' editorial interpretation without any additional edits. Unequivocally, the keyers and their scholarly work are essential to EEBO-TCP – but their work is not credited or cited as such.

EEBO-TCP's credited editors are situated within the United States and United Kingdom, rather than crediting India or the Philippines as primary locations of production. The TCP website only has one mention of the keyers' location, at the bottom of 'TCP Staff': 'Of all of the hundreds of keyers and coders, quality-control officers, and managers at Apex CoVantage (Hyderabad), SPI Global (formerly PDCC, Manila), Aptara (formerly Tech Books[22]), and AEL Data (Chennai) only a few can be named here'.[23] This passive voice obscures who is doing the naming and why this absence of information is occurring: is this information withheld by TCP's vendors or was it simply not deemed important enough to keep track of individual keyers' names? The entry names forty-three people, along with company affiliations and, sometimes, positions. All positions listed appear to be managerial roles, but since not every entry has a position, it is unclear if any keyers are listed.[24] At the very least, these forty-three people do not encompass the hundreds or thousands of keyers involved in typing and encoding EEBO-TCP.

While the vendors are not hidden, they are featured less prominently than editors located in the United States and United Kingdom. The website names the University of Michigan and Bodleian Library (alongside their locations, Ann Arbor and Oxford) on multiple pages, with a much earlier frequency, and higher frequency per page. Both appear on the welcome page and three times on *History*. Hundreds of workers affiliated with both universities are named above the vendor-affiliated workers on 'TCP Staff'. From the FAQ to citation guidelines, the website continually asserts that 'EEBO-TCP is a project based at the Universities of Michigan and Oxford'.[25] Even the citation guide for using EEBO-TCP recommends citing the location of creation as Ann Arbor, Michigan.[26] Other editorial sites, such as the University of Toronto and National Library of Wales, appear prominently and repeatedly.[27]

[22] While Apex CoVantage, SPi Global, and AEL Data all operate multiple office locations, specific locations in India and the Philippines are noted on the TCP website. Aptara, the only company that does not list a location, has three American, one Australian, and six Indian office locations ('TCP Staff', *Text Creation Partnership*, <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/tcp-staff/>, accessed 1 December 2024; 'Offices', *AptaraCorp,* <https://www.aptaracorp.com/about-us/offices/>, accessed 1 December 2024).

[23] 'TCP Staff', *Text Creation Partnership*, <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/tcp-staff/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[24] Additionally, the 'TCP Staff' page was first captured by the *Wayback Machine* in late 2019, which coincides with TCP website template update; prior to the end of 2019, it is unclear what references the website contained to its third-party vendors and their locations, if any.

[25] 'FAQ', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/faq/>, accessed 1 December 2024. The TCP website is especially important because it acts as a source for other versions of EEBO-TCP history. The Wikipedia page for TCP lists the locations of editors but does not mention the use of vendors. Gavin's thirtyfour-page history of EEBO includes a single footnote: 'Transcriptions were performed by anonymous coders working in India' (2021, 99).

[26] 'Citing the TCP – Text Creation Partnership', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/using-tcp-content/citing-the-tcp>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[27] The University of Toronto and the National Library of Wales served as editorial sites for texts written in Latin and Welsh respectively. Both institutions are listed twice in the history of the project, once on the 'About

Further, as Misson and Singh observe, individual keyers are not credited in the XML files that make up EEBO-TCP, even though editors' names are included within these files: 'While the US- or UK-based editor is often named in the XML header, the keyer remains anonymous – a contravention of the system of acknowledgement and citation otherwise used for scholarly labor, and one which we hope will be duly addressed in future iterations of the EEBO-TCP project' (2022, 525). Of course, this is only a contravention if and when the keyers' labor is rightly understood as scholarly. The discrepancy in who is credited within EEBO-TCP's files signals that the keyer's transcription and mark-up is not understood as scholarly labor, even as the editor's identical work of transcription and mark-up *is* understood as scholarly labor. This raises interlinking questions of whose labor is typically perceived as scholarly and where scholarly labor is typically located: the editors affiliated with academic institutions in the United States or United Kingdom are credited for their scholarly contributions, while the keyers located in India and the Philippines are relegated to uncredited, supporting roles. This is especially troubling given the neocolonial and techno-Orientalist stereotypes that imagine Asian workers as machine-like and adept at repetitive and monotonous tasks (Lowe 2014; Bui 2020). Within neocolonial epistemologies, the location and racialized identity of the person completing a task shapes whether or not that task should be understood as knowledge production.[28]

Not only are individual keyers not credited, but often, when their work is referenced on the TCP website, it is through the collective 'vendor'. Production manager Paul Schaffner notes that EEBO-TCP has 'never seen any point in specifying a particular *method* (and indeed some of the commercial processes are proprietary secrets): we specify a given accuracy of output, and leave it to the vendors'.[29] Outsourcing is a technology that emphasizes product over process. These 'proprietary secrets' of *how* a vendor accomplishes this output also blur the *who*, the hierarchal structures and individuals who create the output. The language of 'vendor' is a catch-all synecdoche for the collective, flattening the identities and roles of individuals and the complex power relations between them. For example, Mattie Burkert observes that in a video tour of Apex CoVantage's Hyderabad office available on YouTube, the 'engineers, supervisors, and managers appear to be men, while the cubicle farm referred to as the "production floor" is populated predominantly (although not exclusively) by women' (2023, 498). An individual keyers' experience within a multinational corporation is not the same as a manager, nor is a manager's experience the same as a CEO. And yet, this collective 'vendor' takes on human form: 'vendors who manually key in the letters they see on the page'.[30]

Elsewhere, the vendors are folded into a larger collective. Instead of individuals or vendors keying, the ambiguous 'we' is credited with transcription:

EEBO-TCP' page (*Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/tcp-texts/eebo-tcp-early-english-books-online/>, accessed 1 December 2024), and multiple times on the 'TCP Staff' page (*Text Creation Partnership*, <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/tcp-staff/>, accessed 1 December 2024).

[28] The question of whose labor is valued and recognized as scholarly exists at the intersections of identity, including race, nationality, gender and class. For example, the #ThanksForTyping movement called attention to how women's scholarly contributions, ranging from transcription to computing, are often overlooked (see Light 1999; Dresvina 2021).

[29] The quotation from Schaffner appears in an Association for Computers and the Humanities' forum post to answer a colleague's question about whether any studies have shown the effectiveness of double-keying. 'Verifying the Accuracy of Double Keying - any studies?', 'Digital Humanities Questions & Answers', *Association for Computers and the Humanities*, <https://dhanswers.ach.org/topic/verifying-the-accuracy-of-double-keying-any-studies/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[30] 'The Results of Keying Instead of OCR', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/using-tcp-content/results-of-keying/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

We are a consortium of (mostly) university and college libraries … We've transcribed and marked up text – through manual keying, rather than optical character recognition (OCR) …[31]

Because our funding was limited, we aimed to key as many different works–as much different text–as possible.[32]

… we preferred to reserve our energies for keying and editing rather than original cataloguing.[33]

While the use of 'we' is not necessarily a purposeful evasion, it is also not innocuous. Even when 'we' self-identifies as the consortium, it takes credit for transcribing EEBO-TCP, making transcription sound like an in-house production. 'Our funding' demonstrates that this 'we' exerts fiscal control over the project, further separating 'we' from keyers, but 'reserv[ing] our energies for keying' creates a collective entity that includes those who engage in the manual labor of keying. The shifting scope of who this 'we' includes and omits seems to credit EEBO-TCP partners in the United States and United Kingdom not only with EEBO-TCP's production, but the act of keying itself.

Ruha Benjamin warns that the language of exploitation focuses on intentions and outcomes, rather than the costs of exploitation:

If we probe exploitative labor practices, the stated intention would likely elicit buzzwords such as "lower costs" and "greater efficiency", signaling a fundamental tension and paradox – the indispensable disposability of those whose labor enables innovation. The language of intentionality only makes one side of this equation visible, namely the desire to produce goods faster and cheaper, while giving people "the opportunity to work". This fails to account for the social costs of a technology in which global forms of racism, caste, class, sex, and gender exploitation are the nuts and bolts of development. (2019, 20)

Benjamin's 'indispensable disposability' is underscored in language that centers the point-of-view of the exploiter over the exploited and the product over the people who create that product. The neoliberal narrative that frames offshoring as an 'opportunity to work' is better inverted as 'an opportunity for the West' (Pal and Buzzanell 2013, 211), as lower costs and greater efficiency are indispensable to the companies that rely on them. Simply put: EEBO-TCP relies on the keyers, not the other way around.

Without naming offshoring, the TCP website argues that keying is essential to the project's affordability and efficiency:

[Keying] is actually more cost effective than sorting through and correcting poor-quality OCR.[34]

We maintain a commitment to the quality and the cost-effectiveness of our content …[35]

The review and correction of the text produced would be so expensive and labor-intensive that it is more efficient to simply key the work from scratch.[36]

[31] 'About the Partnership', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[32] 'About EEBO-TCP', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/tcp-texts/eebo-tcp-early-english-books-online/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] 'Results of Keying instead of OCR', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/using-tcp-content/results-of-keying/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[35] 'About the Partnership', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/about-the-tcp/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[36] 'FAQ', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/faq/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

These are only some of the instances that invoke concerns of cost and efficiency; this rationale stresses EEBO-TCP's dependence on the lower rates that offshoring provides. The unspoken addition is that not only were keyers essential to EEBO-TCP, but keyers located in countries formerly colonized by the United Kingdom and United States made the project's scope possible through their high-quality, low-cost scholarly labor.

What does it mean that EEBO-TCP, a searchable database based on 'a mainstay for understanding the development of Western culture in general and the Anglo-American world in particular',[37] was constructed by thousands of people in countries formerly colonized by the United Kingdom and United States? Ironically, EEBO-TCP is an archive of the ideas and worldviews that helped to bring about the 'Anglo-American world' – a euphemism for colonialism and the cultural imperialism – that established English as a global language. Indeed, scholars such as Jyotsna Singh (1996 and 2019), Ania Loomba (Loomba and Orkin 1998; Loomba and Sanchez 2016), Imtiaz Habib (2000), Poonam Trivedi (Trivedi and Bartholomeusz 2005; Lei, Ick and Trivedi 2016), Bernadette Andrea (2008) and Amrita Sen (2022) have explored how early modern English texts articulated and propelled colonial ambitions and epistemologies. Ongoing digital projects, including Al-Azami and Hassan's *Medieval and Early Modern Orients*[38] and Dhar, Sen and Adéèkó's *Shakespeare in the 'Post' Colonies,* offer innovative research that examines cross-cultural and colonial exchanges across geographical and temporal boundaries. By replicating early modern texts in the digital cultural record, EEBO-TCP also duplicates the racist and colonial worldviews contained within these texts without the critical context that these scholars provide.

For example, Thomas Carew's 'A Fancy' (1651) triangulates geography, race, and paper in order to uphold European whiteness as the necessary background for knowledge production. At the beginning of the poem, Carew admires a piece of paper:

Mark how this polisht Eastern sheet
Doth with our Northern tincture meet,
For though the paper seem to sink,
Yet it receives, and bears the Ink;
And on her smooth soft brow these spots
Seem rather ornaments than blots;
… to speak
To the skild Lover, and relate
Vnheard, his sad or happy Fate: (ll. 1-6 and 10-12)

Carew compares the piece of paper to a fair woman's face, praising how the page's whiteness, contrasted with the darkness of the ink, enables the 'skild Lover' to read and interpret meaning. Carew plays on the meanings of tincture, referring to both a cosmetic pigment to whiten the face and an alchemical quintessence capable of purification. As this 'Northern tincture' whitens and perfects the 'Eastern' technology of paper, whiteness and perfection are made synonymous. Carew is by no means singular in how he conflates paper's virtuous whiteness and racialized skin (see Grier 2015; Adams 2021), and numerous early modern English texts reproduced in EEBO-TCP correlate whiteness, beauty, and virtue (see Hall 1995). Carew's 'Eastern sheet' seems to denote paper's invention in China; however, rather than seeing European textual traditions

[37] 'About EEBO-TCP', *Text Creation Partnership,* <https://textcreationpartnership.org/tcp-texts/eebo-tcp-early-english-books-online/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[38] See <https://memorients.com/>, accessed 1 December2024.

as interlinked or indebted to Asian technologies, Carew introduces the 'Eastern sheet' in order to emphasize the superiority of its 'Northern' counterpart. In this, Carew's poem proposes that legibility and meaning-making are contingent on European whiteness.

When Carew's poem is reinscribed in EEBO-TCP, this proposition takes on new temporal and epistemic registers: EEBO-TCP is reproducing a history of colonial violence in more ways than one. EEBO-TCP's construction relies on the prevalence of English-speaking workers in formerly colonized countries as well as the global economic infrastructures that continue to allow countries like the United Kingdom and United States to benefit from skilled, inexpensive labor from countries they previously colonized. This extractive labor is a further instance of cultural imperialism wherein the digital cultural record of 'Western culture' is reproduced by English-speaking people in formerly colonized countries. In this, EEBO-TCP both extracts and erases the labor of keyers in India and the Philippines, perpetuating a colonial epistemology that imagines knowledge production, past and present, as solely the product of European and settler-colonial countries.

It is important to remember that EEBO-TCP is not an anomaly; rather, its construction represents larger trends within academia and digital labor. In fact, these technologies and labor practices are commonplace within academia; to pick just one example, the *London Stage Information Bank* was keypunched by women based in Hong Kong (see Burkert 2022, 179-180 and 2023). And many publishing companies employ the same or similar BPO companies for transcription, typesetting, formatting, and copywriting services in producing academic monographs.[39] Further, new technologies like generative AI, often touted as an alternative to human labor, also can rely on offshored and exploitative labor (Perrigo 2023). While EEBO-TCP is no longer actively transcribing texts, it is presented as 'a model for future collaborations' (Blumenstyk 2001, n.p.) that gestures towards future digital humanities projects. Our concerns about exploitative academic labor cannot begin and end with EEBO-TCP.

It has been over a decade since Alan Liu asked: 'how … the digital humanities advance, channel, or resist the great postindustrial, neoliberal, corporatist, and globalist flows of information-cum-capital'? (2011, n.p.). Scholars of critical digital humanities and critical archival studies[40] have sought to answer this question by imagining new avenues and new possibilities wherein digital archives do not reinscribe colonial epistemologies. As their research indicates, it is not enough simply to 'diversify' the records contained within digital archives, but instead, we need to fundamentally change the approaches, methods, relationships, and epistemological frameworks of digital archives (see Caswell, Punzalan, and Sangwand 2017; Carbajal and Caswell 2021). Risam advocates for a postcolonial digital humanities that 'explores how we might remake the worlds instantiated in the digital cultural record through politically, ethically, and social justice-minded approaches to digital knowledge production' (2018, 4). Kimberly Christen and Jane Anderson center Indigenous temporalities and relationalities to imagine the 'slow archives' as an alternative temporal framework that resists settler colonial logics:

> Slowing down is about focusing differently, listening carefully, and acting ethically. It opens the possibility of seeing the intricate web of relationships formed and forged through attention to collaborative curation processes that do not default to normative structures of attribution, access, or scale … [S]lowness is imagined

[39] Apex CoVantage clients include JSTOR and Taylor & Francis; SPi Global clients include Elsevier, Wiley, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press; Aptara clients include Google, Cengage Learning, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Penguin Random House; AEL Data clients include the University of Cambridge and the Library and Archives of Canada. All clients are listed on the respective vendors' websites.

[40] See Nakamura 2011 and 2014; Mak 2013 and 2014; Williams 2016 and 2017; D'Ignazio and Klein 2020; Carbajal and Caswell 2021; and also the collective movement that goes by the hashtag #transformDH (see Bailey *et al.* 2016).

and enacted in terms of relationality, positionality, and a framework that privileges restorative and reparative work that is decolonial in its logic and practice. Slow archives do not presume one course of action; in fact, they allow for changing courses, for shifts, and for unexpected endings. (2019, 90)

How might these insights and changes in perspective shape early modern studies in new directions? It would require that early modern scholars who create or use digital projects, including archives, bring the labor of knowledge production to the forefront of our research and teaching. In practice, this could include centering labor practices in our discussions, challenging exploitative labor practices, and implementing ethical and innovative approaches to digital projects instead of relying on offshored labor. After all, even as scholars advocate for greater transparency around or research on EEBO-TCP's use of BPO companies, it is important to keep in mind that these companies' lack of transparency is not an accident but by design. Ultimately, offshoring academic labor may ensure cost-efficiency for large-scale digital projects, but it cannot ensure that workers have fair pay or job security.

Early modern scholars can also bring labor to the forefront by acknowledging the web of relationships that is foundational to our work as researchers and educators, including the labor that is not recognized by traditional citational practices or scholarly attributions. In this, Kate Ozment (2020) and Bridget Whearty (2022) both offer insightful, innovative models on how acknowledging the scholarly work of anonymous individuals past and present can expand our narratives of scholarly labor. Scholars who use EEBO-TCP in their research and classrooms should intentionally acknowledge and discuss EEBO-TCP's construction in ways that center the integral, scholarly labor of keyers.

Labor, too, must be at the forefront of ongoing and future projects: the outcome of *what is being made* does not and cannot outweigh the circumstances of *who is doing the making*. This is a simple premise, and at the same time, it is deeply antithetical to academia in its current state. It means having less when having more could mean exploiting other people – but in practice, it often just means *having less,* whether in terms of documents, metadata, and user-experience features to work with. Instead of mourning this hypothetical data, however, perhaps this reframing can also be an opportunity to interrogate the value placed on large-scale, 'big data' digital humanities projects in the first place.

What would it look like if early modern scholars *focused differently, listened carefully,* and *acted ethically*? Our work is pertinent and political. We must endeavor to call attention to how colonialism and racism shape our field specifically and knowledge production more broadly. With that, we must seek to resist the universalization of Anglo-American epistemologies and reject completionist fantasies that imagine that any single archive or digital project, regardless of scale, can give us unfettered access to the past. Only then can we learn from and work slowly, yet urgently (see Caswell 2021, 99-100), and collaboratively with scholars from across disciplines, librarians, students and partners outside of the academy to imagine new ways of knowing.

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Digital Bibliography in the Age of Linked Data

Kate Ozment
Case Western Reserve University (<kate.ozment@case.edu>)

Abstract

The article explores how the interplay of ideological values and technological capacities have shaped the digital bibliography of British print history. Using a misgendering in the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) as a case study, the article explores how information flows through resources like Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), and Early English Books Online (EEBO), library catalogues, WorldCat, and retail outlets like Amazon. The article argues that as data from the ESTC is reproduced through linked data structures, information is 'authorized' far beyond what a single resource would do alone or what its original authors imagined or designed. While feminist, queer, and critical race scholarship has discursively created and revised new histories of textual production, in contrast foundational resources like the ESTC perpetuate old assumptions with unfixed errors and editorial practices that render the *who* and the *why* of their metadata choices opaque. The article concludes that radical revision is necessary if we are to disrupt centuries of a white and male norm in British print history.

Keywords: Early English Books Online, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, English Short Title Catalogue, Feminist Bibliography, Print History

In early 2023, I noticed an editorial addition in the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) that incorrectly attributed the work of a woman to that of a man. With the gumption of a feminist book trade scholar, former copy editor, and digital humanist who has worked with bibliographic resources for a decade, I went about trying to fix this error. My inability to do so revealed that beneath the seeming logical ease of a digital database was a tangled web, metaphorically and literally, that is the current digital bibliographic landscape of print in the Early Modern period. This article uses my failure as a launching point to examine when and how information is introduced into the ESTC and the circulation of data beyond the intentions of the project's architects or the database's virtual address. By detailing a media history of the ESTC from multiple perspectives, I show how chronic misunderstandings of what the database is and is not

have been magnified as the data is imperfectly duplicated in commercial enterprises, scholarly projects and other bibliographic formats. The result is that we have never known more nor misunderstood more about print history in the early modern period, especially as it relates to the history of women's textual labour.

The editorial addition at the centre of this narrative was on record P2961 for the March 1715/16 edition of *Chit-Chat*, a periodical linked to Richard Steele. The imprint read: 'Printed; and Sold by R[ichard]. Burleigh in Amen-Corner', with the bracketed additions expanding the 'R' initial to 'Richard.' A check in the British Book Trade Index (BBTI) and other sources, including the Stationer's Company archives and Henry R. Plomer's *Dictionary* (1922), indicated that there was no Richard Burleigh working in the trades at this time, especially not at that address. Biographical research did not yield any Richard Burleigh in this period or location.

Eventually, I determined that the business must belong to a woman named Rebecca, not Richard. Rebecca Burleigh was born Rebecca Falls and married Ferdinando Burleigh in 1712; they had a son named Ferdinando. Ferdinando Burleigh Sr. was a bookseller with a shop in Amen Corner, which was north of Ludgate Street and to the west of St. Paul's Churchyard in London. He died in 1715, and Rebecca continued on in the business until 1719. In 1717, she married William Graves, also in the trades through his family, but she continued to publish as 'R. Burleigh' rather than changing her business name after her second marriage. I cannot find traces of when Rebecca left the trades or why, but William's father John Graves indicated in his will in 1726 that his son was 'in foreign parts' (quoted in Treadwell 1999).[1] Perhaps Rebecca went with him.

Rebecca Burleigh is well documented for a woman in the trades in the sense that she is in the BBTI, which is an imperfect but useful resource that aggregates references like Plomer (1922) and Foxon (1975). Despite the fact that 'R. Burleigh' accounts for 193 records in the ESTC, it is her husband Ferdinando with his 57 imprints who makes it into Plomer's *Dictionary.* Because the name 'Richard' is on ESTC record P2961 and there is no 'Rebecca Burleigh' or 'Mrs. Burleigh' in any other imprints listed in the ESTC that I could find with text searches, I went through an extensive process of elimination to arrive at the most logical conclusion – that Richard Burleigh is the invention of an editor who assumed an initial would be a man instead of a woman in the absence of other information. Why 'Richard' rather than 'Robert' is harder to guess, but perhaps with 'Richard Steele' floating in the cataloguer's head, that seemed the right name for the publisher as well.

After posting on social media about my consternation at the spectral Richard Burleigh, a cataloguer at the British Library edited the record to reflect the name 'Rebecca' rather than 'Richard'.[2] This was a helpful and satisfying thing to do, and I briefly experienced all the gratification that a feminist bibliographer feels when correct information about a woman in the trades is now circulating out in the world. Except it did not circulate. While Rebecca now sits on her throne on ESTC record P2961, that is the extent of her bibliographic kingdom. The usurping Richard remains in the duplicates of the ESTC's metadata that circulate beyond the catalogue's digital residence.[3] He is in the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online database (ECCO) hosted by

[1] I was unable to get a copy of this will through a request with the probate records office of the National Archives.

[2] This change overwrites the MARC (Machine Readable Cataloguing) field where I would have been able to see the last edit on the record, something I did not realize until later. However, it likely would not have yielded much information, as similar edits have all been twenty or more years ago.

[3] See <https://estc.bl.uk>. The British Library experienced a cyber-attack in 2023 that rendered this URL and many others, inoperable at the time of publication. See the *Coda* for more.

Gale, identifiable by searching with the ESTC record locater. As a consequence, he is also in all the corners of the Internet where Gale's bibliographic metadata has travelled including WorldCat, where the title in the ESTC reference has listed holdings and an assigned OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) number. Gale sells ECCO's metadata to subscribing libraries so that ECCO holdings come up in library catalogue searches by users. Richard appears in dozens of library catalogues to be pulled up in full-text searches by undergraduates and their professors. Gale also sells books on demand on Amazon that are reprints of its ECCO holdings – allowing me to hold in my hand a codex reprint of a digitization of another microfilm digitization of a codex that was printed in the 1700s and now lives in the Bodleian. Matryoshka doll technologies aside, in the description for Amazon's listing of *Chit-Chat,* it reads 'The below data was compiled from various identification fields in the bibliographic record of this title. This data is provided as an additional tool in helping to insure edition identification'.[4] The subsequent information is exactly what is on the ECCO record, including Richard and the surrogate's original copy location.

As months passed after Rebecca was listed on ESTC and no changes occurred anywhere else, I began to unravel my own assumptions about how our digital bibliographic ecosystem communicates. I had erroneously assumed that ESTC information appearing in full transcription in ECCO meant that there was an ongoing dialogue between the ESTC and Gale, which was my experience working in relational database platforms. This is not the case. ECCO's description page, accessible only with a log-in, emphasizes that the ESTC information within is 'static' and that the ESTC should be consulted for the most up-to-date information ('About This Archive' n.d.). ECCO's old interface had an error report button that sent information back to the ESTC when a user located an error, but the button has been removed on the new Gale Primary Sources interface. The metadata on ECCO is a copy of the ESTC made at a certain point in time, done for the benefit of the scholarly community so that ESTC numbers can be searched, and digital surrogates connected to (hopefully) relevant bibliographical information. But as the case of Rebecca Burleigh emphasizes, this veneer of easy identification covers cracks in the accuracy and comprehensiveness of information that is available to ECCO users who may see the ESTC's data and not feel the need to go to an external website and check it.

As I will detail in this article, many scholars are aware of the significant drawbacks of our key databases. However, I do not think that my experience is so singular that a *mea culpa* is sufficient for explaining why I was confused about the information flow between resources – and that is because the resources do not gesture to their own cracks both by design and by happenstance. From its origins, what the ESTC is and could be has been debated by its architects and users, with articles published simultaneously in different journals to haphazardly overlapping audiences. While the history of the ESTC has been told previously, it is necessary to give a short account of the database's creation focused on its technological negotiations and from differing points of view to emphasize that the ESTC has always been more of a contested territory than a neutral reference source – and that much of these debates have been muted for the generation of scholars that have 'grown up' with an open-access ESTC database, Google Books, and scholarly databases sharing bibliographic information.

What is now known as the ESTC began as distinct bibliographical projects and library catalogues that eventually coalesced into the database that we now use. The structure of the ESTC was built as the Eighteenth-Century Short-Title Catalogue (18th STC), which began in earnest in 1977 as a collaboration between the British Library and a collective of researchers in

[4] <https://www.amazon.it/principles-methodically-exhibited-explaiend-Nicholas/dp/1140996940>, accessed 1 December 2024.

the United States. From the beginning, Henry L. Snyder explains, the 18th STC project was intended to use MAchine-Readable Cataloguing files, or MARC records, because 'The enormous expansion of printing in the eighteenth century seemed to obviate the method employed for the manual compilations that preceded it' (2003a, 105). These 'manual compilations' include the Short Title Catalogue (STC), which covers 1475-1640 and is a compilation by many hands including Alfred W. Pollard, Gilbert R. Redgrave, William A. Jackson, Frederic S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer. The other is the Wing Short Title Catalogue, covering 1641-1700 and short-handed as 'Wing' for its author, Donald Wing. The STC and Wing set the standard for bibliographical work in England, but their origins as manually compiled print volumes meant that they could not be direct templates for the work of the 18th STC.

The 18th STC embraced new technologies, but this required significant financial investment from the U.S. and U.K. governments – in the neighbourhood of $30 million, according to Snyder (2003a). It is unlikely such an investment would be made now, which speaks to both the accomplishments of the project and how difficult it would be to make large-scale changes to nearly 500,000 records. Eventually the 18th STC became the English Short Title Catalogue as it incorporated the STC, Wing, and data from other major catalogues like that of the American Antiquarian Society. The ESTC was available first through the Research Libraries Group RLIN system and the British Library's BLAISE system. Users were able to purchase CD-ROMs in the 1990s before it migrated online in 2006, where it has continued as an open-access resource maintained largely through the British Library and the University of California at Riverside's small editorial team at the Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research (Gadd 2009, 684). Thousands of libraries contribute to the catalogue to expand its listed holdings. Now that the database can be hyperlinked to other resources, the ESTC directs users to ProQuest and Gale databases, Hathi Trust, and Google Books where digital surrogates are available.

The ESTC's data structures have been a constant negotiation between different national standards, existing research networks, and legacy projects that were retrofitted into its information architecture. At the heart of the database are MARC records, which required standardization between the U.K. and U.S. to allow libraries in both countries to contribute. MARC is the pioneering work of Henriette D. Avram at the Library of Congress, and it has three separate components: 'the *structure,* or "empty container," the *content designators* (tags, indicators, and subfield codes) used to explicitly identify or to additionally characterize the data elements, and the *content*, the data itself (author's names, titles, etc.)' (1975, 10). The goal of MARC, according to Stephen H. Gregg, was 'not only about designing a record to be parsed by a computer; it also set the standard for bibliographical records that libraries across the world would follow' (2020, 8). Avram's dream, which has become a reality, was that MARC records would decrease the cost of cataloguing by allowing for copy cataloguing rather than original cataloguing where possible. That is, if the Library of Congress created a MARC record for an object, a subscribing library could adapt that record for their similar object without cataloguing it from scratch. Copy cataloguing has become the norm even as libraries transition to BIBFRAME, which is marketed as more flexible than MARC, although may not be (see Edmunds 2023). By using MARC in the ESTC, the database has become the original cataloguing record against which others are copy catalogued, marking it as the authority in the field. However, it is worth noting that many records in the ESTC were copy catalogued from subscribing libraries like the Bodleian to begin with. Other data was pulled from diverse sources including card catalogues that had to be hand-keyed, requiring that British Library cataloguers learn how to type (Snyder 2003a, 122). The standards set by the MARC structure decided on in the 1970s and 1980s have been maintained: when new records were incorporated into the ESTC with data fields that did not

fit what was created, they were 'shorn'; record structures were imperfectly adapted in the 1990s to accommodate serials, which were initially left out (133). Texts deemed not applicable for the database were left out, which included genres like 'domestic papers' that tended to reflect women's writing, as Margaret J.M. Ezell (2007) has argued.

Reflecting back on their work at a 2003 conference, several of the ESTC's major stakeholders and advisers articulated their vision for what the project does and could be. G. Thomas Tanselle commented that 'the database that has emerged is by now so comprehensive that the work can be regarded as substantially complete' (2003, xi). Snyder confirms that, despite the fact the ESTC is a 'living, constantly growing and changing organism' (2003b, 21), the team was 'close to our goal of creating a union catalogue that includes all the known imprints of the English-speaking world to 1801' (2003a, 149). The use of 'union catalogue' is intentional; the design of the ESTC is to be a catalogue of catalogues, a record of other records. It was supposed to be the 'one-stop shop' for all bibliographical information, library holdings and digitizations of titles in English prior to 1801 (Crump 2003; Snyder 2003a). While the 2003 conference coincided with the last CD-ROM edition of the catalogue before it was moved online by the British Library, the editors were already imagining how HTML and hyperlinking could make their 'one-stop shop' a reality – the original, accurate, and comprehensive record against which all pre-1801 books would be copy catalogued.

The editors of and contributors to the ESTC – both named people, who are all men, and the many unnamed people who did the manual labour of typing and cataloguing and were mostly women – are right in celebrating its monumental achievements. Yet the idea that the ESTC is either 'comprehensive' or 'complete' is far from how it was perceived by users in the early 2000s or now. Stephen Karian comments that 'many errors and inconsistencies pervade the file' (2011, 286), and James E. May adds that 'Many, including the ESTC's editorial staff, seem not to realize the incompleteness of ESTC's records for even eighteenth-century imprints, the project's original focus' (2001, 288). Errors proliferate from the fallible hands that keyed data and omissions multiply from the ESTC's origins as three separate editorial projects, formats, and staffs (Gadd 2009, 684). Part of the reason for the divide between Karian and May's perceptions of the ESTC and Tanselle and Snyder's assessments of their work is a misunderstanding, on both sides, about what the ESTC is and does. As noted, it was designed as a 'comprehensive union catalogue', which Ian Gadd defines as 'a single catalogue that merges together the existing catalogue records of other libraries' (2009, 684). In practice, this means that the ESTC represents what is in contributing *libraries,* not the complete output of the period. The ESTC also notably excludes many handbills, broadsides, and other ephemera (Hume 2007; Suarez 2009). It may be that 'comprehensive' describes everything that is in a contributing library and correctly catalogued as from this period rather than everything that existed in the period itself, but in either case the ESTC is not actually comprehensive.

There is also debate about whether or not the name is descriptive of what the ESTC is. Hugh Amory quips that 'In many ways the ESTC resembles the Holy Roman Empire: it is neither English, Short-Title, nor a Catalogue, since the "cataloguing" is only a response shaped by the system at the user's request' (2001, 8). The catalogue has focused on titles printed in the U.S., U.K. and Ireland, which is far beyond England. The titles are not all in English, nor does the ESTC encompass the entirety of the Anglophone world. The 'short title' aspect was happily abandoned as digital space became cheaper and now cataloguing emphasizes full titles, although many truncations remain in the database.

What is particularly interesting for my quandary is whether or not the ESTC is a 'catalogue', given that it is used as the authority record for copy cataloguing in other libraries and

resources. Amory argues that a union catalogue is 'in contrast to a bibliography, which lays bare an unseen, inexplicit reality from documents as well as books' (*ibid*.). He sees the primary benefit of the ESTC is its role as an index 'whose accuracy and exhaustiveness depend on the illogical whims of language' (*ibid*.). Additionally, David Vander Meulen posits that the ESTC might be better described as a bibliography and its users as bibliographers 'for every search produces a list that represents a selection from infinite possibilities, some new imposition of order on the plenitude that is the ESTC database' (2003, 67). Stephen Tabor concurs with this assessment, not because of the querying aspect of the resource, but because 'its records describe groups of copies rather than specific copies' making it more akin to a bibliography (2007, 369). Expanding on this idea, Gregg examines Patrick Browne's *The Civil and Natural History of Jamaica* (1789) and notes the ESTC record (T89758) is a 'palimpsest of all the book copies consulted' rather than a description of a single artifact that exists. He concludes that 'no catalogue could possibly account for all the variations of all book copies held in the world' (2020, 30). All ESTC records are palimpsests to some degree, representations of omnibus descriptions that may or may not exist as copies.

In sum: when ESTC data is replicated on ECCO, it may or may not apply to the surrogate that viewers are encountering, as the digitized copy may have different bibliographical features than the description of many copies could account for. Gadd has a similar observation for Early English Books Online (EEBO), the ProQuest database that accounts for print output in England up to 1700 and similarly incorporates ESTC data to help users search for information:

> By bringing together the bibliographical record for an edition and (usually but not always) only a single witness of that edition, *EEBO* is obviously aiming to provide a useful scholarly mechanism in terms of searching but by doing so are implying – albeit not deliberately – that the record and the copy *are one and the same thing*. It would be better, perhaps, if *EEBO* represented itself as a library of copies, rather than a catalogue of "titles". (2009, 687)

EEBO has 'no formal mechanism for synchronising the data' between it and the ESTC, which has led to 'an increasing likelihood of significant discrepancy between the two resources' (686).

Within EEBO and ECCO, then, are several different versions of ESTC data, pulled at different points from the core database from palimpsestic concepts of books that may or may not exist and with limited if any mechanisms for synchronizing what is on each with the latest bibliographical information. This network does not function like a database system, as I erroneously assumed, which would allow one change in information to automatically populate across the entire ecosystem. Competing commercial companies, different systems and different timelines for creation has likely rendered this a financial impossibility if not a technological one.

It is debatable how much the average user of the ESTC, EEBO, or ECCO keeps the layered epistemologies of what they are viewing in mind as they interact with these platforms. The debate over what the ESTC 'is' is not simple semantics, but involves differing ideas and competing viewpoints about what data in the ESTC represents and how it should be used – often divided between the cataloguers and information architects who populate and maintain the data and scholars deeply engaged with its information structures from the perspective of a user. What users interact with online has the feel of a unified resource, and now that the ESTC has been online for 17 years and ECCO for 20 years, there is an entire generation of scholars for whom the above history is learned rather than a lived experience as it was for scholars who experienced the growing pains and powers of the digital turn in Early Modern book cultures firsthand.

Although the ESTC has grown beyond a small number of cataloguers and editors to thousands of contributing libraries, its perception has remained that of a highly controlled and

verified union catalogue. Whether or not it is an authority record, it is used as one similarly to the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) for biographical subjects. ESTC and VIAF records are the default, but it is much harder to create or change a VIAF record than an ESTC record. VIAF records must be changed by Name Authority Cooperative Program-certified librarians, and the information must meet rigorous standards to be included. In contrast, an ESTC record can be altered by a quick error report, without the editor completing independent research. Yet ESTC records function as bibliographical authorities, and accordingly they legitimize information beyond what a single catalogue, union or otherwise, could have ever hoped to do.

If we return to Richard and Rebecca Burleigh, we can see this distinction in concrete terms. A cataloguer introduced Richard Burleigh into the ESTC without any of the requirements that would have been asked of someone creating a VIAF record, and accordingly Richard has populated all the places where ESTC data has been replicated. However, when the database was updated to reflect Rebecca rather than Richard, other entities that use the 'authority' of an ESTC record through transcription rather than linking back to the record were not also updated. Worse, there is seemingly no mechanism for doing so. At what point, then, is the fictional Richard more 'real' than the empirical reality that Rebecca Burleigh existed and by all accounts sold this book? Tabor argues that the tension between the 'fluidity of content' (2007, 367) in the ESTC and its 'status as an authoritative resource' is precisely what is at stake when we consider the repetition of errors. He expands, 'Transcription errors acquire the weight of authority when the records in which they occur accumulate multiple verified matches … The same human qualities that give rise to transcription errors by cataloguers allow their persistence through numerous proofreadings by matchers' (372).

The 'weight of authority' is both bibliographical and psychological. 'Truth' is a subjective human perception, and repetition is a powerful mechanism for its creation. Psychologists have established a link between repetition of information and the likelihood of the hearer believing that information is true, which has been called the illusory truth effect. Put another way, 'if people think they have heard something before, they will be more likely to believe it' because we correlate familiarity with validity (Arkes, Hackett and Boehm 1989, 82). Dozens of studies have expanded on and nuanced how this phenomenon occurs in terms of facts and beliefs, ranging from politics to perceptions of trust in medical practitioners. Jessica Udry and Sarah J. Barber summarize that 'this repetition-based increase in belief occurs even when people know the repeated information is factually incorrect … or comes from unreliable sources' (2023, 1) and that the effect works even through 'paraphrases, or non-verbatim repetitions' (11).

Traveling ESTC data has created discrete repetitions that are not perceived by all users as interactions with the *same* information, but interactions with *repeated* information. The average user of the ESTC or ECCO, including students and scholars, are likely not aware of the full extent of the ecosystem of Gale's products and its relationship with ProQuest, nor of how library information structures work and what happens behind the scenes to enable an ECCO holding to appear on WorldCat with an OCLC number. Literary and historical students are not taught about copy cataloguing nor the financial constraints on original cataloguing for even well-funded libraries like the Houghton at Harvard. Therefore, when users encounter Richard Burleigh on the ESTC, ECCO, WorldCat, their library catalogue and Amazon, there is a good chance they might understand these as discrete interactions with a repeated fact, feeding into the illusory truth effect. This will be especially true for students who are taught in information literacy and research courses to look for reliable academic sources, most of which these would be. This is amplified further when we consider the high likelihood that such information would be referenced in citations for publications, creating more opportunities for the information

to be repeated and therefore verified as 'true'. The editorial expansion, then, of 'R. Burleigh' to 'R[ichard]' rather than 'R[ebecca]' has impact far beyond users looking up the item in the ESTC, and it verifies Richard as 'real' with far more strength than a correction that stays in its discrete space on the ESTC, a lone note of feminized dissonance.

It is not a coincidence that my example involves the elision of a woman's labour, and the impacts of bibliographic sexism on the creation of the ESTC, ECCO, and EEBO need far greater scrutiny than they have been given by the scholars who have discussed the limits of these resources in other terms. As I have worked with ESTC data in my research on women publishers, I have encountered at least a dozen of these errors and assumptions, and the team members that I work with at the Women's Print History Project (WPHP)[5] each has their own examples of similar moments. The WPHP references the ESTC, but it requires original cataloguing rather than copy cataloguing. This is a time-intensive process, but re-cataloguing digital surrogates and printed objects with ties to women's labour has yielded far more usable and reliable information than working with the ESTC alone, because doing so disrupts repetition as authorization. We can see an example of this disruption in ESTC record T19848, where an unknown editor put '[sic]' next to the 'K' in 'K. Sanger' to indicate it was a typo.[6] This may be because the previous edition of this book, *Calypso and Telemachus* by John Hughes, was printed by Egbert Sanger. However, the initial actually refers to Katherine Sanger, Egbert's wife who is clearly named in his will. Given that Egbert was not living when *Calypso and Telemachus* was published in 1717, the '[sic]' seems like an assumption rather than a researched observation.

It is not only cataloguers but users who make these assumptions. John Horden's work on the Nutt family assumes that Elizabeth Nutt's work can be ascribed to her son, Edward. Horden argues that Edward was at the Royal Exchange as 'E. Nutt' from 1722-1745, adding: 'Foxon … apparently assumes each "E. Nutt" to be Elizabeth Nutt, but in a number of instances … it seems much more probable that Edward Nutt, whom Foxon does not notice, is indicated' (1988, 23). Horden gives no justification for this argument, which is in a footnote to the main article largely uninterested in Elizabeth or her daughters. These arguments are despite significant documentation of Elizabeth's work with her daughters in the Royal Exchange, as summarized by John D. Gordan: '[Elizabeth], in her own right a "mercury" and retailer of books and newspapers near the Royal Exchange, carried on the law-printing business under the patent until her retirement about 1740' (2014, 258). Elizabeth was deposed a number of times due to the nature of the pamphlets she was selling, adding further evidence to imprint information that places her, not Edward, at the Royal Exchange (Hunt 2008). While family businesses were common, it seems clear from the examples of 'Mrs. Nutt' and 'Eliz. Nutt' in imprints, easily accessible by searching the ESTC, that while the Nutt children likely worked with their mother, she was the business' proprietor as well as the 'E. Nutt' who continued to print under her late husband John's law patent with her son, Richard. While Horden did not have the benefit of a full-text-searchable ESTC for his article in the late 1980s, he did have Wing and the 18th STC to reference.

As these examples suggest, publishers' initials on imprints are assumed to be male even for the most well documented of women like Elizabeth Nutt. As with Rebecca Burleigh, men are even invented to explain away a woman's clearly documented labour. Casual sexism in book trade scholarship or literary history more broadly is not a new revelation for those of us who have encountered the transformative recuperative work of Margaret J.M. Ezell (1987), Paula

[5] <https://womensprinthistoryproject.com/>, accessed 1 December 2024.
[6] As with the error on Rebecca Burleigh, I have since gotten this mistake fixed in the ESTC.

McDowell (1998), Lisa Maruca (2007), Helen Smith (2012), Maureen Bell (2014), Cait Coker (2018), Alan Farmer (2020), and Georgina Wilson (2022), nor those of us who have received antagonistic responses to our feminist scholarship in reader reports and at conferences. However, the impact of this sexism, casual and deliberate, is magnified by the structures that digital bibliography has built. It has been much of my work in the last few years to painstakingly look under every metaphorical stone to prove that fictitious men do not exist, spending hours correcting an assumption that likely took seconds to make and now carries the authority of the ESTC, ECCO, and WorldCat with it. Some of these cases are so glaringly frustrating that one wants to require every book history scholar to read Joanna Russ' *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (1983).

This is not simple personal irritation, however. It is another instance of the illusory truth effect that has rendered Richard Burleigh more 'real' than Rebecca Burleigh – many resources on the British book trades in particular and book history more broadly only offer examples of male tradespeople and define book trade production according to men's experiences, as I have enumerated elsewhere (Ozment 2020). Assumptions of masculinity are enmeshed in our key resources and narratives. It can hardly be the fault of cataloguers who are working with dominant narratives in their research that they repeat what book trade scholars continually repeat themselves. Nor it is the fault of subscribing libraries whose cut budgets have meant we must rely on copy cataloguing despite the fact that 'touch-it-once cataloguing can be problematic, since many of the characteristics of rare materials are unique to the holding repository, and the awareness of certain characteristics may not even exist when the initial cataloguing is done' (Ascher 2009, 99). At some point, the 'truth' that ' "the little world of the book" has been a male domain' (Howsam 1998, 1) became such through repetition, rather than through documentary evidence, and despite the discursive histories feminist scholars have written to the contrary.

Justified and nuanced critiques have been levelled at the ESTC, ECCO, and EEBO and the ways that they have shaped our perceptions of print production in the hand-press period, even as they have enabled significant scholarship without the burden of travel.[7] Gadd cautions that 'The canny user of *EEBO* needs to be conscious of the resource's history, the limitations of its coverage, the origins of its bibliographical data, and the nature of the relationship between its bibliographical catalogue and the individual copies available' (2009, 687), and Cassidy Holahan's analysis 'raises questions about the degree to which archives shape the research that comes out of them' (2021, 804). I will add that it is also necessary that we consider the political implications of how the ESTC, ECCO, and EEBO have shaped the research we complete on the Early Modern period's printed objects, especially as it relates to the ways the archives capture the history of women and their textual labour. The ESTC is not alone in defaulting to masculinity. The original selection criteria for ECCO includes more comprehensive digitization for 'widely recognized authors', all of whom are white men ('About This Archive' n.d.). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the list of the top fifty most printed authors in ECCO are overwhelmingly male, with Hannah More and the omnibus 'A Lady' as the lone feminized names. The former feeds into the latter – if only men were deemed 'recognized' and therefore were digitized at a greater rate than women, of course the most digitized pieces in ECCO will be men. If we consider Gadd and Holahan's cautions in light of gendered disparities in the ESTC and ECCO, it is clear that multiple authorizing functions are in play to convince a user, canny or not, that books and their makers are the province of men and male readers.

[7] The high cost of access to EEBO and ECCO is a different sort of burden, of course.

What, then, is the feminist bibliographer to do? If they write discursive histories about women in the trades, as McDowell, Smith, Farmer, and Maruca have done, the work is deemed niche and does not make it into mainstream scholarship. This information is unlikely, then, to be read by generalist cataloguers who might work with ESTC data but are not experts on the nuances of different books or publishers. If the bibliographer is able to get the error fixed in the ESTC through reporting, the digital bibliographic landscape does not allow for the free flow of information that would be ideal with linked data. The error remains. The ESTC's latent replication is a surprisingly less reliable system than the one that was used in the 1980s when British and American cataloguers sent physical tapes of their work across the Atlantic to synchronize the systems (Snyder 2003a). If the bibliographer builds a separate project as we have done with the WPHP, they are able to work with data in new ways without navigating the slow-moving behemoth of international library cataloguing systems, but the project will always be a separate node compared to the 'one-stop shop' that is the ESTC and, more realistically given the changing landscape since 2003, EEBO and ECCO.

When the ESTC began in 1978, its architects and editors imagined a world in which they could make cataloguing easier for libraries by sharing information, and consequently empower scholars to do more powerful work than they ever could before. Now that the ESTC is nearing its fiftieth birthday, perhaps it is time for another reconsideration of not just what the database is or is not, but how it can be used as a tool for the visibility rather than invisibility of a multiplicity of perspectives, rather than the veneer of objectivity in a union catalogue. Karian advocates that a relational database is one way of accomplishing this vision, and this is what the WPHP team is exploring on a much smaller scale (2011, 294). To do this on a large scale would require Gale, ProQuest, and the ESTC to have open dialogue of data in complementary if not similar coding languages, not something that seems possible to imagine with the high cost of paywalls on one side and decreasing funding for cultural heritage projects on the other.

Ultimately, however, we may need to work beyond these systems as well as within them. Digital databases and other forms of data that do not inherently interrogate sexist epistemologies – including how sexism works in tandem with other interlocking systems of power such as racism, cisheteronormativity, and ableism – will not address the core issue. To address it, digital British print history can learn from other fields in digital humanities that have analysed how power structures work within data models. In particular, the work of Safiya Umoja Noble (2018), Roopika Risam (2019), Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein (2020), and Derrick R. Spires (2022), are key. As more feminist, postcolonial, queer, and anti-racist projects complete original cataloguing and supplemental metadata, we may be able to create a network of linked resources that are not bound by geographical locations or nationalist traditions and instead are linked by their commitment to doing better with the tools we have alongside sound bibliographical approaches. If these motivations were an essential aspect of rather than an addition to bibliographical training, over time we could see slow changes that disrupt illusory truths and instead move us closer to the empirical reality that women worked in and around the British book trades and beyond.

Coda

The digital ecosystem that is the subject of this piece experienced further stress and fragmentation when the British Library was the victim of a cyberattack in October 2023 that, among other things, took down the ESTC from its home. As of October 2024, there is no timeline for its rehabilitation. An incomplete but useful stopover has been established at the Print &

Probability website (Vogler 2024). The original cost of building the ESTC ($30 million) would never be invested today, much less at the higher cost of labour in the 2020s, by U.S. and U.K. governments who chronically underfund systems of higher education and cultural heritage centres. If this data were lost, would it be recoverable?

The ESTC has been replicated enough times that its disappearing entirely is unlikely. But the stability of this data is now in question beyond my previous concerns, and instability is an issue for a resource used as an authority file. The ESTC is accessible only in a copied format with no 'copy-text' to compare it to. Without the authority of the ESTC to compare to other information, even more emphasis is placed on EEBO and ECCO and their matching of digital surrogates with bibliographic information. We have shifted the maintenance of bibliographic authority from cultural heritage institutions to commercial enterprises with high buy-in prices and little accountability from academic institutions or scholars except with their pocketbooks. While the work of a good-hearted cataloguer could resuscitate Rebecca Burleigh, no access point exists for the public with Gale and ProQuest.

The long-term impacts of the attack are still unknown, but the immediate effect is that scholar-produced data has been removed from scholars' control until a new access point is built. Neither Gale or ProQuest has announced financial or material support for the British Library, even though they use the Library's resources in their commercial products. This one-way relationship is increasingly extractive, and for my concerns, not conducive to the necessary large-scale changes that need to happen if we are to get a more complete picture of pre-1800 print in England.

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Part Two

Case Studies

Origins

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Confusion and Concern The Troubled Histories of Named Collections Within the British Library

Alice Wickenden
University of Cambridge (<aw620@cam.ac.uk>)

Abstract

The article discusses the relationship between slavery and cultural history within institutional rare book collections. Beginning with an overview of the media controversy which was caused by the British Library's publication of an internal document that noted Ted Hughes' slave-owning ancestors, it argues that the current approach to these questions which have been developed in museum studies are not sufficient when it comes to thinking about libraries. Taking the two examples of Hans Sloane and John Bellingham-Inglis from the British Library as primary case studies, it explores the institutional framing of their ownership of enslaved people. It then moves to an examination of some of the material impacts of provenance, particularly in Bellingham-Inglis' physical dismantling of his books. By drawing on the twin ideas of 'bookwork' (Whitney Trettien) and 'griefwork' (Jennifer Scuro), the article argues that the future of provenance studies is an affective one. It argues for the benefits of a provenance research which actively considers ethical and political questions to be material forces with impact on our work.

Keywords: Cultural History, Institutional History, Libraries, Provenance, Slavery

1. *Introduction*

On the 21st November 2020, *The Telegraph* ran an article headlined 'British Library adds poet Ted Hughes to slavery dossier for ancestor born 300 years earlier' (Simpson 2020). 'In a bid to become actively anti-racist', it explained, 'the Library is documenting connections – even if tenuous – to slavery and colonialism'. Hughes was included in this document because of his distant ancestor Nicholas Ferrar (1593-1637), a writer, politician, and founder of the Little Gidding religious community, who once served as deputy of the London Virginia Company.

The implication for the *Telegraph*'s reader was that Hughes' connection to slavery was so tenuous that his inclusion in such a 'dossier' could be nothing but risible, especially since there was no direct financial relationship between the two – he had not, for example, inherited Ferrar's estate. To make this point clearer, another article followed the next day, in which a columnist pondered that it was 'hard to see what clarity is offered by [The British Library's] naming of the poet' (Shilling 2020). Within a week, with the story having been picked up by other outlets including *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*, the British Library had publicly apologised to Ted Hughes' widow and quietly removed the offending document from its website.[1]

The document in question was a shared Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which recorded preliminary provenance research compiled by librarians and curators within the British Library, primarily undertaken over the course of the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. Rather than a piece of finished research or institutional policy, the aim had been to identify which of the named provenances behind the Library's collections might merit further investigation as part of the proposed 'Action Plan for Race Equality', announced following the Black Lives Matter protests in June 2020. A (pre-existing) spreadsheet of all named donations in the collections was circulated amongst interested staff and any links to slavery or colonial violence which could be found were noted down. As a result, this was an exploratory and tentative document, one which made no claims of being either comprehensive or advisory, but which simply offered a space to begin getting to grasps with what the Library owned and where it had all come from. Although it was made publicly available, it was presented as work-in-progress reference material and found on a website page dedicated to providing tips on provenance research to users.

The outraged media response to the inclusion of Hughes in the list seemed to arise from a combination of factors. It undoubtedly stemmed in part from the reactionary, right-wing view that questions about colonial legacies have no place in national heritage institutions in the first place: buzzwords such as 'cancel culture' and 'anti-woke press' peppered the articles, as did claims of 'over-zealousness' (Bate quoted in Flood 2020). The conversation also drew on language and ideas arising from wider public debates about the decolonisation of the heritage sector and about the place of named figures in institutional contexts (and the financial endowments or gifts associated with them) more generally. Jokes about the British Museum having stolen their antiquities are common enough online that they now merit an entry on '<knowyourmeme.com>', whilst books including *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (Hicks 2020) and *The Whole Picture: The Colonial Story of the Art in Our Museums & Why We Need to Talk About It* (Procter 2020) have found a popular market beyond academics.[2] The heated controversies over the treatment of slave trader Edward Colston's statue in Bristol, which was torn down and thrown into the canal, and the global campaign 'Rhodes Must Fall', which saw calls for the University of Cape Town and others, including Oriel College Oxford, to remove their statues of 'committed British colonialist' Cecil Rhodes (as he was described in the explanatory plaque erected by the College in 2021), and to rename scholarships and buildings dedicated to him, are further examples of recent campaigns concerned specifically with the cultural legacy of colonial money.[3] Looking elsewhere, the recent renaming of

[1] For other articles on the topic, see Flood 2020; Nikolic 2020; Malvern and Kolirin 2020.

[2] The website <knowyourmeme.com> is a repository and database of memes. The entry for 'British Museum Stealing Things' explains that 'While the topic has been an ongoing controversy for years, memes referencing the U.K. stealing artifacts and putting them on display in museums began appearing online during the late 2010s' (*Know Your Meme*, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/british-museum-stealing-things>, accessed 1 December 2024).

[3] For a reproduction of the Oriel College plaque, see Grierson and Gayle 2021.

university buildings associated with the Sackler name following lawsuits investigating Purdue Pharma's involvement in the US opioid crisis suggest that this is an issue which comes in many guises.[4] Beneath the individual examples lies a more philosophical question. What does it mean to name *something* after *somebody* – and when can we change our minds?

When it comes to the heritage sector in particular, the question of where a library fits into this wider discussion is a confused one. I think this is, at least in part, because of the specific materiality of the book. In museum studies, the question of how we 'ought' to respond to provenance so far has tended to circle around the ethics of the repatriation of looted or otherwise disputed objects to their countries of origin. This often takes the form of a plea to responsibility: Dan Hicks writes that 'where an object has been looted, and a community asks for it back, western museums have a duty actively to make a return, both of the physical object and additionally of other sharing of knowledge, resource, connections and platform' (2020, 239). This prioritisation, it is worth noting, is not always straightforwardly accepted. Neil Asher Silberman has recently argued that 'cultural artifacts at the center of repatriation disputes have become dangerously fetishised' in a process he describes as 'the magical materialism of exclusive possession' (2017, 114). There is, he is clear, room for both sides of the argument: physical possession of the thing itself does still matter, although in many ways it matters less the more advanced that technologies of reproduction become – many museums are now dedicating significant resources to the 3D-mapping and digital reproduction of items in their collection – but by focussing on repatriation alone, we risk indulging in a sort of 'magical thinking that confuses exclusive physical possession with the right to determine significance' (*ibid.*).[5]

This is not a conversation which has been had about collections of rare printed books. Such books usually *cannot* be repatriated. They might be 'from' a country in the sense of having been printed somewhere but they are designed to be portable, to cross boundaries. They are also, with certain provisos in place, repeatable things. A very broad statement, then, might be the fact that – since we are working with books rather than artefacts – what a named provenance means within a library inherently looks different to provenance in a museum. By treating them as if they are the same, we have overlooked the sorts of discipline-specific questions that might be productively asked when it comes to thinking about the study of rare books.

Commentators on the Hughes scandal repeatedly aligned the British Library's comments with a form of literary criticism, asking 'why on earth would you judge the quality of an artist's work on the basis of distant ancestors?' (Bate quoted in Nikolic 2020). The inclusion of the former Poet Laureate seemed to offer journalists an easy way into the 'culture war' provenance debate by way of the assumption that to comment on the person is to comment on their work. But in this situation, this was not the case. The British Library's spreadsheet was related to Hughes' *collections*, which are made up of 'over 465 files, volumes and oversize items' and include 'literary drafts, correspondence, notebooks, professional papers and diaries'.[6] It was never a question of poetical worth that was at stake, but rather what it means to have, and use, a named special collection.

[4] For example, in May 2023 the University of Oxford announced that it would rename its Sackler Library as well as galleries and staff posts at the Ashmolean Museum. In doing so, it followed the lead of other institutions including the British Museum, the Tate Galleries, the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[5] For more on the relationship between 3D scanning and museum repatriation, see Samaroudi and Echavarria 2019.

[6] *British Library Collection Guide*, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/ted-hughes-collection>, currently unavailable due to ongoing cyberattack.

For all that book history as a discipline has given us the skillset and vocabulary with which to think about the individual book as an object, the ways in which that object has been recorded, catalogued and described so that a researcher can find it remain poorly understood and (for book historians) under-theorised, often invisible, forces. The response to Hughes' items revealed that there are immense institutional, personal, and political pressures shaping the presentation of material, as well as driving the research which gets done and the research which doesn't. It is common to find acknowledgements in scholarship which give thanks to the librarians and archivists who helped facilitate the research, often mentioning them by name as well as by institution. We recognise the labour gratefully but we do not often ask about the decisions that comprise it. By 'we', both here and throughout the article, I refer to the collective work of academics who consider themselves book historians and who work in related disciplines, especially the humanities. Given my interest in the way that the legacy of slavery in particular has materially affected the items which enable such work, it is worth acknowledging here that my 'we' is also a white, Western one. This is not a commentary on anyone in particular but a reflection of the way the field has developed: 'the imperial, white, cis-male, heteronormative, neurotypical bibliographic tradition' (Maruca and Ozment 2022, 232). If we want a 'liberation bibliography' of the sort championed by Derrick R. Spires as 'as a conscious and intentional practice of identifying and repairing the harms of systemic racism, settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and other oppressive structures in and through bibliography and bibliographical study' (2022, 5), this is the 'we' that we must work with and as part of, regardless of our own personal positions within such structures.

The present article, then, is indebted to the work done in library and information science by librarians and special collections researchers across national institutions, university research collections, and local libraries, as these are people who have been thinking about the issues caused by individual provenances for many years. Rather than claiming this work for my own, I seek to ask what book history as a discipline has to offer this ongoing conversation – and what it can learn from it. It seems to me not only that it is important to know where something came from, but that thinking about provenance can also advance discipline-specific discussions about the material book. In beginning to do this, I will provide a brief overview of some of the named collections of the British Library from its founding to more contemporary acquisitions, before proposing a way of reading these named collections theoretically. The British Library has been chosen only as a case study: the questions raised here are not unique to that institution. Nor is the problem of controversial heritages limited to colonial legacies more generally. Instead, I hope that by asking these specific questions, I will reveal the broader stakes lying behind what it means to do provenance research and how we might move forward with it.

2. *Founding Collections*

The British Museum was founded in 1753 following the death of Sir Hans Sloane, whose collections were then sold to the nation for the sum of £20,000. The collections, which had been valued by some at four times that amount, included roughly 45,000 printed books as well as 3,516 manuscripts, 347 albums of drawings and illuminated books, antiquities, geological specimens, insects, and more (see Delbourgo 2017, 260). It is therefore often considered to be the founding collection not only of the British Museum, but also the British Library and in part the Natural History Museum, which was legally established as a separate entity in 1963. The British Library Act, which officially separated the British Library from the British Museum (although the two remained within one building until 1997, when the Library moved to its current location) was passed in 1972.

Although it was his death which precipitated the Museum's creation, Sloane's was not the only named collection when it came to the founding of what was known as the British Museum Library. At the insistence of Arthur Onslow, speaker of the House of Commons, Sloane's library was combined with those of Sir Robert Cotton and Robert Harley (see de Beer 1953, 150). The Cotton library had become Britain's first nationally owned manuscript collection in 1701 and contained important items such as the only known manuscripts of *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. However, as William Burgess describes, the collection entered the British Museum in a sorry state, having been poorly managed and, in October 1731, severely damaged in a fire. The sense of failing not only the nation but also Cotton himself was prevalent in responses to the disaster: in what Burgess describes as 'the imaginative power of breaking … a covenant of preservation' (2022, 304), the keeper of the collection, Richard Bentley, viewed the fire as 'the Nemesis of Cotton's ghost to punish the neglect in taking due care of his noble gifts to the public' (Mead quoted *ibid.*).

The Museum's council also felt the ghostly weight of needing to do justice to the men upon whose collections they were building. Their names were written into the very act of institutional creation; the British Museum Act of 1753 was 'for the purchase of the Museum, or Collection of Sir Hans Sloane, and of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts; and for providing one General Repository for the better Reception and more convenient Use of the said Collections, and of the Cottonian Library, and of the Additions thereto'.[7] In practice, this was easier said than done. The council aimed to keep each collector's items together (as had been specified in Sloane's will), but this proved difficult to reconcile with the practical need of creating separate departments. As a compromise, it was initially decided that the library collections would be ordered by provenance before being sub-ordered by subject and size. Therefore, Sloane's printed books would occupy the rooms labelled A, B, C, E, F and G (as seen on Figure 1); his manuscripts would be in room H; on the floor above, the Harley Manuscripts would be found in rooms E, F, G, and M; the books of Major Arthur Edward, who had bequeathed his library to the Trustees of the Cotton collection, would be found in room L and, finally, Robert Cotton's manuscripts would be placed in room K. Within these rooms the Museum trustees ultimately had the organisational power: the objects were not necessarily to be ordered as they had been in their initial collections. As P.R. Harris puts it, '[on 13 December 1755] it was decided [by the committee] that as the Sloane books were in no special order, they should be arranged in subject order when they were moved … even though this meant altering the catalogue references and the pressmarks on the books' (1998, 3). There was a desire to acknowledge and commemorate the men behind the museum, but this was an impulse at odds with the organisational principles being imposed. Indebted to its various founders and tied to a room layout that prioritised provenance whilst at the same time struggling to implement an overall order, the early structure of the British Museum Library was torn between two fundamentally different demands: private systems of knowledge were being subjugated into a public, institutional system.

[7] *Establishing the British Museum* (26 George 2 c. 22), <https://statutes.org.uk/site/the-statutes/eighteenth-century/1753-26-george-2-c-22-establishing-the-british-museum/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

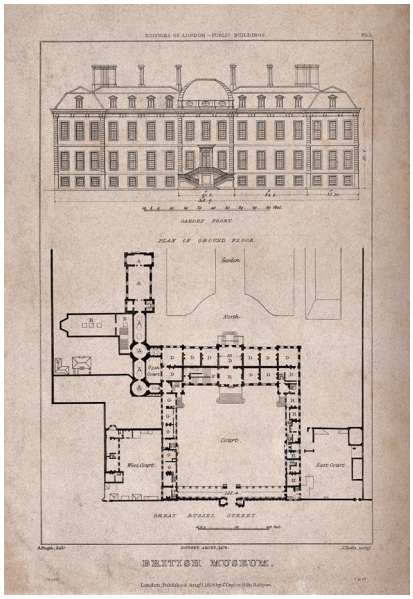

Figure 1 – *The British Museum at Montague House: A Layout Plan, and Elevation of the Garden Façade*, Engraving by J. Roffe after A. Pugin 1823 (Wellcome Collection). License Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 4.0

This organisational structure, of course, has changed drastically over the years. These changes were partly due to the addition of other early large donations such as the King's Library of King George III, bequeathed by George V – which is still largely kept together, visible in the enticing glass tower that greets visitors to the building at St Pancras – and the libraries of John Evelyn (1620-1706) and Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820). As its holdings grew, the Library also faced challenges of rearranging and maintaining its material in order to make it useful. Combined with a need for funding, this resulted in a period of deaccessioning in which several duplicate sales were held. As T.A. Birrell explains,

> In welding together the early collections into a single unit, a considerable body of duplicates had appeared, which were assembled in a separate 'Duplicates Room'. An Act of Parliament was passed enabling the trustees to sell off such duplicates; Samuel Baker of Baker and Leigh (later to be Sothebys) was called in to prepare a catalogue; and a first auction was held in April 1769, to be followed by seven more till July 1832. As the object was to raise money, the tendency was to put the best copy into the sale. (2009, 244)

All these factors mean that even if one is explicitly searching for a named collection it can be hard to trace who once owned the item being looked at. Provenance research has historically tended to focus on this question, using physical traces in the items such as library stamps, printed and manuscript catalogues, sale catalogues, personal and institutional acquisition records, inscriptions, and other annotations in order to reconstruct collections and reidentify owners. As Kari Kraus puts it, these attributes can be understood as 'a form of metadata that is materially coextensive with the book itself' (2019, 163). This type of detailed physical provenance research has led to new understandings about historical book ownership, especially in the field of feminist bibliography: the 'Early Modern Female Book Ownership' project is one such example.[8]

[8] The project can be found at *Early Modern Female Book Ownership*, <https://earlymodernfemalebookownership.wordpress.com>, accessed 1 December 2024.

Institutional metadata, such as shelf marks, occasionally also offer some help in identifying provenance: in the British Library some shelf marks are still named. Evelyn's books can be found under Eve.a.1. - Eve.c.29. and Thomas Grenville's (1755-1846) under G.1. - G.20240. Less intuitively, runs of numbers can also sometimes help to indicate their former owners. For example, books from 1.a.1. - 304.k.23. are part of the King's Library whilst those between 671.a.1. - 688. tend to be from the collections of Clayton M Cracherode (1730-1799). There are, however, some exceptions to these rules, adding another difficulty in undertaking provenance research. Parts of the King's Library were destroyed by a bomb on 23 September 1940. These volumes have slowly been replaced, in some cases with duplicate books from other parts of the Library. It is not clear how many items this applies to: one survey gives the figure as 93 works, or 111 bound parts, another 265. For now, the 'two sets of figures are in essence irreconcilable at this stage' (Edwards 2013, 15). Although these transferred books have been identified with a unique label inside, a researcher going by the shelf marks and location alone would (wrongly) identify them as unique copies once owned by King George III.

Those of Sloane's books which remain in the British Library are dispersed throughout the catalogue. There are some runs of shelf marks around which they cluster, but these tend to be due to the subjects that he was most interested in rather than by any other design. However, the significant amount of material we have in which Sloane detailed his library acquisitions and ordering systems has enabled the digital reconstruction of his library and the creation of a separate catalogue.[9] The British Library guide to provenance webpage explains that

> Many Western printed books acquired at the foundation of the British Museum (and therefore published before 1753) have their origins in the collections of Sir Hans Sloane. Although these are now dispersed across the British Library and indeed other institutions, a quick check of the online database of Sloane Printed Books will confirm if a researcher has already examined your copy and found evidence to support a Sloane provenance.[10]

This information has been fed back into the main catalogue, meaning that a user looking up a book may find – without actively searching for that information – that the copy they are consulting has been identified as part of Sloane's collection. If interested, they can then look to see how such an identification has been made (some of Sloane's books are physically stamped or inscribed, whereas the identification of others requires longer processes of deduction). Sloane's presence in the British Library metadata is undeniable. So, too, is his physical presence: a bust sits within the entrance hall alongside busts of the other founding collectors, Cotton, Banks, and Grenville. His name may be absent from the shelf marks, but it is traceable physically, digitally, and in the legal documentation at the heart of the institution's creation. It has also occupied a prominent space in discussions of colonial heritage. Sloane's collection was funded from money that came in large part from his direct involvement in the slave trade.

The desire to acknowledge this history has led to several public statements and actions from both the British Museum and British Library. A blog post on the latter's website includes the reinterpreted material that makes up the bust's new label, which was changed in 2020. It takes the form of two paragraphs. The first gives biographical information about Sloane:

> Sloane travelled to Jamaica in 1687 as physician to the island's British colonial Governor and worked as a doctor on slave plantations. Using the expertise of enslaved West Africans and English planters, he collected

[9] For more on the Sloane Printed Books Project see Walker 2022 and Wickenden 2020.

[10] *British Library Guide to Provenance Research,* <https://www.bl.uk/help/guide-to-provenance-research-with-printed-books>, currently unavailable due to ongoing cyberattack.

hundreds of plant and animal specimens. When he returned to London, Sloane married Elizabeth Langley Rose, an heiress to sugar plantations in Jamaica. He was a shareholder in the Royal African and South Sea Companies, both of which profited from the slave trade. His medical income, his investments, and the profits from the forced labour on his wife's plantations enabled Sloane to build such a large collection. (Malini 2020)[11]

The second offers a more emotive reflection on such facts:

It is too often said that the transatlantic slave trade is long behind us. An untold number of our ancestors' lives were completely ruined by men like Hans Sloane. Every one of their waking moments filled with violent abuse, torture, unpaid manual labour, rape and treatment as if less than human. That pain and trauma is still with us as we fight to make a world that is truly anti-racist. We cannot allow the glorification of enslavers and their legacies to continue through succeeding generations. We must remember these men for who they truly were, for their crimes as well as their accomplishments. (*Ibid.*)

Only the latter label is accredited – it was written by Reuben Massiah, the Learning Facilitator at the British Library and Chantelle Richardson, Chevening British Library Fellow in 2019-2020 and Librarian at the National Library of Jamaica. The decision to include these details and *not* the name of the person who wrote the first paragraph suggests that the two pieces of writing are not equally weighted: responses to slavery and the desire to contextualise it come from a subjective place of personal or individual impulse, whereas biographical fact is undeniable and objective. At the same time as this 'reinterpretation' was produced, the British Museum similarly changed their framing of Sloane. Rather than adding a label, the Museum's response was to move his bust from its pedestal into a new case within the Enlightenment Gallery with the aim of contextualising his collecting activities in light of his financial background in slavery.

Each of these institution's decisions to recontextualise the busts led to an array of public commentary, both positive and negative. *The Daily Mail* wrote that 'Slavery is not what defines Britain, just as it is not what defined Hans Sloane' (Tingle and Vine 2020); *The Guardian* responded with a column arguing that

no matter how much we are asked to look only at his talents as a physician and his passion for botany and collecting, the fact remains that much of the money Sloane used to purchase the objects that today lie within our national museum came from the murderous exploitation of African men, women and children. (Olusoga 2020)

For better or for worse, it became clear that the question of how to engage with the colonial histories behind institutions had moved from internal debates between GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) sector practitioners into the wider public consciousness – and that it was a debate which threatened to go round in circles.

In *Cruising the Library*, Melissa Adler argues that 'by reading library classifications against the grain, we find spaces where abstractions of state discourse mask state violence' (2017, 12). That is to say that 'the structures underlying the classification and naming systems in libraries were born out of and reiterate societal norms of a particular era' (22). Adler's work is specifically concerned with the historical presentation and classification of forms of desire – she traces the way in which the automation of cataloguing systems means that 'texts that were cataloged in the early part of the twentieth century retain formerly held attitudes that associated homosexuality

[11] <https://blogs.bl.uk/living-knowledge/2020/08/reopening-and-reinterpretation-our-front-hall-busts.html>, accessed 1 December 2024.

and bisexuality with perversion, but now in anachronistic terms' (29) – but her overall project of re-examining the powers behind public library categorisations also allows us to think about named rare book collections. What is the value of maintaining provenance information in a world in which doing so is considered commensurate with making an ethical judgement? Does using a book inherently necessitate engaging with its provenance? It is perfectly probable – and I would go so far as to say likely – that a researcher who has worked frequently with Western Heritage items from the sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries at the British Library has used something owned by Sloane. It is just as possible that they haven't realised it. Is that reader, in any real sense, engaging with the provenance history of that item at all? Is the research that such an encounter produces changed by the likelihood of that book's purchase by Sloane having been funded through the practice of slavery?

What is at stake here, I think, is a question which has been (and remains) an essential component of book history, which is infamously broad as a discipline. When we talk about provenance, we are by default talking about the value of the individual book rather than the text: a named owner is tied to the specific thing, the accessioned object. The fact of ownership forces us to consider the item as a uniquely material one. Otherwise unremarkable items can become valuable and desirable when tied to glamorous owners. In Sloane's case, the chances of a user consulting something from his collection is higher not just because of the vast amount of books he owned, but because of his tendency to collect ephemeral items that did not otherwise survive, meaning that in several cases his is the only copy in existence (see Mandelbrote 2009). This is a direct example of the choices of the collector directly affecting the ways in which we engage with the past and the research that can result.

The other issue at stake when asking whether or how we should ethically consider provenance is the place of emotion in book history scholarship. Where does *affect* belong? It might feel uncomfortable to put it in those terms, because slavery is such an obvious negative; ought we not be able to come up with a more rigorous theoretical argument for considering provenance that relies on facts, not feelings? Saying that we need to think about Sloane's deep legacy within the structure of the British Library because he enslaved people, and slavery was wrong, feels somehow unintellectual. It also feels dangerous: does making this argument not risk inadvertently proving correct those who would rather ignore the whole problem whilst insisting that calls to address slavery are simply representative of 'an intellectual fearfulness' (Tingle and Vine 2020)? But the question of libraries *is* an affective one just as the question of the study of the book is an affective one. In classrooms we (and I am guilty of this) wax lyrical about the features that cannot be reproduced – the smell, feel, sound of an old book – the joy of discovering marginal annotations and doodles, pressed flowers, moments where readers have decided they know better than the author. As readers and researchers we are drawn to books because they allow us to feel. Or, as Deborah Prosser puts it in an article on 'affect and deaccessioning' in university libraries, because 'there is an essential humanism to our relationship to books. They embody the thoughts of others, and the cycle of collections inevitably revolves around the most basic feelings of love and loss' (2020, 519). At the heart of most research is a desire to know, or to think, or to explore – but however it manifests, it is a desire nonetheless.

Could it be the case, then, that we flinch from the question of connecting Sloane's books directly to slavery because we do not want to lose them, or to feel bad about using them? After all, *they* did nothing wrong. Perhaps before moving forward to thinking about how book history can engage with this question theoretically it is necessary to think about what it means to love an institution like a library. Adler uses Jennifer Scuro's concept of 'griefwork' – the idea of a 'necessary labor that cannot be glossed over and gotten over' (2017, xii) – to understand her feelings about working in libraries. 'For me', Adler writes,

historical critical classification research is griefwork. It is an ongoing course of mourning the lives of people who have been silenced and denied access in the past, those whose lives were abstracted, cataloged, and classified; and for the continued marginalization of subjects. In a library classification, we are confronted with the knowledge that our profession has a history and a present that needs to be reckoned with … classifications don't just structure knowledge: they structure experience, encounters, and feelings, and they are structured by politics and people in positions of power. (2020, 551)

Expanding on this, I wish to claim that the process of recognising the legacy that slavery has had in contributing to and constructing our national institutions is also one of griefwork. It is unpleasant, and uncomfortable, and it is all the more so because it is to some extent endless: griefwork can never be completed. It is always ongoing.

3. *Material and Theoretical Legacies*

In the rest of this article, I want to think about how some of the techniques and methodological approaches which have been broadly associated with the discipline of 'book history' might enable us to move productively forward in carrying out this griefwork. It is clear that institutions including – but by no means limited to – the British Library are constrained: they may have the desire to address their pasts and to confront their colonial heritage, but they also need to function as working libraries, something that inherently involves maintaining a certain amount of respect for provenance. Public opinion puts added stress on what can realistically be achieved by librarians: as the Hughes example shows, the balance between what is considered acceptable and what will be deemed disrespectful is a difficult one to strike. Finally – as will become immediately clear to anyone who has raised these sorts of problems with a librarian – there are multiple other issues preventing an in-depth reckoning with provenance, issues which are not unique to the heritage sector. These are primarily financial: a lack of staffing, funding and time mean that curators and librarians simply cannot offer the sort of in-depth research into each item and every named former owner that they might like. To complain that there isn't enough information available is to overlook the very real material restrictions at hand. Cataloguing involves utilitarian prediction: what will be most helpful to the greatest number of scholars for me to give my limited time to? And how can I make sure that the user who will most benefit from this item is able to find it?

The consequences of these choices can be seen most clearly in the sorts of catalogue frameworks and internal languages that often initially baffle research students but which they quickly learn to navigate. Navigation, in this sense, involves a sort of learned invisibility: as proficient researchers, we forget to question the quirks of the archive. The more time spent in any given institution, the more you get to know it. Is it too cold, can you take lunch in, is the coffee any good? Do I need a specific type of coin for the locker room? Do they have pencils there or should I bring my own? And then, alongside these questions about what it looks like to physically occupy the space, there are questions about the catalogue: how is the material arranged? What information will the online entry give me? Before I order something is it clear which other items are bound with it or do I need to search separately for that? Does this give me an understanding of what I am physically going to be consulting, or will it be a surprise? We tend to group these sorts of questions together, as things which get asked of a new research location and which can only really be answered through experience.

These questions are all, in their various ways, deeply political. After all, the body in any given space is not a neutral thing. As Lisa Maruca has recently written, teaching book history allows for a reassessment of the ways in which learning is embodied: 'by emphasizing how the physical containers of knowledge are constructed and bringing to the forefront the uses and

reactions of the physical body in relation to those, we demonstrate that cognition itself is a somatic, active process' (2023, 90). This is true of researchers as well as students, although we are more accustomed to the process and therefore more likely to overlook it. It is undeniable that the ease of physical access and the clarity with which information is conveyed to the user both have high importance in disability studies, and in this sense, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I suggest that the elision of physical factors regarding access (temperature, the available equipment, rest facilities, and the rest) with ones of metadata and cataloguing risks overlooking the latter as areas of potential knowledge that we, as researchers, don't yet know how to think about.

Think about it this way: of course a paragraph on a website which acknowledges a benefactor's uncomfortable or violent legacy feels inadequate. It doesn't help us think about the books themselves any differently. We must do something different if we are to make these colonial histories productive things to work with, to incorporate into our thinking rather than keep at a superficial distance. We must fold them into our work.

The provenance of a book is a material issue. Most obviously, as I have already suggested, the identification of provenance often rests in individual features: inscriptions, ownership annotations, booksellers' marks. Provenance also goes to the heart of what Jason Scott-Warren calls a book's 'material mattering' where 'the book as a whole, in both its content and its physical appearance, signifies' (2019, 6). The value of any sort of ownership claim rests on the idea that *this copy* of the book matters: we might know that someone owned a copy of this, but it is so much more exciting to find the actual thing, to unquestionably connect the object and person. (And there it is: affect again.) The result is that we can think of the named owner as a material influence on the book, and thereby one which is subject to the sort of theoretical interventions that have been made in the discipline over the past several decades. To illustrate this, I will turn my attention to another former bibliophile well represented in the British Library catalogues, this one known less well than Sloane: John Bellingham Inglis (1780-1870).

Bellingham Inglis was a prestigious collector of early printed books, a respected scholar and a keen linguist; he is best known today, if at all, as the first translator into English of Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon*. Compared to Sloane's, his book collection is far more typical of the fate of early modern libraries, as it was sold upon his death rather than being kept together in perpetuity. The title page of the sale catalogue gives some sense of the scope and interests of Bellingham Inglis' books:

> *Catalogue of a singularly curious and valuable selection from the Library of a Gentleman, including three extraordinary specimens of Block Printing; Books printed in the Fifteenth Century; Books printed on vellum; Fine copies of Works from the Presses of Caxton, Machlinia, Wynkyn de Worde, Pynson, Julyan Notary, Verard, &c.; an extensive Collection of Old English Poetry; Romances; Historical and Theological Tracts; early Voyages and Travels; curious Treatises on Witches and Witchcraft; some of the earliest Dictionaries and Vocabularies in the English Language, &c. &c. … Likewise several Manuscripts on vellum, most beautifully illuminated, &c. &c.* (Anonymous 1826, title page)

It is perhaps not a surprise, given the interest or prestige of some of these items, that several of Bellingham Inglis' books have been identified as surviving within public and university libraries today. Christian Algar at the British Library has identified over 260 books, the Bodleian have 13, and UCLA records nineteen bound volumes comprised of Bellingham Inglis' 'transcriptions and translations of various classical and early modern works'.[12]

[12] *Online Archive of California*, <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8rr1wnk/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

The reason that most of these books have been able to be identified at all is that they are materially interesting. Bellingham Inglis had a tendency to embellish his printed books with cut-out images, woodcuts or engravings taken from other works. He also compiled his own: according to the British Library catalogue description, C.194.a.1478 (the 'C' in the BL shelf mark tells us that this is likely to be considered a special collection item with attendant restrictions) is

> A miniature album project of 20 assembled woodcuts with letterpress headings that depict various figures of classical mythology comprising Saturn; Jupiter; Mars; Janus; Sol; Apollo; Neptune; Bacchus; Plutus; Mercury; Vulcan; Genius; Tellus; Minerva; Ceres; Luna; Venus; Juno; Vesta; and Diana. The collated woodcuts appear to have been neatly cut from the large folio pages of the 1554 edition of Johannes Herold's *Heydenweldt*, printed in Basle by Henricum Petri. The cuts have been pasted together, back to back, and bound in an album. (Herold and Bellingham Inglis 1554, n.p.)

In further catalogue information, we learn that

> Each pastedown in the album contains a further printed illustration; each has been neatly cut and pasted to the endpaper. This interaction with the book matches the 'peculiar habit' of the nineteenth-century book collector, linguist and savant, John Bellingham Inglis (1780-1870) who embellished many of his books with woodcuts and engravings, closely cut and pasted to the endpapers.[13]

With its small size (8.5cm) and focus on intricate woodcut images, the created album is enticing. It gives the sense of entering a private conversation, creating a space where one doesn't have to pretend to be interested in the text of the *Heydenweldt* but can simply look at the pictures. The sharing of that desire across time – offering proof that the attraction to images like these in and of themselves is one which was experienced by earlier users of early modern books just as it is today – is also compelling. Simply on an affective level and regardless of the intellectual reason one might have for wishing to consult the item, the experience of viewing it is a charming one – and one in which Bellingham Inglis as a figure feels very much present.

As well as owning and creating embellished books, Bellingham Inglis was also directly responsible for plantations in St Lucia, Trinidad, and Grenada. He is recorded in the database run by University College London's Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery as having been compensated after abolition £276 10s for one estate, £662 3s 8d for another, and £3503 13s 11d for a third; this equates to 13, 21, and 144 enslaved people respectively. He was also (unsuccessfully) involved in a counter claim for a fourth estate upon which 164 people were enslaved.

The jarring contrast between these facts – and, perhaps more importantly, the emotional experiences they raise – demonstrates exactly where the tension of this project lies. If we allow that positive affect can be a productive force in research, then we must also allow for negative feelings; if we think it is important, ethically, to recognise and work through violence committed in the past, then we must also allow for the moments of joy and engagement felt in the archives. Bellingham Inglis' embellished books bring these two things together in close proximity. The very thing that makes them interesting are the material traces of his ownership, which means that we cannot hide from the fact that they were funded with profits extracted from at least 178 enslaved human beings. What are our responsibilities towards this fact as we work with the book? How might we draw on it rather than simply acknowledging it and moving swiftly on?

[13] The above description appeared on the British Library Catalogue that can no longer be accessed due to the cyberattack that took place in 2023.

In her exploration of the work of John Bagford, an 'indiscriminate' collector of printed scraps, Whitney Trettien considers the changing opinions of scholars towards cutting and pasting (2021, 184). Bagford's collection, which included everything from 'portfolios of old bindings and armorial stamps, printer's marks and handwriting from around the world, entire scrapbooks largely devoted to samples of different kinds of paper' (195), was built (much like Bellingham Inglis') on taking apart other items. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Trettien shows, he was subsequently villainised as a biblioclast, a criminal with no sense of the importance of preservation – even as those making such comments used his creations in order to better ground their sense of the past. Part of the anger at Bagford's cutting extended into moral judgements of his character: 'the man who would do this, would do anything' (Pollard 1891, 3). When the book is the most important thing, no one who willingly takes it apart can be considered as having trustworthy intentions.

In the past twenty years or so, however, book historians' work has allowed the processes of cutting and pasting to become understood as simultaneously destructive and creative. In 2015, *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* published a special edition on the 'Renaissance collage', in which Juliet Fleming suggested that collage was 'always central to the production and reproduction of Renaissance culture' (2015, 445), John Considine explored the long history of slips in information management and organisation, and Adam Smyth wrote of the Little Gidding harmonies that

> Knives and scissors function as a kind of material extension of [the] rhetorical mode, lending to the cut-out pieces a force and a sense of lively animation which means that the harmonies are never only themselves: they are books composed of pieces which, as a result of the compositional method that is suggested in the finished form (we see the blade marks, the dried glue, the scribbled corrections), seem only for the moment aligned into the shape of a book. (2015, 598)

These three articles establish fairly conclusively that cutting and pasting were productive modes of engaging with the book: they were often done in service of reading and thinking, and can therefore be read to reveal those actions; they were not as antithetical to the way we read today as we might like to think; they draw attention to the fact of the present when engaging with any book, the fact that it has a past but also a future – one which is not necessarily predictable or within our control. In *Cut/Copy/Paste*, Trettien expands on this in order to explore the way that Bagford's scrapbooks generated 'meaning and narrative through the frictive juxtaposition of material "speciments" ' (2021, 192).

Libraries have also responded to – and helped drive – this disciplinary change, embracing and displaying books which might previously have been kept quietly out of sight. Even in 2015, Fleming described librarians' responses to hybrid manuscript-print items as a combative one, arguing that

> catalogue descriptions of these 'hybrid' books suggest that, in many cases, those who wrote the entries struggled not only with a lack of agreed upon terms to describe what they saw, but also against their own disapproval of the very form — it must, after all, be a rare archivist who can regard a sixteenth-century hybrid book as an embellished manuscript, without regretting the volumes that were sacrificed in its making. (446)

This may have been true at the time (although I would hesitate to say that such archivists, or librarians, were ever as 'rare' as Fleming claims) but is certainly not now. For example, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas opened an exhibit in August 2023 called 'The Long Lives of Very Old Books' whilst that same Fall 2023 Harvard University's Houghton Library

put on an exhibition focussing on bindings and deconstructed books called 'At The Limit of the Book'. There is a clear interest in embellished, hybrid, messy books both on the parts of curators and the public.

We can see, then, the way that responses to cutting and pasting have moved from a type of performative and often ahistorical horror that values the book as a whole item (manifesting in the tendencies of early collectors to bleach away annotations or prioritise copies with no signs of use) to a state in which the book is understood as an inherently porous and almost transient thing. Another way of characterising this movement is as one in which violent actions have been subsumed into a narrative of destructive-productivity – we are beginning to be attentive to the ways in which destruction produces new forms of knowledge. Could this, then, be a helpful metaphor for beginning to understand what it means for intellectual institutions to have been funded with money from slavery? Can we take Trettien's 'frictive juxtaposition' as a way of setting Bellingham Inglis' hybrid books alongside the colonial violence he is responsible for, enabling us to keep both in view without aiming for anything that looks like a reconciliation? Because – let me be clear – I do not think there *is* a clear answer, or at least not one which will enable us to approach these books without unease. Nor do I think there should be. We need instead to look for methodological approaches which embrace and make useful that same unease. We need to become as comfortable working from places of negative emotion as we are from the positive.

'By nudging content out of purview without reducing a text to brute thingness', Trettien writes, 'the word *bookwork* helps us hold in mind the book, any book, as a force field of competing desires and agencies' (2021, 21). However, whilst the cutting and pasting of the Little Gidding concordances offer a sort of 'radical bookwork' that allowed its Christian community to simultaneously 'recognize the cohesive, singular vision of God's word *and* present scripture as polyphonic and variable' (36), and whilst Bagford's scrapbooks were 'experimental engines for generating new historical knowledge' (207), Bellingham Inglis' *Heydenweldt* album is simply curious. It appears to reject anything other than its own brute thingness, prioritising the image over the word and the creator over the author. No explanation is offered in the metadata or other paratext as to why Bellingham Inglis constructed this album, or whether it was even him who manually cut out the woodcuts and glued them back-to-back in the first place. It is adamantly its own thing. We can ask questions but there is no guarantee of any answer.

Returning to Bellingham Inglis' album having pursued some further research into his background and finances, I found myself intrigued by the catalogue note that describes him as a 'book collector, linguist and savant'.[14] Clearly, these descriptions were chosen as the ones which most pertinently reflect back on the items themselves. They suggest that an inherent intellectual value arises from the association between man and book; even when it is not directly related, Bellingham Inglis' linguistic abilities become correlated with his book collecting. But it is the word 'savant' which is most striking in the context of his slave ownership, since it implies an almost unique and exceptional intelligence. Without suggesting that this connotation is necessarily intentional, we might read this somewhat defensively within the wider financial context. If a 'savant' is exceptional in one area, the catalogue seems to imply, they tend to be defective in another, but this is something we should be willing to forgive them for.

The album itself was still charming but the sense of what was lost in these pictures' excisions from their wider text struck me more prominently. I saw unnamed labour in the carefully marbled endpapers and thought about the silent and invisible financial history that had led to

[14] See note 13.

this thing being placed before me. Twenty woodcuts; 178 enslaved human beings. The week before my visit, members of staff at the British Library had been on strike; their labour in keeping the Reading Rooms running, in bringing me this precious book and making sure I had everything I needed in order to properly study it, was another type of silent labour. (This labour, too, is racialised: the British Library's internal BAME group have shown that Black and minority ethnic staff are far more likely to be working in customer-facing roles than in the curatorial or senior management positions.) Bellingham Inglis is by no means absent from the catalogue record, but his slave-ownership, like Sloane's, is; in becoming aware of this, by considering it as a deliberate omission that shaped the way I responded to the book I received, I found myself able to consider the other omissions that might be at play. The absences of the catalogue record came to seem complementary to the other absences we are more practiced at identifying: in this particular case, the text.

4. *Cataloguing Absences*

In their recent special issue of *Criticism*, 'What is Critical Bibliography?', Lisa Maruca and Kate Ozment ask of the field: 'How does the material account for decay, nothingness, and invisibility? Where are the (porous) boundaries between book and body, text and substrate, object and emotion?' (2022, 233). Books are physically full of empty spaces and recent criticism has responded accordingly: for example, Jonathan Sawday (2023) reads gaps and voids in printed forms and on the printed page; Laurie Maguire's work on the blank space of the book considers 'the vestigial and the ghostly, the palimpsest and the trace, … the ways in which the blank self-referentially invokes its own indeterminant existence and activates the reader's restorative critical instincts' (2020, 1); Adam Smyth encourages us to become attentive to the ways in which early printers filled their blank spaces, with errata lists often 'reflecting the available blank space, rather than the actual extent of errors in the text' (2019, 255). But before you can *talk* about absences, you have to be able to *see* them, and some are more visible than others.

The idea of silence in the archives – especially when coming up against names, or their lack – is frequently raised in conversations about decolonisation and conceptualised as a place where abstraction and violence meet. This, again, is something which often comes down to metadata. In their discussion of the process of digitally encoding five of Sloane's catalogues, Alexandra Ortolja-Baird and Julianne Nyhan write about how they became increasingly aware of the absences they were being confronted with – absences that the system of textual tagging being used (in this case TEI [Text Encoding Initiative]) actually reinforced:

> As we engaged in the task of encoding the personal names that are given in the catalogues, we began to wonder about those not included in the catalogues. Those individuals' names may be absent but an echo of their agency, and a trace of their presence is, in some nebulous way, enfolded in the catalogues …. As we worked, we began to conceptualize these nameless individuals as presences who "haunt" the catalogues, in the sense that they participate in a dialectic of trace and absence that is detectable from certain viewpoints only …. But how can one encode the ghosts and the "haunting" of an early modern archival document? Encoders can usually tag an individual only if they are actually "there" in some fixed way in a text …. It was in the process of thinking through how absence, and absent individuals and groups, could be modelled, and encoded in the catalogues, that we were alerted to how positivist encoding schemes like TEI can be. (2022, 853)

This is a conundrum familiar to anyone who has worked at length with archival documents of the early modern period, particularly in an editorial capacity. There is no proving a negative;

how can we even begin to acknowledge enslaved people whose names we do not know (as well as servants, women, children, labourers) in a positive tagging system designed to recognise and record only those who can be identified? Content management systems, including the MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) format used by the British Library, are simply not designed for negatives. Cataloguing is, and has always been, a question not only about what to include but also what to leave out. As Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star put it in their influential book *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences*,

> We have a moral and ethical agenda in our querying of these systems. Each standard and each category valorizes some point of view and silences another. This is not inherently a bad thing – indeed it is inescapable. But it is an ethical choice, and as such it is dangerous – not bad, but dangerous. (2000, 5-6)

The work of this article is not to claim that there is a resolution to all the ethical problems of provenance that we are all ignoring. Getting rid of all traces of slave owners in the catalogue (which, I should make clear, is not something that anyone is actively campaigning for) would achieve nothing but the loss of important information. Provenance offers valuable information about books and the histories of their ownership and use and can be an important political tool in its own right for those working on feminist bibliography and Black bibliography. In this sense, I am aligned with the approach followed by most GLAM practitioners. Museums, archives and libraries alike tend to follow the approach of recognition and recontextualization best articulated by Historic England in its statement on 'Contested Heritage': 'we believe the best way to approach statues and sites which have become contested is not to remove them but to provide thoughtful, long-lasting and powerful reinterpretation, which keeps the structure's physical context but can add new layers of meaning'.[15] Addition, not subtraction, is the way forward.

However, as I have demonstrated in this essay, the re-examination of our colonial pasts and the responsibilities we have in such cases also offers a chance for new questions to be asked of book history as a discipline. As scholars, we must be aware of the fact that the catalogue is not neutral. Moreover, we ought to consider the ways in which we are free to ask questions and think through these books in ways that *the staff within the institutions might not be able to do*, due to pressures on time and finances, the material constraints of cataloguing systems, and various other institutional forces. If we learn to interrogate the library catalogue as a political agent, to understand it as something which has been shaped over many years and which is never fully transparent, we can become aware of a whole new constellation of absences. Who paid for this book to be here? Whose ghostly presence shapes our appreciation of it? What questions can I ask that I may never know the answers to? And how can I become comfortable with that state of unknowing?

Asking such things requires us to grapple more fully with the emotions of doing book historical work and to be comfortable working in spaces of negative, rather than positive, capability. We can only carry out the griefwork of understanding how this field is rooted in and has long benefitted from the products of colonial violence when we also allow ourselves to admit that such work is difficult. If it feels like a sort of loss, that's because it is.

[15] 'Contested Heritage' (2018), *Historic England*, <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/statements/contested-heritage/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

5. *Conclusion*

There is an early poem by Ted Hughes, first published in *Poetry* in August 1957, called 'The Martyrdom of Bishop Farrar [*sic*]'. It begins with a brutal account of the public execution of Robert Ferrar (d. 1555) who was burnt at the stake during the Marian prosecutions, and at first appears to revel in the violence, in the way the flames 'shrivel sinew and char bone / of foot, ankle, knee and thigh, and boil / Bowels' (1957, ll. 2-4). As the doomed man begins to speak, however, he captures his audience's attention in a way his preaching never managed. Ferrar's burning is 'An ignorant means to establish ownership / Of his flock!' (ll. 13-14), but nonetheless a successful one: as he dies, the fire 'come from Hell, even / Kindled little heavens in his words' (ll. 25-26). Rather than disowning 'their exemplar / And teacher' (ll. 19-20), the townspeople begin to treat his words like treasure, 'As good gold as any queen's crown' (l. 36).

Despite assumptions by early biographers, Robert Ferrar does not appear to have been an immediate ancestor of Hughes, unlike the Nicholas Ferrar who got him in trouble with the *Telegraph*. However, Hughes was proud of the nominal link, and probably wrote the poem believing that he was in fact writing about a direct relative. This, as well as the fact that Hughes' son with Sylvia Plath was named Nicholas Farrar Hughes – the two spellings are interchangeable – show a man who was not only aware of his family history but actively engaged with it. But Nicholas Ferrar's troubled legacy has implications beyond the poet. His central role in founding the Little Gidding community also makes him an influential figure for early modern historians of the book; as its continuous recurrence in this article demonstrates, Little Gidding has frequently provided a case study for thoughts about cutting and pasting in particular. The Bibles of Little Gidding have been returned to in scholarship again and again. The discipline is inextricably entangled with the history of slave ownership in ways we are only beginning to grapple with.

Bearing in mind the recent claim that 'archival work … is less neutral presentation of the cold hard facts than it is a politically motivated activity and as such should not only be left to the specialists' (Spratt *et al.* 2022, 496), I have shown in this article how the work of librarians and practitioners has begun to reassess the legacies behind the institutions and collections which support research. I have also traced some of the limits facing that work, and suggested that it offers an opportunity to more fully commit to the processes of griefwork. Only by doing so can we understand what it really means for the discipline and begin to look to the future. What might we do with these facts rather than simply trying to make ourselves feel better about them? What happens if we give up on trying to achieve ethical reconciliation and instead embrace *ethical discomfort* as a mode of study going forward?

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Scottish Hands and Anglo-Centrism The Politics of Canon-Formation and the Dalhousie Manuscripts

Sarah J. Sprouse
West Texas A&M University (<ssprouse@wtamu.edu>)
Sarah Banschbach Valles
Independent Scholar (<sarah.b.valles@gmail.com>)

Abstract

This article discusses the urgent matter of canonicity in early modern manuscript studies. It argues that the archipelagic turn, first articulated by John Kerrigan, encourages new analyses of manuscripts previously studied for their Anglo-centric canonical authors. By permitting the manuscripts to speak for themselves, new evidence for production and reading practices emerge. Our study centers the Dalhousie manuscripts; we examine the evidence for ownership, compilation, and use, ultimately suggesting the contents work together thematically in ways that highlight Scottish aristocratic reading interests in the early seventeenth century. Thinking archipelagically, this article explores Scottish interest in English poetry, examines thematic evidence in the manuscripts for Scottish provenance, and provides comparative examples of orthographical and lexical evidence.

Keywords: Canon, Punctuation, Scotland, Scribes, Verse Miscellany

1. *Introduction*

In the early 1980s, Peter Beal discovered a pair of manuscript poetry miscellanies in the Scottish Records Office in Edinburgh among the papers of the Earls of Dalhousie. Because forty-three of the eighty-nine poems in the manuscripts are by John Donne and said poems would have been transcribed during his lifetime, Beal reached out to Ernest W. Sullivan, III at Texas Tech University to see if the library would be interested in purchasing the so-called Dalhousie Manuscripts. Sullivan was heavily involved in coordinating the *Donne Variorum*'s editions of Donne's poetry, and thus arranged the sale of the miscellanies. The Dalhousie Manuscripts are closely related to Lansdowne MS 740, as well as to Haslewood-Kingsborough MS II, by virtue of the Donne

poems included and the replication of their sequential order.[1] Helen Gardner and Herbert Grierson thus believed that the Donne poems in these three manuscripts belong to the Group II Donne manuscript tradition[2] and must have been copied from a now-missing exemplar (see Sullivan 1988, 7). Despite the miscellany nature of these manuscripts (they contain poetry from many named and anonymous poets) the Dalhousie Manuscripts never became known beyond the Donne circle. Texas Tech hosted a symposium on these manuscripts, for which a festschrift was produced (Sullivan and Murrah 1987),[3] and there has been some scholarly attention (see Pebworth 1989; Sullivan 2005; Eckhardt 2006; Bland 2014; Marotti 2016; Crowley 2018), but never beyond the context of John Donne.

Such a canonical focus led to the scholarly belief that the compiler(s) must have had a direct connection to Donne himself, which suggested an English provenance.[4] Theo van Heijnsbergen argues that this kind of blindspot in early modern studies 'made the Elizabethan Renaissance the norm for the whole of the British sixteenth century and … thereby aligned Scottish early-modern culture to Anglo-centred cultural narratives that treated it as a "Prenaissance" of modern (English) civilisation rather than as an evolution of medieval into "Renaissance" with a dynamics of its own' (Heijnsbergen 2004, 198). Once we set aside this Anglo-centered narrative and focus, however, we can see that there are names in the Dalhousie manuscripts that suggest Scottish ownership, if not origin: Scots Patrick Maule of Panmure and Andrew Ramsay both wrote their names in these manuscripts. As Sebastiaan Verweij observes, 'Scottish audiences also played a significant role in the circulation of English verse, and they should therefore figure much more prominently in histories of reception and circulation' (2016, 4). Further, based on orthography, we can now suggest that almost all of the nine scribes across the two manuscripts were Scottish. We believe it is critical to start from Maule and Ramsay since they are the only two identifiable figures associated with these manuscripts and, surprisingly, continue to go unaddressed by scholars.

In 1988, Sullivan published his facsimile edition of *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts: Poems and Prose by John Donne and Others*. In his introduction to the edition, Sullivan had to account for how the manuscripts containing almost exclusively English poetry from high-profile London poets came to be in Scotland. Because the manuscripts begin with copies of legal documents pertaining to the Earl of Essex's divorce from Frances Howard and because many of the included poets were personally known to the Earl, Sullivan postulated that the poems comprising Dalhousie I (henceforth TT_1) 'were very likely copied as a unit and taken to Scotland before August 1617' (Sullivan 1988, 4). The primary poetic sequences of Dalhousie II (henceforth TT_2) were copied directly from TT_1 in Scotland. In this schema, TT_1 is a London manuscript, and TT_2 is a Scottish manuscript. Given the nascent state of early modern manuscript studies in the 1980s, such a provenance seemed possible. However, in the succeeding years, scholars such as Priscilla Bawcutt (2001b) and Verweij (2016) have demonstrated that poetry coteries were thriving in Scotland (albeit under quite different circumstances than their

[1] Full shelfmarks: London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 740; San Marino, CA, Huntington Library MS 198.

[2] Manuscripts containing Donne's poems that were produced during his lifetime are grouped according to contents, sequencing, and textual variants. Such groupings facilitate the search for the most 'canonically pure' poems (see Kneidel 2022, 883).

[3] It should be noted that all the papers pertaining to the Dalhousie Manuscripts at this symposium were specifically also about John Donne.

[4] For a history of Anglo-centric bias in scholarly study of early modern manuscripts and literature, see Schwyzer 2004, 1-12; Kerrigan 2008, 1-13; Verweij 2016, 6-12.

English counterparts).[5] And while Scottish collectors always had an interest in English poetry (as evidenced by the Bannatyne Manuscript and the Maitland Folio, among others), it was especially after James VI's accession to the English throne that they actively sought out English poetry. James took many Scottish nobles to London, and with the increased traffic between London and Scotland, it is indeed possible that TT_1 was compiled in London and then taken to Scotland.

A second, possible hypothesis that we propose is that TT_1 was compiled in Scotland from manuscripts already in circulation. We base this proposal upon the Scottish orthography and unique punctuation found in the manuscripts. It is certainly possible that a Scot living in London could have collected the poems and used their own Scottish idiosyncrasies in copying. But given the missing exemplar, the number of copyists, the inclusion of a Scottish poet early on, and the fact that Scots such as William Drummond, Sir Robert Ker of Ancram, and Sir William Alexander actively collected English poetry (see McDonald 1971; Bawcutt 2013), we believe it is more likely that TT_1 was compiled in Scotland. TT_2 contains copies of many, but not all the poems from TT_1 and includes additional poems of Scottish origin. In either case, we claim the manuscripts were created for a Scottish audience eager for news of scandal and gossip. For we have found that when we cease to view them through an Anglocentric and Donne-specific lens, the manuscripts no longer act as a showcase for a flashy diamond surrounded by lesser gems and instead reconfigure into a vibrant, kaleidoscopic dialogue featuring whores, cuckolds, lascivious men, unscrupulous churchmen, and lying courtiers. In this article we consider the contents of the manuscripts as a whole to suggest that such a reading brings the compiler(s) into focus. First, we examine the evidence for Scottish provenance based on the thematic picture that emerges when reading the full codices. In the latter sections, we demonstrate the varieties of Scottish orthography and lexicography of the scribes. This method of centering the manuscript itself, we argue, pushes past the barriers of the canon to develop a more complete literary history.

2. *Scottish Interest in English Poetry*

Though there is, as yet, little to no analysis of English interest in Scottish poetry in the early modern period, there is extensive scholarship on Scottish interest in English poetry (see Bawcutt 2001a). Using Chaucer as an example, Priscilla Bawcutt notes that James VI/I, Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lindsay all honor him as their ' "master" ' (2001b, 6). Her research reveals a variety of English romances circulating in Scotland, as well as medical treatises and religious literature (4-8). While some Scottish writers intentionally incorporated dialect as part of a nationalistic, 'self-conscious linguistic patriotism' (Bawcutt 2022, 210), a heavy vernacular gloss is not a requirement for a manuscript or text to be of Scottish origin. In fact:

> Lowland Scots and English were closely related, sharing a basic grammatical structure and common core vocabulary. Most Scots, whether anglophiles or anglophobes, recognized this…This undoubtedly facilitated the ready acceptance of English books; and if copies were desired, it was easy to make the small adjustments which would naturalise them into Scots." (Bawcutt 2001b, 9)

Even the most famous Scottish miscellany, the Bannatyne Manuscript, contains verse from English authors such as Chaucer, Lydgate, Hoccleve, Walton, Heywood, Wyatt, as well as prose

[5] Verweij points out that 'not a single manuscript of vernacular literature survives that can be linked to a Scottish university'. Further, Scotland lacked the Inns of Court culture and commercial theaters that fostered coterie culture in England. Instead, overall, 'manuscript production in Scotland tended to revolve either around amateurs … or individually commissioned professional scribes' (2016, 15-16, 245).

from William Baldwin's print edition *Treatise of Morall Philosophye* (Bawcutt 2005, 60, 62). Verweij proposes that 'it cannot be claimed that a quintessentially Scottish type of literary manuscript ever emerged, nor need such a thing be expected' (2016, 246). While there are general, material tendencies and features which designate a manuscript as Scottish, Verweij gestures to the broader, social context of Anglo-Scottish relations, connections, and interactions resulting from a porous border. English and Scottish cultures have always intermingled, whether through trade and geographic proximity or through aristocratic exchange and the reigns of the monarchs. Such interactions naturally lead to bilingualism and linguistic adaptation as well as literary exchange. Attributing an archipelagic literary interest (Kerrigan 2010) to Scottish readers thus allows for a more complex reading of a manuscript's contents – a reading focused on audience rather than on anachronistic, rigid, disciplinary notions of 'importance' or national boundaries.

3. *Thematic Evidence of Scottish Provenance*

Sullivan identified five scribal hands in TT_1. Scribe 1A dips into the manuscripts at three separate intervals: folios 1r-10r, 11r-20v, and 62v-63v. Scribe 1B has a brief contribution on folios 10v-11r. Scribe 1C contributes a majority of the contents, spanning from folios 21r-62r, while Scribe 1D interjects on folio 62v, and Scribe 1E on folios 64r-69v. In dating the manuscripts, Sullivan claims that

> dating the transcription of the materials to folio 62 in TT_1 between the 12 May 1613 divorce proceedings and the return of James I to Scotland in August 1617 would be entirely consistent with the uniform paper, pattern of handwriting segments, early states of the texts … the essentially chronological order of the datable originals represented by the copies, and the switch to poems of particularly Scottish interest at the end of the manuscript. (Sullivan 1988, 4)

While Sullivan's criteria for what might interest a Scot (poems about identifiable Scotsmen) are overly reductive, this article accepts his dating practices and handwriting analysis. As there are some unaccountable blank leaves, catchwords that have no correspondence, unmatched partial watermarks, and incomplete trial testimony, Sullivan believes that the arrangement of the manuscript quires may not be original (1988, 1-2). This evidence perhaps accounts for the shift from one hand to another, though this article proposes that such evidence applies more specifically to Scribe 1A than to the other hands.

Thematically, Scribe 1A's interest lies in the debauchery of the wealthy and powerful. The manuscript opens with the testimony of Archbishop George Abbot and King James VI/I from the Essex divorce trial. This scandalous affair of 1613 centered on the arranged marriage of Frances Howard and Robert Devereux, the 3rd Earl of Essex (see Lindley 2013). Howard had an affair with Robert Carr, the Earl of Somerset (who was born to Scottish parents in England), leaving Essex a 'public cuckold' (Morrill 2004). The Howards requested an annulment of the marriage on the grounds of Essex's supposed impotence (see Luttfring 2011). Archbishop Abbot's testimony contemplated how men are made 'Eunnches' and suggested 'The Earle to be inspected by Phisicōns' (TT_1, 1r-v).[6] James VI/I discussed the matter in his testimony as 'alike defrawdinge of y^{e} woman, / when eyther he who is to be her husband is gelded or when y^{e} / vse / of y^{t} memb^{r} towards her, is by any vnlawfull meanes taken fro[m] her' (TT_1, 2v). After the divorce was granted, Howard married Somerset to the great dismay of Somerset's closest friend

[6] Line numbers are from Sullivan's edition throughout, though all transcriptions are from the manuscripts.

Thomas Overbury. In the end, Overbury was imprisoned and poisoned, likely by Howard. In total, it was a sordid affair that captured the public attention, as can be attested by the many manuscript copies and broadsides about the trial.[7]

This opening material deposits the initial stratum for the verse collection: it becomes the form upon which the subsequent verses decoratively drape. In discussing manuscript verse collections, Michelle O'Callaghan writes that frequently verses chosen to be copied gave an account of their 'relationship to an event, individual, or group … Such groupings of texts by historical occasion encourage a particular set of interpretive practices that invite readers to read intertextually and contextually' (2017, 313). The trial testimonies of Archbishop George Abbot and King James perform this work for TT_1. By way of counterpoint to the titillating trial accounts of witchcraft and infidelity, the scribe follows the testimony with a Catholic, Latin text used as a 'Preparatorie Prayer before Sacramentall Confession' (Primer 1616, 429). A six-line medieval Christological poem follows – a poem which appears in three other manuscripts, one of which is the preaching-book of John of Grimestone, a Franciscan friar from Norfolk, held at the National Library of Scotland with an ex-libris of 'Jacobi Stuart 1699'.[8] Scribe 1A continues with a poem about contentment, 'My mind to me a kingdom is' (TT_1, 9r), which some (including Sullivan) attribute to Sir Edward de Vere, while others point to Edward Dyer.[9] If Dyer is the poet, a Scottish connection becomes evident as Dyer's poetry was so well-known in Scotland that his name become synonymous with a type of 'amatory lament' in 'poulter's measure' – a specific meter of rhyming couplets in 12 syllable line followed by a 14 syllable line (Verweij 2013, 299). While 'My mind' is not in this meter, the association with Dyer is relevant to establishing Scottish interest in English poetry. Scribe 1A includes a poem unique to TT_1 lamenting a good brother's death. The blatant, stomach-churning misogyny in the manuscript can also be seen in an anonymous poem in this early part of the manuscript:

I could vnto my self a heauenlye creature shape
by whose excellencie, I could euen grace a second rape.
…
No outward beautie now, thowgh nature ioyne with arte
can draw attendance from my eyes, lesse homage from my harte
Sutch seellie bonds as those, my hart could neuer bind.
I like not Helens face so mutch, as I abhorre her mind (TT_1, 19v, ll. 7-14)

Attending to Scribe 1A establishes both that items of 'Scottish interest' may be subtler and broader than an English, canonical focus allows for, and that TT_1 is compiled as a dialogue between accounts of lascivious behavior, and rebuttals, as it were, to such behavior. For Londoners are not the only people fascinated by scandal, nor does gossip limit itself by borders.

Scribe 1B interjects with a poem by Sir John Davies on the beauty that a good life and mind bestows on a woman, and a poem by Sir Henry Wotton on the means to attain a happy life. Scribe 1B's content speaks directly to the issues presented in the Howard trial testimony

[7] Bodleian MS. Rawl. C. 63 and MS. Rawl. C. 64, Cambridge University Library MS Dd.12.36, and Lambeth Palace MS 663 are but some examples of manuscript witnesses of the trial testimonies. The database Early Stuart Libels documents 28 popular poems, anagrams, and ballads connected to the entire scandal, <https://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/overbury_murder_section/H0.html>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[8] See <https://manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/15257>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[9] See Union First Line Index of English Verse, <https://firstlines.folger.edu/search.php?val1=my+mind+to+me+a+kingdom+is#results>, accessed 1 December 2024.

wherein the qualities of a wicked woman are on display, and the follies of men whose passions 'his maysters are' (TT_1, 11r, l. 5). Though Scribe 1A contributed earlier to the rebuttal theme, they shift gears when they next touch the manuscript and contribute erotic verse on loose women from Scottish poet Robert Ayton, John Donne, Josuah Sylvester, Sir John Harington, Jonathan Richards, and several anonymous pieces that advocate against constancy in love, such as:

for a louing constand harte
my reward is greif & smarte
she that kills me with disdayne
takes a pleasur in my payne
…
Dayes & nightes my woes improve
whilst I languish for her love
whilst her hart with rigors frawght
scorninge setts my love at nawght: (TT_1, 18v, ll.1-4, 13-16)

Using the opening trial testimony as the touchstone of the manuscript newly illuminates these thematically stereotypical poems. Rather than stock characters, Frances Howard, Essex, Overbury, and Somerset populate the imaginations of readers. A gossip book, a long-running gag of poetic inside jokes, is born. Anonymous poems rubbing shoulders with well-known poets suggest that the compilers' 'aim was not to canonize the works of a particular set of authors; rather, authority is invested in the milieu defined by the collection' (O'Callaghan 2017, 322). In other words, the values of the socio-cultural world of the coterie for whom the manuscripts were made confers importance upon a poem instead of mere authorship. Furthermore, it points toward a 'publication event that captured not only texts at a certain point in their transmission history but also the coterie identity that they defined' (324). The interests of this coterie ran toward the push and pull of libidinous, misogynistic jocularity and moralizing reproof. Taken together, the poems satirize the court, play with the joke of 'cuckolds and whores', and mock ecclesiastical and courtly conventions.

The longest section in a single hand follows here with Scribe 1C's transcription of seventy poems. The hand is far more proficient than the preceding hands, as there is some attempt at decorative headings, ruling of the page, punctuation, and italicization of important nouns.[10] John Donne's satires, elegies, and early amatory lyric poems comprise much of this section. However, they are interspersed with four poems by Thomas Overbury, two by Sir John Davies, seven by Sir John Roe, one by John Hoskyns, one by Francis Beaumont, three by Sir John Harington, one by Sir Walter Ralegh, one by Josuah Sylvester, and seven by anonymous poets. Marcy North posits that 'fashionable verse' would frequently be 'clustered, either near the beginning of the manuscript or at the beginning of a major stint … [as] fashionable poems serve as anchors, having motivated both the transmission of a set of poems and the recording of it in the miscellany' (2011, 96-97). While Donne is clearly a 'fashionable' poet, his is not the only voice on display. Overbury's poems 'A Very Very Woman' and 'Her Next Part' are direct attacks upon Frances Howard:

[10] Verweij notes that 'On the whole, manuscript production in Scotland tended to revolve either around amateurs (however gifted they may have been as penmen), or individually commissioned professional scribes (notaries public, "wrytars") who worked to order and on a select scale' (2016, 245). See also Wingfield 2015.

… She is *Mariageable* and *fourteene*
…
… She is hied
Away all but her face and thates hangd about
With toyes and deuices like the sign of a *Tauerne*
To drawe *Strangers* it is likely she traffiques flesh
And hanges itt out of · her shoppwindowes … (TT_1, 29r, ll. 14, 20-24)

The popular, anonymous 'Libell agaynst Bashe' appears at this juncture and elucidates the manuscript's theme:

And so he went to London walles
Where after sundry climinge falls
He fell in *Consanguinite*
And linked in *Affinitie*
With Bauds & Brothells whores and *knaues*
Cutthroates: Enchanters Banckrupt slaues
…
Thatt att the last he scrapt so much mucke
and grewe so rich by *Cuckolds* lucke (TT_1, 34v, ll. 55-66)

After the Bashe libel, poet Sir John Davies chimes in on the marriage of Bishop Richard Fletcher to the very recently widowed Mary Baker (née Gifford). Using the trope of heraldry, Davies writes

And yet her *Ladishipp* were greatly shamd
If from her Lord no title she should take
Therefore they shall diuide the name of *Fletcher*
Hee my Lord *F* and she my *Ladie Letcher* (TT_1, 37r, ll. 11-14)

After a quantity of Donne elegies and lyrics, Sir John Harington rails against marriage and swindlers, while Sir Walter Ralegh replies with scornful reproof of worldliness and Josuah Sylvester chimes in with 'The fruites of a good conscience' (TT_1, 58r). Thomas Overbury follows with an invective against love and women. While bantering over cuckolds and whores, love and lust, constancy and falsehood, the spectres from the Essex divorce trial still haunt the pages, as in this anonymous poem where it seems Somerset's plight of the cuckolder who becomes cuckolded is covertly recounted:

And more then that its said she tells him plaine
Sheele putt him to his hornebooke once againe
…
But wott yow why poore *Robin* is distrest
It was for breeding in the *Cuckoes* nest (TT_1, 37v, ll. 5-6, 23-24)

John Roe had some strong feelings about the sudden influx of Scots in the English court, complaining that 'Most of our Ladies with the Scotts doe lie' (TT_1, 43r, l. 8). He compares the Scots to smooth verses that are

… shallowe and wantes matter but in his handes
And they are rugged Her state better standes
And if that linth of misorie be hir lott
In briefe shees out of measure lost so gott (TT_1, 43r, ll. 11-14)

Roe mocks the Scotsmen and their 'linth' or 'length' of misery which ruins English women. To the point of our assessment of TT_1 as of Scottish origin, the word 'linth' is a localized Scottish variant that includes Ayrshire, but excludes much of southern Scotland.[11]

While contemporary readers have mined TT_1 for Donnean transmission history, a macrocosmic, whole-book view of the manuscript allows us to better 'understand this rare or unique verse in the framework not of traditional literary history but of a social history of writing' (Marotti 2017, 221). The coterie network responsible for TT_1, while clearly valuing Donne, recasts him as part of an elaborate joke where a variety of voices chime in to offer social commentary. While Donne's verse may be superior according to technical standards, items like 'Libel against Bashe' contribute heavily to TT_1's bawdy humor. Voices that appear but fleetingly do much of the work of shaping TT_1's thematic contours.

The brief remainder of TT_1 consists of Scribe 1A's contribution of a Thomas Campion ballad who urges his male readers 'tis follie to be true' (TT_1, 62v, l. 27). Scribe 1D provides an anonymous, reproving answer to Campion. Campion was a popular musician-poet, whose work included a court entertainment for the 1614 wedding of Somerset to Frances Howard: *The Somerset Masque*. Scribe 1E completes the manuscript in a purely italic hand, signaling a possible female scribe (see Wolfe 2009). Scribe 1E's interests run toward the political with Richard Corbett's elegy on the death of Lord Howard, Baron of Effingham, and an anonymous elegy on the Duke of Richmond, Ludovic Stewart, second cousin to King James. While these last poems seem to depart from the thematic energy of the manuscript, it is not amiss to consider how readers would contrast Donne's Ovidian elegies with these later funerary elegies. Remembering again that Essex, Somerset, Howard, and Overbury provide the faces which flesh out the poetic fun of the manuscript, Scribe 1E's reference to two factual deaths offers an implicit criticism of their foolishness through a comparison with the more honorable lives of Effingham and Richmond. So, when the contents are considered in full, a startling and misogynistic aristocratic amusement emerges. Women are incorrigible, hardhearted whores; men are encouraged in the sport of adultery; prelates are mocked; and the exaggerated stereotypes are all part of an elaborate game of grins and giggles that derives its mileage from the ridiculous, the self-ignorant, and the self-indulgent.

While TT_1 functions as an integrated unit, TT_2 is less cohesive and far briefer than its parent manuscript. Many poems in TT_2 are copied directly from TT_1, but nearly one third of the manuscript contains poems distinct from TT_1. Sullivan acknowledges that at least 'parts of TT_2' were transcribed in Scotland and he notes a single occurrence of Scottish orthography, 'wes' for 'was' (1988, 10). We concur that TT_2 bears internal evidence for Scottish scribes and compiler(s). The manuscript begins with what the Scottish Records Office identifies as 'notes' in the hand of Patrick Maule of Panmure (1585-1661). The 'notes' are as follows:

Sett in the kitching gardine; the 28th of september
the year of our Lord 1622.
Apricok stones three scor
of peich and neckteriens stones a hunderith
and four, (TT_2, 1r)

Structured into lines of verse, these 'notes' seem to remark on the remains of a record harvest – the stones of sixty apricots and of one hundred four peaches and nectarines. However, if we place these 'notes' in their Scottish context, we find a joke here. The year 1622 heralded the

[11] See Dictionaries of the Scots Language (DSL), <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/linth_n>, 1 December 2024.

conclusion of a tumultuous thirty-year weather pattern that brought extreme flooding, drought, snow, and storms (see MacDonald and McCallum 2013). Records from the Jedburgh Presbytery from late August 1622 note the parishioners fasting for an end to the 'tempestuousnes of the present wedder' and 'for temperance of the wether to cuir the fruictis of the grund' (quoted in MacDonald and McCallum 2013, 506). The bountiful harvest gestured at in the lines from Patrick Maule could not come to pass in this year after a stormy spring and poor, tempestuous summer. We argue that this little poem from Maule helps to situate the Dalhousie Manuscripts not just in Scotland, but more specifically to the east in either Kincardineshire or Angusshire, where Maule's barony was located. Further, these lines establish the humorous tone we suggest is pervasive across both manuscripts.

On the verso of the same folio, Sullivan identifies a 'Prayer', which includes the name Andrew Ramsay at line 4:

In my defenc god me defend and bring
my soull to ane good end guhen I am sick and
Lyk to ye father of heauens heauie mynd amene
andreae RAmsey Andrae RAmsey finis amene
god
seaue and defend thy chosen flok
floke which now (TT_2, 1v)

This opening invocation has unique ties to Scotland, as it regularly appears on flyleaves and margins of only Scottish manuscripts. While the verse mimics the motto of the Royal Arms of Scotland (Mackenzie 1680, 100), it varies from manuscript to manuscript and functions as a 'formula', a kind of 'mixture of prayer and good-luck charm' (Bawcutt 1990, 65). Sullivan proposes John Ramsay, Viscount Haddington and Earl of Holderness (1580-1626), as one of the scribes, though we suggest multiple Ramsays were involved in the compilation of the pair of manuscripts. The basis for this theory seems to be that Ramsay 'would have had an interest in the particular poetry in the collection as well as access to the poetry in circulation through his membership in the Inner Temple (where several of the poets represented in the Dalhousie collection studied law) and as a favored member of the court of James I' (Sullivan 1988, 5). John Ramsay was the second son of John Ramsay of Dalhousie and brother of George Ramsay, the First Lord of Dalhousie. Andrew Ramsay was kin to the Dalhousies via his father David (Wells 2004; Wright 2004). The Ramsays were located in Kincardineshire, just bordering Angusshire. Thus, Patrick Maule's comment about the weather and Andrew Ramsay's ritualistic, Scottish verse corroborate each other in locating TT_2 in Scotland.

Sullivan identifies four hands in TT_2: Scribe 2A on folio 1r, Scribe 2B on folios 1v-2v, Scribe 2C on folios 3r-4v and 21v-34v, and Scribe 2D on folios 5r-21r (1988, 3). No longer in a limp velum cover, TT_2 was given a modern board binding before it was auctioned at Sotheby's in 1981 (*ibid.*). Scribe 2A and 2B provide notes on provenance, while the remaining two scribes provide the verses. Scribe 2C contributes iterations of a ballad by James Graham, Marquis of Montrose advising against infidelity. Scribe 2D next commands the page for a long stint of Donne elegies copied from TT_1, along with three Donne pieces not found in TT_1: 'Love's Progress', 'The Curse', and 'The Message'. Sir John Davies, Josuah Sylvester, Sir John Harington and Sir John Roe reappear to populate the manuscript, as well as one poem by new-comer Jonathan Richards. There are eight anonymous poems which either bemoan unrequited love, or elaborate on the sentiment 'Loue hath winges and loues to range / I loue those that loue to change' (TT_2, 14r, ll. 5-6). One of the more unique poems in TT_2 is an anonymous piece which allows for the reader to insert their own name:

If kinges did heretofore there loues indite
as they now personate, those kinges doe write,
Then why not I; …
…
… knowest thou who I am
( ) thy devouted servant princely dame (TT_2, 7r, ll. 1-3, 11-12)

Though TT_2 lacks any overt mention of the Essex trial, so prominent in TT_1, it is nonetheless clear that the compilers selected content based not just on continuity of authorship, but also along the lines of a general sense of cruel mistresses and inconstant men.

Scribe 2C's musical interest returns on folio 21v with an anonymous, melancholy '*Carold for new yeeres day 1624*'. This carol appears again on folio 33r. The depressing mood continues in italic with Francis Bacon's pronouncement that '*The w'orlds a bũble,· and the Lyfe of man / Lesse then a spann;*' (TT_2, 22r, ll. 1-2).The Scribe then includes some of John Donne's popular lyrics copied from TT_1. One poem each from Ralegh, Beaumont, and Sylvester are also copied from TT_1. The remaining poems (three of which are anonymous), pertain to the cruelty and slavishness of love. The manuscript concludes with a George Morley poem in italic on the death of King James (d. 27 March 1625), and an anonymous 'Epitaph · vpon the Duke · off Buckinghame' (d. 23 August 1628) (TT_2, 34v). These closing poems bring TT_1 and TT_2 full circle: Buckingham replaced Somerset as James's favorite (and possible lover). The long-running wit of TT_1 reprises the cuckhold/whore dynamic in TT_2, as the king himself becomes indicted in a web of illicit love.

4. *Scribe 1C and the Shared Exemplar*

Following Bawcutt's assessment of Scottish scribes as readers making 'small adjustments' (Bawcutt 2001b, 9) to naturalize an English text, Scribe 1C must be discussed in greater detail. This is the scribe who has received the most scholarly attention since the publication of Sullivan's edition and is also the scribe who exhibits the least Scottish orthography and lexicography. However, this singular scribe offers the most evidence of Scottish interest in English poetry as well as, potentially, information about how Scottish readers consumed English poetry. As noted above, the contributions of this scribe share a sequence similar to several other manuscripts in the Group II Donne manuscript tradition (see Gardner 1978, lxiv-lxv; Sullivan 1988, 7-8; Eckhardt 2009). Sullivan (1988), Bawcutt (1991), Considine (2000), and others have all argued that these manuscripts share an exemplar, a claim we find persuasive.

Comparison with B78 (Lansdowne 740) demonstrates Scribe 1C's mostly faithful copying from his exemplar. As a sample case study, we compared the wording and orthography of Donne's 'Satyre IV' across five total manuscripts of Group II, including TT_1, the O'Flahertie MS, B78, the recently discovered Melford Hall MS, and the Drummond MS.[12] While each manuscript has its own idiosyncrasies, they largely match what we find in TT_1. The one substantial difference is punctuation, which led us to reconsider Scribe 1C entirely. The other four manuscripts feature regular and relatively modern punctuation systems; by contrast, Scribe 1C offers substantially more punctuation in a more archaic system resembling the medieval punctus.

[12] Shelfmarks: O'Flahertie is Cambridge, Harvard University, Houghton Library MS Eng.966.5 (Norton MS 4504); Melford Hall is London, British Library, Egerton MS 3884; and the Drummond MS is Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 2067.

In addition to the extensive use of the punctus, Scribe 1C includes punctuation that we can only describe as hearkening back to medieval Latin usages. In addition to more modern marks such as the comma, semi-colon, and question mark, Scribe 1C also, remarkably, includes the punctus elevatus, punctus interrogativus, and punctus flexus. We initially theorized the unusual punctuation system found with Scribe 1C was a holdover of a Scottish medieval or perhaps a regional punctuation system. However, comparative study with roughly contemporary Scottish manuscripts such as the 1568 Bannatyne miscellany of Scottish poetry suggested that Scribe 1C's punctuation system was not common enough to constitute a Scottish practice. Indeed, Jeremy J. Smith notes that practices of punctuation in Scottish manuscripts 'vary widely' (2012, 33). Our early theory was that the farther one was from an epicenter of printing, the more likely a scribe might be to employ Latin manuscript punctuation rather than more modern 'simplified' systems. However, the lack of similar punctuation in other Scottish manuscripts suggests Scribe 1C operated independently of more common practices. In what follows, we demonstrate the comparison via Donne's 'Satyre IV' and then consider the grammatical functions of Scribe 1C's puncti as well as how this unusual system might further suggest a Scottish origin for the Dalhousie Manuscripts.

The first lines of 'Satyre IV' show the substantial differences between TT_1 and the other manuscripts. The O'Flahertie MS has:

Well I may now receaue and dye, my sinne
Indeed is greater, but yet I haue bin in
A Purgatory, such as fear'd Hell is
A Recreation, and scant Mapp of this. (O'Flahertie, 69r, ll. 1-4)

While Melford Hall features different forms of punctuation, they largely emphasize the same levels of pause:

Well, I may now receyue, and dye; my sin
indeed is greate, but I haue bin in
a purgatorie, such as feared hell is
a recreation, and scant mappe of this; (Melford Hall, 4r, ll. 1-4)

As do the Drummond MS:

Well, I may now receaiue and die, ~~indeed~~ my Sinne
Indeed is great, but haũe been In
A purgatorie, such as fear'd Hell is
A recreation and scant Mapp of this: (Drummond, 15r, ll. 1-4)

and B78:

Well; I maye not receyue and die; my sinn
indeed is great, but I haue byn in
a purgatorie such as feared Hell is
a recreation, and scant mapp of this. (B78, 59v, ll. 1-4)

All four iterations feature punctuation after 'die' in line 1, after 'great' in line 2, and after 'this' in line 4. All four witnesses agree on the level of pause in the second line, a short pause signaled by a comma. Similarly, all four agree on a significant level of pause in the fourth line, though represented alternately by a semi-colon, a period, and a colon.

TT_1 agrees on none of these positions nor on the kinds of punctuation:

Well I may now receiue and · die my sinne
Indeed is great but I haue been in
A · Purgatorie such as feard Hell · is
A Recreation and scant Mappe of this (TT_1, 22r, ll. 1-4)

The punctus consistently appears directly before a word that other manuscripts punctuate just after. In that first line, Scribe 1C punctuates just before 'die' rather than after it. This occurs again across several lines of the poem. These marks seem to interrupt the sense of the line, as in line 35: 'This thing hath · travelled and Saith speaks all tongues' instead of 'this thing hath travelled, and saith speaks all tongues'. In B78, the comma in line 35 separates the clause 'this thing hath travelled', which is grammatically a complete thought. The scribe offers a weighted pause before 'die', placing emphasis on the word as it emerges with a new breath. Scribe 1C instructs the reader on how to read this line, encouraging them to wait a moment and then add emphasis to the verb, whether for performance aloud or for oneself. Line 3 is further demonstrative of how Scribe 1C places emphasis. A measured pause is applied to 'Purgatorie' and again to 'is'. Together, the two marks encourage the reader to sit with the connections between purgatory and hell.

While it is possible that a later reader could have placed midline punctus marks in the poem, the deliberate spacing of words so as to include the punctus seems to indicate that it was the scribe who included the marks and, importantly, did so because they had an audience in mind – an audience for whom the scribe was interpreting the poems. This is significant, because the stemmatically related manuscripts not only do not have the archaic, Latin punctuation, they also do not have the midline punctus and thus do not have directive, performance marks. Scribe 1C continues a little further in the poem:

A thinge more strange then on Nilus slyme the Sunne
Ere **bredd,** · **Or** all which into **Noahs** · **Arke** · **came**
A thinge w^{ch} would haue posed Adam to name
Stranger then seauen Antiquaries studies
Then Affrick monsters Guianaes rarities
Stranger then strangers one who for a Dane
In the Danes massacre had sure beene slaine
If he had **liued** · **then** and without helpe dies (TT_1, 22r, ll. 18-25, emphasis added)

At line 19, Scribe 1C marks the possessive for Noah's ark, but also two moments of pause. After 'bredd' there is both a comma and a punctus. The punctus after 'Arke' seems to prepare the reader for what follows. From 'came' in line 19 to 'liued' in line 25, there is not a single punctuation mark. Reading these lines aloud while following the marks of punctuation requires a sharp inhalation after 'Arke' in line 19 and then a steady ramble through the subsequent couplets without pause until the reader reached 'liued' at line 25. These lines are significant for their lack of punctuation. For comparison, here is how the B78 scribe punctuates these lines:

ere bredd; or all *whi*ch into Noahes Arke came;
A thing *whi*ch would haue posed Adam to name;
Stranger then seven Antiquaris studies,
Then Affrik monsters, Guiana's rarities;
Stranger then strangers; one whoe for a Dane
in the Danes massacre had sure byn slayne,
if he had lived then; and w[i]thout help dies, (B78, 59v, ll. 18-25)

The B78 scribe includes punctuation in each line, encouraging the reader to pause at almost each rhyming word. In several cases, they use a semi-colon. The other manuscript witnesses offer similar moments and levels of pause, even when using different kinds of punctuation. It is TT_1's Scribe 1C who again stands out for their unusual marking.

Scribe 1C's preferred mode of punctuation is the midline punctus. Not only do they include a surprising quantity of puncti, but they seem to serve multiple grammatical purposes, including showing possession (the mark occurs after the possessive noun), setting off proper names, indicating a change of speaker, and establishing a sequential list of words. To continue with Scribe 1C's copying of Donne's 'Satyre IV', there are examples of the punctus being used for both possession and change of address:

He names mee and comes · to mee · **I whisper** · ***God***
How haue I sinned that thy wraths furious rodd
This fellowe chooseth mee he **saith** · ***Sir***
…
My lonelinesse is but ***Spartanes*** · **fashion**
…
Kings only the way to itt is ***Kings*** · ***street*** (TT_1, 22v, ll. 49-51, 68, 79, emphasis added)

At lines 49 and 51, it is clear the punctus marks the shift from the speaker to the 'fellowe'. Rather than using quotation marks or commas, the scribe relies on his multipurpose punctus. Moving forward a few leaves, there are occurrences of the sequential punctus, as in the following line of Donne's 'Eligia 1' ('The Bracelet'): 'Which as the soule quickens head · feet · and hart' (TT_1, 27r, l. 37). These punctus features appear across the contributions to TT_1 from Scribe 1C.

The heaviest use of the punctus appears in TT_1's copies of Donne's satires, all of which were copied by Scribe 1C. The satires are part of the sequence TT_1 has in common with the other manuscripts in Group II, but none of the other manuscripts feature the above-mentioned kinds of punctuation – either the medieval forms or the midline punctus. Jeremy J. Smith suggests that prose texts required more punctuation for the guidance of the reader than poetry because prose carries less intrinsic rhythm and patterns of stress (2013, 186). Given that the Donne satires and elegies are far more 'prosey' than the other poems in the manuscripts (see Corthell 1982, 156),[13] it may well be that the superabundance of punctuation stems from a desire to remind the reader, speaker, or hearer that these are poems after all.

The excess of punctuation suggests that though Scribe 1C may be 'accomplished',[14] they may not be a paid professional because it seems unlikely for a career scribe to engage in such a time-consuming, interpretive activity. M. B. Parkes, the expert on premodern punctuation styles, offers some useful language for the phenomenon of scribal editing via punctuation marks. He uses the terms 'deictic' and 'equiparative' and describes them in this way:

[P]unctuation can prescribe a particular interpretation by means of selective pointing, by indicating certain emphases, and hence attributing greater value to these than to other possible emphases. Punctuation used in this way has … 'deictic' qualities … [M]ore extensive pointing can produce a more neutral interpretation which attributes equal value to all the possible emphases in the text. Punctuation used this way has … 'equiparative' qualities. (1992, 70)

[13] Corthell notes that William Drummond of Hawthornden specifically thought of the satires as a book.

[14] See CELM entry for the Dalhousie Manuscripts: <https://celm.folger.edu/repositories/texas-tech-university.html#texas-tech-university_id678860>, accessed 1 December 2024.

Judging from the regular use of the midline punctus, Scribe 1C is anything but a neutral party since the extensive marking ventures beyond mere grammatical necessity and boldly enters the territory of rhetorical style, thus shifting the grammatical punctus into a type of rhetorical marker. Indeed, Smith remarks that Older Scots puncti 'tend to reflect rhetorical structures rather than grammatical ones' (2012, 33). Scribe 1C's consistent and precise deictic punctuation practice demands further investigation of audience and reader. Because the Donne satires are centered on London life, court drama, international politics, and religious mudslinging, an audience reading these satires on the margins of that social environment, such as Scottish readers away from the urban center of Edinburgh or English readers in the provinces, may need more direction in who or what to emphasize when reading either to themselves or aloud for others. The combinations of punctus marks could, as Smith states of the use in other cases, 'reflect gradations of pause in oral delivery' (*ibid.*). The satires were an intentionally complicated genre; lack of familiarity with the intrigues of the urbane possibly warrants a slower, more pointed reading.

5. *Scottish Orthographical & Lexical Evidence*

While Scribe 1C offers little Scottish orthography, likely due to careful copying of an English exemplar full of English poetry, the other scribes were not so restricted. The scribe who opened TT_1 and added the Essex trial testimony, identified by Sullivan as Scribe 1A, copied several poems in the first manuscript across a wide range of folios (1-10, 11-20v, 62v-63). Recognized poets in these sections include Edward de Vere, Robert Ayton, John Donne, Josuah Sylvester, and John Harington. There are also many anonymous poems and, notably, a Middle English poem. Examining all the work of this particular scribe reveals a likely Scottish hand. We will consider as a comparative example Scribe 1A's copy of Sylvester's 'A Caveat to his Mistris'. This poem was first printed in 1654 as part of a collection titled *The Harmony of the Muses* (Donne, King and Strode 1654). It also appears in a verse miscellany at Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson poet. MS 117, at fol. 28v. It is the printed edition against which we will compare Scribe 1A's copy. Scribe 1A's spelling patterns regularly feature the long monophthong <ei> in place of the English <ee>, as in the line 'Eache greidie hande…' (l. 7).[15] The printed edition features the more English 'greedy'. The monophthong <ei> is limited in the Sylvester poem, but appears in other folios, 'seike' for 'seek' and 'yeildes' for 'yields' in de Vere's 'My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is', 'cheike' for 'cheek' in Harington's 'Of a Lady that gives the Cheek', and elsewhere 'neids' for 'needs', 'heire' for 'here', 'beine' for 'been', and so on. Scribe 1A also regularly uses the <wgh> construction, a holdover from Older Scots, as in 'thowghe' for 'though' (l. 21; see Bann and Corbett 2015, 25; Smith 2012, 32-33). This construction is observed in other folios with 'owght' for 'ought', 'enowghe' for 'enough', 'rowghe' for 'rough', 'browght' for 'brought', and others (see TT_1, 2v, l. 53; 16r, l. 5 and l. 6; 63r, l. 6). Scribe 1A similarly regularly employs the <tch> trigraph (see Bann and Corbett 2015, 34), as in 'mutch' for 'much', 'teatch' for 'teach', 'ritch' for 'rich', and elsewhere (see TT_1, 1r, l. 1; 2v, l. 41; 9r, l. 23)

Crucially, Scribe 1A also uses a Middle Scots word for 'fruit'. Where the printed edition has 'Let none taste fruit, unless he take the Tree', Scribe 1A writes, 'Lett none take fruicte, vnlesse y[e] take y^{e} tree' (17v, l. 12). The Jedburgh Presbytery records mentioned above preserve a contemporary use of this word: 'for temperance of the wether to cuir the fruictis of the grund' (quoted in MacDonald and McCallum 2013, 506), Another contemporary Scottish use of the

[15] For common Scots monophthongs in Middle Scots (the period approximately 1450-1700), see Bann and Corbett 2015, 46-47. See also Smith 2012, 31.

term may be found in the poems of King James VI/I: 'These my first fruictis, dispyse them not at all' (l. 11).[16] Variations of 'fruicte' appear across James VI/I's sonnets. Josuah Sylvester was English and the print edition, as noted, reads 'fruit', so it's unclear whether Scribe 1A unthinkingly wrote 'fruicte' from habitual use or whether the term was in his exemplar for the poem. Either way, the evidence strongly suggests that Scribe 1A was Scottish.

Scottish orthography and lexical variants appear throughout the first manuscript, which features the hands of five distinct scribes. Because Scribe 1E copied non-canonical poems, they have not yet been examined by scholars. This scribe contributed two poems to the manuscript: Richard Corbett's 'An Elegie upon the death of the Late Lord Howard Baron of Effingham dead, the 10. Dec. 1615' and an anonymous elegy, 'On the Duke of Richmonds fate an Elegy:' (TT_1, 64-67).[17] Corbett's poems circulated exclusively in manuscripts and did not appear in print until the nineteenth century; the anonymous elegy for the Duke of Richmond similarly circulated in manuscripts.[18] Scribe 1E shares many of the same Middle Scots spellings as Scribe 1A, such as <ei> where English has <ee>, as in 'heire' for 'here' and 'greife' for 'grief' (64v, 67r). Scribe 1E also incorporates such orthographical variants as the dental <t> for <ed> as in 'wisht' for 'wished' and 'trencht' for 'trenched' (67r), and <sh> to express the /ʃ/ phoneme as in 'ishue' for 'issue' (65v).[19] Like Scribe 1A, 1E also includes Scottish lexical variants. At line 47 of Corbett's elegy, there is the word 'quaere' (l. 47), meaning 'A (more or less formal or elaborate) question put publicly during a debate or legal hearing or in a literary work' (DSL). The English equivalent is 'query'. Finally, in the anonymous elegy, Scribe 1E writes 'skriching' at line 10, which the DSL report as a Scottish variant of 'screeching'. While Scribe 1E only copied two poems into the manuscript, we can observe from this brief sample that he was also likely Scottish.

As all these examples demonstrate, the scribes of the Dalhousie manuscripts can be located in either northern England or Scotland. By starting from the two named figures in the manuscripts, Patrick Maule of Panmure and Andrew Ramsay, and then considering the internal evidence across all the folios of these manuscripts, we can start to sketch the contours of a likely Scottish coterie group with a demonstrable appetite for the popular poems of the day as well as a prurient sense of humor about current events in the aristocratic culture of James VI/I's court.

6. *Conclusion*

The English and the Scottish have a shared, archipelagic past, including their literary histories. National borders matter little when it comes to the enjoyment of poetry, particularly in a mostly shared language. More recent scholarship and the evidence presented here counter the lingering assumption that Scottish readers would have little interest in English poetry. We have argued that the Dalhousie Manuscripts serve as important evidence for Scottish literary interests and compilation efforts. As demonstrated, a canonical focus creates a distorted view of an author's manuscript milieu. Further, it obscures the story of how readers encountered, used, and connected to literary conversations. Such a focus also prevents scholars from appreciating each manuscript

[16] James VI, Sonnet 015A, *Sonnets by James VI*, STARN: Scots Teaching and Resource Network, University of Glasgow, <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/aboutus/resources/stella/projects/starn/poetry/james-vi/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[17] Dalhousie I, 64-67.

[18] See the CELM entry for Richard Corbett, <https://celm-ms.org.uk/authors/corbettrichard.html>, accessed 1 December 2024; the Folger Library's First-Line Index lists only one extant copy, British Library Additional MS 21433. Notably, the Folger does not list the Dalhousie manuscripts.

[19] See the DSL entry for 'trin(s)ch, tren(s)ch.'; and Bann and Corbett 2015, 32-33.

as a singular item with its own, internal narrative. The method of assessing the full contents of a manuscript miscellany is a means of avoiding these distortions. If we can examine how anonymous and non-canonical poems interact with canonical authors within the same folios of a bound manuscript, we can start to see the rationale for a miscellany. Further, this approach can begin to illuminate the compilers themselves and thus articulate a more complete picture of the past.

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Textual Labour

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Book Supports Disability, Race, and the Labor of Accommodation in *Milton's Poetical Works* (1855)

Taylor Hare
Baylor University (<taylor_hare@baylor.edu>)

Abstract

This article explores intersections of disability and race embodied in *Milton's Poetical Works* (1855), the first edition of John Milton's poetry published for reading by touch. It describes how Morrison Heady, a blind man from Kentucky, raised funds for the book by traveling extensively across the eastern United States. Heady's commitment to this project speaks to the important position Milton occupied within the culture that developed around the production of tactile books in the nineteenth-century United States. Many blind readers as well as sighted bookmakers found in Milton a model of the intellectual achievement made possible by the advent of raised-letter printing, and the publication of his poems in 1855 was an occasion for key stakeholders to reflect on the state of tactile bookmaking as it stood at the midcentury. But Morrison Heady was also an enslaver, and historical records suggest that his efforts to publish an edition of Milton for blind readers was supported by the work of enslaved individuals. By acknowledging both the remarkable access provided by the 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works* and the coerced labor to which this book owes its existence, this article shows how the study of early modern book history as well as the emerging field of tactile book history can benefit from intersectional approaches.

Keywords: Blindness, Disability, Milton, Race, Reading by Touch

In 1854, a blind man named Morrison Heady traveled the eastern United States to find financing for a raised-letter edition of John Milton's poetry. Heady was himself a writer and a poet, born and raised in the small town of Elk Creek in Spencer County, Kentucky, and educated at both the Kentucky School for the Instruction of the Blind and the Ohio Institution for the Education of the Blind. Later in life, collections of his poetry such as *The Double Night* – a title referencing his blindness as well as the gradual loss of hearing that began to affect him at an early age – would garner Heady minor fame and earn him the

epithet 'The Blind Bard of Kentucky' ('Famous' 1914). But in 1854, at the age of twenty-five, Heady devoted his considerable ingenuity to publishing works in tactile form by the 'sightless but immortal bard of England' (Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind 1857, 7).

This essay tells the story of *Milton's Poetical Works, including Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes, Lycidas, Sonnets, &c.*, the book that resulted from Heady's extensive fundraising efforts. Published in 1855 in two volumes using raised Roman letters designed specifically to be read by touch, *Milton's Poetical Works* made complete versions of the works listed in its title as well as others gathered under the *&c.*, including *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, available to blind readers for the first time in print.[1] Brought to press at a time when funding for raised-letter print projects was scarce, the appearance of this edition demonstrates Milton's importance to the culture that developed around the production of books for blind readers of English in the nineteenth-century United States. As both an eminent writer and a visually disabled person, Milton offered bookmakers and blind readers alike a useful example of the intellectual and literary achievement attainable through the practice of reading by touch. Following its publication, the *Poetical Works* also became an inflection point in the history of the tactile book. Contemporary stakeholders found in the 'uncommonly interesting' story (Perkins Institute for the Blind 1856, 7) of one blind poet traveling the country to fund the publication of another blind poet a useful metonym for the larger enterprise of raised-letter printing. In 1855, the printed tactile book was both old and new, recognizably part of the same textual tradition as inked editions of Milton's works but also a remarkable departure from that tradition.

This essay explains the circumstances that led to the publication of *Milton's Poetical Works* and demonstrates this edition's significance for the history of reading by touch, thus shifting the focus of scholarship on Milton and blindness away from Milton himself and onto his readers. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, critics have begun to examine the role of disability in Milton's literary legacy in light of advances in the field of disability studies. Maura Brady takes the fact of Milton's blindness as an occasion for tracing the word 'disabled' across his literary oeuvre, linking denotative shifts in Milton's use of this term to the more general emergence of disability as a category of social exclusion indicative of 'personal weakness, social menace, and moral pollution' (2022, 174). Amrita Dhar charts the effect of visual disability on Milton's poetic style. By examining works composed in the years leading up to and just after 1652, at which point we understand Milton's 'darkling journey' to have reached complete blindness, Dhar finds evidence of a 'blind language' developed by Milton to reckon with 'approaching and final visual loss' (2018, 75). This and other work heeds Pasquale S. Toscano's call for a reevaluation of works like *Paradise Lost* 'through the lens of disability theory' (2019, n.p.) and builds on Angelica Duran's fusion of 'Milton studies and disability studies' in her reading of contemporary references to Milton's vision (2013, 154). But it leaves open questions about how Milton's legacy has informed the practice of printing books themselves intended for blind readers. How were Milton's texts first made available in raised print, and how have they circulated and signified among blind readers? What role did Milton's visual disability play in the development of tactile literacy? In answering these questions, this essay offers a point of departure for scholarship not only on the topic of Milton's uptake by blind readers but also on the interanimation of raised-letter print production and early modern literary history more generally.

[1] Two complete copies from this edition are known to survive. One is housed in the archives of the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston, Massachusetts (AG43 Embossed Book Collection), and the other at the rare books collection at Princeton University Library in Princeton, New Jersey (3859.1855q Oversize). A copy including only the first volume is housed at the Museum of the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky (2018.26).

Focalizing the story of Milton and his blind readerships through the 1855 *Poetical Works* also shows how complex intersections of disability and race become legible in the labor that produced early examples of raised text. Morrison Heady was an enslaver, and records indicate that Heady's visual disability – as well as his efforts to publish an edition of Milton's poetry – were materially supported by the enforced labor, knowledge, and skills of the people he enslaved.[2] The importance of these enslaved individuals to the making of the *Poetical Works* and the elision of their coerced contributions from the record of the book's publication point us back to Milton and the conditions under which he composed many of the poems Heady sought to publish. Milton's textual history is also one of uncredited labor, albeit of a different kind: the labor of scribes and amanuenses who read to Milton and took down his dictation beginning in the 1640s, but even more tangibly the labor of his daughters, Anne, Mary, and Deborah (Masson 1877, 121). Among other tasks, these women enabled their father's scholarship by reading to him in multiple languages, yet the degree to which their work was performed voluntarily or out of familial obligation (or even compulsion) remains unclear (Lewalski 2003, 407-408). The 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works* thus reflects Milton's status among the makers and readers of tactile books in the nineteenth-century United States while also refracting problematic elements of the relationship between disability, literary production, and the labor of accommodation in Milton's textual history.

Ultimately, these findings show that the study of nineteenth-century tactile books, including Miltonic tactile books, can benefit from a critical approach that takes in not only disability but also race and gender as operative categories of identity. Just as the appearance of Milton's work in raised letters catalyzed discussions about the tactile book and its place within the larger history of the material text, so too should the events that led to the publication of *Milton's Poetical Works* in 1855 prompt us to consider the unique political dynamics at play in the production and circulation of raised text in the nineteenth-century United States. As the field of tactile book history continues to assert the agency of blind readers and bookmakers of the past by examining the books they left behind, we must be mindful that these agents and their books were embedded in, and sometimes actively supported by, systems of violence, coercion, and inequality.

James Morrison Heady was born on July 19, 1829, in the agricultural village of Elk Creek in Spencer County, Kentucky, about twenty miles southeast of Louisville ('Morrison' 1915). His father was Dr. James Jackson Heady, a medical doctor and part-time farmer, and his mother was Lois Eastburn Heady, who also came from a family of physicians (Thompson 1996, 1-2). Morrison, or 'Uncle Morry', as he would later be known to friends such as Helen Keller and Samuel Greenleaf Whittier, was not born blind; he experienced two separate traumas to his eyes at the ages of six and sixteen that left him, as he would later describe it in a Miltonic phrase, 'bereft of light' (Heady 1901, *The Double Night*, I, l. 37). Heady's parents remained committed to their son's education despite his visual disability. In 1845, at the age of sixteen, they sent him to be enrolled in the Kentucky School for the Instruction of the Blind in Louisville, founded in 1839, which prided itself on its success in teaching pupils to read by touch (Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind 1845, 5). He studied in Louisville for one year before transferring to the Ohio Institution for the Education of the Blind in Columbus (about 200 miles northeast of Louisville) for a further fourteen months. Following his time at the Ohio Institution, Heady moved back to Spencer County, where he would live for most of his life. In the period between his enrollment at the Kentucky School and the Ohio Institution, he suffered a fall from horseback that resulted in gradual hearing loss and, by the 1870s, caused him to become deaf as well as

[2] I am grateful to P. Gabrielle Foreman *et al*. for their work on the community-sourced document 'Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help' (2024).

blind (Thompson 1996, 12). Heady's personal experience of disability and education at schools designed for blind students accounts for his awareness of and interest in raised-letter printing and the practice of reading by touch.

Heady was noted for his entrepreneurial spirit. Biographer Ken D. Thompson describes him as preoccupied with designs and inventions meant to make life on the family farm in Elk Creek more accessible for himself and other visually disabled visitors. There was the gate that could be operated using a series of ropes and beams, allowing access to the house without the need to dismount from a horse (50). There was also the 'talking glove' that Heady invented as his deafness became more acute (49). This glove allowed others to communicate with Heady by pressing their fingers onto metal letters sewn onto different parts of the hand and palm.[3] The design that proved most popular was for a diplograph called the 'Kentucky Point-Writer'. This early tactile typewriter allowed users to emboss text on demand and, most impressively, toggle between a variety of type systems such as New York Point, braille, and Moon Type as well as raised Roman types (American Association of Instructor of the Blind 1880, 17).[4] Heady's penchant for invention also manifested in his work as a writer and poet. His first publication came in 1851, a series of ballads published in a local Louisville paper, and he would go on to produce songs, children's stories, and biographical works in both inked and raised letters.[5] Heady achieved widest acclaim, however, for his collection of biographical poems *The Double Night* (1901). This collection garnered attention from publications like *The New York Times* and earned him the lasting epithet 'The Blind Bard of Kentucky' ('Famous' 1914).

Heady's nickname linked his experiences of visual disability and poetic production with those of John Milton, 'The Blind Bard of England,' and in doing so it illustrated Milton's relevance to literary and intellectual culture in the nineteenth-century United States.[6] Scholars have usefully described Milton's influence on writers in his home country, showing how Victorian as well as Romantic British authors found both inspiration and antagonism in Milton's work (Nelson 1963; Nardo 2003; Gray 2009). In the United States, Milton's reputation was first established through regular reference by a wide range of authors in the early days of the republic. George F. Sensebaugh argues that the many facets of Milton's identity – especially his erudition, his Puritanism, and his poetic abilities – enabled writers of different stipes to call on him to witness, and thus authorize, their work:

> Americans of the early Republic created the complex image of Milton out of specific needs of the time. Scholars called on him to support learning and wisdom; ministers, to witness Christian belief; critics and poets to clarify values and tastes and to strengthen an ambitious American literature. Reiteration of Milton's greatness from so many quarters of the American community so exalted his name that he became a popular idol and a symbol of authority. (1964, 32-33)

The American Revolution and its aftermath burnished Milton's legacy as a political thinker devoted to questions of liberty, such that he, 'long known as a controversialist … now began to appear as a powerful reasoner on civil and ecclesiastical freedom' (12). This reputation as a poet of liberty persisted into the nineteenth century and is especially evident in the work of African American poets, thinkers, and activists. Phillis Wheatley Peters, David Walker, Frederick

[3] For more on this technology, see Mills 2011, 96-99.

[4] For more on the development of tactile typography, see Fretwell 2019 and Hare 2024.

[5] Heady published under his own name as well as the pseudonym 'Uncle Juvinell' (i.e. Juvenal). For representative examples, see Heady 1864 and 1869.

[6] For two contemporary examples of this phrase in use, see Boies 1859, 52-56 and Thompson 1868, 476.

Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper, and others drew on Milton's work – *Paradise Lost* in particular – to assert their own literary authority, 'completing and complicating' Milton's legacy in the process (Wilburn 2014, 1).[7] These various affinities and appropriations positioned Milton as 'a man of titanic stature' in the period (Sensebaugh 1964, 3).

Heady's own deep affinity for Milton comes through clearly in *The Double Night*. Heady dedicates the eponymous first poem in the collection 'To the Shades of Milton and Beethoven' (1901, 2) and the same poem contains passages in which the speaker directly addresses 'blind Milton' (*The Double Night*, III, l. 150). 'What of joy I've found in life's dark way', the speaker tells Milton, 'And what of excellence attain I may, / Some part is due thy wondrous rhyme' (III, ll. 156-158). Heady was not alone among blind readers and writers in identifying with Milton on the basis of their mutual pursuit of literary 'excellence' as well as on their shared experience of 'life's dark way'. References to Milton appear regularly in the many poems, autobiographies, and other texts produced by blind writers in the nineteenth century. The memoirist B.B. Bowen positions 'the immortal' Milton as a hero of blind history, a figure 'whose misfortune has only served to stimulate them [blind readers] to greater exertions in the acquisition of knowledge' (1856, 148). For others, such as Mary L. Day Arms, Milton's literary career exemplifies a form of what Hannah Thompson has described as 'blindness gain' (2017, 14), an intellectual preeminence achievable because of, rather than in spite of, visual disability.[8] 'Blindness', Arms argues, 'adds wings to *thought*', which Milton proved by giving 'to the world its "Paradise Lost" and its "Paradise Regained" ' and 'to the blind of all ages the glory and the beacon light of his name' (1878, 279). The kinship that many nineteenth-century blind readers felt with Milton extended even to the particulars of their lived experiences of visual disability. Alfred Hirst, for instance, records his surprise when, on first reading Milton's account of his blindness in the letter 'To Leonard Philaras', he realized that 'the disease which deprived of sight perhaps the greatest man who ever lived was that same atrophy of the optic nerve which has prevented so many of us now living' (1897, 228). Overall, Milton functions in these and other similar texts as an exemplary author whose documented experience of visual disability could interpellate the lives of young blind people as they navigated an inaccessible world.[9]

Milton's example also loomed large for the bookmakers and administrators, many of them sighted, who were involved in the production of tactile books in the nineteenth century. These stakeholders deployed Milton's literary legacy for a variety of reasons, most notably to communicate to a broader sighted audience the possibilities opened for blind readers by the advent of raised text. Valentin Haüy, the founder of the first modern raised-letter press at the Institut national des jeunes aveugles (National Institute for Blind Youth) in Paris,

[7] See also Herron 1987.

[8] Thompson's phrase is a modified form of H-Dirksen L. Bauman and Joseph J. Murray's 'Deaf Gain'. For more, see Bauman and Murray 2014.

[9] Reflecting on the process of requesting disability accommodations from his home institution, Pasquale S. Toscano describes his relationship to Milton as that of 'crip ancestor'; Milton too, Toscano suggests, 'would have had some idea of what it means to receive accommodations', particularly from 'the Commonwealth/Cromwellian governments for which he worked' (Toscano 2021, n.p.). Toscano draws on the concept of crip ancestry developed by Stacey Milbern, which recognizes the importance of kinship relations that exceed the bounds of biological lineage to the lived experience of disability: 'a queered or crippled understanding of ancestorship holds that, such as in flesh, our deepest relationships are with people we choose to be connected to and honor day after day' (Milbern 2019, n.p.). While the affinity that writers like Heady demonstrate for Milton in their work gestures at such a relationship, both Toscano and Milbern make clear the personal and contingent dimensions of crip ancestry and the ethical issues attendant on ascribing it from the outside. While I have chosen not to employ this term in the body of my essay, I want to acknowledge its importance and potential applications in similar situations.

invokes Milton in the very first book produced by the press, the 1786 *Essai sur l'éducation des enfans-aveugles* (*Essay on the Education of Blind Children*). Outlining for his patron, King Louis XVI, his plans for incorporating tactile reading into the curriculum at the Institut, Haüy speculates that 'Homer, Belisarius and Milton, afflicted with blindness, would with pleasure have consecrated to the service of their country those years of their lives which followed their catastrophe' if they had had access to books as could now be printed in raised letters (1894, 17). Other administrators used Milton as an example of blind excellence when shoring up arguments in favor of educating of blind students. 'We still see virtue, innocence, and happiness portrayed in *Paradise Lost*', W.H. Wilkinson wrote in an 1872 address given at the first meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind (AAIB), and for that reason 'it is not necessary at this late day to prove that the blind are capable of great intellectual achievements' (American Association of Instructors of the Blind 1873, 83). Stephen Babcock echoed this sentiment at the same meeting of the AAIB, noting that though 'John Milton's most famous poems were written more than a decade after he became blind … his name stands prominent among English poets' (15). Milton's legacy supported the fundamental claim that blind students could benefit from and deserved access to books printed for their particular sensory needs. Despite never having read by touch himself, Milton helped justify and advertise the project of tactile bookmaking in the nineteenth century.

Heady's personal and professional connection with Milton gave rise to what Ken D. Thompson identifies as his 'dream of providing blind people everywhere with copies of his favorite *Paradise Lost*' (1996, 36). Because Heady himself had found joy in Milton's epic poem, likely when it was read aloud to him at school or at the family home in Elk Creek, he set out to make this title specifically available to a wider blind readership through the emerging medium of raised letters. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, the goal of producing a tactile edition devoted entirely to the work of a single early modern author, even an author as well-known as Milton, would have seemed just what Thompson describes: a dream.[10] Embossing books for reading by touch was a costly endeavor; it required thick paper, specialized type pieces, and press equipment capable of sustaining the pressure of the embossing process (Hare 2024, 12). These economic considerations affected the number and genre of titles available for reading by touch in the 1850s. Nearly three decades after the introduction of raised-letter printing to the Anglophone world, even the most productive presses rarely published more than five new titles in a year, and these consisted primarily of textbooks and academic primers aimed at inexperienced tactile readers.[11] Such books could be easily integrated into the schools for blind students that were beginning to be established not only in metropolitan areas in the United States like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, but also in more rural places like Staunton, Virginia and Macon, Georgia.[12] The more advanced texts available at the time were nearly all religious or liturgical in nature, since their production was made possible by subsidies from missionary organizations such as the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign

[10] An exception to this rule was an edition of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which was published by the Perkins School in 1836.

[11] For an incomplete but nevertheless useful survey of tactile books available in the early 1850s, see Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 (1852), 415-422.

[12] No demographic analysis of students enrolled in these schools yet exists, and this fact limits our understanding of the readership for books such as the 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*, especially in terms of race, gender, and class. Anecdotal evidence can be instructive here, however: the first two students enrolled at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind in Philadelphia (now the Overbrook School) were Abraham and Sarah Marsh, siblings from a white family (Willoughby 2007, 14).

Bible Society (Tilley 2018, 80-81). Heady's proposed edition had the benefit neither of easy classroom application nor of explicitly evangelical content, and so bringing it to press required extraordinary fundraising efforts.

Heady sought funding for his edition of *Paradise Lost* through donations 'solicited', as the president of Kentucky Institution noted in 1857, 'from a few of the benevolent citizens of Kentucky' as well as through subscriptions drawn from the schools for blind students that dotted the eastern United States (Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind 1857, 7). While some of this fundraising work could be accomplished via correspondence, it also required Heady to advertise his project beyond his home in Elk Creek. In an address to the AAIB at the beginning of the twentieth century, Benjamin B. Huntoon recalls that Heady 'canvassed central Kentucky and collected funds for printing Paradise Lost' by traveling to other parts of the state (American Association of Instructors of the Blind 1910, 5). And when, as Heady notes in a letter to Samuel Gridley Howe dated August 1854, the 'excessive heat of the weather' in Kentucky caused him to suspend his efforts there, he began 'visiting the northern and eastern institutions for the Blind to see definitely what they are willing to do for the cause in which I am engaged'. His travels would eventually take him to Howe's own city of Boston, where Heady hoped to persuade Howe, who was the director of the Perkins School at the time, to 'give to my cause all the influence in your power' (quoted in Thompson 1996, 36). Most notably, Heady wanted Howe to print his proposed edition at the Perkins School's raised-letter press, the most respected of its kind in the world.[13] Howe eventually agreed to take on the job, and he also supplemented the $595 Heady had raised in the course of his travels with funds from the treasury at the Perkins School.[14] This new, more robust financial backing enabled Heady to expand the scope of his project; together, Heady and Howe were able 'not only to print a larger edition of the Paradise Lost than Mr. Heady's means would warrant, but also to add another volume, with Paradise Regained, Sampson [sic] Agonistes, Lycidas, and most of the poetical works of the great bard' (Perkins Institute for the Blind and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind 1856, 26-27). The result was *Milton's Poetical Works*, copies of which were listed for sale in catalogs appended in the back pages of Perkins School annual reports starting in 1856. It was sold at $3.00 per volume 'unbound, in pasteboard boxes' and at $5.00 per volume 'bound' (Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind 1857, 27; Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind 1868, 36).

The publication of *Milton's Poetical Works* materialized the connection that many blind readers, including Heady, felt with Milton, but it was the events leading up to the book's publication that caused this edition to take on a significance in excess of its material impact on the tactile book market. Heady's early correspondence about the project finds him optimistic about its chances of success – 'the prospects I have in the future are such as to lead me to believe, that I will have nothing to fear' (quoted in Thompson 1996, 36) – but in reality *Milton's Poetical Works* met with poor sales when it appeared on the market in 1856. As soon as 1857, Heady was forced to donate 113 unsold copies to the library of the Kentucky Institution (Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind 1857, 7). Despite the book's apparent failure as an economic endeavor, however, contemporary stakeholders such as Howe found the case of one blind poet's journey across the eastern United States to raise funds for the work of another blind poet

[13] The jury of the 1851 London exhibition claimed that books printed at the Perkins School 'possess a neatness, clearness, sharpness, and durability all their own' (Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 (1852), 416).

[14] See the $400 added to the Perkins School Treasury in 1855 by 'Mr. Heady, on account of printing' as well as the $195 'received from Mr. Heady' in 1856 (Perkins Institute for the Blind 1856, 29).

uncommonly interesting … Less than two centuries ago the blind bard wrote his great work, for which he could hardly find a publisher, and his publisher hardly find readers, in the capital of the Old World; and now it has become of such universal repute, that a blind youth goes about a great State, which in Milton's day was a howling wilderness, and asks the inhabitants thereof, not, as blind men in the olden time were wont to do, for alms, but that he and his fellows may possess this poem and enjoy it. He asks, too, that the books may be in such form as to be read without eyesight, which Milton would have said never could be done, except by a miracle as strange as any he sang about. (Perkins Institute for the Blind 1856, 7-8)

Howe argues that Heady's efforts to produce a raised-letter edition of *Paradise Lost* indexed the more general relationship of the tactile book as a technology of literacy to its inked counterparts. On the one hand, Heady's 'ardent desire that his fellows in misfortune should possess this great poem' (7) drove him to mirror in his fundraising Milton's initial search for a publisher for *Paradise Lost*. Howe argues that these two publication efforts, and the material texts that resulted from them, are linked by a shared immaterial object: 'this great poem' (*ibid*.). And yet, Howe also claims that Heady and Milton occupy separate paradigms in the history of blind literacy. Not only was Heady able to travel 'about a great State' in support of his edition, but the purpose of Heady's fundraising activity – an edition of Milton's work 'in such form as to be read without eyesight' (8) – would have seemed a 'miracle' even to Milton himself. Howe reinforces the differences between these two paradigms by drawing attention to differences in geography: Milton, operating in 'the capital of the Old World', could hardly have anticipated the 'universal repute' his poetry would enjoy in a territory that featured in the Anglo-centric imagination of the seventeenth-century only as 'a howling wilderness'. Ultimately, what emerges from Howe's reflection is a definition of the tactile book as both old and new, part of a long history of textual production that included inked editions and at the same time a miraculous new technology of literacy. This assessment of the tactile book and its history was made possible by the 'uncommonly interesting' intersection of past and present embodied in the 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*.

For Howe, the provocation offered by the *Poetical Works* depended upon the singularity of Heady's achievement in bringing the edition to press. Notably absent from Howe's retelling are the family members, guides, and other agents whose labor would have been necessary for supporting a blind and increasingly deaf man as he traveled extensively in the mid-nineteenth century. Neither does Howe draw attention to the fact that the 'great State' of Kentucky were Heady lived and through which he traveled had codified the practice of chattel slavery in its constitution beginning in 1792 ('A Constitution', art. IX). Thompson's biography of Heady follows a similar pattern of elision, focusing primarily on Heady's endeavor and gesturing only rarely at the systems of care that accommodated his sensory needs. Thompson does, however, attempt to clarify the Heady family's relationship to slavery: 'Morrison's family owned only two slaves and sought to offset the fact by providing them considerable freedom and personal affection as members of an extended (though dependent) family'. In the same passage, Thompson claims that for Morrison Heady himself 'the notion of owning another person was, however, always a problem' (1996, 44). This description of the Heady family's enslaving practices is problematic in many ways, most notably because its characterization of slavery as a form of familial relation hides, as Drew Gilpin Faust describes, 'the reality of raw power and exploitation behind an ideology of paternalistic concern and natural racial hierarchy' (2022, n.p.). Moreover, Thompson's description of Heady as personally concerned with the 'problem' of slavery calls troublingly to mind several other racialized incidents that occur at other points in his account of Heady's life. Describing the event that first damaged Heady's sight, for example, Thompson says that 'he was blinded in his right eye by a wood chip which flew from a log being chopped by a black man working on the Heady farm' (1996, 6). A similar reference occurs in the description of a trip taken by Heady

in the 1860s to raise funds on behalf of the newly-established American Printing House for the Blind: 'Morrison had the model loaded on a wagon and, with the help of a black driver, toured Nelson, Shelby and Spencer counties, giving demonstrations of the model press and soliciting contributions to purchase the full-size press' (42). When combined with the knowledge that the Headys enslaved individuals on their farm in Elk Creek, these references to an unnamed 'black man working on the Heady farm' and a 'black driver' who accompanied Heady on his travels raise larger questions about how Heady himself, and by extension his 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*, might have benefited from the coerced labor of enslaved individuals.

Comparing Thompson's account with contemporary records provides a more honest picture of the Headys and their status as enslavers. Both the 1850 and 1860 United States federal censuses were accompanied by 'slave schedules', separate documents used to document the number, but not the names, of individuals held captive in the antebellum southern United States. Enslaved individuals are listed alongside the name of their enslaver, and so these documents tell us less about the lived experiences of the enslaved people of African descent than they do about the identities and record-keeping practices of white enslavers. In 1850, for instance, federal slave schedules from Spencer County (2023) include the names of 445 enslavers alongside 2,151 enslaved individuals. James Jackson Heady, Morrison Heady's father, appears on this list accompanied by information relating to seven individuals he is described as enslaving, four of whom are listed as fugitives (US Census 1850, 35). Morrison Heady's own name also appears in the 1850 slave schedule; at that time, he enslaved four individuals: a woman of nineteen years old, a female child of five years old, and a male child of three years old, all three of whom are identified as fugitives, as well as a man of thirty years old (48). Heady resided with his parents at the time the census was taken in 1850, and we can thus assume that the Heady farm in Spencer County housed as many as eleven enslaved individuals in that year, some of whom had managed, at least temporarily, to free themselves. When we move forward to the 1860 census, we find James Jackson Heady once again described as enslaving seven people. Morrison Heady's name is no longer listed among the enslavers of Spencer County, though he continued to reside with his parents on a farm that included at least two 'slave houses' (US Census 1860, 35).

The data contained in these slave schedules strongly imply a connection between the publication of *Milton's Poetical Works* in 1855 and the forced labor of enslaved individuals. And while what Brian Connolly and Marisa Fuentes term 'the violence of the archives of slavery' (Connolly and Fuentes 2016, 105) means that we may never know exactly how the skills and labor of enslaved people may have contributed to this first tactile edition of Milton's work, we can, following Saidiya Hartman, 'imagine what cannot be verified' in our reading of Heady's life and his publication efforts (2008, 12). We can consider, for instance, Thompson's description of Heady as accompanied by a 'black driver' on journeys taken in the 1860s and wonder about Heady's even more extensive travels in the previous decade to raise funds for his edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*. Was Heady's disability accommodated on these journeys by the labor of one or more enslaved individuals, perhaps even someone he is described as enslaving in the 1850 schedules? We might also speculate about the $595 that Heady raised in part from citizens of Kentucky, which served as the bulk of the financing for his print project. Given the importance of coerced labor to the largely agricultural economy of Kentucky in the 1850s, we can be fairly sure that much of this money, and by extension *Milton's Poetical Works* itself, derived from the profits of chattel slavery.

By overlooking Morrison Heady's status as an enslaver – and thus the contributions of enslaved individuals – Heady's contemporaries were able to tell a useful story about *Milton's Poetical Works* and its significance for tactile book history. Howe describes Heady as mirroring Milton's literary legacy while at the same time accomplishing something that Milton himself

would have deemed a 'miracle', and this layering of past and present became the means through which Howe articulated the relationship between books meant to be read by touch and those meant to be read by sight. And yet, the questions about consent and the labor of accommodation opened by knowledge of Heady's enslaving practices also tie the story of the 1855 *Poetical Works* back to Milton's own textual history. Accounts of Milton's life and work stress the importance of outside agents to his literary production in the years following his loss of vision.[15] Milton relied on those around him to accommodate his visual disability by reading to him and writing down his compositions, and in many cases these roles were willingly filled by members of Milton's social circle. One of Milton's nephews, Edward Phillips, recalls that 'he had daily about him one or other to Read to him, some persons of Man's Estate', and that these men 'of their own accord greedily catch'd at the opportunity of being his Readers' (Darbishire 1965, xlviii, 77).[16] Milton's daughters also aided in the production of his most famous works, but the degree to which these women volunteered their labor of accommodation is less clear. For example, Phillips claims that Milton made Deborah, Mary, and Anne 'serviceable to him in that very particular in which he most wanted their Service', namely in 'the performance of Reading, and exactly pronouncing of all the Languages of whatever Book he should at one time or other think fit to peruse', but Phillips also notes that this multilingual accommodation of their father's visual disability was accomplished by them 'without understanding one word' of what they read (*ibid.*).[17] Moreover, Deborah's daughter would later claim that Milton kept his daughters from learning these languages, believing that 'one tongue was enough for a woman!' (l).[18] Scholars such as Barbara Kiefer Lewalski find reasons to be skeptical of this and other similar claims about Milton's relationship with his daughters (2003, 407-408), but the question of whether and to what extent Deborah, Mary, and Anne consented to the labor they performed for their father remains precisely because the voices of these women are almost entirely absent in the historical record. Though certainly different in kind from the labor of enslaved individuals elided from the story of the first edition of Milton in tactile form, the uncertainties around gender, consent, and the labor of accommodation that inflect Miltonic textual history nevertheless resonate with the publication history of the 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*. For Howe, this book spoke to the unique position occupied by the tactile books within the larger history of the material text. For us, it represents as an opportunity to reflect on the forms of uncredited and sometimes enforced labor that have supported the publication of early modern literature across time.

The new information about Morrison Heady's life and efforts to publish poems by Milton contained in this essay emphasizes the importance of approaching the history of the tactile book, and indeed all research in disability history, with a critical lens. As these records show, Heady was both a disabled person of extraordinary endeavor who defied social expectations and an active participant in systems of institutionalized oppression and racial violence. Likewise, his edition of Milton must be understood through two frames at once: it advanced the project of tactile literacy in the nineteenth century by making the work of an exemplary blind

[15] For more on the timeline of Milton's blindness, see Campbell and Corns 2010, 212-213, and Rumrich 2019.

[16] Phillips describes the process of copying and re-copying that enabled Milton to inscribe and revise *Paradise Lost*. For more on this process, see Campbell and Corns 2010, 271. For more on Edward Phillips himself, see McDowell 2019.

[17] Early biographies emphasize that Milton did not rely on all three of his daughters to the same extent or for the same tasks. John Aubrey notes that Deborah, Milton's youngest daughter, acted as his amanuensis once Milton lost his sight, while Edward Phillips claims that Milton largely excused Anne 'by reason of her bodily infirmity, and difficult utterance of speech' (Darbishire 1965, xlviii and 77).

[18] For more on the origins of this phrase, see Lewalski 2003, 670 n. 39.

man accessible to blind readers who strongly identified with him, and it also appears to owe its existence, at least in part, to conscripted individuals whose contributions to the bookmaking process have been omitted from accounts such as Howe's. These complex intersections of disability and race are not unique to the story of *Milton's Poetical Works*. Scholarship in disability history emphasizes the necessity of utilizing intersectional approaches such as those pioneered by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to research disability in the nineteenth century. Surveying the field in 2022, Daniel Blackie and Alexia Moncrieff note that 'disability historians must recognize all the positions disabled people have occupied historically', including 'those stemming from unequal power relations that have had oppressive or disadvantageous consequences for other groups' (809). Penny L. Richards exemplifies this approach in her work on Thomas Cameron, a developmentally disabled man living in North Carolina in the early 1800s whose networks of care 'rested upon and included the command of enslaved laborers' (2014, 51).[19] Research examining the history of raised-letter printing has yet to reckon fully with the areas of overlap between this practice and larger systems of oppression. Work by Erica Fretwell and Vanessa Warne demonstrates the critical energy behind the recovery of blind readers' interactions with their books in the nineteenth century, and the recent Bibliographical Society of America 'Touch and See' workshop shows how this energy can drive methodological change in the study of the material text (Warne 2014; Fretwell 2019; Stuckey 2022). At this crucial juncture in the history of the field, the 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works* cautions us lest efforts to recover disabled experiences of the past through the medium of the tactile book become themselves the means of obscuring the voices, contributions, and agencies of other overlooked people and groups.

Finally, the publication history of *Milton's Poetical Works* functions as a cautionary tale for early modern book history. As the field continues to widen its scope to include not only the production of texts in the early modern period but also the ways in which works by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors have made meaning at different times, in different forms, and for different readers, Heady's edition shows the importance of investigating the points at which these stories of reception and reinterpretation intersect with the economics of slavery and other forms of racial oppression. In doing so, this study joins Emma Smith in calling for greater attention to the 'complex economic histories' of the period's most foundational books (2023, xviii-xix). In her revised preface to *Shakespeare's First Folio*, Smith connects the value added to the Folio through sales in the late-eighteenth century with the labor of enslaved people on sugar plantations in the West Indies: 'The profits from the one frequently enabled the purchase of the other', such that 'the more general impact of the economic sugar rush on luxury goods added value to all the copies of this increasingly desirable book' (2023, xviii-xix). Just as Smith defamiliarizes the Folio's 'rise to cultural prominence' by tying this rise to the brutal realities of colonial violence, so too does the story of the 1855 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works* ask us to consider how seemingly emancipatory increases in access to early modern texts might have depended upon the forced labor of enslaved individuals.

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[19] For other relevant examples, see Cleall 2016 and Nair 2017.

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How Much Does a First Folio Cost and How Much *is* That?

Emma Smith
Oxford University (<emma.smith@hertford.ox.ac.uk>)

Abstract

The article attempts a survey of the ways book prices have been conceptualised and deployed as part of bibliography and book history, with a particular focus on Shakespeare's First Folio. In part it is an attempt to understand the changing prices of books which become valuable through different possible financial heuristics, but its major interest is in the implicit work, both rhetorical and methodological, that is done by conceptions of price, and through analogies and comparisons with what hypothetical book buyers might also buy or earn. The period in which rare books were invented as a consumer category is the period of wealth created by the trade in enslaved people and in goods produced by enslaved people: this differently freighted comparison brings out the ethical and conceptual problems raised in discussions of historic book prices.

Keywords: Book Prices, Collecting, Economics, First Folio, Slavery

1. *'A good, plain dinner'*

'From about 1580', R.B. McKerrow wrote in *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students*, 'the cost of a new play seems always to have been about the same as that of a good, plain dinner' (1927, 133). A footnote elaborated his comparison:

> The normal price of the Shakespearian quarto is said to have been 6*d.* sewn; that of new plays in 1914 was generally 2*s.* 6*d.* in paper covers or 3*s.* 6*d.* bound. The ratio of the cost of living at 1600 and at 1914 is generally given as from 1 : 5 to 1 : 7.

By that measure, the cost of a new play relative to a good plain dinner has fallen over the twentieth century: in late 2023, theatrical publisher Nick Hern Books were selling new plays reduced to £8.79, from a list price of £10.99. A good, plain dinner – especially in London – would be difficult to acquire at that cost – although, like all measures of equivalence, this one is culturally specific, meaning different things to different people. Is a good plain

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dinner a McDonald's meal (£5.19 at the time of writing), an all-you-can-eat buffet (£10.99 in Chinatown), a sit-down service at a mid-price chain (£15 or so), or two courses at an interesting independent restaurant (£30 upwards)? McKerrow's analogy can only understand book-prices relative to the price of other goods, but the cost of those other goods can also be tricky to pin down. Nor is it clear whether it is the paper covered, or the bound, price of the new play that is most approximate to the dinner: the shilling difference represents a large proportion of the price. And, finally, what historicising prices in this way does not begin to do is to track the value of those initial playbooks as they cross different markets at different moments. McKerrow's account of play-book prices assumes that they have a single initial sale, and do not reappear in the market.

The analysis registers the price of a particular kind of book – here, play-books – across time, and sets this against other ways of understanding the sums of money involved. It relies, as will be discussed in more detail, on a form of rhetorical comparison that is effectively a simile: 'a figure of speech comparing two unlike things'.[1] McKerrow's longitudinal price comparison requires a stability in the book type, something available for plays – printed as single text volumes in the sixteenth century and in the twentieth and twenty-first – but not available for many other types of book. Elsewhere, his anatomy of bibliography is uninterested in the changing value of particular books over time. However, coincidentally, my copy of McKerrow's own book itself registers a different arc of longitudinal price change. The publishers' price is printed in the bottom corner of the front flap of the dust jacket. At 21*s*. net, or a guinea, this suggests a high status volume, given the anachronistic financial use of the guinea to calculate luxury or aristocratic consumption. My copy also has a pencil mark £3.49 on the first flyleaf, suggesting a second-hand bookshop, most probably the Oxfam shop in Oxford. In a firm hand there is also a red biro notification of 'WD 50p', suggesting another, lower price circulation, perhaps in a less formal sale. A quick search online suggests that a copy of this edition, with dust jacket (price-clipped), would cost £6. One nice irony of second-hand book prices is that a book that has had the price notification removed is generally less valuable than one that has not, even where its current price does not approach the marker of its price when new. There are a number of different book prices here, then, that are available for consideration: the price of McKerrow's book when new; its price/s in different second-hand contexts; and the price of a price-clipped copy. All of these prices might be contextualised against the price of, say, a good plain dinner at the same time (McKerrow's second-hand value now could only run to the McDonald's menu). That is to say, firstly, prices change across time as books move between statuses: new, gifted, second-hand, rare, collectible. And secondly, those changing prices are themselves understood relative to other prices that may themselves be stable, variable, or difficult to calculate.

The present article attempts a survey of the ways book prices have been conceptualised and deployed as part of bibliography and book history, with a particular focus, like McKerrow, on Shakespeare. In part this is an attempt to understand the changing prices of books which become valuable – the 1623 First Folio of Shakespeare is my key example after the attention it has garnered during its four hundredth anniversary year – through different possible financial heuristics. But mine is not really a study in economic history. Rather, I am interested in the implicit work, both rhetorical and methodological, that is done by conceptions of price, and through comparisons with what hypothetical book buyers might also buy. How might these adjacent commodities reflect or challenge ideas of value and of cost? In the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the purchase price of Shakespeare First Folios suddenly increased very

[1] Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of 'simile', <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/simile> accessed 1 December 2024.

substantially. I try to contextualise the economics of that increase, and to reframe the discussion, with higher comparative stakes, by discussing the development of a valuable trade in early modern English printed books relative to the economics of the age of slavery.

2. *What Does a Book Cost?*

Despite gradually nudging its sphere of influence beyond the book's production journey and into the hands of its readers, mainstream bibliography has not tended to undertake any systematic study of book prices across the life of a book, or relative to other purchases. In as much as book purchasing has been part of the account, bibliography has focused on new prices at the point of publication rather than beyond. For example, Philip Gaskell discusses 'Edition quantities and prices' (1972, 175-178), but is focused on production, rather than purchasing costs. Prices are absent as well from D.F. McKenzie's influential sociology of texts. The only sum mentioned in his book of that name relates to the first edition of James Joyce's *Pomes Penyeach*, but that this cost 'a shilling, or 12 pennies for 12 poems, with the 13th free' (1999, 59) is noteworthy not in order to locate the book's relative affordability at the time of its first English edition in Paris in 1927. Rather, it is because of the price's pleasurable, and perhaps even deliberate, echo of the symbolic numerology of the poems. If consideration of prices was not part of foundational bibliographic texts, nor do they feature in new configurations of the field, such as the influential teaching collections edited by Michelle Levy and Tom Mole (2014), or Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (2019), or James Raven (2023). Rather, book prices have been attended to either in general terms, or in localised or highly specific ways. Prices of books when new have been the subject of historical study, since Francis R. Johnson (1950) and H.S. Bennett (1950) reviewed retail book prices in England in the early modern period almost 75 years ago. Like Gaskell, their focus was on bibliography as book production not consumption, and therefore they each focused on the costs of production rather than acquisition. Simon Eliot's commitment to book prices as 'a critical factor in the history of the book for the simple reason that it determined who had access, and the nature of that access, to texts', drew on nineteenth century publishers' records at scale (2002, 291). Elsewhere, inventories, book-sellers' documents, notes in and about private libraries, and account books such as that of the Bodleian Library, and later, catalogues and trade-body statistics have tended to supply case studies and specific examples. But for the most part, as scholarly bibliography and collecting connoisseurship began to establish their separate spheres during the twentieth century, an interest in prices was located in the buying and selling part of the field. It has seemed 'too variable and too trivial (perhaps even too vulgar)' (Eliot 2001, 160), to be accepted as a category for study.

There are relatively few old books – copies or editions – whose price can be confidently traced across a long historical itinerary. The ongoing bibliographic interest in *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* of 1623 marks it as one possible exception. Work to understand the changing price of this desirable bibliographic object has revealed much about its trajectory, from the book stalls of Jacobean London to the auction houses of New York, beginning with evidence of initial pricing. One copy has an early price of 15s written in the front,[2] and another, at £1 – presumably bound – is noted in a contemporary account book

[2] The Shakespeare Census provides the most convenient way of listing First Folio copies (<shakespearecensus.org>, accessed 1 December 2024). This one is SC 5102, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. Further references to SC number will be given in the text.

belonging to Sir Edward Dering (see Smith 2023a, 1-23; Yeandle 2006). The discrepancy has usually been explained in terms of the unbound/bound price. About how to understand these prices in the context of the period there has been less agreement.

The Measuring Worth website shows how widely the estimates provided by modern price comparisons can vary, depending on the measure chosen. Its calculations allow the modern equivalent of a historic price to be generated according to different financial metrics. The lowest equivalent to the £1 price of the bound book on their site is £195.70 (£1 multiplied by the percentage increase in the Retail Price Index – RPI – over the period); the highest, the economic share of £1 in 1623 relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) compared with the value of the same share now, gives an equivalent of over £63,000. Clearly, this gives an enormous range for the economic significance of the price of a First Folio, and, equally clearly, these are not simply economic questions. What Shakespeare costs is a question of considerable cultural significance that toggles between two potentially contradictory values: the high literary worth placed on his works and the wide access to those works deemed culturally and ideologically desirable. A book that cost the equivalent of a high-end electric car for its first purchasers is clearly a select commodity with a circumscribed reach. The Tesla Folio is an uncomfortable idea: put bluntly, we do not want the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays to be quite so elite. Unsurprisingly, few if any Shakespeareans and Shakespeare institutions have therefore opted for the GDP measure of changing historic value.

Instead, versions of the lower RPI purchasing power calculation have been more helpful to institutions offering a comparison of the original purchase price of a now highly valuable book. The Folger Shakespeare Library website suggests that the 15s would be the equivalent to about $200 today, without any further detail. This relatively modest modern equivalence helps to downplay the elite status of the eighty-two copies that are so key to their collection. Given that the Folger giftshop includes a number of items costing more than $200, it would seem that, for at least some of its implied patrons, the modern calculation of the cost of a First Folio in 1623 produces a price point that is within their contemporary disposable income. The suggestion is that you, or your ancestral equivalent, just might have been one of the first purchasers of the First Folio. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust uses a different measure. It updates the price not through measuring inflation over the four centuries, but by relating it to a different commodity, claiming that the £1 cost of a bound copy was equivalent to forty-four loaves of bread.[3] The price per loaf was set at just under five and a half pence by a medieval statute known as the Assize of Bread, which was in operation from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Because bread was sold by price rather than weight, when grain costs increased, the size of the bread decreased, in an anticipation of the modern idea of 'shrinkflation'. The fixed price offers a stable cost comparator, but bread itself was as clearly socially stratified as McKerrow's dinners, even in the early modern period. Gervase Markham's advice to *The English Hovse-Wife* differentiates 'the making of all sorts of bread, either for Maiſters, ſeruants, or hinds', and offers recipes for manchet, 'your best and principall bread' (1631, 249), for wheaten 'cheatebread' (250) of mixed grains, and finally 'For your browne bread, or bread for your hinde-ſeruants, which is the coursest bread for mans vse', baked from barley and legumes (251). As an economic comparator, bread straddles boundaries of status, but the fact that different breads of different qualities were thought so evidently fit for different statuses means that the symmetry between bread and other goods is only symbolically, rather than actually, inclusive.

[3] See 'Shakespeare's First Folio', *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-works/shakespeares-first-folio/> accessed 1 December 2024.

The fixed price of regular bread has provided a rhetorically useful way to conceptualise the sky-rocketing of Folio prices during the second half of the eighteenth century. As Michael Dobson puts it in a review of Anthony James West's book on prices and sales, 'In 1756 a copy fetched £3 3s., 105 loaves; over the following decade the usual cost rose to more like that of 200 loaves; and by the 1790s the average price of a First Folio had risen to about £35, the equivalent of nearly 900 loaves'. Fifty years later and the price of a Folio was the equivalent of 5000 loaves; another fifty years saw that figure quadruple (Dobson 2001, n.p.). What Dobson's brilliant longitudinal snapshot shows is the bread price equivalent exploding, into absurdist multiples. The utility of the comparison has broken, because the attempt to conceptualise the price equivalence by use of an everyday item has itself become inconceivable. The multiplying loaves have a demonic quality that relates them Grimm's story of the magic porridge pot which so manically overprovides that the whole village is drowning in oats. Only the owner, remarks the index of fairy tales, can call a halt to this exponential growth (Uther 2004, vol. 1, 334). What began as an image grounding the price of the First Folio by comparison with recognisably mundane, necessary daily expenditure, has spun off into a nightmare.

The comparator of bread thus suggests that the price of a book should be understood in relation not to luxury goods but rather to necessary purchases. Even where the multiple becomes as large as in Dobson's later examples, that is to say, the rhetoric of the comparison works to associate the First Folio with everyday consumption patterns. It is a strategy for normalising its purchase. Chris Laoutaris takes a different comparison strategy: not RPI, and not bread. Describing the cost of the unbound First Folio bought by Thomas Longe (15 shillings), Laoutaris glosses this as 'around £120 in today's money' and 'roughly a year's wages for the average labourer and … therefore beyond the reach of most' (2023, 282). My own calculations in my book were different – and perhaps more sentimentally expressed – but reaching for similar comparisons around earnings: 'it would have taken a working man – Bottom the weaver, say, or Snug from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – the best part of a month to earn the purchase price of the First Folio' (Smith 2023b, 73). This figure was based on my assessment of wages paid by Edward Dering as recorded in his account book alongside the purchase of his First Folio, and on the National Archives online historic currency converter, which gives 20 days skilled labour as the equivalent of £1 in 1620.[4] Others using the labour measure come up with different tariffs. Jean-Christophe Mayer cites Julie Stone Peters in estimating that 'a bound folio would be about forty times the price of a single play and represented almost two months' wages for an ordinary skilled worker' (Peters 2000, 331, n. 89 quoted in Mayer 2018, 22), although neither gives a reference for the comparison. Eric Rasmussen states that 'the original price of a First Folio, bound in calfskin, was £1 – an *enormous* sum in an age when a skilled tradesman could expect to earn £4 a year' (2011, xiv). Writing in November 2023 on 'The Long Lives of First Folios' to accompany an exhibition including a Shakespeare Folio at the Ransom Center in Austin Texas, Aaron T. Pratt suggests that 'To the average worker, spending £1 on a book in 1623 would probably have seemed like spending around $4,000 or more for one today' (2023, n.p.). That the buyer is an 'average worker' implicitly links the sum to projected wages although the precise equivalence is not spelled out in this comparison.

[4] For example, Dering paid eight shillings to 'Powte for 8 dayes work' (Yeandle 2006, 117), and 4 shillings and 8 pence to 'Thon Hunt for 4 dayes works in makinge and layinge a new penstocke' (129), while 'Pout three days pluckley land pond' earned another 3 shillings (130). The National Archives calculator is at <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/records/dering-expences> (accessed 1 December 2024); perhaps ominously, 2017 is the latest date to which prices can be compared.

These attempts to conceptualise the price of the Folio through wages produces a wide range, from a month to a year, via labourers variously and vaguely categorised as 'skilled', 'average' or 'ordinary'. It is a rhetorical manoeuvre that manages both to interpellate labourers with this high status book, suggesting democratic accessibility (just work harder), and at the same time absolutely to dissever them from ownership.

Pricing books by comparison with wages has also been a longstanding co-ordinate of economic history, including book history. Discussing the circulation of three-volume novels in the nineteenth century, Simon Eliot notes that the cost of between five and six shillings per volume made these 'an unaffordable luxury' at 'a time when a skilled builder would be earning a weekly average of 21s, a printer 27s, and a teacher about 17s' (2020, 472). In a different age, a book produced by UNESCO on the 'Book Revolution' responded to the postwar boom in cheap paperbacks in similar terms, suggesting that one of the cultural organisation's aims was 'to encourage the publication of cheap editions' (Escarpit 1966, 7). Robert Escarpit's pacy account of 'What is a Book?' concludes with the apotheosis of the form in the paperback, 'printed on ordinary, but agreeable, paper', with an illustrated cover, a print run in the thousands, and, most significantly 'seldom sold at more than the equivalent of an hour's wages per volume' (28). 'An hour's wages' seems a comparison even more socially varied than the 'good, plain dinner': but if we were to take the UK minimum wage of £10.42 (in December 2023), that suggests that new release fiction paperbacks (typically £8.99 or £9.99) are indeed currently retailing for just under an hour's wages, and that older titles sell new for much less.

Materialist economists developed this labour theory of value as an attempt to connect the price of a commodity with the cost of the labour required to produce or purchase it. Eliot's exemplary earners, the builder, the printer and the teacher combine two approaches by including the labour of book production among the other trades. Adam Smith famously summarised in *The Wealth of Nations*, that 'the real price of every thing, what every thing really costs to the man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring it'. It was intended as a practical and theoretical connection between wages and prices: 'labour', wrote Smith, 'was the first price, the original purchase-money that was paid for all things' (1975, 44). In Escarpit's account of the paperback, the comparison is arranged in a proper symmetry which identifies books as appropriately affordable. But the comparison of labourers' wages to First Folio purchase prices diverts this materialist theoretical underpinning by making the gap between the cost of the book and the work required to secure equivalent payment impossibly large. Labour may have been the 'original purchase-money', in Smith's terms, but it no longer suffices. Labouring wages, and the ordinary, average, or skilled categories behind them, propose a rhetorical comparison that emphasises the book's unaffordability, and which implicitly polices its proper reach on grounds of class or status. That a labourer would need work for many days to afford the book emphasises that it is not intended, available, or even appropriate for him.

If bread offers longitudinal price stability as a marker, and wages correspond to labour fiscal theory, one further comparison point is often made. Simon Eliot has explored eighteenth and nineteenth century book prices amid a data-rich economic history of disposable income, adding: 'There is another sort of cost that we need to estimate: namely, opportunity cost. What does a person have to give up, sacrifice, or go without in order to buy a book?' (2001, 167).[5] For an earlier period, David McKitterick has wondered along similar lines: whether we should 'ask not about the prices of books in themselves, but about how much books cost to the customer,

[5] Eliot also factors in considerable additional costs including time spent reading, the energy costs of different light sources, and their dangers and associated faff.

and how much customers were prepared to spend'. The cost of books, McKitterick suggests, can only be understood within an 'environment of costs' and alongside 'the study of prices of other goods, so that the context of choice is more clearly displayed' (1997, 188). McKitterick's extended example draws on the notes of expenses kept by the Norfolk gentleman John Buxton in the later 1620s, including a significant spending spree on domestic items made as Buxton and his new wife Margaret established their household in 1629. At Stourbridge Fair in Cambridge, for example, the Buxtons laid out more than £45 on a long shopping list including fire irons, chafing dishes, kettles, beds and linen, and later expenses included large sums on tapestries, on pewterware, and on drinking glasses (200-203). These accounts provide an actual, rather than a hypothetical, comparison for book prices against other consumer items. They also have the effect – like many similar accounts from the earlier period – of making books look like a bargain; the same is not true of later periods, where book prices are high relative to other consumer goods. Most early moderns who had money to lay out on books had more expensive consumer habits to maintain. McKitterick places Buxton's regular, consistent spending on books well below his expenditure on, for example, extravagant clothes. The accounts reveal that his sixpenny playbooks cost the equivalent of tips paid to a porter; they were, in other words, comparable to labour rather than to other, much more expensive commodities: the Buxtons' frying pan cost four shillings, 'a Close stool and a Pan' nine shillings, and four pounds was paid for a table (202).

Eliot and McKitterick remind us that people who buy books – new, second-hand, or collectable – also buy other things, and that this wider consumer context presents a way of understanding the significance of the expenditure within a personal economy. Rather than comparing book prices to the cost of other, unrelated items such as bread or labour, specific book encounters in the archives offer the opportunity to compare real expenditure across a range of headings. Anthony West's study (2001) of First Folio prices over four centuries draws arrestingly on a range of consumerist comparisons from bread to Gutenberg bibles. For one striking table, West took his comparators from an article in *The Economist* which discussed the shifting global market for high-end brands within a framework derived from Thorstein Veblen's influential notion of 'conspicuous consumption' (1899). Capturing 'the spiralling cost of status', *The Economist* graph tracked over the twentieth century the costs of a range of expensive branded consumer items, including a Louis Vuitton suitcase, a bottle of non-vintage champagne, and a Cartier Tank watch ('Upmarket' 1992-1993, 92).

John Buxton owned his Folio in the seventeenth century within a context of comfortable, but not sumptuous domestic expenditure. It is a measure of the extraordinary baseline shift in the price of First Folios that, for his twentieth-century equivalent, the comparators needed to be drawn from conspicuously luxurious consumption practices. West takes from *The Economist* not the suitcase, champagne and watch (the cheaper end of the comparators) but rather – 'a Purdey shotgun, Russian caviar, and a Jaguar motor car' (2001, 63). West adds the explanation, quoting Veblen in conclusion:

> For the following comparisons to have any meaning, it is important to note that the purchaser of these items is likely to have had *certain characteristics in common with the purchaser of a First Folio* – such as disposable wealth, aspects of lifestyle and taste, and perhaps the wish for "the esteem and envy of fellow men". (*Ibid.*)

Here prices are linked to comparable products, and the comparators chosen identify and corroborate the social and material advantage of First Folio owners. The symmetry here is one of shared privilege. The comparison has moved a long way from the labour model or from mundane staple of bread. Now the only point of comparison is other consumer goods whose cost participates in the same dance of fashion, brand recognition, and self-display as the First Folio itself.

In economic terms, measures of historic price comparisons do particular, and highly variable, kinds of work. But rhetorically they do something different. In producing prices via simile, books come to be disjunctively associated with other distinct objects: with good plain dinners, bread, days' labour, forms of conspicuous consumption. Like all similes, they 'express a similarity between constituents that are not really alike' (Ortony 1993, 343). These various comparisons confer on the apparently neutral activity of historical price comparison certain ideological frameworks. They align books with other forms of ownership, with labour, and with consumption. These similes for prices become literalised in the book-collecting bonanza of the late-eighteenth century, where the typical First Folio owner had, in West's words, 'certain characteristics in common' with consumers of a wide range of luxury goods, including people.

3. *Book Ownership in the Late Eighteenth Century*

In some cases, the connection between Shakespeare's First Folio and slavery was explicit. Take the provenance of a copy of the book offered in an 'Exceptional Sale' at Christie's New York, in October 2020 (SC 5173). The estimate was $4-6 million; the price realised was $9,978,000, a 'World Auction Record for Any Work of Literature', as the press release put it.[6] This is clearly not a price that can be readily understood in terms of any of the comparators that have previously been proposed.

The immediate seller of this First Folio was Mills College in California, originally founded as a women's college at the end of the nineteenth century, and experiencing financial difficulties. Despite its record receipts, the Folio sale did not save them and less than two years later a merger with Northeastern University was announced. Eric Rasmussen and Anthony James West track the prices of this copy immediately prior to its arrival at Mills in 1977, as a gift in honour of Elias Olan James, who had taught Shakespeare there and written a book about the college's founders. It had been displayed at the Festival of Great Britain exhibition at the V&A in London in 1951, when it was owned by the bookseller Bernard Quaritch. Quaritch sold it in 1961 for £12,500 and it was sold again in 1976 for $35,000 (Rasmussen and West 2012, 220). But the most significant of its prior owners was John Fuller (1757-1834). Fuller's entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB), like most other commentary about him in relation to his First Folio, describes him as 'politician and eccentric'. This characterisation serves to whitewash – Folio-wash? – his prominent activities as an anti-abolitionist Member of Parliament and an enslaver. Writing about the contested economic history of the profits from slavery (and challenging the view associated with the Trinidadian historian Eric Williams in his groundbreaking *Capitalism and Slavery*, first published in 1944, that profits from slavery fuelled the Industrial Revolution), Trevor Burnard and Giorgio Riello discuss a typical plantation profiteer in terms that seem tailor-made for Fuller: 'the people who grew rich from sugar seldom put their profits into Lancashire cotton mills. More commonly, they engaged in gentry consumption, including fancy houses, expensive forays into parliamentary politics, and lavish displays of often questionable taste' (2020, 240).[7]

As if in fulfilment of these criteria, Fuller was elected to parliament in 1780 for a term of four years, and returned again as an MP from 1801-1812. Among his fancy building projects was an architectural folly constructed on his estate in Brightlingsea in Sussex. This 35-foot high tower named the 'Sugar Loaf' was designed to look like an obscenely profitable cone of sugar.

[6] See the press release at <https://www.christies.com/about-us/press-archive/details?PressReleaseID=9826>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[7] See also the account of the Lascelles family in Smith 2006 and Dresser and Hann 2013.

Clearly demonstrating 'his Jamaican interests', as the ODNB mildly puts it, this might be one example of his questionable taste. But perhaps, too, the 'gentry consumption' embodied in his copy of the First Folio needs to be included. Checking the value of his bibliographic investment, Fuller consulted the preeminent editor Edmond Malone, whose letter to Fuller from 1809 confirmed his as a genuine 'fine' copy, and recommended a binder who could tidy up the title-page. It is evidence of the long interrelation of scholarly and economic value. Malone's editorial revaluation of the authority of the 1623 text had contributed to the major revaluation of its sale price; here his bibliographic authority is explicitly monetised. Fuller was also a patron of J.M.W. Turner and of the Royal Society, which has recently dropped the use of his name in the 'Fullerian Professorships' which he initially sponsored.

What Fuller paid for his First Folio is not recorded, but his investments in plantation slavery are. The Legacies of British Slavery database lists his ownership of 253 enslaved people on two Jamaican plantations, inherited from his uncle Rose Fuller.[8] Fuller made use of his position in parliament, where he was otherwise a very infrequent speaker, to speak against the abolition movement. His support for slavery became the key issue in the East Sussex election campaign of 1807, where his Whig challenger Colonel Sergison roundly criticised the planter interest in his election literature. One spoof advertisement requested citizens to attend an entertainment at the theatre in Lewes to include 'the Condemned Tragedy, called, SLAVERY' starring 'Rosy West Indian Jack [Fuller]' and a 'new Melo drama … Britannia in tears'. 'A Freeholder' replied, urging the electors that Fuller had 'voted for the slave trade to save your bacon in England' and that, without the taxes paid on plantation goods, British citizens would be forced to make up the difference.[9] The election material makes clear – if clarification were necessary – that Fuller's support for slavery was reviled in his own time: pointing it out now cannot be dismissed as anachronistic, or as a matter of judging the past by the standards of the present. At the vote count, Fuller retained his office by a narrow margin.

Fuller is not the only wealthy man who claimed ownership of both books and people. A copy of the First Folio now at West Chester University in Pennsylvania was owned by Richard Oswald of Auchincruive House in Ayrshire (SC 5220). Oswald was an entrepreneurial 'diplomat and merchant' (again, the ODNB is evasive) whose role in the Anglo-American peace negotiations in 1782 has been a more acceptable historical byline than his other interests (see Rasmussen and West 2012, 733).[10] No account of this book acknowledges that Oswald's wealth and influence came from substantial investments in West Indian plantations and, crucially, in the infrastructure of the transatlantic slave trade, although Rasmussen and West do describe Oswald as 'pro-slavery' (*ibid.*). He was a partner in a consortium which, in 1747, purchased the fortified slave-trading post of Bance Island in the Sierra Leone River. At its height, this hub processed the export of a thousand enslaved people a year to the West Indies and America (Whyte 2011, 52). Bance Island was described in a Royal African Company gazetteer of 1713: 'from those Places, and Parts adjacent, was carried on a good Trade for Elephants Teeth and Negroes' (Royal African Company, *Particular* 1713, 3). Oswald's Shakespeare passed through his family, to Quaritch, and then to the New York insurance magnate Darwin P. Kingsley. Kingsley's sale gives the first confirmed price point in this volume's history: $5,200 in January 1940 (Rasmussen and West 2012, 733).

[8] See <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/-1047169191>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[9] Election material from 1807 in the Sussex Record Office, Brighton: SHR/1/1/3/7/304.

[10] See also the website for West Chester's copy <https://www.wcupa.edu/arts/shakespeare-fortnight/first-folio.aspx>, accessed 1 December 2024.

A third slave-and-Folio owning booklover was George Hibbert (1757-1837), whose copy is now at the Elizabethan Club at Yale University (SC 5228). The Hibbert family have been researched as an exemplary case study in the social change effected by the wealth and status derived from slave-produced goods: for Katie Donington, they represent 'the transgenerational transformation of capital from property in commodities to property in people and finally to investment in land, political position and cultural capital' (2014, 203). Donington's formulation allows us to see Hibbert's First Folio and his other high-status books not as aesthetically or ethically distinct from wealth accrued from the slave trade, but rather as its logical expression. Hibbert was a vehement anti-abolitionist in and beyond parliament. His speeches against abolition, published in 1807, repeatedly claimed that it was 'not the Slave Trade, but the abuses incident to that trade', that should be the subject of parliamentary review (Hibbert 1807, 14). He advocated a gradual approach to avoid 'a measure [abolition] that may elevate the Blacks into a phrenzy, and plunge the Whites into despair' (31). His detailed and prevaricating correspondence with the abolitionist cleric Thomas Cooper, published in 1824, continued to maintain that enslaved labour was morally acceptable and to claim examples of his 'regard for his Negroes' (Cooper 1824, 4). These individuals, according to the compensation awarded him for his Jamaican plantation holdings, numbered more than 3600 enslaved people. Together with his brothers, Hibbert was also, as one historian has put it, 'particularly instrumental in coordinating the Jamaican elite at the close of the century' (Ryden 2009, 72) through his advocacy of anti-abolition via the London Society of West India Planters and Merchants (Markland 1837, 12). Along with his lifelong activity on behalf of the planter interest, he was a bibliophile and an early member of the Roxburghe Club, presenting a volume of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the other members in 1819. He bought his First Folio the same year, from within a London network combining these spheres, from his friend and fellow collector Henry Constantine Jennings. Jennings had inherited Jamaican plantations and enslaved labourers from the family of his mother, Susanna, daughter of the merchant and slave-trader Charles Kent. Many of Hibbert's colleagues in the Roxburghe Club also funded their bibliophilia through substantial slaving interests. Cross-checking the early members of the club against the records of abolition compensation collated at the Legacies of British Slavery database reveals some of these connections. James Heywood Markland, who also wrote a *Sketch* of Hibbert's life praising 'the purity and discrimination of his taste' (16) is listed in the ODNB as an 'antiquary'. Nevertheless – or perhaps because – he received compensation for 1300 enslaved people in Jamaica and Barbados. George Watson Taylor was compensated for more than 1000 enslaved people; another anti-abolitionist MP, Hon. George Neville Grenville (379 enslaved people); the 5th Earl Stanhope (222); and John Cust, 1st Earl Brownlow (185). Hibbert and Markland were both active on behalf of the West Indian Planters and Merchants, and were focused on generating publicity for the pro-slavery case. Presumably their bookish society connections at the Roxburghe brought them helpful contacts for this propaganda work.

Fuller, Oswald and Hibbert are all men who owned Shakespeare First Folios and who were active defenders of their own, and others', right to own slaves. But the overlap between the early members of the bibliophile Roxburghe club and anti-abolitionist interests among wealthy Londoners begins to suggest other connections between books and slavery during the period. In their recent book *Slavery, Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution*, Maxine Berg and Pat Hudson state their method: 'We "follow the money" generated by the enslavement of Africans and the development of plantations but we also highlight their wider impact on institutions, culture and practices in the making of the modern economy' (2023, 12). The economy of slave-produced goods generates the wealth that produces the gentleman's library as one of the key expressions of cultural capital at the end of the eighteenth century. While we don't know what any of them

paid for their copies of the book, we do have some indicative costs of the humans whose labour paid for these refined consumerist lifestyles. In 1797, for example, William Perrin's overseers bought a gang of fifty-four men and women in Jamaica for £5,100, and 'two young women field workers in their twenties, Industry and Mary, were valued at £100 each' (59).

In the last decades of the century, rare books, including copies of Shakespeare's First Folio, changed hands in rapidly increasing numbers for rapidly increasing prices. These rising costs were noted by contemporaries, particularly through a pointed comparison between two major sales: that of James West's books in 1773, and of the Duke of Roxburghe's over 42 days in 1812. One Satiricus Sculptor, the pseudonymous author of a verse satire on the print market, collected these prices in the footnotes of his poem *Chalcographimania* to draw attention to 'the astonishing rise which has taken place in the price of old books' (Ireland 1814, 71). Writing about the Shakespeare First Folio as an exemplary inflationary case study, the author (later revealed as William Henry Ireland, who had profited considerably from the market excitements), noted: 'Four years ago £32. was deemed a fair price … but in these Bibliomanian times, the collector conceives that he has purchased a *bargain*, if he procures the said volume for one hundred guineas, the price which it brought at the Duke of Roxburgh's sale' (75).[11] Describing this crucial time for the invention of the category of rare books, David McKitterick explains the transformation of the market over a generation from the mid-1770s to 1815 with reference to increased supply: 'Unprecedented numbers of old books came onto the market' thanks to monastic collections dispersed as a result of the suppression of first the Jesuits and then other religious houses in Italy and in revolutionary France, political turmoil and 'personal and family misfortunes' (2020, 255). Clearly these books stimulated the market, but it is, on the face of it, economically unexpected that increased supply should also have so increased prices.

McKitterick's supply-side explanation of the change in the market for rare books might be supplemented with a more monetarist historical assessment of price rises. The expansion of consumerism at all levels of society has long been understood as a late-eighteenth-century phenomenon (McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb 1982; Pennell 1999; Berg and Eger 2003). Among many other historians, Maxine Berg has discussed the shift of consumption from needs to desires, and 'the delights of luxury' for consumers (2007, 21). Monetarism would suggest that prices rise because of an increase in the amounts of money available to spend on consumer goods. That money had one major source: goods, especially sugar, produced on plantations by enslaved labourers. British ships carried 1.5 million enslaved people in the second half of the eighteenth century; the transatlantic traffic peaked in the 1780s with the transport of more than 80,000 enslaved people every year, mostly to the Caribbean.[12] West Indian sugar exports to Britain 'increased in value by 237% between 1714 and 1775', and cumulatively, as Maxine Berg and Pat Hudson note, these commodities 'transformed consumer culture' (2023, 20, 75). That consumer culture included the transformed field of book-collecting: enslaved labour produced book-related wealth not simply for particular bibliophile individuals like George Hibbert or James Markland Heywood. Rather, it produced the wealth that transformed the market for these high-status commodities. To put it another way, rare books (at least in the Atlantic world) were invented by slavery, in ways that the institutions and collections that underpin modern literary, historical, and bibliographic scholarship have not yet begun to acknowledge. The rhetoric of book prices apparently draws on historical and economic assumptions about consumption, labour, and commodities. But these underexamined equivalences have their di-

[11] On Ireland and Shakespeare, see Grebanier 1966 and Lockwood 2006.

[12] See the *Slave Voyages* project, <www.slavevoyages.org>, accessed 1 December 2024.

sturbing literalisation in distorted measures of labour, commodity and consumption represented and enabled by the slave-produced wealth that stimulated the growth of the rare book market at the end of the eighteenth century. If we, too, 'follow the money', the costs, and the value, of Shakespeare's First Folio begin to gather new, altogether more unsettling equivalences than the 'good plain dinner' with which McKerrow began.

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Indexing Herbert's *Temple*

Tom Clayton
Colgate University (<tclayton@colgate.edu>)

Abstract

The Temple (1633), a book of devotional lyrics by the English poet George Herbert, was a site of innovation in the seventeenth-century book trade. Scholars of book history have attended to its numerous editions, but one important paratext has been largely ignored: the expansive subject index that was appended to the collection in the printshop of Philemon Stephens in the 1640s. This subject index instrumentalized the collection. By using Stephen Orgel's methodology of 'the archaeology of texts', this essay demonstrates how this index activated homiletical readings of Herbert's poems. The essay uses the index first to reconstruct some of its readings. It explores the assumptions about the uses of lyric poetry that made such readings possible, and considers why twentieth-century critics have rejected them. While the essay connects the index to *The Temple* with earlier biblical and homiletical finding aids and an early modern cultural disposition to reading for action, it also marks, in the demise of this disposition, an origin for the modern practice of indexing lyric collections by first line. In closing, the essay compares the affordances of these two kinds of book index with the collation and search functions prepared for a recent digital edition.

Keywords: Book History, George Herbert, Homiletics, Index, Paratext

1. *Introduction*

There is no surviving holograph of *The Temple* (1633), a book of devotional lyrics by the English poet George Herbert.[1] According to his biographer Izaak Walton, Herbert left a manuscript copy with his friend Nicholas Ferrar before he died, charging

[1] Bradin Cormack offered the seminar, and encouraged the thinking, from which this essay began. Dennis Duncan organized a conference on book indexes and showed me and many others how they could become interesting. Years later, I had the benefit of conversations with Alison Shell and Paul Davis at the British Library. Margaret Maurer read the complete draft, and her advice made this a better piece in the end. Thanks to all of them, and to Zachary Lesser and Georgina Wilson for their help in bringing this work into print.

him to decide whether to burn or publish it (Walton 1670, 74).[2] In a prefatory letter to the first printed edition of 1633 – the year of the poet's death – Ferrar declared his intention to publish it 'in that naked simplicitie, with which he left it' (*2r).[3] The remark suggests not only the tribute of careful stewardship, but also a publisher's desire, at the juncture of manuscript and print, for the printed book to complete the trajectory of the manuscript – or, as it were, manuscripts. For a long time, it worked. It was not until the nineteenth-century discovery of two manuscripts – one containing drafts of many of the poems included in the first printed edition, the second a presentation copy that closely resembles the printed copy – that modern editors began to assess the historical contexture of the books in which the poems had circulated and been passed down, in the sequence inaugurated by Ferrar in 1633.

Herbert's vast and enthusiastic early modern audience typically encountered the poems in printed editions of *The Temple.* And in those books, despite Ferrar's declaration, the poems were not left in their naked simplicity. Over the course of the seventeenth century, paratexts accumulated. The first six editions were relatively spare and elegant duodecimos published in the 1630s and 40s at Cambridge by the University printers Thomas Buck and Roger Daniel. These editions opened with Ferrar's prefatory note and included a table of 'the titles of the severall poems contained'. At midcentury, in what Kathleen Lynch describes as 'murky circumstances' (2002, 190), London stationer Philemon Stephens attained the copy of *The Temple,* and in his new editions the apparatus expanded. By the end of the century the retail edition included several commendatory verses, Walton's *Life*, a series of engraved images, a supplementary collection of poems by Christopher Harvey ('written in imitation of' Herbert, and called *The Synagogue*), the original list of titles (relocated to the beginning of the collection, where it functioned as a table of contents), and an 'Alphabeticall Table for ready finding out chief places'.

[2] The anonymous author of "The Printer to the Reader" – who, according to Walton was Ferrar – alludes to this exchange. For the identification of Ferrar's authorship of the preface, see Walton 1670, 76. Herbert left the manuscript with mutual friend Edmund Duncon, who is thought to have conveyed it to Ferrar at Little Gidding. The scribes working there likely produced what is known as the Bodleian MS (Bodl. Oxf. MS Tanner 307 [B]) as a presentation copy for stationers. See Doerksen 1979-1980.

[3] All quotations from *The Temple* are from the seventh edition (1656).

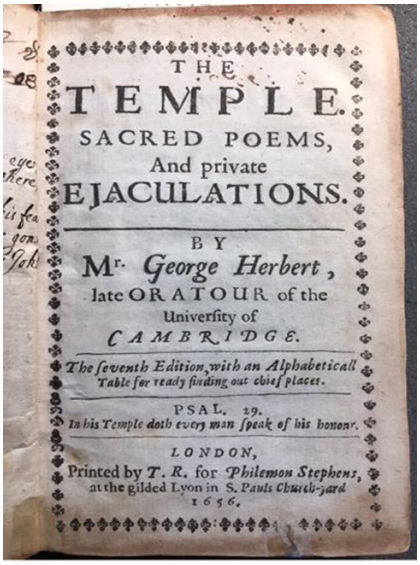

THE
TEMPLE.
SACRED POEMS,
And private
EJACULATIONS.
BY
Mr. George Herbert,
late ORATOUR of the
University of
CAMBRIDGE.
The seventh Edition, with an Alphabeticall Table for ready finding out chief places.
PSAL. 29.
In his Temple doth every man speak of his honour.
LONDON,
Printed by T. R. for Philemon Stephens, at the gilded Lyon in S. Pauls Church-yard 1656.

Figure 1 – The title page of the first of Philemon Stephens' editions of *The Temple. Sacred Poems, and private Ejaculations*, Printed by T.R. for Philemon Stephens at the gilded Lyon in S. Pauls Church-yard 1656 (Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Ex 3780.5.388.16 Wing H1518). Courtesy of Princeton University Library

Among the paratexts, the last one stands out as unusual. This 'Alphabeticall Table' was a comprehensive subject index that was included in all the midcentury and Restoration editions of *The Temple*. Tables of this kind were common enough in books from the period. But no other single-authored lyric collection printed in the period includes a similar finding aid.[4] Throughout the seventeenth century, publishers and printers regularly appended finding aids to texts. The practice of indexing had begun to spread from learned works (especially works of theology and law) to books not previously thought to require them.[5] Accordingly, the title pages of seventeenth-century printed volumes frequently advertised the inclusion of tables 'never before printed' but 'now added', especially to new editions of previously printed works (Hall 1634, e.g.).[6] But in this context, 'table' might refer to a range of different indexical finding aids. Modern bibliographical parlance distinguishes between the table of contents, the alphabetical list of titles, the glossary, the concordance, the index of names or references, the subject index, and so on, but early modern stationers did not, and referred to all of these as 'tables'. The 'table' included in poetry collections was nearly always a list of titles which, like the one included in the first run of Cambridge-based editions of *The Temple*, functioned as a table of contents.[7] But beginning

[4] This claim is based on a survey of ESTC data, EEBO, and other digital records, and, in noteworthy cases (and where possible), consultation of physical copies of print editions of lyric poems by Cowley, Crashaw, Daniel, Denham, Donne, Drayton, Drummond, Dryden, Greville, Herbert, Herrick, Jonson, Marvell, Milton, Phillips, Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, Rochester, Raleigh, Traherne, and Vaughan.

[5] The seminal study of information-management practices in early modern printed books is Blair 2010. For a brief essay on the indexing practices under discussion here, see Corns 2000.

[6] Enlargement-by-paratext was a common technique for boosting sales downstream from the first edition, then as now; see Targoff 2001, 149-5 n. 24; Ferry 2008, 77 and Knight 2013, 6.

[7] ESTC data identifies many poetry collections from the period as 'with index', though none has a subject index except these editions of *The Temple*, so far as I have been able to determine.

in 1656, Herbert's collection had two different tables: a table of contents and a subject index. The mid-century and Restoration sequence of editions of *The Temple* was therefore notable for its inclusion of both kinds of index at a point in the history of the paratext when the two were rarely distinguished, and the subject index was just beginning, according to Dennis Duncan, its 'slow migration to the position it occupies today at the back of the book' (2021, 127).

This index is not just a bibliographical anomaly. It makes a fascinating point of entry into *The Temple* at a crucial moment in its reception, set against the backdrop of the political and religious turmoil of mid-seventeenth-century England. One aim of this article will be to place this subject index within the history of *The Temple*'s reception, and moreover to consider it as evidence of the book's reception as 'something other than a strictly literary work', in Ramie Targoff's terms (2001, 144).[8] Unlike the 1633 table of titles, the subject index has not attracted much attention from critics. The standard description of this subject index as an aid to prayer or a 'devotional commonplace book' (Targoff 2001, 149) does not account for the different interpretive capacities of a subject index in general and the contents of this one in particular. In fact, the evidence suggests that this index was not intended as an aid for private prayer or devotional use, as critics have suggested, but rather as an aid to homiletical reading and writing. Much like Herbert's popular handbook for parish clergy *A Priest to the Temple*, also known as *The Countrey Parson* (1652), this index participated in a vocational culture. As such, it specifies the kind of devotional work *The Temple* was sometimes taken to be.

The index, along with the other paratexts of the seventeenth-century editions, also historicizes a curious fact concerning the reception of Herbert's poetry in the years immediately following its publication: in the words of an early reader, 'it hath y^{e} most generall approbation y^{t} I haue knowne' (quoted in Charles 1977, 125). Even more surprising than its initial popularity was its widespread approbation during a period of Civil War and religious fragmentation.[9] *The Temple* was celebrated, quoted, and imitated by readers representing a wide spectrum of Christian dispositions at a time when intra-Protestant and confessional differences were politicized and fiercely contested. As Sharon Achinstein puts it, 'the centrality of Herbert was the one thing upon which all sides could agree' (2006, 432). *The Temple* served as a devotional touchstone through the English Civil Wars and into the Restoration and came to be regarded, as Nigel Smith has claimed, 'as a kind of manual or handbook on the godly parish' (1994, 266) all throughout a protracted crisis that often centered on the very subjects of his poems. By the end of the century, writes Helen Wilcox, '*The Temple* … had the status of common property' (1984, 290).

The material form of the book influenced this reception and contributed to its prolonged influence. But its material form was not stable throughout this period. The layered accumulation of paratextual apparatuses offers to modern readers an opportunity to undertake what Stephen Orgel calls an 'archaeology' of the text. Orgel says of the first editions of *The Temple* that 'the original book's portability, modesty and discreetness were elements of its meaning and a factor in its reception' (2022a, 6). In the twenty years after the first edition, new paratextual structures altered the form of the book, and its meanings and reception changed, too. Readers wanted something different, publishers provided something new, and approaches to reading and using these devotional lyrics evolved. These changes left their traces in and around the text itself, embodied most conspicuously in its paratexts.

[8] T.A. Birrell likewise reads the subject index as evidence that Herbert 'survived through the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, not as a metaphysical poet, but as a prayerbook' (1985, 164).

[9] The most detailed study of the reception of Herbert's poetry in the seventeenth century remains Wilcox 1984.

The concept of the paratext refers to the parts of the historical book that served as a hinge between the book's production and its reception. According to Gérard Genette, a paratext is a frame around an authorial text, the purpose of which is to make the work legible to a contemporary audience. Paratexts 'present' the work in the double sense of sponsoring its appearance and updating or contemporizing the work, 'making present' the author's text for a new generation of readers (Genette 1991). In Genette's double sense, the paratexts of the Stephens edition 'present' Herbert's collection, framing it while also updating it for a new, critical moment of publication in the mid-seventeenth century. To read the collection through this index is to retrace the routes of access into the poems that its publishers thought to provide and that its readers at this time may have solicited and followed. The subject index therefore offers a particularly useful (and comparatively rare) access into the historicity of *The Temple* because it functions, as Duncan writes of such indexes in general, by 'balancing its allegiances between the work and the community of readers who will come to it' (2021, 11). As an artifact of book use, its allegiances remain poised between Herbert's poems and the wider field of its reception among contemporary readers to whom the index's compilers were also responsive.[10]

The index also attests to ideas about the utility of lyric poems produced for and within a clerical readership in the mid-seventeenth century. As Thomas Fulton has recently shown, early modern religious paratexts enable us 'to reconstruct methods of interpretation' (2021, 12) that informed the period's cultures of reading and writing. In the stalls of Stephens' shop, and under the interpretive auspices of the index, Herbert's poems respond to a host of untimely inflections and interpretations. This index represents a systematization of the interpretive methods that made the text available for a particular kind of use. An archaeological approach therefore reconstructs a contemporary sense of the utility of lyric poems, the practices of interpretation designed to activate their uses, and the bookmaking and publishing practices that distributed them. In this sense, the significance of these paratexts is not only antiquarian: disparities between the untimely readings encoded in the index and recent historicist readings of Herbert illuminate some rather different assumptions about the uses to which Herbert's poetry might be put. The comparison becomes even more interesting where the index produces readings that modern critics like C.A. Patrides feel are 'not evenly remotely sanctioned by Herbert' (1983, 12). In fact, it is not the subjects or topics it identifies, or even the readings implied by its identifications, that has alienated this finding aid from the sensibility of modern critics; it is the basic indexical practice of collating subjects with passages or lines of poetry.

We no longer use this kind of book this way. The 1709 edition was the last to include this, or any, subject index, and the effect of this kind of indexing practice on Herbert's poetry shows why. As I argue later in the essay, by way of a reading of the index's reading of Herbert's poem 'Aaron', this index's basic hermeneutical orientation toward the subjects of the poems circumvents Herbert's *treatment* of the subjects, the sophistication of which has been considered a hallmark of Herbert's religious and literary sensibility in recent scholarship. As a result, the index produces some awkward readings. Its capacity to produce these readings has much to teach us about the reception of *The Temple* in its first century of circulation in print. It also illuminates the interpretive framework of modern critics who reject it.

[10] Recent book historical scholarship distinguishes between book use and the history of reading. See Cormack and Mazzio 2005; Sherman 2008; Lynch and Ender 2018.

2. *The Origins of the Subject Index*

To find the origins of the index to *The Temple*, we must look back to the 'murky circumstances' surrounding the transfer of the copy from the Cambridge press to the Gilded Lion, Philemon Stephens' London shop, sometime in the 1640s. The Gilded Lion was a hub of nonconformist printing. Works by godly authors such as John Owen, Cornelius Burges, Thomas Hooker, and other, lesser-known ministers were printed for sale by Stephens. The shop was also an established 'meeting place for Puritans visiting the capital' (Gilbert 2016, 23) such as the young Richard Baxter who, in his memoirs, recalled meeting his friend 'sober, godly' Humphrey Blunden (who would later become a significant publisher of news pamphlets during the Civil Wars) in Stephens' shop where Blunden was then apprenticing (Baxter 2020, 230). The Gilded Lion's godly bona fides notwithstanding, it was not a publisher of sectarian propaganda, and the paratexts produced there were even less likely to be instrumentalized for causes associated with the figure named in the imprint. The indexes affixed to books sold in Stephens' shop were probably compiled by younger scholars and apprentices who were either affiliated with the shop or working for hire. It was not the kind of work a busy stationer would undertake. The agencies encompassed by this shop therefore include the work of apprentices such as Blunden, whose later career was not marked by any sectarian emphasis, as well as collaborators such as Christopher Harvey, the fervent conformist with whom Stephens worked on an edition of a text by Harvey's stepfather Thomas Pierson. The diversity of devotional attitudes expressed by his few known collaborators cautions against ascribing Stephens' own nonconformist church attitudes to all the paratexts printed and sold in his shop.

A visitor to the Gilded Lion would have encountered an array of indexes at the back and front of the books sold there, and many of these indexes seem designed to serve the demands of a clerical readership. This homiletical inflection, more than the ideological affiliations discernible through Stephens' list and reputation, helps classify the index to *The Temple*. Many other editions bearing Stephens' imprint, such as Nicholas Byfield's *Rule of faith* (1626, with a separate imprint for the index); Gryffith Williams' *The best religion* (1636, 'with a large alphabeticall table'); and Pierson's *Excellent encouragements against affliction* (1647) had impressive indexes that identify key topics and passages in these lengthy works of theological prose, enabling pinpoint access to the books for ministers at work on the preparation of sermons. The shop also sold several standalone indexes, including Thomas Farnaby's *Index rhetoricus … et index poeticus* (1640), a guide to figures and topics of classical literature, as well as Thomas James' *Index generalis sanctorum patrum* (1624), an index to the Church Fathers. Such works belong to the world of information management and homiletics without betraying any discernible sectarian inflection.

Since its first edition, Herbert's poetry had always been read as a devotional resource as much as, if not more than, a collection of poems. By the time Stephens printed the first of his sequence of editions in 1656, the collection had achieved an unusually ecumenical readership, especially among a growing cohort of clergymen-poets. The language Stephens used to advertise the edition's new 'Alphabeticall Tables for the readie finding out chief places' was common in this subculture, although, as far as I have been able to tell, not previously in books of poetry. John Bellamy's fourth edition of John Weemes' *The Christian Synagogue* (1633), for example, advertised 'an alphabeticall table of the cheefe things contained in the booke', while Stephens' edition of John Trapp's *A commentary or exposition upon the XII minor prophets* (1654) similarly advertised 'An Alphabeticall Table of all the Principall things contained in this whole Work'.

Both echoed a common, familiar, source: the Geneva Bible.[11] By far the most popular household English bible in the period, copies of these books typically advertised, "for the readie finding out of any thing in the same conteined" (1611), the inclusion of Robert Herrey's Two Right Profitable and Fruitfull Concordances, or, Large and Ample Tables Alphabeticall (1578).[12]

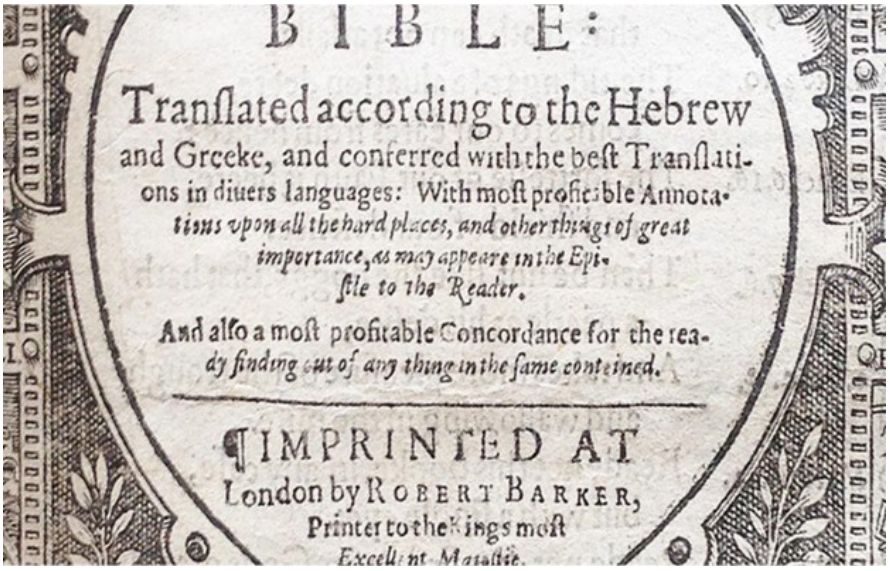

BIBLE:
Tranſlated according to the Hebrew and Greeke, and conferred with the beſt Tranſlations in diuers languages: With moſt profitable Annotations vpon all the hard places, and other things of great importance, as may appeare in the Epiſtle to the Reader.
And alſo a moſt profitable Concordance for the readie finding out of any thing in the ſame conteined.
¶IMPRINTED AT London by ROBERT BARKER, Printer to the Kings moſt Excellent Maieſtie.

Figure 2 – The title page of a Geneva Bible, advertising Robert Herrey's concordance (Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 5173.1605). Courtesy of Princeton University Library

Indexes to devotional and theological works served an expanding, increasingly educated, and professionalizing class of clergymen in this period. As in other learned professions, commonplacing and indexing were regarded, and retailed, as clerical best practices. William Perkins' manual *The Arte of Prophecying* (1607) encouraged clergy to 'Haue in readinesse common-place heads of euery point of diuinitie' (29; see Werlin 2022, 349). Similarly, Herbert's ideal parson was instructed to have 'compiled a book and body of Divinity' with passages abstracted from his reading in scripture and theology, to serve as 'the storehouse of his sermons which he preacheth all his life' (Herbert 2004, 206). The professionalization of the clergy in the mid-seventeenth century generated texts that had much in common with legal and medical literatures, down to the time-saving finding aids and note-taking practices often advertised in print as 'Alphabetical tables'.[13]

But the literary culture of the clergy differed from that of other professional cultures in one key respect. As Julianne Werlin has recently shown, the composition and circulation of lyric

[11] Targoff's suggestion that the index to Trapp's *Commentary* is 'nearly identical to Herbert's' is true only in the simplest sense, in that their title and function are similar (2001, 149 n. 24). The contents of the indexes differ substantially, mirroring the differences of the contents of the respective works.

[12] Stallybrass notes that editions of the Geneva Bible printed between 1580 and 1615 often include these concordances, and were still in wide use through the middle of the seventeenth century (2002, 51-63; 52).

[13] Legal compendia with 'Alphabetical Tables' include *The Compleat clark* (London, 1664), *Reports and Cases, Collected by the Learned Sr. John Popham* (London, 1682) and *An abridgement of the statutes in force and use* (London, 1663). Other professional books like *The City and countrey chapmans almanack* (London, 1685), *The Mariners Jewel* (London, 1695) and *An epitomie … appertaining to physick and chirurgery* (London, 1639) did as well.

poetry became a conspicuous feature in the lifeways of seventeenth-century English clergy. In fact, the clergy comprised the largest professional cohort among lyric poets from the period (Werlin 2022, 335). Herbert's works both testify to this conjunction of literary and pastoral arts and served as a model for the successive generation, not least for churchmen-poets of the 'school of Herbert' that included in its ranks the Roman Catholic convert Richard Crashaw, the Anglican conformist Harvey, and the *sui generis* Henry Vaughan, a self-styled convert to the religion of Herbert (Hutchinson 1941, xli). Still, critics have interpreted the subject index as further evidence of *The Temple*'s appropriation into devotional reading practices, where it was read as a 'prayerbook'. Targoff was right to note that this text was regarded as 'something other than a strictly literary work' (2001, 144), but the alphabetical table of chief places in *The Temple* indicates that it was also, like other indexes produced within this context, something other than an aid private devotion. Rather, much like Herbert's *Priest to the Temple*, it was used as an aid to clerical employment and, specifically, as a source of preaching material.

The reception history of *The Temple* in the seventeenth century attests to many examples of the book's usage as a homiletical resource. But one well-known example also suggests the index's later re-circulation of this interpretive practice. It comes from a sermon by Samuel Ward of Ipswich. In 1635, Ward was censured for preaching a prophetic sermon against popery in which he asserted 'that Religion and the Gospel stood on tiptoes ready to be gone' (quoted by Ray 1986, 22). This last phrase, recorded by William Prynne in his account of the censure, is an allusion to a notorious couplet in Herbert's 'Church Militant': 'Religion stands on tip-toe in our land, / Ready to pass to the American strand' (ll. 235-236). As Walton noted in his *Life*, these 'two so much noted Verses' (1670, 110) nearly caused the licensor to censor the collection in 1633. Though these verses were dangerously heretical upon its original publication, and quoted to dangerous effect shortly thereafter by Ward, the 1656 subject index shone a spotlight on them. Readers could even find this once-heretical phrase by looking in the index directly under the catch-all heading 'Christian religion'. Or, they could access it through one of ten other headings: 'Religions rise and progress', 'prognosticks of Englands woe', 'of the gospels removal to America', 'of Christs second coming', 'The Church… her progress likes the Suns from the East Westwards', 'Americas conversion calculated', 'East, the Churches, as well as the Suns Rising-place', 'Sun, his course like the Churches', 'Time, how ordered by God… all nations have their set time for the gospel', and 'West, see Christian religion'. Two decades after Ward's censure, preachers who wished to invoke Herbert's famous verses on the westward course of conversion in their sermons would have no trouble finding it with the subject index in hand, and many in fact did so.[14] What was controversial for one generation was commonplace for the next.

3. *Reading 'this book of starres'*

The index advertised on the title page of Stephens' editions functioned just like the conventional subject index with which all modern readers are familiar: by sorting the volume for keywords, categories, and concepts of contemporary interest, and providing the reader with access to these topics through a system of internal references. Applied to *The Temple*, this index generated other innovations in the lay-out of the book. Not only did these books contain page numbers – a common but not standard feature, but one made necessary by the subject index – they also had

[14] For instance, Hall 1658, 135. See Ray 1986 for many subsequent allusions to these lines.

line numbers, a much rarer feature that enabled the location of references with greater specificity. The way in which they enabled reference demonstrates the effect of the subject index on the material form of the rest of the book. Unlike modern lyric collections, the lineation in these editions begins anew at the top of each page without regard to the disposition of the material across the pages of the book. The numbers do not count the lines of a given poem; they count, instead, the number of lines of verse on a single page. This numerical system is useful only as an extension of the book's index and demonstrates the index's organization of the book's material for a homiletical, rather than a lyric, mode of reading. Though the line numbers fell out in the tenth edition of 1674, the subject index remained in place for the run of editions printed in London by Stephens, then by his son, and then by his son's associate William Godbid, from 1656 until the thirteenth edition of 1709.

The Temple's subject index provides several substantial and interpretive collations under the heading of a category. In this regard, the index functions like a commonplace book, organizing material into usable fragments and sorting them by keyword. Certain entries provide extensive commentary on some of *The Temple*'s grandest themes. The entry for 'Man', for instance, does more than simply locate the occurrences of the word or idea within the pages of the book. In fact, the entry identifies 'man' as the implicit subject of a great many of the collection's meditations on life and the concept of being. 'Man' leads to sub-headings that suggest mankind's attributes: 'short-lived, and full of sorrow', 'subject to changes', 'mortall', 'perverse', 'rebellious', 'foolish and strangely wicked and wilfull', 'vile and filthy', 'averse from goodnesse', 'impatient of reproof and correction', 'having his reason hoodwinked by Lusts', 'giddy and unconstant', 'grossely doting in what most concerneth him', 'ungratefull to God', 'an ill Steward of Gods goods', 'a busy searcher after every thing but God', 'a beast', 'a tree', and 'likened to a flower'. The entry for 'Man' is surpassed in scale only by the entry for 'God', the category which threatens to subsume the entire organizational remit of the index. Which of the lines of *The Temple* do not fall under the heading of 'God' or to, for example, 'His Pity', 'His Omniscience', 'His Corrections, tokens of his Love'? Inside the thematic world of *The Temple,* nearly any subject refers, at some level, to God or man.

At the intersection of these two concepts, an expansive entry harmonizes the disparate references to 'Christ' in Herbert's poetry. Collating 121 references from 50 different poems, this entry works as a homiletical aid in several different ways. It supplies commonplaces that illustrate or memorialize the themes of Christ's life. It also gathers episodes from the life of Christ that appear in Herbert's poetry, and by doing so, suggests the rudiments of a narrative: 'How he humbled himself to redeem us… He laid aside his Robes, to put on our Rags… He is lodged in an inn… cradled in a manger…' and so on (with each ellipsis standing in for at least one reference to a poem by Herbert). These homiletic excursions and pocket interpretations point toward the use function of such an index for the increasingly professional office of a priest. Of course, any clergyman would know the life of Christ without needing to consult a book; the point is that the index allows the preacher to find quotations from Herbert's work for use at an appropriate moment in a sermon on that life.

The index enabled a topical reading practice suited to sermonizing, but it also supported the literary work of the clergy by identifying the many figures of comparison in Herbert's poetry: 'Afflictions compared to moles'; 'Affliction to Christians, like the pruning knife, to trees'; 'Eager undertakers and slack prosecutors, likened to an exhalation'; 'Our life lik'ned to a posy of flowers'; 'restless thoughts, likened to Thorns'; 'Schism in the Church, like a worm in a rose'. Beyond its many specific identifications of Herbert's similes and metaphors, the index activates a comparative mode of attention, as exemplified by the places where it creates clever nodes of references that mimic Herbert's own conceits, where the reader might for 'Easy things, see Hard' or for 'Envy, a worm', for 'emulation, a spur' and for a 'Grave, see Bed'.

This comparative hermeneutics was central to a preaching ministry, and it is the method that Herbert recommends in Book IV of *A Priest to the Temple*, his handbook for parish clergymen. There, Herbert describes the 'diligent collation of Scripture with Scripture' and the 'judicious comparing of place with place' as the 'singular help for the right understanding of the Scriptures' (Herbert 2004, 205). In his poem 'The H. Scriptures. II', Herbert similarly describes the synthesis of new meanings from the collation of disparate passages of scripture. Just as a stargazer might discover, in the scattering of heavenly bodies, the image of a constellation, a reader finds that 'This verse marks that, and both do make a motion / Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie', as 'this book of starres lights to eternall blisse' (ll. 5-6 and 14). While the poem figures this method of comparative reading as akin to stargazing, Herbert's eye was, at the same time, fixed on the pages of a text. There, in the popular household Geneva bibles of the period, the 'starre' had a mundane and specifically indexical meaning: it referred to the asterisk, or 'Starre*' (as it was termed in Herrey's concordance) that pointed readers to parallel passages listed in the margins. In the pages of these bibles, stars mingled with other alpha-numeric superscripts and marginal annotations, marking out complex patterns of cross-reference (Herrey 1578).[15] The asterisk indicated, in the *mise-en-page* of the bible itself, parallel references within the book that, when followed, illuminated the hermetic internal correlations of what Herbert calls 'this book of starres'.

4. *Reading* The Temple *through its Index, Then and Now*

In an early article on *The Temple*'s paratexts, Saad El-Gabalawy rdescribes the apparatus as neutral in its stance toward the sectarian conflicts of the day (1971). But as Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio have argued, 'even when an index seems to be neutral, by its nature it is interpretive since it guides cognition by emphasizing certain categories and eliding others and indeed by implicitly defining what constitutes a category' (2005, 14). A subject index is never neutral because it selects and organizes and, as Duncan writes, 'distil[s] its source work into a collection of keywords: names, places, concepts' (2021, 4). To make an index is to begin by 'reducing the material, summarizing it' and, by abstracting from the source material, 'to create something new and separate' (*ibid.*).

Though necessary practices for the compiler of a subject index, generalization and abstraction happen to be the interpretive habits that many modern readers of Herbert denounce. Scholars of Herbert have argued that generalization has the effect of flattening a crucial dynamic in Herbert's poetry. As Joseph Summers puts it, 'generalizations crumble before the practice of a particularist such as Herbert' (1954, 149). The index tends to collapse the crucial difference between a subject and Herbert's treatment of the subject. It produces a straightforward reference precisely where Herbert's poems explore the contingencies of a chosen subject. This aspect of Herbert's poetics has informed several influential readings of Herbert's church politics, specifically when focused on the poems in *The Temple* that address the material aspects of religious culture. Critics like Daniel Doerksen, Christopher Hodgkins and Richard Strier read Herbert's representations of devotional practices and ceremonial things such as the altar, the vestment, the windows, and the floor, as signs of his 'church attitudes' or theological inclinations – which is to say, as the measure of his conformity (Strier 1983; Doerksen 1987 and 1997; Hodgkins 1993). In doing so, they

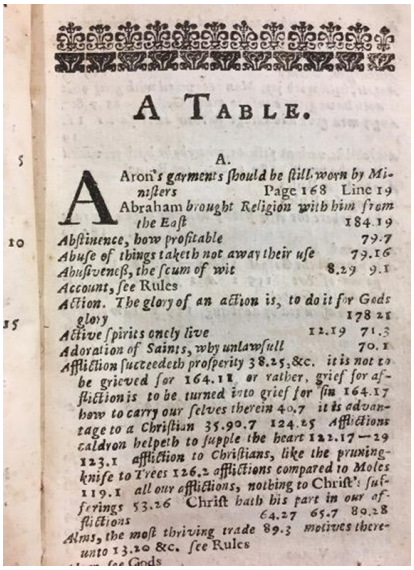
[15] The asterisk also appeared, alongside a host of superscripts, in seventeenth-century *Authorized* (or *King James*) *Versions* of the bible as well as editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

emphasize the (for Herbert) relative *in*significance of things in their material sense. Herbert's poetry has prompted these readers to consider the way in which English Protestantism reinterpreted the material aspects of religious culture in a figurative, or wholly verbal, sense. The governing metaphor of *The Temple* extends this interpretive activity across the whole collection, evoking both the bricks and mortar of its structure – the indifferent matter of its ceremonial practices – and the sighs and groans and inward sensibility of its worshippers that take its place, 'making words do the work of, and actually become, ceremonies and externals' (Smith 1994, 266).

For a country parson, conformity was at stake in the choice to embrace the practices and things that were deemed insignificant in the spiritual sense but maintained as mandatory in the public interest of the values that Herbert and many of his contemporaries, following St. Paul, upheld in the name of decency, 'order' and 'edification' (Herbert 2004, 221-222). 'Things once indifferent' became 'by the precept of authority more than indifferent', as Herbert put it in the *A Priest to the Temple* (237). This obligation to simultaneously deny the significance of specific things while upholding their significance in the political register of conformity generated much debate and occasional confusion in the decades after Herbert's death in an increasingly polemical ecclesiological discourse. Readers might well have approached Herbert's *Temple*, much as they did Weemes' *Christian Synagogue* or any number of devotional works from the period, to determine whether they ought to embrace certain circumstantial practices or indifferent things or follow their conscience in eschewing them. Stephens' index anticipates such questions in entries that tell 'Priests how to be dressed', or maintain that the 'Churches Authority [is] to be obeyed… Innocent customs in the Church [are] to be observed'; and 'Lent-fast, to be observed'. But if, in general, the index attempts to answer the questions such readers might pose, most modern critics have found, with Richard Strier, that 'one cannot answer this question when it is put this way' (2007, 100).[16] Instead, Strier explains, echoing the claims of Hodgkins and Judith Kronenfeld, Herbert's poems often point toward or describe the material aspects of religious practice ('marke you the floore?', 98) but resolve by dismissing the material reality of the thing being described, revealing the material structures of the church to be nothing more, and nothing less, than the metaphorical scaffolding for an experience that was entirely inward. 'Even when externals are Herbert's apparent subject, as is frequently the case in *The Temple*', writes Doerksen, 'these poems are really about the spiritual matters for which the forms are symbols' (1997, 88). Much of Herbert's artistry is contained in the graceful and surprising effects he works upon those changes. For the index, such subtleties are irrelevant; the index informs readers looking to know, more pragmatically, whether they must follow a particular religious practice.

Generalizations, then, became especially fraught in cases where the index points toward matters of religious controversy. In a few places the index strikes a boldly polemical note. The first entry – 'Aarons garment should be still worn by ministers' – is an instructive case, because it points directly to a topic of enduring controversy in English church politics, a subject of intense debate since the Reformation. 'Aaron's garment' was the elaborate vestment at that time still mandatory for ministers in the English church despite the Calvinist orientation of its doctrine, but decried by some as an unconscionable sign of affiliation to the luxurious ceremonialism of Rome. The index implies that a clerical reader could simply turn to page 168, line 19, to find Herbert instructing him to conform to the official injunction to wear the surplice.

[16] The question Strier raises, only to dismiss, is whether Herbert thinks that 'actual church floors do not matter' (100).



A TABLE.

A.

Aaron's garments should be still worn by Ministers Page 168 Line 19
Abraham brought Religion with him from the East 184.19
Abstinence, how profitable 79.7
Abuse of things taketh not away their use 79.16
Abusiveness, the scum of wit 8.29 9.1
Account, see Rules
Action. The glory of an action is, to do it for Gods glory 178.21
Active spirits onely live 12.19 71.3
Adoration of Saints, why unlawfull 70.1
Affliction succeedeth prosperity 38.25,&c. it is not to be grieved for 164.11 or rather, grief for affliction is to be turned into grief for sin 164.17 how to carry our selves therein 40.7 it is advantage to a Christian 35.90.7 124.25 Afflictions caldron helpeth to supple the heart 122.17—29 123.1 affliction to Christians, like the pruning-knife to Trees 126.2 afflictions compared to Moles 119.1 all our afflictions, nothing to Christ's sufferings 53.26 Christ hath his part in our afflictions 64.27 65.7 80.28
Arms, the most thriving trade 89.3 motives thereunto 13.20 &c. see Rules

Figure 3 – The subject index compiled for the 1656 edition of *The Temple. Sacred Poems, and private Ejaculations*, Printed by T.R. for Philemon Stephens at the gilded Lyon in S. Pauls Church-yard 1656 (Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Ex 3780.5.388.16 Wing H1518). Courtesy of Princeton University Library

What this reader would find is the beginning of the poem 'Aaron':

Holinesse on the head,
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead.
To lead them unto life and rest:
Thus are true Aarons drest. (ll. 1-5)

This opening stanza of the poem follows the passages in Exodus 28:30 in which the garments of Aaron, high priest of the Levites, are described in close detail. Moreover, the stanza articulates the union of garment, office, and personal qualities toward which a priest in any age might aspire. Aaron's authority as high priest was represented precisely by the richness of his apparel, as displayed in illustrations in the Geneva Bible.

Figure 4 – The image of Aaron, high priest of the Levites, in the Geneva Bible (Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 5173.1605). Courtesy of Princeton University Library

But if the stanza described the priestly archetype – the 'true Aarons' – dressed in a certain way, a Protestant reader could well anticipate what comes next in Herbert's poem. The poem's speaker draws the reader through a typological comparison between Aaron, whose authority was expressed outwardly through the beauty of his robe, and his own inward preparations for occupying the office of the priest.

The second stanza furnishes the other half of a comparison. Aaron's outward representation of authority is contrasted with a bereft inward state:

Profanenesse in my head,
Defects and darknesse in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
Unto a place where is no rest:
Poore priest thus am I drest! (ll. 6-10)

While the poem draws this comparison of the external vestment and an internal condition, it invokes another, complexly temporal axis on which it might be drawn. What was appropriate dress for the 'true' Aaron as described in Exodus would not be likely to serve literally as the model for priestly dress at any point in the subsequent history of the poem's reception. The index says it should be worn 'still', and its insistence reproduced this norm for another moment in 1656, and then again in successive editions through 1709. Perhaps in doing so it merely pointed to the process (which Herbert's poem narrates) of inhabiting the externalized metaphor that Aaron's garment instantiated, for contemporary priests. For many modern critics, it would seem closer to Herbert's meaning to say that the specific kind of priestly garment is irrelevant to his authority, than it would be to say, as the index does, that they 'should be still worn'. Modern critics have taken Herbert's point to be that such matters were inessential, circumstantial, and immaterial to the real question of an authority underwritten by Christ. While the Old Testament type – the 'true Aarons' of the first stanza – displayed the law on the outer surface

of his garment, he merely prefigured the internalization of that law, and the act that defines the true Christian disposition. 'In him I am well dressed' (l. 15) the speaker realizes in the third stanza, and only in this inward sense has he dressed to do the work of preaching. The index's reference to the vestment as originally sanctioned in Exodus by Aaron and therefore 'still' legitimate is, theologically, the very thing that influential critics like Strier have argued the poem denies when it routes the question through the bible's typological system of references.

Aaron's garment is therefore an example of what Hodgkins called the 'vanishing edifice': an external thing associated with conformity that Herbert invokes, only to redefine its value as entirely internal. *The Temple* itself might be read as such a structure (Hodgkins 1993). Kronenfeld therefore advises readers of Herbert against 'attaching significance to the apparent choice of subject at the expense of the treatment of that subject' (1983, 58). But that is precisely what a subject index is designed to do: to attach significance to the choice of subject at the expense of Herbert's treatment of it. As a consequence of its design, the index makes the vanishing edifice reappear. The relation between subject and treatment that the index supplies in its references is precisely the relation that Herbert's poems, according to his modern critics, treat with a signature subtlety, and ultimately undermine.

Accordingly, modern critics have disavowed the index and its identification of conformist slogans in Herbert's poetry, such as 'Aarons garment should be still worn by ministers'. Yet such claims were supported across the several different paratexts bound within the seventeenth-century editions of Herbert's book, dating back to the first edition, and well-attested by the reception of his poetry during this period. In his introductory note from 1633, Nicholas Ferrar declared that Herbert's 'obedience and conformity to the Church and the Discipline thereof, was singularly remarkable' (*2v). In *A Priest to the Temple,* Herbert himself advised that the authority of the Church was to be obeyed in cases where ceremonies were deemed innocuous. His ideal priest maintains the material elements of his church, not 'out of necessity or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep a middle way between superstition and slovenliness' (Herbert 2004, 222). These are good grounds for associating Herbert with conformity, and they are accurately paraphrased in the index's entry: 'Churches Authority to be obeyed … Innocent customs in the Church to be observed'. But, set against the context of the English Civil Wars and the dismantling of episcopacy – a world Herbert never knew – the index's assertion of Herbert's conformity seems to link the poet to Royalist efforts toward restoring a 'British Church' that was, by the late 1650s, resurgent (see Achinstein 2006).

Why then did Stephens, a 'known Nonconformist' (Achinstein 2006, 431) in the London book trade who was not known for printing lyric poems, print Herbert with a conformist index? And why include the other major paratext in the edition, Christopher Harvey's 'tin-eared paeans to high church Anglicanism' (Lynch 2002, 191) which Stephens printed not just once, but in successive editions in conjunction with Herbert? Initially, this was the product of a genuine collaboration between Stephens and Harvey, as detailed by Judith Maltby (2000) and Kathleen Lynch (2002).[17] Familial relations linked Thomas Pierson and Harvey, while ideology and trade linked Pierson to Stephens. Their collaboration across sectarian lines may have led to the combinatory editions of Herbert's *Temple* and Harvey's *Synagogue*, but it also suggests how personal affiliation and commercial interest guided the agencies of this print-shop toward the production of the midcentury Herbert editions that included the index.

[17] In 1647, Stephens published a work by Shropshire minister Thomas Pierson entitled *Excellent encouragements against afflictions*. It also included a prefatory letter by Stephens, as well as several dedicatory epistles by Harvey. See Maltby (2000, 88-120) and Lynch (2002, 189-193).

Sustained proximity to Herbert has not brought favorable notice to Harvey's poems. But what makes Harvey sound 'consistently vapid' (Patrides 1983, 4) to modern ears might tell us something about what clergymen-poets valued in Herbert in the 1650s and how, in rejecting this historical appropriation, critics since the 1950s have articulated their appreciation for Herbert's art in a different way. Just as the index periodically identifies (or misindentifies according to modern critics) ceremonial things as the subject of Herbert's poetry, so too Harvey's poetry, although modelled on Herbert, also makes things, not ideas about the things, his real subject. A striking difference in their respective approaches to conformity emerges. Where Herbert meditated on what it meant to inhabit church offices, or clerical vestments, when the offices and the vestments themselves were indifferent, Harvey wrote in defense of the institutions as they stood: 'The Bishop? Yes, why not? What doth that name import / That is unlawful, or unfit?' (1647, 32). This didacticism leaves his verse vulnerable to modern criticism, but it also makes legible one interpretative field into which Herbert's legacy was conscripted and in which the subject index participated.

Among his many defenses of tradition and ceremony, Harvey's poem 'Church-festival' is especially interesting because it is a poem about books, and it seems to comment, from within the binding it shares with Herbert's collection, on the value of paratexts. Moreover, it does so by imitating perhaps the most distinctive lyric poem in Herbert's collection, 'Prayer (I)'. In that celebrated poem, the virtue of prayer is suggested by a list of images, and its effect made intelligible not by the connections of grammar, but by the uncommon juxtaposition of the mundane with the otherworldly, as in the images of 'reversed thunder'; 'Church bells beyond the stars heard'; and 'the soul in paraphrase' (l. 6, 13 and 3). Herbert's poem describes the resonance of prayer in terms of the material substrate of religious practice, but the everyday ringing of bells indicates a trajectory that is ultimately 'beyond' the scope of human perception. The bells are, in Hodgkins' terms, a vanishing edifice. But Harvey has it the other way around. In his 'Church Festivals', he borrows Herbert's verse form for a poem that presents festivals as the 'compendiums' of religious experience. They condense it, just as time-saving paratexts condense books into usable matter:

> Marrow of time, eternity in brief
> Compendiums eptimoz'd, the chief
> Contents, the indices, the Title-pages
> Of all past, present, and succeeding ages… (ll. 1-4)

For Harvey, ceremony is to the liturgical year as the index, the 'chief / Contents', and the epitome are to the text in full: devices which, by distilling religious experience, become essential features of its praxis. Like Stephens' subject index to *The Temple*, Harvey's devotional poetics reverses Herbert's, and materializes the spiritual.

4. *Toward the First-line Index*

After 1709, no new editions of *The Temple* appeared until a fledgling Bristol publisher printed a new one in 1799. Unsurprisingly, the seventeenth-century subject index was dropped. Though Herbert was 'held', according to the editor of this edition, 'in no small estimation by the devotional writers of the beginning of the present century', the situation – the book out of print for almost the whole of that century – meant that readers had 'never been able to meet a copy of the whole work' and instead encountered Herbert's poetry primarily in 'detached sentiments' and dispersed fragments (Herbert 1799, iii). This editor reproduced the whole of *The Temple* in

an edition that likely fell into the hands of the young Coleridge, who was working near Bristol at the time and whose reflections on *The Temple* in *The Friend* (1809) and *Biographia Literaria* (1817) inspired a generation of readers to re-evaluate Herbert. The re-discovery of Herbert in the nineteenth century also involved a succession of editors, and saw the production of the first complete works (William Pickering, 1835) and the first major annotated and 'definitive' edition (Alexander Ballach Grosart, 1874).[18] Each retained a version of the original alphabetical table of titles (the collection's most durable index) but left the subject index behind.

It was not the lack of a subject index, or a lack of paratexts in general, that led G.H. Palmer at the turn of the twentieth century to lament the state of Herbert's editions. 'How loosely he is published', wrote Palmer, 'appears in the fact that his book is still without an index of first lines' (1905a, xiv). Distinguishing his new six-volume *English Works of George Herbert* from 'the many handy editions which are issued for devotional purposes', he set out to bring scholarly rigor to Herbert's corpus (xiv-xv). His main editorial intervention was to break apart the structure of *The Temple* and reorganize Herbert's lyric output chronologically. He created new groupings based on a speculative timeline of composition, and correlated poems with moments in Herbert's psychological and poetical development. This editorial intervention has largely been rejected, but the index of first lines, which was essential to the re-ordering project and implicitly part of the reaction against the devotional cast of Herbert's editors through the nineteenth century, has endured, becoming a standard feature in all of Herbert's major editions to the present day.

This indexing practice is not particular to Herbert's collection. Now, 'the norm of poetry books … is to provide an index of first lines', as Duncan writes (2021, 267). The story of how and why this practice became standard has yet to be told, and is beyond the scope of this essay, but the emergence of the norm in editions of Herbert's poetry can be dated to Palmer's edition of 1905.[19] And there is one more historical coordinate that may be useful for understanding the widespread adoption of this indexing practice for lyric poetry around the turn of the twentieth century. That is, it emerged as an organizing principle for archival collections of lyric poetry in manuscript before it was normalized in print editions. In 1880 the staff of the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum began compiling the first-line index to poems in manuscript that still serves as a guide to the collections today. Other institutions followed suit and, over labor-intensive decades, compiled similar finding aids. In 1969, Margaret Crum published a *First-Line Index of English Poetry 1500-1800, in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, a staggering achievement modelled on the British Library index, and in 2009 several major first line indexes (to the collections of the Huntington, Folger, Beinecke, Houghton, and other libraries, and also incorporating Steven May's first-line index to Elizabethan poetry) were synthesized as *The Union First Line Index*, a digital resource compiled and maintained by The Folger Shakespeare Library. Researchers in manuscript archives favor first-line indexes over indexes by author or title because, as James Woolley has written, 'a poem's first line usually remains stable from version to version' (2013, 1). These finding aids help scholars identify variant versions of a poem, including those attributed to different authors, printed under non-authorial titles, or circulated anonymously.

If the first-line index to lyric poems is primarily useful in manuscript miscellanies and in archives where authorship is unstable and titles are fluid and non-authorial, what use might it

[18] Grosart's edition is notable for its basis in a process of 'collation and re-collation' with 'original and early editions and manuscripts', including the (then) recently discovered Williams manuscript (quoted in Armbrust 1990, 145-146).

[19] There was one first line index in an earlier edition: the 'Table… to find any Poem by the First Line' in the Edward Suter edition of 1835. See Palmer 1911, 9.

serve for an author like Herbert, whose corpus has been relatively stable since the publication of the first print edition, for whom there are only two significant manuscript witnesses, and whose titles were authorial and consistent? It is suggestive that Palmer's initial call for the creation of a first-line index to Herbert accompanied his project of breaking up the collection. Only after Palmer's dismantling of the original structure of *The Temple* was a first-line index more useful than, say, the table of contents produced for the first print edition. Palmer's edition downplayed *The Temple*'s large-scale architectonics and emphasized, instead, the formal diversity of Herbert's poetry. His Herbert was a poet who 'invents for each lyrical situation exactly the rhythmic setting which befits it' (Palmer 1905b, 136). A first-line index guides the reader toward this variety of forms more directly than the original table of titles, which corresponded to devotional topics, some of which recur several times. And unlike the subject index, the first-line index defers to the formal integrity of the individual poem. In this sense, it does not generalize. As Joseph Summers maintained, 'the only justifiable generalization [for Herbert] is that every poem required a new beginning, a new form, a new rhythm' (1954, 149), and first-line indexing identifies a poem, and enables access to it, by way of the beginning. Though originally an appendix to Palmer's re-ordered *English Works* of 1905, the first-line index has remained a standard feature of subsequent editions of *The Temple* that have restored the collection's original order, beginning with the landmark Hutchinson edition of 1941.

As Herbert's most recent print editor Helen Wilcox has written, in an article with Richard Todd, Palmer's experiment 'is unlikely ever to be repeated' because it 'disrupt[s] the conversations that take place among the lyrics in their 1633 sequence' (Todd and Wilcox 2012, 199). While Palmer's edition helped establish Herbert's reputation as a major English poet regardless of the religious sentiment of the reader, it also made it clear to readers such as T.S. Eliot, Louis Martz, and C.A. Patrides that to engage with Herbert 'we must study *The Temple* as a whole' (Eliot 1962, 17). Critics have identified the significance of sequential reading in *The Temple*, a mode of attention encouraged by the woodcut and engraved images of actual thresholds that encourage the reader to imagine entering the collection as though through a doorway (McLeod 1998). Both the reader entering through the front door via these paratextual thresholds and the reader entering through the backdoor via the subject index might experience the collection 'as a whole'.

These paratexts and their separate histories remind us that (as Peter Stallybrass has written) 'one paratext can be used to skip or evade another' (2011, 219) and neither should be granted a totalizing authority over the disposition of the volume. A corresponding emphasis in recent indexing practices has been to reintroduce the comparative resources of a subject index in different forms and so guide readers, readers to what Wilcox and Todd describe as the 'echoes internal to the volume' (2012, 200). In addition to a first line index, her edition includes an index of scriptural citations and allusions within the work. Likewise, the editors of *The Digital Temple*, a web-based edition published in 2012, seeking to amplify 'reverberating dialogue' among the poems, have built a parallel display feature which collates the two manuscript witnesses and the first print edition in a single field of view (Hodgkins and Whalen 2012). In place of an index, its strikingly user-oriented interface provides 'sophisticated search mechanisms' enabled by the granularity of its code through which the reader can index the work on the fly (Whalen 2011, 116). As early modern readers knew, sequential reading is not the only, or even the primary, means of sounding the totality of a work. And as Herbert knew, *The Temple*'s resonances were internal not to the collection, but to the reader.

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Dedicating Science and War Books Networks of Power Between Science and Politics in the Early Modern Period

Consuelo Gómez
National University of Distance Education (<cgomez@geo.uned.es>)

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Abstract

The article explores the dedications to promoters and patrons found in military and mechanical engineering books between the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century. These dedications are significant because they show how the authors of those books managed their strategies of self-promotion within the power of the court and weaved new relationships with promoters and patrons. Through their dedications, they attempted to guarantee both their status as authors and that of their books. Circulating as objects throughout elite political networks, these scientific books also enabled less tangible transactions of knowledge, prestige and power.

Keywords: Dedications, Early Modern, Engineering, Science, War Books

1. *Introduction*

In the prologue of his book *Entre poder y placer. Cultura escrita y literatura en la Edad Moderna*, Roger Chartier asserted the importance of breaking with what he viewed as the spontaneous attitude that makes us suppose that all texts were written or read in the past according to the rules and practices that characterise the contemporary relation with written culture (2000, 9).[1] Chartier stressed what he called the 'mutations' that determined the circulation of discourses, conditioned by their uses and possible appropriations. His work showed the need to approach the study of written culture and its discourses from the viewpoint of the processes that determine their forms of production, communication, and reception (1992, 20).

[1] This article is associated with the project E-SENS: Power and Cultural Representations: Sensory Scenarios and Circulation of Objects among the Hispanic Elites (sixteenth-seventeenth centuries) PID2020-115565GB-C22.

From this perspective, the study of dedications in books on technical and scientific topics that proliferated in European centres of power from the mid-sixteenth century is of the greatest interest. Their texts, along with the images on the title pages and frontispieces, were part of the works' textual materiality, shaping discourses conditioned by the social and political demands of the court on the relationship between power and knowledge. Specifically, the dedicatory messages showed the utility of military and mechanical engineering for the government and the progress of states (Campillo 2008; Ilari 2012). Their authors used these preliminary texts to devise their strategies of self-promotion within the power of the court and weave new relationships with promoters and patrons. This editorial sponsorship contributed to the building of exchange networks between science, technology and politics.

These dedications were thus part of a 'culture market' managed by the publishing world, in which patrons, authors and publishers played the role of agents exchanging political, social and cultural prestige (Paoli 2009, 20-33 and 2020). This was a kind of 'courtly economy', to use the expression that Amedeo Quondam employed to analyse the relations of sponsorship and patronage that developed in the early modern period in which intangible as well as tangible goods – including reputation, fame, memory, praise and esteem – changed hands (2013, 248-249). This economy was fundamental in the case of books on mechanical and military engineering, since their authors and editors could write dedications full of allusions to courtly habitus (magnificence, exemplarity, memory and liberality) and carry out an unprecedented vindication of the role that science and technology could play in the government of states. This rhetoric often legitimised the figure of the engineer as a professional devoted to the liberal arts, with which he aimed to raise his economic and social status (Zanetti 2023).

2. *Dedications in the Discourse of Progress*

2.1 *From the Common Good, the Glory of the Ruler and the Progress and Conservation of the State*

Since Gérard Genette foregrounded the significance of dedications in the late 1980s (see Genette 1987 and 1989), many important contributions have been made to their research, especially in the last few decades (Viala 1995; Chartier 1996a; Biancastella, Santoro and Tavoni 2004; Paoli 2009).[2] But only a few of these studies have been applied to the dedications in technical and scientific books, particularly to books on subjects related to aspects of military and mechanical engineering such as artillery, fortifications, pyrotechnics, hydraulics, the invention of measuring instruments, and mechanical devices for military and ludic use (see Falcini 1963; Biagioli 1990; Findlen 1990; Eamon 1991; Biagioli 1993 and 1995; Ferrero 2005, 217-234 and 269-284; Torrini 2005). The preliminaries of these books were particularly important because they provided a material space in which to negotiate the circulation of scientific knowledge and its political power. The comparative scarceness of studies on these introductory texts is particularly notable considering the importance of the information they provide in understanding the role they played in the development of modern science and technology as symbols of power; especially, if we consider that they are crucial for investigating the networks of sociability and scientific-technical exchange that their authors established with government structures (Bertoloni Meli 2006). In addition, these dedications provide information about how economic and scientific-intellectual interests were integrated into the social and cultural realm (Villa 2010).

[2] For a detailed bibliography of dedications in texts in the Italian tradition in the modern age, see the website of the research project: *I margini del libro*, <https://www.margini.unibas.ch/web/it/index.html>, accessed 1 December 2024.

To understand the scope and implications of these types of dedications within the patronage and sponsorship system, as well as in the creation of exchange networks between technical-scientific knowledge and power, it is important to consider that, from the late 16th century onward, books describing technological innovations contributed to an ideal of 'progress'. This ideal encompassed crucial issues for modern states, such as navigation, agricultural management, artillery, civil and military architecture, trade, the manufacturing and processing of new raw materials and the invention of devices for courtly leisure. In this way, books on military and mechanical engineering came to be in demand by princes and important members of the court. This presented an opportunity for authors, patrons, printers and publishers to engage in the system of technical-scientific patronage. It helped shape a publishing market that recognized the growing belief that the progress and reputation of the state and prince were closely tied to their mastery of technology, for both military and recreational purposes.

Military and mechanical engineers deployed their dedications to promote their own interests and appeal to the common good, public utility and the glory of the ruler. The effect was to establish a 'specialisation' in the rhetoric of the dedication genre, which went beyond the simple clichés of the usual 'rhetoric of praise'. This specialisation appeared in a large corpus of books of military and mechanical literature, including those devoted to military architecture, instructions on military strategies for the defence of the state, the invention of new mathematical instruments for the practice of war and manuals of instruction on artillery for war or fireworks for festivals. Also in this corpus were books on mechanics, which presented an illustration of the functioning of many machines and technical devices for military and ludic purposes, as well as those intended for use in such activities as navigation, agriculture and the production of manufactured goods.

This article deliberately covers a wide range of this little-known corpus to make clear the rhetorical similarities as well as the differences that their authors strategically employed. Many of these books were aimed at the libraries of the nobility and aristocracy, as both archives of knowledge and ostentatious displays of power. Through their circulation among powerful figures, they contributed to the construction of technical knowledge in the modern era (Naudé 1627; Bouza 1992, 131; Chartier 1996b, 95).[3] Numerous books offered the patron new devices and mechanical instruments that would be of service in the progress and maintenance of the state, such as the instrument that the Florentine Giovanni Francesco Fiammelli offered to Cosimo I de Medici for military use 'neceſſarie á i gouerni di ſtati, e di guerre … maſſime ne tempi di guerra'[4] in the dedication of *La riga matematica* (1605, n.p.), or the one that the French Real Engineer Jean Errard de Bar-le-Duc offered to the monarch and the French nobility in *La Fortification réduicte en art et démonstrée* (1600). This latter dedication explained how the book contributed to highten the glory of the king and to promote the state and its economy. On other occasions, the dedications showed how the book strengthened the state through the dissemination of knowledge and the training of professionals in the military art, especially in artillery. This was the case with the works of Diego de Álava y Viamont (1590), Luis Collado (1592), Cristóbal Lechuga (1611) or Julio César Firrufino (1626).

Within this background, the emergence of the publishing genre of the 'theatres of machines' was vital (Vérin 1999; Dolza and Vérin 2000 and 2004; Dolza 2009; Ravier-Mazzocco 2013; Gómez 2017, 39-54). The books belonging to the 'theatres of machine' genre explained

[3] Gabriel Naudé pointed out that there is no more honest and certain way to acquire fame among society than to build lovely, magnificent libraries and then commend them and consecrate them to public use.

[4] (necessary for the government of states and wars … especially in times of war). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

the workings of mechanical instruments and devices that were displayed before courtly audiences, providing both knowledge and pleasure. They offered a form of mechanical spectacle aimed 'a chi si diletta di questa nobilissima scienza',[5] as Filippo Pigafetta said in the translation of *Mechanicorum liber* (quoted in Ferraro 2008, 82). This manner of intellectual leisure introduced machines into the cultural and social spaces of gardens, chambers of wonders, cabinets of curiosities, court theatres and libraries. The books attained an important sociocultural position and took part in the debate that had arisen in the sixteenth century about the nobility of mechanics and the distinction between practical and ludic mechanics (Gómez 2017). They are of interest here principally because of the information they provide about the relationships that developed between engineers, publishers and patrons. They enabled their authors to present mechanics as a speculative activity within the liberal arts which was placed at the service of the common good and the glory of the prince, in times of both war and peace. The authors of those books, all of whom were engineers with good relations in the court, were responsible for fortifications, hydraulic structures and architecture, but also for festivals and firework displays, which were carried out by the artillery. In other words, they were instrumental both in the celebration of military prowess and in the display of power. It is therefore not surprising that most of them (Besson, Ramelli, Bachot, Bar-le-Duc and Caus) worked in the service of monarchs who were invested both in the success of their armies and in peacetime spectacle to assert their power.

The authors of theatres of machines made the most of the enjoyable or pleasurable aspects of reading their books. They emphasised these qualities in their dedications to capture the attention of patrons and promoters and to seek collaboration towards the cost of printing books that, owing to their many illustrations, were quite expensive. In their dedications, some of the authors specified that they were also the authors of the plates which enriched their books (Ravier-Mazzocco 2009, 50). When Salomon de Caus addressed Louis XIII in *Les raisons des forces movvantes* (1615), one of the books on mechanics that was most influential in courts in the first half of the seventeenth century, he stressed the pleasurable aspect of the book: 'ſi ie peux entendre que voſtre Maieſté prenne quelque plaiſir à ce mien petit œuure, celame donnera courage de l'augmenter de quelques autres gentils deſſeings' (Dedication page).[6] Thus de Caus appealed to the king both stressing the utility of the machines and praising the aesthetic enjoyment offered by the illustrations.

The situation was similar in the case of dedications in books on pyrotechnics and fireworks, activities which were regarded by some authors as a matter of state.[7] Treatises on fireworks reached a status of their own because the publishing market was aware of the importance of fireworks displays as exhibitions of power in a Europe at war. The frontispieces that announced books on fireworks were, in this regard, a declaration of intentions. For example, Francis Malthus' *Traite fevx artificiels povr la gverre* (1632), dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu, displayed a magnificent frontispiece with the figures of Mars and Neptune accompanied by a dragon that breathed fire, flanked by two cannons. In this case, it was a scenographic presentation of the achievements that the author attributed to the power of the French monarchy and that the editor was able to reflect through the image: military success, represented by the figure of Mars, and the overseas expansion that Richelieu himself

[5] (to those who delight in this most noble science).

[6] (if I should hear that Your Majesty felt some pleasure from this small book of mine, it would give me strength to enlarge it with some other lovely drawings).

[7] This was the case of Appier-Hanzelet 1630.

had promoted as part of state policy, represented by the image of Neptune. Both elements became the visual reflection of the author's verbal praise of the patron in his dedication. The figure of the god Neptune showing Mars the design of a military fortification surrounded by cannons and instruments of military engineering, such as the compass, constituted an image of the power of the French monarchy in the European context, as powerful as the dedication itself (Piñeiro and Vicente 2006). Appier-Hanzelet's *La pyrotechnie* (1630) presented a frontispiece with cannons, under the words 'Marte et Arte'. It thus displayed visually what was stated in the dedication: that the use of gunpowder and artillery for both recreational and military purposes had become a matter of state and, therefore, an element of power. And *Pyrotechnia Or a Discovrse of artificiall Fire works* (1635) by John Babington, dedicated to the Earl of Newport for his 'entertainment', showed different mechanical devices used to create firework displays (Figure 1). By combining word and image these books showed that mechanical instruments and machines invented for military use could also create spectacular visual displays and so exhibit political power.

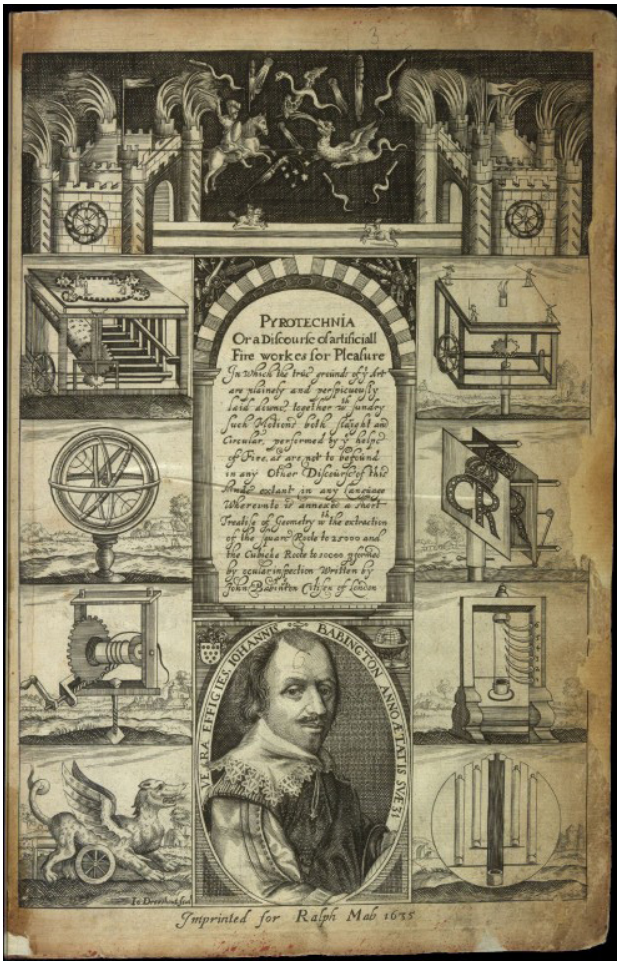

Figure 1 – Frontispiece of John Babington, *Pyrotechnia Or a discourse of artificiall Fire works for Pleasure,* London, Thomas Harper, 1635 (public domain)

2.2 *The Intellectual Itinerary of the Engineer. The Nobility of Mechanics as a Strategy of Promotion*

The dedications of these books created a context in which authors, publishers and printers were able to establish the standing of scientific knowledge and that of its proponents. When François Béroald published a new edition of Jacques Besson's *Theatrvm instrvmentorvm et machinarum* (1578), he removed the dedication to Henry III that Besson had included in the first edition and inserted a new preface in which he affirmed that the idea of progress in society was linked to the use of machinery. This perspective was taken up by other authors, who used their dedications to dignify mechanics by associating it with mathematics and hence elevating it to the theoretical realm of the liberal arts. The effect was to ennoble both the person who created the machine and the person who observed it. Probably for that reason Salomon de Caus recommended in his dedication to the king in *Les raisons des forces movvantes* that he should be versed in 'toutes ſortes d'arts & ſçiences … ſpecialement aux ſciences des mathematiques, & à celles qui deſpendent d'icelles' (Dedication page).[8] Only in that way would he be able to decide for himself where and when their use was necessary and put the arts and sciences at the service of his own glory and pleasure. The idea was reflected in the magnificent frontispiece to the book: a door, flanked by the figures of Archimedes and Heron of Alexandria, opens theatrically to reveal the secrets of mechanics, vindicating its new status as a form of knowledge belonging to the liberal arts and worthy of the attention of the King (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Frontispiece of Solomon de Caus', *Les raisons des forces movvantes,* Frankfurt, 1615, with the images of Archimenes and Hero of Alexandria (public domain, Smithsorian Libraries and Archives)

[8] (all kinds of arts and sciences, especially in those of mathematics and everything that depends on them).

Euclid's *Geometry* also came to form part of the iconography that adorned the frontispieces of these books, especially the theatres of machines, in order to imbue them with authority. Vitruvius, who had devoted part of his *De architectura libri decem* to machines, became a prestigious point of reference, as would Aristotle for his contribution to mathematics and Archimedes for his treatises on weights, spheres and cylinders. Authors of the theatres of machines included these references to elevate their books to the implied status of their patron, complimenting their dedicatee and affirming the significance of their own knowledge. The inclusion of their images presiding over the frontispieces of the books became the perfect addition to the discourse that they were going to present to the patron in the dedication (Galuzzi 2003; Lamberini 2003; Chirone and Cambiaghi 2007).

Figure 3 – Frontispiece of Ambroise Bachot, Le *Govvernail d'Ambroise Bachot Capitaine Ingenievr dv Roy* …, Melun, Ambroise Bachot, 1598, doi: 10.3931/e-rara-61276 (public domain, Eisenbibliothek Schlatt. EM/Bt 29)

Engineers similarly used the dedications of their books to vindicate their own social and professional status (Long 2011). When the military engineer Gabriele Busca dedicated *Della architettvra militare* (1601) to Juan Fernández de Velasco, Constable of Castile and governor of the State of Milan, he compared him with the kings to whom Archimedes, the greatest expert in mechanics of antiquity, had dedicated his works. Busca used the comparison to turn mechanics into one of the virtues of a ruler at the same time as the author himself made claim to be a sort of new Archimedes. This reference was not an exception: most of these authors established a link with mathematics and the principles of the new science. Diego de Álava even included the term

'nueua ciencia' (Title page)[9] in his book published in 1590, dedicated to King Philip II of Spain. De Alava's volume demonstrated the use of trigonometric instruments and such devices as the planisphere, astrolabe and military quadrant. De Álava also examined the methods of Tartaglia, aligning himself with the new science of artillery, which he considered the heir of geometry. His dedication also included praise for 'los admirables secretos de la Aritmética y la Geometría como parte de las matemáticas, a las que alababan Pitágoras y Platón' (26).[10] In the same way, such engineers as Fiammelli, Tensini, Babington, Firrufino, Ramelli, De Caus, Appier-Hanzelet and Malthus claimed to be mathematicians and framed mathematics as fundamental to their work. They thus defended the contents of their books and promoted their social status above that of a simple mechanic to reach the reputation of a mathematician within a prestigious tradition of learning (Biagioli 1989; Vérin 1993; Pautet 2016). Some of these authors supported this kind of self-fashioning by adding self-portraits to their books. Agostino Ramelli presented himself in a courtly demeanour by showing the upper part of his body in military dress and with a compass in his hand (Figure 4). The effect was to present *Le diverse et artificiose machine* (1588) as a vindication of military engineering and therefore as a science related to liberal arts. Similarly, Gio. Antonio Rampazetto's edition of Buonaiuto Lorini's *Delle fortificationi* complements the narrative of self-promotion in its dedication 'Al Seren.mo Prencipe et alla Illvstrissima Signoria di Venetia'[11] with a magnificent image of the engineer in courtly habit (1597) (Figure 5).

Figure 4 – *Portrait of Captain Agostino Ramelli in Le diverse et arificiose machine*, Paris, 1588 (public domain)

[9] (new science).
[10] (the admirable secrets of arithmetic and geometry as part of mathematics, which Pythagoras and Plato praised).
[11] (To the Most Serene Prince and the Most Illustrious Lordship of Venice).

Figure 5 – Portrait of Buonaiuto Lorini in *Delle fortificationi*, Venezia, Gio. Antonio Rampazetto, 1597 (public domain)

Through both word and image, these preliminaries offered material spaces in which to negotiate the tangible and intangible benefits that the dedicator and dedicatee might obtain (Chartier 1996c).

3. *Authors, Publishers and Printers: Strategies and Discourse*

3.1 *Intellectual and Military Ability in the Rhetoric of Praise*

Authors, publishers and printers of books on war and mechanical engineering took advantage of the possibilities of the conventions offered by the dedication to demonstrate their strategies and intentions to their patron or sponsor. They made use of a textual formula that was already perfectly codified in the late sixteenth century, as shown by the book *Della dedicatione de' libri* by Giovanni Fratta, published in Venice in 1590. This practice continued to be developed during the seventeenth century and entered a process of codification that led to the publication of a kind of handbook that gave examples of dedications for the use of secretaries (Brugnolo and Benedetti 2004; Santoro 2004; Terzoli 2002; Paoli 2009; De Blasi and Pedullà 2010; Villa 2010).

In this setting, Sebastián Fernández de Medrano, military engineer and head of Brussels Military Academy, referred to the practice of dedicating books on military engineering to the Count of Monterrey in *El perfecto artificial, bombardero y artillero*:

Una de tres razones, Exmo Señor, juzgo que ſon las que comunmente conbidan à los Eſcritores à dedicar ſus obras à los grandes Principes y Heroës, ſiendo la una, la de buſcar el que puedan con ſu ſoberana protecion peregrinar por todas partes libres de la Cenzura, à que toda Obra publica eſtà ſugeta; y otra la de que ſiendo perſonas verſadas en la Facultad que contiene la Obra, merezca de ſu gran conocimiento, una pia correcion: y ultimamente por arraſtrarles à ello una natural inclinacion: y como todas tres hallaſe yo me aſiſtian para con V.E. ocurro à ſu Grandeza reſpecto no poder elejir otro ſagrado mayor que la de la eſclarecida y antiquiſſima Caſa de V.E. en que tantos Claſicos Coroniſtas han empleado ſus ſubtiles plumas … . (1699, 3r-v)[12]

Here de Medrano summarises the main reasons why engineers had been writing dedications for over a century. Their aim was to guarantee the circulation of their book, their knowledge and their own prestige by putting it under the intellectual authority of a patron who was not only endorsed by his 'eſclarecida y antiquiſſima Caſa' and by his lineage, but also by being '[entendido en la] Facultad que contiene la Obra'.

This appeal to the intellectual ability of the patron was indeed widely used by authors and became part of their rhetoric of praise. For instance, Antonio Lupicini extolled Francesco I de' Medici in the dedication of his *Architettvra militare* (1582) because he thought Francesco was an 'esperto'[13] in mathematics and the liberal arts. In the same way, when Gabriele Busca dedicated *Della Architettvra militare* (1601) to Juan Fernández de Velasco, Constable of Castile and Governor of the State of Milan, he described the intellectual and cultural profile of his patron, whom he represented as an erudite who spoke several languages, understood the theory and practice of military architecture and possessed a library full of books on philosophy and all the sciences and liberal arts (Vázquez Manassero 2019). Indeed, de Velasco's library aroused the admiration of all who visited him (Cieri Via 2004). Busca praises his patron because of his ability to gather knowledge in his library, and stressed the value of books in shaping memory:

che con grandiſſima cura, & diligenza, non hauendo riſguardo à ſpeſa ne à fatica, hà da tutte le parti dell'Europa, & d'altre Prouincie ridotti inſieme; che empie di merauiglia chiunque la vedde, & conſidera Potrei dire della ſua Real Deſcendenza valore virtù, & generoſità di tanti Heroi ſuoi Progenitori, & di tutta la Illuſtriſſs. Caſa Velasca in ambedue le arti della pace, & della guerra, incominciando dalle antichiſſime memorie in tutti tempi per magnanime impreſe. (1601, a2v)[14]

The engineer Luis Collado would also allude to this in his dedication to Philip III in his *Platica manval de artilleria* (1592). In it, he presented to the monarch the 'secretos'[15] of the matter that he had been able to study as an engineer in the service of the king in the Duchy of Milan and emphasised the role that the king played as an illustrious patron because of the Spanish books

[12] (Of three reasons, Your Excellency, for which I judge that they often invite writers to dedicate their books to great princes and heroes, one is that they seek the sovereign protection of that person in order to travel everywhere free of the censure to which all public works are subjected; and another is that because they are people versed in the faculty the book contains, deserve a pious correction with their great knowledge; and lastly to bring a natural inclination to them. And as I find all three assist me for Your Excellency I recur to your greatness; I could not choose higher sacred respect than the enlightened and ancient home of Your Excellency in which so many classic chroniclers have used their subtle pens …).

[13] (expert).

[14] (which, with the greatest care and diligence, and without regard for expense or effort, has brought together people from all parts of Europe and other provinces; which fills anyone who sees it and considers it with wonder, I could say of its Royal Descendency, valour, virtue and generosity of so many Heroes, its Progenitors and of all the Illustrious House of Velasca in both the arts of peace and war, beginning with the most ancient memories of all times for their magnanimous undertakings).

[15] (secrets).

that filled his libraries. Collado's dedication contrasts the pen and the sword, and attributes the scarcity of Spanish books to the greater attention that the King of Spain had paid to war over learning. The authors of these dedications attribute to their patron the role of 'inspirador primordial … del libro que se le presenta',[16] so that the king became 'en poeta o en sabio'[17] and his library the mirror of his power (Chartier 1996c, 210). In this way, the dedication brought prestige to the patron, apart from his political or military merits, through the possession and conservation of the book in a library. The dedications helped to determine the way in which both the book and its patron would be valued and perceived. It should be recalled that the meaning of these books changed over time because of their relationship to specific readers. The moment when these books entered the libraries of these politically powerful individuals would make a 'mark of significance' for the history of the book itself.

The rhetoric of praise, characteristic of these dedications, was focused on exalting the military capability of the patron. The authors usually appealed to the patrons' experience of war and their tactical control of the military aspects of the state, which was normally linked to the prestige of the dynasty or house to which the patron belonged. The Florentine engineer Giovanni Francesco Fiammelli, for example, in his dedication to Alessandro de' Medici in *Il principe cristiano gverriero* (1602), stressed the military ability of the pope, whom he described as an example of a Christian prince, at the same time extolling the power of the Medici through their ability to hold positions of princes, prelates and governors. Fiammelli presented his book to the Medici in an attempt to promote himself in the pontifical court. Indeed, publishing books on military architecture was a strategy that occasioned large networks of contacts (Gómez 2019a). With this objective, Fiammelli published *La riga matematica* where, in the dedication to Cosimo II de' Medici he exalted the military origins of the house and stressed the military power of the duke to whom he attributed the successful organisation of the fortifications that defended the state's borders. Fiammelli thus made the patron the owner of what he offered him: an instrument for drawing city plans, measuring river depths and planning the army on the battlefield. However, the book probably mattered more to Fiammelli than the instrument it described. The book formed part of a strategy of self-promotion with which he tried, in the dedication to the duke, to make the reader a witness of the relationship that might exist between an engineer and his patron and draw the maximum benefit from the value of the connection (Jouhaud and Merlin 1993).

The inclusion of the Medici coat of arms in *La riga matematica* suggests that the strategy of affirming the patron's military prowess had become quite usual among authors and printers. This rhetorical device acquired great significance in seventeenth-century Italy, for it was bestowed on different types of patrons, whatever their social status (nobles, popes, kings, military officers). Accordingly, together with his dedication, Cristóbal Lechuga, sergeant major and artillery lieutenant in the states of Flanders, included a xylograph representing the royal coat of arms of Philip III in his *Discvrso del Capitan Criſtoual Lechuga*. The xylograph occupied the centre of a large decorative display, including allegories of evil and justice flanking the coat of arms. The objective was mainly that of glorifying the patron, but also that of covering the costs of printing the book by asking for the economic support of the person being honoured (see Paoli 2014). In order to strengthen this appeal for support, these emblems gradually became more decorative. This is the case of the interesting, coloured coat of arms of the Farnese that Antonio Blado, the printer of Cesare d'Evoli's work, included in *Dell'ordinanze e battaglie* (1583), dedicated to Alessandro Farnese (Figure 6). The emblem of the patron sometimes even appeared

[16] (primordial inspirer … of the book being presented to him).
[17] (a poet or a wise man).

in the frontispiece of the book, as in Francesco Tensini's *La Fortificatione* (1624). The book's frontispiece includes, on a small scale, the emblem of dedicatee Duke Francesco Contarini, as part of a magnificent display of allegorical figures that referred to geometry and mathematics, together with a disordered set of instruments used in artillery and military mechanical engineering. The book acquired, by virtue of these cover images, a figurative dimension that, as a complement to the dedication, gave it a value similar to that of any work of art dedicated to a patron or sponsor. In sum, these books inserted themselves within the broader material culture associated with the propaganda of the patron or promoter.


DELL'ORDINANZE
E BATTAGLIE
DI CESARE D'EVOLI
SIGNOR NAPO-
LITANO
Al Sereniſs. Signore il S. Alleſsandro Farneſe
Principe di Parma, & Piacenza, & Ge-
nerale di ſua Maeſta Catolica
in Fiandra.
NAPOLI
CON LICENZA DELLI SVPERIORI
IN ROMA,
Per gli Heredi d'Antonio Blado Stampatori Camerali
M. D. LXXXIII.

Figure 6 – Coloured coat of arms of the Farnese in the frontispiece of Cesare d'Evoli's book *Dell'ordinanze e battaglie…*, Rome, 1583 (public domain, Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli Vittorio Emanuelle III).

3.2 *Between Servitude, Gratitude and Clientelism*

Military and mechanical engineers employed much of the rhetoric and textual formulae governing the relationships between patrons and clients in a court, while adapting them to their own interests. For example, they generally demonstrated an attitude of servitude towards the state and the person to whom they offered their books, which had become quite usual in dedications at that time. This trope became so widespread that it earned the criticism of some writers who regarded it as degrading for a man of letters (Bianco 2008). For example, Francesco Tensini literally stated that he was the 'vassallo' and 'seruitore'[18] (1624, Dedication page) of the Venetian senate and the Contarini in the dedication of *La Fortificatione*; Luis Collado was

[18] (vassal) and (servant)

the 'Humilissimo criado, y vassallo'[19] (1592, Dedication page) of King Philip III in his *Platica manval de artilleria*, and G.B. Fiammelli was the 'Vmilissimo Seruo'[20] (1604, 2v) of the same king in *Il principe difeso* (1604), while he offered another of his books, *Il principe cristiano gverriero*, to the Medici 'in segno di servitù'[21] (1602, Dedication page).

These declarations of loyalty were generally addressed to one person, although sometimes, as in the case of the engineer Giovanni Battista Isacchi's *Inventioni* (1579), they were extended to many members of the most important Italian families (Alessandro Farnese, Alfonso d'Este, Ranuccio Farnese, Claudio Gonzaga and Felice Paccioto, among others). Isacchi offered to each of them one of his 'secreti'[22] connected with military and mechanical engineering, probably to increase the success of his book and promote himself among different patrons. It was also usual for authors to dedicate their books as a sign of gratitude. Fratta had criticised this practice in his book (1590, 21r), but nevertheless, it became quite common.

The formula would often include allusions to the collaboration between the author of the book and the person to whom the book was dedicated, or to the benefits that the author aimed to obtain with the dedication, or in gratitude for those he had obtained. Tensini said that he dedicated *La Fortificatione* to the Venetian senate out of gratitude for having knighted him. Cristóbal Lechuga addressed his discourse to Philip III for having been given the post of field marshal. Diego de Prado, artilleryman and cartographer in the service of the Spanish monarchy thanked Juan de Acuña, member of the royal council and artillery general captain, for providing the protection which allowed him to develop his career and achieve the success of his books: Acuña had helped the initial manuscript of *La obra manual y plática de la artillería* (1591)[23] to reach a more technical and interesting level and thus present it in 1603 before the Council of State under the name of *Encyclopaedia de Fundición de artillería y su plática manual*.[24] It seems that by then Acuña had become a patron of artillery books, as can be deduced by Lázaro de la Ysla's dedication to him in 1595 in the first treatise on artillery published in Spain. Similarly, the engineer Agostino Ramelli, the author of the most famous treatise on machines (1588), declared in his dedication to Henry III of France that he offered the book to him as a sign of gratitude for freeing him from prison when he was sick while he was working in his service in La Rochelle. Gabriello Busca thanked Juan Fernández de Velasco for his favours and kindness (1601) during his years of service as an engineer in the Duchy of Milan. These dedications demonstrated the existence of a clientelism relationship between the authors and the people to whom they offered their books. One of the clearest examples is the dedication that García de Céspedes, head cosmographer of Philip III, addressed to Archduke Albert, Count of Flanders, and Duke of Brabant in his *Libros de instvmentos nvevos de geometria* (1606). The author asked nothing of the king, but in his dedication defined a relationship between himself and his patron in which he was fully integrated into the cultural, intellectual and power clientele networks of the court. Céspedes alluded to the books he had written in Castilian and to a book on navigation which was in the process of being printed for the king (1606). The effect was to suggest that he was already integrated into these networks.

[19] (most humble servant and vassal).
[20] (servant).
[21] (as a sign of servitude).
[22] (secrets).
[23] BNE, Mss/9024.
[24] Despite this, it seems that the manuscript never reached the printers. It can be consulted at the Cambridge University Library, Mss. 2883.

In this way, the dedications became a social space in which to continue to write these books. Along with the context in which the book was produced and transmitted – who owned it, where it ended up – the dedications determined the possible uses and appropriations of the book. For this reason, the theatres of machines were usually dedicated to a monarch whom the author claimed to have inspired the book, thus converting the work into a mirror of the patron's power, which was deemed worthy of public admiration. Thus, the dedications provided a platform for those with technical knowledge, typical of military and mechanical literature, to engage with power. They exalted the military ability of the monarchs, as well as their knowledge of the liberal and mechanical arts. For this reason, books on machines were often dedicated to a monarch who, according to the author, had inspired it. They exalted the military skill of the monarchs and their knowledge of the liberal and mechanical arts. Similarly, authors praised nobles and military officers for their contributions to the greatness of the state. In all cases, the dedication remained faithful to the same linguistic register, based on appealing to the appreciation, reputation, fame and praise of the patron, true to the values of a courtier society in which liberality, magnificence and exemplarity took precedence.

3.3 *From Protection to Sponsorship*

In the context of the exchange of favours, authors of books on military and mechanical engineering made use of their dedications to obtain protection and sponsorship for future books, although most often they purported to have no personal interest (Jouhaud and Merlin 1993). The Florentine engineer Lupicini, for instance, included in the dedication addressed to Francesco I in his treatise on military architecture a request for his support in order to 'ſeguire l'altre mie opere cominciate attenenti a ſimili materie'[25] (1582, 5), while in *La Fortificatione*, Tensini informed the Most Serene Prince and Excellent Senate of Venice that he had some other 'vtilissime inuentioni'[26] (1624, Dedication page) that he had held back for another occasion. Even more interesting is the case of the dedication to the Duke of Lerma that the printer Horacio Cardon introduced in the Castilian translation of Jacques Besson's *Theatrvm instrvmentorvm et machinarum*[27], the so-called 'Teatro Eſpañol' (Besson 1602, Dedication page).[28] Cardon said that his only purpose was 'ſeruir al publico, y en particular à V. Excellencia, de quien ſiempre quedare muy humilde y verdadero Seruidor'[29] (1602, Dedication page). However, the dedication added a request to establish a *commercial* relation with the duke, which would make him the 'protector de todas las [obras] que ſalieren de mi impreſsion ' (1602, Dedication page).[30]

Cardon's dedication followed nearly all the clichés of the genre. One of them was that the author hoped for protection against criticism and envy (Matt 2005). This was especially relevant when the book described new instruments or mechanical engineering inventions. In those cases, there was a significant economic interest because the authors usually claimed the profits that their invention might earn. They therefore attempted to protect their works and

[25] (continue my other works that I have begun on a similar theme).

[26] (very useful inventions).

[27] The original Latin version by Besson was published in 1578. Besson's book was widely influential and enjoyed several reprints and translations. Here the reference is the 1602 Spanish translation, which was 'compuesta' by Diego Besson and introduced by a Dedication by the printer Horatio Cardon.

[28] (Spanish Theatre).

[29] (to serve the public and particularly Your Excellence, of whom he would always be his very humble and true servant).

[30] (protector of all the [books] that come off my press).

their status as inventors and asked for protection against 'la dent venimeuse des envieux'[31] or 'l'envie des indiscrets et des médisants'[32] (see Dolza and Vérin 2004, 7). These expressions showed the importance that technical culture had acquired at that time from the economic point of view and the extent to which that culture had begun to form part of the history of the book (Long 1991 and 2001). Isacchi's *Inventioni* was published under the privilege granted by the Duke of Savoy and Prince of Piedmont, which was meant to stop anyone making use of Isacchi's inventions. The author included his portrait in the first pages of the book, following the formula of courtly representation in the figure of the upper half of his body, preceding the list of people to whom he dedicated the book (Zappella 1988). Together, the portrait and the request for privilege show an author seeking personal recognition.

4. *Relationship Formulae and Exchange Networks: Printers, Authors and Publishers, Between Clients and Patrons*

In *La main de l'auteur et l'esprit de l'imprimeur. XVIe-XVIIIe siècle,* Roger Chartier stresses the importance of books' preliminaries to understand the relationships between the power of the prince, the demands of patronage, the laws of the market and author-reader relations (2015, 14). Chartier does not mention dedications explicitly but, like other preliminaries, dedications mediate between different participants in a relationship expressed in print. It was in this context that books on mechanics or the art of war found their publishing fortune. Their contents formed part of the political, social and economic progress of the state, and the glory of the prince or patron. Meanwhile their authors aimed at their own promotion and that of their works. Dedications became an essential part of a political and intellectual model to which they gave rise and shape. They created hierarchies and models of relationships that did not exist before, with important consequences in the construction of cultural and political exchange networks that were generated according to shifting interests and priorities. The history of those books not only concurs to the development of a history of the circulation of scientific knowledge, but also resulted in the creation of a political power and prestige whose consequences outlasted the lifetimes of their authors; an aspect which has so far received little attention. Existing studies are usually limited to cases associated with a particularly important author. In this regard, the well-studied and known case of Galileo's *Siderevs Nvncivs* (1610) is emblematic. Historiography has converted it into an example of the extent to which the dedication of a book, a scientific one in this case, can become a key piece in the exchange of tangible and intangible interests of the governor and the man of science. The publication of *Siderevs Nvncivs* transformed the political and intellectual relationships of the scientist and the patron to whom he dedicated the book and the scientific discovery it contained. Along with the physical book, Galileo dedicated to Cosimo II de' Medici the famous invention of the telescope. He named the newly discovered four stars (actually moons) that orbited Jupiter the 'Medicean stars', in honour of the House of Medici. Galileo, at that time professor of mathematics at the University of Padua, used the dedication to ask Cosimo II for support with the aim of entering the service of the Medici and increasing his salary. The strategy was successful: only five months later, Galileo was named by the duke the Philosopher and Chief Mathematician of the Grand duchy of Tuscany and awarded a salary as professor of mathematics at the University of Pisa. In exchange, Cosimo II made *Siderevs Nvncivs* and the innovative telescope an instrument with which to increase his authority and inter-

[31] (the poisonous teeth of the envious).
[32] (the envy of indiscreet individuals and slanderers).

national political prestige. He used his diplomatic networks to demonstrate how the patronage of science and techniques could play a vital role in the process of competition for political pre-eminence (Biagioli 1990 and 1993; Bucciantini, Camerota and Giudice 2012). Galileo's dedication of *Siderevs Nvncivs* would increase even more the impact of a book that from the start received great international interest and was often given as a present among the most prestigious personalities in European courts, since it was an object that went beyond the discipline of astronomy to involve the wider territory of politics (Giudice 2023). The book, which revolutionised the relationship between humankind and nature, would also inspire a fruitful debate disseminated through the Venetian publishing industry. By publishing texts that made known contemporaneous scientific novelties, publishers helped create a cultured and knowledgeable public. Indeed, the publishing industry would take advantage of this situation to capitalise on Galileo's scientific success in the context of the rivalry between Florence and Venice (Hall 2013).

4.1 *Publishers and Printers as Mediators in Contact Networks*

Publishers and printers of books on war and mechanical engineering mediated in the creation of networks between men of science and political powers. The dedications surrounding the edition of Jacques Besson's *Theatrvm instrvmentorvm et machinarum*, by the influential François Béroald gives us an idea of their influence.

The book, which was published posthumously six years after the author's death, emerged from an earlier set of publishing negotiations. Besson had published *Cosmolabe* in 1567. It included a full series of inventions about which he intended to write a new book that would be dedicated to Charles IX of France, under the title *Livre premier des instruments mathematiques et mecaniques*. Besson wrote that book in 1569, when the king named him Master of Engineers, although it was not published for the following three years (see Besson 1572). By then Besson had published other books on scientific matters with the support of Protestant printers. One of them, the publisher Galiot du Pre, introduced Besson to François de Montmorency, a French nobleman and soldier involved in patronage, who provided Besson an entrance to the French court and paid for the publication of the second edition of the work *Art et Moyen parfaict de tyrer huiles et eaux* (1573) (Keller 1973; Hillard 1979; Vérin and Dolza 2001; Ravier-Mazzocco 2008). De Montmorency also presented the book on mechanical and mathematical instruments that Besson was working on to Charles IX and Catherine de' Medici and obtained the royal privilege for it to be printed.

François Béroalde came on the scene after Besson's death and, in 1578, promoted a new edition of the book, in which the politics of dedication were of great importance. Béroalde changed the title, removed the dedication to the king and changed the frontispiece. He added more detailed descriptions of the machines and instruments thanks to the collaboration of the printer Barthélemy Vincent, who made use of the engravings of the 1572 edition by the architect and designer J. Androuet du Cerceau, an active participant in the network that sponsored Besson's work (Régnier-Roux 2010). This newly formatted book was very successful and was translated into several languages (Latin, Italian, Spanish and German). The rising fortune of Besson's book was driven largely by the use of the dedication: a space in which new individuals could be addressed and new customers appealed to (Ravier-Mazzocco 2008, 6). This case shows the extent to which the translations of technical and scientific books could affect their cultural status and increase their power of intervention in new political contexts (Carreira da Silva and Brito Vieira 2019). This phenomenon acquired special relevance considering the proliferation of translations and publications of military and technical literature that took place in the early seventeenth century due to the great increase in the number of engineers.

Publishing in the language of the patron or protector was also a strategy of promotion that the authors often used and which they explicitly mentioned in their dedications. This frequently implied a modification of the original context in which the book had been created, and hence its broader meaning, once it was translated (Virol 2016). The case of the dedication that the Lyon printer Horacio Cardon introduced in 1602 in the Castilian translation of Besson's book is especially interesting. The printer used the vernacular translation to expand his influential publishing industry to reach the American readership which he mentioned in the (Spanish) dedication to the Duke of Lerma. Cardon must have thought that publishing in the language of the patron or promoter was a good strategy to win favours in the court. That the court was invested in modernising the country by disseminating scientific knowledge in the vernacular is something that Cardon must have known. It was for this reason that the book by the Protestant Besson could be finally published in the most Catholic of the European states.

In addition to printers, other figures contributed to creating networks of contact between writers and patrons through their books. An example is the Florentine grammarian Francesco Serdonati, who acted as an intermediary between the engineer Fiammelli and Cosimo II. This was also the case with Belisario Vinta, the duke's secretary, through whom Fiammelli sent several of his works. Additionally, in 1606, Fiammelli sent another of his books, *La riga matematica*, to Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, in an attempt to expand his network of contacts.

4.2 *The Power of Family Networks*

The dedications in these books on war and mechanical engineering provide evidence of powerful networks that were used to guarantee the prestige of authors and publishers and their books. Writers alluded in their dedications to people who might form part of the family network of the dedicatee. Fiammelli again provides an interesting example in the dedication addressed to the Medici in *Il principe cristiano gverriero*. To make himself known in the papal court, the engineer employed the strategy of dedicating the book to Pope Paul V, within a joint dedication to Alessandro de' Medici, who had been Pope Leo XI and to whom the new pope was related. The author thus took an intermediate path in the politics of dedications by offering the book to the same person through another who played, as he himself wrote, the role of 'mediator'.

Fiammelli also resorted to appealing to the family networks of the dedicatee in *Modo di ben mettere in ordinanza gli eserciti*, which was dedicated to the cardinal Antonio Facchineto. In this case, Fiammelli appealed to Alessandro Farnese as mediator. As nephew of Paul III and brother of the Duke of Parma, Farnese was highly influential. In this way, the engineer hoped to improve his reputation as an author by placing himself under the protection of an illustrious patron. The allusion is especially interesting if we consider that Alessandro Farnese's military and intellectual prestige was also used by the printer of Cesare D'Evoli's work *Dell'ordinanze e battaglie.* This printer mentioned the relationship of the author's father with the Farnese family as a means of promoting himself. Both author and printer used other connections to assert their proximity to Farnese.

Other engineers made use of family networks to achieve their interests or to maintain a relationship of patronage or clientelism. In *Flagello Militare* (1676), Giovan Battista Martena explained to Fernando Giovanni Fajardo de Requesens y Zuñiga, Marquis of the Vélez and Viceroy of Naples, how the publication of this book had been made possible thanks to the contacts provided by the family network of the Vélez (1676). Martena took advantage of this to mention the marquis' father, from whom he had obtained a letter of recommendation to the Duke of Arcos when he was Viceroy of Sicily, which had enabled him to obtain the post of captain in the kingdom of Naples. In this case, the dedication was used to acknowledge the assistance he had already received.

A similar relationship was established between Gabriele Busca and Juan Fernández de Velasco, with whom he closely collaborated in the publication of books on fortification. In 1597 Busca acted as an intermediary in a network of technical-scientific knowledge that enabled him to obtain interesting images of military architecture requested by his patron. For some time afterwards, these formed part of the interesting collections of books and mechanical scientific and technical instruments that Velasco kept in his library, to which the engineer must have enjoyed access. To be precise, these were drawings of machines from Francesco di Giorgio's *De machina et architectura*, which was then in the Duke of Savoy's library. It was also intended that those drawings should reach the humanist Justo Lipsio, who was working on a new edition of the book *Poliorceticon* (Vázquez Manassero 2019). This example thus shows the mutually beneficial circulation of books between authors and patrons.

5. Conclusion

Authors, publishers and printers of books on military and mechanical engineering created networks of sociability, technical-scientific exchange and patronage by means of the paratexts of their books. These networks emerged in the last decades of the sixteenth century, when this type of literature contributed to an ideal of progress in the government of modern states. The role played in this context by publishers, authors and printers owing to the politics of dedication was essential. The relationships they established allowed information to circulate through books that were re-edited and translated into different languages and diverse formats. The preliminaries offered a physical space in which to mediate the dissemination of knowledge and power. At the same time, the dedication became a resource to legitimise the status of military and mechanical engineers and their books, to obtain protection patronage or to make the work, in the hands of the publishers, a best-seller in the publishing market, characterised by its capacity for reproduction and adaptation to the reading habits of different social groups. The creators of the books and their dedications attempted to determine their current and future status, owing to the importance that technical and scientific literature acquired in late sixteenth century as a way to exhibit and wield power.

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Humphrey Moseley and the Politics of Early Modern Publishers

Justin Kuhn
Independent Scholar (<justinkuhn86@gmail.com>)

Abstract

The essay reassesses the ways in which book historians define the politics of early modern publishers by examining a selection of books published during the late 1640s and 1650s by Humphrey Moseley, a prominent London bookseller whom modern scholars have routinely characterized as a Royalist stationer. It argues that starting in 1648 Moseley's publishing began to shift away from the overt Royalism of his earlier career just as Parliamentary and republican forces were consolidating their victories over King Charles I. From that year onwards, Moseley increasingly published material that repackaged the social, political and cultural values of former Royalists for inclusion within the intellectual and discursive spheres of republican England. His political flexibility during this period of Parliamentary supremacy and republican rule received expression through publishing strategies of contingency, conformity and collaboration. These publishing strategies offer modern scholars a set of critical methods for making sense of seemingly contradictory evidence within the historical archive. Rather than inconsistency, such evidence may signify that a publisher was changing their specialization or simply adapting to the times. With the shifting developments of his career after 1648, Moseley's example ultimately cautions us against assigning fixed political identities to early modern publishers.

Keywords: Humphrey Moseley, Interregnum, Republicanism, Royalism, Stationer

1. *Introduction*

Over two decades ago, David Scott Kastan issued a clarion call within early modern literary studies. In *Shakespeare After Theory*, Kastan pushed for a grounded rather than theoretical version of historicist criticism that would engage more extensively with the particularities of the archive (1999, 18). Perhaps no group of scholars followed that imperative as vigorously as those working on the history of the book. Through meticulous research into the production and reception of imaginative writing in the material form of print publications, these scholars have enriched our understanding of the historical specificity of early modern literary

texts as well as of the cultural and political functions that such texts were made, or thought, to possess.[1] Much of this scholarship has explored the role of early modern publishers, with particular attention to how individual publishers both construed and shaped the meaning of a literary text as they positioned it within the marketplace of print.[2] Although book historians have offered compelling explanations of the publishing strategies and political specializations that contributed to this process of meaning-making, such efforts to classify the politics of different publishers, and by doing so to gain an interpretive foothold on the ideological significance of their printed editions of literary texts, have arguably risked oversimplification. In particular, these studies have often assumed that publishers maintained stable political identities which seldom, if ever, changed over time.[3] The present essay queries the fixity of such political identities as well as the scholarly procedures through which political labels have been attributed to early modern publishers by examining a selection of books issued by the London bookseller Humphrey Moseley during the late 1640s and 1650s. Routinely depicted by modern scholars as a committed Royalist, several of Moseley's politically resonant publications in fact defy categorization along a Royalist-Parliamentarian binary. The publishing strategies he used for these books, moreover, can point us towards a set of critical methods for probing historical particularities within the archives that would enable modern scholars to better account for the kind of political complexity that Moseley exhibited. Moseley's publications not only provide important insights into the challenges of publishing during a period of unprecedented social upheaval; they also invite us, more generally, to reconsider how we ascertain the politics of early modern publishers.

As one of the most prominent English publishers of the early modern period, Moseley has not escaped scholarly scrutiny. Throughout the mid-seventeenth century, he published a wide range of poetry and drama (see Reed 1928), including a slim volume of early poems by John Milton (see Coiro 1992; McDowell 2009, 69-90), assorted Jacobean and Caroline dramatists in an innovative serialized format (see Kewes 1995), several selections of Cavalier verse (see Zajac 2015), and the monumental folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays (see Štollová 2017). For these reasons, Moseley has been credited with preserving imaginative writing during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, and some critics have even posited that he was instrumental in helping to construct English literature as a rarefied category of writing with important aesthetic and cultural value (see Kastan 2007). Given the connections between imaginative writing and political Royalism during this period, Moseley's extensive involvement in literary publishing has been regarded as evidence that he explicitly targeted likeminded readers who sided with King Charles I in the English Civil Wars of the 1640s before spending the Interregnum period of the 1650s coping with their defeat.[4] Subtler interpretations of Moseley's politics have suggested that his printing of dramatic works, continental romances, and court-affiliated poets constituted a quietly subversive effort to sustain the beleaguered supporters of the King while Parliamentary forces gained increasing control of the country.[5] Whether seen as a staunch advocate of the

[1] While these studies are too numerous to count, notable recent examples include Bourne 2020; McCarthy 2020; Calhoun 2020.

[2] See Lesser 2004; McCullough 2008; Straznicky 2012; Hooks 2016.

[3] Political readings of early modern publishers have proliferated and include several of the previously cited works. For additional examples, see Andrews 2011; Melnikoff 2012.

[4] References to Moseley's avowed Royalism abound, including in several of the studies cited above. Other major studies of mid-seventeenth century literature that have reinforced this political narrative include Smith 1994, 12; Norbrook 1999, 159.

[5] The most influential account of Moseley's Royalist subversion can be found in Potter 1989, especially 19-22. See also Lindenbaum 2010, 395-396. Recent studies express similar sentiments about Moseley's implicit Royalism.

Stuart cause or as a discreet purveyor of Cavalier culture, Moseley has been inextricably linked by modern scholars to the ebb and flow of political Royalism during the mid-seventeenth century.

When considered more broadly, however, Moseley's publishing record challenges the consensus view of him as invariably Royalist. The evidence for this political complexity can be found not in Moseley's frequent paratextual addresses to the reader, which often focused on the preeminent quality of each work's contents, but rather in the books that he chose to publish and in the timing of their release. Indeed, what has not received sufficient attention among modern scholars is that a shift in Moseley's publications started to occur in 1648. Whereas Moseley's earlier books had tended to be more avowedly Royalist, particularly in their promotion of Cavalier writers, from 1648 until the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 he also published multiple books in a diverse array of genres that explored political concerns relevant both to kingless governance more generally and to the specific conditions that held sway under the various Parliamentary and republican regimes of the period. Some of these publications attempted to justify switching allegiance from the Stuart cause to the Parliamentary victors – or, later, from the Stuart cause to the republican state. Others theorized how social, political, and cultural values associated with former supporters of the King could be adapted to the English Republic. One publication even had Moseley working directly with the republican administration. All these books, taken together, suggest that Moseley's publishing after 1648 played a significant role in conceptualizing how erstwhile Cavaliers and previously Royalist ideas might have fit within, and been able to exert influence upon, the new republic. After the apparent defeat of the Stuart cause, this group of books articulated a vision of social, political, and cultural conservatism within the republican state.

Ultimately, these books indicate that a certain degree of political flexibility entered Moseley's calculus once Parliament triumphed over the King. As I demonstrate below, Moseley's political flexibility was expressed through publishing strategies that embraced contingency, conformity and collaboration. These strategies allowed Moseley to navigate the dynamic and unsettled political environment of the mid-seventeenth century. For modern scholars, however, they offer critical procedures for grappling with seemingly inconsistent political details within a publisher's body of work.

2. *Contingency*

Moseley's publishing career peaked during the 1640s and 1650s, a tumultuous stretch of civil war and political revolution characterized by intermittent regime change, social dislocation, pervasive radicalism and cultural upheaval. That Moseley thrived amid the uncertainty and instability of the mid-seventeenth century attests to the efficacy of his publishing strategies. One of those strategies, however, specifically addressed the fluid conditions that prevailed during that time. At multiple points throughout the era, Moseley sought to exploit abrupt shifts in the political landscape, some of which favored Parliament or the republican state, others the Stuart cause. Although Moseley operated his business during a unique period of extraordinary volatility which practically demanded such pivots, his nimble publishing of texts in response to new political developments highlights the role of contingency in the early modern book trade more generally. Taking a cue from the revisionist movement in early Stuart historiography, we might say that

In a monograph on early modern drama during the Civil Wars and Interregnum, for instance, Heidi Craig observes that Moseley qualifies as a Royalist publisher not because of any overtly political texts supportive of the Stuart cause but rather due to his 'belletristic publishing' of high culture, which carried with it tacit political meanings (2023, 140-141; see also Štollová 2017).

publications had short-term implications reflective of the immediate circumstances of their release as well as long-term meanings that crystallized over time.[6] The short-term implications of Moseley's contingent publishing demonstrate the extent to which early modern books were embedded in their original historical moments, while also revealing how adaptive – and how politically complex – early modern publishers could be.

After the First Civil War, Moseley published an influential text that justified submission to Parliament on the basis of its *de facto* control of the realm, Anthony Ascham's *A Diſcourſe: Wherein is examined, What is particularly* lawfull *during the* Confuſions *and* Revolutions *of* GOVERNMENT (1648). Written while the defeated Charles I was negotiating with Parliament, Ascham's *Discourse* argued that subjects owe political allegiance to a victorious party – even if its triumph was not technically legal – so long as the party can provide for the common defense, a line of reasoning that would be deployed by no less a figure than Sir Robert Filmer, the infamous theorist of royal absolutism, when he himself attempted to justify obedience to the republican government in 1653 (see Cuttica 2012, 173).[7] The specific political goal of Ascham's text was to consolidate support for the *Heads of the Proposals*, a constitutional settlement presented to the King by the political Independents in charge of Parliament's army.[8] According to Marco Barducci, 'Ascham was a writer on the payroll of the moderate Independent group in Parliament, and his political doctrine was aimed at convincing lay Presbyterians and royalists to adhere to the policy of national pacification implemented by his patrons since 1648' (2017, 38; see also Barducci 2015). Ascham's text, therefore, was oriented toward precisely the type of readership Moseley had been cultivating up to that point.[9]

Because Ascham's *Discourse* was designed to appeal to moderate and conservative opinions, the way that he frames his arguments can shed light on Moseley's publishing considerations during the entire period of Parliamentary supremacy and republican rule. Ascham is careful to note his own preference for kingship – 'The ſtate of Monarchy is of all the reſt moſt excellent' (1648, 70), he says – and he condemns democracy in no uncertain terms, expressing the commonplace fear that civil society would degenerate into a 'diſſolute multitude' (69) and warning that 'in confuſion there is a rage which reaſon cannot reclame' (*ibid.*). Such 'confuſion', he adds, 'ariſes moſt out of the reflexion which particular men may make on their particular rights and liberties', a comment that undoubtedly glances at populist movements like the Levellers (70). Ascham thus makes clear that he approaches his claims for Parliament's supremacy not only from a distinctively anti-radical standpoint, but also with a view towards preserving political order. Within the context of the entire *Discourse*, these concerns about political order provide further justification for submitting to a conqueror's authority. Whatever partisan convictions one may hold, obedience to an 'usurper' – the term Ascham uses consistently in reference to Parliament – would safeguard the internal stability of the body politic.

Above all, according to Ascham, switching allegiance can be seen as a rational, even necessary response to political events beyond one's control. This idea informs the providential logic of his assertion that 'Wee are bound to owne Princes ſo long as it pleaſes God to give them

[6] On the lessons that early Stuart revisionist historiography can offer to early modern literary studies, see Zwicker 2015.

[7] In this respect, Ascham anticipated and helped give shape to the arguments used in the Engagement Controversy during the early 1650s, when the government pressed its citizens to take an Oath of Engagement to the new republican regime. For an influential treatment of the engagement controversy, see Skinner 1972.

[8] For more information on the background, contexts and ramifications of the *Heads of the Proposals*, see Como 2020.

[9] Nevertheless, Barducci suggests that Moseley's decision to publish Ascham could have been strategic, 'a way for keeping a foot in both camps (a royalist one and a parliamentary one)' given the 'flood of political events' after the First Civil War and the 'developments of current policy' (2015, 39-40, n.14).

the power to command us, and when we ſee others poſſeſt of their powers, we may then ſay, That the King of Kings hath chang'd our Vice-Roys' (88). A few pages later, Ascham drives this point home with the example of a conquered village, remarking that if 'Townes are reduced to the jurisdiction of thoſe to whom they were ſworne not to ſubmit, but to deſtroy' (92), then 'In ſuch caſes the Prince to whom they were firſt obliged, releaſes them of all imaginable duty to him. For he cannot expect that which is impoſſible for them to doe, *viz*. acts of former Allegiance to him' (93). By drawing attention to the vicissitudes of political affairs, Ascham impresses upon his readership the inevitably contingent nature of partisan loyalties.[10] As Royalists suffered further losses and then the decisive blow of the regicide, Ascham's reasoning must have grown increasingly compelling, and it is easy to see how this perspective could have shaped the publishing practices of a canny stationer like Moseley throughout the late 1640s and 1650s. Even before the trial and execution of Charles I, however, the publication of Ascham's *Discourse* in 1648 marked a conceptual shift in how moderates and conservatives grappled with the political repercussions of Parliament's ascendancy. For Moseley in particular, it functioned both as theory and as event – as a rationale for adapting to the changing circumstances of a tumultuous age and, by publishing the text during this key turning point in a decade-long conflict, as a conspicuous moment in which he himself adapted to the political situation at hand.

It would not be the last moment of adaptation for Moseley. Throughout the rest of his career, he remained attuned to the fluctuating state of affairs within England. In 1651, just a few years after his edition of Ascham's *Discourse*, Moseley attempted to capitalize on a revival of the Stuart cause by releasing a book with Royalist political implications more akin to his pre-1648 phase of textual production. That year he published an octavo collection of *Comedies, Tragicomedies, with other Poems* (1651) by William Cartwright, a young Oxford-educated writer with clerical aspirations who had died in 1643. The collection is notable for including over fifty commendatory poems, exemplifying to an unparalleled degree the Cavalier 'practice of contributing verses to each other's volumes of poetry as a means of maintaining a sense of cultural identity' (Wilcher 2001, 321). Though these prefatory poems and indeed the publication as a whole served as a belated epitaph for Cartwright, after the regicide such memorializing efforts had taken on greater political significance, providing a means through which committed Royalists processed their losses. As Nicholas McDowell observes, the paratextual materials of Cartwright's collection represented 'the early death of a figure who combined the offices of poet, priest, and scholar … as symptomatic of the devastation of learning, religion, and poetry during the war' (2009, 79). By mourning Cartwright, Cavalier writers were also mourning the demise of a particular social formation, a way of life that had become increasingly linked to and symbolically dependent on a King recently executed for treason.

But while the culture of the Stuart court lay in ruins when Moseley published the collection in June of 1651, the Stuart cause itself had not yet suffered total defeat.[11] Earlier that year Prince Charles, later Charles II, had accepted the Scottish crown. Over the ensuing spring and summer, as Moseley prepared *Comedies, Tragicomedies, with other Poems* for print, Charles embarked on a military campaign to recover his lost kingdoms, hoping to gain reinforcements from anticipated Royalist uprisings once he entered England.[12] With a Stuart invasion on the horizon, Moseley

[10] Ascham's stance reflects what historians have recently begun to argue: that partisan affiliation was more malleable and less ideologically rigid than has been supposed, often contingent upon fluctuating political circumstances. See McElligott 2007, 93-149.

[11] The Thomason Copy of the Cartwright volume dates it to 23 June, 1651.

[12] On this period of Charles II's military campaign during the Third Civil War and his life in Scotland more generally, see Hutton 1989, 49-70.

published the Cartwright volume, a book that prominently featured an entire host of disaffected Royalist poets mobilized toward a 'reaffirmation of Cavalier ideals and a gesture of defiance against the society which had repudiated them' (Thomas 1969, 177). Not only could these sentiments express discontent with English republican culture, but prior to Charles' final defeat in Worcester that September, such defiance could also work to marshal ideological and material support for an active Royalist offensive. As with Ascham's *Discourse*, Moseley strategically published a text responsive to a recent shift in the country's political terrain. Through the Cartwright collection, he sought to profit from conditions that had become favorable to Royalist enthusiasm. Following the Republic's triumph over Prince Charles, however, the collection's elegiac function, which honored the halcyon days of Cavalier fellowship, solidified into the predominant understanding of the book, while its political backing for a Royalist resurgence faded into obscurity. The short-term considerations behind a text's publication can recover such layers of meaning as well as provide fresh insights into the careful political maneuverings of stationers like Moseley.

3. *Conformity and Collaboration*

While the Royalist politics of *Comedies, Tragicomedies, with other Poems* marked a reversal from the Parliamentary leanings of the *Discourse*, Moseley's publication of the Cartwright collection was nevertheless consistent with Ascham's logic of partisan contingency. Moseley continued to abide by that logic after Royalist forces were routed at Worcester in 1651, but increasingly he would do so with a view towards adjusting to the reality of kingless self-rule. Indeed, as the decade progressed, Moseley published material that conformed in various ways to the republican culture of the 1650s.[13] During the momentous regime change that established the Protectorate, he even collaborated with republican authorities on a text the government wanted to print. Yet these publications, far from demonstrating a commitment to the ideological underpinnings of the republican project, remained largely congruent with the conservative attitudes expressed elsewhere in Moseley's body of work. If these publications held larger political significance, they represented a broader effort to take previously Royalist values, particularly the aesthetics of the Stuart court and the emphasis on social and political hierarchies, and rehabilitate them for English republican culture. In synthesizing republicanism and former Royalism, however, these publications confound a key political distinction that modern literary critics have used to grapple with the revolutionary period. Moseley's publishing strategies of conformism and collaborationism call into question the utility of such distinctions as well as the political categories that reify them.

Most significantly for literary scholars, Moseley's overtly conformist publications included a volume of poetry. This genre of book has often been considered by modern critics to carry subversive Royalist connotations whenever Stuart sympathizers, particularly Moseley himself, published an edition during the 1640s and 1650s (see Potter 1989). Moseley's release of Abraham Cowley's *Poems* (1656a), however, challenges that interpretive paradigm. The poetry collection contains a Preface in which Cowley, much like Ascham, makes peace with the political circumstances of the times and urges other writers to do the same. Unsurprisingly, Cowley's Preface occasioned controversy among devoted Royalists – particularly those living in exile – and to this day the question of its sincerity provokes vigorous debate among critics.[14]

[13] It might be objected that such conformism was the result of the republican government's censorship and control over the printing press. Republican authorities certainly had the mechanisms for such enforcement and the ability to do so if it was deemed necessary, but they seldom intervened directly except in cases of incitement to violence. See Peacey 2006.

[14] On contemporary and modern responses to Cowley's text, see Wilcher 2001, 340-346. More recently, Niall Allsopp has argued that Cowley's *Poems* demonstrates a genuine effort to accommodate himself to the political reality

Whatever Cowley's private intentions, though, his Preface offers a public manifesto on how a literary aesthetic identified with the Stuart court could be accommodated to the English Republic, and his thinking may even help to explain and contextualize Moseley's voluminous output of poetry, plays and romances during the 1650s. Cowley's Preface emphasizes the necessity of healing after a traumatic decade of conflict and bloodshed. To that end, Cowley defends his decision not to print what he had written during, and about, the Civil Wars, claiming that he 'would have it accounted no leſs unlawful to *rip up old wounds*, then to *give new ones*' (1656b, a4v). He argues against either producing or circulating '*Representation*[s] of *Places* and *Images*' that would 'make a kind of *Artificial Memory* of' the conflicts of the 1640s, conflicts which he describes as 'thoſe things wherein we are all bound to deſire like *Themiſtocles*, the *Art* of Oblivion' (a4r). He also pushes for the renunciation of partisan coding, presumably within literary as well as political discourse, since abandoning such antagonism would be conducive to the necessary work of national reconciliation: 'The *enmities* of *Fellow-Citizens* ſhould be, like that of *Lovers*, the *Redintegration* of their *Amity*. The Names of *Party*, and *Titles* of *Diviſion*, which are ſometimes in effect the whole quarrel, ſhould be extinguiſhed and forbidden in peace under the notion of *Acts* of *Hoſtility*' (a4r-a4v). What appears to underlie Cowley's concern about partisanship, then, is the possibility that it would inflame tensions within the country and thus provoke civil unrest. While some critics have interpreted Cowley's Preface as an elaborate ruse to evade the suspicions of republican authorities,[15] it would hardly strain credibility to take Cowley's interest in political order at face value given that it echoed similar stances adopted by former Royalists like Hobbes and Davenant in addition to Parliamentarian monarchists like Ascham.[16] As I point out throughout the present essay, this stance also accorded with several publications by Moseley.

Like that of other former Royalists, Cowley's stated position derives from an acceptance of the reality of England's situation after the end of the Civil Wars. In a line of argument that recalls Ascham's *Discourse*, Cowley asserts that 'when the event of battel, and the unaccountable *Will* of *God* has determined the controverſie, and that we have ſubmitted to the conditions of the *Conqueror*, we muſt lay down our *Pens* as well as *Arms*', and he goes on to take note of the '*General Amnestie*' which former Royalists received 'as a *favor* from the *Victor*' (a4r). Owing to these significant developments, Cowley insists, writers who once supported Charles I ought to direct their talents elsewhere: 'we muſt *march* out of our *Cauſe* it ſelf, and *diſmantle* that, as well as our *Towns* and *Caſtles*, of all the *Works* and *Fortifications* of *Wit* and *Reaſon* by which we defended it' (*ibid.*). Cowley's ideological disarmament takes the literary values typically associated with Royalist poetics and decouples them from their partisan connections suggesting, as a result, that 'wit' and 'reason' can serve entirely new purposes. Based on his comments about national reconciliation, such purposes, if they tended toward the political, could potentially involve the peacemaking process or even the quest for stability like Ascham. As the preeminent publisher of literary texts during the mid-seventeenth-century, Moseley was undoubtedly securing his own material interests by issuing a book that attempted to make the imaginative writing of former Cavaliers and other Stuart court wits acceptable to the political circumstances of the times.

of the Stuart monarchy's defeat. In addition to a close reading of the collection, Allsopp's discussion provides a detailed review of archival material from contemporaries who doubted Cowley's commitment to the Stuart cause, including Royalists-in-exile such as Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon and Tories writing later during the Restoration (2020, 111-138).

[15] Cowley's imprisonment at the time of his writing might indicate that his Preface was insincere, but it would not necessarily preclude the ideological commitment to political stability that seems to underwrite the Preface.

[16] In his study of formerly Royalist poets navigating the political terrain of the 1650s, Allsopp (2020) helpfully contextualizes the intellectual reasoning behind such poets' decisions to make peace with the republican state, highlighting the importance of theories of sovereign power developed in response to Royalist losses.

Through this act of conformity, however, Moseley's Cowley publication proposed changes to the curation and composition of literature that went even further. Rather than merely grafting Stuart court aesthetics onto the sanctioned discourses of the 1650s as a marginalized, if tolerated, addition, the preface aimed at a more cohesive political integration, working to situate a formerly Royalist poetics within the burgeoning culture of republican England.

A year after his Cowley publication theorized how previously Royalist literature could be reconstituted within the republican state, Moseley released a text that similarly reconciled the priorities of a social elite to the conditions of kingless governance. The publication, *Politick Discourses* (1657), the translation of a book by the Italian statesman Paolo Paruta, examines the ancient Roman Republic in relation to the modern Venetian Republic, a subject that would have had broad appeal in England during the 1650s. Following a typology popularized by Machiavelli in his *Discourses upon the first decade of T. Livius* (1663),[17] the two republics had often served as contrasting models of representative self-rule, with Rome typically thought to exemplify a relatively democratic and decidedly imperialist form of republicanism and Venice a patrician and isolationist form. Arguing against Machiavelli, who like many English republicans favored a Roman model, Paruta assesses the weaknesses of the ancient republic while highlighting the stability of its modern-day counterpart, asserting that Rome's downfall can be blamed on the composition of its government which, unlike Venice's aristocratic structure, was 'too much inclining towards the corruption of a Popular State' (1657, 12). As with other commentaries about Venice from throughout the decade, Paruta's book cast a system of noble rule and its implied social hierarchies into a viable option for representative governance (see Kuhn forthcoming). In doing so, his text echoed the line of thinking that attracted some former Royalists to Venetian republicanism during the 1650s (see, for instance, Howell 1651). By publishing an English translation of Paruta's commentary, Moseley actively facilitated the development of a conservative politics not within the bounds of traditional kingship, but rather within the new intellectual horizons of republican discourse. Moseley's publishing strategy for books like Paruta's and Cowley's involved reorienting around the circumstances of Royalist defeat without abandoning the social and cultural elitism of formerly Royalist ideology. These publications conformed to the hegemonic politics of the 1650s even as they contested the class and cultural assumptions of prevailing republican thought.

Moseley, however, went beyond conforming to the political circumstances of the decade; in at least one instance, he effectively collaborated with republican authorities. In December 1653, the government commissioned Moseley to publish an English translation of Georges de Scudery's *Discours politiques des roys*. Moseley's translation was published in 1654 with the title *Curia Politiæ: or, The Apologies of Severall Princes: Justifying to the World Their moſt Eminent Actions, by the ſtrength of Reason, and the moſt Exact Rules of Policie* (Scudery 1654a). First published in France in 1647 as *Discours politiques des rois* (Scudery 1647), this work of political counsel, whose Latin part of the title, *Curia Politiæ*, translates roughly to 'Court Policy', discusses 'the moſt eminent actions' of twenty famous monarchs and purports to disclose 'those reasons and causes which overruled them to their resolutions', aiming above all to 'diſcover thoſe ſecret and concealed myſteries of State, and ſo to remonſtrate the events of Councels and grand Enterpriſes, undertaken with ſo high deliberations' (B2r).[18] In short, Scudery sought to confer political wisdom to his readers

[17] The first Italian edition is *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, Firenze, Giunti, 1531.

[18] The title of the original French printing of Scudery's book differed substantively from the English translation published by Moseley; for *Discours politiques des Rois* translates to 'Political speeches of the Kings'. Perhaps owing to the republican government's commission of the text, the title of Moseley's edition, while acknowledging Princely

through the insights that could be gleaned from the decision-making of notable kings and their courts. At a cursory glance, then, *Curia Politiae* would seem a natural fit for a publisher with Moseley's supposedly ardent Royalism. The monarchical subject matter certainly aligns with modern critical understandings of Moseley as a purveyor of courtly and Cavalier texts.

Yet the fact remains that the republican government, not Moseley, made the initial decision to have Scudery's courtly text printed. This puzzling detail raises questions about the intended purpose of the publication and about Moseley's ties to republican authorities more generally. Bibliographic evidence and the circumstances surrounding the book's publication may provide some answers. The government's commission takes up the final page of Moseley's printed edition of *Curia Politiae*, in two separate sections documenting the entire bureaucratic process. The top section notes that the Council of State tasked its Secretary, John Thurloe, with choosing a stationer to publish *Curia Politiae*:

> *Tueſday 6. December, 1653*. At the Council of State at *Whitehal*. Ordered, *That Mr* Thurloe *be appointed by the Council, to aſsigne ſuch perſons as he ſhall think fit, to print the Book, entituled* CURIA POLITIÆ*; and that no other Perſon whatſoever do preſume to print the ſame without leave firſt had from Mr.* Thurloe*, for the doing thereof. JOHN THURLOE, Secr.* (n.p.)

The bottom section, dated a week later, records Thurloe's official decision:

> I Do appoint *Humphrey Moſeley* to print this Book, and that none elſe do print the ſame. Joh*n Thurloe*. 13 December. 1653. (*Ibid*.)

Jason Peacey, in his study of political propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, explores 'the possibility that the appearance of certain political texts was supported' by the government 'at key moments in the 1640s and 1650s in order to set the political tone for important constitutional change' (2004, 249), and he cites *Curia Politiae* as an example of this practice. Indeed, the Council of State's commission of *Curia Politiae* coincided, that December, with the formation of the Protectorate, itself the culmination of a rapid succession of regime changes which began earlier that year with the dismissal of the Rump Parliament and then continued over the interim with the creation and subsequent dissolution of the Nominated Assembly or 'Barebone's Parliament' (see Woolrych 1982). Given Scudery's promise to divulge 'secret and concealed mysteries of State', the publication of *Curia Politiae* may have functioned to clarify precisely the kind of inscrutable and seemingly erratic processes of high politics that had recently embroiled England's central government, affirming not only the prudence of civic officials, but also the stability of the very institutions that had just been subjected to a series of upheavals. For republican authorities, the ostensible monarchism of this text apparently mattered less than its capacity to legitimize the inception of a new regime by highlighting similar 'events of Councels and grand Enterpriſes, undertaken with ſo high deliberation' (B2r). Like Ascham's *Discourse* and the Cartwright collection, Moseley's edition of *Curia Politiae* resonated with the short-term contingencies of the political moment.

The government's commission of *Curia Politiae* serves as a reminder that the meaning and ideological significance of such texts was hardly fixed, a point that Moseley himself affirms in prefaces 'To the Reader' that he attached to various other publications during the 1650s.[19]

power and the centrality of the court, avoids using the term 'King' and places emphasis on the details of statecraft revealed within the text.

[19] Based on prefatory comments Moseley made in two of the books he published during the 1650s, Moseley seems to have understood that texts could be transposed from one cultural framework to another and that the readers

The fact that an extant copy of *Curia Politiae*, evidently issued after the Restoration, includes a dedication to King Charles II only emphasizes the political ambiguity of Scudery's work.[20] That same ambiguity applies to Moseley as well. His collaboration with republican authorities reveals that he was hardly considered a subversive Royalist *provocateur*, least of all by John Thurloe, who had by then begun his tenure as the government's spymaster.[21] While Moseley himself did not initiate the publication of *Curia Politiae*, his involvement in the republic's efforts to appropriate a courtly text for its own designs underscores the nuances and complications of his publishing practices during the 1650s.

Additional evidence suggests that Moseley attempted to take advantage of these ties to the republican regime. When he entered *Curia Politiae* into the Stationers' Register on 20 December 1653, Moseley also recorded *Politick Maxims and Observations* by Hugo Grotius, a work of political counsel that he would publish in 1654 with a subtitle noting that it was *Translated for the ease and benefit of the English STATES-MEN* (Grotius 1654, title page).[22] While the government apparently did not commission the printing of this text as well, Moseley's subtitle implies that *Politick Maxims and Observations* was aimed at those connected to the centers of power, whether they were politicians, civic officials, political thinkers, or republican propagandists. For that reason, Moseley's publication of Grotius may very well have been intended to complement his Scudery book on court policy. The titlepage even echoes *Curia Politiae* by framing Grotius' text as demystifying the workings of governance and administrative decision-making, offering '*ease and benefit*' to political figures. During England's transition to a Protectoral government, in other words, Moseley's publication conveniently provided advice about statecraft.[23] If the republican administration partnered with Moseley to publish *Curia Politiae*, Moseley arguably sought to continue that collaboration with *Politick Maxims and Observations*.[24]

who encountered such texts might critically engage with any meaningful disparities that might arise and even put the texts to entirely different uses than their original authors or audiences might have anticipated. In his address 'To the Reader' in *Catholique Divinity* by Richard Steward (1657), Moseley observes that '*For as the Badger-skins, and Goats-hair were made uſe of for the ſervice of the Tabernacle in the Jewiſh Church: So may the Endowments of prophane Infidel-Philoſophers, Orators, and Poets, bee imployed for the ſervice of the Chriſtian*' (Steward 1657, A2r). In a similar address in *The Compleat Hiſtory of the Warrs of Flanders* by the Roman Catholic Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio, Moseley actually encourages his English Protestant readers to overlook the confessional differences between them and the author, remarking that 'It likely may displease you to see him stile the Enemy *Heretick* and *Schismatick*; but consider 'tis the usuall Language of the Church whereof he was a Member; and Writers who are of the contrary Perswasion, do bestow as sharp Epithets on Him and his Friend's' (Bentivoglio 1654, A2v).

[20] Reed (1928, 110) takes note of at least one copy of *Curia Politiae* in which signature A2 has been cancelled and replaced by the dedication to Charles II, written by Edward Wolley, D.D.

[21] On Thurloe, see Hobman 1961 and Aubrey 1990.

[22] On the Stationers' Register entry, see Stationer's Company 1950, vol. 1, 437.

[23] In a recent study on memories of the Civil Wars in republican England, Imogen Peck observes that several historical publications by Moseley 'provided narratives that chimed with Royalist attempts to explain the source of Britain's own domestic troubles' (2021, 76). The Royalist origins of these historical narratives, however, were not necessarily incompatible with Moseley's conformity and collaborationism. As my arguments throughout this essay suggest, Moseley's publications worked to make room within the new republic for the perspectives of former Royalists. Historical texts aimed at political figures within the republic would have formed part of that effort.

[24] Moseley would go on to publish additional works of historical analysis, including English translations of Bentivoglio's *The Compleat Hiſtory of the Warrs of Flanders* (1654) and Paolo Sarpi's *The History of the Inqvisition* (1655). The latter publication echoes Moseley's Grotius text by featuring a subtitle declaring it *A Pious, Learned, and Curious Worke, neceſſary for Councellors, Caſuiſts, and Politicians*. Moseley apparently aimed to continue cultivating a political readership linked to the republican state.

4. *Conclusion: Moseley and the Politics of Early Modern Publishers*

Steven Zwicker has proposed that 'an inexact, fuzzy picture may be just what we need for imagining' the mid-seventeenth century 'because a more distinct picture distorts political and ethical uncertainties, the blurred cultural alliances and allegiances that writers and readers occupied in these decades of warfare' and 'political revolution' (2015, 806). Taken as a whole, the books I have discussed yield an inexact picture of Humphrey Moseley, producing a blurrier image than conventional accounts of his publishing have allowed. While Moseley certainly did give a platform to Royalist writers and Anglican divines of various stripes – even after the regicide – in at least one case he assisted the republican government in its propaganda, and he also published important texts that challenged the idea of continued allegiance to the Stuart cause. By attending to patterns of contingency, conformity and collaboration within Moseley's publishing, however, these seeming contradictions can be resolved. The books examined in this essay indicate that Moseley was willing – or simply able – to adapt to the political changes brought on not only by Parliament's victory over the King but also by the ensuing turbulence within republican England. At the same time, these publications suggest that Moseley's strategic accommodations were generally consistent with the conservative tendencies and cultural elitism that characterized the Royalist bent of his earlier career.

Much like Cowley, then, after 1648 Moseley may have been working towards creating conceptual space within the English Republic for a reconstructed Royalism. In an article about book advertisements in the official newsbooks of the English Republic, Marcus Nevitt notes that Moseley placed far more ads in Marchamont Nedham's republican newsbook *Mercurius Politicus* than any other bookseller (2017). The fact that Moseley aggressively marketed his publications in such venues, whose readership no doubt included a wide range of political views, places considerable pressure on the idea that Moseley's books were specifically aimed at disaffected Royalists. If, as Nevitt claims, *Mercurius Politicus* with its book ads 'was instrumental in creating an image of the Commonwealth and Protectorate as a Republic of Letters' (2017, 219), then Moseley surely contributed to that image as well. His publication of poetry, plays and romances as well as books of humane learning can plausibly be read not as preserving the scattered remains of Cavalier culture, nor as cultivating an apolitical literary domain separate from the affairs of state that had for so long occupied the country, but rather as helping to forge an ecumenical republic inclusive of and influenced by some of the beliefs about society, politics and aesthetics held by previous supporters of the King. The group of books he published which conformed to and collaborated with the Parliamentary and republican governments would have stood at the forefront of this conservative project, clearing the way for the formerly Royalist or politically neutral poems, plays and romances for which Moseley is renowned among modern scholars to be integrated within the new republic.

As we reflect on the history of the book back then in order to consider how best to practice book history right now, the publications I have surveyed demonstrate the limitations of neat political distinctions – like that between Royalism and republicanism – when it comes to classifying a publisher's specialization. Indeed, Moseley's political flexibility throughout the period of Parliamentary supremacy and republican rule cautions us against presuming that stationers held stable political identities. Inconsistencies within the archival record may, in fact, point toward change and adaptation as publishers moved between different phases of their careers.[25] Even if an

[25] In a chapter on Shakespeare's history plays in Caroline England, Alan B. Farmer (2012) provides an insightful analysis of these kinds of political changes by tracing the career of a stationer, John Norton, who went from publishing books with a Puritan bent in the 1620s to publishing anti-Puritan texts in the 1630s.

ideological throughline can be detected, as in Moseley's conservatism, a publisher's politics may not have remained fixed. By taking a synchronic analysis of a publisher's ideological tendencies and contextualizing it within a diachronic study of their political fluctuations over time, we stand a better chance both of delineating the precise contours of a publisher's specialization and of charting the distinct phases of a publisher's career. Moseley's strategies of contingency, conformity and collaboration reveal some of the ways that we can account for the vicissitudes of historical change within this kind of diachronic study. Because the early modern period was marked by dizzying social, political, and religious transformations – and by a series of bitter conflicts over those transformations – the critical methods inspired by Moseley's strategies can certainly apply not only to stationers who were publishing texts contemporaneously during the Civil Wars and Interregnum but also to those who were publishing throughout the entirety of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England. By adopting these critical methods, book historians writing now and in the future can refine the political categories that we deploy in our assessments of early modern publishers and their various printed texts. Through these refinements, we would be working to restore some of the dynamism both of early modern political affairs and of the book trade which played a key role in mediating political thought and conduct to an early modern public.

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Readerly Identities

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Rewriting American Identity The Eighteenth-Century Americanizations of George Fisher's *Instructor* and Sarah Trimmer's *Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature*

Jessica C. Linker
Northeastern University (<j.linker@northeastern.edu>)

Abstract

Before and after the American Revolution, revised imprints of British works claiming to be adapted for American audiences appeared in the British North American colonies. The essay suggests that collating 'Americanized' reprints against their source texts can be a useful metric for determining how Anglo-Americans perceived themselves to be different from counterparts in Great Britain, as well as how these beliefs evolved over time. This is addressed through case studies of reprints of George Fisher's *Instructor* and Sarah Trimmer's *Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature*, both popular instructional texts. Finally, the essay attempts to reimagine revised reprints as translations of national and local culture, if not of language.

Keywords: American Identity, Gender, Reprints, Science, Translation

1. *Introduction*

In the preface to the 1748 Philadelphia edition of *The American Instructor: or Young Man's Best Companion*, an anonymous editor explained why George Fisher's work had been printed locally rather than imported from overseas: 'In the *British* Edition of this Book, there were many Things of little or no Use in these Parts of the World: In this Edition those Things are omitted, and in their Room many other Matters inserted, more immediately useful to us *Americans*' (Fisher 1748b, v).[1] The book, published

[1] The author wishes to thank Robert A. Gross for his comments on a very early version of this research, and for thinking it interesting enough at the time to integrate examples into his introduction to *The History of the Book in*

by Benjamin Franklin and David Hall, revised and expanded a London edition of George Fisher's *Instructor: or Young Man's Best Companion,* a handbook for letter writing that additionally offered advice useful to young tradesmen and families.[2] The sentiment expressed by the American editor, Benjamin Franklin himself, became common over the course of the eighteenth century: this was the notion that, despite acknowledgment of continuity and connection, there was something ideologically or culturally distinct about British citizens living in the American colonies. For some eighteenth-century colonists, this perception of difference may have helped precipitate a revolution. But, for a handful of colonial printers and publishers, this perception necessitated curating content that bridged these cultural gaps. Claims that a book was more suited for an American audience appeared in both original works and reprints of European books. In this case, the title page of *The American Instructor* and its newspaper advertisements beseeched potential customers to note that the Franklin and Hall imprint was 'better adapted to these American colonies, than any other book of the like kind' ('Advertisement' 1748; Fisher 1748b, title page). But did this statement constitute anything meaningful, particularly in this early period? While some have suggested that these claims of American suitability were insincere or precocious, it seems plausible, at least in the case of revised reprints, that we might compare editions to gauge what this curious exchange of 'Matters' for 'Things' looked like. I propose this because *if* the contents of eighteenth-century reprints claiming to be adapted for Anglo-American audiences were altered in significant ways, an analysis of edits may offer a way to track how eighteenth-century people perceived American identity as it was evolving.

2. *Reprints, Claims of 'Americanness', and American Content*

Thanks to Meredith McGill, reprints now play a vital role in our understanding of national identity and American literature in the nineteenth century. Both antebellum readers and twentieth-century scholars had imagined reprinted European texts as an obstacle to the emergence of American literature, partly because they created competition for native publications (McGill 2007, 108). In *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853,* McGill reconceived reprinting's role in cultivating an American literature through materiality and function. As she argues, the 1834 copyright case, *Wheaton v. Peters*, declared all printed works to be 'copies' of manuscript books, and the ensuing adjudication ultimately prioritized the public's right to access print over authors' control of their work. In the long term, this incubated a system of publication centered on reprinting that was American in purpose and design. Printers claimed that the cheaper materials and space-saving format characteristic of reprinted books enabled ideas that would otherwise be subject to authorial or editorial control to disseminate freely and inexpensively (93-94). Thus,

America, Volume II. Two anonymous readers and James N. Green provided feedback on the current text, for which the author is likewise grateful. Georgina Wilson and Zachary Lesser offered excellent editorial advice and support throughout the process. Elizabeth Pope at the American Antiquarian Society assisted with research inquiries.

[2] Identifying the book's source was complicated, as letter writing manuals tended to borrow content from each other. Both the eighth and ninth London editions were probable candidates based on textual similarities, but Franklin's correspondence indicates that he was revising the book in 1747, making the eighth London edition the most likely candidate. William Lingelbach believes that Cotton Mather's *Young Man's Companion* may be the source, but the Philadelphia edition's visual layout most closely approximates the London editions attributed to Fisher (Lingelbach 1952; see also Bannet 2005 for a general overview of letter writing manuals in this period). Some rare book catalogue entries for this title mistakenly identify 'Vale and Fruere' (which appears at the close of the explanatory preface) as the names of the editors, but it means 'Farewell and Enjoy' in Latin and appears to be borrowed from earlier (London) editions of Fisher's instructor.

McGill argues that the practice 'embodied a central tenet of Jacksonian political philosophy – the commitment to the decentralization of power as the mark of national difference' (108). Notably, what is 'American' about reprints in this context is how they circulate in the world.

Scholarship seeking to understand the emergence of an identifiable body of American literature tends to deal more specifically with the expression of American identity in printed works, insofar as American identity has traditionally been understood to be a necessary precursor to this project. Despite printers' postrevolutionary calls to produce a national literature, some scholars have assessed the efforts of eighteenth-century printers to be a failed or delayed initiative, partly because a sense of national identity seemingly had yet to coalesce more generally (see Warner 1992, 119). For many years, the desire to emulate European values and structures was imagined as precluding the expression of 'Americanness'. Other scholars have taken a less oppositional approach. Cathy Davidson's seminal *Revolution and the Word,* sought to establish the early American novel as a 'definable, distinctive literary form, but also *as a genre*' despite claims that American works plagiarized European texts. Claiming that the desire to 'ape the imperial language' was a hallmark of seeking legitimacy in a postrevolutionary world and thus should not be grounds for dismissing these works as derivative, Davidson instead convincingly demonstrated that these novels 'played a significant role in shaping provincial and parochial identities and communities of the postrevolutionary era into the evolving entity that would become the United States of America' through analysis of texts, their uses, and their reception (2004, 4). These novels became sites for exploring citizenship's gray areas, including class differences and gender roles (see Davidson 2004, ch. 6). Leonard Tennenhouse's *The Importance of Feeling English* reimagined early American identity as an English diasporic identity. Tennenhouse suggests that the political break with England did not translate into a full cultural break, and Americans instead defined their identity in print as one in which they were more 'English than their English counterparts' (2007, 17). Scholars vary on how, or the degree to which, difference or distancing from England or Europe played a role in defining early American identity. While this essay focuses on tracking American perceptions of cultural difference in revised reprints, these authors demonstrate that it is important to remember that difference co-existed alongside and was constructed through ideological, cultural and literary continuities.

Other scholars have wondered if printed claims of Americanness were vested in content at all. In *The Letters of the Republic,* Michael Warner argued that eighteenth-century original works that declared their American qualities 'merely solicit[ed] patrons' encouragement of the domestic trade' by informing the purchaser that the book was a local imprint. Essentially, Warner argued that what was American about these books was the potential for doing civic good through investing in the local economy (1992, 120). Like McGill, Warner was interested in the function of the object rather than its literary content, which is surely part of the larger story – but did content truly have nothing to do with it?

Warner's conclusions partly derive from an analysis of subscription proposals for a 1793 epistolary novel, *The Hapless Orphan, or Innocent Victim of Revenge*, written by an 'American Lady'. Warner concludes that the claims of Americanness in advertisements for the *The Hapless Orphan* conveyed cultural values that were 'not particularly American at all', arguing that the content of *The Hapless Orphan* resembled Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and other early British novels in plot structure and basic sentiment (*ibid.*). Davidson's scholarship suggests we should resist this conclusion, because 'early American novelists borrowed plot as the structure to hang their own adaptations, translations, co-optations, somethings writing new endings, often undermining the class assumptions of their progenitors' (2004, 3). The resolution of *The Hapless Orphan* is brought about by the discovery of a grave robbery perpetrated by medical

students, such that the heroine's corpse is rescued in the nick of time from being dissected by a Philadelphia physician (American Lady 1793, 231). Might the setting and events of the book convey anything particular about the burgeoning culture of science in the early republic?

But there are other reasons to assume that advertising for *The Hapless Orphan* and other books claiming to possess American qualities could be about content. Adrian Johns' study of the printing industry in early modern England, *The Nature of the Book* (2000), demonstrates that a complex culture of trust shaped a publisher's ability to succeed in early modern Europe.[3] Making empty promises about an imprint could cultivate disappointment and mistrust in a publisher or printer. Presumably, consumers tempted to purchase a book on the grounds that it was somehow 'American' could assess whether it was through the act of reading – and if not satisfied, would this not discourage them from making future purchases? Not only did exaggerating overmuch potentially undermine a publisher's reputation, but we furthermore have evidence that editors silently edited moral sentiment in novels to suit American audiences, as was the case with the 1772 Philadelphia edition of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (see Fliegelman 1985, 83-88). Although the alterations are not advertised openly as 'American', they are nonetheless there, and what enables us to assess this is the ability to compare a reprint against its source text.

I am not alone in wanting to use altered content to think about regional or national differences in ideology. In *Empire of Letters,* Eve Tavor Bannet argued that early-eighteenth-century secretary guides often contained proto-nationalist sentiment, and general attempts to 'Anglicize' letter writing went hand in hand with local exceptionalism in America (2005, 106). By the end of the eighteenth century, studies have suggested that reprints emphasized political difference between the United States and Great Britain, as one might anticipate. In the case of Mathew Carey's 1794 Philadelphia reprinting of *Guthrie's Geography,* Richard Sher found that the work was revised to reflect Carey's negative attitudes toward Britain, transforming, as Sher puts it, the original 'Whiggish ethos into something altogether more radical and controversial' (2006, 578). Though much more attention has been given to the American qualities of early novels, instructional and non-fiction works also claimed to contain altered American content.

Further text-to-text comparisons will allow scholars to assess what, more specifically, 'American' or 'adapted for America' claims really meant. More importantly, deciphering cultural difference via reprints will allow us to flesh out a metric of values that will allow us to revisit and re-evaluate the content of original American imprints like *The Hapless Orphan*. While the present essay cannot comprehensively survey the revisions made to all these texts, it does present case studies that demonstrate the utility of this approach while ultimately reframing eighteenth-century reprinting as an act of translation. I examine a text with a long history of reprinting and adaptation in America before 1800: George Fisher's *The Instructor: or Young Man's Companion.* The 1748 Philadelphia edition (1748b) was one of the first American imprints to claim to be adapted for the 'colonies', with later editions being adapted for the American 'states'. In this case, because claims of 'adaption' occur before and after the American Revolution, it can help us to understand how claims to 'American' content evolved over a period when ideologies are diverging and shifting. Some of the more ambitious post-revolutionary revisions of *The Instructor* were executed by Isaiah Thomas, the famous Worcester, Massachusetts printer and bookseller. Attuned to the political climate, Thomas' imprints became increasingly anti-monarchical with each subsequent edition. I also examine a more obscure reprint from 1796, a Boston edition of Sarah Trimmer's *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature*, which was remarkable for

[3] See particularly his argument regarding credibility in the chapter entitled 'Literatory Life: The Culture and Credibility of the Printed Book in Early Modern London'.

the character of the changes related to gender made therein. Because these were titles with clear educational aims, the act of tailoring ideologies to suit the needs of future citizens may be particularly palpable.

3. *Adapted for the Colonies:* The American Instructor: or, Young Man's Best Companion

On September 7, 1747, James Parker wrote to Benjamin Franklin and asked 'if the Young Man's Companion be almost done?'.[4] At the time, Franklin was preparing the book that, in 1748, would be published as *The American Instructor, or, Young Man's Best Companion,* which revised an imprint by George Fisher, who was billed an 'accomptant'. It is worth giving a brief history of this endeavour, for the sake of clarifying the source text, as well as to demonstrate the longer history of localized imprints. Advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* indicate that Franklin was selling a book by this title (*Young Man's Companion*) as early as 1741 (Miller 1974, 237). It is unclear if Franklin stocked an import of the popular secretary's guide by William Mather, or a reprint-revision of the Mather text published by William and Andrew Bradford. Mather's work had appeared in print for the first time in 1681 in London as *A very Useful Manual, Or, The Young Mans Companion*, and subsequently under other titles, but was usually abbreviated as *The Young Man's Companion*. In America, William and Andrew Bradford began printing a work known as *The Young Man's Companion*, or, alternately, *The Secretary's Guide* early in the eighteenth century (see McMickle 1984). An imperfect, surviving copy of the 1710 (second) New York edition suggests a missing first edition based mostly on a London edition of William Mather's book that may have been augmented by content taken from other sources. It is unfortunate that many of the Bradford editions are missing and that extant editions are mutilated (making it hard to track revisions), because Andrew Bradford in a preface indicated that the work would be useful to Americans:

> I being sensible of the want of a small Book of this Nature in these American parts, concluded it might be of Service to the Country to Collect and compile out of several larger Volumns this small Manuel, entituled, *The Young Man's Companion* … And the general Reception that the first Impression met with, has encouraged us to make some Additions … I will adventure to Recommend it as Useful & Profitable in these American parts, where Books of this Nature are not always to be got … (Anonymous 1710, n.p.).[5]

Other American-printed letter-writing manuals and secretary's guides circulating before 1720 made similar overtures. Editions of *The Young Secretary's Guide* printed in Boston in the early eighteenth century claimed it was 'made suitable to the People of *New-England*' (Hill 1713, title page), and the Bradfords went even broader, though practically the work was most likely circulating in the mid-Atlantic.[6] Perhaps this sentiment ultimately inspired Franklin to revise his own edition when the need arose. The Bradfords published new editions from time to time, with the last known published by Andrew in Philadelphia in 1739.[7] By 1742, Andrew Brad-

[4] James Parker to Benjamin Franklin, 7 September 1747, *Benjamin Franklin Papers Online*, <https://franklinpapers.org/framedVolumes.jsp?vol=3&page=172b>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[5] See the section at the front of the book with the heading 'To the Reader'.

[6] The 1750 (24th) edition says that '*but with a small Alteration,* [it] *may suit all Parts of America*' (Hill 1750, title page).

[7] While it is not included in Evans' bibliography, nor is it at the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), the AAS catalog notes a Philadelphia edition as late as 1739. This is *The Secretary's Guide, or Young Man's Companion* (1739), Philadelphia, Andrew Bradford. See catalog entry: <https://catalog.mwa.org/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=351348>, accessed 1 December 2024.

ford was dead and, not long after, William retired. Consequently, by 1745, perhaps the title was in demand but no longer printed locally. Franklin sought out London editions of Mather; he wrote to William Strahan requesting three dozen copies of William Mather's *Young Man's Companion* to sell at his bookstore (Miller 1974, 237). He additionally may have made plans to prepare a new Philadelphia edition based on the newest London edition of Mather; and this may have been a pivotal moment where Franklin received George Fisher's *The Instructor: or Young Man's Best Companion* instead. Fisher's work was similar in scope to Mather's, with about seven editions in print by the time of Franklin's request. It also likely was written to compete with Mather's work, as indicated by the moniker of '*Best Companion*'. An eighth London edition appeared in 1746, and likely was the copytext for Franklin's work.[8] Franklin identified *The American Instructor, or Young Man's Best Companion,* printed in Philadelphia in 1748, as the ninth edition of Fisher's work. According to advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the book was available for purchase as early as July (Miller 1974, 237).[9]

Scholars have been interested in how Franklin revised this text, particularly as it contains the earliest printing of Franklin's original essay, *Advice to a Young Tradesman*. To some extent, works such as this required revision for the locality; there was practical need to update content related to a locality's laws, climate, and exchange rates. But letter-writing manuals and secretary's guides modeled good behavior and morals through the content of their example letters, and Bannet suggests that these were often revised in ways that conveyed British identity, and on the peripheries, local identity. To expand Fisher's offerings for an Anglo-American audience, Franklin furthermore included advice about the role of industry and frugality in running a business and his friend Joseph Breintnall's system of ciphering.[10] Several illustrations of writing hands appear in the work, and both Stanley Morrison (Nash 1943, 8) and William Lingelbach (1952, 375) have previously argued that the copperplate engraving illustrating the round hand may have been an invention of Franklin's. Thus, Franklin made a range of changes to the work which are worth revisiting in the context of the claim of the revised work being more appropriate for an American audience. Some of these changes are admittedly minor or linguistic, and reflected Franklin's personal aesthetics.[11] For example, the 1748 *American Instructor* does not deviate much from the original source in the section on letter writing, though it occasionally changes a name. 'Henry Hearty' (Fisher 1748a, 49; Fisher 1748b, 49) in Fisher's eighth edition becomes 'James Canter' (Fisher 1746, 49) in Franklin's – and as the fictional names for the letter writers tended to gesture to the sentiment of the letter, perhaps Franklin thought this was a better fit for a brother writing to explain a delay in visiting a sister, who soon plans to travel.

[8] Franklin identified his work as the ninth edition, which might have indicated that he saw his work as a new edition based on the eighth, or was reprinting the ninth. Since he was preparing the work as early as 1747, it is likely to be the former case, as ninth London editions appear in 1748 as well. I have compared against all probable candidates throughout.

[9] Historically, there has been some confusion about what Franklin was reprinting. This is due to competing titles with similar names, and confusion over authorship. Scholars have sometimes assumed 'George Fisher' was a pseudonym for Ann Fisher Slack (based on revisions made to London editions of *The Instructor*) or Franklin himself (based on his request for Mather's work), and there may be overlap between Mather's work and Fisher's work due to the works competing with each other in the London market. A 1747 London edition of Mather's *Young Man's Companion* exists, but as it is the 'seventeenth' edition, it is inconsistent with Franklin's numbering. Also, there are significant differences regarding the title, the attribution (Fisher vs. Mather), and other content-related differences.

[10] For the first appearance of 'Advice to a young Tradesman, written by an old One' see Fisher 1748b, 375-377; Breintnall's ciphers appear on 377-378, and conclude the work.

[11] Lingelbach suggests (1952, 381) that Franklin liked to capitalize certain nouns for emphasis, which may explain many of the capitalization changes in the American edition.

Other changes, like the inclusion of *Advice to a Young Tradesman*, are more substantial, but many of these larger insertions borrow from other English works. The eighth London edition contained a monthly gardener's calendar with tips for what to sow; monthly headings for this section included zodiac signs (Fisher 1746, 307 and 310-311). This is replaced in the Franklin edition by 'A short, but Comprehensive Account of All Arts and Sciences' (Fisher 1748b, 296). The substitution, in this case, may be explained in part by Franklin's definition of Astrology: 'ASTROLOGY, is that foolish Science which pretends to foretel future Events from the Motions of the heavenly Bodies and their Aspects one to another; or from some imaginary, hidden Qualities, which the weak Admirers of this Cheat will have to be in the stars' (297). After this, Franklin inserted several sections related to history and literature: 'Of the Seven Wonders of the World', 'Of the Muses', 'Of Hercules', 'A short Historical Table of *the most remarkable* Events, *that happened* in the World', and 'A short Abstract of the History of England' (303-330). The text of these sections originally appeared in *The Universal Pocket Book* (Anonymous 1745), a London imprint.[12] This amalgamation of texts may simply convey Franklin's desire for an educated rather than superstitious citizenry, but while in this moment Anglo-American colonists saw themselves as part of the history of England, they are largely not depicted as historical actors in these insertions. Indeed, the only mention of the colonies in this lengthy insert simply says that 'Sir Walter Raleigh first discovered Virginia', that it was named for Queen Elizabeth, and that they had found tobacco there (Fisher 1748b, 327). Thus 'A short Account of the British Plantations' is a further addition, probably distilled by Franklin from an edition of Thomas Salmon's *Modern History: Or, the Present State of All Nations*, but it is separated from the history of England by gardening receipts, beginning with a section headed 'To innoculate FRUIT-TREES', which, along with sections on grafting and pruning, was taken from *The Universal Pocket Book* (330-334).[13] Which is to say, excerpts from the *Pocket Book* are grouped together, but inserted historical information about British territory is not grouped together. Information from and about America is, because at the very end of the inserted gardening receipts (the section before 'British Plantations') we finally pivot back to America, with a receipt for apple molasses taken from the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions*, submitted by Paul Dudley of New England. In this case only, Franklin provides a citation for the reader (Fisher 1748b, 333).

Thus, the history of Anglo-American colonies provided by the 'short Account of the British Plantations' is oddly detached from a longer account of England, but one should not read too much into the meaning of this, given that it may be an artifact of how the work was compiled. The inclusion of this information in a discrete section, however, may have underscored that American history shared a loosely connected but distinct trajectory from England. But Franklin also favored his immediate locality; among inserted profiles of colonies that contained demographic and geographic details, Pennsylvania was simply described as: 'Pennsylvania, One of the happiest Countries at this Time in the World. God grant it may long so continue' (335). Or perhaps he imagined his work primarily circulating in Pennsylvania where local demographics and geography could be omitted.

Franklin frequently rebranded content for his imagined audience, which becomes clearer in changes made to later sections of the book. The eighth London edition of *The Instructor* adver-

[12] Compare Fisher 1748 to Anonymous 1745, beginning on page 154.

[13] Also, see for example Salmon 1744-1746, for similarities in describing Hudson's Bay as a 'cold inhospitable country but thinly peopled with Indians…' (vol. 3, 526). Other similarities in describing colonies appear throughout this volume.

tises a section called 'The Family's Best Companion' on the title page (Fisher 1746, title page). Franklin excluded this from the title page of *The American Instructor*, advertising instead 'The Poor Planter's Physician', but using the description for 'The Family's Best Companion'. While the title page indicates a receipt 'for Marking on Linnen', a guide for embroidering letters on cloth for young women, that to some extent mirrored the handwriting plates for young men, this has been omitted from the 1748 edition (Fisher 1748b, 337). The eighth London edition prefaced this receipt by indicating what the 'Family's Best Companion' was for women: 'As many Things have been spoken to, for the Information of the younger Sort of the Male-kind, so it may not be amiss to say some small Matter in relation to the Instruction and benefit of the Female-kind' (Fisher 1746, 311). Franklin left the remainder of 'The Family's Best Companion', a record of medicinal and culinary recipes, largely intact, but made other additions to repurpose this section for young men.[14] To complete the masculinization of this section, he greatly augmented the medicinal recipes with 'Every Man his own DOCTOR: the Poor Planter's Physician', which was written by a gentleman in Virginia, and thus also a significant addition of American-generated content (Fisher 1748b, 344). In the aftermath of overturning Roe v. Wade, popular media has highlighted the receipt to relieve 'SUPPRESSION OF THE COURSES' (363), essentially, menses stopped by unplanned pregnancy, as a 'feminist' statement, but this does not necessarily mean the intention was to include or be generous to women readers, as unplanned pregnancies also forced unwanted marriages in this time period. A section on curing the vapours (hysteria), a gendered affliction, suggests that women patients be 'whipp'd with smart little Rods', which the author indicates will 'brace the Nerves, and rouze the sluggish Spirits (as some grave Gentlemen find, when they try it for a merrier Purpose)' (362). Titillating references such as this tend to suggest that the target was a male reader. Franklin may have also imagined his audience as more middling in their wealth, as he also removed 'The Gentleman's New Guide; with Good Advice to a Groom', which provided advice about caring for horses in addition to articulating the relationship between gentlemen and their servants (Fisher 1746, 324).

The differences between the two editions, in aggregate, seem to reflect Franklin's personal ethos, which to some extent presents a complication insofar as Franklin himself would later try to codify his values as American ones through his autobiography and other works. The revisions (additions or omissions) generally suggest that Anglo-American *men* were relatively poorer but practical individuals within a larger British Empire. The average American individual (or clerk) was perhaps more interested in learning science, medicine, arts, and history than his London counterpart. Though one could still imagine a young woman reading this work, Franklin may have tried to focus readership by editing out certain content. America itself was comprised of different geographic areas with a range of local advantages and disadvantages, though something about Pennsylvania stood apart from the other colonies. So, while Franklin's alterations suggest how he believed the colonies differed from the metropole, we also have the sense that Franklin thought (in this moment) the colonies differed from each other as well.

4. *Isaiah Thomas'* Instructor, or American Young Man's Best Companion

Franklin may have produced the first Americanized edition of Fisher's *Instructor,* but he was not the last. Franklin and Hall printed another 'American' edition in 1753 (10th, Philadelphia), Hugh Gaine produced two known in 1760 and 1770 (12th and 14th, New York, respectively), John Dunlap also in 1770 (15th, Philadelphia), and John Boyle and J.D. M'Dougall published

[14] Cathy Davidson reviewed extant copies of *The American Instructor* and its later iterations in the American Colonies and found 53 provenance marks, which were nearly exclusively made by male owners (2004, 64-65).

another in 1779 (no edition given, Boston), which, given the progression of the American Revolution, updated the title page claim to read '*The whole better adapted to these American States*, *than any other book of the like Kind*' (Fisher 1779, title page) At the same time, editions printed in Great Britain continued to be revised and expanded.

The United States became recognized as a sovereign country in 1784, upon the ratification of the 1783 Treaty of Paris. The first Americanized edition to appear after this event was Isaiah Thomas' revised *Instructor*, in 1785. While the title page no longer makes the claim to be adapted for an American audience, Thomas' title indicates that this is *The American Young Man's Best Companion*. It furthermore claimed to be the 'Thirtieth Edition, Revised, Corrected, ENLARGED, and Improved' (Fisher 1785, title page). The end of the preface, like its predecessors, retains the claim that work has been adapted for an American audience, however: 'On the whole, this Edition is corrected from the numerous Errours of former Editions, and such Additions made, as will make it more Useful to the Youth of the United States, than any other Volume of its kind' (v).

Thomas was likely aware of the various copies of *The American Instructor* circulating, but he seems to have composed his edition from a London edition of Fisher's *Instructor*, rather than an earlier Americanized edition. Some of the dates in the book suggest that the source may be a London edition from 1784. Like Franklin, Thomas greatly augments the scientific and mathematical content of his *American Young Man's Best Companion*, though he does so by taking information from later British editions of *The Instructor*. The 'Compendium of Sciences of Geography and Astronomy' that appeared in Thomas' work had appeared in revised British editions. Thomas' edition likewise restored the instructions for 'Marking on Linnen', its respective plate, and the indication that the section was for women. Thomas' edition therefore did not include the 'Poor Planter's Physician', which had appeared as late as the 1779 Boston edition of *The American Instructor* (Fisher 1785, 373). Unlike the Franklin edition, which had a clear candidate for the copytext, Thomas' editions require checking against multiple predecessors in England and America. Nonetheless, there are still numerous changes unique to the Worcester editions that can be isolated and analyzed.

The first mention of *The American Young Man's Best Companion* in Thomas' correspondence appears in an April 12, 1786 letter to the firm of Hudson & Goodwin in Hartford, Connecticut. In this letter, Thomas mentioned that he had recently published *The American Young Man's Best Companion*, likely referring to the first Worcester edition printed in late 1785, though Thomas also reissued the work in 1786. The work is listed among a number of books he is willing to supply bound copies of in exchange for debt owed and the possibility of receiving copies of Noah Webster's most recent publication.[15] Hudson & Goodwin expressed interest in the *Companion*, inquiring about the price on May 2. Thomas responded that he would only sell them to Hudson & Goodwin for two pence more than he sold the London imprint. At his own bookstore, Thomas offered the Worcester imprint in two different bindings, and sold them both at higher prices than the imported London edition. Despite this, Thomas claimed that he had 'retailed only two copies of the English [edition]' since printing his version, and that 'Mr. Patton has had a number, and has lately wrote for more'.[16] Thomas printed a third edition of the *American Young Man's Best Companion* in 1794. In a 1793 agreement with David West and Ebenezer Larkin, Thomas promised to deliver 3,000 copies of the book 'as speedy as is in my power'. In

[15] Isaiah Thomas to Hudson & Goodwin, April 13, 1786, Isaiah Thomas Papers (1748-1874), Box 1, Folder 7 (1786), American Antiquarian Society (copy of original held at New-York Historical Society).

[16] Isaiah Thomas to Hudson & Goodwin, May 8, 1786, Isaiah Thomas Papers (1748-1874), Box 1, Folder 7 (1786), American Antiquarian Society (copy of original held at New-York Historical Society).

return, Thomas expected to receive one shilling and six pence per copy, totaling 750 dollars in all.[17] What made these Worcester editions so popular? Why, as Thomas observed, did potential buyers prefer a 'more expensive', domestic imprint over the cheaper, English version?

The answer may lie in the changes to the content within. Some changes were minor, but clearly marked the audience as American. For example, recipes in 'Family's Best Companion' claim to include 'instructions for making divers sorts of wines of *American* growth'. This section superficially updated place names in a section headed 'Of the making of sundry Sorts of *English* Wines' in London editions. In a concluding section called 'Family Medicines', Thomas felt compelled to justify its inclusion: '*The following recipes are inserted because they are in the* British *Editions, and it is supposed the chief of them are best calculated for* British *constitutions*' (Fisher 1785, 381). This is difficult to parse from the 1785 edition alone, because it could mean that Thomas included these recipes because they appeared in the source text, although are more suited for British, not American, people. It could also mean that he imagined the audience to have 'British constitutions'. The 1786 Worcester edition omits this caveat and updates the receipts, clarifying Thomas' note. For example, the cure for 'Ague' is changed from: 'Drink the Decoction (that is, the boiling of a Herb) of Camomile[*sic*], and sweeten it with Treacle; which drink when warm in Bed, and sweat two Hours. Or, to the Wrists apply a mixture of Rue, Mustard, and Chimney Soot, by way of Plaister' to

> FIRST vomit the sick person, by giving half a drachm of the powder of ipecacoanha[*sic*], and work it off with chamomile tea; then let the sick person take the following powder: Of the best Peruvian bark powdered, one ounce; of Virginia snake root, and salt of wormwood, one drachm; mix these well together, and divide them into eight doses, one paper to be taken every two hours in a glass of any liquid. (compare Fisher 1785, 382 and 1786, 381)

Receipts in the 1786 edition become more detailed and measurable, and include ingredients found in the Americas. This suggests that Thomas thought the original recipes inadequate, and perhaps that he believed Anglo-Americans, despite their ancestry, had become differently-bodied.

More importantly, unlike other editions of *The Instructor*, *American Young Man's Best Companion* contained anti-monarchical content that demonstrated a basic, but fundamental difference between the American States and their former 'parent'. This simple distinction might have been appealing and reassuring to Anglo-Americans seeking to educate their children in an American fashion. References that argued for deference to kings were systematically removed from the text. All American editions of *The Instructor* printed prior to 1800 contain a section on penmanship that provides the reader with lines to be copied out. Most American editions printed prior to 1800 contain a line that says 'Honour the King'.[18] The 1785, 1786 and 1794 Worcester editions have been revised to say 'Honour your rulers' (Fisher 1785, 2, 1786, 2 and 1794, 2). Similarly, the handwriting sample for 'German Font' has been revised from 'Fear God and Honour the King', to 'Fear God and Honour your Country' (Fisher 1785, plate inserted after 52). By the third Worcester edition, a section on 'how to subscribe, and how to direct' letters had been transformed from a list of Kings, Queens, and Temporal Lords to the proper

[17] 'Copy of 2 obligations respecting Young Man's Companion' between Isaiah Thomas and West & Larkin, August 3, 1793, Isaiah Thomas Papers (1748-1874), Box 2, Folder 14 (1793, Jul - Aug), American Antiquarian Society.

[18] The American editions of *The Instructor* printed before Fisher 1785 that contain the phrase 'Honor the King' are: Fisher 1748b, a second Franklin & Hall edition printed in 1753, a 'twelfth' New York edition printed by H. Gaine in 1760, another Gaine edition in 1770, a Philadelphia 'fifteenth' edition by John Dunlap printed in 1770, and Fisher 1779.

titles for Presidents, Governors, as well as lay men and women (compare Fisher 1785, 66 and 1794, 65-66). These subscriptions and directions are listed hierarchically, with the highest ranking individual listed first. English subscriptions also appear in the 1794 edition, presumably for reference's sake, but only after all American citizens have been listed. Thus, the King's importance, though at the top of English hierarchy, came only after all of America.

British editions of Fisher's *Instructor* meanwhile had been updated to include descriptions of European geography. Thomas' edition instead examines colonial holdings in America by various European powers, and of the United States. Thomas carefully explains the extent of the country's borders, as well as propositions for several new states including 'Sylvania', 'Cherroneus', 'Assenisipia', 'Metropotamia', and 'Polipotamia', among others that never manifested after representatives from Southern states rejected the Ordinance of 1784. Thomas' descriptions of the then-current thirteen American states were more developed than Franklin's descriptions of the American colonies, naming major towns, counties and borders (Fisher 1785, 301-304). While Franklin focused on the different nationalities of inhabitants and structures of government (apart from Pennsylvania) in describing colonies, Thomas' inhabitants are mere demographic statistics, and local government is presumably omitted to emphasize the importance of federal government. Instead, Thomas focused on educational opportunities, indicating seminaries and colleges in each state (Fisher 1785, 304-313). Thomas' somewhat more statistical-oriented descriptions do not address cultural differences in states, but emphasize stability, organization and growth, as well as education.

By 1794, *The American Young Man's Best Companion* had transformed into a text that, like Franklin's *American Instructor*, suggested that individual Anglo-Americans sought education in the arts and sciences, but were also citizens who, regardless of state residency, shared a common political outlook (even if it was only fully articulated as rejecting monarchy). Furthermore, Anglo-Americans residing in the United States had different medical needs than British citizens, and ingredients found in the Americas perhaps offered more robust treatment. While information intended for women was restored to Thomas' editions, it is still not clear whether or how they were intended to share in this sense of 'American-ness'. As in the British editions, the instructions explicitly addressed to 'young ladies' are limited to a few pages buried within hundreds. Was it simply that with regard to women, Anglo-Americans drew less difference, or no difference, between them and their British sisters? For a more explicit exploration of Americanized gender roles, we must turn to a Boston edition of Sarah Trimmer's *Easy Introduction of the Knowledge of Nature.*

5. *Good Government for Roast Beef: Sarah Trimmer's* An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature

In 1796, Boston printers William Manning and James Loring produced the first American edition of Sarah Trimmer's *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* for David West, a local publisher and bookseller. As was previously mentioned, West had been interested in the Isaiah Thomas' *American Young Man's Best Companion*, and perhaps was seeking out Americanized editions of books. This, in turn, suggests there was a market for them, at least in Boston. Newspaper advertisements and the book's title page indicated that this children's natural history text had been 'revised, corrected, and greatly augmented, and adapted to the United States of America' ('Advertisement' 1795, 3; see also Trimmer 1796, title page). Indeed, the book underwent a number of significant revisions from the eighth London edition (1793), ranging from minor grammatical alterations to the insertion or omission of entire pages and paragraphs. While it is not evident

who was responsible for the various changes to this text, it is clear that the editor believed he had transformed Sarah Trimmer's work into something suitably American, and consequently, vastly improved. The preface openly boasted that 'the superiority of this [the American revision] over the English edition will be obvious upon comparing them together' (1796, iv).

Eight British editions of Sarah Trimmer's *An Easy Introduction to Nature and the Holy Scriptures* were available when the editor of the Boston imprint began to revise the content. By the 1790s, Trimmer, a British national, was a popular children's author at home and in the United States, famous for her religious and natural histories.[19] *An Easy Introduction* followed a dialogue format, which was intended to make studying natural history more pleasurable for young children (Trimmer 1793, ix-x). Reading more like a story than a textbook, the book conveyed scientific knowledge via the perspective of a mother instructing her two children, Henry and Charlotte, as they took nature walks and learned to use scientific tools, such as microscopes and globes. Henry, Charlotte and their mother are identifiably British citizens in the eighth London edition, but the editor of the Boston edition decided to transform the merry Englanders into New Englanders for an American audience, so 'England' is changed to 'New-England' (compare Trimmer 1793, 100 and 1796, 71). In addition to transposing the location of the lessons and the identity of the characters, the editor revised the dialogue to make the narrator and her children behave like Americans.

Much of the text's Americanized content underscores the superiority of American life and values. Like Thomas' *American Young Man's Best Companion*, this particularly focused on elevating American government and eschewing monarchy. The editor did his best to expunge evidence of monarchies whenever he could, repeatedly removing the generic use of the word 'kingdoms' to mean nations and substituting in the less politically charged 'countries' whenever possible (compare Trimmer 1793, 92 and 1796, 65). One interesting edit preserves 'kingdom' but revises 'This place is Great Britain, the kingdom we live in', to 'This place is Britain, the kingdom in which the English live' (compare Trimmer 1796, 68 and 1793, 96). While on one hand the edit transposes the location of the speaker, it also seems to purposely avoid calling Britain, a kingdom, 'Great'.

Other edits more explicitly praise American government. A passage addressed to Henry by the mother character, common to both the 1793 London and 1796 Boston editions, encouraged him to travel when older. At the end of her dialogue, the mother in the London edition reminded Henry that he was 'an Englishman, and so … must love England the best' and thus must eventually return home (1793, 104). In the Boston edition, the mother character echoes this wisdom about travel, and of course substitutes 'America' for 'England' (1796, 75). Why should each child love their country? Each mother explained why their home was the greatest of them all. The London edition emphasized that England was self-sustaining, and could satisfy Henry's material needs, but particularly England had 'the best roast beef in world' (1793, 104-105). The Boston edition made similar claims about America, but altered the passage to reflect that America has the 'best government in the world'. Additional revised content in this section asserted that 'no people enjoy so much liberty, both civil and religious' as Americans did (1796, 76).

This revision may seem comical to modern readers, but it must have posed ethical problems for the Boston editor. Such claims were inconsistent with passages from the London edition that condemned slavery and criticized its legitimization by the state. The 1793 edition explained: 'Negroes are black people; many persons in England, have them for servants. Abroad they toil

[19] See Trimmer 1825, 47-49, for an example specifically related to the book in question, but see more examples of praise for her work throughout the book. Advertisements for Trimmer's works appear in a variety of American newspapers in the 1780s and 90s. An early example appears in *The Connecticut Journal*, 17 November 1784, 2.

like horses, and are frequently much worse used, which is an exceeding barbarous thing, for they are *men* as well as their masters …'. The narrator lamented that Englishmen, particularly in colonial territories, owned slaves, while admitting that the institution is 'authorized by our own [English] laws' (1793, 116 and 117). It is possible that the Boston editor was somewhat sympathetic of this view, because he chose to edit these statements rather than omitting the passage outright. However, the editor was also entirely unwilling to acknowledge American involvement in such practices. A simple substitution of 'this country' for 'England' was made in the first line, but this also disingenuously suggested that Africans were 'servants' rather than slaves. Additionally, the line about barbarous behavior taking place 'abroad', essentially implying not in America, was preserved. Unlike the British narrator, the American narrator did not condemn her own country's actions. According to the American author, the 'dreadful situation' of slavery was perpetuated by the 'English and other Christian nations, and even authorized by their own laws!' (1796, 84). In this instance, the 'Americanization' of the text reflects an inability to reconcile claims of enlightened government with entrenched, systematic racism and structural oppression in America.[20]

The most interesting edits to the text relate to gender. Unlike the various Americanized editions of Fisher's *Instructor*, the Boston preface of *An Easy Introduction* claims that the book would be useful to 'young persons of both sexes in the United States of America' (1796, [iii]). In the original version, various objects, such as the sun and the moon, were gendered as 'he' and 'she', while in the American edition they became a neutral 'it' (compare 1793, 135-136 and 1796, 96-97). The American editor also removed gendered passages about the human characters. For example, when the reader is introduced to Henry for the first time in the London edition, the narrator notes that he is 'now … dressed like a man', implying that he has recently graduated from androgynous childhood garments to pants. Furthermore, Henry relates that he considers himself a man because he was capable of reading, spelling, spinning a top, and catching a ball (1793, 14). Later, the narrator anticipated that Henry would cross a stile first, because he is a gentleman who wanted to help his older sister Charlotte over (127). These references are removed in the American edition, disassociating Henry and his actions from categorizations of manhood and masculinity.

Charlotte's character, too, is subject to changes that diminish traditional gender expectations for girls. A passage in the British edition encouraged her to study natural philosophy, but warned that she would be disappointed if she pursued it too fervently, since certain books would not be available to her as a girl (134). A footnote in the American edition clarified that the reason such books were not available was because there actually were no books on natural philosophy that were '*true* and adapted to the capacities of youth' (1796, 96). Thus, the emphasis on Charlotte being unable to read certain books was subtly shifted from gender constraints to there simply not being a sufficient body of literature available to *any* child. In general, the American edits appear to downplay gender distinctions in childhood, while preserving adult ones. Charlotte was still not permitted to be a silk-merchant when she grew up because too many silkworms were deemed unwholesome for women to own, and she was also expected to remain at home while Henry traveled (63 and 103).

One significant exception to this observation concerns the mother-narrator and her role as a scientific educator. To expand the scientific content of the text, a lengthy commentary

[20] Instances in which the editor is hesitant to localize material also suggests this. One passage claims that Henry would need a book to know that 'some people in the world are black, others have complexions of a copper-colour …'. This is presumably referring to Africans and Native Americans, and it seems unlikely that Henry, situated in New England, would need to consult a book in this instance (see 1796, 75 and 1793, 104).

on Moses was omitted from the Boston edition. The official reasoning for this omission (as perhaps the original text was not unknown to an American audience) was that Sarah Trimmer intended to abridge her religious histories in a separate volume (1796, iv). The reduction of religious content prompted the removal of 'and the Holy Scriptures' from the title of the Boston edition. Perhaps the editor objected to Trimmer's high-Anglican affinity; perhaps, as discussed earlier, he was concerned about the lack of reliable scientific texts available to young people. Rather than being a one-for-one substitution of science for religion, perhaps the aim was to Americanize the mother's commitment to her children. By the 1790s, Republican Motherhood, the idea that women were indirectly engaged with politics through the raising of good citizens, was beginning to justify expanded education for women so that they might educate their children, particularly their sons. Sometimes, the Boston editor would substitute a more sophisticated scientific term for a vague one, but more often added entire paragraphs to flesh out scientific teachings. The most significant addition in this vein included extended commentary on astronomy, largely for the benefit of Charlotte (see additions between 1796, 102-125). The Boston edition plagiarized passages from various British imprints, including John Bonnycastle's *An Introduction to Astronomy,* and James Ferguson's *Astronomy explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's principles*.[21] The end result was, that, upon comparison, the American mother was able to provide more complex and extensive commentary to her children about various scientific subjects. In contrast, her British counterpart openly admitted the limitation of her knowledge, else deferred to a schoolmaster who would teach them more advanced science in the future. Notably, the editor of the Boston edition often removed these lines, simply inserting the relevant information, or altering the text to explain that the mother herself would teach more advanced lessons at a later date (compare, for example, 1796, 88 and 1793, 123). And although the scientific information came from British sources, the 'Americanization' of the mother-narrator resided in her behavior and authority rather than her words. Essentially, what has been 'Americanized' was the mother's capacity to learn and articulate complicated scientific views for her children's benefit. The text suggests that it was acceptable for American women to pursue science in ways English women could not.

6. *Concluding Thoughts*

The present examination of the Americanization of Fisher's *Instructor* and Trimmer's *Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* reveals surprising and unsurprising results. That late eighteenth-century texts were revised to emphasize political difference, particularly after the American Revolution, aligns with chronologies we are all familiar with. What may be more surprising is that the editors of the *Instructor* (Franklin and Thomas) as well as the editor of Trimmer's *Easy Introduction*, augmented the scientific and medical information for American readers, and in various ways, tried to emphasize individual or local innovation. In Franklin's *American Instructor*, the inclusion of the Virginia-written 'Poor Planter's Physician', as well as his stripping of the zodiac and highlighting of the New England author's receipt in *Royal Transactions*, points to local ingenuity while reminding the reader that he too can possess medical authority. Thomas' *American Young Man's Best Companion* uses 1780s-era British editions as the

[21] Plagiarized sources that appear in Trimmer 1796: on 96 and 102 from Anonymous, *Analysis of certain parts of a compendious view of natural philosophy* (1796); on 111, 118-120 and 124-125 from John Bonnycastle, *An Introduction to Astronomy* (1786); on 118 and 122 from James Ferguson, *Astronomy explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's principles* (1764).

copytext, augmenting content about astronomy and ultimately updating medical receipts to be more measurable and precise, while integrating American ingredients. The Boston edition of Trimmer's *Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* radically reimagines the limits of women's scientific knowledge. If Anglo-Americans understood science as important to their cultural identity, would unethical scientific practices (such as corpse theft) diminish this? Perhaps the reader of *A Hapless Orphan* is meant to understand the stakes of the ending in this context. By examining more Americanized reprints and using their changes as a metric, we may uncover other unexpected themes and values buried in original American works.

Though I have focused on reprints with 'American' claims to content, revision was not a one-sided endeavor. British versions of these reprints were often updated to reflect changed political relationships and values as well. For example, Eve Bannet has shown that in letter-writing manuals published prior to the Revolution, an economic relationship with Americans was portrayed as patriotic, but afterwards, a financial burden (2005, 204). Future work might survey British revisions to various titles circulating in America, to see how adaptation practices in both nations collaboratively constructed difference. Furthermore, while the editors of these works made significant changes to the text, they also left much of it intact. If changes to the book reflect the editor's 'Americanizations' and perception of difference, deliberately unchanged text may reflect perceived commonalities with British culture and society. If our goal is to determine what American identity was as well as how it was changing, we must have a through sense of what values Anglo-Americans rejected, and what values they continued to share with Britain.

But there is something about calling these books 'reprints' that has detracted at times from scholars considering the possibility of American content or qualities, because a reprint suggests, at heart, that it is a copy of another work, not an original intervention. I want to consider this strange practice of altering content for regional audiences (at any scale) as an act of translation instead. In common parlance we may think of translation as the process of converting one language to another, but historically, translation was more complicated. Paula Findlen (1995) has pointed out that women authors in early modern Italy translated scientific texts for patriotic purposes. This manifested in several ways. When a woman translated a work, her locality could then claim the fame of hosting an educated woman. Through the act of translating, women underscored their residence and regional values by making revisions and annotations according to local taste. Once the translator had imprinted the values of her hometown upon the book, it would recognizably belong to that locale. Findlen's documentation of early modern translation practices is strikingly similar to the revisions made to Fisher's *Instructor* and Trimmer's *Easy Introduction* in America. In these cases, since the works were already written in the vernacular, the editor translated cultural incongruities rather than language – and to recall Franklin's claims from *The American Instructor,* the curious exchange of 'Matters' for 'Things' was essentially an exercise in working through what distinguished local and national aspects of American identity.

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White Christmas Pie, 'smooth as monumental alabaster' The Past and Future Politics of Shakespearean Cookbooks

Breanne Weber
James Madison University (<weberbe@jmu.edu>)

Abstract

The article interrogates *As You Like It* (*AYLI*), the 1959 cookbook produced by the Seton Guild of Hyattsville, Maryland, as a case study for how the occasional deployment of Shakespearean aesthetics and references across charitable fundraiser cookbooks curates political agendas that ostracize those who do not belong to the communities of (mostly white, upper-class) women who compiled them. Through analysis of the bibliographical elements of the Seton Guild's *AYLI*, the article shows how the fragmentary reading methods of the cookbook genre, paired with frequent detached quotation from Shakespeare's plays – especially those thematically concerned with race – work to detach and distance the white women contributors from the book's non-American contributors, contributors of color, and the lower-class women their charitable efforts purported to help. It also shows how such cookbooks are important material objects in the history of Shakespearean reception in part because they restore their women compilers to conversations around book history, bibliography, gendered editorial labor, and Shakespearean reception in our work, while simultaneously prompting interrogation of their complicity in the marginalization and erasure of other cultures and communities.

Keywords: Charity, Cookbooks, Fundraising, Shakespeare, Whiteness

1. *Introduction*

In 1959, the Seton Guild of Hyattsville, Maryland, compiled a fundraiser cookbook bearing the title *As You Like It* (henceforth *AYLI*), with a black and blue illustration of Shakespeare holding platters of food and drink adorning the comb-bound cover (see Seton Guild 1959).[1] Members of the Guild and their connec-

[1] I am particularly indebted to Allison Fulton, Yasmine Hachimi and Robin Kello for their depth of engagement with this piece in its various stages of development.

tions, including many celebrities and politicians' wives, contributed hundreds of recipes to the book, a microcosmic representation of mid-century American cuisine reliant upon pounds of margarine, tinned seafood, Jello, and other such delicacies. The Guild created the *AYLI* cookbook to raise funds for the Catholic charity St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home, which has historically supported mothers and children in crisis.[2] As a fundraising mechanism for their philanthropic efforts, the Seton Guild's *AYLI* follows in the tradition of Shakespeare-themed fundraising cookbooks produced as early as 1908 and continuing into the present.[3]

While similar cookbooks pun on the titles of Shakespeare's works but otherwise disregard them, the Seton Guild's *AYLI* leverages Shakespearean aesthetics throughout the book in its usage of black-letter typography, illustrations that evoke performance, and quotations from Shakespeare's works. While some quotations, printed at the end of recipes and in the same typeface, seem unaffiliated with the recipes at hand, others occasionally offer commentary. For example, Bette Sawyer's 'Wild Rice Casserole' (Seton Guild 1959, 32), which contains herbs like oregano, thyme, and marjoram, is followed by a quote from *Richard III*: 'Small herbs have grace' (2.4.13).[4] The quotation reminds readers that fresh herbs, a seemingly small addition to a recipe, enhance taste. In this instance, the line is divorced from its meaning within the context of the play and utilized solely as a descriptor of the food. This detached method of quoting Shakespeare establishes a connection among Shakespearean language, recipe, and edible product without necessarily engaging with the play's content.

Despite this detachment and in the context of other aesthetic references to Shakespeare's England in the cookbook's layout and other design components, the book invites readers to draw connections among plots, characters and the recipes to which the quotations are attached. Because their typographical placement sometimes suggests that the quotations are intended to describe the recipe or finished food product, as in the case of *Richard III*'s herbs, quotations from plays like *Othello*, one of the most-cited plays in the entire cookbook, take on troubling resonances when read within the context of the cookbook's layout. For instance, Frances R. Norton's 'White Christmas Pie', made more 'attractive' with the addition of shredded coconut to its top (Seton Guild 1959, 52), is paired with the quotation 'And smooth as monumental alabaster' (5.2.5), taken from the moment in the play when Othello, standing over Desdemona's bed as he prepares to strangle her, determines that he will not shed her blood 'nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow' (5.2.3-4).[5] Norton's claim that the whiteness of the coconut increases the attractiveness of the pie simultaneously emphasizes its appearance and associates that appearance with race and violence, for anyone who understands the original context of the quotation: an example of the white feminist politics of detachment that undergirds the entirety of the cookbook.

Cookbooks are meant to be read in a fragmented fashion, and the Seton Guild contributors' use of Shakespearean quotation in this manner encourages their readers to approach Shakespeare's plays with a similarly detached method of reading. As Kennan Ferguson argues, the non-linear approach to reading inherent in the cookbook genre subtly 'entice[s] rather than enforce[s]'

[2] St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home has rebranded as the St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families. From its inception, the Center has prioritized caring for vulnerable women and children of all backgrounds and identities.

[3] See the appendix for a non-comprehensive list of Shakespeare-themed cookbooks published from 1908 to the present.

[4] Bette Sawyer, wife of Nevada governor Grant Sawyer, is credited as Mrs. Grant Sawyer. All direct quotations from Shakespeare's plays were checked against the Folger Shakespeare Library's digital editions: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/all-works/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[5] Frances R. Norton is credited as Mrs. Frances R. Norton and affiliated with the Seton Guild in her attribution.

instruction and guidance, challenging notions of authority and how political agendas operate (2020, 6). Therefore, although the Seton Guild's *AYLI* and its purported philanthropic purpose may seem apolitical, the bibliographical elements of the genre that encourage fragmentary reading of both the recipes and Shakespearean quotation curate a particular political agenda: a non-intersectional white feminism that others those who do not belong to the community of white women who assembled it.

This agenda is made especially apparent through the cookbook's engagement with Shakespeare's plays that are thematically concerned with race, detaching quotations from them without providing textual context and linking them to food. In the case of *Othello,* quotations like the one affiliated with Norton's 'alabaster' pie proliferate in the section on desserts in particular, associating *Othello*'s longstanding participation in race-making with sweet comestibles – a troubling association that, as scholars like Kim F. Hall have shown, has existed for centuries and that has implicated white upper-class women in the oppression of enslaved peoples in the American colonies through their normalization of increased sugar consumption in Britain (Hall 2009; Shahani 2020). Continuing in a similar tradition of detachment, the contributors to the Seton Guild's *AYLI* curate their white feminist agenda via fragmented, out-of-context engagement with Shakespeare.

When read alongside the fragmented manner in which the contributors engage Shakespeare's plays, the cookbook's generic features such as layout, paratextual elements, aesthetics, and typography – work to detach and distance the white women editors and contributors of the Seton Guild's *AYLI* from the book's non-American contributors and contributors of color, as well as the lower-class women their charitable efforts were designed to help. We might see the Seton Guild's contributors as participating in a long history of Shakespearean editing done by women (see Yarn 2021), but in this case their editorial work funded philanthropic efforts with complex social effects. Such cookbooks are thus important material objects in the history of Shakespearean reception, in part because they not only utilize Shakespearean aesthetics for financial gain during a time of political and social upheaval in America – in particular, the Cold War and burgeoning Civil Rights movement – but because they edit and present Shakespeare's works in bite-sized and at times problematic snippets for public consumption. Ultimately, the present essay demonstrates how we can include these women who have been otherwise excluded from conversations around book history, bibliography, gendered editorial labor and Shakespearean reception in our work, while simultaneously interrogating their complicity in the marginalization and erasure of other cultures and communities.

2. *The Politics of the Cookbook*

Fundraiser cookbooks, which have existed since the mid-nineteenth century in America, engender politics in insidious ways (see Hall 1996; Theophano 2002, Ch. 7; Chaudhuri 2011; Goldstein 2013; Shahani 2020). They embody the ideologies of the communities that produce them and can become class markers through the types of recipes included, the class status of the contributors, or cultural references meant to signal a certain erudition to visitors in the home. In a primarily white organization like the Seton Guild, compiling a cookbook has the potential to stratify national, racial, and class boundaries regardless of Shakespearean engagement simply because of who is invited to contribute, what kinds of recipes are included, and how recipes and their ingredients are presented to readers (are 'ethnic' ingredients Americanized? Are non-English names translated into English? How are recipes attributed?).

Western cookbooks, including fundraiser books like the Seton Guild's *AYLI,* are inherently political and have been since their inception. As many Premodern Critical Race Studies (PCRS)

scholars have shown, the early modern period was a period of race-making, one defined by the twin projects of colonization and the establishment of racial differences, and textual genres from domestic manuals to plays were not immune from participation in those projects (see Hendricks 2019). Ayanna Thompson argues that Shakespeare and race 'grew up as contemporaries', noting that even the naming of the Globe Theatre is evidence that 'the larger world was a part of [Shakespeare's] creative consciousness', as it was part of British consciousness more generally (2021, 5). Even in the domestic sphere, Hall (1996) argues, early modern white women were enabled by household manuals and other similar genres to integrate and normalize foreign ingredients and domestic practices into their homes; as a result, these women contributed directly to the oppression of enslaved and Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean and Americas who supplied their ingredients and methods even as the books they wrote and used actively erased the 'other' against which their new national identity was built.[6] In the centuries since, Western cookbooks have similarly worked to obscure their inherent politics of domesticity, nationalism, language, community and race. Ferguson argues that the genre's gendered 'practicality' readily obscures its politics: cooking has been historically linked with women's domestic labor, and because that labor is often separated from more public and masculinized methods of knowledge production and consumption, cookbooks also appear divorced from their own politics (2020, 14).[7]

Cookbooks also have a longstanding history of use beyond fundraising for establishing and perpetuating community ideologies and producing or replicating national and ethnic boundaries.[8] In their production, transmission and use, cookbooks 'politicize those aspects of our lives that we usually neglect to see as political: taste, production, family, collectivity, and imagination' (Ferguson 2020, 18). Cookbooks enable participation in the marking of social class, visible in the creation of Shakespeare-themed cookbooks that share titles with his plays. Compilers of cookbooks with Shakespearean references seem to utilize his work in a similar manner to other cultural allusions to the playwright and his work in popular culture: often when Shakespeare is referenced in television shows and films, the allusions create meaning through an appeal to broad audiences interested in a particular type of historical or class aesthetic because of Shakespeare's cultural capital.[9] In the case of cookbooks like the Seton Guild's *AYLI,* Shakespearean references similarly become a touchstone for educated women of higher classes looking to cultivate or raise their social status. Use of Shakespeare alongside a variety of famous recipe contributors to market the book thus renders the Seton Guild's *AYLI* a 'collector's item',

[6] For more on the particular impact of the spice trade in early modern England and its literary output, see Shahani 2014; see also Crosby 1972; Roy 2010; Earle 2013; Dolan 2020; Shahani 2020.

[7] There are a number of other scholars working to elevate the voices of women excluded from the literary and historical canon via their creation and use of recipe books. Notable work in this area includes Wall 2002; Applebaum 2006; Munroe 2008; DiMeo and Pennell 2013; Wall 2015; Leong 2018; Bittel, Leong and von Oertzen 2019.

[8] The David Walker Lupton African American Cookbook Collection at the University of Alabama is an excellent example of how cookbooks, when read against and alongside one another with their cultural and political weight in mind, can yield an immense amount of knowledge about cultural histories. The collection contains nearly five hundred cookbooks produced by African American writers and their communities, including the first cookbook with recipes by an African American (published in 1827). For more contextual information on the collection, see <https://www.lib.ua.edu/collections/the-david-walker-lupton-african-american-cookbook-collection/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[9] Douglas Lanier argues that 'Shakespop', or moments when Shakespeare appears in popular culture, can even function parodically while also suggesting that Shakespeare is 'a valuable aesthetic touchstone or ethical resource' (2002, 17-18). While the cookbooks I discuss here do not seem to parody Shakespeare, the tension Lanier outlines here is visible in other cookbooks, like *As You Spice It,* which simultaneously fantasize about an accessible, popular Shakespeare while also portraying a certain reverence for his position in western culture. See also Hodgdon 1998 and Corredera 2022.

to use the Guild's phrasing on an *As You Like It*-themed fundraiser luncheon menu.[10] Framing the book in this way encourages potential readers to contribute funds to support the Guild's activities and feel like they have received something of value in return.

While the Seton Guild and many other philanthropic organizations that compiled Shakespeare-themed fundraiser cookbooks in no way centered all of their activities around Shakespeare, their public-facing use of his work as a signal of erudition and social class follows in the tradition of white women's Shakespeare clubs. As Katherine West Scheil outlines, as far back as the turn of the century in America, white women in particular established and participated in clubs centered around the study of Shakespeare's work to facilitate social activism in a manner less threatening to patriarchal power structures. This was a possibility due to Shakespeare's prominence in the educational curriculum. White women's Shakespeare club activities thus resulted in the founding and completion of many public programs and community spaces like libraries and gardens (Scheil 2012, 10-13).[11] Yet, despite these clear commitments to philanthropy, community support and social activism, many of these activities primarily benefitted white communities. For instance, before widespread desegregation in the 1960s, white women's Shakespeare club activities, which included the building of kindergartens and public restrooms, would have only benefitted white communities to the detriment of communities of color.

While other women's clubs like the Seton Guild were not necessarily organized around the study of Shakespeare, their use of the playwright to market fundraiser cookbooks and events leverages his cultural capital in a manner similarly empowering to their philanthropic goals. And, like the Shakespeare clubs whose community activism further stratified cultural and racial boundaries, the Seton Guild's *AYLI* compilers' appreciation for and deference to Shakespearean authority translates to a furtherance of nationalist and classist goals. This is a common result of the public deployment of Shakespeare and Shakespearean aesthetics. Arthur L. Little, Jr. has argued that, since Shakespeare contributed to the development of whiteness as a cultural and social concept, white people have utilized his image and work to establish and uphold social hierarchies on the basis of class and race, a process perpetuated through the educational system's commitment to training students to defer to Shakespearean authority (2023, 7). It is for this reason that Farah Karim-Cooper encourages scholars and the public alike to remove Shakespeare from his pedestal, 'look him dead in the eye', and examine his complicity in establishing and upholding white supremacy through the study of his works, the period in which he wrote, and how both participate in race-making (2023, 5). And because Shakespeare and his works have been historically wielded by many as a symbol of power, erudition and social class, we must acknowledge how the white women compilers of Shakespearean fundraiser cookbooks like the Seton Guild's *AYLI* subtly establish a white feminist and nationalistic approach to class and race.

Because of this deference to the playwright and his cultural authority, women's detached and fragmented usage of Shakespeare and Shakespearean aesthetics in their fundraiser cook-

[10] Seton Guild (2014), 'Luncheon at the Silver Fox, December 10, 1959', *Facebook*, 10 July, <https://www.facebook.com/TheSetonGuild/photos/pb.100083283709342.-2207520000/362598113891080/?type=3>, accessed 1 December 2024.

[11] In contrast to clubs run and attended primarily by white women, Black women's clubs – more difficult to trace due to an absence of records – often engaged Shakespeare's work not as a primary activity or mode of activism, but instead as a method of what Scheil refers to as 'racial uplift through agendas of cultural education' (2016, 106). According to Scheil, Black club women were more likely to pursue social reform activities than white club women whose focus was the study of Shakespeare.

books softens their political engagement by creating plausible deniability about their subtle perpetuation of classist, nationalist, and racist behaviors. For instance, in the 1989 *Cooking with Shakespeare* by Annette Francis and Paula Hober (developed for wholesale fundraising efforts by theatrical organizations, schools, and businesses), Shakespearean references are aimed at an erudite audience interested in the appearance of higher class status through association with England's most famous playwright. Some of the Shakespearean references across this cookbook rely on wordplay to establish a conceptual relationship between the recipes and Shakespeare's plays. For example, 'Cordial Cordelia' and 'Watercressida Soup' pun on character names, while other recipe titles utilize alliteration and/or near-rhymes: 'Asparagus Arviragus', 'Custard Costard',[2] and 'Prunes Pompey',[2] among others. Some, however, are much less obvious: 'Meat Balls Caliban' is an oddity among the cleverly titled recipes. Why not 'Meat Balls Miranda', to preserve the habit of alliteration (Francis and Hober 1989, 4-5)? This recipe alludes to one of Shakespeare's more commonly racialized characters, Caliban from *The Tempest,* an Indigenous man whom Prospero enslaves after invading his island.[12] The recipe is comprised primarily of beef, veal, bacon and pork with minimal other ingredients; together, the name and ingredients link Caliban with a carnivorous appetite at odds with Prospero's perceived decorum. And while *The Tempest* itself certainly works to 'other' Caliban through his association with the wildness and strangeness of the island, *Cooking with Shakespeare* here more clearly and directly associates Caliban with racist tropes through the recipe itself and its name, reinforcing his 'otherness' both via his relationship with the island in *The Tempest* and his indirect portrayal in the printed pages of *Cooking with Shakespeare.*

Not every Shakespearean fundraiser cookbook embodies classist, racist and nationalistic politics in this way. However, Shakespeare-themed cookbooks have been repeatedly designed, published, and circulated in the United States and United Kingdom, with at least twenty-five distinct volumes published since the early twentieth century. The vast majority of these books have been published since the 1950s, many to fundraise for organizations like Zeta Phi Eta professional speech fraternity (1974), the all-girls preparatory academy Holton-Arms School of Bethesda, Maryland (1979), and the Guild of the Utah Shakespearean Festival (1993). This widespread popularity, paired with the inherently political nature of the cookbook as a genre, renders these texts important material in the history of Shakespearean reception, deserving of scholarly attention. With this in mind, I will now turn to the Seton Guild's *AYLI* as a case study demonstrating how a book historical and bibliographical approach to the cookbook and its usage of Shakespeare can reveal the book's white feminist politics.

3. *The Seton Guild* As You Like It

Founded in 1953 and active until at least 2019, the Seton Guild was, like many women's clubs, organized by and for (primarily well-off white) women with the aim of supporting a local charity: St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families.[13] However, that charitable support,

[12] Characters like Caliban, Othello, Aaron the Moor, and Cleopatra are not the only evidence of Shakespeare's engagement with race: as Arthur L. Little, Jr., David Sterling Brown, Patricia Akhimie and others have argued, all of Shakespeare's plays are racialized in some sense, in part due to their direct engagement with and contributions to the formation of whiteness in the early modern period and beyond (see Little 2021; Brown, Akhimie, and Little 2022; Little 2023).

[13] Into 2019, the Guild continued to host an Afternoon Tea and Basket Raffle to support St. Ann's High School and create gift bags to meet basic grooming and infant care needs of the young women coming to St. Ann's for as-

garnered in part by the sale of the *As You Like It* cookbook alongside other fundraisers like garden parties and luncheons, had harmful consequences for the people that the Guild and the Center purported to help. The Guild's mission statement articulates a desire to prepare young women for future participation in society as self-supporting individuals, a rather paternalistic goal, considering these young women were often unwed, low-income and single mothers seeking tangible and financial support for their families who were then either encouraged to place their children for adoption or live by the community rules established by the Center.

In recent years, a number of these women have come forward after experiencing decades of trauma at the hands of religious charities like St. Ann's, recounting stories of how nuns and other charity workers at these centers misled them to surrender their children for closed adoption during the period in which the Seton Guild *AYLI* was produced and sold. In 1992, former recipient of St. Ann's assistance Barbara Montgomery recounted to the *Los Angeles Times* that the nuns at St. Ann's insisted 'it would be selfish' to keep her baby in order to urge her to sign away her parental rights:

> Every May 7 since 1965, I've thought about this child. For 27 years I've seen a baby in my mind, a baby who is now a man … I was told that I'd forget the experience, that I'd have other children and go on with life. What happened is I've never had other children and I've never forgotten the experience. (Dreyfous 1992)

Montgomery is one of dozens of women who have advocated for the government to intervene in opening adoption records to adult adoptees for family reunification through Catholic Mothers for Truth and Transparency, having also signed an open letter to the Connecticut General Assembly during the 2021 consideration of House Bill 6105: An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Certificates by Adult Adopted Persons. The women articulate the trauma they have endured at the hands of Catholic charities including St. Ann's:

> When we found ourselves pregnant—and for most of us, unwed—we were blamed wholly for our situation … Many of us were sent away to Catholic maternity homes where we were stripped of our identities and forced into silence. We were gaslighted by Catholic authorities to believe we deserved the shame and humiliation they bestowed upon us, gaslighted to believe we were not good or strong enough to keep our babies, that we didn't love them unless we gave them up. By the time this heinous system was done with us, it had accomplished exactly what it had set out to do: render us powerless, alone, and broken to the point where we had no other choice but to relinquish our babies. ('Catholic Mothers for Truth & Transparency' 2021, n.p.)

The stories of Montgomery and the 44 other signers of the open letter are stark reminders of the role that charitable fundraisers, including the Seton Guild's *AYLI* and affiliated events, can play in the perpetuation of harm against less privileged individuals and communities.

The legacy of the Seton Guild's *AYLI* is thus one of loss, as it was compiled, published, and marketed – using Shakespeare's work and the aesthetics of the period in which he wrote – with the express purpose of raising funds for one of the charities named as having inflicted such traumatic experiences upon young women and their families. Its publication in 1959 was paired with two other *As You Like It* themed fundraiser events for the Guild and its work in

sistance. While the Guild seems to have either dissolved or slowed their operations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of its existence upon St. Ann's remain visible as the Center continues its work with young families to this day. The Seton Guild website is, at the time of this writing, accessible only via the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine; the group's Facebook page has not been updated since October 2019.

support of St. Ann's: a luncheon on 10 December featuring dishes from the cookbook on the menu, and a festival and fashion show on 4 June 1960 at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. The menus and invitations coordinate aesthetically with the cookbook's appearance: each includes black, white, and blue line drawings of theatrically dressed characters in pantaloons, ruffs, and pointed-toe shoes, and each leverages a nostalgia for the 'old world' with its use of a black-letter typeface for aesthetic emphasis.

The bolded variation on Monotype Engravers Old English Regular mimics the black-letter fonts common in printing of Shakespeare's day, functioning in much the same way as it has since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: black-letter fonts were used in the early modern period across a range of genres and contexts, but as Zachary Lesser argues, its usage lent texts an antiquated gravitas that deeply connected the font to traditional ideals of 'Englishness' – what Lesser calls 'typographic nostalgia' (2006, 107). The typeface's usage in the early modern period was popular in authoritative documents from the government and the church, but has drawn the attention of historians due to the ways these texts reflect a nostalgia for a certain type of white, Christian Englishness. Black letter's association with tradition has persisted into the present day, and in the case of the Seton Guild's *AYLI,* this 'Old English' font is primarily utilized for headings and paratexts, such as the title of the book and the prayer printed on the page opposite the copyright information, while the remainder of the book is printed in a more accessible Garamond Bold (recipes) and similar italic font (Shakespearean quotations). The prominent use of black letter, in combination with the Shakespearean references and images, functions as a marketing strategy grounded in a form of nationalism that trades in nostalgia for the traditions and aesthetics of an imagined 'old world'. The typographic design of the material text thus functions as a direct appeal to an audience that values the cultivation of their own erudition and class status through domestic and charitable work. That appeal will entice them to purchase the book to support the philanthropic cause of the Guild.

The language used to advertise the cookbooks at these events also subtly highlights the class status of the women contributors and Guild members, distancing them from the recipients of their charity. Whether all of the contributors to the book were members of the Seton Guild themselves is unclear,[14] but the Guild members who compiled the book clearly maintained and exploited their connections with the upper echelons of mid-century American society to produce, market and sell the book and fund their work with St. Ann's. The 1959 luncheon menu describes the Seton Guild's *AYLI* as 'The 'Who's Who' Cook Book' and 'A Collector's Item', selling each copy for $3.00 at the front door. Other than Seton Guild members from the D.C. area and a number of established restaurants from across the U.S., contributors include many people who might be considered the 'who's who' of the decade: actresses Shirley Booth and Rosalind Russell, opera star Lily Pons, manager of the National Theater Scott Kirkpatrick and Alice Elizabeth (Concklin) Snyder, close personal friend of Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower. Each attribution made in the book includes the contributor's name in the upper left-hand corner of the recipe, followed by a qualifier: the majority of contributors are noted to be wives of politicians and their close connections, their own names subsumed by the names and positions of their husbands; for example, Alice Snyder is credited as 'Mrs. Howard McC. Snyder, Wife of General Snyder, President Eisenhower's Physician' (Seton Guild 1959, 102).[15] While these

[14] The Guild does not seem to keep records in a publicly-accessible location nor do they have a method of contacting former members now that the organization is no longer active.

[15] While the women of the Seton Guild cookbook often choose to represent themselves using their husbands' names, titles, or affiliations, I here name them directly as a feminist act to ensure their contributions (both positive and negative) to American society, the Seton Guild, and the cookbook itself are rightfully acknowledged.

attribution conventions are not unusual for the period, especially given that women gained status and financial security through their marriages, the effect emphasizes their celebrity, social status, and political connection – contrasting them to those receiving their charity.

Even the production process of the Seton Guild's *AYLI* emphasizes the political and social connections of the book's compilers and the Guild itself. The cookbook was printed by the McArdle Printing Company in Silver Spring, Maryland, a suburb of D.C. The printer is identifiable only by the presence of their union label or 'bug' and the number '31' designating their shop on the copyright page, which notes they were a member of the Allied Printing Trades Council Union in D.C. during this time. Steve Nobles, current president of the Printing, Packaging, and Production Workers Union of North America (which has absorbed the Allied Printing Trades Council Union) has confirmed that the bug belongs to McArdle, noting that the company was initially owned by the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) before Bloomberg acquired it in 2011.[16] The BNA was long considered America's largest nonpartisan, independent publisher of news; its ownership of McArdle underscores the connections of the Seton Guild's members to the national printing and publishing market.

Further social and political connections are emphasized in the eighteen pages appearing before the indices featuring sixty-eight advertisements ranging from full-page spreads by the First National Bank of Washington, D.C. and Trans World Airlines (TWA) to half- and quarter-page ads from local grocers, furniture stores, restaurants, and car dealerships. Many of the advertisers in the book are also religiously affiliated, such as the Catholic Information Center and the Christ Child Opportunity Shop. These advertisements are effectively endorsements of the Guild's charity work from members of the community on both a local and national scale, and their existence is a clear demonstration of the cookbook creators' class connections. Such endorsements, while generating business for the companies advertised, also encourage buyer confidence, which in turn generates more profits from the book's sales to support the work of the Guild.

With the class status of the Seton Guild's membership conveyed by their connections to the BNA, the many local and national advertisers, and upper-class recipe contributors ranging from celebrities to American politicians and their wives, and with their own educational status reinforced through their evocation of nostalgia for the 'old world' of Shakespeare's day, the Shakespearean references themselves stand in stark relief. The references to his plays and sonnets proliferate from the title page, which, in the same Monotype Old English typeface as the title, quotes *Othello* with an incorrect act and scene attribution: 'Take note, take note, O world!' / Othello, Act II. Sc. 3.' (Seton Guild 1959, i). The quotation, paired with the title as the only printed text on the page, establishes from the cookbook's beginning that the Shakespearean quotations are meant to be consumed like the recipes in the book and as the compilers themselves have done: in a fragmented fashion, as 'you' (the reader) likes them.

The correct citation for the quotation is in fact 3.3.431, but its incorrect attribution establishes that the Shakespearean references and quotations throughout the book are not meant to be anything more than a marketing tactic and show of status. The compilers were not using Shakespeare to demonstrate their erudition or participate in a conversation about the playwright and his work: instead, they used Shakespeare to cultivate the 'appearance' of erudition in an effort to appeal to a specific class of consumer, one with the funds to support their work. The unusual choice to use an *Othello* quotation in this way, especially within the opening of a book named *As You Like It,* is ultimately characteristic of the cookbook, which then proceeds to place

[16] See Nobles 2024. For more on the Bloomberg acquisition of the BNA, see <https://www.bloomberg.com/company/press/bloomberg-completes-acquisition-of-bna-2/>, accessed 1 December 2024.

detached quotations from Shakespeare's plays and poems on nearly every page to follow. Just over 350 recipes feature in the book, with about 127 quotations appearing across the book's 218 pages. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* only contributes six total quotations to the book, one of the least frequently cited plays in the entire collection despite sharing its title.

The mis-cited *Othello* quote on the cookbook's title page also establishes a connection between food and race due to the context of the quotation within the play itself. The cited line is uttered by Iago as he attempts to convince Othello that Desdemona has cheated on him with Cassio. Othello responds:

> By the world,
> I think my wife be honest and think she is not.
> I think that thou art just and think thou art not.
> I'll have some proof! Her name, that was as fresh
> As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
> As mine own face… (3.3.438-443)

Othello's response to the rumors of Desdemona's infidelity associates purity and honesty with freshness and, by extension, whiteness, and dishonesty and an adulterous reputation with blackness – and Blackness[17] – which he directly associates with his own body. Desdemona's name is both pure and begrimed, white and black; and the effect of the speech situates Othello and Desdemona against one another in part due to the color of their skin and the moral associations of each.

On the surface, decontextualizing Iago's half-hearted 'attempt' to avoid disclosing his lie about Desdemona's infidelity to Othello and extracting it on the title page of the Seton Guild's *AYLI* seems merely to be a marketing tactic. It is one that encourages the same nonlinear reading patterns of the cookbook genre by suggesting that reading Shakespeare can be approached in the same fragmentary fashion as the recipes in the book itself. However, placing the quotation back within its original context stands as a stark reminder to 'take note' of how this fragmentation and decontextualization serves a greater purpose in the Seton Guild's *AYLI*: it both establishes and obscures the cookbook's white feminist politics that separate its compilers and readers from the recipients of their charity. By extension, it repeatedly fetishizes and suppresses those who do not serve the nationalistic or classist goals of the text.

The detached juxtaposition of Shakespeare's pastoral comedy via the book's title, and the tragedy of *Othello* via the title page's mis-cited quotation, encourages readers from the beginning to divorce the plots and characters of the plays from the allusions themselves, seeing them as nothing more than a thematic addition to the cookbook and mirroring the ways that recipes are presented within a cookbook's pages. This becomes a pattern over the course of the book: while some of the quotations seem to describe the recipes they are affiliated with, many have no obvious connection to the recipes with which they share page space. For instance, Florence Rhodes' recipe for a sweet almond dessert, 'Petit Fours Croissants Vanilla' (Seton Guild 1959, 39), has no apparent relation to the quotation from *A Comedy of Errors* it is paired with: 'We'll pluck a crow together' (3.1.120).[18] And Pat Nixon's contribution, 'Shrimp Superb', which contains ingredients like shrimp, boiled eggs, mayonnaise, butter, cheese, and potato chips,

[17] Current usage, especially in the United States, favors capitalization of Black and Blackness when referring specifically to racial and/or cultural identities as well as specific histories and communities in the same manner as other such identifiers (e.g. Latinx, Native American, etc.).

[18] Mrs. Florence Rhodes is credited as herself and affiliated with her location only, Washington, D.C.

is followed by the first line of Sonnet 18: 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' (Seton Guild 1959, 26).[19] These odd pairings suggest that perhaps contributors were asked to identify a favorite Shakespeare quotation to include with their recipe; it is also possible that the book's editors, Verna Hickenlooper and Elizabeth Gruenther, added the quotations before publication.[20] That the quotations are sporadically placed in the page layouts according to no specific pattern – not even as page filler – suggests the former: some pages lack any quotation at all while others include multiple references, regardless of how much white space is available on the page. Ultimately, the choices made visible in these quotation placements signal that the Shakespearean reference, while still conveying appreciation for the playwright's work, is meant to establish class status through the appearance of erudition as opposed to an actual understanding of the play. This enables the contributors to lay claim to Shakespeare as white property and leverage him and his work for their project of charity, which by extension elevates their own appearance of social status.

At times, this appeal to class and erudition is precisely what results in troubling connotations. Here I return to the example with which I opened this essay, Frances R. Norton's 'White Christmas Pie' (Seton Guild 1959, 52), which is paired with an *Othello* quotation one can only presume is in fact meant to describe its texture: 'And smooth as monumental alabaster' (5.2.5). The ingredients in Norton's pie suggest that the finished product is likely alabaster in color – light-colored ingredients include shredded coconut, gelatin, milk, sugar, vanilla, and whipping cream – but pairing this quotation with the recipe results in rather sinister connotations when read in context. Othello's monologue before he smothers Desdemona, in which this quotation appears, yet again draws direct attention to race as Othello juxtaposes his own Blackness against Desdemona's 'alabaster' skin:

> Yet I'll not shed her blood,
> Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
> And smooth as monumental alabaster.
> Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men. (5.2.3-5)

Othello here suggests that Desdemona's whiteness is an external representation of her innocence and purity, a commonplace association in early modern England and Europe more broadly, and he thus refuses to murder her in a manner that would color her white skin. However, this turn of phrase, marked by 'yet', suggests that the whiteness giving her the appearance of innocence obscures her true character: this, too, is a commonplace association in the period, as evidenced by phrases and titles like *The White Devil*. Evoking Desdemona's whiteness as a marker of the pie's color in the way that Norton does thus situates the whiteness and attractiveness of the pie and its affiliation with a Christian holiday against Othello's dark skin, Moorish ethnicity, and the relationship between his identity and capacity for violence, glossing over his own conversion to Christianity in the process.

The othering of Othello by linking his race to food is a longstanding historical problem with the play, as Shahani has compellingly argued. Often applied to foods like coffee, chocolate, and cookies, Othello's name evokes 'his exotic role in the play – his thrilling traveler's tales, his dangerous yet alluring blackness, his tragic grandeur – all in one delectable serving' (2020, 81).

[19] Pat Nixon is credited as Mrs. Richard M. Nixon, Wife of the Vice President of The United States.

[20] Verna A. Hickenlooper was the wife of Iowa governor Bourke B. Hickenlooper and is credited as Mrs. Bourke B. Hickenlooper. Elizabeth Mahoney Gruenther, wife of the Assistant to the Deputy Assistant to U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Homer H. Gruenther, is credited as Mrs. Homer Gruenther.

This history finds its roots in the early modern period, and even in broadside ballads spreading anti-coffee propaganda Othello's otherness is used to evoke 'conversion and contamination' (82). For instance, in *A broad-side against coffee; or, the marriage of the Turk* (1672), the ballad writer directly references Othello in the diatribe against coffee:

Which for a truth, and not a story tells,
No faith is to be kept with Infidels.
Sure he suspects, and shuns her as a Whore,
And loves, and kills, like the *Venetian Moor*
(Anonymous 1672, ll. 23-26)

The reference in this late seventeenth-century broadside establishes a longstanding history of using Othello and his Blackness to render foreign foods exotic, alluring, and dangerous. While the Seton Guild's *AYLI* does not so explicitly weaponize these racialized references to *Othello,* the manner in which they do reference the play – with detached quotations, with those most apparently connected to the recipes they are printed beside linking Blackness and whiteness to food for the purpose of commodifying their cookbook for charity – evokes a similar otherness grounded in racism. Furthermore, it functions as yet another moment in the long history of fetishistic consumption of racial and ethnic difference that is legitimized in part through a widespread cultural reverence for Shakespeare.

The Seton Guild's *AYLI* extends this othering behavior through the creation of an entire section of the book devoted to 'Diplomatic' recipes. The table of contents otherwise outlines sections based on food type: that is, breads, casseroles, desserts, salads and dressings, etc. The 'Diplomatic' section is the only one that uses a non-food identifier as its title, and the contributions are provided by foreign embassies and the wives of diplomats to the U.S. Unsurprisingly, most of the recipes in this section have been Americanized, with translated or equivalent American ingredients and dish titles listed. Only a handful of recipes include cultural ingredients: for example, Takako (Debuchi) Asakai's[21] recipe for Yakitori lists mirin, shoyu, and katakuri-ko (translated as 'Japanese cornstarch') as required ingredients (Seton Guild 1959, 84). For the most part, however, ingredients named in non-English languages are translated for American readers.

The most insidious way that the 'Diplomatic' section others non-American contributors to the cookbook is through its deployment of far more Shakespearean quotation than in the other sections of the book. Eight of the book's sections, including 'Appetizers', 'Salads and Dressings', and 'Casseroles', feature about five to eight pages of recipes with ten to sixteen Shakespeare quotes in each section. Two sections, 'Desserts' and 'Meat and Poultry', include eighteen quotes each across thirty-six pages. The 'Diplomatic' section, however, contains twenty-six pages of recipes contributed by foreign diplomats' wives, and this is where most, if not all, of the contributors of color across the entire cookbook appear, with their recipes understood as representative of their contributors' cultures. Proportionally, the amount of Shakespeare is the highest in this section of the book: there are thirty-nine quotations spread across the twenty-six pages. While we cannot know for sure whether the quotations were added by the contributors themselves or the editors, the effect of this structure upon readers is the same: the large and uneven proportion of Shakespeare quotations suggests that these recipes and their contributors *require* association with Shakespeare (and, by extension, the whiteness and elite class status he has come to represent) to legitimize their contributions and appeal to American readers.

[21] Wife of Japanese ambassador Kōchirō Asakai and daughter of former ambassador Debuchi Katsuji.

The cookbook's index likewise cordons off these contributors in the 'Diplomatic' section of the cookbook. The book contains two indices: the first organized by recipe type and title, and the second organized by contributor name. Hundreds of contributors are listed in alphabetical order by surname. However, the contributors to the 'Diplomatic' section, most of whom are named on the recipe page itself, following the same conventions as their American counterparts, are not named at all in the index. Rather, the index attributes each of their recipes to the embassy with which they are associated. For instance, Daw Mya Mya Win's recipe is listed in the contributor index under 'Burma, Embassy of the Union Of'. Like the collapsing of food and race via the deployment of *Othello* quotations in other sections, the recipe and its contributor are collapsed as these non-American women are referred to solely by the institution of their nationality, in contrast to the hundreds of white American women listed by name (even if only their husband's name) in the same index.

The Seton Guild's *AYLI* repeatedly others and objectifies its non-American contributors and contributors of color in this way, whether through its uncritical deployment of Shakespearean quotation or bibliographic design choices. The cookbook's politics of social class, gender, and race are thus reified through its engagement with Shakespeare and the formatting, typographic design, publication practices and other bibliographic components. These politics, as I have shown, are not benign, especially considering that in 1959 America was in the midst of the Cold War and the early stage of the burgeoning Civil Rights movement. The Seton Guild's white feminist deployment of textual elements and their deep reliance upon Shakespeare to sell their products and raise funds for charity are deeply intertwined with the political context in which the book was created, to the detriment of the communities they aimed to help.

4. *Conclusion*

The Seton Guild's *AYLI* has established a legacy of nearly invisible political engagement that can nonetheless be made visible through bibliographic and book historical methods and theories. Jennifer Park argues that 'The power of defining a legacy … is the power to define the value of past, present, and future, and is used to determine who or what is allowed access: to knowledge, to resources, to community' (2023, 266), and to revisit cookbooks like the Seton Guild's *AYLI* as crucial points in the history of Shakespearean reception ensures that we are able to challenge the harms of this legacy while creating space for a more inclusive future of the field. By questioning their material components as well as how, by whom, and for what purposes they were compiled, published, and circulated, book historians and bibliographers can contribute to broader conversations about Shakespeare's legacy and the ways that he has historically and contemporarily been utilized in service of problematic political engagement. Brandi K. Adams argues that book historians in particular have an immense opportunity to ensure that we are thoroughly equipped to not only identify, but conscientiously draw attention to, the gaps in historical record, reception history, and other scholarship with the goal of ensuring that those who have remained 'in the shadows' can be brought to the center of conversations that have traditionally excluded them (2023, 84). This may require, as I demonstrate here, a willingness to let our scholarship settle in contradiction and complexity. In this instance, addressing how white women like the editors and contributors to the Seton Guild's *AYLI* may participate in the long but under-appreciated history of women editors of Shakespeare while also subtly perpetuating the harm of other marginalized people through the bibliographic obfuscation of their political engagement. This process enables us to pursue a future of the field that makes space for justice, equity, and reparation.

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The Queer Lives of *The Life of H.H.* (1822, 1688, 1650-1651)

Michael Durrant
Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study
University of London (<michael.durrant@sas.ac.uk>)

Abstract

The article explores how the early modern book trade and book use have shaped the biography of the notorious seventeenth-century printer, Henry Hills (c. 1625-1688/1689), particularly as this pertains to our knowledge of his sexual history. Key to this analysis will be Hills' Particular Baptist confession-cum-conversion account, *The Prodigal Returned to His Father's House* (c. 1650-1651), which is said to have been composed whilst Hills served time in the Fleet for having entered into a bigamous (and apparently Ranter-inspired) relationship with the wife of a Blackfriars tailor. As the article highlights, *The Prodigal* is no longer extant; our knowledge of *The Prodigal* is actually based on a book published much later in 1688, *The Life of H.H.*. Earlier critics and editors have relied on *The Life* to access *The Prodigal* – and, by extension, details related to Hills' sexual history and his character – without properly acknowledging this crux. Consequently, we have failed to address the ways in which Hills' sexual history has been produced and augmented by the material forms that enable that history to be read. To offer alternative readings and methodological counterpoints, the article will attend to the *longue durée* of the four surviving copies of *The Life* taken from collections in England and North America, in which we find former owners and users transforming their copies of *The Life* by pulling those copies apart and binding them up in new material and editorial configurations. This copy-specific evidence helps to register the ways in which book use and collection activities have impacted representations of Hills' sexual history. By extension, the article maintains that they together reveal a potential for queerness that is being played out via deployments of *The Life*'s material form.

Keywords: Biography, Material Texts, Printers, Queer Bibliography, *Sammelbände*

1. *Introduction:* The Prodigal*, Then and Now*

The printer Henry Hills' (c. 1625-1688/1689) Particular Baptist confession-cum-conversion account, *The Prodigal Returned to His Father's House*, which is thought to have been first published by Giles Calvert (1612-1663) in 1650-1651, has had a rather chequered critical reception. Composed whilst Hills served time

in the Fleet Prison for having entered into a 'open living arrangement' with the wife of Thomas Hams (Lynch 2007, 305), a Blackfriars tailor who had sued him for £250, *The Prodigal* has often supported commentators' efforts to throw back the metaphorical 'cloak' of Hills' deceitfulness (Anonymous 1733, 37) and to expose him for what he really was: that is, an 'unpleasant and unreliable character' (Blagden 1960, 168). In large part, his unpleasantness and unreliability has been located in his habitual political backslidings. To quote Julie Stone Peters, Hills worked 'for a number of conflicting enterprises' (1990, 53), rising from a labouring-class background to serve as printer to the New Model Army and the Leveller movement, official printer to Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate, printer to Charles II's Restoration government and printer to the Catholic James II's royal household and chapel. Hills combined his official printing for consecutive governments with a successful corporate career, rising, by the mid-1680s, to be Master of the Stationers' Company, and along the way, he changed his religion several times over, starting out amongst the Particular Baptists and ending his career as a Roman Catholic via a dalliance with the Church of England.[1] Pinning Hills down as the author responsible for writing *The Prodigal*, in which his capacity for politico-religious unfaithfulness finds a neat corollary in an admission of bigamous excess, has enabled commentators to put a documentary fix on the 'volatile' nature of Hills' life and career (Mendle 2001, 127), and the 'insincere' text of 1650-1651 (Smart 1925, 386) has been used by later scholars to damn Hills as an 'obsequious flatterer' (Morand 1969, 41), a 'strained and unconvincing' spiritual self-writer (Watkins 1972, 49), and even as a morally 'shameless' figure (Haffenden 2009, 141).

More recently, however, Hills' *Prodigal* has been reassessed. William E. Smith III argues 'evidence embedded' in this 'autobiographical work' demonstrates 'conclusively' that Hills was in fact 'a Ranter' (2017, 257-258). *The Prodigal*'s engagement with notions of sinlessness illustrates how Hills had once embraced the 'antinomian strain found among certain segments of the Particular Baptists', a 'characteristic that would eventually lead him to see bigamy as licit for Christians' (258). Hills' imprisonment in the Fleet 'proved to be the end of [this] phase of his religious life – Hills being a Ranter' (*ibid.*); nevertheless, for Smith, Hills' post-Ranter *Prodigal Returned* confirms his earlier 'experimentations' with a set of pantheistic beliefs that actively 'challenged the moral codes of England in the mid-seventeenth century' (264). By drawing *The Prodigal* in from the margins of scholarly accounts of Dissenting selfhood in the early modern period, Smith's research has usefully recast Hills as a sectarian libertine in the orbit of other well-known former Ranters, including Abiezer Coppe (1619-1672) and Laurence Clarkson (1615-1667), who, in professing that 'individual conscience' placed England's godly above 'all laws', sought a more erotic kind of spiritual liberation by way of materialist rituals of drinking, swearing, and extra-marital orgiastic sex (Smith 2014, 8).

William Smith's argument is important because it is atypical, at least in the sense that he takes seriously Hills' *Prodigal Returned*, a text that has been marginalised from scholarly accounts of Dissenting selfhood in the early modern period. But then Smith does share with *The Prodigal*'s detractors an apprehension of Hills as author and therefore as source for this 'autobiographical work'. This position might seem straightforward enough, but it can be a difficult one to sustain. In large part, this is because Hills' *Prodigal Returned* does not survive in its original form. Assuming it was actually published by Calvert in 1651, that earlier version of *The Prodigal* has since been lost.

[1] For a cradle-to-grave capsule biography that outlines Henry Hills' conversions and political negotiations, see Ian Gadd 2004. My own monograph on Hills' life and afterlives – including chapters on his beginnings, his imprints, his Catholic conversion, and his often tense relationship with his eldest son and namesake, the pirate printer, Henry Hills Junior (c. 1654-1710) – is forthcoming with Manchester University Press.

In fact, everything we know about Hills' 'autobiographical work' comes from a belatedly-printed, cheaply made and highly censorious biography, *The Life of H.H.* (Figure 1), which claims on its title page to contain a '*Relation at large of what passed betwixt him and the Taylors Wife in Black-friars, according to the Original*'. The imprint formulation at the foot of this later text's title-page tells us that *The Life* was 'Printed' for '*T.S.* in the Year 1688', which is some thirty-seven years after '*the Original*' (i.e. *The Prodigal*) is said to have been first published (Anonymous 1688b).

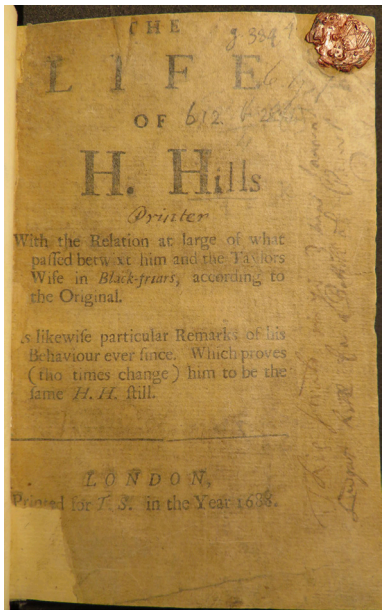

THE
LIFE
OF
H. Hills
Printer
With the Relation at large of what passed betwixt him and the Taylors Wife in *Black-friars*, according to the Original.
As likewise particular Remarks of his Behaviour ever since. Which proves (tho times change) him to be the same *H. H.* still.
LONDON,
Printed for *T. S.* in the Year 1688.

Figure 1 – The British Library's copy of *The Life of H.H.* (1688). From the British Library Collection: BL 612.b.25(4.), main title page. Courtesy of the British Library

What, then, are we reading when we say we are reading *The Prodigal Returned*? *The Life of H.H.* contains five documents that apparently formed part of that '*Original*' publication of 1651. These include:

1. a supporting statement addressed 'To the Reader' (A2r-A2v), written by Hills' Particular Baptist pastor, the wealthy merchant and leader of the Devonshire Square branch of the Particular Baptist Church, William Kiffen (1616-1701);
2. a 'Premonition to the Reader' (A3r-A5v), written by another Baptist leader, Daniel King, who is identified in the text as Hills' 'friend';
3. a copy of a Hills-authored 'Epistle To all the Saints in General' (A6r-B1v), which he directed towards the Particular Baptist brethren from whom he had apostatized;
4. Hills' central confession-cum-conversion account (1-42), 'The PRODIGAL Returned to His Fathers House';
5. and finally, 'A True Coppy' of a letter authored by Hills (43-46), in which he pleads for leniency and forgiveness from the cuckolded tailor, Hams.

If these five documents were included in the '*Original*' publication of 1650-1651, then it is clear that *The Prodigal*, like other autobiographical forms from the period, was not the 'sole product' of one easily definable author (Graham *et al.* 1989, 2). Its epistle 'To the Reader', written by Hills' Particular Baptist pastor, Kiffen, and King's 'Premonition to the Reader from the hand of a Friend', suggest instead that *The Prodigal* was underwritten by multiple authorships. Hills' 'PRODIGAL Returned' confession was, by extension, seemingly embedded within a larger, multivocal and hybrid work, flanked on either side by paratexts that were meant to be read in relation to each other, including epistolary forms, such as Hills' 'Letter' to the cuckolded Hams, in which he pleads for leniency and forgiveness on behalf of himself and his family. Some of these '*Original*' documents feature dates that refer us back to the originary scene of *The Prodigal*'s composition. Hills' 'Epistle', for example, is dated 'Jan. 28. 1650' (Anonymous 1688b, B1v); his letter to Hams is dated 'Dec. 12. 1650' (46). Whilst Kiffen's prefatory missive is undated, King's does bear a date; however, that date ('*July* 15 | 1672') seemingly takes us out of time and out of context (A5v). This may well be the result of a printing error (is it meant to read '1652' rather than '1672'?), though the possibility remains that this document was, as Larry Kreitzer posits, composed and added at a later date (2012, 48). Adding to the text's complex temporal positioning, *The Life* concludes with one final document:

6. a scathing biographical sketch entitled '*A View of part of the many* Traiterous, Disloyal, *and* Turn-about Actions of H.H.' (47-54).

'*A View*' details Hills' post-1651 activities, including his later backslidings from the Particular Baptist faith to a more moderate form of Protestantism after the Restoration, and his subsequent conversion to Catholicism following James II's ascension. Like all the other documents that make up *The Life*, '*A View*' is another reprint, this time of an anonymous biography that originally appeared in single-sided broadside format in 1684-1685 (Figure 2).

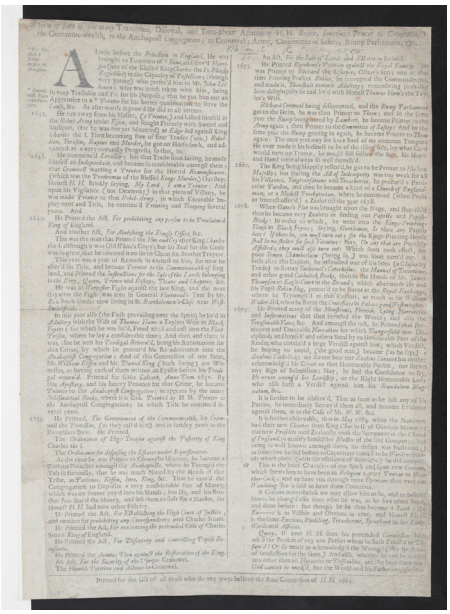


Figure 2 – The anonymous biography, *A View of part of the many Traiterous, Disloyal, and Turn-about Actions of H.H.* (1684-1685). From the British Library Collection: 74/816.m.2.(60.), broadside. Courtesy of the British Library

To quote Kate Loveman, '*A View*' functions as a 'sarcastic commentary' upon the confessional documents that precede it, offering an alternative paratextual lens through which the authenticity of Hills' first-person claims to spiritual regeneration can be interrogated (2008, 37). By reading '*A View*' alongside Hills' claims to confession and repentance, *The Life*'s readers are called on to locate disjuncture between the then and the now in Hills' life story by reading between texts. So, in one part of *The Life*, we find Hills-the-narrator asserting that his confession 'is not a fiction or imagination … but the truth' (Anonymous 1688b, B2v); Kiffen signs off his own epistle 'hoping' Hills' confession is 'reality and truth' (A2v), while King asserts that Hills' 'repentance is real' (A4r). This collaborative claim to 'authentic faith', so 'crucial' in Dissenting accounts of religious experientialism (Baker 2005, xviii), is compromised by evidence provided in the concluding document of '*A View*', which bookends *The Life* by telling us that 'this conversion of our Saint' (Anonymous 1688b, 49) was just another example of Hills' dissembling nature, 'Religion he [made] use of upon all changes' (54). Hills only 'writ this Book' to procure his 'Re-admittance' into the Particular Baptist community, and by this '*Apostacy*, and his hearty Pennance for that Crime', he became a 'Printer' to the congregation (49). To reinforce the idea that Hills was driven by mercenary motives and that his textual self is not to be trusted, it is also claimed that he became a preacher amongst the Baptists, and that he 'thump'd the Tub' with such enthusiasm that 'he caus'd the Congregation to Deposite a very considerable sum of money' into a Particular Baptist fund; Hills then absconded with the money in 1659, leaving the Devonshire Square Baptists to 'shift for a Teacher' (50). I have found no evidence to support this claim, but by presenting an alternative account of Hills' dealings with the Baptists, the author-editor-compiler of *The Life* attempts to convince us that, despite Hills' claims to the contrary, this godly performance of repentance really is a work of fiction.

Whilst I do not want to undermine Smith's interventions regarding Hills' 'Ranter sexuality', there is clearly another story here, and one that puts pressure on terms like 'evidence' and 'embedded' (Smith III 2017, 258). Until a copy of that 1651 text is found, our major source for Hills' Ranter-inspired experiments with bigamy is really *The Life* compilation of 1688, and *The Life*'s status as a transparent form of documentary disclosure cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, issues to do with reliability become even more acute if we read *The Life* in terms of the way the text marketed itself: that is, as a '*Relation*'. As Frances Dolan reminds us, 'the designation of a text as a relation … announced its particular claim on the reader's trust or belief' (2013, 2). Author-editors of 'true relations' would often support their truth claims by listing 'living witnesses' (3), or alternative narratives, to the events they describe. Such texts assure the reader of their authenticity through their claims to accurately reproduce 'original' documentation (4). These authors 'assemble a kind of archive to substantiate truth claims' (*ibid.*) and in doing so the textual relation becomes evidence of its own claims to authenticity. *The Life* works in broadly similar terms: it refers to 'Mr. *William Kiffin* and Mr. *Daniel King*' as 'living … Witnesses' to Hills' extra-marital relations with the tailor's wife, both having 'written an Epistle' before his confession (Anonymous 1688b, 49); its title page promises an '*Original*', too. But as Dolan tells us, such affirmations 'cannot be verified' but rather 'stand in for the proofs toward which they gesture' (2013, 4). For example, many of the details that I have already rehearsed in relation to *The Prodigal* – that Hills was sued for '260 *l.*' by the tailor Hams, and that his confession-cum-conversion account was published by '*Giles Calvert*' (Anonymous 1688b, 49) – are details found only within the biographical document of *A View* and its subsequent reprint in *The Life*. Further, given that *The Prodigal* is no longer extant, *The Life* becomes the only evidence that Hills' confession ever existed in the form that we have it now, and even this works 'on the assumption that it was actually printed' (Loveman 2008, 37, n. 78). Ultimately,

though, we cannot really know this, since there's nothing outside of this document to challenge *The Life*'s own claims to documentary realism, and this includes its title-page assertion that Hills committed some sort of sexual infraction with a '*Taylors Wife*'.[2]

Attempts to pin down *The Prodigal* as 'first-person evidence' (Como 2018, 406) of Hills' sexual misconduct have, by and large, tended to side-line such opacities, and as a consequence earlier commentators have failed to properly address the ways in which Hills' libertine sexual history has been produced and augmented by the material forms that enabled it to be read. Building on recent developments within the field of queer bibliography, particularly research that has explored the queer affordances of pre-modern material texts (Masten 2016, 109-149; Magnani and Watt 2018; Trettien 2022, 99-182; Sargan 2022), this article generates new readings and approaches to the absent *Prodigal*, arguing for a sense of the mobility and multiplicity of Hills' 'autobiographical work', whilst also underscoring the fact that that the interpretive co-ordinates of Hills' 'Ranter sexuality' are historically variable, discursively contingent, and materially situated.[3] As part of this argument, I will attend to *The Life of H.H.*'s post-print history, as copies passed into readers' hands, and as those copies were subsequently bound up in new material and editorial configurations. In the next section, this will take us to the Bodleian Library's copy of *The Life*, which does not survive as a stitched or bound codex, but rather in the form of torn fragments that have been tucked into the proof pages of a failed nineteenth-century attempt to reprint Hills' lost *Prodigal*; I then turn to two other copies of *The Life* – the first held at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, and the second at the Houghton Library, Harvard University – which together survive within the 'multibook compilations' of user-generated *Sammelbände* (Knight 2013, 2); in conclusion, the article returns to the UK, this time to turn to an individually-bound copy of *The Life* held at the British Library, where I will linger on a curious red wax seal that is impressed upon its title page. Tracking across and between these versions and variants, and hopping between the 1650s, the 1680s, and, in the following section, the 1820s, will help to reorientate the discussion away from a sense of Hills' confession-cum-conversion account as a fixed, finalised, or unmediated source that neatly satisfies our will to knowledge around Hills' 'Ranter sexuality'. Made up, made over, remixed and sometimes cut up: this article will ultimately propose that book use, as well as collection activities, have each impacted and helped to shape representations of Hills' sexual history, and that these factors and forces together reveal a potential for queerness that's being played out via deployments of *The Life*'s material form.

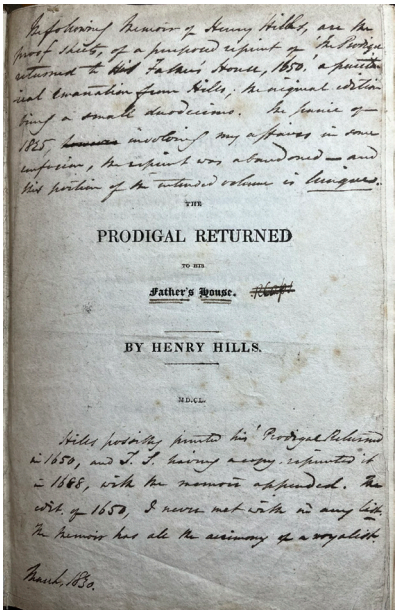
2. *'a proposed reprint': Bodleian Library, Arch. H d.40*

Tucked within its half goat binding and marbled paper boards, Bodleian Library's Arch. H d.40 archives the proof sheets of a proposed reprint of *The Life of H.H.* by the private press of

[2] As I have argued elsewhere (Durrant 2018), a number of Hills' rivals, as far back as the mid-1650s, conjured his bigamy in both royalist satire and anti-sectarian polemic, and so there appears to be little doubt that Hills was once embroiled in a sexual scandal; however, the exact nature of that scandal, up to and including the identities of those involved, needs to be treated with a good deal of skepticism.

[3] The field of queer bibliography has also begun to define itself – both in terms of the textual materials it is interested in (i.e. queer literature and archives) and the methodological approaches it takes to the material text – in some recent symposiums, such as Malcolm Nobel and Sarah Pyke's 'Queer Bibliography: Tools, Methods, Practices and Approaches' (Institute of English Studies University of London, 2023), as well as conferences, including the 'Queer Bibliography Conference' (UCLA California Rare Book School, 2024). Noble and Pyke's recently published special issue for the *PBSA*, 'Queer Bibliography', and their introductory essay to this emerging sub-field (2024), will serve as an important landmark in the study of 'the queerness of the book-as-object' (152).

Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, a project that began in around 1822. Figure 3 gives an indication of the anticipated title page, which scraps *The Life of H.H.* title, opting instead for the one that apparently accompanied the now lost original: 'THE | PRODIGAL RETURNED | TO HIS | Father's House. | BY HENRY HILLS.'.



THE

PRODIGAL RETURNED

TO HIS

Father's House.

BY HENRY HILLS.

Figure 3 – Thomas Davison's proposed reprint of *The Life of H.H.* (1825). The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Arch. H d.40, proof title page. Image is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

An accompanying 'ADVERTISEMENT' indicates how the reprint was to be promoted:

The excessive rarity of this Memoir [i.e. *The Life*], of which no other copy, known to the writer, has occurred for sale than that purchased by Edward Rowe More[s], at the dispersion, by [Samuel] Paterson, of the Bibliotheca Monastica Fletewodiana, in 1779,[4] has induced the ~~Editor to give the~~ present reprint; the impression being strictly limited[,] ~~to fifty copies~~, and those only intended for private circulation.

EDITOR.

[March,] ~~Jan~~ 1, 1825.

[4] The *Bibliotheca Monastica-Fletewodiana*, a printed catalogue of rare books auctioned by the bookseller Paterson (1728-1802) at Essex House, the Strand, in December 1774 (rather than 1779), does indeed record the sale of the 'Life of Hen. Hills' to the antiquarian Rowe Mores (1731-1778) – *The Life* featured in lot 172 and sold, alongside four other tracts, for eighteen shillings (see Paterson 1774, 9).

The hand-written corrections to the title page and to the 'ADVERTISEMENT' suggest that by January (or rather March) 1825 the 'EDITOR' was still ironing out specifics. Was the intention to issue more or less than fifty copies? Why aim for 'private circulation', and who might have formed a part of its coterie readership? The rhetoric of 'private circulation' generates the impression of 'intimacy in small social circles', in which books are passed 'from hand to hand' (North 2003, 24); the phrase is occasionally also attached to more 'salacious', 'under-the-counter' publications (McCleery 2002, 172), although the question of whether this excessively rare 'Memoir' was intended to be read as a spicy exposé is one that Arch. H d.40 refuses to answer, since the whole project was abandoned in or after 1825.

We know this because of the manuscript notes that are inscribed onto the proposed title page. Written in an italic hand and dated 'March, 1830', the 'EDITOR' provides contextual details, at first to do with biography:

> The following memoir of Henry Hills, and the proof sheets, of a proposed reprint of 'The Prodigal Returned to His Father's House, 1650,' a puritanical emanation from Hills, the original edition being a small duodecimo. The panic of 1825, involving my affairs in some confusion, the reprint was abandoned – and this portion of the intended volume is unique.

The 'EDITOR' then turns to thorny issues to do with provenance:

> Hills possibly printed his 'Prodigal Returned' in 1650, and T.S. having a copy, imprinted it in 1688, with the memoire appended. The copy of 1650, I never met with in any list.

When these inscriptions are read alongside the 'ADVERTISEMENT', those promotional claims to the 'excessive rarity' of *The Life* take on a new dimension. Here, notions of 'rarity' are replaced by the problem of absence: 'The copy of 1650, I never met with in any list'. Despite the title ('THE | PRODIGAL RETURNED') and that confident assertion of authorship ('BY HENRY HILLS'), Hills' 'puritanical emanation' is just not there; or, rather, the version we might want, that 'copy of 1650', is not there – at least not yet. Additional remarks related to the editor's 'affairs', which were apparently 'in some confusion' due to the stock market crash and bank failures of 1825, add to this context of absence a personal crisis that remains unarticulated, but that similarly worked towards the project's abandonment.

It is not exactly clear who that editor was, and neither is it altogether clear who was tasked with printing the proof sheets. An interleaf featuring the imprint of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown does include the name of the printer Thomas Davison (d. 1831) and his address on Lombard Street, Whitefriars. Posthumously represented as an 'establishment-orientated' figure (Cochran 2011, 123), Davison was, according to an obituary that appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in December 1831, highly regarded by his peers because of the 'beauty and singular correctness' of his printing; by all accounts, Davison was also lauded for the 'sweetness' of his singing, 'which retained to the last all the compass and freshness of that of a young man' (Urban 1831, 183).[5] Today, Davison is best remembered as John Murray's (1778-1843) favoured Byron printer, although another printer named Thomas Davison stalks records from the same period. He kept a shop on Duke Street, Smithfield, and as far as his reputation went, the Thomas Davison of Duke Street was a far cry from the Thomas Davison of Lombard Street. Rather than being famed for the beauty of his printing or his singing, this other Davison was one of Regency London's 'leading ultra-radical publishers' (McCalman 2004, 133), responsible for editing and publishing

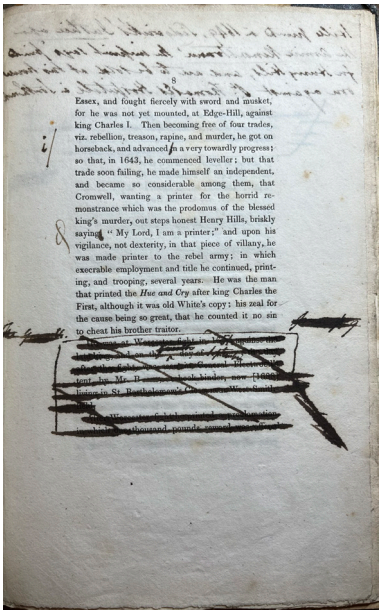
[5] On Davison's experiments with printing and with printing ink, see Isaac 1997, 10-18.

politically incendiary weeklies, including the *Medusa, or Penny Politician* (Feb. 1819-Jan. 1820); he was well-known as a 'republican, a deist and a Painite' (Morgan 2018, 20). Hardly an 'establishment-orientated' figure, then, but as Gavin Edwards indicates, the two Davisons have often been conflated in 'modern checklists of London printers of the period' (1996, 277); elsewhere, David Worrall posits that the Davison of Lombard Street and the Davison of Duke Street are in fact one and the same person, and that Davison used the profits from his more vanilla ventures to cross-subsidize his radical publications and lifestyle (1997, 147).

It is a fascinating conceit, not least because it would add an extra layer of meaning to his involvement in *The Prodigal* project of the 1820s, which sought to revive the confession of an incarcerated printer who, for the first few decades of his career at least, was a key agent in the production and dissemination of Leveller, republican, and religiously dissenting tracts. Indeed, it might not be unimportant that, when *The Prodigal* project got underway in 1822, the equally notorious Davison of Duke Street had only just been released from prison himself.[6] In 1820, he had been fined £100 and sentenced to two-years' imprisonment in Okeham gaol, Rutland, for his involvement in the publication of blasphemous libels, including materials that were critical of the Bible. Upon his release, Davison of Duke Street fell on financial hard times and suffered from serious bouts of ill health; by 1831 he, like that other Davison of Lombard Street, appears to have been dead. If the two Davisons are really one, the implication is that in his final years, the politically radical Davison was embroiled in an editorial project that looked back to the political radicalism of the seventeenth century by way of Hills' 'puritanical emanation'; however, to quote the 'EDITOR' again, the 'confusion' of life and of human 'affairs' obviously colluded to ensure that this turn to the past would remain incomplete.

As a consequence, Arch. H d.40 survives as a material trace of what might have been. Outside of the title page and 'ADVERTISEMENT', Arch. H d.40 contains the specimens of eighteen leaves of printed text, which derive from the concluding portion of '*A View*'. These leaves are paginated 1 through 18, which suggests that the editor of the 1820s edition of *The Life* intended to depart from the organisational principles of the original, moving '*A View*' from the back of the book, where it stood in *The Life of H.H.*, to the front. Thus what originally served as a concluding paratext, enabling readers to retrospectively reinterpret the documents of *The Prodigal* in light of damning evidence related to Hills' later conduct, was, in the revived edition of c. 1822-1825, reworked to serve as a prefatory threshold, shaping the reader's attitudes of what's to come. Replete with editorial notes, redactions and corrections (Figure 4), these pages capture the sense of a messy, working document, and one in which the final shape of the intended reprint was still in play. They also reveal that the approach adopted by the 'EDITOR' – whether that was Davison or another agent – involved scissors as well as pen and ink. This is because Arch. H d.40 also contains printed fragments cut from seventeenth-century books, including some derived from Hills' printing, as well as two fragments of printed text cut from a 1688 copy of *The Life of H.H.* (Figure 5). Marked up with hand-written corrections to spelling as well as punctuation, these printed remains represent the flotsam and jetsam of the editor's reading and research, a process that involved the destruction of an antiquarian book in order to establish the material parameters of a new one.

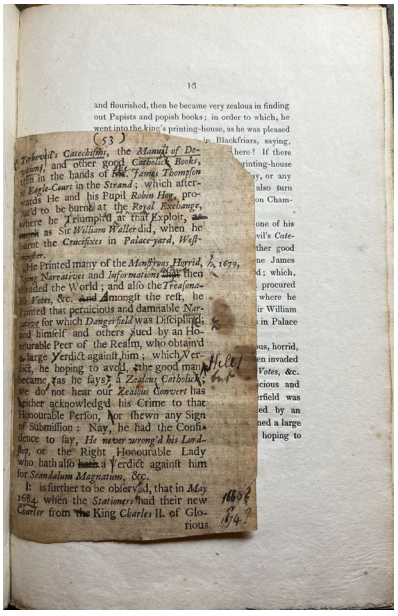
[6] For a contemporary account of Davison's trial and imprisonment, see Davison 1820.



8

Essex, and fought fiercely with sword and musket, for he was not yet mounted, at Edge-Hill, against king Charles I. Then becoming free of four trades, viz. rebellion, treason, rapine, and murder, he got on horseback, and advanced in a very towardly progress: so that, in 1643, he commenced leveller: but that trade soon failing, he made himself an independent, and became so considerable among them, that Cromwell, wanting a printer for the horrid remonstrance which was the prodomus of the blessed king's murder, out steps honest Henry Hills, briskly saying, "My Lord, I am a printer;" and upon his vigilance, not dexterity, in that piece of villany, he was made printer to the rebel army; in which execrable employment and title he continued, printing, and trooping, several years. He was the man that printed the *Hue and Cry* after king Charles the First, although it was old White's copy: his zeal for the cause being so great, that he counted it no sin to cheat his brother traitor.

Figure 4 – Editorial amendments in Davison's *Life of H.H.* (1825).
The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Arch. H d.40, 8. Image is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0



13

and flourished, then he became very zealous in finding out Papists and popish books; in order to which, he went into the king's printing-house, as he was pleased to Blackfriars, saying,

(53)

here? If there printing-house ay, or any also turn on Cham-

one of his vil's *Cate-*ther good ne James d; which, procured where he ir William in Palace

us, horrid, en invaded *Votes*, &c. cious and rfield was ed by an ned a large hoping to

Catechisms, the *Manuel* of Dev- and other good *Catholick Books*, in the hands of Mr. *James Thomson* at *Eagle-Court* in the *Strand*; which afterwards He and his Pupil *Robin Hog*, proved to be burnt at the *Royal Exchange*, where he Triumphd at that Exploit, as Sir *William Waller* did, when he burnt the *Crucifixes* in *Palace-yard*, *Westminster*.

He printed many of the *Monstrous Horrid*, &c. 1679, *Narratives* and *Informations* that then invaded the World; and also the *Treasonable Votes*, &c. And amongst the rest, he printed that pernicious and damnable Narrative for which *Dangerfield* was Disciplined, and himself and others sued by an Honourable Peer of the Realm, who obtain'd a large Verdict against him; which Verdict, he hoping to avoid, the good man became, (as he says) a *Zealous Catholick*; we do not hear our *Zealous Convert* has either acknowledged his Crime to that Honourable Person, nor shewn any Sign of Submission: Nay, he had the Confidence to say, *He never wrong'd his Lord-ship*, or the Right Honourable Lady who hath also had a Verdict against him for *Scandalum Magnatum*, &c.

It is further to be observ'd, that in *May* 1684. when the *Stationers* had their new *Charter* from the King *Charles* II. of Glorious

Figure 5 – Printed fragments derived from a 1688 copy of *The Life of H.H.*, interleaved within Davison's *Life of H.H.*
The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Arch. H d.40, 13. Image is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Yet no matter how hard the 'EDITOR' dug into his copy of *The Life* – pulling that copy text apart in an attempt to locate a standard version of *The Prodigal* – it did not take him back to

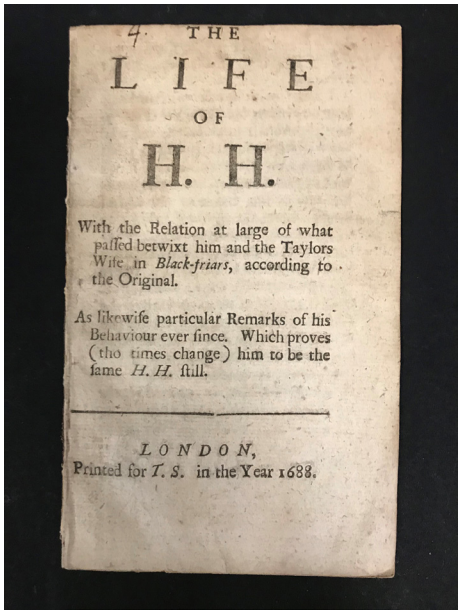
the authentic '*Original*' that *The Life*'s title page promises. Looking back in March 1830, the 'EDITOR' bemoaned that he 'never met with' *The Prodigal* of the 1650s, and as I have rehearsed in the introduction to this article, this is because *The Life* of 1688 is currently our only access to it. Arch. H d.40 is a (failed) reprint of a reprint of which no original copy as survived, and as a result, it has the potential to send us on strangely circular journeys. Take, for instance, Oxford's SOLO catalogue entry for the abandoned *Prodigal* project of the 1830s, where we find two links to two related items.[7] 'The Life of H.H.' link guides the user to a digitised copy of the 1688 publication archived on *Early English Books Online*; the second related item, 'The prodigal returned to his father's house', simply loops the user back to SOLO's entry for nineteenth-century proof pages that make up Arch. H d.40. 'Unknown to Wing', it says, and so there is nowhere to go: in the absence of *The Prodigal Returned*, this link returns us, like the wayward son of the prodigal parable, back to where we started.

That is to say, it is hard to properly straighten out *The Life*, even if that embedded title, 'The PRODIGAL Returned to His Fathers House', offers a version of those 'directional metaphors' that Sara Ahmed describes in the contexts of heteronormative relations (2006, 69), which organise a spatial (re)orientation, or moral progress, away from 'deviant' (*ibid.*) desires towards the filial embrace of 'the father' and 'the family' (74). Drawing on Ahmed's critique of 'directional metaphors', Roberta Magnani and Diane Watt argue that pre-modern cultures of textual production repeatedly disrupt ideals of patrilineal 'linearity', of straight lines and ordered progress, defining them instead in the queer terms of 'dissonance' and 'instability' (2018, 252). Their point is salient given my discussion of *The Life*: it is made up of textual parts drawn from multiple temporal moments, whether that be 'Jan. 28. 1650', 'Dec. 12 1650', 1651, '*July* 15 | 1672', 1684, and 1688; *The Life*'s main title-page points us backwards to the promise of an '*Original*', but with Arch. H d.40 standing in as a case in point, *The Life* emerges as a text that seems also to frustrate attempts at duplication, eschewing bibliographical desires for completeness and origin, as well as our attempts at cataloguing it. Unwilling to conform to that nineteenth-century editor's attempts to fix it into place and to establish the terms of its lineage, and seemingly short-circuiting contemporary cataloguing practices, *The Life* reveals itself as a rather less concrete bio-biographical record than we might assume: to quote Magnani and Watt again, it is much more 'refracted', even 'non-binary' (2018, 256).

3. *'plurality of wives': Ransom Center, 1688, DC 122.8 V513 1637 & Houghton Library, EC65.A100. B688t No. 3*

Rather than taking queerness as a methodology in and of itself, Magnani and Watt deploy a revisionist book history as a means of discovering or producing queerness in pre-modern material texts. In this section, I extend this approach by turning to two copies of *The Life of H.H.* – the first held at the Ransom Center (Figure 6), the second at the Houghton Library (Figure 7) – which together survive within the 'pick-and-mix' assemblage of the *Sammelband* (Scott-Warren 2019, 139).

[7] See <https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma990106313950107026>, accessed 1 December 2024.

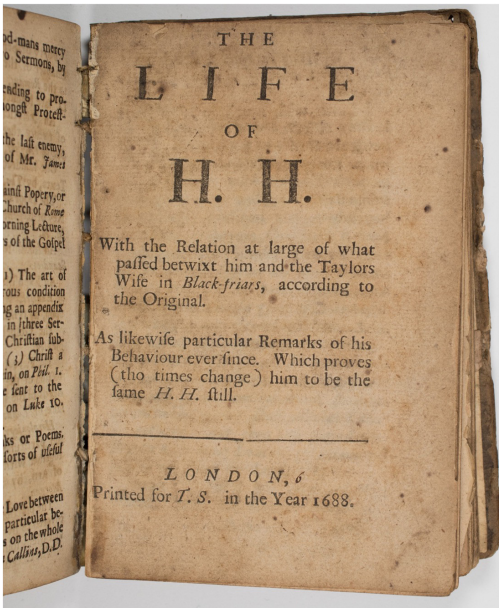

THE
LIFE
OF
H. H.

With the Relation at large of what passed betwixt him and the Taylors Wife in *Black-friars*, according to the Original.

As likewise particular Remarks of his Behaviour ever since. Which proves (tho times change) him to be the same *H. H.* still.

LONDON,
Printed for *T. S.* in the Year 1688.

Figure 6 – The main title page accompanying the Ransom Center's copy of *The Life of H.H.* (1688). DC 122.8 V513 1637. Book Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin. Public domain


THE
LIFE
OF
H. H.

With the Relation at large of what passed betwixt him and the Taylors Wife in *Black-friars*, according to the Original.

As likewise particular Remarks of his Behaviour ever since. Which proves (tho times change) him to be the same *H. H.* still.

LONDON, 6
Printed for *T. S.* in the Year 1688.

Figure 7 – The main title page accompanying the Houghton Library's copy of *The Life of H.H.* (1688). EC65.A100. B688t No. 3. Houghton Library, Harvard University. Courtesy of the Houghton Library

The copy of *The Life* at the Ransom Center has been bound into a bespoke volume containing five other printed 'lives' of Protestant converts (and, in the case of Socinus, the life of one anti-Trinitarian heretic), which have been arranged in order of their publication:

1. Vignolle's *Abridgement of the Life of Henry the Great, the Fourth of that Name: King of France and Navarre. Translated out of French* (London, printed for Nath: Butter, 1637);
2. William Garrett's *Anthologia: the life & death of Mr Samuel Crook … who being dead, yet speaketh. By W.G. an eye and ear-witness of both* (London, printed by James Flesher for Philemon Stephens, 1651);
3. John Biddle's translation of Samuel Przypkowski's *The Life of that Incomparable Man, Faustus Socinus Senensis, described by a Polonian Knight* (London, printed for Richard Moone, 1653);
4. the anonymous *A brief relation of several Passages of the life and death of William Barton of Shrewsbury, in October, 1661…* (London, printed for John Allen, 1664);
5. Oliver Heywood's *A narrative of the holy life, and happy death of that reverend, faithful and zealous man of God, and minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Mr. John Angier* (London, printed for Tho. Parkhurst, 1685);
6. *The Life of H.H.*
7. William Crashaw's translation of Niccolo Balbani's *The Italian Convert: news from Italy of a Second Moses: Or the life of Galeacius Caracciolus the Noble Marquess of Vico* (London, printed for Abel Roper, 1689).[8]

Turning to the Houghton's *Sammelband*, which is labelled simply as 'Tracts', we find that *The Life* has here been bound up with four texts written by, or written about, Catholics and Catholicism. These tracts include:

1. the anonymous *Advice from a Catholick to his Protestant friend, touching the doctrine of purgatory* (Douai(?), n.p., 1687);
2. the second edition of the anonymous *History of Pope Joan and the Whores of Rome* (London, n.p., 1687);
3. *The Life of H.H.*
4. the anonymous *A Letter of Advice to a Young Lady, Being Motives and Directions to Establish Her in the Protestant Religion* (London, printed for Richard Baldwin, 1688);
5. the anonymous' *Rome's rarities, or, The Pope's cabinet unlock'd, and Expos'd to View: Being a true and Faithful Account of the Blasphemy, Treason, Massacres, Murders, Lechery, Whoredom, Buggery, Sodomy, Debauchery, Pious Frauds, &c. of the Romish Church* (London, printed for J. Norris, 1684).

How might we account for the rival confessional contexts into which these (as yet unidentified) former owners have archived their copies of *The Life*? Is *The Life* a mid-seventeenth century Ranter record, as Smith has it, or one more concerned with Catholic subjectivities? Perhaps it's both: printed in 1688 when Hills was openly identifying as a Catholic, although made up of documents apparently composed whilst Hills is thought to have tested the boundaries of mid-century puritan piety back in the early 1650s, *The Life*, and the life that it represents, can

[8] As Figure 6 shows, the Ransom Center copy has the number '4' written onto its title page, which implies that it may once have stood as the forth tract in an entirely different *Sammelband*. Compare this with Figure 7, which shows that the Houghton copy has a number '6' on its title page, numeration that might well imply the same thing.

be read bi-focally, since both cut across and between apparently disparate religious boundaries. This has rendered *The Life* open to apparently competing material redeployments.

So, in the Ransom Center's *Sammelband*, *The Life* finds a place alongside the lives of a high-profile French Protestant (*Henry the Great*) and a Catholic-to-Protestant convert from Italy (*Marquess of Vico*), as well as the intra-Protestant conversions of English clerical figures from Anglicanism to radical nonconformism (*Crook* and *Angier*). The Ransom Center's volume also makes room for the life of a low-born figure, whose debauched, criminal behaviour brought him to prison, self-reproach, and godly penitence (*Barton*). *The Life of H.H.*, which features documents apparently composed in the Fleet, might sit comfortably alongside the *Barton* text, but it would be a push to say that William Barton (d. 1661) and Hills are analogous in their spiritual trajectories. Barton the butcher fell into drinking, gambling, and, ultimately, murder. He was imprisoned in Shrewsbury's gaol and executed, but not before he found godly assurance of salvation through thoughtful prayer and scripture reading. Brought to a particularly definitive conclusion by the hang-man's noose, Barton's *Life* offers its consumers a fairly fixed vision of spiritual renewal through corporeal suffering, repentance, and, in the end, death. Conversely, *The Life of H.H.* conjures a far more cynical vision of confessional transformation, since in its concluding phase, it details Hills' post-confession tergiversations, 'Religion he still making use of upon all changes' (Anonymous 1688b, 54). In this context, *The Life* might have closer thematic affinities with the 'life' offered up in Vignolle's *Life of Henry the Great* of 1637, which focuses on Henri IV of France, King of Navarre (1553-1610), a Protestant supporter of French religious reform who was widely celebrated in Elizabethan England, but whose name took on queasy connotations following his conversion to Catholicism. Describing his broader place in the early modern English cultural imagination, Gillian Woods argues that the King of Navarre 'represented a person who had changed and a person who was change itself. His conversion to Catholicism undid the meaning of his previous representation' (2013, 71). When read in relation to *The Life of H.H.*, published only three years after Hills' 'Mercenary' (Anonymous 1688b, 54) conversion to the Catholic faith, we might discern the compiler's interest in religious commitments that blur, rather than reinforce, what Woods describes as 'oppositional confessional categories' (2013, 69-70).

That said, it might be wrong to assume that the owner-compiler of the Ransom Center's *Sammelband* was reading *The Life of H.H.* for details around Hills' experiences. A reader-supplied table of contents situated at the beginning of the collection, which is entitled 'Tracts in this Volume', suggests a far more complex understanding of *The Life*'s authorship. Here, we find that the owner-compiler has condensed and reworked the titles of the printed texts that he or she has assembled, and in the case of *The Life*, these processes of reworking have suggestive consequences:

1. *The Life of Henry the Great, King of France & Navarre.*
2. *The Life & Death of Mr. Same. Cook Minister.*
3. *The Life of Faustus Socinus Senensis.*
4. *The Life & Death of William Barton.*
5. *The Holy Life & happy Death of Mr. John Angier minister.*
6. *The Life of H.H. by William Kiffen.*
7. *The Life of Galeacius Caracciolus the noble Marquess of Vico.*

The phrase '*by William Kiffen*' insinuates that this owner-compiler's interests lay as much with Kiffen, the Particular Baptist minister and Hills' co-author, as with '*H.H.*' the Particular Baptist convert, registering as it does a sense of Kiffen's accountability for *The Life*.

It is a small moment of readerly (re)interpretation that seems to momentarily blur issues of agency and authorship, although it is one that does have a history. The anonymous *The holy sisters conspiracy against their husbands*, printed on 26 January 1661, also called attention to Kiffen's support of Hills' sexual misdemeanors, situating their relationship within the contexts of a fictional meeting of radical millenarian women on Coleman Street.[9] Here, sexual and spiritual promiscuity combine in a virulently misogynist attack on the female visionaries who spoke and wrote themselves into political discourses during the 1640s and 1650s:

For Husbands we will have none,
  But Brothers in puritie;
We will not be Wives
And tye up our Lives
  To Villanous slaverie;
But couple in love and feare;
  When mov'd by the spirit to't;
For there is no sin
To let a Saint in,
  When he has the grace to do't.
 And thus are we taught,
 No folly is wrought,
  When Brothers will exercise.
Both *Kiffin* and *Hills*
(No Printer of *Bills*)
  Have prov'd it in ample wise. (12)

The 'holy sisters' stage a rebellion against hierarchical norms of social and political order. They reject the authority of 'Husbands' and they together associate marriage with 'slaverie'. Their obedience is instead directed towards their 'Brothers' in a gathered congregation, with whom they 'couple in love and feare' when 'mov'd by the spirit to't'. 'Both *Kiffin* and *Hills*' are summoned as hypocritical caricatures of promiscuity, figures who, by espousing claims to election and holy inspiration, aided and abetted this weakening of the masculinist hegemony in order to satisfy their own sexual appetites. In the Ransom Center's copy of *The Life*, we find that these attachments have been sketched out within the manuscript table of contents, where the phrase '*by William Kiffen*' binds Hills' former pastor more fully to *The Life*'s story of sexual errancy, and in doing so it raises a question that we never thought we had to ask: whose *Life* is it anyway?

The Houghton volume blurs our reading of *The Life* in other ways, particularly in terms of the sexual taxonomies that have recently supported its interpretation. As noted above, this book binds four texts alongside *The Life*. Two of them fall within the advice genre, with one written by a Catholic (*Advice*), and the other written (nominally at least) by a Protestant (*A Letter*). One issue that appears to link these two texts is an interest in libertine sexualities and atheistic beliefs, although in one of these examples, those issues are dealt with in complex and potentially even duplicitous ways.

The *Advice from a Catholick* of 1687 is perhaps the more straightforward of the two. It begins by characterising its unnamed (presumably Protestant) addressee as a 'Libertine', who,

[9] One obvious context here (particularly given the reference to Coleman Street) is the so-called Venner rebellion, a failed coup led by the Fifth Monarchist Thomas Venner (d. 1661) against Charles II in January 1661. On Coleman Street and its radical associations, see Adrian Johns 2008, 33.

having rejected the doctrine of Purgatory '*as Folk talk*' (Anonymous 1687a, 1), is likened to the 'Atheistical Philosophers' (2). The *Advice* subsequently leaves libertinism and atheism behind, outlining, across just eighteen pages, the historical precedents for a belief in the purgation of souls. The *Letter of Advice* of 1688 – written, according to its title page, by a '*Person of Honour*' for a generic '*Young Lady*' of quality, and published to establish others '*of that Sex*' 'In the *Protestant Religion*' – begins its narrative by giving a name to one of the 'Atheistical Philosophers' only hinted at in the *Advice*. This comes as part of an extended account of a society in which moral and gender boundaries have been eroded by bad reading habits. Young women, we are told, have thrown down the bible in favour of the 'extravagancies of *Romance-Amours*', which are not only 'daily *read*, but almost hourly *practised*; and *Women act* more than *Romances can write*' (Anonymous 1688a, 4). Meanwhile, young men are avidly reading the materialistic philosophies of 'Mr. *Hobbes*', shaping their lives under the belief that they are '*all bodies*, and … *no souls*' (*ibid.*). This results in sexually excessive desire, and with that excessive desire comes a challenge to masculine as well as national/racial boundaries:

> the Eastern Country-Laws allow not with more freedom *plurality of Wives*, than our new English Customs admit *plurality of Mistresses* … the *Liberty* of our men *exceeds* theirs: for they are permitted no more *Wives* than they can well *keep*, but ours allow themselves as many *Mistresses* as they can any way *get*. (5)

From its anti-Hobbesian polemic, its scenes of outlaw liberty and appetites, *A Letter* turns to an extended discussion of the character 'of *Papists*', and the text's narrator speaks at length about their '*ignorance and superstition*', and how that religion is, like the '*Romance- Amours*' and the books of 'Mr. *Hobbes*', lacking in '*reason or belief*' (10-11). But as this part of the narrative develops, the text's motives and agendas become murkier; indeed, in conclusion, *A Letter* will stage a U-turn. Its narrator works himself into such a state of heightened '*anger*' over 'the *Papists*' that he decides it best to simply offer them '*Charity*', as well as reconciliation, extending, in the end, the '*bond of peace*' (47-48). While the tone seems straightforwardly moralistic throughout, *A Letter*'s ending reveals the text's playful complexity in an ironic reversal of expectations, a process that is typical of 'the Protean flux' that Jocelyn Harris associates with 'Hobbist attitudes', and with the writings of Libertine poets who participated in shaping them (1990, 328). In other words, the ending undermines (and may be intended to undermine) the simple moral condemnations that it simultaneously sets up, an ambiguous quality that, once spotted, starts to make itself known elsewhere within the Houghton *Sammelband*.

Responding to Protestant polemical writings that used the legend of a female pope 'as conclusive proof of papal depravity' (Freeman 2006, 63), *Pope Joan* of 1687 reviews a range of fake news stories related to 'this *Androgyne*, or *Hermaphrodite*' (Anonymous 1687b, 1) in the hopes of dispelling them, but in the process it is caught up in publicising the transgressions it seeks to contest, including the claim – laden with sodomical potential, and referenced twice – that when any Pope is '*first placed in the Porphyry-Chair*' (14), which 'hath an hole made' to test whether the papal candidate is male, 'his Genitals' are vulgarly 'handled', and only ever 'by the youngest Deacon' (14). Seemingly confirming the 'anti-Catholic association of Catholicism with paganism' (Marotti 1999, 14), *Advice from a Catholick* pulls its proof for the existence of Purgatory from pre-Christian antiquity, including the 'Ægyptians', whose 'Opinion that Souls were to be purg'd' after death came largely from the fact that, in life, they were 'drench'd in the voluptuous Pleasures of the Flesh' (Anonymous 1687a, 3). Fleshly pleasures similarly preoccupy Anonymous' *Rome's Rarities*, which offers up a range of alleged debaucheries committed by England's heretic 'Other', including sex between Catholic men, sex between men and young boys, between men and goats, dogs, and dead bodies; however, even here the text might not

be what it seems (1684, 154-156). There's the occasional assurance that the anonymous author will censor out the worst of the debaucheries – 'I'll leave off this filthy discourse' (30) – but this almost never happens. The text lingers over its vivid descriptions of 'Sodomy, Buggery, [and] Incest' (190), which might suggest that behind its easy moralism, and the ghoulishness of its anti-Catholic stereotypes, there is the potential for pornographic titillation. In places, there might be hints of wink-wink humour, maybe even the possibility of a camp sort of parody, if camp is to see 'everything in quotation marks' (Sontag 1964, 519). This seems especially apparent in the text's self-conscious overstatement of modesty: 'I blush to think', writes the anonymous author, 'that I have offended the chaste ears of the Protestant Reader by harping so long upon such loose Notes', and he wonders if he has made the reader's 'Cheeks glow at the rehearsal of such immodest actions' (1684, 30).

How might our 'Cheeks glow' when we read the 'loose Notes' of *The Life of H.H.* alongside the likes of the *Advice*, *Young Lady*, *Rome's Rarities*, or the *History of Pope Joan*? What meanings are rehearsed when *Pope Joan* comes to an end, and, following on in this volume's organisational sequence, *The Life* begins its story of Hills' bigamy amongst the Particular Baptists? Or when *The Life* reaches its 'FINIS', and the *Young Lady's* account of the '*Romance-Amours*', 'Mr. *Hobbes*', and a '*plurality of wives*' takes to the stage?

In the introduction, I suggested that *The Life* undercuts Hills' repudiation of his 'detestable wickedness' (Anonymous 1688b, 43) by setting those past articulations in juxtaposition with competing evidence, primarily in the form of its concluding document, '*A View*', where '*H.H.*' is described as an '*Envious, Plodding, Treacherous, Sycophant*' (54). The documents that make up 'The PRODIGAL Returned' set up moral frameworks that are, in the end, rendered ironic by *The Life's* editorial interventions. As a package, the Houghton *Sammelband* is governed by similar logics of reversal, in that it binds together texts that give off different kinds of moral signals, texts that seem to pull strongly against their own claims, sometimes even to comic effect. If, to quote Jeffrey Todd Knight, 'How we collate is how we think' (2013, 184), then the thinking here might be governed by the queer pleasures of contrariness, which is articulated in terms of transgressed boundaries between, amongst other things, '*bodies*' and '*souls*', the fictions of '*Romance*' and the philosophies of '*Hobbes*', as well as in terms of sexual phobias/fantasies that are reinforced and at the same time denied.

And pleasure, too, in the juxtaposition of Hills' 'Ranter sexuality' alongside other forms of sexual nonconformity. The Houghton *Sammelband* is striking not only because it binds *The Life* – and therefore Hills' Particular Baptist confession – in juxtaposition with 'Tracts' related to Catholicism and its early-modern representations, but because in doing so Hills' cross-sex sins are provocatively cross-hatched with anti-Catholic descriptions of 'Sodomy, Buggery, [and] Incest'. Jeffrey Masten's work on the circulation history of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* (1592), and that play's appearance within a *Sammelband* held at the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, alludes to a similar scenario. Masten asks why the Zentralbibliothek's copy of *Edward II* was not bound alongside 'other plays, or tragedies', but rather with a 'theological tract that marches squarely into the raging intra-Protestant controversy over whether it is permissible to execute heretics, and a text on the "reign of Turks" and other "oriental" religions' (2012, 17-18). Masten considers how the play's complex mingling of same-sex desire and Reformation politics can be better understood when read in relation to the 'habitat' of this *Sammelband* (17), concluding that it at least 'underlines that … what we might call "homosexuality" exists in a complex network of legal, religious, ethnic and national discourses' (19). By the same token, the Houghton's *Sammelband* attests to an analogous phenomenon: in making Hills' heterosexual sin of bigamy a material bedfellow of the 'Sodomite', of 'Eastern Country-Laws',

of the '*Androgyne*, or *Hermaphrodite*', it underlines that what we might call 'Ranter sexuality' exists in a discursive relation with other sexual/confessional/racialized identities and practices deemed outside the bounds of early modern propriety.

In many respects, this is not an especially new point. Valerie Traub has, for example, written on the 'flexible and capacious' nature of pre-modern sexuality as a 'category of analysis' (2010, 251), and Traub points out that if there has been a recent trend in histories of early modern sexuality, then it has been 'toward the slippery borders and uneven edges where erotic desires, bodies, and acts rub up against other bodies, fields of signification, and social concerns' (253). However, if scholars of the period are cognizant of what Stephen Guy-Bray terms 'the rhetoricity of sexuality' (2013, 200), and the mediating role that language plays in the nebulous constructions of pre-modern sex, there remains room to consider how these mediations were playing out at the level of the material text. Back in 1996, Margreta de Grazia gestured towards this issue when she asked whether 'the new mechanics of the press', which brought with it not fixity but 'malleability and provisionality', was 'attended by transformations in how thought and sex were construed' (2005, 91). We might extend this point to ask how pre-modern practices of textual compilation and binding produced, augmented, and refracted knowledges of sexual activity; how, when early modern books 'rub up against' other books in the 'habitat' of the user-generated *Sammelbände*, 'the instability of sexual signification' that Traub examines (2010, 254) is made, remade, and passed down to us.

4. *Wax Impressions: British Library, 612.b.25.[4.]*

The British Library's copy of *The Life of H.H.* (BL 612.b.25.[4.]) is the only surviving witness that is currently individually bound, although it does appear to have previously existed as part of a *Sammelband*.[10] According to the British Library's online catalogue, this copy was formerly owned by the Anglo-Irish naturalist, physician, slaveowner and celebrity bibliophile, Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753). Figure 1 shows the title page of the British Library's copy, which bears Sloane's purchase code ('g 384'); reference to this purchase appears on the recto side of folio 185 in Sloane's library catalogue (Sloane ms 3972C vol 1), and following Amy Blakeway's analysis of the chronology of acquisition in this record, it seems likely that Sloane acquired his copy of *The Life* in about 1696 (2011, 9). It may have been Sloane or one of his assistants who manually reworked this copy's title to make the identity of its biographical subject, as well as his profession, more unequivocal: 'THE | LIFE | OF | H. H[ills] | [*Printer*]'. That said, the figure who, with pen in hand, added 'ills' and '*Printer*' to this title page may have been someone else, because there are other hands at work on this title page. For instance, running up the right-hand margin of the title page, and written in a different hand to the one that left the 'g. 384' code, we find the following statement: 'This sealed in the 3 tons tavern Ludgatt Hill for a Bottle of Claret'. The book's foredge has been trimmed – this may have happened in 1947, when BL 612.b.25.[4.] was rebound as a single volume in a British Museum binding – and this appears to have cut away more evidence of marginalia, perhaps the commenter's name; however, in lieu of an autograph we do have, on the top-right corner of the same page, a red wax seal featuring a personalised heraldic image, which has been impressed by a signet stamp, probably a ring (Figure 8).

[10] For instance, this volume's call number (BL 612.b.25.[4.]) indicates that it was once fourth in a tract volume. We are well aware of the nineteenth-century practice of breaking apart *Sammelbände* and individually rebinding their component parts (see Knight 2013), and this scenario probably helps to account for the current situation of BL 612.b.25.[4.].

Figure 8 – A red wax seal, impressed upon the upper righthand corner of the British Library's copy of *The Life of H.H.* (1688). From the British Library Collection: BL 612.b.25(4.), main title page (detail). Courtesy of the British Library

If, to quote Donald F. McKenzie, 'forms effect meaning' (1999, 13), what meanings are generated here by the presence of solidified red wax? Reading the wax impression alongside the accompanying manuscript note ('This sealed in the 3 tons tavern Ludgatt Hill for a Bottle of Claret') is suggestive of a deal being done over a book in a Ludgate tavern, in which a wax seal has been facetiously attached to a book in the contexts of a strong drink, but who 'sealed' BL 612.b.25.[4.], and why?

It may be the case that the figure behind the wax is the '*T.S.*' mentioned in *The Life*'s imprint; however, despite the fact that the personalised heraldic image imbedded within the red wax is still quite legible, I have yet to identify the agent who made this wax impression, whether that was '*T.S.*' or someone else. The design of the seal does indicate that its owner was a member of the landed gentry, and possibly above the rank of gentleman;[11] it is also possible that this figure had connections with the Stanleys of Lathom. The first and fourth quarters of the shield actually derive from the Lathom family's arms, and the crest, which shows a motif featuring an eagle with wings disclosed beneath what appears to be a swaddled baby, is again consistent with the Lordship of Lathom, which was inherited by the Stanleys in 1385 – subsequently Earls of Derby from 1485. On the basis of the design of the second and third quarters of the shield, which feature three diagonal stripes (or 'bends'), Andrew C.G. Gray has posited (in private correspondence) that its owner may be a member of the Staffordshire Stanley branch; however, he cautions that this was a very common design in the period, and without tinctures our heraldic image remains very difficult to identify.[12] Consequently, the identity of the individual behind this seal has remained

[11] The helmet (or 'helm') design is facing to the dexter (or right) side of the chief, with its visor closed, which indicates that the owner was at least at the rank of esquire (i.e., the eldest son of a knight or peer).

[12] In private correspondence, Gray, Image Librarian for the Heraldry Society and *Heraldry Archive* Editor, has posited that it may be the arms of the Mayvesyn (or Malveysin) family of Ridware in Staffordshire, which

frustratingly out of reach. Clearly, Hills had made enemies in high places – in this instance it may have been a figure who was somewhere in the social and genealogical orbit of the Stanleys of Lathom – but who exactly that was, and how '*T.S.*' got their hands on *The Prodigal* documents in order to reissue them, are issues that, for now, require further investigation.

Answering the 'why?' of this red wax seal is equally challenging, although it is a question that might help to shed a little more light on the 'who?' I have been unable to find examples of wax seals being attached to early modern printed books in this way. Typically, wax seals can be found on early modern letters, diplomatic documents, and even quire booklets, but this is usually in an administrative context. Early modern wax seals were conventionally affixed to documents as a means of securing them, although beyond this more practical function, pre-modern processes of sealing 'were highly meaningful social acts' (Whatley 2019, 1-2), serving as material emblems of closure, identification, and authentication – denoting, for example, that the contents of a document had been 'read and sanctioned' by the bearer of the seal (Daybell 2012, 107). If we were to read our 1688 example in the contexts of convention and precedent, then BL 612.b.25.[4.] may have been sealed to confirm the identification of '*H.H.*'. (The title-page insertion of 'ills' and '*Printer*' works, in a similar sense, to bring to the text's paratextual surface clearer signposts about Hills' identity and his professional status.) Additionally, the seal may have been affixed as a symbolic act of closure, an explanation that seems especially plausible when *The Life* is read within the contexts from which it first emerged.

Hills' conversion to Catholicism in the mid-1680s, and his subsequent work as official printer to James II's Catholic court, made him a target for Williamite supporters. Given its associations with James' polytheizing campaign on behalf of English Catholicism, Hills' Blackfriars printing house became a particular *foci* for anti-Catholic hostility. So much so that when news leaked that James II had fled for France on the evening of 11 December 1688, sparking anti-Catholic rioting across the City of London, Hills' '*Popish* Printing House' was set on fire and ultimately 'demolish'd', destroying his 'Presses, and many Reams of Paper and Books' (Anonymous 1688c). Hills' printing house had been subject to several coordinated attacks in the weeks that led up to its eventual destruction, including on 13 November 1688, when a 'Rabble' made up of '1000' apprentices, labourers, and disbanded soldiers 'broke [Hills'] Windowes' and 'threatened' his life (SP 44/97, 15). By this point, Hills had recognised that the game was up: he signed his last will and testament on 10 December 1688 (PROB 11/398/114, 44-45), the day after he was granted a travel pass (SP 44/338, 159), which enabled Hills to leave London for mainland Europe, where he joined James' exiled court in Saint-Omer in the Pas-de-Calais region of northern France; within the year he would be dead. Presuming that *The Life* was published at around the time that William of Orange landed in southwest England on 5 November 1688, one scenario is that it was issued as part of a broader campaign to drum up support for attacks on the infrastructures of James II's Catholic court, which in this instance involved smearing the name of James' royal printer by raising the ghosts of an old sexual scandal '*betwixt Him and the Taylors Wife in Black-friars*'. And if one of the significations of pre-modern sealing was closure, then the sealing of BL 612.b.25.[4.] could indicate that this smear campaign had worked, that James' printer, '*Henry Hills*', was, to quote from one contemporary satirical tract, finally '*out of the way*' (Anonymous 1689, broadside).

featured *Gules three bendlets Argent*, or Red with three Silver diagonal stripes. We know that an heiress of the Mayvesyns – Elizabeth (née Cawarden, b. 1577) – married a Stanley of Pipe Ridware, and so as Gray suggests, the owner of this seal may be a member of this Staffordshire Stanley branch. My thanks to Gray for his kind assistance in reading and understanding this seal.

The '3 tons tavern Ludgatt Hill' was apparently the perfect venue to hatch a covert scheme and to celebrate its success over a glass of claret. In his anti-Whig satire, *Familiar and Courtly Letters* (1701), Thomas Brown (1663-1704) records that '*mean*' and '*obscure*' Whig propagandists were known to 'drink a Glass of Wine' at the '*Three Tuns* upon *Ludgate-Hill*' (Brown, 133). In 1704, the former secret agent, imposter, and anti-Jacobite conspirator, William Fuller (1670-1733), claimed to have 'had several meetings … at the *Three-Tuns* on *Ludgate-hill*', accompanied, he tells us, by a 'Cabal' of Whiggish conspirators (22). This reputation was also acknowledged by the Presbyterian minister, Benjamin Bennet (c. 1674-1726), who complained that when 'a Company of Lords and Gentlemen' gathered to honour 'the Memory of King William [III]' at 'the *Three Tuns*' in 1717, their choice of location immediately brought about talk of an imminent 'Plot' in the popular press (1717, 395). Bennet's point was to dispel such aspersions as fake news, but with the title page to the British Library's copy of *The Life* standing in as a case in point, it's possible that the Three Tuns' dodgy reputation as a place of conspiratorial intrigue amongst Whig factions and anti-Jacobite plotters was well earned.

As an outlier in a culture where the sealing of cheaply-made printed books doesn't seem to have been the norm, and as a little material cue that has the potential to send us down a conspiratorial rabbit hole, our red wax seal is a queer little thing. For a start, the title page of BL 612.b.25.[4.] has the effect of making us think about *The Life* in terms of material stuff that might otherwise seem extraneous to it. These might include the traces of its previous *Sammelband* organisation, but it also extends out to include the 'impressing' technology of a signet stamp (Newman 2019, 5), a block of red sealing-wax ready to be softened by heat, and 'a Bottle of Claret' ready to be imbibed. Quite unexpectedly, the material traces impressed into the title page of BL 612.b.25.[4.] tip us over into a world of wax and booze and Ludgate taverns with dubious reputations, and in doing so this copy of *The Life* helps to clarify what Jason Scott-Warren means when he talks of the early modern book's 'situatedness' as 'an object among other objects' (2019, 251). And situated, too, as an object of a particular time and a particular place, which has been mediated by particular agents who had particular political agendas in mind. Indeed, the tendency to assume that *The Prodigal* was reproduced in 1688 'Without comment or amplification' (Lynch 2007, 305) comes unstuck when we allow wax to enter into the picture. "[W]ax can hold a shape', but as Lynn Maxwell reminds us, it can 'also be softened and made malleable, melted and re-formed' (2019, 45); malleability is a key property of wax as an 'impressible' technology since 'wax can always melt' (2016, 455). (If we were to put a flame to our red wax seal then it might still yield itself to new material configurations and shapes. All that's required is a bit of heat, and our motif of an eagle and a swaddled baby might well be effaced and supplanted by a different impression). Wax introduces a semantics of malleability, and therefore of provisionality, and this provides a useful context as we approach and attempt to interpret Hills' *Prodigal Returned* and its present situation in *The Life of H.H.*

Even some of the most basic facts of the case melt away when we apply enough contextual heat. Smith, for example, calls Hills' 'autobiographical work' '*The Prodigal Returned*' because that is the title given to it when those '*Original*' documents were reprinted as *The Life* in 1688; yet in 1660, the anonymous author of an anti-Baptist tract would give Hills' 'autobiographical work' a slightly different title: '*The Prodigal son returning to his Fathers house*' (Anonymous 1660, broadside). The different title formulations may seem trivial, but the words '*Returned*' and '*returning*' do carry with them distinct connotations, with the former suggesting a completed act, while the latter suggests a movement that is incomplete, and it has a here-and-now quality to it. The present participle '*returning*' is actually more appropriate as a way of framing the first-person documents reproduced in *The Life,* since Hills' self-construction is marked by

hesitancy, and 'The PRODIGAL', at least as it survives to us, reads as if it is uncertain of its outcome. For instance, Hills tries to apply the Prodigal Son parable (Luke 15:11-32), with its departure-and-return structure, to his own situation as a prisoner in the Fleet, but this analogy comes unstuck. Unlike the Prodigal Son of the parable, who, having fallen into self-inflicted destitution, is welcomed back into his father's house, Hills ends his 'PRODIGAL Returned' as an outcast, 'having not as yet been entertained again' by members of Kiffen's Particular Baptist congregation (Anonymous 1688b, 39). Kiffen and King's prelims seem to have been designed to ease Hills' return to the Particular Baptist community, but Hills ends his 'PRODIGAL Returned' in an anguished state of 'longing', still waiting 'to re-injoy … fellowship and communion with the Saints' (40). The open-endedness implied by the word '*returning*' is therefore useful because it suggests that whatever *The Prodigal* was, it may not have been designed to be read as fixed and finalised, but rather as evidence of a more malleable and provisional self that was still in the process of taking on a new form.

The provisional nature of Hills' spiritual experiences finds itself replicated at a material level, since changes were made to the 1684 broadside, *A View*, when it was re-formed to become the conclusion to *The Life*. So, 'he writ his *Prodigal Return'd*' in the broadside of 1684 becomes 'he writ this Book the *Prodigal Return'd*' in *The Life*'s version of 1688 (49), the broadside pointing to the existence of an original outside of itself, while the reprint points to the text readers have already encountered while reading *The Life* compilation. Interpolated passages not included in the 1684 broadside include the suggestion that in 1659 Hills had an unnamed royalist printer taken into custody for printing material in support of Charles II's restoration, and it quotes him as 'saying, *What Print in Right of the King, sure we have had King enough already*' (52). *The Life* has also integrated a new conclusion into the document of *A View*, stating that the anonymous '*Publisher*' – presumably the '*T.S.*' of the text's imprint – 'will prove to *H.H*'s. face' that the accusations the work presents against him are true, but only 'if [Hills] hath the confidence to deny any of them' (54). These final interpolated words goad Hills into a face-to-face encounter, suggesting that this is an on-going story, one that might take us off the page, out of the book, and into a waxy world that's quite apart from the one that we think we should be getting when we read *The Prodigal Returned* (or '*returning*').

5. *Conclusions: Proteus and the She-Bear*

What, then, are we reading when we say we are reading *The Prodigal Returned*? Open the Bodleian's Arch. H d.40 – a nineteenth-century 'proposed reprint' that contains within it fragments torn from a 1688 copy of *The Life* – and the answer is that it's a bibliographical object made up of multiple textual parts cut from pre-existing sources; turn to the manuscript notes on the proposed title page, and the answer might really be that it is an object that we have not yet 'met with'. The two *Sammelbände* I discussed have introduced other answers: it is a text that needs to be read in relation to others rather than in isolation; it is a text that asks us to conceptualize Hills' 'Ranter sexuality' in relational terms and on a queerer kind of continuum. BL 612.b.25. [4.] reminds us that our access to the documents of *The Prodigal* are shaped by their publication contexts in 1688 rather than 1650-1651, and that Hills' 'puritanical emanation' might be better understood as a set of mobile texts that were materially remixed and remodelled, and all within peopled environments that appear to have been governed by embodied interactions with material objects, from books to signet stamps and through to wax.

To put all this another way, that term 'embedded' just won't do, because it conjures the image of the printed book as a fixed, monolithic mass; as a case study, *The Life* calls on us to

reach for other images, for other metaphors, which might together resist the 'neatening and straightening' (2024, 152) that Malcolm Noble and Sarah Pyke associate with the discipline of bibliography. Wax – a material that 'is queer insofar as it … refuses to maintain one legible shape' (Maxwell 2019, 25-26) – is one, but *The Life* does offer others. In its concluding document, '*A View*', Hills is described as 'a very *Proteus*' (54), an analogy that links his turncoatism to the Greek 'god of shapes' (Marlowe 2013, 1, 4, 412), who transmuted himself into a strange variety of appearances to avoid capture, and a figure whose name finds its etymological root in the phrase 'the first', meaning the beginning, the ever-recurring start of something new. Versatile, mutable, and capable of assuming many forms: what applies to Greek gods of the sea and early modern printers can just as easily apply to the books that seek to represent them. After all, the multiform Proteus – whose presence in early modern literatures signals 'dissolved' boundaries between sex and gender (Knowles 2003, 680), and 'queer' forms of identity making (Starks 2020, 272) – does resonate with the ways in which Hills' 'Ranter sexuality' has been mediated and remediated by the material forms that have transmitted it, processes that have produced multiplicity and variability, as well as lapses and gaps.

If Proteus won't do, we can look for metaphors outside of *The Life*, including those that can be found in an anonymous secret history narrative of 1733, ***Revolution Politicks***, in which Hills' power of reinvention is linked not to the artfully ambiguous Proteus, but to the Classical topos of the she-bear, whose ferocious sexual appetites were thought to make her give birth to a formless, eyeless, hairless lump of flesh, which she would then have to lick into the shape of a cub by way of her own bodily fluids: '*Henry Hills* … had a Way (as they vulgarly call it) by licking himself whole again' (Anonymous 1733, 37). Of course, this is hardly a neutral representation, but it remains a wonderful image, since it queers an already queer notion of generation: to quote Michael Bristol, the she-bear 'literally makes babies … without the cooperation of or the assistance of an inseminating male', and she therefore embodies an 'inversion of the normal birth process' (1991, 160). From the perspective of the pre-modern books I have been reading, Hills' status as a self-licking she-bear offers another metaphor for us to think about books, bodies, and lives that don't enter into the world fully formed, but are licked and re-licked into a variety of shapes across time and space. In place of the 'heteronormative' reproductive metaphors that associated printing with parenting (Maguire and Smith 2019, 296), and that located print's ideality within the confines of patrilineal procreation, the she-bear guides us towards nonconforming books within books, copies within copies, and texts that take their shape from existing matter, and all the while, *The Life*'s promised '*Original*' emerges as the least interesting thing we could look for.

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Contributors

Tom Clayton is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, where he teaches courses on Milton, poetry and the literature of the early modern and Restoration periods. His research concerns the intersections of book history, political philosophy and poetics. He is working on a book about the use of the theological concept of adiaphora, or 'things indifferent', in the formations of religious toleration before liberalism, titled *The Reformation of Indifference: Tolerance and Its Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century Literature*.

Michael Durrant is a Lecturer in Book History at Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. He has written on early modern book use and religious devotion, printed waste, and the creative functions of early modern printed paratexts, including printers' devices.

Consuelo Gómez is a Lecturer in the Department of Art History at the National University for Distance Education (UNED). Her research has focused on the relationship between the city, the art and the power elites in the Hispanic Monarchy in the early modern period. She has studied the communicative dimension of festivities and spectacles, as well as their capacity to develop visual and textual discourses based on the relationships established between the art and technical thought among the Spanish-Italian elites. She is currently co-director of the project E-SENS. Power and Cultural Representations: Sensory Scenarios and Circulation of Objects among Hispanic Elites (sixteenth-seventeenth centuries).

Taylor Hare is a Postdoctoral Fellow in English at Baylor University with research interests in early modern literature, disability studies, book history, and the digital humanities. His writing on the history of reading by touch can also be found in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* and *Inscription: The Journal of Material Text*.

Justin Kuhn is an Independent Scholar who recently taught at St. Andrews University in North Carolina. In Fall 2025, he will take on a new role as Assistant Professor of English at Missouri Southern State University. He is completing a monograph, tentatively titled *Exclusionary Republicanism: Drama and Politics*

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in the 1650s, that examines how publishers and editors repurposed early modern plays to help define the meaning and limits of citizenship during England's transition from monarchy to representative self-rule following the execution of King Charles I. His articles on the political significance of printing Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton have been published or are forthcoming in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, *English Literary Renaissance*, and other venues.

Zachary Lesser is Edward W. Kane Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He recently published *Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrapes: Shakespeare in 1619, Bibliography in the Longue Durée* (Penn Press, 2021). He is a general editor of The Arden Shakespeare, for which he is currently editing *Macbeth*. He is the co-creator of two online resources for studying early English printed drama, *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks* <deepplaybooks.org> and the *Shakespeare Census* <shakespearecensus.org>.

Jessica C. Linker is an Assistant Professor of History and Co-Director of Huskiana Press, an experiential letterpress studio, at Northeastern University, Boston. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) and has been SHARP's liaison to the American Historical Association for over a decade. Her scholarly work has been supported by a variety of institutions, including the Library Company of Philadelphia, the American Antiquarian Society and the National Endowment for the Humanities, among others. She is currently completing a book on women in early American science.

Margaret C. Maurer is the Curriculum Design Specialist for the Sexual Violence Prevention Project at Dartmouth College. She received a PhD in English and Comparative Literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, specializing in early modern book history and the history of science and technology. Previously a fellow at the Consortium for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine (2022-2023) and at the Science History Institute's Beckman Center (2023), She has written on alchemy, papermaking, and recipe knowledge in the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, the *Early Modern Studies Journal* and *The Recipes Project*.

Kate Ozment is Digital Scholarship Team Lead at Kelvin Smith Library, Case Western Reserve University. She co-edits the *Women in Book History Bibliography* and contributes to the *Women's Print History Project.* Her work focuses on women's Anglophone print history, bibliography, and book collecting and includes *The Hroswitha Club and the Impact of Women Book Collectors* (Cambridge Elements, 2023) and journal articles in *Textual Cultures, Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *Huntington Library Quarterly.* She is currently working on a network analysis of eighteenth-century women publishers in London.

Emma Smith is Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Hertford College, Oxford. Her work on the First Folio has opened up questions about the invention of rare books in the later eighteenth century in the context of the economics of slavery. Her emerging project on 'Imperial bibliographies' connects these material legacies to the development of bibliography as a racial science in the Victorian period and beyond.

Sarah J. Sprouse is an Assistant Professor of English at West Texas A&M University. Her scholarship focuses on transmission of ideas and literature in the medieval and early modern British Isles. Her current book project explores how the idea of a medieval Welsh past took shape in the early modern period. She has published on Middle English romance, Gerald of Wales, and

codicology. Recent publications have appeared in journals such as *Arthuriana* and *Manuscript Studies*. Her research has been supported by the Medieval Academy of America, the Huntington Library and Trinity College Dublin.

Sarah Banschbach Valles is a literature scholar residing in Lubbock, Texas. Her research focuses on early modern Britain and includes women's writing, religious studies, and cultures of the book. She is the co-director of the *Dalhousie Manuscripts Project*, a digital edition of two seventeenth-century verse miscellanies. Her recent work appears in *Recognizing Our Religious Allegiances in Early Modern Literary Scholarship* (Baylor 2025).

Breanne Weber is an Assistant Professor of English at James Madison University. Her research interests include early modern literature and culture, book history and arts, and the environmental and digital humanities. Her co-edited volume, *Playbook Wills, 1529-1690,* is forthcoming with Manchester University Press, with a digital expansion of the project to follow. Her work also appears in public-facing venues like *The Recipes Project* and *Contingent Magazine*. She is writing a monograph on the materiality of inscriptive metaphors and their impact upon conceptions of the human body, the book, and the environment in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature.

Alice Wickenden is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Cambridge. Her current project, 'The Material and Ethical Afterlives of Named Collections', explores the complicated histories behind the collection of early modern rare book material and thinks about how provenance studies might shape ethical research in the future. She has previously worked at the British Library on an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership. A book on the founding collection of the British Library, *Hans Sloane's Library Collection and the Production of Knowledge*, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

Georgina Wilson is the Postdoctoral Research Associate on a project called 'Print Matters' at the University of York. She is broadly interested in the relationship between literary criticism and the materiality of its objects of study, and has published in *Criticism, The Oxford Handbook to the History of the Book in Early Modern England*, and *Inscription: The Journal of Material Text*. Her book, *Paper and the Making of Early Modern Literature*, is forthcoming in September 2025 with University of Pennsylvania Press.

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