ACTS OF IMAGINATION:
CURATING THE EARLY ELIZABETHAN REPERTORIES, 1582–1594

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“Acts of Imagination” examines playing companies as the locus for the production of Renaissance drama. To date, narratives of Elizabethan theatre history tend to be playwright- and Shakespeare-centered; in response, I explore the companies operating during the under-examined dozen years of theatre before William Shakespeare entered the marketplace. The project thus takes as its organizing principle that of the period—the companies—rather than those categories privileged thereafter—authors and directors. Using the pioneering work of Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean as a point of departure, I expose how the repertory system galvanized innovation in playing techniques, playhouse design, and playtext production. Each chapter focuses on one season and one of four companies to expose the interconnections between thematic concerns and staging techniques that set a given company apart, as well as underscore the fact that it was repetition, revision, and collaboration as much as novelty that produced financial success in this theatrical marketplace. Attending to the collective process that was the Elizabethan theatre industry, I show the ways in which dramaturgical innovation and literary production were mutually constitutive drivers, as well as how this industry became the engine from which an oeuvre like Shakespeare's and the cult of authorship evolved. By sketching the contours of the Elizabethan theatre’s evolution, I widen our vantage of this dramatic landscape by providing unexamined, anonymous, and even “lost” plays cultural specificity and repertorial context.
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If we rummage among these fragments we shall, at any rate, leave the highroad and perhaps hear some roar of laughter from a tavern door, where poets are drinking; or meet humble people going about their milking and their love-making without a thought that this is the great Elizabethan age, or that Shakespeare is at this moment strolling down the Strand and might tell one, if one plucked him by the sleeve, to whom he wrote the sonnets, and what he meant by Hamlet.

— Virginia Woolf

Like Lydgate before his King, I seek to broaden the lesson: beware of the many storied building, to be sure, but beware also of the desire for an Author—for the building will often be erected for him.

— Scott McMillin

What was the character of the early modern English playing company? Company-centered scholarship offers a range of labels, from contemporaneous ascriptions such as “players,” “servants,” “men,” and “troupes” indicated on title pages and licensing documents, to contemporary economic formations such as “actor-collectives,” “syndicates,” “teams,” and “weak fellowships.” In legal terms, playing companies were early adopters of the joint-stock

For their comments and suggestions on portions of this introduction, I wish to acknowledge Andy Kesson, Helen Hull, and the members of the “Before Shakespeare: The Drama of the 1580s” seminar held at the 2016 annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America in New Orleans, Louisiana. Some of what I have written here on genre and representativeness will be appearing in a brief essay, “Super Troupers; or, Supplemented Playing before 1594” in the forthcoming Shakespeare Studies 44 (September 2016).

model: a cooperative made up of shares purchased and owned by stakeholders. In the
Elizabethan period, those stakeholders were players and playwrights. Joint-stock companies like
the Levant Company, a merger of Italian and Turkish merchants in the early 1580s intended to
regulate trade with the Ottoman Empire, and later the famous East India (1600) and Virginia
(1606) companies were a part of what Joan Thirsk has called the Age of Projects: a period of
new, practical financial schemes driven by “industry and ingenuity” and motivated “to make
money, to employ the poor, or to explore the far corners of the earth.” As an industry, playing
was subject to licensing by the Master of the Revels office, as well as to the regulation of its
product (playtexts) and its distribution (playhouses) just like any other guild, project, or financial
product of the period. When examining the early modern English playing company, it is
therefore culturally and historically important to approach them as fundamentally economic
entities.

This introduction outlines the methodological aims and implications of this project
concerning Elizabethan playing companies and their repertories. First, I define the key terms of
this study: repertory, repertoire, and house style. Second, I sketch the contours of Repertory
Studies in order to offer a rationale for de-prioritizing author- and canon-centered approaches to
this period. Of particular import is the need to rethink claims about theatre’s representativeness
of larger cultural concerns. Third, borrowing from the fields of Art History and Museum Studies,
I argue that curation provides a useful theoretical framework for approaching sets of arranged art
objects. If repertory was the system by which individual plays were selected and presented, then

Ashgate, 2008), 77; and Bart van Es, Shakespeare in Company (New York, NY: Oxford
University Press, 2013), 106, respectively.
4 Joan Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early
scholars of curation can provide the collectivist lexicon of exhibition and arrangement needed to read these texts in sets—to read, as it were, in repertory. Fourth, having demonstrated the richness of house styles as an organizing principle, I explicate the scope of the chapters to follow.

1.1 THEATRICAL ENDEAVORS

Elizabethan troupes employed the repertory system in order to distribute and vary, which is to say curate, their plays. To understand the influence of this system on the composition of plays, the innovation in stage technology, and as a strategy for mitigating financial risk, it is useful to think of the repertory system of the Elizabethan period as twofold. Repertory refers to the day-to-day rotation of plays. Individual plays were rarely performed twice in the same week, and available records show no signs of organization, regularity, or pre-determined scheduling. The rotation did help to mitigate intermittent and abrupt playhouses closures, which were frequent due to plague outbreaks and Puritan protests. Repertory also refers to the set of plays purchased, revived, commissioned, and collected by a company over time. Repertoire, on the other hand, refers to the skills of individual actors, such as being able to play an instrument, fight, dance, and other forms of kinetic intelligence. Evelyn Tribble frames actors’ skills within a framework of “cognitive ecology” wherein “skilled practices are inseparable from expert viewing...built through the reciprocal and recursive relationships among skill-building, display, competition, and evaluation.”

Therefore, the repertoire of a company’s personnel would have, by its gradual accretion, inflected popular preferences for particular thematic topics, as well as the props, architectural features, and special effects available. This terminological distinction is crucial in order to mark the aesthetic choices made by individuals (the players) as opposed to financial

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choices made as a collective (the troupe). Companies used the repertory system to construct diverse portfolios of dramatic properties in order to manage the risks of innovation—in topic and in staging—against the safety of adapting, revising, and reviving old playtexts.

Aside from the repertory system in which they worked, there were several other ways in which the Elizabethan playing companies were distinctive from those that would follow. First, their plays were marked, literally and figuratively, by company affiliation and the writing teams that produced them. The title pages of the several printings of William Shakespeare’s early play, *Titus Andronicus*, provide a useful example. The first printing in 1594 includes four playing companies; the play was good enough to have been performed not only “sundry times,” but also by several companies up to that point. Multiple companies listed on printed title pages should be understood as a marker of financial success and experiential value. The 1600 edition adds a fifth company to its Elizabethan playing history, while the 1611 printing elides that history in order to prioritize a single, Jacobean company. (Shakespeare’s name was not associated with the print life of this play until the 1623 folio.) Second, the companies operated in a period in which they were understood as artistic and financial equals to a company patroned by the monarch, the Queen’s Men, for the first time since monarchs began to patronize companies in the fifteenth century. Third, the demand of this theatrical marketplace sustained five major and a number of minor playing troupes, each maintaining between approximately 14 to 20 players. Thus, there were simply more playing companies operating than at any other time before or at any other time after this period up until the late-eighteenth century. Fourth, rather than being attached to specific venues, the companies rented inn-yards, playhouses, and amphitheaters (often simultaneously)
while in London, as well as guildhalls and other civic spaces while on tour. Finally, in terms of content, their success was predicated on duplication, repetition, cooperation, serials, sequels, and adaptations rather than overt shows of thematic, topical, or generic novelty.

FIGURE 1.1: The 1594, 1600, and 1611 quarto title pages for Titus Andronicus.

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These features of playing—especially the dependence on cooperation rather than competition, on duplication rather than novelty, on several venues rather than a single space—complicate our assumptions about the Elizabethans for whom these plays were devised. In order to “habituate audiences to the routines of regular attendance” as Paul Menzer describes it, companies developed a range of thematic and dramaturgical strategies. One of the primary unspoken assumptions about Elizabethan playing companies is that their manners of presentation, the ways in which they produced theatrical experience, were dictated by a collective economic agenda. It would seem to follow that this economic agenda took precedence over an aesthetic one. I would argue that the cultural prioritizing of imitatio—the Humanist principle privileging the selection and thoughtful replication of pre-existing rhetorical models—and the restrictions placed on the content of plays (it was the playtexts, not the productions, that were censored by the Master of the Revels office) actually informed and even contributed to the development of distinctive aesthetic agendas among the companies. In other words, the economic goals of the Elizabethan company were not necessarily separate from, but may actually have coincided with, artistic goals. Foremost of those goals was to ferret out what kind of theatrical experience playgoers were willing to pay for regularly.

While Alfred Harbage’s two monographs are discredited today, *Shakespeare’s Audience* (1941) and *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (1952) foreground some of the essential questions about who were the playgoers these companies envisioned. He was the first to assemble a reference index of all the plays thought to have been performed and attach them to

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playing companies as well as possible authors. (John Tucker Murray was the first to formally organize study around companies thirty years prior in *English Dramatic Companies, 1558–1642.*))

Cobbling together a guess about the social classes represented in the early modern audience, Harbage argued that “the theatre was a democratic institution in an intensely undemocratic age,” where

> [i]n the theatres, the rights and privileges of class melted before the magical process of dropping pennies in a box. Distinctions in admission prices and locations were crude compared with finer distinctions of class; thus, in the pit, the cobbler could look at the carman and realize that he was associating with riffraff.\(^9\)

Harbage’s ideas about the materiality of distinction and that different playing traditions might target specific classes of people underpin a two-model theory of theatrical industry reinforced by E.K. Chambers, W.W. Greg, and Andrew Gurr: public theatre that catered to a motley crew of everymen, and private, indoor theatre that was predicated upon reinforcing social distinctions. While Harbage’s dual stress on both the homogeneity and the inherent democracy of playhouses essentialized the early modern playgoer, I believe his post-World War II investment in “the men and not their hedges”—in the audiences these plays imagined rather than how class positions possibly dictated reception—was in the right place.\(^10\) In her essay, “These Strange Elizabethans,” Virginia Woolf echoes this sentiment that the fragmentary nature of these plays tells us

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\(^9\) Martin Wiggins is in the process of updating Harbage’s *Annals of English Drama* 975–1700; his multi-volume *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012–18) has been published in part starting in 2012 and while by this writing all the volumes have yet to be completed, it is already making a major impact in the scholarship surrounding non-canonical Elizabethan drama.


\(^11\) Harbage, *Shakespeare’s Audiences*, 162.
something about the “humble people going about their milking and their love-making,” and how very different their habits of playgoing and reception were from our own.

While very little primary evidence of playgoers’ responses to theatre of the Elizabethan period survives, we cannot take for granted the ways in which real lives inflected these plays. In December of 1579, there was an inquest into a drowning just outside of Stratford-Upon-Avon (Shakespeare’s home town) of a girl named Katherine Hamlett; Shakespeare would have been 15. In 1587, a play called *Friar Francis* was on tour; it became quite famous when in 1590 a woman in the audience, having murdered her husband some years earlier, was moved to confess her crime in seeing the same story enacted in the play, not unlike Hamlet’s mousetrap. Both *A Warning for Fair Women* (1590) and Thomas Heywood’s *Apology for Actors* (1612) describe the “unexpected out-cry” of the murderess. In 1603, Brian Annesley’s eldest daughter tried to have her father declared insane and was prevented by the loving care of Annesley’s youngest daughter, Cordell; it is an eerie echo of *King Lear*, which was performed less than three years later. These anecdotes powerfully suggest that companies were attuned to the ways in which playgoers could be affected by the performance event. Furthermore, they experimented with different dramaturgical strategies in order to cultivate certain conditions and experiences. Company house styles, the toolkit of preferred manners of presentation that evolved over time from the practice of playing, are the primary concern of this dissertation.

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13 *Lost Plays Database*, eds. Roslyn L. Knutson and David McInnis (Melbourne, AU: University of Melbourne, 2009), s. v. “Friar Francis.”
I argue that the early Elizabethan playing companies developed house styles that distinguished themselves from one another in the rapidly expanding theatrical marketplace of 1580s and early 1590s England. The repertory system in which they worked crucially provided the hermeneutic by which house styles were delineated. House style is a bit of a misnomer since playing companies were not attached to any particular playhouse. For this reason, critics have rightly avoided using the term until Scott McMillin reintroduced it as a means of delineating the work of “companies as the organizing units of dramatic production.”16 In 2001, he stated that critics are now “in position to build new histories of Elizabethan drama,” and yet the topic has yet to be directly or fully addressed.17 For example, in her excellent study, *The Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare’s London*, Siobhan Keenan embeds the question of house styles in disparate sections. First, she states that in terms of adult companies “there were limits to how distinctive the plays written for any individual company might be” because “plays passed between companies as well as spaces.”18 Much later, under a sub-section speculating on audience tastes, she argues that “the evidence for any great differentiation between the playing repertories at the main playhouses is slim” as “most of the evidence points towards the development of similar company repertories, perhaps because the acting troupes were competing for the same, socially diverse audiences.”19 While on the surface she has the right of it, that plays moved around between companies with great frequency, both claims are evidence of the widespread primacy of venue and genre as distinctive markers of a house style over other possible aspects of

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17 McMillin, “Headnote,” 111–2. McMillin may have very likely made this attempt himself had he not passed away from cancer in the intervening years.
the play event. The central goal of this project is to demonstrate that not only did the companies develop house styles, but that they did so by developing distinctive dramaturgical strategies rather than relying solely on narratological or generic novelty as a means to attract audiences and respond to their cultural moment. By extension, at stake in what I call a dramaturgically-sympathetic reading of Elizabethan theater is not only how we historically situate artistic collectives and the assumptions we make about the collective decision-making process as it pertains to theatrical production, but also the relationship between economic constraint and cultural production.

1.2 THE COMPANIES AND THE CANON

Between 1582 and 1594, there were over a hundred different licensed itinerant entertainers active in England, according to the Records of Early English Drama. While 51 of those were theatrical troupes, five came to dominate the boards: the Lord Strange’s Men, the Queen’s Men, the Lord Admiral’s Players, the Lord Pembroke’s Players, and the Lord Sussex’s Men. Each chapter of this project deals with between 10 and 16 playtexts (42 all told) to provide a middle-

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20 It may be useful to dissociate house style from playhouse by thinking in more atmosphering terms. As Andy Kesson’s observes, consider that frequently uttered by ushers and stage managers is the question “What’s the house like tonight?”—which is to ask, how many people are in the room watching us? (Or, rather, are the apprentices at risk of rioting?) Andy Kesson, “Re: Being an 80s Fan,” email to the author, March 30, 2016.
22 As you will note, there is no chapter regarding Sussex’s in this dissertation. Smallest of the five major companies, the archival record of its movements is the most elusive and its scholarship practically nonexistent. It is also the only company of the five for which a biography does not yet exist. Upon completion of this project, I plan to spend the next year researching the company and developing entries for nine of its 17 known non-extant plays for the Lost Plays Database. Ideally this will be a first foray into an article or chapter for the monograph version of this dissertation. I have included them in Appendix A for this reason.
distanced snapshot of the recurring topical themes and dramaturgical patterns of each of these companies during this dynamic period. This theatre industry was structured by two exceptional events: the incorporation of the new, elite playing company, the Queen’s Men, and a particularly virulent onset of plague that required an extended period of theatre closures. On 10 March 1582/3, the order was given to form Queen’s by soliciting the top players of the time. The fact that the Queen’s troupe was made up of already existing personnel who excelled in the repertory system necessarily means that we need to think of the troupe in relation to the companies their formation also caused to be restructured; it necessarily caused the other companies to reorganize, hire new actors, and rethink what plays to commission, revise, or remount. In fact, the first extant play written new for the public adult companies, *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, enters the repertory in this same year. The other exceptional event, a significant plague outbreak in

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23 The term “middle-distance reading” comes out of work following Franco Moretti’s “distant reading” practices from the innovative *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (New York, NY: Verso, 2005). Elyse Vigiletti, in “Reading the Middle: US Women Novelists and Print Culture, 1930–1960” (Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015), has developed a hybrid reading practice in order to consider American middlebrow writing broadly as a network of cooperation while also highlighting specific texts that are particularly useful for understanding how the middlebrow works on a local, content level. She argues that, “if broad, quantitative analyses of corpora too large to physically read constitutes the Franco Moretti-inspired ‘distant readings’ common in digital humanities scholarship, and ‘close reading’ commonly refers to extensive analysis of a single text, then my approach falls somewhere in the middle: ‘middle-distance reading’” (11). I employ this strategy as a way of structuring my chapters, reading a repertory of plays owned by a company but also close-reading individual texts as emblematic of larger trends. For other examples of the technique, see Tanya E. Clement, “‘A Thing Not Beginning and Not Ending’: Using Digital Tools to Distant-Read Gertrude Stein’s *The Making of Americans,*” *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 23, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 361–81; and Elyse Vigiletti, “Edna Ferber and the Problems of the Middlebrow,” *Studies in the Novel* 48, no. 1 (2016): 65–85.


25 For historical perspective, William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway were married at Temple Grafton on 29 November 1582. The order to found the Queen’s Men troupe was made four months later on 10 March 1583.
1593/4, shut down London venues but not all theatrical activity. The companies remained on tour beyond their usual summer months in the provinces and continued to perform their repertories. It is worth noting, too, that regional touring by playing companies (as well as a range of other entertainers such as trumpeters and bearwards) long pre-dated that of London-specific playing.

Other events of 1593/4 make it a significant place to bookend a cross-sectional study of playing companies. Once the City playhouses did reopen, Queen’s failed to regain any market-share they had held in the City and instead focused on regional touring for the rest of their career. After the mysterious death of their patron, Fernando Stanley, in 1583, Strange’s failed to secure a new license from his heir and became instead the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. One notable addition to their sharers was Shakespeare. Sussex’s likewise failed to renew their license, and Pembroke’s fell out of Court favor and so also limited their city residence. The repertory holdings of Admiral’s altered dramatically with a heavy increase in the purchasing of new stock. They started to appear in records as “Men” rather than “Players” or “Servants,” as if moving out of some litigious infancy. In short, between 1582 and 1594 there were a great number of companies operating, whose competition produced, nuanced, and regularized the habits of amphitheater playing and playwriting—the industry into which Shakespeare would enter, train, and come to influence. The aim of this section, therefore, is to provide a review of early modern English playing company scholarship in order to demonstrate the ways in which the study of repertories in and of themselves rather than playwrights, personnel, or playhouses realigns the dramatic canon and re-enlivens anonymous, lost, and otherwise noncanonical playtexts swallowed in the orbit of Planet Shakespeare.
1.2.1 Repertory Studies

The study of playing companies extends back to the inception of Shakespeare Studies with the bibliographers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; G.E. Bentley, F.S. Boas, E.K. Chambers, T. Gregory Foster, W.W. Greg, R.B. McKerrow, and A.W. Pollard considered themselves inheritors of Edmond Malone’s archival agenda. It was not until the late 1970s that analyses focused on individual playing companies began to emerge. The first four monographs on the topic concerned the boy companies: Michael Shapiro’s *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare’s Time and Their Plays* (1977), W. Reavley Gair’s *The Children of Paul’s: The Story of a Theatre Company, 1553–1608* (1982), Linda Austern’s *Music in English Children’s Drama of the Later Renaissance* (1992), and Mary Bly’s *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (2000), which focuses on the Children of the King’s Revels. Each defines the lineaments of their respective company in two ways: in relation to the adult companies as a collective whole, and in relation to other individual boy companies. In the adult company biographies that would follow, little concern is expressed over the boy companies as major economic competitors. The boy and adult companies have been understood as operating in different economic spheres rather than as two options in a vast landscape of entertainments from which consumers could choose.

These early studies stress what can be illuminated when critics approach the companies as economic entities with theatrical experience as their primary product. Like a piece of sheet music, a playtext includes the basic instructions for performance, offering space for interpretation. Unlike a poem, it is not the thing itself; playtexts and other documents of performance are vestiges of an irrecoverable experience—stars on the edge of a black hole that are the only evidence that something once happened there. As a sub-genre, the boy company
biographers focus on describing the material, dramaturgical features that would have filled the interpretive spaces of their playtexts. For example, Gair identifies four aspects at the heart of the Children of Paul’s house style: portrait props, the prodigal son theme, complex eight-part songs and casting requirements (including doubling), and lyrics that serve the action of the plot rather than act as set-pieces. Austern’s work is often forgotten by Theatre Historians, perhaps because she comes out of Music History and performance rather than literary criticism. She focuses on the music of the three boy companies (the Children of the Chapel, the Children of Paul’s, and the Children of the King’s Revels) rather than on one; she is able to differentiate between what were common practices shared amongst them and what were distinctive to each. In her survey of stage directions, song lyrics and titles, musical performances, and discussions of music within this combined repertory, she uncovers three significant differences between boy and adult company repertories: boy plays frequently called for multiple musicians to be integrated into the action, required a greater variety of musical instruments and musical styles during the Elizabethan period than later, and routinely include pre- and inter-act music.26 Austern’s study makes the strong suggestion that boy companies had somewhat distinguishable soundscapes, and that music played a significant part as a dramaturgically distinctive feature of company house styles. The scope of this dissertation, which compares several companies within a discrete historical window, follows her innovative example.

It also follows Shapiro and Bly’s tempering of empirical study of a variety of extant records about their respective companies with a consideration of thematic trends that recur throughout their repertories. Shapiro argues the economic and aesthetic development of the early

modern English companies were contingent on accentuating the disparity between the child actors and their adult characters and situations. The boy companies engaged with the widespread literary ethos of self-dramatization and embedded in courtly literary production, particularly in their use of declamatory and parodic acting styles as well as mixing the two for satiric effect. Bly adds to this conversation concerning the boy companies and satire by arguing that the Children of the King’s Revels (sometimes called the first Whitefriars company) was distinctive by virtue of their exploration of queer puns that carried “homoerotic resonances and sp[oke] to homoerotic desire.”

The phenomenon reflects a “managerially driven specialization in punning transgressions,” a commercial endeavour that appealed to “a theatrically canny community that apparently appreciated homoerotic wit, an emphasis that explains the plays’ univocality[;] their narrow focus on bawdy virgins.”

Due to the lack of print archives that are the usual hunting ground for post-seventeenth-century theatrical experience, such as print reviews, newspapers, personal diaries, and other kinds of first-person testimonials, Renaissance Theatre Historians are hesitant to correlate the production of plays with their reception. Bly is especially important in that she makes the logical turn from production to reception explicit, arguing that these scripts collectively articulate the extent to which the syndicate considered certain puns marketable: the inscription of a punning, homoerotic humour illustrates the effort to construct an audience, or amuse that audience if it already asserted itself economically…When queer puns are not a logical selling point, they are ruthlessly effaced.

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28 Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage*, 60; 131.
Recurring features in a company’s plays, like a particular strain of satire such as queer puns, can and likely do constitute something marketable to playgoers. The wider field of Theatre Studies relies on Susan Bennett’s work on audience cultures as the essential framework for theorizing the historically-contingent implications of playgoers. Drawing on a number of theorists (from Richard Schechner and Stanley Fish to Bertolt Brecht and Roland Barthes) and critical traditions

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(from Reader-Response and Semiotics to Feminism, Film, and Post-Structuralism), Bennett established a bi-directional formula for thinking about audiences’ experiences of a performance event:

The outer frame is concerned with theatre as a cultural construct through the idea of the theatrical event, the selection of material for production, and the audience’s definitions and expectations of a performance. The inner frame contains the event itself and, in particular, the spectator’s experience of a fictional stage world...It is the intersection of these two frames which forms the spectator’s cultural understanding and experience of theatre.\(^{31}\)

For Bennett, the processes of reception are conditioned by the horizon of cultural and ideological expectations audiences bring to a performance, which, like genres, are constantly being tested and changed. Bennett’s framework, her “horizon of expectations,” is useful for my purposes insofar as it provides the missing argumentative turn to which Bly gestures: that the evolution of dramaturgical features and thematic concerns were the two primary categories by which playing companies anticipated (and to some extent, dictated) playgoers as consumers of theatrical experiences.

The turn of the twenty-first century saw a boom in studies focusing on the adult companies, and with it an overwhelming prioritizing of those possibly affiliated with Shakespeare and Queen’s. Another inheritor of the archival mantle of the nineteenth-century bibliographers, Andrew Gurr has been the dominant voice until very recently. His titles, including *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (1996), *The Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642* (2004), *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London* (2004), and *The Shakespearian Stage, 1574–1642* (2009), makes his agenda apparent: Shakespeare is foremost as a metric by which to assess all other aspects of the industry in which he worked as if they grew up together. Gurr’s company

biography, *Shakespeare’s Opposites: The Admiral’s Company, 1594–1625* (2009), is oddest of all because it gives star billing to a figure who never worked with or for that troupe. Adding insult to injury, the biography ignores the first decade of Admiral’s career because there was not yet any Shakespeare to be in opposition with.

Despite the dominance Shakespeare exerts over the current publishing marketplace both popular and scholarly, study of Queen’s has accelerated since McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean’s inarguably ground-breaking study, *The Queen’s Men and Their Plays* (1998). It was the first of its kind to attempt to distill the career of an adult company without the telos of Shakespeare’s genius. (Their emphasis on the company’s history plays as progenitors to Shakespeare’s admittedly undermines some of the radicality implied by a Theatre History title excluding Shakespeare.) Explored in greater detail by the contributions to *Locating the Queen’s Men, 1583–1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing* (2009) are the ways in which company organization, personnel, and patrons influenced the development of playtexts. In the same year, Brian Walsh published *Shakespeare, The Queen’s Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (2009), which brings the content of the Queen’s plays back into an empirically-driven conversation focused on payment receipts and political power. He argues that the Queen’s taste for Protestant English history plays shaped “a continuing if not commonly articulated model of historical consciousness, one that is structured by the dynamics of stage performance.”

32 Shapiro has successfully anticipated the growing interest in company biographies, writing the award-winning popular histories *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (2011) and *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606* (2015). Other critics have also got in on the act, like that of Stanley Wells’ *Shakespeare and Co.* (2007), but with less success.

Intellectual Property (2011) similarly uses company organization to get at a topic rather than provide a summary of the company’s career. He argues that the key features of the house style of the Lord Chamberlain’s Servants was their revising of secondhand scripts into coherent sets (including the cobbling together of the Henriad) and literally putting Shakespeare’s “name on everything” as a mark of company ownership rather than authorship. It is arguably the first time we see “authorship as a signifier of possession” in early modern drama and, in this case, “to cement the company’s claims upon plays which they inherited in 1594 or which dealt with an easily duplicated historical subject.” This is to say that Shakespeare saturates the market after 1594 because the company in which he was but one of several sharers made it so.

Shapiro, Gair, Bly, McMillin and MacLean set the model for Repertory Studies moving forward: a reference armed with maps; sharer, patron, and personnel lists; indices of playtexts owned and performance receipts that strongly de-prioritize individuals and authorship in lieu of company ownership; and the typologizing of the plays themselves in terms of genre and sub-genre categories marked by features of geographical location and plot. Since The Queen’s Men and Their Plays, three more magisterial biographies of company careers, one Elizabethan and two first forays into Jacobean companies, have come into print: Lawrence Manley and MacLean’s Lord Strange’s Men and Their Plays (2014), Lucy Munro’s Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory (2005), and Eva Griffith’s A Jacobean Company and Its Playhouse: The Queen’s Servants at the Red Bull Theatre (2014). The titles of these studies are significantly telling about the relationship between the kinds of playing companies and their place within literary criticism. Shapiro’s title, Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of

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35 Marino, Owning William Shakespeare, 42.
Shakespeare’s Time and Their Plays, encapsulates all of these biographies’ titles. The boy companies and Jacobean companies lead with their company names, constantly vying for attention in relation to their adult competitors. Studies of adult companies were for some time dominated by the phrase “Shakespeare’s Time.” In moving away from this model, studies of the Elizabethan companies are now foregrounding their patronage label and then their repertorial output. With the exception of Walsh and Marino, the focus on these “men” rather than “their plays” has distanced literary stakes from their repertorial contexts, focusing almost exclusively on the archive as a conversation separate from the content of the plays.

One of the aims of this dissertation is to articulate the ways in which a specific economic framework, the playing company and its repertory system, inflected the development and revision of the content of Elizabethan plays—that form and content colluded in the cultivation of playgoers. Read a handful of Theatre History essays and you will discover a distinctive strain

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To foreground both this project’s ground-up approach, its participation in the field of Theatre History, and its interests in counteracting authorial bias, my title draws from Walter Ong’s crucial thesis in “The Writer’s Audience Is Always a Fiction,” PMLA 90, no. 1 (January 1975): the writer’s audience is always a fiction. It follows that all writing, not just playwriting, requires acts of imagination when it comes to envisioning its possible, desired consumers. Even “the historian, the scholar or scientist, and the simple letter writer,” even authors such as Herodotus, John Lyly, and Earnest Hemingway, “all fictionalize their audiences, casting them in a made-up role” (17). Ong demonstrated that the managing of audience expectations is a collective process, historically contingent, and ultimately performative, even at the level of print, where “the masks of the narrator are matched, if not one-for-one, in equally complex fashion by the masks that readers must learn to wear” (20). “If the writer succeeds in writing, it is generally because he can fictionalize in his imagination an audience he has learned to know,” it follows that if a play succeeds at the box office, it is generally because the company fictionalized in their collective decision-making process an audience they had learned to know through previous attendances (11). Imagining the theatrical endeavors of playing companies by attending to the processes of cultural production is precisely why Elizabethan Theatre History belongs, counterintuitively, in English departments. It is in this discipline that hypotheses are “explanation[s] of things that need explaining—things that have implications of congruence but need the narrative assistance of a hypothesis to explain them” (McMillin, “Building Stories: Greg, Fleay, and the Plot of 2 Seven Deadly Sins,” 53).
running through the scholarship that almost always apologizes first for the state of its archive. It has been there from the very beginning. Murray observed in the first study of companies in 1910 that “the highly speculative nature of the history of these companies must have impressed every student of the Elizabethan drama.”37 In his seminal 1987 essay, McMillin’s *apologia* more overtly serves methodological ends:

> the theatre historian who wants to recreate the visual side of an Elizabethan play or an Elizabethan theatre must be a most patient reader, listening to the implications of the text without much explicit help, because the positive evidence that we would like to depend on for the sake of objectivity is largely missing.38

This refrain produces what could be critiqued as a passive and hedging form of criticism; while avoiding provocative conclusions, it provides a sharpened consideration about the extent, limits, and nuance of speculating upon theatrical endeavors. In contrast to the early bibliographers, in the last two decades Theatre Historians have adopted, despite an otherwise lack of formalized methodology according to William Ingram, an additive posture rather than one of contest or positivist revision.39 By the logic of accruing and revising playtexts over time, segments of company careers are essential to determine whether the use of a dramaturgical feature was occasional, an industry norm, or indicative of a specific repertory. That one company used one or other feature does not mean that it was exclusive to that company, nor does that necessarily preclude a particularized use by a specific company.

39 On the fact that the field has yet to articulate a formal methodology, Ingram observes “Theater History has, for a very long time now, resembled golf more than tennis”; R.W. Ingram, “Introduction: Early Modern Theatre History: Where We Are Now, How We Got Here, Where We Go Next,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12–3.
In response to this critical tradition and the growing interest in Repertory Studies, this project combines the historian and anthropologist’s ground- or bottom-up approach with the literary and cultural critic’s informed speculation based on close-reading and individual cases. In so doing, I respond to the numerous calls for imaginative approaches to Elizabethan theatre. For example, Jeremy Lopez contends that “given the state of the documentary evidence in the field, there is a point at which imagination must take over where evidence leaves off.”\(^\text{40}\) Walsh qualifies that “we must find a space for responsible conjecture about how the fact of the audience affected the composition and production of plays, and about how the experience of being part of an audience inflected the reception of the drama.”\(^\text{41}\) And McMillin argued in a headnote for a 2001 issue of *Early Theatre* that while “we have been trained to read playwrights” we can now build new histories of the Elizabethan theatre industry “if we can learn how to read them.”\(^\text{42}\) Ultimately, the problem of archive becomes a question about the principles of inclusion and one’s ability to hear, as Munro says, “the full choir.”\(^\text{43}\) The arguments in the chapters that follow encourage this additive hermeneutic, proposing new models for framing a company’s house style by the indicative strategies they kept as well as by speculating upon the playgoer’s they imagined and to which those strategies attest.

\(^{42}\) McMillin, “Headnote,” 111–2.
1.2.2 Survival and Representativeness

It is not difficult to argue that public theatres were big business in Elizabethan London. According to Keenan, “by 1595, it is estimated that around 15,000 people were attending the theatres every week,” and in another twenty years it was more like 25,000 people a week.\textsuperscript{44} If by 1600 the population in London was roughly 200,000 people, nearly one in every six Londoners attended a theatre production per week. For comparison sake, a 2014 Harris Poll reported that the average American attends the cinema less than five times a year, but more than half of Americans stream a video-on-demand (VOD) film at least once a week.\textsuperscript{45} The frequency with which we today stream a film or television show per week is therefore comparable to the frequency with which an Elizabethan left their home or place of work, crossed the Thames river, and attended a live play. Theatre was a major part of metropolitan life in early modern England, and so drama is an especially useful cultural product for enumerating the mental furniture of ordinary (and yet, as Woolf reminds us, still very strange) Elizabethans.

Despite this measure of historical representativeness, the cultural, economic, and scholarly cachet of Shakespeare has problematically skewed the numbers, warping our sense of what was culturally distinctive about the Elizabethan theatre industry. Before I expand upon the theoretical framing and project outline, I want to take a moment to clarify what I mean by representativeness using Admiral’s, the company burdened with the status of being “Shakespeare’s opposites.” (Their distinctive rather than normative features I address in chapter four.) The historiography of Admiral’s revolves around two lines of argument. First, their

\textsuperscript{44} Keenan, Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare’s London, 129.
repertory was primarily made up of plays by Marlowe and imitators of his mighty line. Second, they operated in opposition to the only other licensed playing company of their day, Chamberlain’s, and their most lucrative asset, Shakespeare. It is a strange kind of story to tell about a playing company because it distills a group of plays produced by the collective writing and performance energies of a group of people down to an antagonism between two individuals—one of whom had arguably nothing to do with the Admiral’s oeuvre. The primacy of the Chamberlain’s and King’s Men is implicitly assumed because of their links to Shakespeare; using a metric of financial success, the fact that the career of Admiral’s outstretched them both suggests primacy in the Elizabethan period may lie elsewhere. As Marino has shown, Chamberlain’s and King’s may well have simply used Shakespeare’s name to label revised playtexts, where “Shakespeare” was literally a rubber stamp for a set of plays sharing a similar set of dramaturgical strategies, themes, and players. The length of Admiral’s career and generic breadth of their repertory will allow me to sketch out the scope of playtext survival in the period in order to demonstrate what is lost when genre is the principle of inclusion.

What would it look like if we took Admiral’s on their own terms? Three major threshold moments for their repertorial output immediately come to the fore: the period up until the forced contraction of the number of playing companies allowed to operate in London, around 1594; the period between this contraction and the death of Elizabeth I in 1603; and the period from James I’s ascension to the throne—taking the two remaining adult companies and one boy company all under royal patronage—until the dissolution of the company in 1625. Dividing the company’s career in this way allows me to test to what degree the survival rate of their plays and their genres are or are not representative in relation to the extant archive in general. Between 1567 and
1642, according to Matthew Steggle, upwards of 3,000 different plays were written and staged. Of that 3,000, only 543 playtexts (18%) survive; we have titles and other identifiers of an additional 744 (25%) lost playtexts. While this means that we know almost nothing about 57% of the theatre entertainments available to early moderns, this data provides a springboard from which to reframe the categories and methodologies through which critics approach Renaissance drama. It is my contention that, by focusing the lens on segments of individual company careers rather than making claims for the whole of Renaissance drama, we can speculate upon something like representativeness.

The first of the three major thresholds of Admiral’s career was marked by the greatest degree of immediate competition: as I’ve said, there were more companies operating between 1582 and 1594 than at any other time until the late-eighteenth century. Of Admiral’s 35 known plays from this period, two thirds (68%) are lost, but nearly one third (32%) survives. Compared to the other two distinctive periods of their career, this meaningful window has the best rate at which we might begin to venture representative claims about the company’s house style. From

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47 Steggle, Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England, 8.
the period between 1595 and the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, the company owned or purchased a great many more plays than they ever had previously: 172. Of these, 87% are lost to us, while 12% and three platts remain extant. While it would seem that the company was staging not necessarily more productions but nearly five times more individually distinct plays than in the first part of their career, the gross and percentage survival rates are markedly worse than in the period when the company had more competitors. Only 21 plays survive from the two-decade Jacobean portion of their career. Of those, three quarters are lost. If we reorganize the numbers in terms of monarchs (understood as different censorship and patronage regimes), Elizabethan plays make up 99% of their known properties while Jacobean plays only 0.9%. While the company was active for 18 years of Elizabeth’s reign and 20 years of James’, of the plays that survive one can only make representative claims about the company’s house style as an *Elizabethan company*.

Monarchal period designations are more useful than other headings to frame repertorial output not only because of this difference in survival rates, but also because of the difference in legislation. Periodization has arguably less to do with topical politics than it does with the systems in which companies were permitted to present work. Henry VII was the first monarch to formally patronize a playing company in 1495. Early instances of multiple playing companies

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48 *Plots* included one act and a summary of the rest of the play, which would be used as a way for playwrights to pitch a concept to a company. *Platts* were one-page summaries of the stage action of a play, typically including entrance and exit cues, that would be posted on the inside door frame of a tiring house as an aid to players during a performance. See Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11–29; 207–13.
operating around the city of London begin in the 1520s, and continued to expand so that by 1559 Elizabeth I issued the first piece of legislation requiring licensing for companies.\textsuperscript{49} Similar edicts placing increasing restraints on the companies were issued in 1572, 1574, and 1598.\textsuperscript{50} This period also coincides with the building of nine new commercial theatre venues in and around London between 1575 and 1578. (From the late-1570s through the mid-1590s, Elizabeth I and five of her Privy Council members patroned playing companies.)\textsuperscript{51} After 1594, officially licensed playing troupes were (for all intents and purposes) limited to two adult companies, Admiral’s and Chamberlain’s. After 1603, these two adult companies and one boy troupe all came under the patronage of James I and the royal family, and their activities centralized around the Court. Therefore, the period from 1582 to 1594 is compelling in that it was the first time in a generation that a monarch served as patron of a troupe and that the monarch’s troupe competed with others

\textsuperscript{49} Keenan, Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare’s London, 26.
\textsuperscript{50} Keenan, Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare’s London, 26.
patroned by members of their own Council. These conditions mark the Elizabethan period as seeing the rapid development of “a system of government censorship in the commercial theater industry” that was not yet fully formalized. In this light, monarchical periods serve as important markers of company identity legally, financially, and ideologically.

What if we slice the numbers another way? To what extent do genre markers tell us something representative about Admiral’s in this highly competitive marketplace?

Surveying their playing from 1595–96, Knutson finds that their main generic features included a diversification within genres that included a category of myth, ancient history, and pseudo-historical history. She argues, “duplication of popular subject matter, the extension of that matter into sequels or serials, and the expansion of a popular figure into a spin-off” worked to cluster together “epic drama with larger-than-life heroic figures.” In another study, however, Knutson finds that Admiral’s presented more tragedies than was usual up until 1594 while most of the plays being staged by other companies had predominantly historical and/or comic subject

* Elizabethan period denotes the 207 plays presumably performed during 1582–1603, and the Jacobean period denotes the 21 plays performed during 1604–1625.
52 Streitberger, “Adult Playing Companies to 1583,” 38.
She surmises that in the principles that governed their selection of plays, Admiral’s prioritized “only those plays with a history of commercial success” as well as attempted to maintain a “seasonal quota for tragedies.” This combination of preferences may have contributed to the “commercial exhaustion” of their stock of tragedies by the fall of 1596 and subsequent financial struggles when their signature for tragedy had grown stale to audiences. While Knutson’s findings are instructive in the particular, it is difficult to know how to apply these sub-genres to a definition of their house style.

FIGURE 1.5: Lord Admiral’s Men playtext survival by genre.

To situate Knutson’s finding on the Admiral’s repertory (the only work of its kind), I’d like to crunch the numbers using Harbage’s genre designations for surviving plays and his guesswork for lost plays, some of which supplemented by the Lost Plays Database. I have simplified the genre ascriptions (by removing modifiers) down to seven distinct categories:

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56 Knutson, “Influence of the Repertory System on the Revival and Revision of The Spanish Tragedy and Dr. Faustus,” 263.
Comedy, History, Pastoral, Romance, Tragedy, Tragicomedy, and unknown. If we assume that over the course of their career Admiral’s performed 229 distinct playtexts, it follows that they prioritized Histories (35%), Comedies (27%), and then Tragedies (16%), in that order. Romances (7%), Pastoral (3%), and Tragicomedies (3%) are in the single-digit percentile, with 9% of the plays having no known genre. If we assume that in the first third of their career, until 1594, the company performed 35 distinct playtexts, the order of priority turns out to be exactly the same: Histories first (31%), then Comedies (23%) and Tragedies (17%). Both their career as a whole and a meaningful segment of their career demonstrate a prioritizing of the same three genres that also turn up in the later title of the first folio: *Mr William Shakespeare’s Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies; Published according to their True Originall Copies* (1623). In short, whether it was the entirety of early modern drama, the entirety of a single company’s oeuvre, or a meaningful segment of a company’s career, the genre priorities remain the same: History, followed closely behind by Comedy and Tragedy.

If not genre, what? I would like to offer a rubric of four dramaturgical categories I believe are rich sites of potential but have been little explored by Elizabethan Theatre scholars and historians: (1) collaborative writing teams as opposed to single authors; (2) extratheatrical resources, such as tumblers or dancers, abutted to the play event; (3) indicative blocking priorities and tableaux; and (4) specially-built or up-cycled props. Each category represents a constituent part of the play event other than its topical and/or thematic commitments. The Admiral’s repertory provides a useful snapshot by evincing two of these markers of dramaturgical distinctiveness. First, the company used recurring teams of playwrights, the most

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57 Following that are romances (14%), Tragicomedies (9%), and Pastoral (3%), with only one play of entirely unknown genre.
frequent being the combined work (typically in syndicates of four) of Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathway, Anthony Munday, and Robert Wilson. Second, they specially built and then repurposed a full-sized chariot prop, staged as a torture device to which conquered kings were hitched and made to pull. Just as my chapter on Admiral’s explores the house style that evolved out of these three elements, so too do each of the other chapters look at combinations of these features which colluded as a company’s recognizably distinctive house style at a discreet moment in time we would today label as a “season.” While the chapters stand alone as micro-histories of individual seasons by four different companies, contributing to the biographical conversation of each, together they speak to my larger thesis that it was their dramaturgy as much as their thematic concerns that dictated the financial success of Elizabethan playing companies.

By this course, I hope to encourage fellow scholars of the theatre in England to reconsider what is meant by “representative.” As a brief example to send the point home, if Shakespeare had a hand in only 0.1% of all the plays staged in early modern England, to say that Romeo and Juliet tells us something about early modern visions of amorous love or procreative suitability is extremely problematic. By placing the first performances of that play in the first season after a balcony was installed in the Rose theatre, and by placing it within a group of plays featuring balconies new to that season, Romeo and Juliet can say something representative about the visual hierarchies of gender and sexuality in Elizabethan England. In this vein, Repertory

Studies and dramaturgically-sympathetic reading has the potential to productively complicate the stories told about Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and their theatrical marketplace.

1.3 REPERTORIAL CURATION

Repertory as a system for presenting theatre is distinctive in that it asks consumers to think about plays in sets—which is to say, relationally rather than as individual art objects. As I’ve discussed, Repertory Studies and company biographies have done the work of establishing what plays were owned by what company at what point. In this regard, Philip Henslowe’s Diary remains an invaluable resource for tracing the lives of individual texts as they moved from one company to another or fell out of rotation altogether. The energy in these company biographies is given to characterizing the venues and neighborhoods in which the company performed, the relationship between the company and its courtly patron, and mini-biographies of individual personnel. While it is the norm to attend to the pattern of themes and topical investments, very little attention has been paid to the dramaturgical elements that recur across the repertory to make up something distinguishable about a company’s house style.

McMillin and MacLean are again seminal in establishing a template for considering company repertories. They argue that on tour Queen’s disseminated propagandistic Tudor history that promoted civic pride and Protestant ideology. To do so, their plays were built from a “medley” of genres and scene types stressing literalism and narrative overdetermination in light of the company’s close association with the English history play.\footnote{Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, \textit{The Queen’s Men and Their Plays} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 124.} Gurr has ascribed the

\footnote{Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, \textit{The Queen’s Men and Their Plays} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 124.}
amorphous “citizen” ethos to the work of Admiral’s, while Manley and MacLean have characterized the plays of Strange’s Men as invested in “modern matter,” dramatizing geopolitical events in “genres with a strong classical or Italianate pedigree, including Senecan revenge, novella intrigue, and what Henslowe (or the company) called ‘gelymous comodey.’”

Missing from these definitions of what was distinguishable about a company’s manner of presentation is the live, material condition of theatrical experience. It is nothing new to say that genres are unstable: their very capaciousness for new markers and conventions make them both useful and difficult frameworks for tracing the distinctive and comparable aspects of two or more texts. Without the rigid marketing necessities and infrastructure of the post-nineteenth-century print industry wherein genre became an essential salable category, early modern genres were especially capacious. Genre is only one possible framework for revealing distinguishable patterns between a large group of complex texts. While scholars have hitherto depended upon genres and sub-genres to clarify the character of a company, this project asks what would happen if we threw out genre as an organizing principle for the study of Elizabethan playtexts.

I propose that curation is a hermeneutic equipped to account for the two unique aspects of repertory as a system: the collective process of selecting, purchasing, revising, and mounting plays; and the uneven and gradual accrual of the plays a company came to own and was associated with over time. The term curation and analyses of curatorial logic come from the field

60 Useful about Gurr’s biography is his argument that “the company developed a trick that exploited precisely the audience's familiarity with their faces. While the lesser players doubled their bit parts, the company gave their leads plays involving quick-change disguises” (Shakespeare’s Opposites 2). Closely linking the company with indoor playing at the Blackfriars (not their only venue), he argues their plays relied topically on “citizen” concerns (4), which more often than not sounds like a substitute for what we might anachronistically call “middle-class.”

of Museum Studies and Art History focused on the period between 1970 and 2000. Curator-auteur and curator-critic Hans Ulrich Obrist is the leading voice on curation in the contemporary art world. His *A Brief History of Curating* (2008) provides a series of interviews with major museum and gallery curators of the twentieth century. Concentrating heavily on the 1970s and ‘80s, Obrist argues that curation is a wholly twentieth-century phenomenon. While certainly I think it was professionalized in this period with the rise of biennials as “the medium through which most art becomes known,” its essential activity, selection, existed much earlier. The Galleria Borghese in Rome, purpose-built in the early-seventeenth century as a space to display collected paintings and sculpture, is a still-standing counterexample. Obrist would come to revise his ideas about earlier modes of curating, however, wherein “to study the Renaissance” became a means of gaining access to “a model for reconnecting art and science, sundered by history.”

I would take Obrist’s observations a step further to argue that curation was one of the paradigm shifts that helped to define the English Renaissance—a mode of consuming cultural products that informed the repertory system.

Part autobiography and part theoretical treatise, Obrist’s more recent *Ways of Curating* (2014) establishes a lexicon of curatorial activities. For my purposes, there are two important aspects of the book: his rejection of the curator-auteur and his distinctions between how different art forms mediate time as it pertains to the exhibition forum. Obrist is interested in the curating function rather than the individual’s role and the “shift in understanding from a person (a curator) to an enterprise (curating).” He locates this communal, collective strain in ancient Rome, where “curatores were civil servants who took care of some rather prosaic, if necessary functions: they

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were responsible for overseeing public works, including the empire’s aqueducts, bathhouses and sewers,” while the medieval “curatus was a priest who took care of the grounds of the parish.”

Based on this sociological trajectory, he rejects the premise “that curators are competing with artists for primacy in the production of meaning or aesthetic value.”

The power of an exhibition comes from “the subtle courses of juxtaposition and arrangement,” and that “arrangement of important and disparate works of art...one can also clearly detect a singular and distinctive cultural voice”; “one could learn from it, agree with it, disagree with it, defend it.” That arrangement does not necessarily have to be or is a product of a singular subject, but can be an accretion over time as a viewer moves through the exhibit. The usefulness of curation is that it produces a coherent set of investments from a selection of art without necessarily having to locate that coherence in an individual person. To extrapolate for the repertory system, a playgoer could now dictate the phenomenology of theatrical experience when adopting regular and repeated habits of playgoing, and/or by selecting from a range of newly repeatable factors.

In *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (2012), Terry Smith is more open to the performative implications of curation because he defines the curatorial hermeneutic as one that elaborates exhibitionary meaning. Smith locates the power of the curated exhibit in the spatial: “it is a discursive, epistemological, and dramaturgical space in which various kinds of temporality may be produced or shown to coexist.” Using terms like “wings,” “repertoire,” and “staged,” he links curation to theatre in order to stress that it is precisely the necessity of having to forge an exhibition in the crucible of practical contingencies that distinguishes what they do from the empathetic

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insight required of the critic, the speculative bent of the theorist, and the historian’s commitment to arm’s-length research into art that is becoming consequential.  

By locating the curator-function in the exhibitionary, Smith provides a two-fold definition of curating: space conditions the experience of curated art, and the experience of a set of works stages a dialogue. Therefore, we may understand to curate as an extension of the verb to exhibit. Like Smith, in The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures(s) (2012), Paul O’Neill centralizes the spatial and the performative at the center of the modern curator’s work, whose “decisions go hand in hand with ‘market forces and the private gallery.’” He also prioritizes the exhibition, but addresses the performative as well as the verb to arrange as part of its core activities. For O’Neill, exhibitions “produce temporary forms of order” wherein personal choice and subjective valuation are converted into social and cultural capital “through the arrangement of the primary material that is art.” Surprisingly, scholars of curation are more likely to understand the exhibit as an event, as a performance, than practitioners like Obrist, whose livelihoods are predicated on selling curation as an action imbued with individual intention.

I rely on this vocabulary of curatorial activities to frame the unique polysemy made available by the set of texts owned by individual playing companies. Companies performed a different play every day of the week using the same stable of actors supplemented by regular ad hoc hired men. In this culturally specific context, I understand to exhibit as to bring a selection of extant or new art into a shared space “with the aim of demonstrating, primarily through the experiential accumulation of visual connections, a particular constellation of meaning that cannot

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68 Smith, Thinking Contemporary Curating, 44; 45; 36.
70 O’Neill, The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s), 39; 87–8.
be made known by any other means.”\textsuperscript{71} By extension, \textit{to curate} is to appropriate and configure artwork into a “pathway that will carry the spectator’s experience” as to change, improve, and stretch a dialogue.\textsuperscript{72} The repertory system relied upon exhibitionary and curatorial logic insofar as it depended upon the re-appropriating of individual actors and their skills from play to play, was a spatially-inscribed exhibition of art (dictated by the playhouses, inn-yards, guildhalls, and other regular venues), and as a set the plays and their staging decisions represented an agenda (either implicit or explicit) of a collective.

To be clear, none of the chapters to follow go so far as to argue whether the repertories were dictated by impresarios or patrons. In fact, it is generally agreed that the degree of influence exerted by actor-managers or courtly patrons were relatively weak and certainly informal, if existing at all. Just because we cannot identify a specific individual exerting influence in an authorial model with which we are comfortable does not mean that economic, material, and legal constraints alongside aesthetic strengths of a group could not or did not produce a “a singular and distinctive cultural voice.” The day-to-day rotation of plays performed by a single company fulfills O’Neill’s sense of \textit{to arrange}: where the ordering of art objects “is seen as the performative expression of a strategy for the production of meaning and being, conjured throughout the exhibition as a compulsory, exposing, and approximate practice.”\textsuperscript{73} (If the point that theatre, dramaturgy, and curation are related endeavors is still unclear, consider that the first methods section in Katalin Trencsényi’s \textit{Dramaturgy in the Making: A User’s Guide for Theatre Practitioners} (2015) is entitled “Curating.”) The arrangement and exhibition of a set of plays by an Elizabethan troupe is a crucial aspect of the history of curation, the history of these

\textsuperscript{71} O’Neill, \textit{The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)}, 30.
\textsuperscript{72} O’Neill, \textit{The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)}, 254.
\textsuperscript{73} O’Neill, \textit{The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)}, 120.
companies, and the history of the ways in which economic risk and constraint inflect cultural production.

David Balzer’s counterarguments to Obrist, O’Neill, and Smith in *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else* (2014) are worth noting because he spotlights the limits of curation as an economic strategy. He argues that since the mid-1990s we have been living in a “curationist” moment during which “institutions and businesses rely on others, often variously credentialed experts, to cultivate and organize things in an expression-cum-assurance of value and an attempt to make affiliations with, and to court, various audiences and consumers.”

Balzer makes the crucial observation that to curate has become problematically synonymous with connoisseurship. He takes aim at the ways in which corporate entities have co-opted the rhetoric of curating as part of a larger “deskilling,” or “the cost-cutting phasing-out of professional works by machines or less-skilled workers” in and out of the art world, and consumers’ complicity in it.

While Balzer points to the widespread deskillment curation promotes via “a self-fulfilling dependence on algorithms,” Tribble points to the early modern repertory system as a venue in which curation promoted “enskillment.” Therefore, what is illustrative about Balzer’s critique is that curation has the potential to illuminate why it is that “we don’t always click for the same reasons,” “we don’t always collect for the same reasons,” and, by extension, playgoers did not always attend theatre for the same reasons.

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75 Balzer, *Curationism*, 99.
76 Balzer, *Curationism*, 131.
78 Balzer, *Curationism*, 132.
The early modern repertory system challenges the post-modern desire for the algorithm and the New Historian desire to ascribe to peoples of the past motivations that look like our own. Perhaps one of the most mysterious aspects of the repertory model is how a company—operating collectively, without a director, and premiering new material on one full rehearsal—decided what play to put on each day. Based on the box office takings and surviving playtexts from the 1580s and ‘90s, there seems to be no algorithm, no prioritizing of comedies for Fridays, tragedies for Sundays, and an experimental drama mid-week as modern-day companies might. One of the concerns of this project, then, is to consider how repertory as a system of presentation—and one still used widely today—conditions how we make meaning of Elizabethan playtexts. I offer repertorial curation as a hermeneutic for framing the meaning made by the arrangement and performance of plays under the rubric of the playing company.

A framework like repertorial curation illuminates the factors specific to Elizabethan habits of theatre-going. Theatre Historians have shown that playgoers had up to twelve amphitheatres, nine playhouses, and six inn-yards to choose from in London just for theatre and these venues were often literally across the lane from one another. If the offerings were relatively unknown until a playgoer got to the playhouse itself, and proximity wasn’t a conditioning factor for selection, how did one choose? Relying on Theatre Studies methodology, I contend that to decide playgoers referenced a horizon of expectations established by previous playgoing experiences, personal aesthetic preferences, and relevant topical themes. By curating distinctive house styles rooted in technical innovation and the ability to respond to their cultural

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moment, I argue that it was through the repertory system that playing companies managed playgoer expectations in order to ensure financial success.

1.4 HOUSE STYLES

Focusing on playing companies as collective agents and crucial units of the early modern English theatre, in this dissertation I consider the dozen years before Henslowe, Marlowe, and Shakespeare’s dominance over the Elizabethan theatrical marketplace (as well as the critical conversation about it) in order to recover this diverse and overlooked period of theatre history. Each chapter centers on one of the major playing companies operating between 1582, when the companies shifted their focus from touring in the provinces to playing in London, and 1594, when the Privy Council ostensibly reduced the number of adult playing companies to two. The “duopoly” debate, the purviews of which are usefully outlined in a 2010 special issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, is not a concern of this project. Instead, in using McMillin’s framework, 1594 is but one of many “crossroads in theatre history, a threshold, and a turning point”; while “we can tell a crossroads when we see one…it is of little use unless we have some orientation and can tell in which directions the roads might lead.” By reading a season of plays for each of four companies, I expose the major thematic concerns of the Elizabethan theatres as well as the staging tactics that enlivened them.

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The first two chapters focus on the ways in which the companies cultivated theatrical experience. This introduction described the interrelation between Theatre History, Theatre Studies, and Museum Studies methodologies in order to establish the kind of work Repertory Studies can pursue—work that resides in that grey space between questions a historian might ask (who were these playgoers) and those of a literary critic (what audiences did these plays envision). As a representative case, Chapter Two, “Fads and Foreigners: The Lord Strange’s Men and Their Mediterranean Plays, 1592–1593,” establishes that this company dedicated a great deal of their resources and energy to cultivating a fad for Mediterranean plays. A majority of their active properties, such as *The Battle of Alcazar*, as well as nearly all of their new material, like *A Looking Glass for London and England*, turned to Mediterranean settings in order to examine topical issues such as the Portuguese succession crisis, Elizabeth I’s marriage proposal from the Moroccan king, and reciprocity as a political posture that threatened Reformation models of communal ethics.

The succeeding pair of chapters examine the political functions of repertories. In Chapter Three, “Presentation and Polyphony: The Queen’s Men and Their History Plays, 1587–1588,” I demonstrate the company’s processes of innovation by reading these texts for their staging specialties rather than literary themes. Largely overlooked is the fact that the company toured in two halves when not in London. Thus, I first sketch the extratheatrical strategies of each branch suggested by the touring record and stage directions. In part because their repertory was infrequently refreshed, I argue these extratheatricals were one of two features that would have distinguished them from other companies. The other was their endemic use of the dramaturgical strategy I term *triptychs*: the blocking together of three members of the same socio-economic group to collectively voice concerns of the commonwealth. I attend in particular to the starving
watchmen in *King Lier*, the disgruntled Fressingfield merchants in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and the mischievous pages in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*. Rather than read the Queen’s Men in terms of conservative propaganda, I argue that their modes of presentation and touring practices made room for political critique.

In Chapter Four, “Personnel and Properties: The Lord Admiral’s Players and Their Supplemented Plays, 1589–1590,” I recover the strategies of playing for the company routinely imagined as the main rivals of Shakespeare and “his” Chamberlain’s Men by focusing on the repertory from the first half of their career. Known then as the Admiral’s Players, I trace each instance of the company’s penchant for combining with another, referred to by critics as “amalgamated” or “supplemented” playing. Frequently seen in Court Christmas festivities and premieres of new work—such as the massive personnel requirements of *II Tamburlaine the Great, The Wounds of Civil War*, and *The Reign of King Edward III*—these combinations suggest that the company prioritized up-cycled props, pairings with other companies, and consistently new stock rather than revisions as distinguishing features of their repertory.

Extending beyond the historical frame of the project, the final chapter, “Sounds and Sennets: Factional Politics and the Lord Pembroke’s Players, 1597–1598,” considers elements that limited rather than sponsored repertorial development and curation. I employ the company’s infamous *Isle of Dogs* fiasco—which caused the closure of a playhouse, the exile of a playwright, and the arrest of a company—as an extreme case of a repertory invested in issues of censorship. I pay special attention to their War of the Roses plays to posit two new staging techniques hitherto unacknowledged as part of the company’s tactics: the extensive use of trumpet calls and blocking arrangements that together emphasized interrelations between political factions. I then juxtapose *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Taming of the Shrew* to
demonstrate the ideological consistency of this house style even in the revision of old stock. While the text of the *Isle of Dogs* is lost, in recovering the company’s indicative manner of presentation I theorize what strategies (symbolic sound and blocking combinations) and political questions to which the Privy Council was sensitive (the efficacy of factionalism) the play may have emphasized (and perhaps put the company at odds with the Master of the Revels Office). When curated—that is, selected, organized, and presented—successfully, these repertories had the power to appeal to all stripes of playgoer, playing company, and political orientation, thus recovering our sense of Elizabethan playgoers as no longer merely an act of imaginative reconstruction.

To supplement these arguments is an appendix of the plays owned and performed by each of the companies I treat here, along with plot summaries that include brief notes on the company, venue, and patron. Dating ascriptions of the individual playtexts have been drawn from a number of sources in addition to the extant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century print objects themselves. In total, the appendix contains data for 42 distinct, extant playtexts across five companies. The instrumental purpose of the appendix is to make clear the archive of the project as a whole as well as render easily referenced the texts to which individual chapters refer. The broader agenda of the appendix is to put anonymous and non-canonical works on an even playing-field with their canonical counterparts.

This dissertation troubles the primacy of Shakespeare by reorienting our gaze toward the collaborative process that made up the Elizabethan playing company. In so doing, we are able to leave, as Woolf implies, the highroad of reading the play as poem in order to find where the poets are working together, writing for the milkmaids, the lovers, and the waterman who may have recommended *Hamlet* to indecisive playgoers as he ferried them over the Thames to
Southwark. By sketching the contours of this marketplace, I widen our vantage of this dramatic landscape by providing unexamined, anonymous, and even “lost” plays cultural specificity and repertorial context.
CHAPTER 2:
FADS AND FOREIGNERS: THE LORD STRANGE’S MEN AND THEIR
MEDITERRANEAN PLAYS, 1592–1593

The variety of theatrical experiences of which the repertory system is capable was not fully realized until the development of dedicated playing venues. Until the mid 1570s, theatrical troupes were primarily a touring venture. Troupes performed a limited run of between one and five performances in a given town before moving on to a new marketplace and new playgoers. Some municipalities formalized how many performances a troupe was entitled to depending on their patronage. For example, consider a Gloucester city ordinance that dictated “the Queenes maiestes Players’ being allowed to perform three times during each visit, the players of barons being allowed to play twice and the players of lesser patrons only being allowed to play once.”

Non-London playgoers likely experienced the variety of a company’s repertory, sampling the different genres and topics they had on offer. They did not, however, have the opportunity to revisit favorite plays, players, or topics that the repetition of London playing made available.

In this respect the Lord Strange’s Men hold a unique place in the history of the repertory system as the first company on record to commit to an extended engagement at a dedicated venue, the Rose public amphitheater in Southwark. Their 1592–93 season at Philip Henslowe’s

For their comments on an early version of this chapter, I wish to acknowledge Charles Keenan, Edward Muir, Regina Schwartz, and the members of the 2014 Mellon Academy for Advanced Study in the Renaissance. Some of the work here is forthcoming in “A Race to the Roof: Cosmetics and Contemporary Histories in the Elizabethan Playhouse, 1592–1596” for Shakespeare Bulletin 34, no. 2 (Summer 2016), which received a 2016 Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (IPRH) research prize.

venue marks an important threshold in Elizabethan Theatre History: the moment when the
playhouse and the repertory became intertwined. At this threshold the function of repetition
within the repertory system was no longer only part of the actors’ experience, but became a
salable feature for playgoers. This is not to say that playhouse and the repertory system became
codependent; rather, the option to exclusively rent a dedicated venue for a specific period, for a
season, extended the challenge of working in repertory in two ways. First, the ability to handle
many more distinct parts than were expected while touring became more important to the
player’s profession. Second, with a finite number of plays in a company’s repertory, playgoers
had the opportunity to revisit particular plots, roles, or other dramaturgical effects. While other
companies were quickly following suite and that such a strategy was certainly the product of
other kinds of longer runs at Court or major estates of the peerage, Strange’s established the
template for dedicated playing practices in London—the practices for which we assume the plays
of Shakespeare were designed.

This chapter focuses on Strange’s repertory to consider the extent to which dedicated
playing contributed to house style formation. Positioned at this unique threshold, Strange’s
1592–93 season offers an illustrative case for the possibility of a venue contributing to the
development of a company’s house style. I argue that this company offers us the first example of
the cultivation of a fad on the Elizabethan stage, dedicating an exceptional amount of resources
and energies toward what I loosely call Mediterranean plays.83 A majority of their active

83 I use the term “Mediterranean” rather than “proto-Orientalist” to reflect arguments made in the
recent collected volume, Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings
(2007), as well as the current trends in Orientalist and Post-Colonial scholarship of the early
modern period. The term has come to typically exclude the Catholic city-states of Italy, focusing
on the non-Christian cultures in the region contemporaneous to Elizabethan playgoers. The label
is a slippery one. References to and appearance by representatives of the Pope linger on the
peripheries of these plays, and other companies were interested in Italian novelli as rich sources
properties, such as *The Battle of Alcazar* (1588), a dramatization of the 1578 Battle of Alcácer Quibir, as well as nearly all of their new material, including *The Jew of Malta* (c.1589–90) and *A Looking Glass for London and England* (1592), turned to Mediterranean settings in order to examine topical plots and issues such as the Portuguese succession crisis and Elizabeth I’s marriage proposal from the Moroccan king. Their repertory helps us distinguish between fad and genre development in the period, as well as articulate what about Strange’s dramaturgy was vendible to returner-playgoers.

### 2.1 THE ORIENT OF THE ROSE: “ITS STRANGENESS, ITS DIFFERENCE, ITS EXOTIC SERIOUSNESS”

Discussing the Elizabethan playhouse often requires referring to a set of assumptions we, as literary and theater critics, share about its architecture. C. Walter Hodges, illustrator of children’s books and early modern playhouses, provided the visual template associated most closely with Renaissance theater. This template consisted of ten features attached to the principal architectural unit of the performance space and its tiring house, including the three-sided acting area, the audience area comprising the galleries and yard, a closed-off tiring house, two doors, a permanent upper stage, two stage posts, a curtain, windows, trap doors to Hell under the stage, and the Heavens. Dominant trends in Shakespeare Studies tend to gesture toward the

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for new material. None of Strange’s plays in this period work from such sources, but rather other histories, print and oral reports focused on the military campaigns of the Ottomans and adjacent non-Christian empires. The term still homogenizes to some extent playgoers’ shared knowledge of cultural distinctiveness; however, in privileging geography rather than a projected imaginary it remains useful for the purposes of this chapter.

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constructed nature of Renaissance drama in the sense of cultural and ideological influences rather than its materiality. In a 2005 special issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, “Theatrical Movements,” S.P. Cerasano describes in her headnote how many “aspects of the theatrical scene have also been envisioned as inert; or, at the very least, we often operate under the assumption that the players, companies, and theater financiers settled into similar—and stagnant—patterns of behavior.” Furthermore, “this sense of fixity has so pervaded the narrative of theater history, in fact, that it has produced an almost undifferentiated picture of the Elizabethan public playhouses.” Due to this seemingly undifferentiated picture, it is frequently overlooked that playhouse templates were different from one another, developing over time in response to the vicissitudes of the theatrical marketplace and topical, cultural influences.

Hodges predicted some of the ways in which a reconstructed Globe would solidify a template of Renaissance playhouses in both the popular and scholarly imagination. In his book chapter, “What is Possible,” he articulates the surprising misconceptions scholars had about Elizabethan playhouses prior to the recovery of the Globe foundations in 2008:

> But the responsibility is that when the new Globe is at last actually built and complete and at work, after all the effort of academic authority that has gone into it, so far as all the systems of public information and education are concerned, to say nothing of the universal influences of the media, *that will be that*. That will be the Globe. Photographs of it will be in all editions of Shakespeare. Audiences (we hope) and other visitors who go to it will, we hope, enjoy it and go home, and be content to know that that was the great Globe, *be it right or wrong*.

Despite his own mistaken hypotheses about the design of Elizabethan playhouses (mistakes to which he freely confesses), Hodges did not predict how his own drawings would remain

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86 S.P. Cerasano, “From the Editor: Theatrical Movements,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Fall 2005): iv.
87 Cerasano, “From the Editor: Theatrical Movements,” iv.
incorporated in the explanatory materials posted for audiences attending performances at the Rose archaeological dig site, for example, continuing to reinforce a popular sense of a standard template. It may be that it is simply easier to imagine the playhouse as a static entity or conceptual “green screen” upon which to project readings primarily mediated by the playtexts. How a space is constructed has implications for what that space can reveal culturally. As mutable and as evolving as the entertainments they housed, these venues must be reconceived in order to situate Strange’s playtexts in the materiality of their historical performance.

Built in or around 1576, the Theatre, the Rose, and the Curtain all shared the same architect, John Griggs, and roughly the same diameter of 72 feet (22 meters).89 If these playhouses were made relatively equal, they did not remain so. Based on evidence from recent excavations in Southwark of playhouses and bearbaiting rings, archaeologist Julian Bowsher is convinced that there was no such thing as “a typical Shakespearian theatre.”90 While there may have been a common early playhouse type Griggs imagined for the 1576 constructions, those three playhouses soon diverged from one another with “unspecific alterations at the Theatre, additions of stair turrets at the Curtain and remodeling at the Rose.”91 Such variability reinforces the understanding that the template of features varied greatly from playhouse to playhouse; in short, playhouse development and renovation was intentionally diverse rather than randomly so. Part of this intentionality had to do with the plague.

89 Considering the threshold the Rose and Strange’s Men share, there is something poetic about the fact that it was the Rose’s foundations that were the first to be discovered by the Museum of London Archaeology in 1989, even before the Globe.
The mid-1590s were marked by plague outbreaks in London. Death counts ranged from 150 to 1100 per week; considering that the playhouses were attended by roughly 15,000 people per week by 1595, they were routinely closed.\(^2\) While playwrights were turning to publishing to weather the epidemic, playhouse owners used the time to expand. Archaeological evidence and Henslowe’s accounts confirm the Rose underwent significant renovations in 1592 and 1595. The 1591/2 renovations focused on the remodeling of the stage area of the playhouse, including the construction of the first recorded roof over the stage not extrapolated from a speculative reading of a playtext.\(^3\) What has gone undefined is what were the different agendas for renovation in 1592 versus those in 1595. Consider that Henslowe records only two payments specifically to painters of the 125 individual renovation payments in 1591/2.\(^4\) In 1594/5, however, nine of the 24 individual payments for renovations were paid specifically to painters, including the “itm pd for carpenters work & mackinge the throne In the heuenes the 4 of June 1595.”\(^5\) This contrast suggests that while the roof over the stage was built in 1592, it did not include painted details until 1595.\(^6\) This chronology implies that the stage roof and the painted sun, moon, and constellations did not, in fact, grow up together.

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\(^3\) Up until 1752, the new year began in England on Lady Day, 25 March. I am employing the slash here to indicate the calendar year of the record against the calendar year as we would have it after the change, while dashes will indicate ranges.


\(^6\) The level of sophistication of the Heavens’ pulley system remains ambiguous based on the Henslowe, archaeological, and playtext evidence. No evidence of the particulars of the Rose superstructure were found in its archaeological survey, and plays in the season immediately following the 1591/2 renovations detailed later in this chapter suggest that at the very least a rudimentary pulley system was available, although it may not yet have been retrofitted with
FIGURE 2.1: Detail of Sam Wanamaker Globe Theatre roof paintings (2010).\textsuperscript{97}

It is a safe guess that the Heavens was not a part of the initial design of London’s theaters, and that the evolution of this architectural feature was, at the very least, a three-year piecemeal process. The most famous painted roof in the record of Elizabethan playing is not that of the renovated Rose but that of the Swan, built new in 1594/5. Touring England in 1596, Johannes de Witt sketched the playhouse interior, which is the earliest visual account of a dedicated venue in the period. Despite its murky transmission history of copying and recopying, the sketch has contributed to the general sense of formal fixity ascribed to all early modern playhouses. Glynne Wickham, in his genealogy of inner stage machinery, observes that our Henslowe’s “throne.” This sub-feature of the Heavens may, too, have evolved gradually, but evidence speaking to the particulars of that process are not extant. \textsuperscript{97} edna_million, \textit{Globe Theatre [1]}, JPEG photograph, October 2010, Flickr, https://www.flickr.com/photos/_edna_million/5145347385/.
“assumptions about physical conditions and production techniques are closely interrelated.” 98

The de Witt sketch is an instructive artifact in that it both articulates the shape of the English playhouse just after a significant change was made to these structures (thus giving us a better sense of the Dutchman’s reason for recording something new) but also elides the successive steps in that innovation. In a reactionary rather than trendsetting approach, playhouse landlords and companies were turning to material novelty as an additional resource to attract playgoers. As Bowsher notes, “this period was one of competition between the London playhouses, all striving to attract audiences, acting companies, and playwrights through new building designs.” 99 The very press of the audiences against the Rose stage is marked by a foot-and-a-half difference in the floor depth between the majority of the yard and the area immediately in front of that stage. 100 This suggests an allowance for more playgoers to pack into the yard, or perhaps a desire by playgoers to see aspects of the stage itself up close. As playhouses multiplied, the model of anticipating financial success through imitation may have no longer been sustainable in this increasingly diverse marketplace.

The gradual diversifying of playhouses may have been a product of their very close geographical proximity. The Rose and Globe were only about 100 yards apart, and the Swan about 400 yards westward. 101 The “toe-to-toe” competition of the construction of roofs and proximity of the Rose and Swan in 1595/6 forecasts a later contest between the Rose and Globe

100 Bowsher, “The Rose and Its Stages,” 42.
FIGURE 2.2: Arend van Buchell’s reproduction of Johannes de Witt’s sketch of the Swan playhouse (c. 1596).
in 1599/1600, as sketched by Knutson. Rather than offering plays that marked each playhouse as distinct, the Rose and Globe doggedly pursued similarities that season, staging comedies of similar structure that featured pastoral love plots and humours-based caricatures. Conducting a comparative analysis of the repertories as Knutson does here provides “insight into the logic of a company’s repertory” but does not “explain the ingenuity of its practitioners to identify a subject with theatrical potential and turn it into a stage-worthy play.” One way of speculating upon the conditions from which such practitioner ingenuity arose is to contextualize the material stage devices of the Swan and Rose, understanding that their distinct material affordances would have necessarily inflected the repertory that played out under their roofs. Once a playgoer had made it across the Thames to Southwark, it would take relatively the same amount of energy to travel to each of the playhouses. How might a playgoer decide which to attend if proximity and advanced advertising were not factors? Perhaps one factor was to what degree a painted and ornamented interior was a part of one’s desired theatrical experience.

Situating venues and their unique material affordances is not a new project, but part of a wider trend in early modern studies which attests to the “varied world of touring theatre and into the dynamic relationship that existed between metropolitan and regional professional theatre.” I made mention of some of these studies of emplacement in my introduction. David Kathman’s body of scholarship has rendered that metropolitan theatre marketplace all the more complex by

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102 Arend van Buchell and Johannes de Witt, *The Swan Theatre*, Sketch, c.1596, Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht.
104 Knutson, “Toe to Toe across Maid Lane,” 32.
demonstrating the ways in which inn-yards, playhouses, and beargardens functioned alongside and depended upon one another. By applying an ecocritical lens to the materiality of the playhouse, Vin Nardizzi has demonstrated how the up-cycled planks that made up these venues both echoed of their former lives as homes and shops, as well as “conscripted the structural woodenness of the playhouse” to a variety of theatrical ends. Mimi Yiu, in a study of the new Renaissance genre of the architectural treatise, argues the period understood constructed spaces to have “social and psychic impact,” where the “tangible properties” of the visual, textual and spatial collided “to create an architecture of the self.” These studies make clear that the pressors of the built space—the previous lives of their construction materials and their phenomenological influence—informed the content and curation of plays. They make clear that it was important for the topical richness of Strange’s repertory that the Heavens—comprised of a roof over the stage, attendant pillars, and a pulley system to suspend props, scenery, and actors—was not a feature in the initial construction of the first-generation playhouses, but a new feature that coincided with their residence.

108 The first non-dramatic reference to the Heavens feature is by Thomas Nashe in his preface to Philip Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella (1591), describing the book as a paper theater of poetic seriousness “with an artificial heav’n to overshadow the faire frame” rather than one of mere pleasure. In Thomas Heywood’s later Apology for Actors (1612), we get a more thoroughgoing description of “the covering of the stage, which wee call the heavens (where upon any occasion their gods descended), were geometrically supported by a giant-like Atlas, whom the poets for his astrology feign to bear heaven on his shoulders; in which an artificial sunne and moon, of extra-ordinary aspect and brightnesse, had their diurnal and nocturnall motions; so had the stars their true and celestial course” (34–5). For the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse reconstructed Shakespeare’s Globe rationale for the inclusion of a painted Heavens, see Tiffany Stern, “‘This Wide and Universal Theatre’: The Theatre as Prop in Shakespeare’s Metadrama,” in Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance, eds. Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern, The Arden Shakespeare (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2013), 15–9.
The other significant material pressor that informed the cultivation of Mediterranean plays in Strange’s repertory was its relationship to paint and cosmetics. I have shown that in the period when Strange’s would have first taken up residence, the Rose received a new paint job rather than nonspecific renovations, perhaps to keep up with the decorating of the new Swan or an innovation of its own. While many artifacts attesting to everyday London life have been found at the Rose archaeological site, very few of those artifacts have specific theatrical associations. Of those few items found, however, a cosmetic brush and part of the frame of a wall mirror alongside fragments of mirrored glass have survived.109 (A station for a player to go from boy actor to lady character, perhaps?) In nut-based makeup tests from period recipe books, Richard Blunt has demonstrated that “while medieval scarves, masks, and soot applications were generally a true black, Renaissance makeup is a more realistic brown.”110 The odds that the nut-based recipes were used by actors at the Rose and Swan increase when we consider the cluster marketing structure of Southwark: neighboring industries capitalized upon neighbors, including the use of wattle-and-daub infill for the floor of playhouses, streets, and bowling alleys that included soot and nut shells from a nearby soap yard not 200 yards from the Rose on Maid Lane.111 In addition, Lawrence Manley has observed an unusually large number of Strange’s plays involved pyrotechnics, possibly including the staging of human immolations by way of

sophisticated cosmetic stains. Used to represent acts of cruelty and judicial punishment, staged human immolations had an edge of topical relevance to English history and politics, and in particular their interrelation with Mediterranean history and politics. It would seem this engagement was made possible in part by the pyrotechnic skills of Strange’s in combination with the newly renovated Rose playhouse. While literary and theater critics have suggested the ways in which cultural difference was signified, my aim is to anchor those generalist observations within a specific season, a specific playhouse and a specific moment in its evolution. In so doing, the means by which the evolution in stage architecture, technology, and dramatic content contributed to the development of a Mediterranean fad become evident.

2.2 TOPICALITY AND ITS MEDITERRANEAN VARIATIONS: THREE CASES

The Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the large whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe…In the depths of this Oriental stage stands a prodigious cultural repertoire whose individual items evoke a fabulously rich world.

The narrative constructed around the Renaissance theatre’s attention to the Mediterranean is that it was initially popular for servicing narcissistic projections upon which to rigidify an Anglo-Protestant identity; it gradually evolved into more accurate contextualizations meditating on Mediterranean culture and its diversity. Two camps broadly mark the discussion of the function

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of the Mediterranean topos for English early moderns. On the one hand, these plays represented England’s nascent proto-imperialist fantasies—that widespread desire for hegemonic expansion that characterized Said’s nineteenth-century Britain as articulated by Richmond Barbour and others. On the other hand, a growing number of critics, including Nabil Matar, Emily Bartels, and Daniel Vitkus, have recently argued that rather than projecting outward, Renaissance Mediterranean plays represent a turn inward and express anxiety over a sense of national porousness by which English society was being quickly transformed by African and Ottoman cultural influences. Vitkus suggests that English theatre in London as a site of cultural production and the Mediterranean as a site of cultural exchange was closely linked as economic spheres. The public playhouses provided a space for ridicule of imperial pretensions as much as they modeled the salability of the Mediterranean. In this section, I expand this genealogy to


116 Linda McJannet, Emily Bartels, and Daniel Vitkus have argued in different permutations that early moderns had or at least attempted to develop an accurate accounting of the differentiated cultures of the Mediterranean, especially after England’s first contact with Moroccan envoys from Mulay Ahmad al-Mansur’s court in 1578. After this initial contact, official Ottoman histories were translated and circulated widely, sketching the causes of their military success and recommending that western princes emulate them in order to defeat their winning combination of “unity, martial excellence, and strict justice. As a particular variation of the Mediterranean play, Strange’s modernity and contemporaneity, a unique and significant quality elaborated by Manley and MacLean’s company biography, hang on an attempted cultural specificity in order to make larger ideological claims. See Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories About the Ottoman Turks* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Emily C. Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and Daniel Vitkus, *English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630*, Early Modern Cultural Studies, 1500–1700 (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2003).
include how the influence that the playing companies, and the Strange’s house style in particular, contributed to the development of this cultural topos.

That influence on the Mediterranean topos by playing companies came in the form of a fad. Fads in the Elizabethan marketplace took shape in one of two ways. The first was what Knutson calls cross-repertorial duplication, wherein a company, seeing the success of one technique by another company, borrowed, imitated, and innovated upon that technique in their own works.\textsuperscript{117} Such acts of cross-repertorial borrowing could manifest in something material like shifting from cloth masks to paint in order to signal cultural or symbolic distinctions. Or in the construction of plays such as using direct address to convey a character’s interiority. This method of fad cultivation could extend across companies and evinced the close network that constituted London’s theatrical marketplace. The second method was more reactionary to the vicissitudes of playgoer receipts, and riskier: through deliberate cultivation, a single company would throw a high percentage of their resources and man power into the development of a sub-genre or plot type whose initial financial successes seemed worth the risk.

I refer to the Strange’s house style strategy as a fad of this second kind because of its short-lived nature relative to other genres of the period. Sub-genres such as the revenge tragedy or English history play developed a set of relatively stable conventions that continued to evolve over the course of the early modern period. Aside from \textit{The English Moor} (c.1637), \textit{The Fatal Contract} (c.1639), and a handful of other Caroline “disguised Moor” plays, the great glut of plays featuring peoples from the Mediterranean were staged between 1582 and 1594 by Strange’s.\textsuperscript{118} This is not to discount the “masques of moors” tradition: there were five blackface

\textsuperscript{117} Knutson, \textit{The Repertory of Shakespeare’s Company}, 50–1.
Court performances well before the permanent playhouses, as documented by Andrea Stevens, between 1533 and 1566.\textsuperscript{119} In these Tudor masques, Moors were presented as damned souls whose “blackness outwardly embodies truths about inner states,” which made these masques ideal for the period for reflection and repentance of Christmastime revels.\textsuperscript{120} Virginia Mason Vaughn and Stevens have usefully historicized blackface practices specific to the Stuart period as well, but Elizabethan practices remain undifferentiated from these earlier and later practices. This may be in part due to the larger critical conversation concerning the Orient and the early modern stage, however, which conducts studies deriving from grouped readings of plays that come from distinctly different theatrical marketplaces; this identity politics-driven methodology implicitly presumes that all of these plays could and were performed in the same conditions between the reigns of Elizabeth I, James VI and I, and Charles I. It presents “a closed field,” to use Said’s expression, upon which early moderns’ conceptions of the Other and the “orient” remained fixed and static. I argue that, responding to the blockbusters \textit{I and II Tamburlaine}, \textit{I and II Tamar Cham}, and \textit{The Spanish Tragedy}, there is in fact a very different story to be told of Elizabethans’ engagement with Mediterranean peoples via Strange’s first season of regular day-to-day playing and their fad for, as described by the prologue to one of its most popular plays, Mediterranean “modern matter” (l. 50).\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{120} Stevens, \textit{Inventions of the Skin}, 97.
2.2.1. Modern Matter

Grouping plays featuring Mediterraneans together over a large, undifferentiated period of time, obscures the fluctuating interest playgoers had in this topos, producing a misprision about when and to what extent it had traction in the early modern English imaginary. The conditions that informed the composition and staging of the Elizabethan *Tamburlaine*, arguably the most lucrative of these Mediterranean plays designed for the first generation of open-air amphitheaters, were markedly different from that of, say, Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* (c.1607), a Jacobean piece that ran largely at the indoor Blackfriars playhouse with a different set of stage technologies and at a higher cost of entry. This kind of homogenizing of the material conditions of playing problematizes the way in which we think about Elizabethan theatrical genres and theatre history more broadly. For example, Louis Wann’s chronology of “oriental” plays from 1579 until 1642—roughly from the opening until the closing of the public playhouses in London—illustrates the type of misprision that comes from homogenizing the early modern theatre industry as a set of stable and undifferentiated house styles and practices.

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{I. } 1579–1581 & \text{3 years} & \text{3 plays.} \\
\text{II. } 1586–1611 & \text{25 years} & \text{32 plays.} \\
\text{III. } 1619–1627 & \text{8 years} & \text{6 plays.} \\
\text{IV. } 1638–1642 & \text{4 years} & \text{5 plays.} \\
\text{Date unknown} & & \text{*Antonio of Ragusa*}.
\end{array}
\]

**FIGURE 2.3:** Louis Wann, grouped chronology of “oriental” Elizabethan plays, 1579–1642.\(^{122}\)

Over the course of 63 years of playing, 32 plays of this topos were produced in a narrow window of 25 years—the same window when Strange’s were on the market—while only 14 plays of this kind were produced in the remaining 38 years of pre-Interregnal theatre. This is a different

picture than the sweeping narrative Culture Studies privileges, impacted by the material innovations of the first long-term collusion between a landlord and theatrical tenants. With an eye toward stochastic moments rather than smooth trajectories, fads become productive synchronic indicators speaking to the socio-economic concerns of a historically particularized public sphere. Strange’s was at the center of moment when the Mediterranean was a hot commodity for London stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Total Performances</th>
<th>Extant</th>
<th>Mediterranean</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A Knack to Know A Knave</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Looking Glass for London and England</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Battle of Alcazar (Muly Mollocco)</em></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bendo (or Byndo) and Richardo</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Clorys and Organto (or Ergasto)</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Constantine</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Don Horatio (The Spanish Comedy)</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Four Plays in One</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Harry of Cornwall</em></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I Henry VI</em></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Jealous Comedy</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jeronimo (The Spanish Tragedy)</em></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jerusalem</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Jew of Malta</em></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Machiavel</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Massacre at Paris</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Orlando Furioso</em></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pope Joan</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sir John Mandeville</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>II Tamar Cham</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Tanner of Denmark</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Titus and Vespasian</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zenobia</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL 24</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>63%</strong></td>
<td><strong>47%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2.1:** The Lord Strange’s repertory holdings, 1592/3.\(^{123}\)

\(^{123}\) Strange’s repertorial holdings have been compiled from Henslowe’s Diary and title page ascriptions. Mediterranean labels for non-extant plays drawn from *The Lost Plays* database and
### 1592/3 Season Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Text</th>
<th>1592/3 Season Only</th>
<th>1591/2 Season Only</th>
<th>In Repertory</th>
<th>Mediterranean Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Comedy of Errors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Edward IV</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Edward IV</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Em, the Miller’s Daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Henry VI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Henry VI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John a Kent and John a Cumber</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John of Bordeaux; or, the Second Part of Friar Bacon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seven Deadly Sins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Tamar Cham</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus Andronicus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL 36</strong></td>
<td>137</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2.1 (cont.)**

During the six months of unrestrained playing between 19 February 1591/2 and the 1
February 1592/3, Strange’s staged 136 performances of 32 distinct playtexts. At least 15 and as
many as 18 of the plays in repertory during this season, approximately half of their active
properties, featured contemporaneous Mediterranean figures and/or Ottoman locales. Less
concerned with the nearer Catholic Italian city-states, these Mediterranean plays focused further
east, specifically on the reaches of the non-Christian Ottoman Empire and North African Levant.
The percentage of the company’s plays that included Mediterraneans increases when we assess
their entire corpus. As many as 20 of their 36 total known playtexts feature similar figures and
locales. Wann’s division of four periods without a clear principle of inclusion leaves one
wondering if there was an Elizabethan “oriental” play (see Figure 2.3). By taking that division
and applying the principle of playing companies as I do, the “oriental” or Mediterranean play

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the Henslowe’s Diary...as a Blog! websites. Mediterranean percentages based on total number
excluding the three plays about which nothing of the content can be speculated upon.
was not a widespread phenomenon, but rather one located almost exclusively in a single playing company (see Figure 2.4).

Why the Mediterranean? Recent geopolitical events may have had an influence. The first Turkish envoy arrived in England in September of 1578 bearing a treaty of unrestricted commerce and gifts of lions, scimitars, horses, and ostensible unicorn horns.\textsuperscript{124} This successful exchange was quickly followed by several more, sometimes by official emissaries and sometimes by caids, the leaders of the piratical Barbary corsairs advancing on the Mediterranean and Atlantic. Eventually these exchanges resulted in a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth I from the Moroccan sultan himself, Mulay Ahmad al-Mansur.\textsuperscript{125} Both advancing in age, such a marriage, had it come about, would have been in the interest of ensuring control over commercial routes between the East and West. No union came of it, but the congenial relations between Elizabeth and al-Mansur did produce the first joint-stock company in England; the Levant Company was chartered in 1581 in order to regulate trade with the Mediterranean region. The joint-stock innovation, on which the sharer formula of playing companies was also based, has been referred to as an essential cornerstone in the development of modern capitalism.\textsuperscript{126} This newfound political and economic relationship with Morocco was likely a response to the Ottoman Empire’s ongoing attempts to extend its reach into central Europe. In 1529, Suleiman I’s successful siege and capture of Vienna resulted in the death of King Louis II, meaning that Ottoman conquest was as near as Hungary. More recently, Sebastian I of Portugal’s death after allying with Abu Abdullah Mohammed II at the Battle of Alcácer Quibir (Battle of the Three

\textsuperscript{124} Nabil Matar, \textit{Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery} (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 33.
\textsuperscript{125} Matar, \textit{Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery}, 33.
Kings) in 1578 had caused a succession crisis in Portugal. His body never made it back to Portugal for burial. Many were unconvinced of Sebastian’s death, so much so in fact that, between 1580 and 1640, four different pretenders laid claim to the Portuguese throne now kept firmly in trust by Spain. England’s greatest ally had been lost to their greatest enemy all through third-party dealings with Mediterraneans.

Another possible indication of the pervasiveness of Elizabethans’ preoccupation with Mediterranean geopolitics was the concomitant increase in print meditations on the relationship between England and the Mediterranean in the 1570s and 1580s. Many stressed the contemporaneity of their contents in their titles. John Daus’ translation of Johannes Sleidanus’ *A famous cronicle of oure time* (1560) sketched a series of contacts between Charles V and the Ottoman Turks, diagnosing faults in religion and the commonwealth itself as the reason the Holy Roman Emperor was unable to stem Ottoman campaigns westward. The critique was prescient considering that it would be his son, Philip II of Spain, who would come to rule Portugal after the death of its monarch by Mediterranean hands. The frontispiece of John Poleman’s *All the famous Battels that haue bene fought in our age throughout the world* (1578) combines a variety of firearms and crossbow bolts as its main decorative motif in order to stress its exigency. For Poleman, sixteenth-century battles with the Ottoman Turks were worth accounting for their military “prowesse” and “noblenesse of stocke.”

Published the same year the Battle of Alcácer Quibir took place, the book was popular enough to warrant a second volume. *The second part of the booke of battailes, fought in our age taken out of the best authors and writers in sundrie*

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languages (1587) includes “the Battaile of Alcazar, fought in Barbarie, betweene Sebastian the king of Portugall, and Abdelmelec, king of Marocco.”

Aside from these lesser known accountings, most notables of English historiography made comment on Mediterraneans’ impact on current politics, including John Stubbes in his *The Discouerrie of a Gaping Gulf* (1576), John Foxe in his *Actes and Monuments* (1583), and Raphael Holinshed in the third volume of his *Chronicles* (1586).

It would seem that the character of recent geopolitical events from or inflected by this region provided Strange’s repertory a particular sense of urgency. There are varying degrees of urgency, however; I am of a mind with Greg Walker when it comes to the ways in which drama conjures a sense of exigency. In the Tudor period, that topicality proved central to the structure and function of drama. According to Walker, plays were not merely such “because they touched upon political acts, but because they

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were themselves political acts.”\textsuperscript{129} Political dramas were always specific and occasional, gaining “its relevance and its potency from the expression of particular opinions at a given time and in a given place.”\textsuperscript{130} In their recent company biography, *The Lord Strange’s Men and Their Plays* (2014), Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean characterize Strange’s trend of complex, globally-oriented histories with a similar political efficacy: their house style was “‘bookish,’ drawing, most importantly, on the humanistic revival of classical learning and on writing from and about the contemporary world” with a “a direct embrace of current geopolitics” and featuring a “distinctively ‘modern’ geopolitical orientation.”\textsuperscript{131} Leah Marcus qualifies these visions of contemporaneousness by observing that “topical reading allows us to enter into alien areas of signification, which quickly spread beyond the fleeting contemporary reference to create a new field for interpretation,” with that spread producing “patches and glimmers of meaning that cause a play to gravitate toward some areas of signification and cultural functioning rather than others” over time.\textsuperscript{132} That these early 1590s plays about relatively contemporary events of a decade before depend not on the shallow pleasure of playgoers recognizing a popular meme, but rather on a pervasive and unresolved aspect of “modern matter,” suggests an attenuated cultural processing of these plays I consider to be “contemporaneity.” With a sense of the topics particular to the 1580s, to get to the center of gravity of Strange’s Mediterranean fad I now turn to the matter of two of Strange’s most lucrative plays and one of its least so.

\textsuperscript{130} Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, 35.
\textsuperscript{131} Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Lord Strange’s Men and Their Plays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 166.
2.2.2 Of Mountains and Molehills

After *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Battle of Alcazar* and *The Jew of Malta* were the two most frequently staged Mediterranean productions during the 1592–93 season. *Alcazar*, a contemporary history featuring the death of three kings in the midst of Ottoman military campaigns, played 14 times and averaged 32s 6d a night. The two salable features of the play were its Mediterranean context and the popular mythology surrounding its single English character, Captain Thomas Stuckeley. Of multiple and sometimes conflicting allegiances, the historical figure was the bane of several governments in his lifetime. Made reference to in not one but three volumes of Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, he was a central figure in two plays, three ballads, and several letters to the Spanish ambassador from William Cecil Burghley. Stuckeley was also featured in a number of published sermons in the mid 1580s chastising social climbers—those who desired, as one put it, “to be the monarks, if it bee but of a mole-hill”—for which he became a kind of catchphrase. For to be “a Stukeley, a faithlesse person & perjured beast,” full of pride “as Absolon’s facifal heade was hanged in his own lockes, and Haman on his

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133 *Alcazar* is one of two plays and a number of other literary works of the period that featured Stukeley. Peele had a particular affinity for Stukeley, making him the lynchpin in *Alcazar* but also a part of his 1589 epic poem in tribute to Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Norris in their attempt to rally an English Armada against Spain. Its dedication directs the soldiers to “Bid Theaters and Proud Tragedians / Bid Mahomets Poo, and mightie Tamburlaine, / King Charlemaine, / Tom Stukeley and the rest / Adieuw: to Armes, to Armes, to glorious Armes.” The dedication makes reference to those Mediterranean plays where England is the victim of Ottoman advancement. See George Peele, *A Farewell. Entitled to the Famous and Fortunate Generalls of Our English Forces: Sir John Norris & Sir Frauncis Drake Knights, and All Theyr Brawe and Resolute Followers* (1589; Early English Books Online, accessed May 10, 2016), [5], http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845932/.

own gallowes, so Stukeley & Stukeleis like haue had their just deserts, & drank the wine of their own vintage.” Matar argues that, as a social climber beholden to no particular affiliation, Stukeley represented the greatest fears of Protestants and Catholics alike; even the Papal See registered concern over Stukeley. While it is unclear to whom it was addressed, a letter from Bishop Sega, stationed in the Low Countries (then a Spanish territory), sketches the nature of Stukeley’s threat:

Stickley was a failure, someone who interferes with things, and someone who weaves things together, one who will use up the power of the King [of Spain] as well as the pope, His Holiness would not burden himself with him, especially knowing that the said Stuckley has been rebuffed by the kings of Spain and France.

Here Sega portrays Stukeley as a force that both “interferes” and “uses up” sovereign power in order to redirect that power, to “weave” it into that of his own design. Alcazar takes up these myths around the historical Stukeley to craft a character who exerts his ability to select and reselect his nation and faith, feeling it “not so great desert / To be begot or born in any place” (II.ii.34–5). Stuckley, alongside similar characters throughout Strange’s repertory, represents a threat to models of publicly-structured loyalty upon which both post-Reformation politics and Anglicanism had been founded. Alcazar projects a fantasy of reciprocity as an effective model for political allegiance—which Ottoman culture had come to connote financially, politically, and militarily—as it anticipated a Protestant military success.

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135 Prime, *A Sermon Briefly Comparing the Estate of King Salomon and His Subjectes*, [17].
The concept that links Stukeley’s ethics with that of his Mediterranean co-conspirators is that of “policy,” referring to a proposed stratagem to be carried out by an individual rather than a regime. Stukeley reveals his method for capturing a country for his own in two speeches, both direct addresses to an ostensibly English crowd, the countrymen he willingly left behind:

There shall no action pass my hand or sword
That cannot make a step to gain a crown,
No word shall pass the office of my tongue
That sounds not of affection to a crown,
No thought have being in my lordly breast
That works not every way to win a crown. (II.ii.69–74)

To waste no energy on any task that does not contribute to procuring him a kingdom of his own is Stukeley’s motto; it is a personal policy that has worked in several countries with kings and popes alike. An extreme experiment in self-fashioning, ownership over a nation and belonging to a nation are one in the same for Stukeley. With this strict personal regimen Stuckeley articulates not only his motivation but also his intended process of transformation:

Deeds, words and thoughts shall all be as a king’s,
My chiefest company shall be with kings,
And my deserts shall counterpoise a king’s.
Why should not I then look to be a king? (II.ii.75–8)

Through this policy or method, Stuckeley reasons that the only possible remuneration must be of equal political status. If all his energies are to affect his own kingdom, and he keeps all his time with and learning from monarchs, then the only logical outcome is to become one himself:

I am the Marquess now of Ireland made
And will be shortly King of Ireland.
King of a mole-hill had I rather be
Than the richest subject of a monarchy.
Huff it, brave mind, and never cease t’aspire,
Before thou reign sole king of thy desire. (II.ii.78–83)

Stukeley’s core motivation is to have a kingdom for his own not stolen but won over time by clever personal policy. Peele appropriates the sermon convention contrasting monarchs and
molehills, attaching it to Stukeley in order to perhaps encode a critique of the fruits borne by personal policy-making as a strategy of governance. Torn between conformity and subversion, Stukeley’s treasonous disloyalty to any nation or faith is at odds with the appealing personal sovereignty undergirding his political promiscuity.

Unique to Strange’s play and not extant in ballads and anonymous play of the mid 1590s is that Stukeley’s speech takes the more common connotation of “policy,” the coherent agenda of a nation-state, and ascribes it to the personal will of an individual subject. The implication is that an individual has the potential to carve out space for a kind of personal sovereignty that operates outside the nation-state. This kind of anti-hero, who “fashion themselves not in loving submission to an absolute authority but in self-conscious opposition,” Greenblatt ascribes exclusively to Christopher Marlowe and his notion of absolute play: the compulsion for repetition and evasion brought to their absurd excesses represent the threatening extremes of the self-fashioning ethos. Like Stukeley in his desire for personal sovereignty, Marlowe’s figures “freely proclaim their immense hunger for something which takes on the status of a personal absolute.” As a sociological argument about improvisation, Greenblatt locates the source of Marlowe’s suspicious disposition in the notion “that all objects of desire are fictions, theatrical illusions shaped by human subjects” concomitantly resulting in “subjects [that] are themselves fictions, fashioned in reiterated acts of self-naming” not unlike Stukeley’s two new titles, “marquess” and “King” which he claims for himself.

139 Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning, 218.
140 Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning, 218–9.
Useful as this model of self-fashioning is, *Alcazar* has been safely ascribed not to the hand of Marlowe but of Peele. This would seem an opportune moment to pause on the material limits of author-centered study of Renaissance theatre. Greenblatt himself, in describing his method of analysis, gestures toward the influence of companies and the repertory system:

If we want to understand the historical matrix of Marlowe’s achievement, the analogue to Tamburlaine’s restlessness, aesthetic sensitivity, appetite, and violence, we might look not at the playwright’s literary sources, not even at the relentless power-hunger of Tudor absolutism, but at the acquisitive energies of English merchants, entrepreneurs, and adventurers, promoters alike of trading companies and theatrical companies.141

Peele’s literary sources, the “modern matter” of geopolitical events and shared cultural knowledge brought home by merchants, entrepreneurs, and adventurers are his historical matrix. That matrix would also include his contemporaries writing for Strange’s, including Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, and Thomas Heywood, as well as Marlowe. By linking presentational tactics and dramatic conventions synchronically across a repertorial set rather than diachronically within a single author’s oeuvre, we can begin to identify more precisely functions of topicality in theatre. In so doing, Greenblatt’s “absolute play,” which “flaunts society’s cherished orthodoxies, embraces what the culture finds loathsome or frightening, transforms the serious into the joke and then unsettles the category of the joke by taking it seriously, courts self-destruction in the interest of the anarchic discharge of its energy,” looks more like a product of Strange’s preferred mode of representation (to which a playwright might cater) than an individual playwright’s disposition.142

Greenblatt’s model of the Marlovian anti-hero works in more ways than self-naming and institutional opposition in the case of Stukeley. While Stukeley fantasizes ever-increasing returns

for his forays into nobility, the play itself is structured as a sequence of diminishing returns. The cause of depreciation is explicitly associated with the mercenary nature of Ottoman promise-making: when kin turn against kin in the ruling classes of the North African Levant the different factions reach out for troop resources from nearby tributes. The promised troop remunerations are made in terms of feudal troth-vows. Calsepius, a bashaw captain, comes to defend the old king Abdelmelec not “as mercenary men to serve for our pay, / But as sure friends by our great master sent / To gratify and to remunerate / Thy love, thy loyalty and forwardness” (I.i.22–5). As early at the 1520s, “remuneration” referred to the necessity for material reward or repayment. The term suggests something fiscal and fungible, but is used here in an overtly sentimental context of janissaries (themselves the fantasy of fidelity that the English impressment system could never replicate) pledging a loyalty that needs no repayment. In the passage, the use of “remunerate” undercuts the sentimentality of troth vows, emptying the political act of its reciprocating power. As much as we might say that this anti-hero, conditioned by an articulated personal policy of resistance toward fundamental cultural institutions, is a Marlovian tactic, that statement is only true insofar as we consider that Marlowe was himself conditioned by (and perhaps an expert interpreter of) economic trends of his theatrical marketplace. His contesting hero was also Peele’s as much as it was employed in a number of anonymous plays by Strange’s. The more accurate statement may be that Greenblatt’s “absolute play” was a house style privileged by Strange’s, and at which Marlowe particularly excelled if the high percentage of his plays that make up their repertory are any indication.

If Stukeley is representative of an identity transmogrified by this Mediterranean world, a character type whose being in this other world can resist institution as such, then we need to look at both his major speeches in the play to explicate that process. Charles Edelman in his edition of *Alcazar* hypothesizes that Stukeley’s death speech was likely taken from the several popular ballads about the man.\(^{144}\) While none from the sixteenth century are extant, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century versions provide additional clues as to Stukeley’s emblematic status. Both the ballads and Peele’s play take as their conceit “brave Stukely bidding the World Adieu” having “liv’d and dy’d in love of Kings” (ll.131–2).\(^ {145}\) In the play, having been born literally on London Bridge above the Thames, Stukeley “lived in affluence of wealth and ease” until “a discontented humor” drove him out of his country on a “pilgrimage” (V.i.140; 142; 180). In the ballads, the reason for his leaving is far less ambiguous. After marrying the daughter of a wealthy alderman, Stukeley becomes discontented with wedded life and eventual poverty having spent “one hundred pound a day in waste” (l. 33). After selling the clothes off his wife’s back, “away from her” (l. 54) grief and complaints “he parted” (l. 56). At the end of the ballads, Stukeley regrets the abandonment of his wife. From that guilt and the fear of impending death’s presumption “to

\(^{144}\) Edelman hypothesizes that there may have been many ballads in circulation from which Peele drew (40). While none remain extant from this period, there are three versions of the ballad printed between 1624 and 1759 housed at the Bodleian Library and accessible via Broadside Ballads Online. Each version, though with some editing and made by different printers, includes the same woodcut of Stukeley leading his men into battle. This suggests that the ballad with the woodcut was inherited and reprinted together overtime, leaving the possibility that there may have been previous versions that circulated concurrently with Peele’s play. This is further viable when we consider that the ballad was to be sung to the tune, “King Henry’s going to Boulogne,” referring to Henry VIII’s French victory of the mid-1540s. In reference to these ballads I will cite the earliest extant, but the quotations are synonymous across the three extant versions.

change this life of mine into a new” (l. 129), Stukeley finds comfort in reflecting on his life at the elbow of kings. The Stukeley of the play expresses neither remorse nor fear, but requests one last gesture of celebrity imploring “thy country ring thy knell” (V.i.176), to presumably English playgoers as if his death is something worth remarking for them. This is the only planned moment in which the narrative fiction of the play would have been broken for playgoers. The focus on Stukeley’s last military campaign in the Mediterranean highlights the strong subversive appeal not only of his persona, but of the Mediterranean as Other and not. According to historian Juan Tázon, the source of that appeal derived not only from his military successes, but also from his political ones achieved through a policy of “reciprocal interest and manipulation”; “His tragedy, therefore, can be read as springing from the ‘means’ used rather than the ‘end’ chosen.”

The mix of ballad form with direct address magnifies the desire for playgoers to empathize with Stukeley, the presentism of his directive speech causing his character to oscillate between fictional character and historical person.

When we consider the ideological content that threads the company’s repertory, an investment in staging models of social reciprocity and the limits “Stukeleis [a]like” provided come to the fore. Their repertory alongside other cultural products suggest that, in the larger cultural imaginary of Elizabethan England, Stukeley became an emblem for those attempting to conscript models of social reciprocity, models typically dictated by the figurehead of a particular society (monarch, sultan, pope) in order to fashion for themselves a kind of personal sovereignty outside the state. In his lamentations, Stukeley does not rage against death itself but instead at having been fated to consort with an ill-counseled king:

Ah sweet Sebastian, hadst thou been well advised

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146 Juan E. Tazón, The Life and Times of Thomas Stukeley, 1525–1578 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 239; 15.
Thou mightst have managed arms successfully,  
But from our cradles we were markéd all  
And destinate to die in Afric here. (V.i.169–72)

Peele gives his death a subversive punch: disallowing the recuperative potential of repentance and regret featured in the later ballads and the anonymous 1596 play, Stukeley’s farewell in Peele’s play instead underscores the uselessness of subversion and of “bitter rage” at “Fortune’s rule” (V.i.179). The ultimate failure of his attempts to fashion a self that operates outside the cultural institutions that inscribe identity suggests nothing particular in the world was progressed by the life of Stukeley, pointing up the limits of self-fashioning in the process. Stuckeley will go unmarked among the dead.

And yet. When accounting for the body of knowledge playgoers may have shared amongst the print, cultural, and political milieus thus far sketched, we can posit that Marcus’s expanded “patches and glimmers of meaning” this play may have come to accrue a decade after events Alcazar depicts. Not an initial contender, Muly Mahamet Seth presides over the “prince’s funerals” (V.i.128). For the rightful king Abdelmelec, he is “buried and embalméd as is meet” (IV.i.194). For the Christians, Portuguese soldiers are allowed to take the body of King Sebastian and “return from hence to Christendom” (V.i.225) for the appropriate burial. As knowing playgoers may remember, however, the historical Sebastian’s body never made it back to Portugal, rearranging Iberian politics in the process and remaining a subject hotly contested across the Channel. It is a moment similar to the conclusion of Shakespeare’s Henry V (c.1599): a dark shadow is cast over the nationalism of that play for those who recall that Hal in fact dies shortly after the play’s events, and his son eventually loses France despite the suggestions that England was destined to maintain it by God’s right. While many have commented on the pervasive anxiety in England over Elizabeth’s succession throughout her reign, as a seated
monarch the issue of succession crisis could not be explicitly staged. This moment in *Alcazar*, like the conclusion of *Henry V*, gestures toward that anxiety implicitly by relying on a presumed shared knowledge of knowing consumers.

One way to ensure that Stukeley character was not emptied of meaning by the nature of his death was to make the contrastive point doubly so. To do so, the bodies of the three kings are grotesquely ventriloquized in *Alcazar*. Afraid that the “sudden sorrow of the news” of Abdelmelec’s death would cause “the army wholly [to] be discomfited,” Muly Mahamet Seth orders his body “in this apparel as he died…set him in his chair with cunning props, / That our Barbarians may behold their king / And think he doth repose him in his tent” (V.i.43–53). Stukeley is then killed in the next scene and is then immediately followed by the body of Sebastian being hauled on stage, leading us to presume that the gag had worked. To Muly Mahamet Seth a Portuguese soldier describes having found his king “wrapped in his colours coldly on the earth, / And done to death with many a mortal wound” (V.i.220–1), the corresponding actor or a dummy laying before him. Considering the difficulty of carrying bodies on and off stage and the blood the actor would have to be covered in (and the costume expense that implies), I would hazard the dummy a more likely scenario, especially when a third corpse, “the body of the ambitious enemy” (V.i.232) Muly Mahamet, is thrown at the feet of the new African emperor by his own soldier. Following the stage directions, the corpses of all three kings would now be propped up on the stage in one way or another, made grotesque objects to be traded in as a show of fidelity to the new monarch.

That two of these bodies are used as literal props to solidify the victor is a grotesque extension of Louis Montrose’s arguments concerning the dramatizing of the theatricality of power in early modern England, namely as a recurrent contest among historical actors to control
the “personation” of the king, the very thing Stukeley desired for himself. The model of reciprocity in *Alcazar* is weighed not in the death of Stukeley, then, but in the death of the three actual monarchs. Not only are all three would-be kings of Morocco killed in the battle, but their bodies are recycled into tokens of loyalty to the new regime. Those who actually served as kings, Sebastian and Abdelmelec, are given funerary rights according to their respective faiths. The two aspiring to the crown, Stuckeley and Muly Mahamet, are given no such honors. For the later:

> His skin will be parted from is flesh,
> And being stiffened out and stuffed with straw […]
> So to deter and fear the lookers on. (V.i.251–3)

The Turk traitor’s body will continue to ventriloquize the threat of his infidelity to kin and kingdom. While the true kings’ reciprocal policy proved a faulty model for governance, the pretenders are condemned for combining a mercenary logic with a vaulting ambition above their fated station. Stukeley is a party not to nation building but rather to multinational “self-destruction in the interest of the anarchic discharge” of the self-fashioning energies of governance. Not for naught, Stukeley here proves to have unsettled an entire continent whose geopolitics reach as far as England with the Spanish succession crisis still unresolved by 1593. In this instance, the Mediterranean provided a space for theatre to interrogate self-interest, subversion, and its political ramifications without the impediment of the Master of the Revels.

What about the staging of politically promiscuous individuals, particularly those trafficking in a species of manipulation on which “more dishonor hangs…than all the profit their return can bear” (II.iii.64–5), did Strange’s imagine would appeal particularly to Elizabethan playgoers? To answer the why of *Alcazar*—why stage it, why attend it—we need to look at the

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play in its repertorial context to consider its ethos as part of a set that included equally successful products of Marlowe’s.

Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* played ever so slightly less often than *Alcazar* during the 1592–93 season, 13 times, but averaged slightly better takings at 40s 8d a night. Of commensurate success and locale, *Malta* is the emblematic example of Marlowe’s “absolute play.” The ghost of Niccolo Machiavelli himself is prologue to the play of Barabas, articulating what is at stake for a community—the island city-state of Malta in this case—when a strict policy of reciprocity is applied to both financial and political spheres. For Barabas, an individual’s worth is measured in terms of their immediate labor value. He refers to his operatives as “factor” (I.iii.245) and “credit” (I.i.57) expressing a vision of work and value that may remind us of Marx.149 His daughter, Abigail, shines brightest in her father’s eyes when she demonstrates herself as a worthy investment by stealing back their fortune:

*Abigail* Here—(*throws down bags.*) Hast thou’t? There’s more, and more, and more.

*Barabas* O my girl,
My gold, my fortune, my felicity,
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy:
Welcome, the first beginner of my bliss!
O Abigail, that I had thee here too,
Then my desires were fully satisfied;
But I will practise thy enlargement thence.
O girl, O gold, O beauty, O my bliss! *Hugs his bags.* (II.i.46–54)

Barabas’ exclamations of joy begin to collapse the identity of his daughter with the gold she is handing down to him. Are his “gold,” “fortune,” and “felicity” similes to the value of his daughter, or is his daughter but one object in a list of things he values most? Or, is Barabas’ fortune in fact his child, his “girl,” as much as Abigail? The object of his exclamations is

unclear: what exactly is the source of “bliss,” “strength,” and “death”? The reiteration of “O” seemingly links Abigail as the subject in the attenuated anaphora; however, in his wishing that she was “here too” we are corrected. Abigail is but an afterthought to these exclamations of joy. The simile is again confused with the stacking of “girl,” “gold,” “beauty,” and “bliss,” to be reaffirmed that his wealth is in fact the source of joy with the stage direction for hugging. No one is exempt from Barabas’ policy of substitutional logic: money has human value as much as humans have monetary value.

While Barabas is the character who most consistently deploys this policy of substitution predicated on reciprocity, the governor of Malta, Ferneze, is not much better. In the play, the city of Malta is already decaying due to a governor literally and morally without credit. Left bankrupt from attempts to protect Rhodes “lately lost” (II.ii.32), Governor Ferneze has been reassigned to Malta. The Ottomans come calling for ten years of tribute left unpaid, amounting to “a hundred thousand crowns” (II.ii.36). This just so happens to be half of Barabas’ income newly earned from risky yet lucrative trade with Persia. It only makes sense to Ferneze (and conveniently serves his moral superiority) to conscript Barabas’ fortune rather than that of Malta’s God-fearing citizens for the sake of the city. It is only when the suggestion that Spanish troops might be procured to fend off the Ottomans that Ferneze considers other alternatives. Pandering to the virtue of his soldiers when they risk defection, Ferneze suddenly adopts a different posture of virtue in which “Honour is bought with blood and not with gold” (II.ii.55–6). While Barabas’ rather extreme method of valuing individual merit is distasteful, his consistency seems more honorable than Ferneze’s inability to commit to any policy whatsoever, preferring expedient rather than sustainable options.
In the mouths of both Barabas and Ferneze the notion of credit conflates individual subjectivity with personal wealth. Barabas himself refuses to be made “convertite” in all senses of the word, of course, unabashedly elaborating that robbing him of his “wealth, the labour of my life, / The comfort of mine age, my children’s hope” (I.ii.147–51) in order to save the city from ruin is “an injury” (I.ii.83) far worse than sacrificing the lives of soldiers. Barabas’ absolutist self-interest seems a logical response to Ferneze’s racial profiling. As the play evolves, Barabas recognizes how the “kingly kind of trade” that Ferneze has sanctioned by his willingness to use his income to buy political leverage. The result is a trickle-down effect that provides Barabas with the means “to purchase towns / By treachery, and sell ‘em by deceit” (V.v.46–7) vis-à-vis his liquidity. “Carat[s] of this quantity” equates to both power and political security for Barabas, providing him the ability “to ransom great kings from captivity” (I.i.30–2). By sanctioning the equation of personal credit with political power, the Governor has sublimated himself to the whims of an individual citizen. In this Barabas poses a threat alike to Stuckeley: a citizen has discovered a personal policy by which to cultivate a particular political capital and possibly win himself his very own molehill to rule.

Realizing his mistake in crossing Barabas, Ferneze wrongly labels his Machiavellian manipulations of credit “a jew’s courtesy,” unable to see the reciprocal process by which, having adopted this approach through international mercantilism, “he that did by treason work our fall / By treason hath delivered” the heir of the Ottoman Empire “to us” (V.v.107–9). Vitkus observes that part of the anxiety surrounding the new financial systems based on principles of credit, group risk, and substitution becoming increasingly pervasive in Elizabethan society was that “the English were undergoing a double conversion that combined ‘Jewish’ finance and ‘Turkish’
force.” To turn Turk was to literally adopt an amoral system of credit uninterested in concepts of fair trade, fair pricing, or other reciprocal transactions invested in the social. What is “Turk” or “Mediterranean” about these plays, then, is not just their cultural or geographical specificity.

At the core of successful Strange-produced Mediterranean plays was the political problem of the threat reasoned self-interest poses to communal sustainability—a threat that Ottoman and Levant peoples had come to connote. While Barabas and Ferneze share this Machiavellian “policy,” it is not an invention particular to Malta. It is therefore significant that Malta locates this reasoned self-interest in the invading Turks; this personal policy is a learned behavior adopted by Barabas and Ferneze (and Stuckeley) from their previous experiences with the Ottoman east. Through Barabas’ trade with Persia and Ferneze’s failed military attempts, they have assimilated a perceived Arabic amorality that values financial and political profit equally over communal good. For Turks, it is on a favorable wind and on the “desire of gold” that the world turns (III.v.3–4). Similarly, in Alcazar, Muly Mahamet expresses the moral sentiment that “gold is the glue, sinews and strength of war” (I.ii.10–1). In his mouth “a counterfeit profession is better / Than unseen hypocrisy” (I.ii.292–3) and thus do ends justify one’s means. Gold and empire are understood in the world of the play as inextricably linked, underpinning an Ottoman world-view not mystically ancient but close and current to English playgoers.

In this light, it becomes all the more striking that Strange’s plays routinely crafted an image of near-historical Mediterranean societies wherein wealth and violence are the primary mechanisms of power. In Malta, what is threatening about this cultural assumption is the unsustainability of the policy of strict reciprocity. The initial problem that puts the action of the play in motion, tribute gone unpaid, is an emblematic case. Tribute as a model for imperial

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150 Vitkus, English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 172.
power demonstrates the political ramifications of reciprocity at levels both local and national: either individuals pay to display loyalty or the city is razed to the ground to ensure it. Having no immediately discernible gains in protection or interest from the empire as a tributary state, Malta simply did not pay. (It is unclear if this was a choice made or inherited by Ferneze.) Now that it is required, the re-distribution of a small segment of the population’s wealth for the well-being of the whole is anything but reciprocal. It is a happenstance that a member of the community could pay off a poor political choice. But framing it as a “policy” decision, one that could be applied at any time in a number of variations on the same situation implies its ideological sustainability, as if in every case it would be a viable option to successfully evade destruction. This policy of equal reciprocations is nefarious in that it appeals to the desire for fungibility on both an individual and national scale. Barabas becomes the litmus test for the later. He contends that “men of judgment” should participate in immoral “means of traffic from the vulgar trade,” its risks promising “infinite riches in a little room” (I.i.34–7). This is to say that risky trade ventures increase not only the hard assets of material wealth, but also the soft assets of liquid cash, credit, and purchasing power that offer unlimited possibilities through a policy of clever investment. This notion undergirds the way in which Barabas engages with the rest of the world whether it be his daughter, who leaves him to join a convent, or his Turkish slave, Ithamore. Both test and reveal the flaw in his substitutional logic: the human desire to get more for less.

It is through Ithamore that the play becomes invested in the poetic justice of perverted political bartering turning back to bite the haggler for its moral thrust. “Spend as myself” Barabas implores Ithamore after just having demonstrated the value of his service by poisoning an entire convent with porridge (III.iv.45). We hear again a rhetoric of substitutions, a rhetoric that Ithamore himself adopts back again from Barabas and attempts to use to blackmail his
master (with some prodding by his prostitute love). As a slave, Ithamore has learned from Barabas not the Ottoman policy of reciprocity, but rather a perverted permutation of it. The mainstay of barter culture, to haggle in order to negotiate a fair price, is an easily perverted economic concept. When either side of the negotiation privileges their needs above the other, the process becomes motivated by deceit: to get more from the other by giving up the least amount of trade value to get it. This personal perversion is writ large in the city Malta. In the geopolitical standoff between Malta and their Ottoman lords, the city desires to be free of their violence without paying for it. In the individual standoff between Ferneze and Barabas, the governor takes Barabas’ income without having worked for it. Reciprocity thus works nicely as a strictly applied theory, but when deployed with human variables, functions poorly in practice. Feeling underpaid and underserved by his master, Ithamore has this “treachery repaid” (V.v.188) by outing Barabas’s relationship with the Ottoman invaders—having given them access to the city through a common sewer—to Ferneze. Turks turn on Turks, while the Maltese on one another.

Malta runs the risk of ringing a little flat because of this poetic justice. It seems too neat that Barabas gets his just deserts just as Ferneze discovers some inner nobility to take on the invaders. Following the play’s theme of reciprocity makes this plotting seem less pat. To ensure that neither society goes unscathed, Barabas’ adoption of the “policy” leads to the death of the Ottoman heir. But the formal aspect of his deserved retributions links the play’s plot to its content: the play’s morality is itself reciprocal. For Barabas’ dehumanizations, the play deals him out equal retribution: he is boiled alive on stage in a cauldron at the same time that Ottoman soldiers have been trapped in a pit in his house and set ablaze. As the characters have executed a strict reciprocal policy on one another, so does the play effect this as a mechanism for resolution. By applying the appealing policy of reciprocity to both fiscal and political spheres, the moral
nefariousness of this policy as a social vision comes to the fore. That no one escapes alive with their moral compass intact positions the play as one of critique: reciprocity as a policy for political negotiation is unsustainable, as vulnerable to self-interested perversion as England to Ottoman conquest.

*Malta* and *Alcazar* demonstrate the pervasive rhetoric of amoral economics—through credit, policy, and mercenary remuneration—for which Turks had become emblematic on the Elizabethan stage. Strange’s particular attention to the problem of reciprocity and its Ottoman connotations, of which these two plays are emblematic, suggests the thematic aspect of the company’s house style concerned with models of financial cooperation. At the very least it would seem that amoral reciprocity was an issue the company considered to have been on the London playgoers they hoped to entice. Where was the limit or point of thematic saturation for Strange’s fad, then? One of the 1592–93 season’s biggest flops, *A Looking Glass for London and England*, is useful in this regard, employing a Biblical narrative intersecting with the Ottoman east in order to take up a didactically devotional posture to the problem of reciprocity. Manley and MacLean argue that the repertory’s focus on “especially contemporary or near contemporary geopolitical affairs” intentionally complemented their primary “representational paradigms drawn from classical and contemporary continental sources like the Senecan play and the Italian novella, using them to support suspenseful and intrinsically compelling structures that, in contrast to older techniques of narration, commentary, or allegorization.”

In *Looking Glass*, the combination of allegorization with the contemporaneity of London itself serves as the play’s strategy for recuperation.

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151 Manley and MacLean, *The Lord Strange’s Men and Their Plays*, 5.
Malta and Alcazar are other species of the London inveighed against in *Looking Glass*. Their rulers, without credit morally and materially, extend outward to influence the moral compass of the state. In *Looking Glass*, Ottoman society is not deployed as a form of moral “antimatter,” but rather as an immediate parallel to a depreciation of England’s virtue, London being a test of that larger condition writ small. At the end of each scene the chorus figure Oseas, presumably in the newly constructed gallery space that was part of the Heavens addition, begs “London take heed, these sins abound in thee” (I.iii.419). The focus of his expository speech is the City’s dismissal of the poor, having become a place where “poverty is despised and pity banished…the poor complain, the widows wronged be” (I.iii.413; 420). The major institutions that mechanize the nation, including government and the law, are to blame in having “made a labouring of strife” (IV.v.1818) rather than a source of virtue. Because of its Biblical content and intertextual print cohort of adventurer and devotional pamphlets, Lori Humphrey Newcomb and Knutson both indicate the ways *Looking Glass* would have operated as a form of instructive popular devotion, aiming to recuperate a culture of almsgiving the play posits has been lost from London’s streets. As evidence of a play designed with a London amphitheatre in mind, Oseas links the City and the morality of its playgoers together.

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The Assyrian city of Ninevah is made “a precedent” for the “happy Isles” “bounded by the West” (V.iii.2162–5), England; the legalistic simile suggests that which mechanizes English virtue is under threat by a “plague” (IV.v.1823) of self-interest. The source of this moral corruption is not the new king, Rasni, but rather the bad wives and worse counsellors with which he surrounds himself. Rasni relishes the sycophantic praise of his tributary kings, courtiers, and caterpillar counsellors. While “no man dare say no” (I.i.156), Rasni’s viceroy’s recognize that he is a flash in the pan, with “no vertue to maintaine his Crowne” (I.i.136). Rasni is a personal monarch whose politics of intimacy, to use Curtis Perry’s framework, are “structurally susceptible to the corrupting influence” of favorites. Rasni’s susceptibility is not the source of blame for the widespread poverty and economic disparity in Ninevah, however. The play positions counselors and peers of the realm as the source of corruption while Rasni remains a “virtuous heathen” by way of his eventual conversion. It is the flattering courtiers like Radagan whose “blushing” (II.ii.1187) praises negate the “common exaltations” (II.i.536) of the “base and abject swains” (III.ii.1189) of Ninevah. Radagan’s rhetoric echoes the 1592 anti-Burghley libels Manley and MacLean point to: “that the ‘generall oppression of the people’ was ‘no lesse lamentable then the ouerthrowe of the nobilitye,’ the libel explained that ‘the Lyftenantes and Iustices of the Shires, who are reported to liue in best credit with their countries, are no more but the subiect of pusuivants, catchpoles, and promoters.”

It is the middlemen, like Barabas and Stuckeley, who live most comfortably and “in best credit” on the backs of the general people. By coopting this particular popular critique, Looking Glass suggests self-

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156 Manley and MacLean, *The Lord Strange’s Men and Their Plays*, 243.
157 Quoted in Manley and MacLean, *The Lord Strange’s Men and Their Plays*, 223.
interested policy is not contained to the outskirts of the realm, but have come to infect the capital.

The reciprocating equation that is inherently corrupting in *Alcazar* and *Malta* is used here to link the interests of the landed nobility with the commons in a relationship that intends to ultimately correct the self-interested policy of the monarch. To this effect, the choral invective of Oseas and the Biblical figure, Jonas, are tempered with a parable of collusion between a gentleman (Thrasybulus) and a beggar (Alcon). Greedy for the hard assets of land and a cow over his usual liquidity, a moneylender holds a hard line despite the fact that Alcon can now repay, if late, in full. Alcon despairs that his “Cow is a Common-wealth,” of as much importance as a “Crown to a King”:

> she allows me, my wife and son, for to banket ourselves withal, Butter, Cheese, Whey, Curds, cream, sod mild, raw-mile, sour-milk, sweet-milk, and butter-milk, besides sir, she saved me every year a penny in Almanacs, for she was as good to me as a Prognostication, if she had but set up her tail and have galloped about the mead, my little boy was able to say, oh father there will be a storm, her very tail was a Calendar to me. (I.iii.369–79)

This bovine simile is central to the social claims of *Looking Glass* in that it articulates the stakes of privileging communal fair pricing rather than a fair market to remunerate an individual’s efforts. By his cow, Alcon is able to track the seasons, earn a living, and sustain his family throughout the year. As a tenant, whomever his lord is gains directly from Alcon and his cow, even if it is to be wasted on lute strings as Thrasybulus will do. Furthermore, in the heterodox fashion of the Stanley family, secular (“Almanacs”), pagan (“Prognostication”), and Christian (Georgian “Calendar”) time are affected by his cow’s productivity; she is emblematic of the
Alcon applies his communal approach to financial exchange by appealing to his courtier son for reprieve on his behalf as well as Thrasybulus’. The gentleman had helped Alcon find a lawyer, after all. Their complaint, when it eventually reaches Rasni, becomes a lightning rod for the monarch when paired with Jonas’ doomsday prophecies. Alcon’s cow is an antithetical emblem to Barabas’ Turk policy: the inversion of this policy privileges the importance of a “fair price” for the community rather than for the individual as dictated by a “free” market. Rasni is convinced to take up a recuperative alternative to this governing policy of self-interest.

Like Malta, Alcazar, and London, the mechanisms of Nineveh’s government, especially its courts and economy, bear the symptoms of its monarch’s susceptibility. While Jonas would have seen all of Ninevah destroyed, the play contends that there are separate categories of redeemable and irredeemable. The latter category is largely made up of those who come from intra-status groups that tend to mechanize the monarch’s corruption; the former, the inverse. Having failed to obtain justice in the courts, Alcon appeals to his son, who is none other than Radagon, the fast-rising courtier. But Radagon is contemptuously dismissive of his poor family,

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David Kathman’s DNB entry for “Stanley, Ferdinando, fifth early of Derby” articulates the complicated history of (dis)loyalty attached to the Stanley family, made infamous during the War of the Roses when the Stanley brothers refused to engage pre-committed troops in both the battles of Blore Heath and Bosworth. Manley describes the Lord Strange as a man of no religion, “inscrutably politic” in cultivating a perception that he was neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Puritan, at times perhaps of all three persuasions, to the result that “no side in deede will esteeme or trust him” (“From Strange’s Men to Pembroke’s Men,” 278). Rather than a man of no religion, the description also suggests Strange might have been a man of too many allegiances—loyal to everyone and no one referenced by the several organizations of time. Conflicting and conflicted allegiances was a pervasive problem for Strange’s troupe generally: with the deaths of Christopher Marlowe in 1593 (in a bar fight possibly over spying), Thomas Kyd (also possibly related to spying) and Ferdinando Stanley in 1594 (likely by poisoning for conspiracy against the Crown), the company had lost both its compositional and political backbone by 1594. For more, see Lawrence Manley, “From Strange’s Men to Pembroke’s Men: 2 Henry VI and The First Part of the Contention,” Shakespeare Quarterly 54, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 253–87.
now that he has ascended to wealth and power. Alcon’s wife curses Radagon and immediately he
is consumed by a flame of fire. (Rasni’s magi consider this to be a purely natural phenomenon,
once again ignoring the portents of divine retribution.) Alcon and his family are reduced to
thievery to survive. Radagon’s is the first fiery death explicitly related to a rejection of the needs
of the commonweal for the sake of self-interest. Eventually shaken by Jonas and the immolations
of his wives and favorites, Rasni requires the whole of Ninevah to fast and repent. The mandate
tests the Assyrian nation, no longer an imagined community but now a state from which absolute
obedience is required at every level. The threat comes down to Adam, a smith’s apprentice, who
began the play virtuously but evolved into a drunkard by the conditions of moral corruption in
the city and representing Oseas’ greatest fears. While the city awaits God’s mercy with
abstinence and prayer, Adam, “with a bottle of beere in one slop, and a great peece of beefe in
an other,” awaits the end of the world with excess: “I had rather suffer a short / hanging, than a
long fasting” (V.iv.2244–5). Like Alcon, Adam articulates his place in the nation through his
commodities; he takes Alcon’s simile to its extreme: “my hose are my castles” (V.iv.2280–1).
For breaking the fast that would hopefully save the city that corrupted him, Adam refuses to die
of starvation and so is hanged. Looking Glass is unlike Malta and Alcazar in that it concludes
with a vision of an ameliorated nation based on the moral economy of social reciprocity. Adam
proves the limit case to this vision, that through his sacrifice the image of the monarch is
protected. Rather than a critique of reciprocal politics, Looking Glass denigrates London for
adopting these habits and ultimately presents reciprocity as a policy for securing its reformation.
Strange’s 1592–93 season brings into relief the public ambivalence of politico-economic
reciprocity and the false logic of the seemingly consistent, fair, and equal resolution it implies.
As a repertorial set, Looking Glass, Alcazar, and Malta indicate the plurality of positions
available concerning the ethics of reciprocity fiscal and political. Staged four times that season, *Looking Glass* provides a reconciliatory model of reciprocity between status groups rather than merely the negative image of a city doomed to a cycle of ever-diminishing returns. By contrast, staged more than a dozen times each, *Malta* and *Alcazar* critique the false logic of credit-based societies by demonstrating that usury always has destructive socio-political implications and leaves monarchs vulnerable to the corrupting logic of usury on power. *Malta*, in particular, stages the recuperative possibilities of using Ottoman society as a form of moral antimatter while the latter two leave England’s developing commercial and political policies of expediency yet to be judged. In all three plays, Mediterranean contact imparts a kind of moral code onto a non-Mediterranean character, one predicted on personal discipline and transforms into a policy that has the potential to upset regimes. Under the Rose’s painted Heavens, the Mediterranean otherness of Strange’s fad sold itself on differences of religion and moral compass rather than geographical alterity, on the effects an individual’s contact with Mediterranean cultures had on their approach to their communities rather than simply or only as an invading force.

### 2.3 CODA: GHOSTING TAMBURLAINE

At the close of Shakespeare’s *2 Henry IV* (c.1596–99), Hal registers unease in the countenances of his brothers. Justifiably wary of his notorious prodigality, Hal-now-Henry V attempts to allay their doubts by arguing that “this is the English, not the Turkish court, / Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds, But Harry Harry” (V.ii.47–9).

The passage refers to one of the competitors for the Moroccan throne in *Alcazar*, suggesting Hal finds no threat from his brothers for the

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throne nor will his ascension be the start of civil war. What effect did Shakespeare anticipate the simile to produce? What about Amurath had become so commonplace that he could anticipate a particular resonance with playgoers?

One possibility is that the passage would have activated memories of Strange’s recent fad for Mediterranean plays that, as I have described, featured Ottoman Turk and Moorish dynastic conflict for which “Amurath” seems to have become a byword. The specificity of Hal’s comparison relies on the mnemonic archive of appropriately habituated playgoers who had attended performances in their 1592–93 season and whose memories were activated by “Turkish” and “Amurath” to produce the effect of ghosting. Theatre historian Marvin Carlson explains this theatrical phenomenon as when

in semiotic terms, we might say that a signifier, already bonded to a signified in the creation of a stage sign, is moved in a different context to be attached to a different signified, but when the new bonding takes place, the receiver’s memory of the previous bonding remains, contaminating or ‘ghosting’ the new sign…the mimetic process is…made more complex, by memories of previous mimetic acts by the interpretive body of the actor.160

Playwrights and playing companies depended on a certain repetition of plays becoming associated in the public mind with certain conventions and political positions in order to establish and capitalize upon “an echo effect in role after role to which both the public and dramatists responded.”161 The glut of plays featuring Amurathian dynastic conflict, often with too many heirs, haunted Elizabethan stagings of Turkish politics. Activating this shared archive by summoning the ghosts of previous plays, Hal’s simile speaks to the complexity of the Mediterranean world as a shared referent by Elizabethan playgoers.

If part of Strange’s fad was the successful recycling of a popular Mediterranean topos, from whence did it come? It is significantly illustrative about the repertory system as whole that the formula on which Strange’s capitalized in the early 1590s to great success came from another company: the Lord Admiral’s Men and their two *Tamburlaine* plays, written by Marlowe and led by Edward Alleyn, the first celebrity actor of the period. Tamburlaine, the lowborn shepherd who comes to threaten “the world with high astounding terms” (prologue l. 5) represents the core of the Mediterranean otherness that was a zeitgeist of the late 1580s and early 1590s:  

> From jigging veins of rhyming mother wits,  
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,  
> We’ll lead you to the stately tent of war,  
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine  
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms,  
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.  
> View but his picture in this tragic glass,  
> And then applaud his fortunes as you please. (prologue ll. 1–8)

The prologue is a forked-tongue, of course. On the one side is Marlowe’s self-aggrandizement, suggesting that from a shared common English prose he will render an experience “stately” and “astounding” unlike his peers, and yet still up to playgoers’ approval. (It may be useful to note that Tiffany Stern contends prologues and epilogues were only employed at first trial performances and not a regular part of theatre, so the call for “applause” had real stakes as a measure of whether or not greater investment would be put into the production.)  

On the other side is the “mother wit” of the Mediterranean, the Judeo-Christian center of the world. In her observations on the figure of Cleopatra and race, Francesca Royster argues “England’s fear is


that it may be but one creature that may have slithered from the Nile’s slime—along with its friends and enemies.” Where the Cleopatra icon is an emblem that, through “recasting itself as the regenerator of Egyptian culture, England may extract itself form this original humbling vision,” Strange’s earlier Mediterranean plays are more concerned with Elizabethans’ susceptibility to the politics of their primordial kin. Tamburlaine became the conscious referent from which Strange’s in the collective decision-making process of the joint-stock company drew their fad, and so tracing the influence of this play is at best an example of cross-repertorial borrowing instead of authorial exceptionalism.

Alleyn and Marlowe’s mutual invention of Tamburlaine became the wellspring for a Mediterranean topos with which Strange’s hoped to cultivate reliable returner-playgoers in the London marketplace. The figure of Tamburlaine marks the crossroads where the fad of Strange’s repertorial content and the new paintedness of its dissemination—on the playhouse as much as on the bodies of actors—met. I discussed briefly the interrelation of cosmetics and the Heavens in the first section of this chapter as it pertained to the 1592–93 season. A few years later, the 1595–96 season at the Rose brought Strange’s and Admiral’s together for a unique series of supplemented plays that may have evolved or marked the final throes of the Mediterranean fad on Elizabethan stages. I discuss in detail the implications of what E.K. Chambers call “amalgamated” or supplemented playing in chapter four of this dissertation. For the purposes of this section, it is useful to know that the idea of companies combining is a contested one because it is often difficult to tell if in fact these payments suggest super-troupe combinations, or

165 Royster, Becoming Cleopatra, 57.
merely the borrowing of a few performers. Seven of the Mediterranean plays at the Rose, roughly a third of the company’s active properties, were new offerings in the 1595–96 season, and all of this group were very possibly performed jointly. There are frequent records of joint payments throughout the Admiral’s career, but in particular with Strange’s in 1595–96 (see Figure 4.1). If we account for the fact that more than half of Strange’s repertory was Mediterranean in some way, including all of their new plays in the season for which they combined frequently with Admiral’s, perhaps these “amalgamations” amounted to the addition of Alleyn—kin to Rose-owner Henslowe—and a few of his fellow Admiral’s to supplement the new Mediterranean productions. If we recall that Alleyn inaugurated the title role in Tamburlaine, the first successful Mediterranean play, there is every possibility that Alleyn was brought in to help sell the new material by drawing upon playgoers’ association of this actor with his iconic role—ghosting his own performance history in what we might today refer to as typecasting. If these new roles featured the use of blackface cosmetics (and this is a very hypothetical “if”), it may have included several members of the supplementing troupe.

The interrelation of personnel, venue, and technology under the banner of Tamburlaine illustrates the work of the repertory system in structuring the Elizabethan performance event. First, it demonstrates the codependence of companies that made up England theatrical marketplace in both borrowing a strategy from another to develop a fad as well as collaborating with other companies to extend the shelf life of that fad. Second, it demonstrates the influence of the materiality of playing had on the development of a company’s repertory. Specific to this case were the special effects of cosmetics and a purpose-built, dedicated venue. Third, it demonstrates that the fad as a London-based strategy of repertorial development came about as a means of counteracting the new rigors the repertory system made possible when employed outside a
touring context. Investing in a topical fad proved for Strange’s a short-term solution to the question of how to sell theatre to returner-playgoers when the novelty embedded in the limited runs of the provinces no longer conditioned playgoers’ horizon of expectations. The succession anxieties to which Hal refers with “Amurath” provided a cognitive opportunity for playgoers acclimated to regular playing for at least five years to be rewarded by the activation of a rich topos linked to the risks of depending on geopolitical ties to affirm the rights of a domestic regime. By contextualizing this season in terms of marketplace trends, Hal’s rhetoric hangs as much on the cultural specificity of the Turkish court as it does on the shared cultural memory of the playgoers the text envisions. It is precisely the two core conventions Elizabethans would have associated with these Mediterranean plays, namely their historical “modern matter” and their interrogations of social reciprocity as political policymaking that provide Hal’s comparative claim a historically discrete resonance.

2.4 PLAYING WITH OTHERS: THE CULTIVATION OF A FAD

In this chapter, I have argued that, in their 1592–93 season, Strange’s dedicated a great deal of their resources and energy in cultivating a fad for Mediterranean plays. A majority of their active properties that season as well as nearly all their new material were invested in thematic variations on the problem of reciprocity. The company turned to the Mediterranean as a site to interrogate the political, economic, and social permutations of that theme. As an all-consuming code of ethics, Malta stages the problem of reciprocity as an appealing yet threatening policy for political leverage. Alcazar takes up reciprocity as an economic vehicle for remuneration, a vehicle that ultimately facilitates cheating the system rather than managing it. And finally, while less successful on the boards, Looking Glass figured reciprocity as reconciliation, a kind of
religious antimatter to presumed Ottoman amorality. The Mediterranean fad helps to spotlight the thematization of reciprocity ethics also apparent, if more subtly, in their native history plays featuring War of the Roses campaigns. It would suggest the fad was intensive enough that a playwright could still rely on its specific shared cultural knowledge of his playgoers upwards of a decade later. In their combination of thematic emphases, economic collusions, and technological experiments, I contend that the Mediterranean play was both an economic and ideological strategy specific to Strange’s and their 1592–93 season at the renovated Rose playhouse, producing the first successful fad on the London professional stage.

The Scythian conqueror and his successors were not only inventions of a text, but the Mediterranean topos’ development was also inextricably tied to the playing conditions of Tamburlaine’s creation. My secondary aim has been to reorient the narrative we tell about the evolution of this topos in the Elizabethan period as one specifically conditioned by the material practices of individual playing companies rather than as proto-Orientalist fantasies of empire. These material and economic innovations contribute to the development of the Mediterranean play in England as much as the evolution of a particular political ideology. Again, to evoke Said, the “prodigious cultural repertoire” of the “Oriental stage” proved for Elizabethans a space to test not fantasies of conquest, but to work out the ethical conditions that marked a particular group—in this case, their non-Catholic contemporaries of the North African Levant and Ottoman Empire.

In Strange’s plays, cultural and religious Others of the Mediterranean were marked not so much by their ostensible irreligiosity or sociological difference as by their privileging of reciprocity as an all-encompassing socio-economic policy. It was an amorality the English feared not only as the source of their possible political subjugation, but also the trade-off in adopting
proto-capitalist financial innovations brought by Mediterranean merchants. To adopt these innovative financial policies was to risk Protestant communal ethics in the venture. It is to this end that not Tamburlaine’s “conquering sword” but rather his “picture” that refracts the ethics of reciprocity through its “tragic glass.” In order to build the repertory necessary for a successful London residence, Strange’s responded to the ghosts of playgoers past by using an amalgam of codependent commercial strategies to cultivate a fad for Mediterranean plays they hoped would resonate across the Elizabethan spectrum.
CHAPTER 3:
PRESENTATION AND POLYPHONY: THE QUEEN’S MEN AND THEIR HISTORY
PLAYS, 1587–1588

It is deceptively easy to identify what was distinctive about the Queen’s Men. They were an exception to the rules of playing in the 1580s in many ways. As a theatrical enterprise, they developed a new dramatic genre, the English history play; they were the first troupe in a generation to have the patronage of the monarch; they were designed to be the Globe-trotters of English theatre, made up of the best players the Master of the Revels could find and committed to a rigorous touring schedule that took them even to Scotland and Germany. These unique features have elicited increased attention. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean’s groundbreaking work, The Queen’s Men and Their Plays (1998), has led to numerous other publications such as Locating the Queen’s Men, 1583–1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing (2009) and performance initiatives including two important web projects, Performing the Queen’s Men and The Queen’s Men Editions. Among other activities these initiatives are producing recordings of performances of the company’s plays in guildhalls and other venues.

As an economic entity, the troupe was also unique in its organization, which complicates the picture of this company as ambassadors appealing to non-London playgoers. Little discussed is the fact that the troupe frequently divided in half while on tour into six-man skeleton crews—still enough for a pick-up game with extensive doubling of parts. The aspects of the company that draw scholarly attention—their genre affiliations, patronage, and personnel—reinforce the sense that their plays were ultimately propagandistic in nature. By the late 1580s, the company had lost its leading clown, Richard Tarlton, and cannot be found taking up residence in any of
the London playhouses. The first generation of bibliographers, working under the assumption that London was the incubator for Renaissance theatre, read this as a sign of the company’s financial failure. Their history genre, “medley” style, and propagandistic themes have all been suggested as reasons. As Terence Schoone-Jongen points out, however, it would be incorrect to presume this prioritizing of non-London playgoers as a failure; “The company still bore the Queen’s name and patronage, and it still received handsome payments in the provinces,” remaining “an important traveling company until its ultimate dissolution upon its patron’s 1603 death.”

Could there be a relationship between the company’s change in organization and its perceived “failure” in the provinces?

The aim of this chapter is to qualify and particularize the current definition of the Queen’s house style by taking into account their company organization and endemic dramaturgical strategies. Attending to the organization of the company and its records of payment when on tour in the provinces qualifies Schoone-Jongen, Roslyn Knutson, and others’ arguments that provincial playing did not necessitate less pay. It also reveals that extratheatricals—entertainment resources outside the play event—were a distinctive feature of the company. Reading the company’s repertory for dramaturgical rather than representational features additionally reveals a penchant for what I call triptychs: the grouping together of three undifferentiated characters sharing the same status group. Adding these two features of the company’s house style to the scholarship, this chapter challenges the idea that all playgoers in all regions responded to the same things, the idea that regional playgoers were somehow less

For their comments and suggestions on early portions of this chapter, I wish to acknowledge Catriona Fallow, Sebastian Trainor, and the members of the 2015 Harvard University Mellon Summer School for Theatre and Performance Research.

sophisticated than those in London, and champions the notion that success on tour was as valid (if not more so) than City success in the 1580s. These two dramaturgical features support my contention that rather than medley, a more accurate characterization of the Queen’s house style was one of polyphony—a style of playing that left a door open for political critique as well as the representation of regionalized political interests.

3.1 A TROUPE DIVIDED; OR, THE TUMBLER AND THE TURK
Before attending to a specific dramaturgical feature I believe was endemic to the Queen’s repertory, I want to first consider whether or not the unique organization of the troupe itself may have influenced the process of repertorial curation. To do so, this section frames the parameters of economic success in the 1580s, as well as the regional touring and playing licenses that made this company unique in a contractual sense. Attending to the company’s organization and routes of playing reveals something about their house style. That the company spent most of its time playing in a divided state, in two skeleton crews, challenges working assumptions about joint-stock formations and company mobility. Furthermore, following the records of the two branches reveals that they shared the same species of strategy in order to cultivate non-London playgoers, yet in different, paratheatrical forms.

Study of Queen’s has stressed two genre-centered lines of argument. First, their style was primarily determined by the history play. McMillin and MacLean argue that, on tour, the company disseminated propagandistic Tudor history that promoted civic pride and Protestant ideology. Second, their plays were built from three different types of scenes, each stressing literalism and narrative overdetermination: (1) “broad ‘stand-up’ comedy in which clowns are frequently choric, [(2)] vivid sentimental moments of repentance or reunion, and [(3)] brilliant
mass scenes with swordplay, magic, and/or pageantry.” McMillin and MacLean take their description of Queen’s dramaturgy from its actor and playwright, Robert Wilson, when they call it a “medley”: “it cannot be thought of as history, tragedy, or comedy—it is medley or it is nothing.” However, because the “medley” characterization doesn’t make explicit a principle of inclusion or exclusion, at least at a narratological level, it proves difficult to employ as an analytical tool for determining what was salable about the Queen’s repertory.

The question of what was salable about the company’s repertory is important because their location of success was not in London, but rather in the provinces. The company dominated financially as a touring company and struggled when trying to use venues in the city. It follows that the playgoers with which their house style was most successful were limited-run regional audiences rather than London returners. In addition, as the first troupe patronized by a monarch in two generations, the company received unique financial leverage when on tour. Payment comparisons show that the Queen’s Men on average made 10s to 20s more between 1583 and 1588 than other companies on tour. Rather than necessarily reflecting a valuation of the quality of their performances as compared to competitors, Siobhan Keenan and Mary Blackstone have demonstrated that it actually reflected their perceived status by communities on the major regional touring routes. In their studies of the decline in patronage over the latter half of the

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170 English currency was divided into three units: *libra* or pounds (£), which was equal to twenty *solidus* or shillings (s), which was equal to twelve *denarius* or pennies (d). Playhouse admission cost 1d. For comparison, an August 1588 “statute regulating London victuals prices” lists “seuens egges the best in the Market” to cost 2d. See Carol Chillington Rutter, ed., Documents of the Rose Playhouse, The Revels Plays Companion Library (New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 1999), 232.
1580s, Keenan and Blackstone concur that civic authorities treated playing companies differently based on their relative Court prestige. For example, a Gloucester city ordinance goes so far as to delimit the number of performances based solely on a patron’s status, wherein “the Queenes maiestes Players’ being allowed to perform three times during each visit, the players of barons being allowed to play twice and the players of lesser patrons only being allowed to play once.”¹⁷¹ Not only did it pay to be a Queen’s man, then, but increased pay suggests communities on the touring routes may have been encouraged via this licensing to take account of the company’s drama with more seriousness than its peers.

In addition to their unique patronage and financial situation, the other distinctive feature of the company was its organization. Beginning around 1588, they were a troupe divided. Queen’s frequently operated as two separate branches with approximately six players apiece and supplemented by occasional hired men.¹⁷² Andrew Gurr, McMillin and MacLean suggest that this split was formalized around 1588/9, when payments in significantly disparate regions to the

¹⁷² Oliver Jones argues that this divided state makes an argument for the regular employment of *ad hoc* players not just in the city, but on the road with upwards of “at least another dozen hired men between them” (136). While I do not explicitly address it in this chapter, it is clear that further study is required regarding the ramifications for casting when it came to this divided troupe. On the question of why the split itself, Jones leans toward “political motivation as the primary reason for splitting. Two companies touring simultaneously would double the opportunity for receiving rewards, but the shortfall of actors would have had to be made up by employing hirelings. While the wages they received may have been less than a permanent member’s share of the profits, hirelings nevertheless represent a significant additional base cost. If financial profit was subsidiary to political purpose, then we can discount the possibility that the company split because it met with insufficient financial success in the first few months…The company did not divide as an act of desperation after a failed opening series of performances; it had planned to do so. The company’s choice of plays and their preparations for touring must have been based around this plan” (136–7). See Oliver Jones, “The Queen’s Men on Tour: Provincial Performance in Vernacular Spaces in Early Modern England” (Thesis, University of York, 2012), http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/3833/.
“Queenes Maiesties Players” become increasingly noticeable. The split was likely an interstitial feature of the company, dividing and rejoining depending on the context (i.e., Court) and the weather. (Better weather meant more traveling could be done, and so dividing would most efficiently double profits.) The first suggestion of the split comes from a coroner’s report. There is a payment record to “the quenes maiesties plaiers” on the 13 July 1587 where the troupe received 15s. On the same day, a coroner’s report in Thame notes that Queen’s actor William Knell was killed by his fellow thespian John Towne. Bath and Thame were at least a three-days walk apart from one another, and so even a minor discrepancy in accounts dating could not corroborate the two events as referring to the same troupe. Several instances of this division in payments stack up to suggest that two branches of the company were working separate regions.

What is compelling about Queen’s’ structure is that it suggests that, in at least the Elizabethan theatre industry, there was room for different kinds of organizations and hierarchies within a company. The easiest way to conceptualize the different branches is by the regions that they privileged, and the kinds of non-theatrical entertainments with which they came to be associated. Looking at the span of payments to Queen’s along the traditional midlands touring route—one of the several major “tested routes, circuits, and communication networks” Barbara Palmer points out touring performers had used for generations—we see a number of references to the half of the troupe that featured tumblers, sometimes referred to as “tomlers”.

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173 REED, Bristol, 133.
174 Mark Eccles, Shakespeare in Warwickshire (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), 82–3. I will also say that that coroner’s report is mentioned far more often as evidence of Shakespeare possibly joining the Queen’s Men only based on the circumstance that Stratford was not far from Oxfordshire. It’s a good example of the erasure that happens in prioritizing authors for this period.
176 REED, Shropshire, 216.
or “tomlaiers.” This John Symons, who had once served as messenger between the treasury and the Queen’s chamber, most likely led this branch. This is also most likely the troupe that received the payment in Bath on 13 July. Featuring musicians, especially personnel skilled in the fiddle and singing clowns, it was the branch that travelled furthest from the English Court. By the following July, the two branches were becoming distinct to the small communities they visited: in Bath again we have a payment of 10s by “master mayor to the quenes men that were tumblers,” suggesting an awareness of another Queen’s Men that were not.

Similar analyses of attendant payment records and sharer lists from previous companies suggest that the other branch, focused on northern touring, was led by the Dutton brothers, Lawrence and John, previously of Warwick’s Men. This branch is occasionally referenced alongside a ropedancer, interchangeably referred to as a Turk or Hungarian (Hungary still part of the Ottoman Empire at this point). A schoolteacher named Taylor recorded one such performance in 1590, describing three distinct kinds of feats. In the first the performer “twise bothe backward and forward without touchinge any grownde in lightinge or fallinge upon their feete.” The second was a “bagge” trick, suggesting a feat of escape “beinge tieed fast.” The third we would recognize as a tightrope walker, wherein:

a litill from the sayde stadge there was a gable roape tighted and drawen strayte uppon poales erectid…upon the whiche roape the sayde hongarian did assende and goe uppon withe his bare feete having a longe poale in his handes over his

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177 REED, Bristol, 113.
178 McMillin and MacLean, The Queen’s Men and Their Plays, 24.
179 REED, Somerset including Bath, 14.
180 Warwick’s were one of the many small troupes that immediately collapsed after the creation of Queen’s. In grabbing the best players, many small troupes no longer had the personnel to sustain their economic project.
181 REED, Shropshire, 247.
182 REED, Shropshire, 247.
headd and wold fall stridlinges upon the sayde roap and mowntinge up again upon the same withe hys feete.\textsuperscript{183}

The increasing specificity in these records to demarcate these extra resources establishes not only that there were two branches of Queen’s, but also that these branches sold themselves in different ways. The description of the two branches that work to qualify and add precision to the payment records tell us two things about the company: they were indeed touring separately at least part of the time after 1588, and their markers of distinctiveness included elements extraneous to the playtexts themselves.

Toward the end of the 1580s, the two branches of Queen’s were becoming increasingly contrastive in their organizational strategies. In addition, both branches were attempting to differentiate themselves using the \textit{same} species of strategy: what Erika T. Lin has theorized as “extratheatrical” resources. An extratheatrical, according to Lin, was a non-narrative performance element not tied to or necessitated by the plays themselves, such as musicians, puppeteers, or acrobatic acts performed before, after, or interstitial to the play event. To allay any confusion, it is important to differentiate extratheatricals from either embedded music, other integrated feats, and \textit{ad hoc} hired actors. This Hungarian provides Lin’s theory a local habitation and name. What I find compelling about not only the inclusion of extratheatricals as part of a touring troupe, but the function of demarcating different branches of a troupe, is that it suggests Queen’s as a collective had a complex conception of the performance event: the contours of theatrical experience extended well beyond the performance of the playtext proper.

What if this expanded conception of the performance event worked in collusion with the history play? What kind of theatre experience might that produce? Walsh, in thinking about

\textsuperscript{183} REED, \textit{Shropshire}, 247.
FIGURE 3.1: ArcGIS map of known Queen’s midlands branch performance locations, 1583–1594.184

FIGURE 3.2: ArcGIS map of known Queen’s northern branch performance locations, 1583–1594.185


185 Jakacki, “Queen’s Men, Touring Dates, 1583.”
history as a popular genre in this period, pushes back against assumptions that see it as only a vehicle for questions of national identity, kingly authority, and the interpellation of the subject. In the context of performance, Walsh argues, the history play allows for interesting metatheatric considerations due to the ontological condition of the play event as the disappearance of time. For him, Queen’s plays increasingly focus on two attendant concepts, the “lively image” and “borrowed time,” evincing a shift away from conceptions of history as a naturally occurring form of knowledge.\footnote{Brian Walsh, \textit{Shakespeare, The Queen’s Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11; 25.} For Elizabethans, the complexity of the play event, and in particular the existence and performability of history, depended on liveness enacting the dead as well as borrowing time from the present in order to produce it onstage and experience it. Following these emphases, visual emblems indicated by implicit or explicit stage directions similarly enlivened and enriched thematic concerns of the text.

Previous Theatre History scholarship of the company has yet to account for the “peculiarities [that] printed dramatic texts tend to efface,”\footnote{Erika T. Lin, \textit{Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance} (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 107.} meaning dramaturgical elements, such as costumes, stage directions, props, and extratheatricals specific to Queen’s. The records of payment that refer to feats of activity, such as the tumblers and the rope-dancing described above, qualify Lin’s suggestion “that both representational theatre and spectacular physical displays were offered by the same performers at the same events and to the same audiences.”\footnote{Lin, \textit{Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance}, 107.} Additionally, these feats “operated within a given play’s fictional narrative” but could “also [serve] as legitimate entertainments in their own right,”\footnote{Lin, \textit{Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance}, 109.} and so potentially blur the mimetic
and non-mimetic distinctions we like to make of theatre as a semiotic system. In other words, whether in the City or on tour, Queen’s drama depended on the collusion between the effective and affective functions of theatre to accrue playgoers. Precisely because, as Lin observes, stage directions (explicit or implicit) are only “paltry placeholders for the rich aural textures of the original performance and the cultural meanings such moments invoked,”¹⁹⁰ I find it crucial to assess the markers of a company’s house style by the manner of their presentation to determine the kinds of theatrical experiences available to Elizabethans.

It is my contention that we can add to the working parameters of Queen’s house style if we look not only to its medley of generic conventions but also to its dramaturgical elements. There are, however, two possible complications to this understanding of their house style. First, due to the financial leverage associated with their patronage, a number of unlicensed “Queen’s Men” appear in civic records.¹⁹¹ Playing patents legislation had become increasingly important in the 1570s and was eventually formalized in a series of three monarchal edicts. According to Blackstone, “the influence of a patron’s prestige, and consequently his ability to promote plays, began to seriously deteriorate outside of London” rather immediately.¹⁹² Blackstone argues this deterioration was due in part to the fact that the Queen disturbed the triangular relationship upon which patronage depended. Namely, she did so by cobbling together a new troupe of her own from those patroned by high-status peers (all of which were currently serving on her Privy Council). Because “patron, performer, and an audience of subjects were linked together by mutual responsibilities and benefits,” scholars of playing companies understand the implicit

prerogative of Queen’s as providing entertainments for the monarch. To patronize one of their performances, like that of the boy companies, was to get access to what was a rehearsal of material ultimately intended for her. Between the rise of patronage legislation in the 1570s, the redistribution of talent by the rise of Queen’s, and the economic depression of the early 1590s that caused many communities to curb touring patronage, we have a decade of intense innovation by companies on the road and an increase of unlicensed companies all attempting to curry favor with tighter purse-strings and making up for their lost specialized personnel.

Scott McMillin observes that “for a professional troupe to have to resort to calling themselves ‘Queen’s men’ in order to get permission to play at all is about as desperate” as it could get considering the “increasingly strict control of touring activity, the overall decline in civic rewards to players, and the rising number of payments to players not to perform.” The identification of these false servants of the Queen makes one suspicious of the touring records themselves. Some critics have even gone so far as to suggest that we have to disregard or at least de-prioritize what touring evidence can offer our understanding of the theatrical marketplace of the 1580s and 1590s.

This phenomenon was not unique to the sixteenth century, however; the 1633 John Marston play, Histrio-mastix; or, the Player Whipt in part revolves around the changing fortunes of the fictitious Sir Oliver Owlets’ Men as they experience times of plenty and poverty. That the illegal and untrained rabble of tradesmen taking up playing similar to the rude mechanicals of A

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Midsummer Night’s Dream speak to the play’s preoccupation with idleness. Histrio-mastix is concerned as much with the financial marketplace as the valuation of “good” acting and actors. Its conceit, rather than targeting any institution, folds back in on itself: if it is in an age of plenty that art flourishes, that plenty will cause men to leave their professions for the leisure of art, to the detriment of actual trades and the moral propensity of material temperance. The Queen’s record, particularly those records rendered more official by the license bearing “theire appoyntementte,” alongside textual references to the vicissitudes of illegal playing usefully suggest that throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this kind of black-market entertainment was simply par for the course.

The second possible complication is the question of whether and how the company shared playtexts between its branches. Gurr assumes that it would have been most natural to halve the repertory. I would hazard a different theory. Compared to the other repertories of the period, Queen’s is small in number but also had a relatively low attrition rate. With only four lost of their total corpus, all thirteen plays attributed to the company between 1583 and 1594 remain extant. Considering this relatively small yet stable repertory, it would be perhaps more useful to reframe the issue: why such a small repertory considering the financial and personnel resources available to the company? I imagine it would have been functionally difficult to grow the company’s repertory with its sharers spending a good part of the year in different parts of the

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197 REED, Bristol, 133.
199 These include Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes, The Famous Victories of Henry V, The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, James IV, King Leir, A Looking Glass for London and England, The Old Wife’s Tale, Orlando Furioso, Selimus, The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London, The True Tragedy of Richard III, and both parts of The Troublesome Reign of King John. See Appendix A for a complete list of the company’s properties before 1594, as well as plot summaries and other dating information for individual playtexts.
country, and at times out of it. It also seems likely that the branches did play together, especially when at Court or in London. It would seem less likely that the repertory was halved. Rather, ensuring that both branches were well versed in a shared range of parts meant that the troupe could quickly and proficiently be prepared for entertaining the Queen when together. A more important question the travel of playtexts brings up is how this shared set of playtexts could accommodate two different troupes of players considering their individual resources.

Based on the evidence of their distinctive method of organization, their financial strength in the provinces, and their unique patronage situation, it would seem the Queen’s branches did share strategies to cultivate playgoers throughout the provinces. Taking into account their divided state, and a superficial count of their play genres alongside payment records suggests privileging the affective qualities of history in combination with extratheatricals was part of a distinguishable style. While the midlands branch was equipped with musicians and the northern branch an exotic tumbler, both companies used these extratheatricals as distinctive and endemic features of their house style. In addition, their continued success in the provinces long after they gave up touring in London altogether suggests that these extratheatrical features were perhaps crucial to the limited run of performances allowed on tour. When the Queen’s came to town, it meant not only one could anticipate a play about the nation’s political history, but other feats of show were also to be in tow. Were there similar presentational and non-mimetic elements of performance internal to the company’s innovative history plays that contributed to their house style? Or was theirs one uniquely circumscribed by the materiality rather than the textuality of performance?
3.2 POLYPHONIC “WE”: THREE KINDS OF TRIPTYCH

In addition to characterizing the Queen’s repertory as “medley,” McMillin and MacLean argue that in the materiality of their performances the company relied on the props of pageantry and festive days in order to stress a “kind of interplay between the lowly and the exalted at the centre of all of the plays.”

The emphasis on plainness and theatrical literalism meant that the company cultivated “the sort of entertainment English people could be drawn to see in crowds without abjuring the combination of God, queen, Protestant church, and nation which the government depended on.”

The “unwritten text of mime,” “parodic gestures,” and “feeling for the impromptu” also contributed to the theatrical experience distinctive to the company. These features are largely contained to the actor’s repertoire, however, stressing gesture and embodiment with which the company may have excelled, but not the dramaturgy that their plays required. McMillin and MacLean argue that, in regard to their playtexts, Queen’s repertory lacked “poetry capable of expressing the pressures of realistic psychological experience.”

Such a claim echoes Jeremy Lopez’s argument that privileging interiority and methods of characterization associated with Shakespeare’s plays has distorted how critics read non-canonical drama of the period. The assumption goes that psychology was a vendible feature of drama, that psychology isn’t culturally or historically contingent, and that only text can convey realistic experience.

In this section, I add to the growing list of features that were part of the indicative house style of the Queen’s players by eschewing psychology for dramaturgy. Distinctive for their

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200 McMillin and MacLean, The Queen’s Men and Their Plays, 125.
201 McMillin and MacLean, The Queen’s Men and Their Plays, 166.
202 McMillin and MacLean, The Queen’s Men and Their Plays, 143–4.
203 McMillin and MacLean, The Queen’s Men and Their Plays, 145.
extratheatrical resources, I argue that the company also prioritized a particular set of relationships within the texts of these plays. The triptych, the arranging of three characters together to voice an issue affecting a larger group, can be found in every one of Queen’s plays. As a strategy, the triptych relied on several members of the same group remaining undifferentiated, on not expressing their individual realistic psychological experiences, in order to articulate the wider politics of the play. In what follows, I provide a background of the post-Reformation triptych tradition and examples of its three different uses in the Queen’s repertory in order to argue that the dramaturgy of Queen’s productively problematized the otherwise normative authority promulgated in the content of their English history plays.

3.2.1 The Triptych Tradition

The triptych tradition in art stems from Medieval religious music and portraiture. In the wake of the English Reformation, critics have identified formal evolutions in portraiture and the Protestant Mass. According to Jane Eade, the triptych altarpiece, “where two wings or doors are hinged to open and close over a central panel, was almost exclusively associated with devotional objects” and the Holy Family or Trinity. Starting in the early-sixteenth century, however, she points to a vogue for commissioning secular triptych portraits intended for domestic spaces and tied to Anglican priorities of personal interpretation—that all things needed for salvation were available to one through the scriptures rather than an earthly intercessor. The repurposing of the religious conventions of the triptych for secular meditation was meant to remind onlookers “that the ultimate source of aristocracy resides in the monarchy.” Likewise Irene Gultesky, in an

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extensive study of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Caput Masses, traces the triptych structure, re-ordering, and increased mirroring of the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei verses during the period to produce what music scholars now refer to as the polyphonic Mass.\textsuperscript{206} The proximity of the movements and their tripartite arrangement was intended to present the Holy Trinity as simultaneous and co-dependent rather than as a linear progression.

Like the three states of Mary as virgin, mother, and wife, post-Reformation triptychs in art relied on curatorial logic to make meaning from not the representation of an individual but the arrangement of three co-constitutive states of being. The post-Reformation triptych was “part of a nostalgia for a feudal age,” dramatizing tensions between “past and present use, secular and sacred power.”\textsuperscript{207} Take, for example, Jan van Belcamp’s seventeenth-century work, “The Great Picture” (1646), which depicts the life of Lady Anne Clifford (see Figure 3.3). In the left-hand panel is Anne at age 15, when she lost both her father and inheritance of lands in Westmorland

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{janvanbelchamp.png}
\caption{Jan van Belchamp’s triptych, “The Great Picture” (1646).}
\end{figure}


and Yorkshire. In the right-hand panel is Anne at age 56, when she finally gained that inheritance back. The center panel depicts her parents and her two younger brothers, whose deaths in infancy caused confusion in the inheritance documentation. The images are not simultaneous temporally or spatially, but alongside one another they suggest another theme: Lady Anne’s lifetime of struggle against institutional patrilineage that came to shape her identity.

The triptych as a broader artistic formula can be understood as a way of seeing: a recognizable, visual rubric through which to analogically transfer new knowledge to the spectator. Diana Taylor refers to this kind of performative device as a *scenario*: an act of transfer that “as a paradigm” is “formulaic, portable, repeatable, and often banal because it leaves out complexity, reduces conflict to its stock elements, and encourages fantasies of participation.”

It would seem that in Renaissance portraiture, music, and I will argue theatre as well, the triptych as a form curated three simultaneous and differentiated states of the same subject in a socially meaningful arrangement. The simplicity (banality, even) of arranging three figures as an easily repeatable formula allowed playgoers to access new content through the curatorial act of arrangement. As a technique endemically deployed through the Queen’s repertory, the triptych likewise managed playgoer expectations visually by arranging three characters to make meaning from their presentational relationship. When I use the term *triptych*, I refer to the strategy specific to Queen’s: the arranging of three actors on stage wherein each part represents a member of the same status group. Frequently cut in contemporary stagings because they do not overtly relate to the main plot, it is my contention that these figures are crucial; they summarize, in concert, the state of the commonwealth and distill a core political problem of a play.

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3.2.2 Those Who Work, Those Who Fight, Those Who Lead

When reading the Queen’s repertory with an eye toward indicative manners of presentation, two things are immediately evident: first, triptychs are employed in all of the company’s extant playtexts; second, their speech prefixes are either professional abstractions or culturally specific. As a dramaturgical technique, three types of status-oriented triptychs can be identified in the Queen’s repertory: those comprising aristocrats, soldiers, and members of the commons.

The first kind, triptychs of feudal aristocracy including lords, ladies, and knights, function in ways analogous to the interlude tradition. Interludes, the non-cycle drama that made up the majority of playing activities from the early 1300s to the 1580s, were marked by “a strong political dimension” and were “didactic in orientation,” targeting noble households and “provincial urban centres.”209 According to Darrell Grantley, the interlude systematically put “allegorical and non-allegorical” features “alongside one another,” especially in terms of characterization, where “an element of psychomachia persists in the dramatic narratives.”210 It is in interludes, Grantley argues, that we can see the “development from dramatic character as abstraction to a more historical or psychological concept of representation.”211 Selimus (c.1594), The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London (c.1584–90), and Clyomon and Clamydes (c.1570–83) all deploy aristocratic triptychs where the named figures are numbered within a profession, such as Knight 1, 2, and 3. The prefixes literalize the medieval concept Madeleine Doran and David Bevington call multiple unity, where each member is “to some extent self-sustaining and

Together, the figures produce “a panoramic, narrative, and sequential view of art rather than a dramatically concise and heightened climax of sudden revelation.” Voicing a shared concern, the three figures enact a form of polyphonic political speech: each member does not have to sacrifice their individual distinctiveness in order to harmonize with and reinforce by volume the concerns of his peers.

As a play built on the exponential multiplication of this device, *The Three Lords* exemplifies the form both in its content and in the bracketing of triptychs in its quarto printing (see Figure 3.4). A triptych of lords of London and a triptych of lords from the suburb of Lincoln team up to save three ladies of London from defamation. Wimpled in sorrow, each of the ladies have been deformed and made to sit on uncomfortable stones labeled Care, Remorse, and Chastity. Once they are recovered, the lords team up again to save London from a Castilian invasion with a metatheatric plan of combat. Their weapons are the communal entertainments that contribute to London’s artistic reputation: Pomp, the first lord, stages feats, shows, and bonfires; Pleasure, the second lord,

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publishes plays, puts on masques, may games, school feats, puppet shows, and bear-baitings; and Policy, the third lord, heads to Mile End Green to summon folk participants. Organized by their feudal lords, the commons rally together to combat the Castilians’ siege of their national reputation by means of sophisticated cultural production. The upshot? As a reward for collaborating, the Lincoln suburb gets to keep its right to independently govern itself. It is also a prime example of the broader tradition of incorporating festival activities into the play event; as Lin has shown, “negotiating between seasonal pastime and commercial enterprise, acting companies ended up integrating festivity into professional theatre not only by selecting and fictionalizing popular holiday traditions but also by integrating them into the formal and semiotic dimensions of playhouse performance.”

In *Clyomon and Clamydes* and *Selimus*, however, the ability of feudal lords to mobilize the resources of the commonwealth is more closely linked with a monarch who is capable of registering counsel from his peers. In both, lords prove to be the mechanism for carrying out the monarch’s policies, as well as register a loyal resistance to the monarch’s self-interestedness. In *Clyomon and Clamydes*, rather than try to storm his enemy at full tilt, Lord 1 and 2 counsel Thrasellus, the king of Norway, against “this rash attempt” (xii.1142). By “some secret meane devise” (xii.1153), they suggest entering the enemy’s lair “all drest in Merchants guise” (xii.1152). Rather than resist out of pride, Thrasellus acquiesces: “Of truth my Lords this your advise doth for our purpose frame” (xii.1158). While given independent speech prefixes, the lords present concillior cohesion to their monarch. This concillior cohesion is predicated on a

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multitudinous unity wherein their discrete interests are allowed to remain so, while cohering in a unified ethos. In other words, the political speech of these abstract elite triptychs isn’t predicated on an individual subjectivity; the distinction is significant in that individual subjects operating without a mediating status group or public are more susceptible to producing caterpillars (read: sycophantic courtiers) and self-interested favorites than good counsel.

The aristocratic triptychs remind playgoers that the monarch has no peers, no members of a similar class against which his behaviors can be measured. The presentation of three peers of the realm or noble councilors necessarily weighs such scenes seemingly in favor of feudal vassalage rather than centralized governance. Participating in the post-medieval nostalgia (and misprision) of feudal power where, as Susan Reynolds has shown, the idea that fiefs became “hereditary while obligations to military service, aid, counsel, and so on remained attached to them,” plays featuring the aristocratic triptych tend to end with a stage battle where a crown or heir is at stake. Michela Calore has shown that nearly all of Queen’s plays include stage directions for battles in ways that became “increasingly sparse in the next forty years.” She argues the company “made ample use of metonymic and aural signifiers” that depended upon a “symbolic quality” in order to characterize the desired dramaturgy of battle scenes. In this context, the speech acts made by aristocratic triptych characters interrogate what English militarism and English military success looks like. In Selimus, for example, the three janissary generals, Sinam Bassa, Hali Bassa, and Cali Bassa, force the previous king, Bajazet, to confront his greatest fear: that “Stern Selimus,” one of his three sons, “hath won my people’s heart; / The

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The favor of the commons has problematized how the old king will distribute and prioritize his sons’ inheritances fairly while mitigating the possibility of civil war. The sons quickly spill out from their designated jurisdictions to vie for supreme control over the region. Attempting to wrest control of the situation, the generals point out the limits of Selimus’s power:

If you resolve to work your father’s death,  
You venture life. Think you the janissaries  
Will suffer you to kill him in their sight  
And let you pass free without punishment? (ii.169–72)

While Selimus may succeed, it is a fault in his strategy if he thinks the janissaries will allow his patricide to go unpunished. It is only with this censure by his own generals that Selimus ultimately comes to rule the Ottoman Empire. Seeing the writing on the wall, the janissaries rescind their fealty from Bajazet in order to coordinate power in Selimus:

SINAM BASSA: Bajazet, we the captains of thy host,  
Knowing thy weak and too unwieldy age  
Unable is longer to govern us,  
Have chosen Selimus, thy younger son,  
That he may be our leader and our guide

...  
There wants but thy consent, which we will have,  
Or hew thy body piecemeal with our swords.

BAJAZET: Needs must I give what is already gone.  
*He takes off his crown.* (xvii.64–73.1)

The captains first invoke their unified status before citing their rationale for their vote of no confidence in Bajazet. Because they are virtually indistinguishable in any speech pattern, personality traits, or material signifiers as indicated in the stage directions, it is as if the captains conscript the representative royal “we” pronoun to dictate the defunct emperor’s transfer of

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power. This aristocratic type of triptych, then, is attached to moments of conciliar cohesion rather than fracture, moments when a feudal structure of support from the monarch’s peers, his lords, yokes together the resources of the commons with the governance of the monarch.

While on the surface the distinctions between these types of triptychs may seem overtly class-based in the Medieval model of those who fight, work, and pray, I would argue that it is a more nuanced predication on a changing sense of regionalism in early modern England. (That, and I have yet to find a triptych of spiritual figures, priests, nuns, etc.) Take for example the prologue from *The Three Lords*. London is personified, claiming that God’s blessing on the city “is not my sole benefit” (l. 8) but that of “all England is” (l. 9); it is a blessing that has “bred our plenty and our peace, / And they do breed the sportes you come to see, / And joy it is, that I enjoy increase” (ll. 15–7). For City playgoers, this moment is excessively self-congratulatory, linking the economic prosperity and general population influx into the capital with aesthetic prestige. On tour, however, the propagandistic sentiment is one of incorporation. Like a twentieth-century worlds’ fair, the Queen’s repertory brought the center of England to the periphery in less formal or politically overt terms than a royal progress. A similar sentiment couches the plot of *Clyomon and Clamydes*:

> What is all things finished, and every man eased?  
> Is the pageant packed up, and all parties pleased?  
> Hath each Lord his Lady, and each Lady her love? (ll. 2130–2)

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This is to say that when we talk about the propagandistic quality of the Queen’s repertory and history plays, that propaganda was an inverse kind of tourism. The trappings of London are routinely envisioned as being eagerly consumed by rather than forced upon an otherwise unaware, homogenized periphery. This assumption of undifferentiated playgoing communities outside of London contributes to the misleading narrative that by dedicating their resources to touring after 1588, Queen’s somehow “failed.” The repertory does suggest a fantasy of England where it is desirable for the provinces to see themselves as codependent with London’s survival (i.e., wherein all are parties pleased and every individual man eased). While it is outside the purview of this project, it is worth mentioning that London-centric readings and the failure narrative suggest a deep scholarly ambivalence toward the plurality of audiences the highly regionalized character Elizabethan England contained.

The second kind of triptych, that of soldiers, pages, or the watch, always include members of the commons serving to mechanize the interests of the state, as in The Famous Victories of Henry V (c.1594), King Leir (c.1585–92), Selimus (c.1594), and The True Tragedy of Richard III (c.1594). This second type, due to its cultural specificity absent from the aristocratic triptychs, more directly grapples with this growing sense of a complex regionality that complicates how we read the dramaturgical affordances and effects of plays that went on tour. For example, in King Leir, the city is beseiged and nearly lost for the sake of three starving watchmen who would rather be guarding a “pot of ale” (V.vii.21–2) and “half-a-score piece of salt bacon” (V.vii.26–7).221 The watchmen function here as presentational intermediaries, appearing only in this scene and indistinguishable from one another. More complex than the

aristocratic triptych, the soldiering triptych also inhabits representational space by signaling culturally-specific English desires such as that for ale and bacon. This both/and quality suggests that military functionaries, middlemen between the commonwealth and their governing regime, present a unique perspective and ability to voice widespread yet specifically English tensions. In *The Famous Victories*, three French captains, gambling on which English nobility they will kill in the morning, reflect back this culturally-specific image of “poor English scabs” for soldiers: the captains concur that to “take an Englishman out of his warm bed and his stale drink, but one month” would be enough to kill him, but “give the Frenchman a radish root and he will live with it all the days of his life” (xiv.38–42).\(^\text{222}\) In these cases, it is the unified execution of military duty by soldiers made up of the citizenry (and not an elite force) to mobilize the commonwealth upon which the national security of a semi-recognizable England hangs.

These soldiering triptychs, emphasizing those who are more likely to be canon-fodder than knights, literalize a larger imagined community and put back into the shared cultural knowledge of English history its non-elite participants. In doing so, the Queen’s history plays make room for a vision of the past whose facts have many truths depending on the perspective of the participant. For Walsh such theatrical moments gesture towards the company’s “self-consciousness about the production of history,” and more specifically the particular “incongruity between the body of the present play and the historical figure being enacted in the moment of performance.”\(^\text{223}\) The soldiers or pages still go largely unnamed, although their status is more

culturally specific than a lord or monarch. As a presentational and undifferentiated unit, the soldiering triptych epitomizes the function and concerns of a specific intra-status group within Elizabethan society rather than standing in for subject positions playgoers could have conceivably inhabited in their day-to-day lives. As in portraiture, the subject of the triptych is not about conveying a sense of relatability. Its project is to distill a common, widespread political problem around which individuals were willing to sacrifice their particular desires in order to press for the needs of a group.

Max Weber’s concept of *intra-status group* is particularly useful here to think about the political function of triptychs as meaningful groupings where “the interest in the substance of the shared ideals necessarily recedes behind the interest in the persistence or propaganda of the group, irrespective of the content of its activities.” The individual distinctiveness of a particular soldier’s character recedes in order to prioritize a political problem. For example, the fact that everyone is starving in *King Lear* becomes a primary concern of the soldiers over the ability to defend their particular part of the wall. This becomes especially apparent when characters are given named speech prefixes including first and last names, which stresses the internally differentiated nature of England as a nation-state and a problem culturally particular to it. Shakespeare’s variations on the history play genre a decade later occasionally use this triptych technique, such as in *Henry V* (c. 1599) when Hal speaks to John Bates, Alexander Court, and Michael Williams on the eve of battle. Each of the men represent different regions of the British Isles, such as Cornwall and Wales, but suppress these regional differences in order to collectively voice a problem that affects them all equally: the poor odds of the coming battle against France.

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A notable variation is the naming of the three murderers James Tyrell, Miles Forest, and John Dighton that turn up in a number of plays recounting the fall of Richard III (including one performed by Queen’s); in Shakespeare’s telling they go un-named as Murderer 1, 2, and 3. In suggesting potential countercurrents to historical events and indicating social problems that remain universal and unresolved, this second form of triptych underscores Walsh’s observation that a core element of the social construction of history is its mediation through one’s particular status position as circumscribed by the mechanisms of governance.

The third and final type of triptych found in the Queen’s repertory is that of the citizen or commoner. Drawn from folk traditions, the third type is populated by rustics and non-military figures who more often than not get specific names rather than exist in numbered parts, as in The Old Wife’s Tale (c.1591–94), The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (1592), and The Troublesome Reign of John King of England (c.1589–96). In Wife’s Tale, for example, three boys named Antic, Frolic, and Fantastic are lost in the woods until a kindly old blacksmith, Clunch, takes them in. His wife, Madge, provides the boys food and a series of entertainments that make up the body of the play. The boys’ interjections provide a kind of loose frame narrative akin to the much later The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607). The nested narratives are drawn to provide moral instruction for the pages; at least one of the principles of inclusion seems to be tales in which a giver, motivated to generosity only out of virtue, reaps a life-altering benefit. Their interjections suggest an implied ideal interpretation the play imagines for its playgoers. For example, when a community church decides to bury one of their own for free, Fantastic observes, “But hark you, gammer, methinks this Jack bore a great sway in the parish” (ll. 511–
The old wife confirms his interpretation: “O, this Jack was a marvelous fellow! He was but a poor man, but very well beloved” (ll. 513–4). This is immediately followed by a complex song break where “Harvest men singing, with women in their hands” (ll. 516.1), eventually producing a complex harmony a few lines after this stage direction, wherein “Here they begin to sing, the song doubled” (ll. 519.1). The pages, like the imagined playgoers, are being instructed by a folktale, mediated by Fantastic’s interpretation, and then confirmed in a different mode by the lyrics of the harvestmen: “Lo, here we come a-reaping, a-reaping, / To reap our harvest fruit” (ll. 518–20). Cobbling together multiple modes of storytelling, the play thematizes generosity and gift culture, which is further reified by the didactic framing device of the three pages.

The commoner triptych lends itself to multiple performance modes more than the other types, perhaps capitalizing on a boy actor’s specific repertoire and/or providing performative space for the extratheatrical elements in which Queen’s, in its two branches, specialized. Jennifer Roberts-Smith has argued that “instead of a proto-democratic space for voluntary association, the Queen’s Men and their boys, when they performed The True Tragedy of Richard the Third in provincial town after provincial town, created something that more closely resembled a royal nation than a public.” Frequently the boys present a sense of English cultural specificity in their association with familiar English ballads, as in the “chopcherry” schoolboy tune from The Old Wife’s Tale (set to music in 1949 by Benjamin Britten for his Spring Symphony) and the list of ballads in the wares of the chapbook-seller, Simplicity, in The Three Lords, including “A

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lamentable ballad of burning the Popes dog: The sweet Ballade of the Lincoln shire bagpipes, 
And Peggy and Willy” (ll. 281–2). The three lords of London are tied to respective pages who 
enact their own kind of courtly competition, arguing over which quality is best in a boy, while 
their masters are away. To get some answers they attempt to interpret their lords’ shields, which 
they carry, each bearing an emblem. Simplicity overhears the boys and attempts to buy the 
shields, but of course good virtues—and the tokens that serve as presentational substitutes for 
them—cannot be bought or sold. Instead, the boys use their interpretive skills to help to improve 
Simplicity’s ballads (through Wit the Page) by singing them in the market (by Will the Page) for 
a profit (according to Wealth the Page). Depending on the blocking, the three pages may well 
stand as to re-enact a painted altarpiece triptych, especially if one, placed in the center, happened 
to be taller than the others. Additionally compelling are the references to the company’s recently 
deceased lead clown, Richard Tarlton; the text requires an actual portrait prop of him for this 
scene. To interpret the heraldic shields, improve Simplicity’s wares, and come to this final 
assessment of what makes theatre appealing, the pages depend on both the social reciprocity 
between themselves, the relational reciprocity to their lords, and the combination of the unique 
qualities of their individual virtues to reach a common goal.

In general, the triptych as a dramaturgical technique seems to be doing politically more 
complex work than a tableau, where players make still images with their bodies to establish a 
scene. They are active in their relationship, where the possible blocking arrangements implied by 
stage directions, speech prefixes, and dialogue reinforce their collective function as standing in 
for the interests of a group. That might range from the health of the commonwealth to the loyalty 
of the army. When triptychs carry specific names, this intensifies not only the cultural specificity 
of the play—that this is an England more verisimilitudinous than mythic—but also the function
of these characters as inherently subjective rather than didactic, more representational than presentational. As final examples, *The Troublesome Reign* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* are illustrative of this point. In *The Troublesome Reign*, Hubert de Burgh and his guards are charged to blind Prince Arthur, whose life unsettles King John’s claims to the throne. Hubert voices the shared moral anxieties of his men:

> I perceive by your heavy countenances you had rather be otherwise employed, and, for my own part, I would the King had made choice of some other executioner. Only this is my comfort, that a king commands whose precepts, neglected or omitted, threat’neth torture for the default. (I.xii.2–7)²²⁷

Hubert’s observations suggest a wide range of behaviors available to the actors playing his accomplices. Stamping of feet, nervous glances, and the wringing of hands would be the most likely gestures if the men mirrored his observation—if played by men at all. The moral burden of co-opting the innocent into a violent act would be all the greater for Hubert if his men were played by boy actors. More compelling perhaps would be conspirators who performed no exterior qualms at the violence they were about to commit, and so Hubert would be projecting his own anxieties onto them in an odd moment of moral instruction.

*The Troublesome Reign* has received increased attention by scholars in the last five years, particularly by the Shakespeare and the Queen’s Men projects in Canada, which have shown the merits of exploring the Queen’s repertory in performance. A University of York archeology dissertation by Oliver Jones, “The Queen’s Men on Tour: Provincial Performance in Vernacular Spaces in Early Modern England” (2012), focuses explicitly on *The Troublesome Reign* by recreating its staging in the Stratford Guildhall to explore the specific material, social, and

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political conditions a venue and its occupants imposed on a visiting company. Combining archaeological and theatre historical research, Jones’ primary discovery was that there was no political or performative justification for visiting players to conscript the dais, benches, or chairs used by the mayor and alderman at the high end of the civic hall. They likely performed at the low, service end; “the modest height of a platform would have offered players no great advantage, particularly if the audience consisted only of the men of the corporation and not the general public, whereas at the low end of the hall there were more likely to be doors or a screen to serve as entrance and exits.”

This spatial positioning recasts the scene of Hubert and his men as one of counsel to a regional government rather that to a regional audience.

Hubert and his guards weigh the problem of a monarch’s command against God’s law. While his speech seems certain, regardless of the performance choice of the moment above, his implied actions reveal a deeper ambivalence. Before summoning in his accomplices, Hubert actually shows and reads the command for Arthur’s blinding to the prince. Arthur appeals on the grounds of fidelity to God over a king:

I speak not only for eyes’ privilege,
But for thy peril, far beyond my pain,
Thy sweet soul’s loss, more than my eyes’ vain lack—
A cause internal and eternal too.
Advise thee, Hubert, for the case is hard,
To lose salvation for a king’s reward. (I.xii.72–9)

That this speech comes from Arthur is suspect precisely because the prince is attempting to usurp a crown using opposing logic. Aware of this, Hubert and Arthur trade a lengthy series of rhetorical couplets attempting to situate where and to whom loyal infidelity is best served:

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228 Oliver Jones, “The Queen’s Men on Tour: Provincial Performance in Vernacular Spaces in Early Modern England” (Thesis, University of York, 2012), 114. Jones’ work to better understand the nature of provincial performance is ongoing; see http://www.thequeensmen.co.uk/.
HUBERT: My lord, a subject dwelling in the land
Is tied to execute the King’s command.
ARTHUR: Yet God commands, whose power reacheth further,
That no command should stand in force to murther. (I.xii.73–83)
...
HUBERT: [Aside.] My king commands, That warrant sets me free,
But God forbid, and He commandeth kings…
[Unbinds Arthur.] Go in with me, for Hubert was not born
To blind those lamps that Nature polished so. (I.xii.133–4)

While comforted by the “warrant” and “precepts” of King John’s commands in this life,
ultimately Hubert is assuaged by Arthur’s argument that it is in God’s commandments that he
should look for precedent. Like most triptychs in the Queen’s repertory, Hubert and his men are
featured only in this scene of the play. Thus, the episode provides an example of the rubric of
features for identifying a Queen’s triptych: a scene early in the play, characters featured only in
this scene, and the triptych formation standing in for a larger imagined community in order to
summarize a core political problem of the play. If in a civic hall, Hubert speaks truth to power
both in and out of the world of the play. Later in The Troublesome Reign, the commandments of
God and king are pitted against one another in several more permutations and, more often than
not, are made to be executed by a member of the commons.

When unnamed and merely labeled by their status position, triptych figures suggest a
play world of a semi-mythic and naïve past; when named and given a designation, they can
suggest a powerfully contemporaneous and panoramic play world that intends to appeal to
nostalgia by cultivating a particular theatrical experience. In Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, for
example, this contrast is underscored with two sets of commoner triptychs. The three doctors
Burden, Mason, and Clement prove essential to the plot by together agreeing to notify the
magician-scholar Bacon about the “jests” between the “Western kings,” including their own, in
“Oxford town” (vii.3–8). They agree that Bacon is the best example of “what an English friar can do” (vii.24):

We must lay plots of stately tragedies,
Strange comic shows, such as proud Roscius
Vaunted before the Roman emperors— (vii.9–11)

Burden’s comment somewhat mocks the Inns of Court tradition, suggesting that the stately tragedies played before emperors were but strange comic shows linked to the famous Roman comic actor, Roscius, rather than having serious political efficacy. (Again it seems like there may be something alluding to Tarlton here.) The underlying sentiment, however, remains the same: as representatives from the different quadrants of the Oxford community, the three concur that the function of Bacon’s magic as a performance (also metatheatrically implying the inverse, that performance is a kind of magic) works in the service of cultural prestige, and later, national security. This recalls *The Three Lords*, again, where “this counsel is for thy prefarming” (l. 337), where politics and theatre are closely entangled.

On the surface triptychs are expositional. In the context of criticism about Queen’s Tudor history repertory, however, triptychs also imply a phenomenology of theatrical experience Queen’s may have envisioned for their players: that theatre underscores the limits of propagandistic interests best through its presentational qualities rather than through narrative or plot. Consider a later moment in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* where the Fressingfield rustics Thomas, Richard, and Joan provide an atmospheric rather than wholly expositional function. Scene three of the play functions as a juxtapositional complement to the Oxford triptych: the three scholars represent the intellectual interior of England while the rustics the artisanal exterior.

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Both regions are interestingly conditioned by competition, which again echoes something of The Three Lords, where the suburb of Lincoln and the city of London have to combine artistic energies and resources in order to stave off the Castilian siege. Thomas opens the scene by remarking on the status of Fressingfield’s fair in relation to the nearby Harleston fair: “If this weather hold, / we shall have hay good cheap, and butter and cheese at / Harleston will bear no price” (iii.2–4). His remarks establish a sense of competition for consumers, alluding to the actual courtship competition in front of them. A nobleman and bosom friend to the heir, Lacy, is engaged on behalf of the English prince to acquire the maid Margaret. As Joan, Thomas, and Richard mediate the action similarly to the boys in Wife’s Tale:

JOAN: Margaret, a farmer’s daughter for a farmer’s son! I warrant you the meanest of us both Shall have a mate to lead us from the church.— But, Thomas, what’s the news? What, in a dump? Give me your hand; we are near a peddler’s shop. Out with your purse; we must have fairings now.

THOMAS: Faith, Joan, and shall. I’ll bestow a fairing on you, and Then we will to the tavern and snap off a pint of wine or two.

… (iii.27–34)

RICHARD [to Lacy]: Sirrah, are you of Beccles? I pray, how doth Goodman Cob? My father bought a horse of him.—I’ll tell you, Margaret, ‘a were good to be a gentleman’s jade, for Of all things the foul hilding could not abide a dung-cart. (iii.55–8)

Thomas is depressed realizing that he has already lost in the courtship game for Margaret. He finds Joan an appropriate substitute as her status position as a farmer’s daughter not only matches his own but is equal to that of Margaret. Richard interrogates Lacy, attempting to identify where he comes from and what kind of contribution he will make to the community of Fressingfield. It would probably be safe to assume a great deal of unspoken work by the actors—of hushed whispers and flirting between Margaret and Lacy, and Thomas’ lovesickness.
Lacy’s disguise fails as he is unable to escape courtly affectations. Even Margaret remarks to herself that “his words are witty, quickened with a smile, / His courtesy gentel, smelling of the court” (iii.61–2). Lacy is exotic in the sense that he brings the behaviors of the interior and urban to a rural exterior. This allure of a knowing performativity is questioned but ultimately sanctioned through Lacy and Margaret’s eventual marriage and the local community of Fressingfield as represented by Thomas, Joan, and Richard’s acquiescence. The individual subjectivities of Hubert and his attendants along with the Fressingfield farmers are useful examples of putting allegorical and non-allegorical qualities alongside one another to cultivate a particular theatrical experience. The strategy constructs a vision of English history in its representational moments while gesturing to the constructedness of narratives of English history—that Tudor exceptionalism is as much as myth as King Arthur—in its presentational ones. In sum, triptychs enact a fantasy of counsel, where representative groups of those who fight and those who work could productively advise those who lead.

3.2.3 Polyphony and the Triptych Scenario

The formal parallelism of triptychs displaces the usual primacy of space and time to posit other patterns. They also propose a more complex understanding of the English people as a group historically willing to act in common while retaining the ability to remain internally different. As a final example of this, consider Shakespeare’s Pericles (1619) and its fishermen from act two. One fisherman, in response to his companion’s wonder at the very thought of survival in the sea remarks that its food chain is not unlike politics onshore, where “the great ones / eat up the little
Extending the simile, he goes on to “compare our rich misers to / nothing so fitly as to a whale: ’a plays and tumbles, / driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours / them all at a mouthful” (II.i.29–32). Pericles is impressed not just by the “pretty moral” (II.i.35), but that “How from the finny subject of the sea / These fishers tell the infirmities of men / And from their watery empire recollect / All that may men approve or men detect” (II.i.47–50). The nameless laborers are not intended here to be differentiated subjects but rather collectively serve as an emblem of the commonwealth. They reflect a model of governance wherein the micro blights of the yeomen necessarily echo the macro concerns of the monarch. They ventriloquize a specific interest shared by an entire status group: that their labor value is inversely proportional to that of the monarch’s. They remain poor while the king consumes the product of their labor, not only accruing more social power for it but also disseminating that consumptive structure downward throughout society. Side by side, the three fishermen suggest simultaneously the differentiated nature of their individual and culturally-specific lives alongside a common political critique that is given weight through the harmony of their shared concern.

**FIGURE 3.5:** The three fisherman in the 2015 *Pericles* at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, directed by David H. Bell.

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I have attended closely to the nuanced deployment of these triptych strategies in the Queen’s repertory to qualify McMillin and MacLean’s characterization of their house style. Medley implies the technique of combining a number of parts that individually form a melody into a coherent order. When those melodies—individually distinctive voices and perspectives—are combined, they successfully harmonize and complement one another. The structure of a medley is horizontal, teleological, and linear. Each individual song has its own moment as a focal point, and then gives way through smooth transition to the next. The discrete pieces are threaded together using the tactic of bricolage: the linking of pre-existing or “found” art objects that largely maintain their internal individual qualities. For example, a medley of John Philip Sousa marches might start with “The Washington Post,” then modulate into “The Liberty Bell” before concluding with the familiar “The Stars and Stripes Forever.” As a medley they represent the soundtrack of World War I American military pageantry. The moments from the Queen’s repertory explicated above are not sequential as a medley might be. The collection of variegated sources and presentational strategies (especially native histories, allegory, and impromptu) as well as the lack of differentiated characters within the triptychs together suggest a different musical metaphor: polyphony. As in the triptychs of post-Reformation secular portraiture and music, Queen’s theatrical triptychs simultaneously braid several individual subjects to add volume and heft to a single core concern. The three distinct voices harmonize that concern

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232 By “polyphonic” I do not mean Mikhail Bakhtin’s reading of Fyodor Dostoevsky novels. In fact, Bakhtin might have meant something more akin to medley than polyphony when he argued that the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky’s novels was the “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses” where “the plurality of consciousnesses, [had] equal rights and each with its own world” (6). In fact, in music and in etymology “polyphony” signals a merging of multiple individual voices simultaneously, while “medley” signals co-dependent but distinct members of a plurality. For more on polyphony and the Russian novel, see Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics, trans. Caryl Emerson, vol. 8, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
simultaneously rather than in a differentiated sequence. Furthermore, because their plays are largely constructed as a group of sequences rather than privileging the primacy of climax and revelation, Queen’s repertory gives voice to different status positions reinforced through these complementary presentational techniques.

The Shakespeare example suggests that to use a triptych in this way was not an idiosyncratic strategy, but a technique long in the marketplace before he came on the scene. Any dramaturgical technique could easily travel between the companies and their plays. This seems rather likely, in fact, considering that playtexts moved frequently between companies as did players. Take the fact that *Titus Andronicus* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* were both owned by four different Elizabethan companies at one time or another between 1582 and 1594. Part of the larger argument of this project is that what made a strategy like triptychs and extratheatricals part of a company’s discernible house style was their *endemic* use throughout a repertory. I would contend that house styles are best defined not by their exceptional features, but by their endemic ones. The successful and constant reuse of a blocking tactic, prop, or tumbler suggests that it was part of a set of preferred manners of presentation with which the company had found and expected to find financial success.

The house style operates something like what Zachary Lesser and Alan Farmer describe as a “structure of popularity,” where different “indices tell different stories” and “illuminate distinct aspects of popularity.”233 While they are discussing the early modern book trade, Lesser and Farmer’s observation that “there is no single entity called ‘the market,’ only different ways of defining it; and these definitions will vary with the specific questions scholars want to

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answer” is a useful reminder that the popularity of Queen’s was in the touring marketplace and not London. By marking this distinction between medley and polyphony, triptychs can be used to infer the company’s presuppositions about the playgoers they imagined. Certainly this polyphonic model allowed for increased plasticity in those moments that could be performed to either valorize London as the heart of the nation or the exterior’s necessary contribution to the English commonwealth. Their repertory is comprised of plays that take London on tour, encompassing both the interior and the exterior by vacillating between the two. In this sense, the triptych figures act more often than not as expositionary mediators not within the action of a play’s fiction, but between that action and its implicitly imagined audiences. In this we can see a growing awareness of distinct audience sub-cultures, or at least an awareness of regional playing as needing to appeal to spectacle because performances were available only in limited runs while London audiences, as inherently “returner” playgoers, were increasingly being understood as to be appealed to in new, different ways.

3.3 REGIONALISM AND RHETORICS OF FAILURE

At the outset of this chapter, I pointed to the all-star troupe narrative and the fantasy of coherence it has provided the critical conversation surrounding the Queen’s repertory. That narrative, and the eventual “failure” and relegation to the provinces, has become a kind of shorthand used to describe (or explain away) Queen’s preferred manner of presentation. Despite maintaining a touring presence, Queen’s disappear from records of London and Court performances in the early 1590s. E.K. Chambers interpreted this fact as a sign of the company’s death-march toward dissolution. The fact of the construction of playhouses from 1576 onwards in London (not to

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mention a potentially separate audience sub-culture altogether that brought playgoers to the inn-yards well into the seventeenth century) is regularly used to corroborate the company’s relative disappearance from the City by the 1590s—as if it were their deserved comeuppance for acquiescing to a conservative agenda in their repertorial choices. The appeal of this narrative is the suggestion that the English would not be easily swayed for long by propaganda. It also powerfully suggests a close relation between a patron and the intentions of a troupe. Part of the innovation of McMillin and MacLean’s study has been to complicate the relationship with patrons and uncover the ways in which Privy Council members envisioned the use-value of entertainments.

The broader implication is that when it came to their taste in and consumption of theatrical culture, “rural” playgoers had narrow-to-no theatrical culture themselves, willingly eating up any performance coming their way and inherently less sophisticated consumers for it. Siobhan Keenan distills the general character of playing before the turn of the seventeenth century as one where travelling dictated all the early playing practices:

Company organisation, the teamwork of sharing and using few extras besides the boy ‘apprentices’, the essential resources of playbooks and costumes, the plays themselves seen as things that could be carried from one place to another, and the related expectation that performances could be mounted at new venues at short notice, these were all features of early company life that never lost their place in company thinking.235

Furthermore, “the emergence of the metropolitan playhouses in the 1570s did not lead to any immediate change in players’ practices,” taking several decades to diagnose playgoers’ purchasing habits in the City in order to “establish this more permanent foothold.”236 This gradual shift combined with the unique structure of the Queen’s troupe and their collaborating

with extratheatricals were likely products of a long tradition of touring that made room for a variety of organizations and hierarchies. Regional theatre was rich and complex, deeply interwoven into communal traditions and structures as evinced by drolls, mummers, and morris dancers; cycle and non-cycle drama; harvest, seasonal, and religious festivals; pastoral romances and interludes. (London was, of course, its own region, too.) These “folk” practices, as much as classical and courtly traditions, were informing the shape of theatre on the public stages, not the other way around, and are from whence triptychs likely derive. In summary, not only was touring a normal practice, but it was the bread-and-butter for most playing companies up into the mid-1590s, and could take on many forms in order to demonstrate distinction between companies.

The rhetoric of failure that has been attached to regional touring may be in part responsible for the limited conversation around company house styles and Elizabethan dramaturgy more generally.

Marked by economic depression, its effects on touring payouts, and possible player friction produced by the bricolage construction of the all-star troupe, 1587–88 was an important threshold period for the Renaissance theatrical marketplace, but one of many. The aim of this chapter has been to qualify and particularize the current definition of the Queen’s house style by taking into account their company organization and endemic dramaturgical features. By attending to the company structure, the two halves of Queen’s would have likely shared the same repertory but have performed them quite differently. John Symons’ midlands branch, with its tumblers, fiddlers, and singing clowns, had the resources to emphasize the musicality of plays like *The Three Lords* and *Wife’s Tale*. On the other hand, the Dutton brothers’ northern branch, with their Turkish rope-dancer—a trapeze act, escape artist, and tightrope walker all-in-one—would have been able to marshal an entirely different experience of the exotic worlds in *Selimus*,

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Orlando Furioso, and A Looking Glass. Recognized by the late 1580s as two distinct branches of the same company, both used the same strategy of extratheatricals, banking on this collusion between effective and affective strategies to produce economic success.

When combined with a study of their dramaturgy and triptychs in particular, Queen’s repertory seems to have depended on the combination of extratheatricals and native history, to stress the presentational and non-mimetic semiotics of theatrical experience, and accrue success in the limited runs of a touring schedule. Central themes woven throughout the Queen’s repertory start to become clearer with this outline of their mobility in place. Combining this technique with the blank verse McMillin observed in their English history plays tended to thematize the notion that illegitimacy to the crown was easier detected than ignored, and yet the structure of verse encouraged playgoers to take a passive stance to the particular political problem, “hovering over questions of status instead of questions of action, taking shape around the verb ‘to be.’” The frequently stichomythic dialogue of the triptychs are marked by both rhyme and blank verse, both of which McMillin argues were used by the company as though they could “measure the world into segments” by their very meter. It achieves its goal with a static image rather than disordering the image into fragments of possibility. Rhyme royal, tumbling verse, and the fourteener all continue to be heard in most of the Queen’s men’s plays, and their blank verse was largely composed by writers and spoken by actors who used it as though it had rhyme too and could, like the other forms, measure the world into segments.

I see this measuring the “world into segments” on a number of levels in the company’s behaviors, from episodic narrative constructions and aggregate presentational tactics, to the

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privileging of a regionality whose co-dependence produces military prowess and innovative cultural production. This regionalism was reified by meditations on historical pastness; through the combination of presentational and representation modes within the native history genre, playgoers were provided an opportunity to consider in what ways their status position inscribed and was inscribed by historiography. Rather than blanket failure, this gradual honing produced a house style that led to consistent success for more than a decade using the limited-run touring model to which regional playgoers were already habituated. Rather than failure, then, we might better understand the Queen’s house style as giving over attempting to break into the London scene in order to instead prioritize regional playing where their repertorial innovations more effectively accommodated financial success.
CHAPTER 4:
PERSONNEL AND PROPERTIES: THE LORD ADMIRAL’S PLAYERS AND THEIR SUPPLEMENTED PLAYS, 1589–1590

The historiography of the Lord Admiral’s Men revolves around two major lines of inquiry. First, that their repertory was primarily made up of plays by Christopher Marlowe and imitators of his mighty line. Second, that they operated in opposition to the only other licensed playing company of their day, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men and their most lucrative asset, William Shakespeare. Both perspectives depend upon the priority of authorship—Marlowe and Shakespeare—and the priority of competition for financial gain—rather than collaboration, say—in order to shape this company’s history into a rational narrative. Both also rely on a timeline misprision: the Marlowe connection stems from the Elizabethan half of the company’s career, while their relationship with the Chamberlain/King’s Men from the Jacobean half. These narratives and the critical habits of thought behind them belie aspects of the company’s life when attempting to boil down its distinguishable features along the lines of authorship and ownership. They are also symptomatic of the widespread personification of the playing companies, in providing careers a biography or pitching company competition in terms of individual antagonisms such as the War of the Theatres storyline, which Roslyn Knutson’s *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Time* sets out to counteract.

The extant details of Admiral’s career square more often with narratives of group collaboration rather than playwright competition. Consider the fact that the company would become a regular feature of Court Christmas festivities up through the Jacobean period but for one blip in their record. The Admiral’s had played on Monday, 6 January, for the 1585/6
entertainments at Greenwich Palace, and were paid £1 (ten times the usual rate a public
performance might earn) to perform alongside at least part of the Lord Hunsdon’s Men. Holiday
court performances were so important, S.P. Cerasano argues, that playhouse landlord and
financier Philip Henslowe closed up shop in order to personally attend. The following year,
Admiral’s did not make an appearance despite evidence that they were playing in London, likely
at the Theatre, in the fall of 1587. Philip Gawdy, a student at the Inns of Court, reported in a
November 16 letter to his father that:

My L. Admiral his men and players have a devyse in ther playe to tie one of their
fellowes to a poste and so to shoote him to deathe, having borrowed their
callyvers one of the players handes swerved his piece being charged with bullet
missed the fellowe he aymed at and killed a chyld, and a woman great with chyld
forthwith, and hurt an other man in the head very soore. How they will answere it
I do not study unlesse their profession were better.

The episode of a shot gone astray in the firing squad scene from act five of II Tamburlaine (a
rare record of Elizabethan audiences’ experiences in the playhouse) attests to women and
children being regularly in attendance. It also suggests that there was an expectation that the
company, as a professional organization, would answer for reasons of quality control to the
Master of the Revels; it would seem their penance was, at the least, to be banned from the
forthcoming Christmas payday. It suggests, too, that experimenting with new plays and new
stage technologies carried risks mortal, financial, and political. Assessing the range of plays in a
company’s repertory alongside the material conditions of playing, as this anecdote encapsulates,

A portion of this chapter is forthcoming in “The Chariot in ‘II Tamburlaine,’ ‘The Wounds of
Civil War or Marius and Scilla,’ and ‘The Reign of King Edward III’” for Notes & Queries 63,
no. 3 (September 2016).
52–3.
241 I.H. Jeayes, ed., The Letters of Philip Gawdy (London, 1906), 23, quoted in Andrew Gurr,
evinces the categories with which the Admiral’s were and were not willing to take risks as a collective.

If one measure of a company’s career is in the variety of its repertory, this chapter aims to define the diversity of the Admiral’s genres and themes, as well as the relative financial success of their Marlowe holdings in comparison to their other, often anonymous and certainly lesser known, plays. When we look at the first half of their career, we see a very different character of repertory not explicitly attached to Marlowe nor what Andrew Gurr describes as a “citizen” or middle-class ethos. I will focus on this first part of their career to fill a gap in their history not yet attested to by Henslowe’s Diary or the criticism. Following this, I will compare their generic diversity against receipts for performances for which the company formed a super-troupe to premiere new work—a tactic they pursued more consistently throughout their 49-year career than any other company working the Elizabethan boards. In so doing, my aim is to recalibrate our sense of the Admiral’s dramatic variety, situate their dramaturgical practices, and the place of Marlowe within a marketplace more diverse than hitherto characterized.

4.1 “PLAYS WITHOUT ALTERATIONS”: THE ADMIRAL’S PLAYERS AND THEIR COLLABORATORS

The first critical summary of evidence surrounding the Admiral’s players appeared in E.K. Chambers’ second of four volumes outlining the history of the theatres, the playing companies, and the social background of Elizabethan drama. He established the main points of interest

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242 We do not know yet if “players” and “men” for this and other troupes were merely synonyms or demarcated a difference in licensing or number of personnel. I will refer to the troupe as the “Lord Admiral’s Players” for this chapter because there is no archival record from before 1594 that gives them the title of “men.”
frequently used to characterize the company. First, from their initial recorded performances in 1585 (three years before their patron would find victory over the Spanish Armada) the company frequently played in “amalgamated” arrangements with other companies and not infrequently so at Court.\footnote{Chambers’s postulation of “amalgamated” playing had been hotly contested and now largely left for dead among critics. On the particular stakes and summary of the debate, see Terence G. Schoone-Jongen, 	extit{Shakespeare’s Companies: William Shakespeare’s Early Career and the Acting Companies, 1577–1594} (Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2008), 62–79.} Second, Philip Henslowe’s record of them, begun in earnest in 1594, signals both the inclusion of his stepson-in-law Edward Alleyn at the company’s helm and signals a centralization of theatrical activity in London. Third, he provides the shooting story above in its entirety, where the death of a pregnant woman, child, and the injuring of a nearby man prove the risk involved in attending the theatre. (It has been often rehearsed, and frequently inaccurately: when paraphrased, the fetus and child are collapsed into one and the injured man ignored.) Finally, he points to the company’s high rate of cultivating new work: they introduced a total number of 55 new plays into their repertory between 1594 and 1597 at the average rate of one a fortnight and purchased on average for about £2. Like the Elizabethan historians of his generation, Chambers makes no definitive conjectures about the company, nor does he divide their career in half from its start in 1585 until its absorption as Prince Henry’s Men in 1604. From this point onward critics would attempt to subdivide the career of Admiral’s in order to make more specific claims about the authors and genres their repertory privileged.

For example, the only stand-alone biography of the company, Andrew Gurr’s 	extit{Shakespeare’s Opposites: The Admiral’s Company, 1594–1625} (2009), looks at the second half of their career as one built in reaction to Chamberlain’s and Shakespeare. Gurr considers the players and playing conditions to determine how the two companies operated in relation to one
another in what he calls the “duopoly” years. Namely, the Admiral’s catered to what Gurr calls a “citizen” playgoer with cheaper outdoor theatres that ran all year round (such as the Fortune and the Red Bull), and invested in a local audience that liked having familiarity with the play, players, and topics. This was in opposition to the Chamberlain’s “gentry” playgoer, who experienced theatre in transitional outdoor-to-indoor playhouses (the Globe and the Blackfriars).

What is odd about Gurr’s study of Admiral’s is that while ostensibly it does the critical work of recovering some of their story, its agenda remains anchored in Shakespeare’s aesthetic and classed primacy—as the titles of all of his monographs imply. In *The Shakespearian Company* (2006), Gurr valorizes the Chamberlain’s Men and their shareholder management system when he claims that such a structure constituted “the only effective democracy of its time in totalitarian England.” This implicitly links Shakespeare with a prescient political ethos, while the Admiral’s Men are relegated to represent an opposing and presumably antiquated political model: an oligarchy headed by playhouse landlord Henslowe and actor-manager Alleyn. Gurr is often the first person to whom a non-performance-oriented scholar will turn to make a gesture toward early modern playgoers and so this habit of deploying Admiral’s as a counterexample to the plays of Shakespeare and early modern political life has become widespread.

Knutson, S.P. Cerasano, and Charles Cathcart have done much to recover the story of Admiral’s beyond the purview of comparison with Shakespeare and his oeuvre. One would think that this has been too long in coming considering that the day-to-day business of the Admiral’s is one of the best we have on record of any playing company in the period thanks to Henslowe’s ledger. In one of the few pieces of criticism that takes a segmented view of their repertory from

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1592 to 1604, Knutson demonstrates the great deal of creative energy spent by companies specifically on revising old playbooks. Expensive and labor-intensive endeavors to incorporate into a company’s day-to-day rotation, “new plays were the most profitable members in the repertory of every company in the diary” after 1594; “the old plays in the lists for 1592–4 were nearly as lucrative as new ones.”245 In short, of the many factors contributing to the Admiral’s success up until 1594, “revision was not one of them,”246 immediately setting them apart from their peers and normal industry practices. Furthermore, it is only in the period between 1594 and 1596 that we see the Admiral’s altering their approach to old plays in two ways. First, in 1594 they continued performing a number of plays from the previous spring and summer seasons. Receipts had been low and continued to be so; according to both Knutson and Cerasano, this produced an increased number of instances of borrowing money from Henslowe by the spring of 1596. Second, post-1594 Knutson argues Admiral’s “revived at least twenty-three plays without alterations,” suggesting “that the repertory companies in the 1590s did see the payment for revisions to accompany a revival as a commercially necessary or profitable venture.”247 One thing we can say for the Admiral’s, then, is that the company had a penchant for new work in a variety of ways—in revivals, amalgamations with other companies, and brand new work—rather than revising old work. This is in stark opposition to all of the other companies, including Chamberlain’s who, according to James Marino, “employed a double strategy to bolster their claim on their repertory” by revising “secondhand scripts, refashioning them into more

246 Knutson, “Henslowe’s Diary and the Economics of Play Revision for Revival,” 5.
sophisticated works, better fitted for future seasons in the playhouses” and by using Shakespeare’s “authorship as a signifier of possession” in order “to cement the company’s claims upon plays which they inherited in 1594 or which dealt with an easily duplicated historical subject.”

Critics frequently turn to genre categories when describing and counting a repertorial set, instinctively trying to gesture towards the themes of interest for playgoers by quick typology. A quick scan of Alfred Harbage’s *Annals of English Drama 975–1700* or Yoshiko Kawachi’s *Calendar of English Renaissance Drama 1558–1642* reveals a dizzying array of possible generic markers, more often accompanied with “(?)” than not. In a different approach to surveying the general strategies deployed by early modern companies, Knutson’s second monograph, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Time* (2001), explores the predominance of imitative and cooperative strategies in order to critique the history-as-personality model as a tool for thinking about commercial competition and in particular about the implicit “assumptions about audiences” it requires. She works from three core theses: first, that this period marked a transition in companies from loosely organized groups of common players to relatively stable companies under elite patronage; second, that this shift coincided with another, that of troupes

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249 Marino, *Owning William Shakespeare*, 42.
with discrete economic existences to companies with a shared commercial agenda; and third, that a necessary feature of the vitality of the London marketplace was variety in company repertory, generic or otherwise. Specific to Admiral’s, Knutson suggests they were a part of “the golden age of commercial theatre in the 1580s and early 1590s.” The 1580s theatre industry was predicated on a “sociable commerce in which companies might participate merely by joining the current game or starting another” and which was a cooperative business model akin to the guilds. To put it another way, there is room in the scholarship around the companies of “commercial relations for the role of fellowship among separate destinies.”

It is this question of combination and cooperation as a repertorial strategy that is most elusive in the Admiral’s repertory. The REED archive allows one to see touring entertainers of all stripes in the 1570s and 1580s teaming up with, collaborating with, or at the very least travelling alongside others, including players, trumpet troupes, bearwards, and tumblers. The pattern offers a compelling snapshot of the vast landscape of mobile entertainers and entertainments available in Tudor England as well as the strategies they might have shared. For example, two Kent records contrast the ways in which such performances were recorded. Kent Wardens’ Accounts from 1521–22 lists three separate payments to three trumpet troupes, with the Viceadmiral’s making much less than their compatriots:

| Item to the kynges Trumpeters          | 2s  |
| Item to [my] the lord Cardynalles Trumpettes | 2s  |
| Item to the vyceadmyralles Trumpettes | 12d |

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252 Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Time*, 139.
255 REED, *Kent*, 419.
The safest assumption is that this is a record of a series of individual instances of playing over the period of a year. It was usual for household and municipal accounts to not mark individual dates but rather grouping payments by kind. Account books adopted a uniform style for clarity as much as possible. In 1555–6, the same Kent records refer to what we might assume was a collaborative performance by trumpet troupes rather than the possible separate performances listed above:

\[\text{Item paid to the kynges & quenes maistes trompeters that [g] camest with my lorde admiralles} \quad 5s^{256}\]

For our purposes, payment records like these help to identify the language of possible joint performances, particularly when two or more troupes were paid in a lump sum rather than separately. Take for example another record from an early May 1593 performance:

\[\text{geuen in reward to my lord admiralles plaiers and my lord moreleis plaiers beinge all in one companye} \quad 30s^{257}\]

If extra effort was made to link to separately licensed companies together to accurately reflect who was paid “all in one companye,” I am inclined to take it as a trustworthy record of collaborative performance. These explicit notations of collaborative performances ranging the span of the Admiral’s career become especially important when we consider that in the period between 1582 and 1594, Admiral’s appears to have been one of the most popular partners, and perhaps even sought out such arrangements.

Records exist for fifteen discrete performances for which the Admiral’s Men collaborated with, at the very least, some members of another currently active company. All of them take place under the Lord Admiral Charles Howard’s patronage, and none under the other two patrons

\[^{256}\text{REED, Kent, 455–6.}\]
\[^{257}\text{REED, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 90.}\]
ascribed to the company. Six of those instances, not quite half, are explicitly marked as a joint payment, as Figure 4.1 indicates. While combinations with Strange’s were more frequent than

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Joint Troupe</th>
<th>Joint Patron</th>
<th>Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 Sept 1578–29 Sept 1579</td>
<td>Aldeburgh, Suffolk</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lord Robert Dudley’s Men</td>
<td>Dudley, Robert (1532–1588)</td>
<td>3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 June 1585 (Saturday)</td>
<td>Dover, Kent</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lord Hunsdon’s Players</td>
<td>Carey, Henry (1525/6–1596)</td>
<td>20s (joint pay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Jan 1586 (Monday)</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Greenwich Palace, Great Chamber</td>
<td>Lord Hunsdon’s Players</td>
<td>Carey, Henry (1525/6–1596)</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Sept 1585–29 Sept 1586</td>
<td>Leicester, Leicestershire</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lord Chamberlain’s Men</td>
<td>Carey, Henry (1525/6–1596)</td>
<td>4s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Dec 1589 (Thursday)</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Children of Paul’s</td>
<td>Giles, Thomas (master of troupe, 1584–99)</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Sept 1589–28 Sept 1590</td>
<td>Canterbury, Kent</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Queen’s Players/Men</td>
<td>Tudor, Elizabeth (1533–1602/3)</td>
<td>30s (joint pay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Dec 1590 (Thursday)</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Richmond Palace, Great Chamber</td>
<td>Lord Strange’s Men</td>
<td>Stanley, Ferdinando (1559–1594)</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Feb 1591 (Saturday)</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Greenwich Palace, Great Chamber</td>
<td>Lord Strange’s Men</td>
<td>Stanley, Ferdinando (1559–1594)</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Aug 1592 (Friday)</td>
<td>Ipswich, Suffolk</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lord Derby's or Strange’s Men</td>
<td>Stanley, Ferdinando (1559–1594)</td>
<td>20s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4.1:** Joint performances with the Lord Admiral’s Men, 1582–1594.\(^{258}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Paymaster</th>
<th>Player/s</th>
<th>Pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 Sept 1592–29 Sept 1593</td>
<td>Ipswich, Suffolk</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lord Stafford's Men</td>
<td>Stafford, Edmund (1572–1625)</td>
<td>20s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April 1593–28 April 1593</td>
<td>York, Yorkshire</td>
<td>Common Hall</td>
<td>Lord Mordaunt’s Player/s</td>
<td>Mordaunt, Lewis (1538–1601)</td>
<td>40s (joint pay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Week of May 1593</td>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne</td>
<td>Merchant's Court</td>
<td>Lord Moraley’s Players</td>
<td>Parker, Edward (1551–1618)</td>
<td>30s (joint pay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Aug 1593–28 Sept 1593</td>
<td>Shrewsbury, Shropshire</td>
<td>Booth Hall</td>
<td>Lord Strange’s Men</td>
<td>Stanley, Ferdinando (1559–1594)</td>
<td>40s (joint pay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Sept 1593–31 Oct 1594</td>
<td>Bath, Somerset</td>
<td>Guildhall</td>
<td>Lord Norris’ Players</td>
<td>Norris, Henry (1525–1601)</td>
<td>23s 10d (joint pay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–13 June 1594</td>
<td>Newington Butts</td>
<td>The Playhouse</td>
<td>Lord Chamberlain’s Men</td>
<td>Carey, Henry (1525/6–1596)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4.1 (cont.)**

others, they do not collaborate so frequently as to constitute a consistent partner. Takings also varied greatly, from as little as 3s to £10. As I argued in my introduction, because of the gross survival rates of playtexts in early modern England, it would be unrepresentative to posit a hard-and-fast earnings average based on these records. However, they are substantial enough to say that Admiral’s could expect to make between 40s and £5 in a one-off collaborative enterprise, which was significantly more than an average afternoon in the public playhouses. (In the early 1590s, a performance in a London playhouse averaged £1 10s.)

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259 This average is drawn from the 380 individual performances and 66 weeks of recorded playing by the Lord Strange’s, Sussex’s, and Admiral’s troupes in Henslowe’s *Diary* from its first records in 1592 through December 1594. In this period, the companies averaged £8 7s per
assuming the companies split these earning, which is a substantial assumption implying that
whole companies rather than supplementing actors joined forces. So while these collaborative
engagements may have taken more energy and coordination, the benefit seems to have been a
worthwhile risk of up to three and a half times as much as an ordinary public performance.

Scholarship surrounding Admiral’s career suggests that they may have prioritized
collaboration not only in performance, but also in the writing process. In two articles, Cathcart
develops the argument that the company may have served “as a home for inexperienced literary
dramatists,” including a young John Marston. Such a position helps us rethink their
competitive posture as “outward-looking” rather than merely developing in reaction to
Chamberlain’s. In attempting to “understand the context both of individual playwriting
endeavor and of corporate company behaviour,” Cathcart also makes the useful observation
that “all stage writers had to respond to common pressures: debt, company requirements, the risk
of imprisonment for politically risky material, the need to pursue dramatic fashion, and the need
to cope with theatre closures,” which is one of the few, and perhaps only, things we can say
about all the companies operating in this period.

Critics have yet to settle on a label for these collaborative writing arrangements, but
certainly “amalgams” seems an exaggerated characterization. In my favorite assessment of the
problem, mainly for its similetic pith, Terence Schoone-Jongen explains the limits of the term:

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week, and together made a total of £551 11s 5d. See Neil Carson, A Companion to Henslowe’s
Diary (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 85–91, for more legible daily receipt
accounts.
Associated with the Records of Early English Drama 13, no. 2 (2010): 156.
The balance of the evidence, then, is clearly against the existence of any Strange’s-Admiral’s “amalgamation,” unless the transfer of a player from one company to the other constitutes an amalgamation. This, however, would be like saying that Manchester United amalgamated with Real Madrid when David Beckham switched teams, or that the Boston Red Sox amalgamated with the New York Yankees when Babe Ruth switched teams. Of course, the initial “problem” which resulted in the “amalgamation” theory still exists: the 1590–91 court records which list the Admiral’s as performers and Strange’s as payees.\textsuperscript{264}

There is, however, good evidence to suggest this was a normal practice for playwrights operating in the early Jacobean period. In *Joint Enterprises: Collaborative Drama and the Institutionalization of the English Renaissance Theatre* (2004), Heather Anne Hirschfield treats collaboration as a historically embedded, personally inflected, and creative phenomenon. She departs from early work on this topic which understood collaboration as a form of “‘gentlemanly’ interaction at court” to instead contend that joint work is better understood in terms of guild relations (to which the archival work by David Kathman attests).\textsuperscript{265} Because the playing companies were not incorporated as other professional trades, they “were in the position to improvise on guild structures: they were both allied with and separate from the trade organizations in significant ways. And this freedom to improvise is in the service, whether intentional or not, of individuation,” underscoring “a vision of the acting profession as a set of discrete companies”\textsuperscript{266} rather than a unified profession. In fact, between 1597 and 1600 “collaborative plays accounted for as much as 82% of total plays finished”\textsuperscript{267}—a substantial majority. As an Elizabethan point of contrast, up until 1594 Henslowe records thirteen serials,

\textsuperscript{264} Schoone-Jongen, *Shakespeare’s Companies*, 77.
\textsuperscript{266} Hirschfield, *Joint Enterprises*, 12.
\textsuperscript{267} Hirschfield, *Joint Enterprises*, 17.
eleven or 84% of which at least one of the writers carries over from part one to part two. While Hirschfield focuses on the Jacobean industry, there is evidence that this was an inherited Elizabethan practice. I think Hirschfield compellingly makes the case that collaborative process could manifest as part of a company’s distinguishable style: “writing with another [playwright] makes specific demands—sometimes precarious, sometimes stabilizing—on its practitioners” and so personal style “was both a potentially powerful and potentially vulnerable ‘commodity.’”\(^{268}\) The Jacobean iteration of the Admiral’s suggests that a sustainable repertory for an adult company—playing in larger amphitheaters on a near-daily basis unlike the weekly and private performances of a boy company—were characterized “by consistency and repetition,”\(^{269}\) and were best served by traits we associate with writerly collaboration.

Considering the evidence of collaborative writing and supplemented performing that marked the Admiral’s repertory, to assign them Marlowe’s plays and rhetorical style as a distinguishable feature seems counterproductive and an oversimplification. Arguments attempting to codify the generic breadth, or lack thereof, of a repertory can be useful, but only insofar as they reveal what happens in the life of a single play once it is no longer new. In “Influence of the Repertory System on the Revival and Revision of The Spanish Tragedy and Dr. Faustus,” Knutson explores stylistic and generic implications of revision. While in general companies had “offerings made up of new plays, plays continued from previous seasons, and revivals,”\(^{270}\) Admiral’s can be seen as paying to revise only two plays in their repertory: The Spanish Tragedy and Dr. Faustus. Rather than appealing to novelty or some kind of rhetorical

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\(^{268}\) Hirschfield, Joint Enterprises, 28.  
\(^{269}\) Hirschfield, Joint Enterprises, 18.  
updating to accommodate new actors or stage accoutrements, the additions in fact echo Kyd’s rhetorical devices, making the additions “stylistically more like, not less like, the original text.”\textsuperscript{271} In terms of genre, it would seem that along with prioritizing revival over revision, Admiral’s also presented more tragedies than was usual up until 1594, where most of the plays being staged by other companies had predominantly historical and comic subject matter.\textsuperscript{272} Therefore, Knutson surmises, in the principles that governed their selection of plays, Admiral’s prioritized “only those plays with a history of commercial success” and attempted to maintain a “seasonal quota for tragedies.”\textsuperscript{273} This combination of preferences may have contributed to the “commercial exhaustion” of their stock of tragedies by the fall of 1596\textsuperscript{274} and subsequent financial struggles when their signature for tragedy, we presume, had grown stale to audiences. If in their pre-1594 career they were almost entirely interested in new work rather than revisions, genre-based repertory studies are particularly unsuited for Admiral’s.

In her most recent work on the Admiral’s, Knutson’s analysis of the playing receipts of Christopher Marlowe’s plays from roughly 1588 through 1594 does not quibble with the influence the playwright seemed to have over the marketplace, but rather with the evolution of that influence overtime. Namely, it was in the duplication, exploitation, and otherwise exaggeration of certain features of Marlowe’s style, specifically in terms of cross-repertorial duplication and counter-action, that his plays came to accrue such influence. Marlowe becomes

\textsuperscript{271} Knutson, “Influence of the Repertory System on the Revival and Revision of The Spanish Tragedy and Dr. Faustus,” 259.
\textsuperscript{272} Knutson, “Influence of the Repertory System on the Revival and Revision of The Spanish Tragedy and Dr. Faustus,” 262.
\textsuperscript{274} Knutson, “Influence of the Repertory System on the Revival and Revision of The Spanish Tragedy and Dr. Faustus,” 263.
the hypotext by which we can see the impact of receipts directly upon the content of the
surrounding drama. In other words,

the coincidence of similar plays in the repertory of companies owning Marlowe’s
plays, as well as in the repertories of competitors, suggests a degree of intentional
duplication. The Elizabethan companies—anticipating commercial strategies used
today by television networks, the film industry, and potboiler novelists—used the
repertory to take advantage of the popular subjects, genres, characters, and
structures of one another’s plays.275

In this way, while the system of dissemination (i.e., repertory) is alien to us, the back-and-forth
process of consumption is not.

While this piece served to establish that tragedy as a genre may have been more closely
associated with Admiral’s than their competitors, it is frequently grouped with other critics who
turn to this company in order to make authorial claims. In “Marlovian Echoes in the Admiral’s
Men Repertory: Alcazar, Stuckeley, Patient Grissil,” Tom Rutter asks readers to rethink our
narrative about Tamburlaine’s stylistic dominance on the Elizabethan stage. Looking at three
plays from the Admiral’s 1590s repertory, he argues that the kind of writing we attribute to
Marlowe was actually “popular in itself” and thus served “as a stimulus to imitation or
emulation.”276 To render more complex the one-dimensional compositional term of “imitation,”
he demonstrates playwrights deploying not only Marlovian tags in dramatic speeches, but “a
number of dramatic styles used to create a kaleidoscopic image of a controversial figure of recent
history” that worked “as a homage, pastiche, or even attempt to outdo the original” character.277

He goes so far as to suggest that in order to write for Admiral’s, playwrights were expected to

275 Roslyn L. Knutson, “Marlowe Reruns: Repertorial Commerce and Marlowe’s Plays in
Revival,” in Marlowe’s Empyre: Expanding His Critical Contexts, eds. Sara Munson Deats and
276 Tom Rutter, “Marlovian Echoes in the Admiral’s Men Repertory: Alcazar, Stuckeley, Patient
277 Rutter, “Marlovian Echoes in the Admiral’s Men Repertory,” 34.
imitate, emulate, or allude to Marlovian techniques and character types as a “necessary element of [their] poetic self-fashioning,” an “inescapable influence and an ongoing presence” for this repertory.\textsuperscript{278} In collusion with Cerasano’s arguments about the primacy of Edward Alleyn as the leading man and main selling point of the company, that he was suited to Marlovian characters and style may have additionally reinforced their house quality. Likewise, In his brief research notice, Blamires argues that not only is Ben Jonson made a satirical target for writing additions to plays in the then new prequel to \textit{The Spanish Tragedy}, \textit{The First Part of Hieronimo}, but also points to a brief period when two of the leading men of their day, Alleyn and Richard Burbage, would have been playing the lead role of Hieronimo in the same play but in very different ways. Having taken a break from acting from 1597 to late 1600, a “critique of [his] bombast was delivered,” highlighting the “distinction between Alleyn’s histrionic power and Burbage’s considered naturalism.”\textsuperscript{279} The “unusually high fee”\textsuperscript{280} charged by “Jonson to reupholster Kyd’s warhorse looks like a bid to retain or win back some upmarket cachet.”\textsuperscript{281} It also suggests an attempt to Alleyn away from the “coterie audience at Blackfriars”\textsuperscript{282} to revise “populist blockbusters,”\textsuperscript{283} and thus Blamires reiterates assumptions about a more elite audience at the indoor playhouses. This inversely supports a number of other critics, Gurr and Cerasano among them, who likewise imply Alleyn (rather than Marlowe) as a core salable component of the Admiral’s house style.

\textsuperscript{278} Rutter, “Marlovian Echoes in the Admiral’s Men Repertory,” 35.
\textsuperscript{279} Adrian Blamires, “Ben Jonson’s Additions to \textit{The Spanish Tragedy} as the Subject of Ridicule,” \textit{Notes & Queries} 61, no. 2 (2014): 266.
\textsuperscript{280} Blamires, “Ben Jonson’s Additions to \textit{The Spanish Tragedy} as the Subject of Ridicule,” 267.
\textsuperscript{281} Blamires, “Ben Jonson’s Additions to \textit{The Spanish Tragedy} as the Subject of Ridicule,” 266.
\textsuperscript{282} Blamires, “Ben Jonson’s Additions to \textit{The Spanish Tragedy} as the Subject of Ridicule,” 267.
\textsuperscript{283} Blamires, “Ben Jonson’s Additions to \textit{The Spanish Tragedy} as the Subject of Ridicule,” 268.
The leading voice on the complex relationship between actor Alleyn and landlord Henslowe is Cerasano, who, in a series of articles, has changed how we think about their relationship to the Admiral’s company and the Elizabethan court. In a 1994 piece using the Diary records and the famous drawing of costumes for Titus Andronicus, presumably from a period performance, she convincingly demonstrates that the mixed costuming in the drawing (combining contemporary and Romanesque dress) was a standard performance practice. In so doing she is also able to demonstrate that the contents of the tiring house at the Rose were worth as much or possibly more than the playhouse itself.\textsuperscript{284} In 2001 and 2007 articles,\textsuperscript{285} Cerasano focuses on the ways in which Alleyn and Henslowe engaged in conservative courtly pursuits to gain public visibility and a financial base that ultimately strengthened their political network. Like the mixing of costume periods, Henslowe and Alleyn combined professional and familial partnerships, ancient privilege with new money, for financial leverage in the entertainment industry.

Neither of these theatrical figures operated in a vacuum, of course. In a 2006 article, Cerasano speculates Alleyn was a kind of new model actor who accrued a degree of fame as to influence the development of the Admiral’s repertory, serving as a piece of and made a celebrity by its Elizabethan house style. She has worked to separate the historical individual Henslowe from his Diary. In a 2005 special issue of Shakespeare Quarterly, she argues that the Diary is best understood when read “cartographically” as both an “animated map of individuals, acting companies, material goods, and events” and as a moving object—the product of many hands,

including Henslowe’s wife and daughter. The Diary and several substantiating documents point to his time, close ties, and actual service at Court. It also suggests the variety of theatre activity he sponsored, including three test or table readings at taverns. Court Christmas activities and the Christmas playing season more generally were especially lucrative, and the batch entries imply that Henslowe was present at the Court performances. Depending on where the Court was, this is the season where we see possibly two performances in a day by troupes. The Diary also includes private entries—wedding days, magic spells, recipes—as well as the locations and financial relationships with neighboring businesses. The article cleverly ends with a survey of the archival movements of the Diary itself, back and forth from Dulwich College and between the fingers of notable theatre historians Edmond Malone, W.W. Greg, J.P. Collier, R.A. Foakes, and R.T. Rickert. Alleyn, Henslowe, and the Diary records are less stable sources than hitherto assumed; in recasting the ways in which they negotiated and participated in the theatrical marketplace, it is all the more important to contextualize the careers of Alleyn and Henslowe under the auspices of the Admiral’s playing company.

Despite these efforts to place Admiral’s in the context of their industry rather than the playwrights they employed, the most recent work on the company from a 2013 collection, *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, generally focuses on principals of individualism and authorship rather than company-as-collective. Of the articles that do look at archival materials beyond the playtexts themselves, no one addresses the company’s life, or Marlowe’s for that matter, after 1592, while the archival evidence is from 1594 and afterward. (Marlowe was killed on 30 May 1593.) Rutter, in “The professional theatre and Marlowe,” points to the playwright’s

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conventional and unconventional means of business with playing companies.\textsuperscript{287} The obligatory distinction from Shakespeare is made: “Marlowe’s relationship with the actors who performed his plays was thus very different from the one that Shakespeare would go on to enjoy… As an actor and a sharer in the company, Shakespeare presumably had the opportunity to influence the manner in which a play he had written might be cast, revised, and performed. As a mere playwright, Marlowe had no control over any of these things.”\textsuperscript{288} On the one hand, Shakespeare or Marlowe would not have been unique in this, as the majority of the forty major playwrights from the early modern period were also shareholders in a company. On the other hand, consider that playtexts were owned by companies and not their authors, there is no evidence to suggest that any playwright would have “presumably” had any connection with the staging process. Rutter goes on to make it seem almost a radical notion that Marlowe collaborated with others on some of his plays.\textsuperscript{289} In “Marlowe in his moment,” Holger Syme offers a kind of corrective to Rutter, arguing that “just as what we do not know about Marlowe has distorted our conventional accounts of his influence, what we think we know about his plays’ exceptional commercial success has distorted our understanding of their relative popularity.”\textsuperscript{290} Addressing the misprision I mentioned above, Syme writes:

\textsuperscript{287} What causes me greatest anxiety about claims of un/conventions in the theatre industry is the fact that they are largely based on smell. That is to say that they are drawn from a general sense, as there have been no programmatic studies (up until this dissertation) that attempt to define what was normal across companies and what was unique to each company. In addition, that general sense is often drawn from Jacobean records and back-projected without substantiation onto the Elizabethan period.


\textsuperscript{289} Rutter, “The Professional Theatre and Marlowe,” 268.

Contrary to what some theatre historians have asserted, none of his plays is in fact among the most profitable Admiral’s Men productions recorded in Henslowe’s *Diary*; in each of the years for which we have records (1594–7), Marlowe’s works brought in fewer spectators that the average play; and by the troupe’s third season at the Rose, none of his works played a significant role in their repertory any more—only *Doctor Faustus* was still being staged in the 1596–7 season, but just 4 times compared to 187 performances of other plays, earning Henslowe a total of 58 shillings, or just over 14 shillings per show.291

The contrast by Rutter and Syme demonstrates the ways in which author-oriented approaches to the study of Renaissance drama severely misrepresent the functions of literary influence in early modern England and the theatre industry generally.

If the repertory of Admiral’s has something to say about the primacy of Shakespearean authorship and the way it distorts actual industry practices, it also has something to say about Marlovian exceptionalism. Brian Walsh supplements this discussion by sketching the audience Marlowe was believed to have envisioned, doing some fancy psychoanalytic and affective footwork to argue “the audience that Marlowe imagined when he wrote his emotionally and intellectually complex plays was filled by people who evidently wanted, and were prepared to grasp and negotiate, distinct tones and registers,” ignoring the anthropological situatedness of his subject.292 As Walsh attempts to posit Marlowe’s ideal playgoer, Paul Menzer, in “Marlowe now,” describes the popular and academic historiography of Marlowe, arguing his “plays underwrite the biography of an author whose greatest drama was to suffer an ending that matched those of his protagonists.”293 Works by Marlowe are associated with his “mighty line,” suggesting that his works provided a rhetorical excess that was somehow big enough in the

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theatrical experience to substitute for material spectacle—that there is something inherently non-dramatic about Marlowe’s dramas. He is another case in which authorial exceptionalism is used to stand in for company history despite the fact that he seemed to be writing for the restraints of a particular industry for a particular moment in time. *II Tamburlaine* is especially useful on this point. Henslowe records seven performances of “2pte of tamberlen” in 1594/5. All of these entries follow a heading that reads “In the name of god Amen begininge at newing / ton my Lord Admeralle men & my Lorde chamberlen men As ffolowethe,” making it pretty clear that these performances were put on by either the Admiral’s troupe, Chamberlain’s troupe, or members of both. All of these performances follow exactly one day after a performance of *I Tamburlaine* except for one. In that case, a play called “Mawe” was played on January 28, 1594, between a performance of *I Tamburlaine* on January 27 and *II Tamburlaine* on January 29. Not only does this provide the opportunity to say that either or both of the *Tamburlaine* plays may have been supplemented with actors from another company (the one with whom Shakespeare was associated no less), it also suggests that Marlowe was operating within the purview of the Admiral’s house style. *II Tamburlaine* would have been a new serial play rather than a revision, as Admiral’s was wont to do. *II Tamburlaine*, as I will show in the following section, was part of a group of plays that used spectacular props and required huge amounts of personnel on stage that were part of the Admiral’s specific house style. These relational aspects of plays—the milieu in which they operated as salable experiences—get erased when we focus on reading the play as

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295 Henslowe, *Henslowe’s Diary*, 21. On the same page Henslowe makes clear to distinguish these performances from those “by my lorde admeralls men” and those “begingine at easter 1593 / the Quenes men & my lord of Susexe to geather.”

296 Henslowe, *Henslowe’s Diary*, 27.
poem and product of a singular aesthetic voice rather than as a product with a particular audience, horizon of expectations, and purchaser (the playing company) in mind. If, according to Menzer, the “teaching, critiquing, and performing of Marlowe today are all versions of inverted biography that start with death and work backwards,” I would also say similarly that the teaching, critiquing, and performing of the Admiral’s today are all versions of inverted biography that start with authors and work outward.297

From this sweeping critical conversation with branches concerning Marlowe and collaborative writing, the Chamberlain’s Men and collaborative playing, the cartographical imaginary of Henslowe and his Diary, as well as Alleyn’s position within the company’s repertory, we can say that very little focuses on the Admiral’s as such, and even less so before the company surfaces in Henslowe’s accounts despite more than a decade of playing. Supplementing this criticism with the financial archive within and without London, we can recover a few features of the company—at least for the moment. Celebrity was a salable feature of the repertory, from Alleyn’s leading roles to the familiarity of ensemble actors faces, both between parts and mimicked in detail, as Knutson had shown, as heads on pikes.298 Alleyn, his lineage, and his court appointment helped to bankroll loans to Admiral’s specifically for new plays, and may have helped secure the company’s regular appearances during holiday festivities.299 Broadly speaking, tragedy and history were the genres they prioritized; there are few extant and recorded comedies or romances attributed to or purchase by them. A similar priority seems to have been

299 It seems plausible that Henslowe would have had some vested interest in his son-in-law, Alleyn’s, success as an actor in order to keep his daughter, Joan, comfortable. Wedding gifts to the couple even creep into the Diary itself, according to Cerasano in “The Geography of Henslowe’s Diary,” 351.
for revivals and new plays, but rarely if ever revision of old stock. If collaborative writing was
the norm for the company in these early days rather than keeping an “ordinary” or house poet as
the Chamberlain’s may have, perhaps it was simply easier to get new work from a group of
writers than ask them to revise collectively.

The one undeniable feature of the company that critics have largely ignored were the
collaborations not just between playwrights, but between players. More specifically and despite
Schoone’s caution, there are financial records, shown in figure 4.1, that indicate that between
1582 and 1594 Admiral’s collaborated more often with at least some members of other
companies than the other active troupes in this period insofar as they were paid jointly,
suggesting a performance supplemented by more than hired extras. After 1594, the marketplace
would ostensibly shrink to two licensed adult troupes playing within London (although
unlicensed playing was very common), so the opportunities for collaborative performances such
as these between adult companies would disappear but for the very occasional collaboration with
the boy troupes. Up until this point, Admiral’s scholarship has stressed evidence after 1594 and
from the Jacobean portion of their career, where these kinds of collaborations simply weren’t
possible as a matter of simple math. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter offers three plays
from Admiral’s pre-1594 repertory that would have required significantly more players and
named parts than the average troupe could provide. Each I suggest are good candidates for a
production supplemented by actors from another troupe, and would have been active in the
company’s repertory for the joint payment dates listed in figure 4.1. In so doing, I posit what
their house style would have had to gain from investing in this kind of performance that carried
its own financial, organizational, technological, and aesthetic risks. My aim is to revive the
Admiral’s as a corporate, group identity, not by revising the story of this troupe but by instead providing a prequel of sorts.

4.2 “TO MANAGE MIGHTIE THINGS”: THREE CASES OF SUPPLEMENTED PLAYING

Up until late 1587, Admiral’s were touring around the country with what have become the most canonical Elizabethan plays, including both Tamburlaines, Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, and The Spanish Tragedy. They were also performing at different points before 1594 Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, The Battle of Alcazar, The Four Prentices of London, The Famous Victories of Henry V, A Knack to Know an Honest Man, The Massacre at Paris, Orlando Furioso, The Reign of King Edward III, Two Angry Women of Abingdon, Two Lamentable Tragedies, and The Wounds of Civil War, or Marius and Scilla.300 In terms of archive, the survival rate of plays purchased between 1579 and 1594 (16 extant) is better than those between 1595 and 1625. As I argued back in the introduction, plays performed by the company before 1594 had a nearly 60% greater rate of survival than those performed afterwards, making the pre-1594 repertory of the Admiral’s troupe a more reliable indicator of their house style.

Three of these plays provide demonstrable evidence that they may have been performed jointly in some capacity with another troupe in one of the fifteen recorded instances in figure 4.1: II Tamburlaine; The Wounds of Civil War, or Marius and Scilla; and The Reign of King Edward III. If the critics are right that the company rarely invested in revision, then these plays as we

300 See Appendix A for a complete list of the company’s properties before 1594, as well as plot summaries and other dating information for individual playtexts.
now have them may well have been written and designed for collaborative performance. II

*Tamburlaine* was first performed in late 1587, a year after its prequel and two years after

FIGURE 4.1: Woodcut and prologue to part two of *Tamburlaine* from Richard Jones’ 1590 black letter octavo (O1).\(^{301}\)

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\(^{301}\) Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great Who, from a Scythian shephearde, by his rare and woonderfull conquests, became a most puissant and mightye monarque. And (for his tyranny, and terbour in warre) was tearmed, the scourge of God. Devided into two tragical discourses, as they were sundrie times showed von stages in the citie of London. By the right honorable the Lord Admyrall, his seruauntes* (1590; Early English Books Online, accessed May 10, 2016), [84], http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/openurl?ctx_ver =Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857253/.
Christopher Marlowe’s departure from Cambridge University.\textsuperscript{302} Henslowe’s \textit{Diary} marks the record of the play as “old,” which theatre historians agree indicates that it was part of the Admiral’s pre-1594 repertory.\textsuperscript{303} Gurr contends that it was this then new play (likely in preparation for a Christmas Court performance considering the November date of Gawdy’s letter) during which the woman and children were accidentally killed at the Theatre.\textsuperscript{304} It would explain both the company’s disappearance from Court for two years as well as a possible motive for several members of the troupe to go on tour in Germany shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{305} Until this accident, however, \textit{II Tamburlaine}, with Alleyn in the title role, seemed poised for a lucrative run, one spurred by popular demand as the prologue to the 1590 printing attests:

\begin{quote}
The generall welcomes Tamburlain receiv’d
When he arrived last upon our stage,
Hath made our Poet pen his second part…
Himself in presence shall unfold at large.\textsuperscript{306}
\end{quote}

The prologue positions both \textit{Tamburlaines} as a zeitgeist responding to audiences’ demands in London and at large.

The average scene in \textit{II Tamburlaine} requires no fewer than 13 distinct players. IV.iii, however, requires the greatest number of individual, distinct parts: as many as 24 and passably as few as 20 players, ten of which with named parts that could not be doubled. According to Gurr,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{302} All references from Christopher Marlowe, \textit{Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two}, ed. Anthony B. Dawson (New York, NY: Methuen Drama, 2014).
\textsuperscript{303} For substantiating arguments that the inventories represent properties that had long been in ownership by Henslowe and used at the Rose playhouse, see Cerasano, “‘Borrowed Robes,’ Costume Prices, and the Drawing of \textit{Titus Andronicus},” 50–1; and Andrew Gurr, \textit{Shakespeare’s Opposites: The Admiral’s Company, 1594–1625} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11.
\textsuperscript{304} Gurr, \textit{The Shakespearian Playing Companies}, 233.
\textsuperscript{306} Marlowe, \textit{Tamburlaine the Great}, [85].
\end{quote}
the archive can only account for the names of ten possible actors working under the Admiral’s license before 1594. Surely there were more that go unnamed or could have been hired ad hoc, and best guesses estimate the average Elizabethan troupe ranged between eleven and eighteen men. Therefore, a performance of II Tamburlaine adhering to the dramaturgical requirements as I can reconstruct them would take the better part (but not necessarily all) of two adult troupes and at least half as many hired players. In particular, they would be needed to supply the visual tableaus of soldiers required for four specifically on-stage battle scenes, the nine stage directions calling for the entrance of at least part of an army by “their train,” the six stage directions denoting an entrance “with others,” and six stage directions calling for miscellaneous “lords,” “soldiers,” or “concubines.” In fact, only six of the play’s 19 scenes require fewer than five players, and all of them are shorter than 110 lines—half of the average length of scenes requiring six players or more. These numbers suggest that in order to meet the casting requirements of II Tamburlaine, even when taking doubling opportunities into account, it required more skilled actors than the average troupe contained as well as additional hired men for even a skeleton performance. If one thing we can say about Admiral’s is that the company did not invest in revising their stock, then we are left to assume that II Tamburlaine was designed with the possible supplementation of members of another troupe in mind.

What would a troupe have to gain by the sheer supplementing of their numbers—especially when Renaissance players had developed and depended on strategies that made much

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308 Battle scenes occur in II.iii, III.ii, III.iii, and V.i.
309 Calls for this stage direction occur in I.i.0.2, I.ii.0.1, I.v.0.1, II.i.0.2, II.ii.0.1, III.iii.0.1, III.iv.33.2, III.v.0.2, and III.v.146.1.
310 Calls for this stage direction occur in II.iv.9.1, III.i.0.6, III.v.57.2, V.i.133.1–2, and V.i.62.5.
311 Calls for these stage directions occur in III.i.0.5, III.iii.0.2, IV.i.74.4, IV.iii.0.6, IV.iii.66.1, and V.i.48.2.
of a few men for touring purposes? Like the Strange’s 1580s repertory discussed in Chapter One, the large scenes from *II Tamburlaine* allowed for a greater diversity of conquered peoples to be on display. The stage direction for “drum and trumpet” is used five times, which Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson link with military and ceremonial shows of power (to be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five).³¹² In conjunction with the stage directions calling for acoustic military information are the several instances of incantatory listing of armies by the different factions and from whence they came. The play opens with the gathering of the dead Bajazeth’s armies from Asia, whose lords debate whether or not to parley with the Christian force from Hungary in order to reserve their troupes to take on Tamburlaine—for “He brings a world of people to the field” (I.i.67)—and recover Bajazeth’s son, Callapine. The Christians agree to a truce and just as quickly turn on their word to their own detriment. In the meantime, Callapine manages to escape and reconnect with the victorious remnants of his father’s men. Oracanes, King of Natolia (today Armenia and eastern Turkey) presents to him:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a hundred thousand men in arms:} \\
\text{Some, that in conquest of the perjured Christian,} \\
\text{Being a handful to a mighty host,} \\
\text{Think them in number yet sufficient} \\
\text{...enow to win the world. (III.i.39–44)}
\end{align*}
\]

The kings of Jerusalem, Trebizon (remnants of the Byzantine empire controlling what is now northern Turkey), and Soria (Arab-controlled eastern Spain) follow, each making a point of the geographical variety and implicit scale of the volume of the troops they bring to aid Callapine to revenge his father and stem the conquering tide that is Tamburlaine.

\[
\text{JERUSALEM: And I as many from Jerusalem,} \\
\text{Judea, Gaza, and Scalonia’s bounds,} \\
\text{That on Mount Sinai with their ensigns spread}
\]

Look like the parti-colored clouds of heaven
That show fair weather to the neighbour morn.

TREMIZON: And I as many bring from Trebizon,
Chio, Famastro, and Amasia,
All bord’ring on the Mare Major sea,
Rico, Sancina, and the bord’ring towns
That touch the end of famous Euphrates
...

SORIA: From Soria with seventy thousand strong,
Ta’en from Aleppo, Soldinio, Tripoli,
And so unto my city of Damascus,
I march to meet and and my neighbor kings,
All which will join against this Tamburlaine,
And bring him captive to your highness’ feet. (III.i.45–63)

The listing of forces constructs a geographical imaginary of what we would now label the Middle East, pulling together cultures ringing the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea to stave off Tamburlaine’s Levant forces coming from its southern shores.

Jerusalem signals to the variety of peoples with the “parti-colored” ensigns and flags typically called for with the stage direction “colours,” although the terminology is not used in the explicit stage directions for the act. As I discuss in detail in Chapter Five, “colours” typically includes a flag, ensign, or standard of some kind, accompanied by drums and trumpet calls to indicate, according to Dessen and Thomson, a “readiness for battle” and “a show of power.”

Reflecting upon stage directions that ask for “the whole army,” C. Walter Hodges theorizes “the playhouse property room built up a collection of such heraldic devices—especially those of possibly frequent use, such as the lions of England or the lilies of France—with some other ‘ordinary’ flags, diapered, crossed, stripped, or quartered, but of no particular allegiance, which might be used generally for parades.”

Tremizonz indicates that his men come from the borders

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313 Dessen and Thomson, A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642, 53.
314 C. Walter Hodges, Enter the Whole Army: A Pictorial Study of Shakespearean Staging, 1576–1616 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82. For more on going about the
of the known world, and may themselves tend toward disloyalty if the threat of Tamburlaine weren’t so dire. Soria, on the other hand, suggest that his men are slaves “ta’en” in order to render the tyrant “captive.” In its stage directions and speeches describing the geography of the soldiers represented on stage, *II Tamburlaine* stresses not just volume, but prioritizes the breadth of cultures that the threat of Tamburlaine brings together.

In continuing the arc of Tamburlaine’s character from part one, part two traces the devolution of hamartia into hubris: having buoyed his followers with the idea that he is militarily unstoppable, Tamburlaine begins to believe he is also biologically so—immortal even in the face of the abrupt death of his wife. IV.iii is an echo of earlier scenes (I.v and I.vi) where, having yet to establish an agenda for warfare, Tamburlaine’s satellite kings of Argier, Morocco, and Fez return to offer up their goods and conquests. Each of their scripts include not only a reference to troop numbers, but first offer up their crown: Argier, “I offer here / My crown, myself, and all the power I have” (I.v.3–4); Morocco, “my crown I gladly offer thee” (I.vi.9); and Fez, “I here present thee with the crown of Fez” (I.vi.13). All three list the geographies from whence their soldiers hail, and each repeat that, being “in leaguer fifteen months” (I.vi.49), Barbary has been “unpeopled for thy sake” (I.vi.7; 21). Unlike his counterparts from Asia, Tamburlaine rehearses again and again the role of king-maker and re-maker. By accepting the gifts and triumphs of his vassals, he re-anoints their titles. Techelles, king of Fez, is the first to suggest that Tamburlaine’s successes are favored by “infernal Jove” (I.vi.16). Later, Tamburlaine suggests he is not merely favored but inhabited by Jove:

> Here Jove, receive his fainting soul again,  
> A form not meet to give that subject essence  
> Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine,

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Wherein an incorporeal spirit moves
Made of the mould whereof thyself consists
Which makes me valiant, proud, ambitious,
Ready to levy power against thy throne,
That I might move the turning spheres of heaven—
For earth and all this airy region
Cannot contain the state of Tamburlaine. (IV.i.110–9)

He is “mould[ed]” by the “incorporeal spirit” of “Jove,” whose presence tests the bounds of reality to contain his person and power. In other words, Tamburlaine has become unmoored from his base upbringing as a shepherd. It is at this point in the speech that Tamburlaine publicly stabs one of his three sons who is not invested in the risks of a soldier’s life, and then rails at his “mighty friend” (IV.i.120) Mahomet for sending him such a son. Callapine does not ask his Middle Eastern followers to give up their titles to him; he is not a king-maker but a figure around which others can unify in order to counteract a force that would be a god by giving up their individual, cultural distinctiveness. Tamburlaine is not only a king-maker, a Mediterranean Warwick, but upon the death of his wife, and his seemingly unstoppable forces, he attempts to unpeople the world in order to remake it in his own image.

In terms of its military and geographical plot elements, II Tamburlaine prioritizes material volume and rhetorical excess as markers of Tamburlaine’s successful conquests. We see this in the casting requirements of the play itself, the implied cultural variety of the volunteer, professional, and impressed soldiers on both sides of the debate, and the transformation of Tamburlaine’s perception of his own limits and mortality. He revels in the excess of his realization that he may, in fact, be immortal. Having outlived his wife, Zenocrate (whom in part one he captured, raped, then wed), he burns down an entire city as a mourning tribute to her. He leaves a kind of Rosetta headstone behind:

This pillar play in memory of her,
Where in Arabian, Hebrew, Greek, is writ,
This town being burnt by Tamburlaine the Great,  
Forbids the world to build it up again. (III.ii.15–8)

Attempting to inspire his sons to take up “war’s rich livery” (III.ii.116), Tamburlaine is so enthused “He cuts his arm” (III.ii.114.1) in proof of the fulfillment the soldiering life provides. This successfully inspires only two of his three offspring, and he has no qualms ridding himself of the useless spare. When he eventually captures four of Callapine’s kings, he bridles them two at a time to his chariot and drives them onward from Babylon to Persia until he himself is “distempered suddenly” (V.i.216). Tamburlaine (and II Tamburlaine) is therefore a study in decadence: military, emotional, and material excess to the point of actual decay.

That excess comes to a head in IV.iii, which also happens to be a scene requiring as many as 24 individuals on stage. It opens with a lengthy stage direction requiring at least 15 actors to successfully complete:

[Enter] TAMBURLAINE drawn in his chariot by TREBIZON and SORIA with bits in their mouths, reins in his left hand, in his right hand a whip, with which he scourgeth them. TECHELLES, THERIDAMAS, UMUCASANE, AMYRAS, CELEBINUS; [ORCANES, King of] Natolia, and JERUSALEM, led by five or six common soldiers. (IV.iii.0.1–6)

Tamburlaine mocks Trebizon and Soria, calling them “pampered jades of Asia” for only being able to carry their great “coachman” a mere “twenty miles day” (IV.iii.1–4) despite being “fed with flesh as raw as blood” (IV.iii.17). As the “unconquered arm” (IV.iii.16) and “scourge of highest Jove” (IV.iii.24), Tamburlaine prioritizes shows of strength rather than mercy or truce with which the play opened. Having earlier ordered his son be buried by concubines, he has them “brought in” (IV.iii.66.1) and given to “the violence of thy common soldiers’ lust” (IV.iii.80). In both parts, Tamburlaine’s rhetorical strengths are in his diction, marked as it is by purple brains and red blood. In part two, however, he excels at thought-experiments in and as torture; his victories allow him to cage, bridle, chain, burn, and put at the end of a firing squad those who
refuse his global conquest. It seems important then to note that in the play the scenes swell not by servants or messengers, as is typical of history plays, but by soldiers, concubines, and the otherwise already conquered. As Tamburlaine states at the end of the act, until his “soul [is] dissevered from this flesh” (IV.iii.131), there seems no stopping him. And then he is stopped. The play halts abruptly when Tamburlaine’s body simply gives out, leaving a power vacuum behind. He and Callapine are yet to meet. Perhaps the play was written with a third part in mind, wherein Callapine meets his foils, the two sons of Tamburlaine, Amyras and Celebinus? As it is, while the gods Christian, Roman, and Muslim get retribution for Tamburlaine’s hubris, the sea of the conquered on stage are conscripted yet again, this time to bear his funeral train.

Thomas Lodge’s The Wounds of Civil War, or Marius and Scilla, first published in 1594 and likely initially performed around 1588, strikes similar dramaturgical and thematic notes to that of II Tamburlaine.\(^{315}\) Those similarities, like the larger oeuvre of the Admiral’s, have been acknowledged by critics to demonstrate Marlowe’s influence.\(^{316}\) The title page from the only edition printed until the nineteenth century specifically indicates that the “it hath beene publiquely plaide in London, by the Right Honourable the Lord high Admirall his Servants.”\(^{317}\) It is one of the few title pages from the period that so clearly marks not only company ownership


\(^{317}\) Lodge, The Wounds of Civill War, Lively Set Forth in the True Tragedies of Marius and Scilla, [1].
and play authorship (Lodge), but also a performed life that may have prioritized the affordances of the four London playhouses available. Other attributes that make *The Wounds of Civil War* a good candidate for supplemented playing includes the duplication of props used in *II Tamburlaine* (specifically the heavy chains used to bind noble women and the chariot pulled by four captives), as well as not one but two massive scenes which max out the number of personnel normally available to a single company.

As in *II Tamburlaine*, the plot of *Wounds* serves as an epic public display of retribution for a conquered party. However, while in *II Tamburlaine* the foe is othered by the porosity of national borders and what Emily Bartels refers to as a “global economy”\(^\text{318}\) of warfare, in *Wounds* it is a war of an empire against itself: Marius, the Roman consuls, and the aristocracy are pitted against Scilla, the Roman generals, and the army itself in the first of several civil wars that would culminate in the collapse of the republic and the rise of Caesar. The young Scilla “by lot and by election” was made “chiefe Generall against Mithridates” (I.i.52–3), the lord in Asia, whom we never meet in the course of the play. Despite his “dignity” (I.i.51) and military

successes, he has “forced murders in a quiet State” (I.i.10) by agitating for greater power in Rome. Not unlike Shakespeare’s Coriolanus, Scilla can’t believe that “for all the Honors [he has] done to Rome, / For all the spoiles [he] brought within her walles,” the “Trustles Senators and ingratefull Romaines” repay him with “ingratitute” (I.i.160–4). In this case, it is not for having to supplicate to the people for a position as consul, but rather for consuls stripping him of his command over the campaign against Asia that Scilla targets his own. Exiled, it only takes Scilla three acts to retake Rome. Like II Tamburlaine, midway through the plot detailed stage directions underscore the volume and geography of his triumph:

Enter Scilla in triumph in his chare triumphant of gold, drawn by foure Moores, before the chariot: his colours, his crest, his captaines, his prisoners: Arcathius Mithridates son, Ariston, Archelaus, bearing crownes of gold, and manacled. After the chariot, his souldiers bands, Basillus, Lucretius, Lucullus: besides prisoners of diuers Nations, and sundry disguises. (ll. 1003.1–4)

A number of dramaturgical elements detailed here are also used in the Tamburlaine plays: the capture of the son of the enemy (Callapine, Arcathius), the parti-colored display of military insignia, and, most spectacularly, the chariot actively pulled by conquered men. Note that the stage direction is actually divided into two separate actions. The initial entrance includes military standard bearers, captains, and a list of three specific prisoners from Mithridates’ Asia forces carrying crowns in their manacled hands. Likely moving across—which is to follow the lip of the thrust rather than merely cut directly over—the stage to emphasize the volume of the tableau, this group anticipates the shocking entrance of Scilla on his Moor-drawn chariot. In the second, Scilla’s entrance is bookended by his actual soldiers (not just their leaders), three captured Roman counsellors, and finally more “prisoners of diuers Nations, and sundry disguises.” The two halves of Scilla’s procession, broken by his unconventional conveyance, suggest that his
prowess yokes the world under one figurehead, with Rome and her counsellors on one side and the Asian forces on the other.

To enact the scale of this presentation of world domination and retribution, the scene calls for seven speaking parts and nine named parts. If each of the the other groups, such as the captains and prisoners, were represented by two individuals, the stage direction requires more than 20 individuals on stage. Scilla’s first words reinforce this sense of dramaturgical scale: “You men of Rome, my fellow mates in Armes” (III.iii.1). This address foregrounds the public, group situation within the narrative of the play. Again, in a history play like Henry V such moments seem to ask playgoers to either envision a mass of armies, or, depending on the blocking of the speaker, can substitute the perspective of the audience as the army itself. Consider, however, a later stage direction from Wounds: “A great skirmish in Rome and long, some slaine. At last enter Scilla triumphant with Pompey, Metellus, / Citizens, souldiers” (ll. 1819.1–2). While the scene starts with only three speaking parts—later to require eight (Carbo, Carinna, Scipio, and Norbanus)—it asks for at least two citizens and between four and eight soldiers in order to forcibly remove three men at different points for beheading. (There are no stage directions for soldiers returning to the stage to repeat the same actions.) The scene ends with Scilla’s decree to either additional soldiers remaining on stage or to the playgoers as a part of an imagined (which is to say not materially presented) army:

I do proscribe just forty senators
Which shall be leaders in my tragedy.
And for our gentlemen are over-proud,
Of them a thousand and six hundredth die;
A goodly army meet to conquer hell.
Soldiers, perform the course of my decree!
Their friends my foes, their foes shall be my friends.
Go see their goods by trumpet at your wills. (V.i.121–8)
If we take at its grammatical word the plural of Scilla’s embedded stage direction for the remaining soldiers to kill 1,600 members of the aristocracy and pawn their goods, the scene requires at the least 16 bodies to interact as an ensemble. Furthermore, it would seem that in these scenes of retributive violence the army is not an imagined community for which playgoers could substitute, but a body of present individuals who are mechanized for particular actions on stage.

The scene that follows the massive triumphant parade of III.iii is the smallest in the play in terms of speaking parts, by contrast underscoring even after the fact the material spectacle and volume of Scilla’s powers. As Barbara Mowat has argued, quick shifts between perspectives such as the ensemble and the monologue “juxtapose tragic and comic effect” to “force the spectator to oscillate between (or to experience simultaneously) sentimentally naive responses and a sophisticated awareness of the ironic.” Alone, Marius munches on roots while delivering a 53-line soliloquy of (mostly) rhyming couplets. In the last fifteen lines, Marius enacts an imaginary conversation with Echo, the unrequited nymph of Greek mythology, to assuage his loneliness and distract him from the starvation symptoms that are settling in:

> Sweet Nymph these griefes are grown before I thought so? I thought so.  
> Thus Marius liues disdaind of all the Gods. Oads.  
> With deepe dispaire late ouertaken wholy. Oly.  
> And wil the heavns be neuer wen appeased? appeased.  
> What meane haue they left me to cure my smart? art.  
> Nought better fits old Marius mind then war, then war.  
> Then full of hope say Eccho, shall I goe? goe.  
> Is anie better fortune then at hand, at hand.  
> Then farewell Eccho, gentle Nymph farewel. farewell. (ll. 1155–63)

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There are no stage directions or speech prefixes that suggest any other parts or entrances in this scene, so the text seems to imagine that Marius uses a speech inflection for the repeated, italicized phrases to mimic Echo. In so doing, he convinces himself that in order to appease the gods and his pride, the only answer is to use his skills to enact war and find his own retribution. That he needs to appease the gods in some way is not an empty gesture at bravado: at birth he was surrounded by seven eagles, meant to represent the seven times he would serve as consul. Having served only six times, the omen suggests his work is not yet done. Both the shift between scenes and within the scene itself the dialogue wavers tonally between the tragedy of Marius, taking the “man [and] his illusions seriously,” and the comedy of the game he plays with himself as a strategy that, according to Mowat, “punctures such illusions in the service of common sense and reason.” The ventriloquizing of Echo doubly underscores the emptiness of the performance space: having just been filled with an epic procession, Marius here recreates another interlocutor out of thin air. Making an echo out of his own words suggests an even greater hollowness to the space and the unsustainable cycle of violence that is retributive violence.

The empathy that Marius’ lonely desperation attempts to cultivate all but disappears in the fourth act. At this point in the action, Marius has reconquered Rome for himself, and in his triumph the stage directions and successive beheadings unsettlingly echoes Scilla. The scene

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320 Dessen and Thomson note that in the cases in which Echo is part of a stage direction, “the circumstances vary” as to how it would be staged, “sometimes occur[ing] as a speech heading when a figure within repeats the last word or words of an onstage speaker” (82). In the Joseph W. Houppert’s 1969 edition, he decides to add stage direction brackets before the echoing portion of the speech: “[A voice offstage echoes Marius’ last words]” (48). There is no explanatory footnote, nor other indications that suggest this method. I am inclined to take the 1594 playtext and its dramaturgical apparatus at its word, as all other stage directions and speech prefixes are detailed and complete throughout the rest of the text.

requires 13 speaking parts and additional non-speaking senators to represent the seated Roman
senate. A volume of benches or chairs would be required to fulfill the staging requirements of
Marius taking “his seate” (l. 1398.1) and when “Cynna presseth vp, and Octavius staieth him” (l.
1323.1). At its most basic, the scene indicates a major shift in fortunes: having defeated Scilla,
the senate reinstates Marius, makes his son consul, witnesses the death of Octavius at protesting
that monarchal move, exiles Scilla, and orders Marius’ son, Cathego, and his troops to quell the
remnants of the civil war. Cornelia and Fulvia, wife and daughter to Scilla, are chained similarly
as the captured men in II Tamburlaine, but rather than beheaded, are sent in an unexpected show
of mercy, to Scilla. Mechanizing the full scale of the ensemble present is the debate between
Marius and Octavius. In refusing to let Marius or his son be reinstated, Octavius orders his men
“go draw him hence! Such braving mates, / Are not to boast their arms in quiet states” (IV.i.112–
3). It would seem none of his men make a move when Marius replies, “Go draw me hence?
What, no relent, Octavius?” (IV.i.114). Marius, not yet reinstated by the senate, turns to Cinna for
recompense:

MARIUS: Cinna, you know I am a private man,
    That still submit my censures to your will.
CINNA: Then, soldiers, draw this traitor from the throne,
    And let him die, for Cinna wills it so.
YOUNG MARIUS: Ay, now my Cinna, noble Consul, speaks:
    Octavius, your checks shall cost you dear.
    ... 
CINNA: Then strike him where he sits; then hale him hence!
          A soldier stabs him; he is carried away.
OCTAVIUS: Heavens punish Cinna’s pride, and thy offense. (IV.i.128–44)

Carried offstage, Octavius’s head re-emerges later as evidence of Marius’ sway in the senate.
This brief moment, with the lack of movement by soldiers and senators on Octavius’ behalf and
their support for Marius, stages a tension of loyalty at the heart of the broader debate between
Marius and Scilla. While the consuls have the power to make laws and sway public opinion, the
soldiers and their loyalty affects the actual shift in power dynamics. In this moment, Marius’
seems to yoke together the loyalty of his troops and the senate with a show of violence in the
same way that Scilla in his chariot conquered both Asia and his would-be captors.

For its plot and dramaturgy Wounds requires, in essence, two leading men. McMillin
estimates that from 1580 to 1610, there were approximately 30 roles longer than 800 lines. Alleyn managed the first of these with Admiral’s, and 13 of the 20 were acted by the other
leading man of the period, Richard Burbage. While not quite at that length, the role of Marius
here runs 526 lines and the role of Scilla runs 640 lines. While the volume of speaking and extra
parts required of Wounds could be managed by a single company with a healthy budget for hired
men, it would still need to be supplemented with the equivalent of a second actor with the skills
and training to balance against Alleyn, presumably in the role of Marius. Otherwise, the notion
of civil war thematized by the play in dialogue and structure simply wouldn’t work, throwing off
the balance implied by war against the self with a clear lead-and-supporting actor dichotomy.
That both Scilla and Marius are dead by factors other than warfare by the end of the play
reinforces this dramaturgical necessity. Whether or not Alleyn and Burbage shared the stage in an
amalgamated performance of Wounds, the archive as it stands cannot attest (however delicious
the idea may be). What Wounds does suggest is that Admiral’s not only collaborated with other

323 I presume that Alleyn was the Admiral’s actor who specialized in the tyrant character of Tamburlaine, Marius, Edward III, and others based on the arguments made by Tiffany Stern and Simon Palfry that, whichever “of the four humours you most exhibited [and] made up your actual character” dictated “the parts you played” (44). This kind of typecasting aided in memorization of lines and gestures, as well as reinforces Carlson’s notions about the recycling of the actor’s body and the cognitive work that it ignited for playgoers. For more on humoral typecasting and the rehearsal process, see Tiffany Stern and Simon Palfrey, Shakespeare in Parts (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007).
companies to swell the ranks of the captured and lesser speaking parts, but also to supplement lead speaking roles. Furthermore, both arrangements suggest they may have collaborated with an entire additional company, as in *II Tamburlaine*, as well as parts of or a single player from another company, as in *Wounds*.

On the surface, it would seem there is little generically in common between the English history play *The Reign of Edward III* and *II Tamburlaine* and *Wounds*. For one, the plot of the play is bifurcated. The first half is centered on the Countess of Salisbury (the wife of the Earl of Salisbury), who, beset by rampaging Scots, is rescued by King Edward. He then proceeds to woo her himself. In an attempted bluff, the Countess vows to take the life of her husband if Edward will take the life of his wife. When she realizes that Edward finds the plan morally acceptable, she surprises him at knife point, demonstrating that not only is he just like the Scots in threatening her with rape, but that he is not fit to rule without the ability to govern himself. Edward is shocked into shame, and decides to refocus his energies on war. The second part of the play focuses on his French campaign, beginning with Edward joining his troops after a naval success. The play oscillates between the French and English camps, contrasting the apparent hopelessness of the English campaign with the arrogance of the French. Much of the action is focused on young Edward, the Black Prince, who broods on the morality of war before achieving victory against seemingly insurmountable odds, albeit with the help of a mis-read prophecy. It also stresses the evolution of King Edward from a tyrant into a worthy monarch.

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While there is no confident ascription of authorship, we do know that Edward III was owned by Admiral’s before 1594. To further the case for supplemented playing as a distinguishable feature of the Admiral’s repertory, I contend Edward III exhibits features that would make it a strong candidate for supplemented performance. II Tamburlaine, Wounds, and Edward III all stage multiple nations at war and place their protagonists at the geographic center of the action. In Edward III, England is simultaneously at war with the Scots and France, and is aided by troops from the queen’s Danish father. Stage directions and dialogue are frequently specific in naming locations, such as the captured border towns of Barwicke, Newcastle, Harslen, Lie, Crotag, Carentigne, and the Castle in Rocksborough. All three also thematize the problems of heirs and spares, testing in battle the virtue of Callapine, Tamburlaine’s three sons, the son of Marius, and Prince Edward. Two monarchs, King Edward of England and King John of France, are present throughout the action (like that of Marius and Scilla and, from I Tamburlaine, Tamburlaine and Bajazeth), implying the need for two lead actors.

Dramaturgically, Edward III also describes the mass of an army through its parti-colored flags in both dialogue—“Quartred in colours seeming sundy fruits” (l. 1845)—and stage directions—“all with Ensignes spred” (l. 2170.2)—gesturing toward a volume of bodies, if not actually presented on stage. Finally, its largest scene requires 24 speaking parts in addition to several hired actors for non-speaking roles.

Unlike II Tamburlaine and Wounds, however, Edward III pastoralizes the would-be tyrant’s transition into, rather than fall from, Fortune’s grace. Kathryn Schwarz argues that I Tamburlaine stages a model of an “insurgent sovereign,” a “tyrant who capitulates to his own lawless desires”
and for whom “there is no meaningful difference between triumph and devastation.” The first half of the play would suggest that King Edward is on a similar path of destruction as Tamburlaine and Scilla, consumed as he is by the contemplation of betraying his wife (who also represents important logistical ties to the Continent). Rather than geopolitics, wherein it is only death that can halt Tamburlaine and Scilla, English ecology encodes and corrects Edward’s mode of governance. In the opening scene, as Edward welcomes the French traitor Artois into his circle, the new count describes the logic of his loyalty in terms of naturalized obeisance:

    ARTOIS: What then should subjects but imbrace their King,
            Ah where in may our duety more be seene,
            Then stryuing to rebate a tyrants pride,
            And place the true shepheard of our comonwealth.
    KING EDWARD: This counsayle Artoyes like to fruictfull shewers,
                Hath added growth into my dignitye,
                And by the fiery vigor of thy words,
                Hot courage is engendred in my brest,
                Which heretofore was rakt in ignorance. (ll. 38–46)

It is this language of naturalized censure and the logic of husbandry to which the king is willing to stand corrected: it is natural for subjects and peers to embrace a leader, a shepherd, who is invested in the well-being of the group. Likewise describing her keep as “like a Country swaine” (l. 314), the Countess nearly redirects the King out of his marital obligations. The case is similar with his military prowess by accidental pastoral imagery. His navy’s success at sea against the French is announced by a mariner—almost as if prescient of the company’s patron and his recent success against the Spanish Armada within three years of this play:

    The proud Armado of king Edwards ships,
    Which at the first far off when I did ken,
    Seemd as it were a groue of withered pines,

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But drawing near, their glorious bright aspect,
Their streaming Ensignes wrought of couloured silke,
Like to a meddow full of sundry flowers,
Adorned the naked bosom of the earth. (ll. 1073–9)

While the first act envisions King Edward’s triumph over the Countess as a devastation without consequence, the second stages sequence after sequence wherein counsel argues for a distinct and meaningful difference between triumph and destruction. It becomes a question of sustainability, where “withered pines” are brought to “bright aspect”; reason “engenders” dignity, virtue, and courage; and loyalty is won of citizens and foreigners alike.

Ecological images of sustainability and husbandry also beg questions of procreation and “lyneal” right (l. 36). King Edward’s heir is tested three times in battle, overcoming odds that make his fellow lords assume him dead several times. That he survives all three encounters with only the aid of “a clamor of rauens” (l. 1997.1) is also a measure of King Edward’s evolution from tyrant to shepherd-monarch. The Prince accuses King John of never making this transition:

I that approues thee tyrant what thou art,
No father, king, or shepheard of thy realme,
But one that teares her entrails why they handes,
And like a thirstie tyger suckst her bloud. (ll. 1366–9)

The tyrant is likened to a tiger in its waste, tearing out entrails and drinking blood. In addition to their Biblical allusiveness, shepherds provide an interesting ecological lens through which to consider governance: living in the presence of edible sheep every day, they must consider the long-term implications of keeping the animals alive for wool and continued income rather than simply eating them for immediate gratification. A comic shepherd complaining of hunger is also one that lives in a state of virtuous humility. The analogy reflects back on King Edward: his eventual resistance of the Countess and his negotiation rather than pillaging of Callais suggests a king willing to entertain humility.
The Black Prince’s successes, later to expand beyond “the territories of France alone, / But likewise Spain, Turke, and what countries els” (ll. 2466–7) turns the play into a global romance and Prince Edward into an English Tamburlaine, capable of making “a flynt heart Sythian pytifull” (l. 407). Helen Cooper argues plays “that tell the story of lost heirs and their recovery of their kingdoms are the clearest example of the objective of romance to promote the well-being of the realm, the common wele” particularly when their “insistence on presenting models of good rulers, and their tendency to equate tyranny with a false claim to the crown, both promote the idea that the rightful king is also the good king.”\(^{326}\) Two prop-driven scenes in Edward III make this link between rightful inheritance and monarchical morality overt as a crucial topical feature of the Admiral’s supplemented performances.

In the first, Prince Edward is equipped by his father and peers for his final test. “Foure Heraldes bringing in a coate of armour, a helmet, a lance, and a shield” (l. 2426.1) to dress the Prince as the King, the Earl of Derby, Lord Audley, and the Count of Artois imbue each object with a classical pedigree and particular virtues. The scene is in part a scare tactic: the French King John and generals look on. The King imbues his offspring with his spirit—not unlike Tamburlaine being enthused by Jove—and prays to God, less his heart wither “like a saples tree” (l. 1465) and his legacy become “the map of infamy” (l. 1466). Included in an appendix of “properties for my Lord Admeralles men” inventory kept in the Rose playhouse’s tiring house and recorded in Henlsowe’s Diary are all four items that would have been needed for this staging: “j helmet with a dragon; j shelde, with iii lyons,” “j greve armer,” and “viij lances.”\(^{327}\)

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The likelihood that these may have been some of the items used for this production increases when one considers the fact that the list—whose 35 entires comprise 139 items—includes “j cage,” “Tamberlyne[‘s] brydell,” a “charete,” “ij Imperial crownes; j playne crowne,” and something labeled “Sittie of Rome,” all very possibly used in both Tamburaine plays and Wounds.\textsuperscript{328} The inventory groups these plays together as does the number of personnel needed to stage these prop-oriented scenes and their geographic-yoking effects.\textsuperscript{329} For this scene, 24 individual personnel are needed to represent the speaking parts of the French and English retinue as well as to flesh the Prince for the battle that will bring them under one rule.

The second and final piece of stage business that situates Edward III amongst other plays that may have been designed as to require supplemental personnel in addition to the Admiral’s players is the possible use of another triumphal chariot drawn by conquered lords in the final moments of the play. The dearth of scholarship on and poor printing history of the play (likely because it is anonymous in authorship and doesn’t treat a historical subject with which Shakespeare was interested) means the editions that do survive are inconsistent. The first edition from 1590 is particularly poor in that there are several instances of missing stage directions for entrances and exits, as well as many extraneous speech prefixes for characters already speaking. (Nor are scene and act divisions overtly marked, although this was normal for drama printed before the mid-1590s.) Stage directions embedded in dialogue become increasingly important to envision the necessary stage actions called for in order to make sense of battle and conquest.

\textsuperscript{328} Henslowe, \textit{Henslowe’s Diary}, 320–1.

\textsuperscript{329} For the source material and performance history of chariot props on Elizabethan stages, as well as an examination of the inventories’ relationship to plays staged at the Rose playhouse, see Elizabeth E. Tavares, “The Chariot in ‘II Tamburlaine,’ ‘The Wounds of Civil War or Marius and Scilla,’ and ‘The Reign of King Edward III,’” \textit{Notes & Queries} 63, no. 3 (September 2016): forthcoming.
scenes in particular. The inclusion of a chariot has yet to be acknowledged for the last scene of *Edward III* I think because of the lack of easily searchable stage directions and the nature of these publication conditions. The scene also maxes out a single company of performers by requiring 12 speaking parts on stage. At this moment in the play, the English assume the Prince has been killed in battle when a herald interrupts:

*After a flourish sounded within, enter an herald.*

HERALD: Reioyce my Lord, ascend the imperial throne
The mightie and redoubted prince of Wales,
Great seruitor to bloudie Mars in armes,
The French mans terror and his countries fame,
Triumphant rideth like a Romane peere,
and lowly at his stirop comes a foot
King Iohn of France, together with his sonne,
In captiue bonds, whose diadem he brings
To crowne thee with, and to proclaime thee king.
KING EDWARD: Away with mourning Phillip, wipe thine eies
Sound Trumpets, welcome in Plantaginet.

*Enter Prince Edward, king Iohn, Phillip, Audley, Artoys.*

KING EDWARD: As things long lost when they are found again,
So doth my son reioyce his fathers heart,
For whom even now my soul was much perplext
QUEEN PHILLIPA: Be this a token to expresses my ioy,

For inward passions will not let me speak.
PRINCE EDWARD: My gracious father, here receiue the gift,
This wreath of conquest, and reward of ware,
Got with as mickle perill of our liues,
As ere was thing of price before this daie,
Install your highnes in your proper right,
And heere withall I render to your hands
These prisoners, chiefe occasion of our strife. (ll. 2409.1–2432)

It is the herald’s announcement that is most telling. The Prince, thought dead, enters “triumphant.” It is not suggested that he metaphorically “rideth” but rather that he literally uses a “stirop” as a “captiue bond” over the French King and Dauphin. Prince Edward implies that he gives the reigns of this conqueror’s chariot to his father: “receiue the gift”, “I render to your hands / These prisoners.” While the prop cannot alone be the tell that *Edward III* may have
worked as a script for supplemented performances, it colludes with other staging requirements such as a large number of personnel and a thematic investment in staging the limits of global conquest. All three features together suggest that Edward III may have been easily fitted to collaborative performance, and was a part of the thematic milieu that drew playgoers to Admiral’s performances in the late 1580s.

4.3 “VERY DUTIFULLIE OBEYED”: COLLABORATION IN/AND THE ADMIRAL’S PLAYERS

Taken together, II Tamburlaine, Wounds, and Edward III paint a picture of the kind of play—dramaturgically and thematically—for which the Admiral’s players were willing to hire a large number of additional performers, and even possibly collude with a second company. Each include major scenes in which more than double the number of an average company’s worth of speaking parts are required on stage. Certainly Wounds and Edward III suggest the need for two leading men. It seems unsupportable and unlikely that the Admiral’s catered to a single, narrow topical house style throughout their career akin to what Gurr calls a “citizen” ethos. I would agree with Gurr that if the company tried to market their personnel, such as in the celebrity of Alleyn, the remaking of actors heads for pike props, and the combined playing with other troupes, a feature of their house style that may have spanned their entirety was investing in playgoers that liked having familiarity with the players and that played with familiarity as a trope. More recently, Michael J. Hirrel (qualifying Knutson’s research) has argued that Henslowe’s inventories suggest that severed heads presented onstage specifically resembled the heads of the characters who had been beheaded, and of the actors who had performed the
FIGURE 4.3: John Douglas Thompson as Tamburlaine in a 2014 amalgamated staging of Tamburlaine Parts I and II in Brooklyn, New York. He rides the infamous chariot that also doubled as Bajazeth’s cage. In this production, the props of chariot and cage were collapsed into one, further stressing the link between the two parts, unifying his evolution into a tyrant, and connecting the episodes of domination.330

roles.331 One is reminded of Marvin Carlson’s argument in The Haunted Stage about the function of “ghosting,” where playgoers are presented with “the identical thing they have encountered before, although now in a somewhat different context.”332 Whether it be the grotesquely triumphal chariot drawn by conquered men, the face of Alleyn as yet another Mediterranean tyrant, Burbage as an heir born to mete or bear the virtues of his father, or the recurring faces of actors in different roles and on pikes within the action of a single play, each are “semiotic building blocks” which “carry much of their reception burden in their combinations.”333 Made available are powerful opportunities for playgoers to apply previous memories in the recirculation of the actors’ bodies and up-cycling of recognizably distinct props, evoking “the ghost or ghosts of previous roles if they have made any impression whatever on the audience, a phenomenon that often colors and indeed may dominate the reception process.”334

331 Hirrel, “Alcazar, the Lord Admiral’s, and Aspect of Performance,” 59.
333 Carlson, The Haunted Stage, 7.
334 Carlson, The Haunted Stage, 8.
Each of these possibly supplemented plays are not only marked by the ghosts of one another and the careers of their actors in the minds of playgoers, but palimpsestically return to problems of the interrelation between communal tyranny and an individual’s moral compass that makes possible real global conquest.

Three aspects of early modern theatre history have hitherto worked to preclude the Admiral’s players from conversations about innovation. First, Gurr rightly observes that in explicitly associating the works of Marlowe with the Admiral’s, the company has developed a “reputation which led to what too many readers have dismissed as work much less inventive than their opposites the Shakespeare company.”[^335] Second, in a rare show of company politics, after a Privy Council order for playing to cease, “The L. Admeralles players very dutifullie obeyed, but the [Lord Strange’s Men] in very Contemptuous manner departing from me, went to the Crosse keys and played that afternoon.”[^336] Third, because the company did not revise plays already in their repertory, either reviving or buying new, their approach to genre does not easily align with their competitors. The entire career of the Admiral’s players has been marked by a kind of implicit conservatism despite the fact that they were not trading in the Protestant Tudor propagandism of the Queen’s Men, for example. Attempting to ascribe a coherent style and narrative to a half-century career that spanned several generations of players and three patrons proposes an impossible project that ignores the human element of the performance industry, not to mention the particularly fast rate at which it was growing and changing in the 1580s. Additionally, the literary prioritizing by critics of generic conventions as markers of aesthetic

innovation, diversity, and intellectual development has prematurely foreclosed discussions of what was distinctive about the theatrical experience of an Admiral’s performance.

For these super-troupe plays, the Admiral’s players managed mighty props and multiple leading parts to cultivate an armadic theatrical experience, stressing cultural volume, the evolution of tyranny, and metatheatres of war. As a final example of that which would have characterize the armadic experience the company cultivated, consider the moment when Prince Edward I is overcome with anticipation when the first whispers of war with Scotland enter the dialogue of Edward III:

As chereful sounding to my youthfull spleene,
This tumult is of warres increasing broyles,
As at the Coronation of a king,
The ioyfull clamours of the people are,
When Aue Cesar they pronounce alowd;
Within the schoole of honor I shal learne,
Either to sacrifice my foes to death,
Or in a rightfull quarrel spend my breath,
Then cheerefully forward ech a seuerall way,
In great affaires tis nought to vse delay. (ll. 160–9)

The Prince likens the emotionality and the effects of the experience of the spectacle of a coronation to the excitement before the reality of war. Specifically, he links the “clamours of the people” cheering the new-made king to the “tumult” of “warres increasing broyles,” or the chaos of the initial conditions that gradually simmer together to produce eventual conflict. In such “great affaires” does the Prince imagine he will learn when to use violence and when diplomacy so that this learned “honor” will be worthy of remembering, will be worthy of staging in a play. Aside from proposing the overt political problem of Edward III (what balance of violence and diplomacy makes the difference between a tyrant and a shepherd), the play also points to the productivity of “comixt” (l. 1743) elements, and in great volume such as the nation’s crowd or army. It serves as a description of the kind of experience Admiral’s attempted to cultivate in its
several kinds of collaborations: with other companies, playwright teams, and new playwrights, as well as yoking hemispheres by chaining its representatives under a single conquerors chariot recurrently within the plots themselves. The up-cycling of props and possibility of supplemented performances suggest that genre and generic diversity was least of the factors that rendered the Admiral’s players distinctive from their peers in Elizabethan theatrical marketplace.
CHAPTER 5:

SOUNDS AND SENNETS: FACTIONAL POLITICS AND THE LORD PEMBROKE’S PLAYERS, 1597–1598

To do literary criticism is often to ask questions of distinction. What is novel about how this novel situates race? How does that play stage representations of gender? Where in a poem does class become a concern of not just content, but also form? In other words, what makes an art object distinct from its peers, a distinction ostensibly serving some epistemic end? In Repertory Studies—that is, the study of a set of plays owned by a single playing company at a discrete moment in time—the question shifts; the unit of interrogation is a collective rather than singular noun. To put it another way, the research question is not what sets a single text apart, but rather what trend does a set of texts share in common. I mention this methodological repositioning because, as this dissertation aims to make clear, Repertory Studies is an underused technique for middle-distance reading—for locating a playtext amongst its peers. This method does not hang on claims of exceptionality as any close reading of a single text inherently must, and thus helps answer different pervasive questions about texts, especially about those texts that have been lost.

When discussing anonymously written plays, it is difficult not to regard them as stuck out of time; we have no author, fallible or otherwise, on which to hang their intentions. As mentioned in the introduction, Matthew Steggle argues that anonymous and lost plays challenge literary methodologies that read plays as poems rather than as theatre. Playtexts, like play titles, platts, or other documents of performance are not unitary objects, but a part of a “flotilla of
different pieces of manuscript” that contribute to a play event. While this project is in part an argument for the recovery of plays by Shakespeare’s contemporaries as well as for repertory study as part of the standard toolkit for scholars of early modern English drama, it is useful to recall the limits of repertory study as a strategy and its ability to re-entrench the canon.

Of all the Elizabethan playing companies, the Lord Pembroke’s players have been most subsumed by the need to provide Shakespeare with a biography in the 1580s and ‘90s. Pembroke’s come to us in what Andrew Gurr describes as a “farrago” of speculation. From the paratextual evidence, theatre historians concur on only a few aspects of their existence. The company formed around 1591/2 as a splinter group from Strange’s Men with 11 principal actors, one of whom was named Will Slie and some of which were incarcerated for a brief period after the maiden performance of The Isle of Dogs. We know of ten plays in their repertory, of which one is lost, one survives only as a plot, four are alternate or serial versions by Shakespeare of plays already existing in their repertory, and that this repertory likely consisted of several more comedies. Formed at the height of plague season, where death

For their comments and suggestions on early portions of this chapter, I wish to acknowledge the members of the “One shrew, two shrew, my shrew, whose shrew: Performance & Intent” panel held at the 2015 Wooden O Symposium of the Utah Shakespeare Festival in Cedar City, Utah. A portion of the second section, “A Tale of Two Shrews: Recovering the Repertory of the Lord Pembroke’s Players,” is forthcoming in The Journal of the Wooden O Symposium 14 (2016).

Lost Plays Database, ed. Roslyn L. Knutson and David McInnis (Melbourne, AU: University of Melbourne, 2009), s. v. “The Isle of Dogs.”
These include Christopher Marlowe’s Edward II; William Shakespeare’s The Taming of the Shrew, Titus Andronicus, 2 Henry VI, and 3 Henry VI; Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson’s The Isle
counts ranged from 150 to 1100 per week,\textsuperscript{343} the company performed at inn-yards as well as the Rose and Swan theatres, but was primarily on tour outside of London in the time we know of their existence (c.1592–1601).

Two particularly jarring aspects of Pembroke’s biography upon which company intentionality has been hung was their vacillating favor and disfavor at Court, and the high number of anonymous plays making up their repertorial flotilla. We know that Pembroke’s played twice at Court for the 1592/3 Christmas festivities\textsuperscript{344} and possibly sometime in 1601 specifically for the Queen.\textsuperscript{345} We know that 40% of their canon remains anonymous in terms of authorship. Both these aspects of the company’s history resist larger common narrative tropes told of the period. With the inconsistent dating and huge span of time, one cannot say that they were favorites of the Queen nor rejected by her. With so many anonymous and adapted texts in their repertory, one cannot assign them a figurehead playwright around which to arrange a tale. I propose that a study of their repertory as a curated set reframes these kinds of “inconsistencies” and recovers a sense of the company’s intentions by placing their anonymous and lost plays amongst their playtext peers.

This chapter focuses on Pembroke’s Dogs and The Taming of a Shrew as example cases in how accounting for a company’s house style inflects how we tell stories about lost texts and,
by extension, the Elizabethan theatrical experience. The first section frames the responses to and fall out from the *Dogs* fiasco. This is followed by a sketch of the staging devices with which the company may have been associated in order to fill in some of the picture about what exactly was so incendiary, so distinct, about this play within its marketplace. Introducing two new markers of the Pembroke house style to the company’s biography, complex trumpet calls and factional social blocking, in the second section I test these seemingly militaristic devices to see if they are present not only in Pembroke’s histories but also in the surviving domestic comedies, *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Rather than reading *A Shrew* as a source, derivative, or competitor to Shakespeare’s *The Shrew*, I analyze the reception implications of *A Shrew* as the only version of the shrew-taming narrative where the subject of instruction, Sly, remains and even interjects all the way through the action. My aim is to use Pembroke’s strategies to articulate the communal politics at work in the shrew trope—a subject of debate seemingly heated enough to warrant two versions in the same theatrical marketplace. In so doing, I argue that Pembroke’s house style was distinguishable from its peers by merit of its systemic staging of factional conflict in both public and private spheres of Elizabethan life.

### 5.1 A LOST CASE

Scholarship primarily invested in Pembroke’s troupe is sparse. Until very recently, new discoveries about the company have been pursued to further readings of individual plays or Shakespeare’s biography. Surveys of the companies operating in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods make only passing mention of this company because, while there is no explicit link to Shakespeare as a sharer, the company did own and stage several early plays ascribed to him. In his article “Three’s Company: Alternative Histories of London’s Theatres in the 1590s” (2012),
Holger Schott Syme rightly observes that “these strong connections between author and company have served to obfuscate the fact that neither was in any sense coterminous with the other—the Chamberlain’s Men never were the ‘Shakespeare Company,’ even if they may appear that way in retrospect, nor was Shakespeare always a Chamberlain’s Man.” By “decoupling author from sharer from playwright from play,” Syme contends we are better equipped to construct new narratives of the Elizabethan theatrical marketplace by, for example, depending on the greater accuracy of first-edition title pages at their word to chart company ownership. In doing so, for example, the Queen’s Men are back as a major, if perhaps old-fashioned, force—not just on the touring circuit but in the capital as well. Troupes such as Derby’s Men or Sussex’s Men are no longer marginal companies barely worth noticing, but well-known enough that stationers thought their names could sell books. And Pembroke’s Men emerge as a dominant force of late Elizabethan theatre, staging some of the most recognizable and still canonical plays of the era.

Theatre historians are acutely aware of (and resistant to) making yet another canon, reifying what David Damrosh calls the hypercanon (“major” authors who have held or gained popularity in the past twenty years), or thinking of anonymous or “minor” authors in terms of a countercanon (subaltern or “contestatory” authors less commonly taught). As Jeremy Lopez argues, “single-text editions re-inscribe the principles of selection and exclusion” by the same means that “anthologies define the canon.”

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biographies (or composing biographies of the companies as if these early modern corporations were individual persons) suggests that as much as canon development is a historiographic phenomenon, so too were (and are) company repertories a form of cultural canon formation. With this rethinking of the structure of a canon—a curatorial process in and of itself—what becomes available are not only preferred strategies for presenting plays that set companies apart, but also that the content of lost plays has a place in Elizabethan culture. *Dogs* is an illustrative case in how a lost play can add to the story of the Elizabethan theatre industry and censorship.

5.1.1 “that most infamous, most dunsicall and thrice opprobrious worke”\(^{351}\)

Sometime in mid-July of 1597, Pembroke’s rented out Francis Langley’s Swan theatre, the new state-of-the-art playhouse with the first painted Heavens or roof feature, which the nearby Rose was scrambling through last-minute renovations to replicate.\(^ {352}\) The first mention of *Dogs* came a month later in a contract of a new player to Admiral’s by actor Edward Alleyn and landlord Phillip Henslowe; his new gig would begin just as soon as the “Jeylle of dodges” restraint was lifted.\(^ {353}\) Alleyn’s contract language indicates both a request by the London Mayor and aldermen to suppress all playing in the City and nearby liberties until whatever chaos the play had started was mitigated. It was subsequently approved by the Queen’s Privy Council by the end of July.\(^ {354}\) So what the archive mentions first about *Dogs* has not to do with its content. Rather, the thrust is


\(^{353}\) *Lost Plays Database*, s. v. “The Isle of Dogs.”

\(^{354}\) *Lost Plays Database*, s. v. “The Isle of Dogs.”
that the play, in effect, ruins the high point of the 1597 summer season not just for Pembroke’s players, but for all five of the major playing companies in residence in London.

The play was likely destroyed by the Master of the Revels office for what scholars believe was an “explosive political satire” that criticized the government and produced a “rowdy reception” by playgoers that “embarrassed both the Queen and her Council.”\(^{355}\) Because of the lack of hard evidence of what exactly happened and what the play was even about, it became the subject of forgery.\(^{356}\) There are no known narrative or dramatic sources, nor analogues to *Dogs* but for possibly a 1577 play called *The Cynocephali* performed during Court Christmas festivities. (It supposedly featured a man-eating race of dog-men like those described by Marco Polo.)\(^{357}\) An Isle of Dogs serves as a location in several later Jacobean plays, including *Eastward Hoe!* (1605), *The Return from Parnassus* (1602), and *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet* (1602), all of whose biting satire and cultural specificity are so precise to their historical moment that they often seem unintelligible to twenty-first century readers. These geographical allusions share a similar sentiment that of Ingenioso to his friend Academico in *The Return from Parnassus*: the “writts are out for me, to apprehend mee for my playes, and now I am bound for the Ile of doggs” ([H3r]). In these allusions the locale is either a place of hiding or where one met their appropriate punishment for a theatrical critique gone too far. The actual geographical location of the same name: a large and marshy meander surrounded on three sides by the Thames in east London at which Henry VIII kept greyhounds as well as a number of

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\(^{355}\) *Lost Plays Database*, s. v. “The Isle of Dogs.”

\(^{356}\) John Payne Collier fabricated a number of details in his edition of *The Diary of Philip Henslowe, from 1591 to 1609* (London, UK: Shakespeare Society, 1845).

\(^{357}\) *Lost Plays Database*, s. v. “The Isle of Dogs.”
Whatever the geographical specificity of the allusion, the play remained hot in the Elizabethan imaginary as a kind of Avalon for ineffectual satirists for at least another six years, right up until the Queen’s death in 1603.

Interestingly (and frustratingly), contemporaries focused almost exclusively on the playwright Thomas Nashe’s flight from justice rather than on whatever had incited playgoers at Dogs’ maiden performance. Francis Meres likened Nashe to several mythic heroes done-in by their own dogs: “As Actaeon was worried of his own hounds: so is Tom Nash of his Isle of Dogs. Dogges were the death of Euripedes; but bee not disconsolate, gallant young Iuuenall, Linus, the sonne of Apollo died the same death” (323). He qualifies however that Nashe’s are “but paper doggies,” and so for his counsel he shall eventually receive “a glorious return to Rome” (ironically) like that of Cicero (323). Richard Lichfield’s detailed account in The Trimming of Thomas Nashe (1597), published the same year as the performance, offers an extended call for Nashe to return from hiding and receive his punishment: a cropped ear. But since he will not, Lichfield decides that with words he will instead cut the truant playwright into parts, taking a hatchet to the poet’s reputation. Lichfield takes his time unwinding the logic of cropping Nashe’s ears for his “tongue’s fault”: unbalanced critique, like “the over-pregnant dog (we see) bringeth forth blind puppies, and the spider that prepares her matter and weaves her web together at the same time makes but slender work of it” ([37]). Lichfield concludes, “thy tongue was in thy ears’

359 And possibly further, if a 1986 stage play and 2011 limited release film of the same name are any indication.
place, and for this cause thine ears are justly punished” ([38]). Marginalia makes sure we don’t miss the point, including “cropt ear” in the left-hand gloss (Lichfield [31]).

For Lichfield, Nashe’s play “threatened to spoil our stirring satirists,” a claim that implies satire was a crucial form of political critique in the period ([40]). Lichfield concludes his indictment with a series of “graces,” or defenses of Nashe, which really aren’t defenses at all but further indictments in the name of “all ballad-makers, pamphleteers, press-haunters, [and] boon
pot-poets” from which as a satirist Nashe is further accused of nabbing materials disingenuously (20). Nashe responded to these accusations two years later in *Nashe’s Lenten Stuff* (1599); unable to understand exactly how his own play was so threatening, he decried “the straunge turning of the Ile of Dogs from a comedie to a tragedie two summers past, with the troublesome stir which hapned aboute it, [wa]s a general rumour laid upon me” (2). Nashe calls his play an “unfortunate imperfect Embrion” that “was no sooner borne but [he] was glad to run from it” (2)—a sentiment about invention and revision any writer could commiserate with. Part of his trouble may have been with his critics’ misunderstanding of the theatrical composition process, which, with few exceptions, was inherently collaborative. Nashe tried to make the point clear, arguing that “I hauing begun but the induction and first act of it, the other four acts without my consent, or the least guess of my drift or scope, by the players were supplied, which bred both their trouble and mine” (2). Playwrights specialized in kinds of scenes, which no doubt helped to disperse blame in such instances but failed in doing so for Nashe. It seemed few, from his troupe mates to the wider writing community, were perceived to be on Nashe’s side.

Whatever the blame, the fallout was undeniably extreme. Elizabeth’s Privy Council called the event “lewd” and a “very seditious and sclanderous matter” in their 15 August 1597 indictment, putting several punitive measures into motion.\(^{360}\) The spymaster Richard Topcliffe confiscated Nashe’s papers from his abandoned London lodgings. Two of the players, Gabriel Spencer and Robert Shaw, were imprisoned, along with Ben Jonson, who was thought to have penned the four acts for which Nashe refused to take responsibility.\(^{361}\) The Swan immediately lost its playing license for the rest of the season and then was restrained due to a plague outbreak;


\(^{361}\) Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, 108.
it would never again reopen as a fully functioning and dedicated theatre venue. (Henslowe’s Rose no doubt happily filled the void as now the most up-to-date playhouse in Southwark.) In 1600, Nashe died in regional exile in Yarmouth, followed by the Swan-landlord Langley in 1602. Any of Pembroke’s players not grabbed by Alleyn and Henslowe to fill the ranks of the Admiral’s troupe fled for smaller touring routes. Alleyn also wasted no time signing Spencer and Shaw upon their release.\textsuperscript{362} Based on these print indictments, \textit{Dogs} came to be synonymous with the power of ambivalence when it came to using theatre for political critique. Additionally, the martyrdom of Nashe’s reputation signals the beginnings of a playgoing public that overtly linked the politics of a play with its playwright. While certainly Pembroke’s players were the most immediate casualty, the print discourse required that the playwright as an individual also take responsibility over that work. Therefore, the question remains exigent for how critics conceive of the livelihoods of players, playwrights, and playhouse landlords: what exactly was so dangerous about Nashe’s “paper doggies”?

\textbf{5.1.2 “The trumpet sounds. Be copious in exclaims.”}\textsuperscript{363}

On the surface this question is a fool’s errand because the playtext itself is lost. It would certainly be so if we consider \textit{Dogs} in isolation and as a one-off, rather than part of the flotilla of documents that instructed the play event. Consider that even play titles, as Steggle argues, can offer for a lost play a “very brief record [that] could be thought of as a very low-resolution thumbnail of an image.”\textsuperscript{364} One of the arguments of this project is that we can determine

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{362} Gurr, \textit{The Shakespearian Playing Companies}, 108.
\item \textsuperscript{364} Steggle, \textit{Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England}, 10.
\end{itemize}
something about the house style that demarcated one playing company from another by analyzing their playtexts as a set. Authorship and focus on single playtexts prove a poor organizing principles for studying sixteenth century drama because collaborative writing was the norm, players specialized in typecast parts while playwrights specialized in species of scenes, and the plays underwent continuous revisions each time they were sold, each time a company moved to a new playhouse, and each time company personnel changed. If playing companies were the most stable organizing factor in this marketplace, we then have to think of these plays as accruing a distinguishable style over time as a curated set—that is to say, as a set selected and refined over time by a playing company in response to playgoer attendance receipts. As such, a company’s repertorial set evinces both presentational and representational strategies that render them distinguishable to theatrical consumers, as a factor in playgoers’ horizon of expectations.

Now that *Dogs* has been situated within its immediate reception context and the surviving paratextual evidence laid bare, I will turn to sketching the indicative manners of presentation making up Pembroke’s house style. I do so in order to place *Dogs* within its performance milieu and suggest dramaturgical elements it may too have featured.

Roslyn Knutson surmises that Pembroke’s house style included “generic variety, serial drama, their own version of popular stories, and theatrics such as onstage violence, sexually provocative moments, traffic with the supernatural, and challenges to hierarchical structures with which to entertain London and provincial audiences.” Of their touring practices, “provincial stops took them to towns where their patron was influential, where players had traditionally been welcomed, and where their rewards were the average or higher.” Together the character of

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their repertory and touring practices suggest that “whatever the cause of the company’s reported collapse” around the end of the century, “the fault does not appear to lie with its repertory or touring schedule.”\textsuperscript{367} Syme has recently argued, too, that while the company “must have been a large troupe, at least in the early 1590s, they probably did not specialize exclusively in large-scale productions” like that of Admiral’s.\textsuperscript{368} As I discussed in the previous chapter, to assume “that the company went bankrupt because they tried to take their big shows on the road and discovered too late that large-cast productions did not travel well treats them as shockingly ignorant of the economic basics of their trade.”\textsuperscript{369} Their War of the Roses plays, shrew plays, and \textit{Titus Andronicus} speak to imitation, duplication, and serialization as compositional norms of the period.\textsuperscript{370} Their presentational strategies—such as the frequent staging of beheadings and piked heads,\textsuperscript{371} coordinating the food smells of the inn-yard with dramatic content to pit “playgoers’ innate desire for food” against “regulating principles of morality,”\textsuperscript{372} and drawing on shared memories of unsavory and violent native history—worked to implicate audiences ideologically and sensorially.

\textsuperscript{367} Knutson, “Pembroke’s Men in 1592–3, Their Repertory and Touring Schedule,” 135. For a programmatic dismantling of the myth that the company had to pawn their apparel in order to survive, see Syme, “Three’s Company,” 281.

\textsuperscript{368} Syme, “Three’s Company,” 288.

\textsuperscript{369} Syme, “Three’s Company,” 288.

\textsuperscript{370} In both of Knutson’s monographs, \textit{Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Time} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and \textit{The Repertory of Shakespeare’s Company, 1594–1613} (Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), Pembroke’s War of the Roses plays are key pieces of evidence to support her claim that necessary features of the vitality of the London marketplace that developed were imitation, cooperation, and variety in company repertory. Note, too, that \textit{Titus Andronicus} may have been a sequel to another lost play, \textit{Titus and Vespasian}.

\textsuperscript{371} Knutson, “Pembroke’s Men in 1592–3, Their Repertory and Touring Schedule,” 133.

In my assessment of the playtexts theatre historians agree were owned and performed by Pembroke’s up through the 1590s, I propose two additional strategies to the above list that were endemic to their repertory: specialized trumpet calls and factional blocking. The name of Pembroke had a history of patronizing musicians. The first records of a troupe patronized by Henry Herbert, the second earl of Pembroke—patron of Fulke Greville and Philip Sidney, and close friend of Robert Devereaux, the Earl of Essex—\textsuperscript{373} are harpers and minstrels.\textsuperscript{374} While each of these only has one payment record, there are significantly more of an Earl of Pembroke’s trumpeters,\textsuperscript{375} especially in the late 1580s and early 1590s, up until a playing troupe of the same name enters the records.\textsuperscript{376} While there are no firm accounts of the relationship between the trumpet troupe and the player troupe aside from a familiar patron, that there may have been some relation is suggested by the fact that the systemic employment of trumpet calls and trumpet allusions in the troupe’s repertory far outstrip their competitors (not including the boy companies). Pembroke’s repertory deploys five distinct calls in a nuanced example of a playing company capitalizing on a specialized resource. The density of the soundscape, especially in The First Part of the Contention, The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, and 2 and 3 Henry VI, suggests that varied trumpet calls were tied to specific semantic work that enabled stagings with a particular political resonance.

\textsuperscript{374} REED, Sussex, 47; Shropshire, 140.
\textsuperscript{375} REED, Oxford, 576 and 383; Cambridge, 584.
\textsuperscript{376} There are 18 individual recorded payments to Pembroke’s players on tour outside of London: REED, Kent, 270; Somerset, 15; Coventry, 338; York, 455; Sussex, 136; Oxford, 240; Somerset, 17; Bristol, 150 and 152; Coventry, 353; Kent, 485; Coventry, 353; Heref/Worc, 362; Norwich, 113; Bristol, 154; Newcastle upon Tyne, 131; York, 491; Bristol, 155.
The Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama notes five different kinds of trumpet calls or directed action that includes trumpet signals. The anonymous The First Part of the Contention Between the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster is a useful representative example of their numbers and range. “Flourish,” a fanfare call played within the tiring house (which is to say not on stage) typically when key figures entered or exited, appears eight times.377 “Alarum,” an offstage call to arms, usually at a point of conflict or confusion during battle, appears nineteen times.378 The “sennet” fanfare appears only three times, two of which are paired with a stage direction for “flourish.” In other plays, “sennet” is frequently paired with other instruments such as flutes and cornets, suggesting that this was perhaps a staccato call specific to a full-sized trumpet.379 Trumpets in particular are asked to sound four times, and in Shakespeare’s version of events in 1 Henry VI a trumpeter is even given a stage task—“Go to the gates of Bordeaux, trumpeter: / Summon their general unto the wall”—before presumably executing the direction that immediately follows—“Trumpet sounds. Enter General and others, aloft” (IV.ii.1–2). Following stage directions alone demonstrates trumpet calls fill the soundscapes as well as help to construct the landscapes of Pembroke’s plays.

A secondary argument I aim to make in addition to articulating the house style of Pembroke’s is that the density of their soundscape implies that varied trumpet calls were tied to specific and complex semantic work. They were not, as often implied, simplistic affective tools as has come to be associated with the term “spectacle.” Dramaturgical and presentational elements of theatre and its playtexts make political claims as much as the text of dialogue alone

378 Dessen and Thomson, A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 3.
379 Dessen and Thomson, A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 191.
might; the emotionality and cognitive work spectacular stage business enlivened was as complex as the dialogue of the script. For example, in *The First Part of the Contention*, “drums” are called for and played with trumpets eight times. Trumpets are also required for two other significant stage directions that do slightly different work other than directing movement: “excursions” are called for seven times, and “colours” nine times. Both these stage directions signal social blocking, a term film theorists use to describe arrangements of characters that accentuate the relations amongst characters rather than in the service of visual patterns or harmony. These would not be unlike the *triptych* social blocking patterns discussed of the Queen’s Men in chapter two. However, where Queen’s blocking patterns emphasized political concerns of the commonweal at large in groupings of three, Pembroke’s coordinated social arrangements with sound specifically pertain to members of the elite and often stress dichotomy. For example, “colours” typically include a flag, ensign, or standard of some kind, accompanied by drums and trumpet calls to indicate a “readiness for battle” and “a show of power.”

This direction requires only a few bodies, even as little as two, but bearing a variety of flags they can imply many factions coming together for action. Likewise the direction “excursions” requires an antagonist: it is an appropriated military call for the “issuing forth against an enemy,” typically paired with alarum and indicating movement over rather than merely across the center of the stage. In all these cases, trumpet calls are routinely paired with social configurations and so provide sonic and symbolic markers for movement by players.

When I use the term *soundscape*, I do so to indicate the specific way in which both the blocking and music (exclusive of speech) in a scene would have worked together so that in

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380 Dessen and Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama*, 53.
381 Dessen and Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama*, 84–5.
listening, a playgoer processed that acoustic information and rendered meaning from it. Sound Studies critic Wes Folkerth refers to this aspect of reception within the performance event as an acoustemology: the “particular ways cultures experience their knowledge of the world through sound.”\(^{382}\) He argues that the playing troupes and the playhouses were important contributors to the larger acoustemologies of London. Companies would announce performances with drums and trumpets so effectively to the point that, as a letter from Lord Hunsdon to the Lord Mayor of London in September 1594 stipulates, his company could only play at the Cross Keys as long as they “will nott use anie drumes or trumpettes att all for the callinge of peopell together.”\(^{383}\) Two years later, Blackfriars district citizens protested the new playhouse in their neighborhood, filing a complaint that argued “the same playhouse is so neere the Church that the noyse of the drummes and trumpetts will greatly disturbe and hinder both the ministers and parishioners in tyme of devine service and sermons.”\(^{384}\) Bruce Smith defines London itself as a part of the early modern theatre’s soundscape as opposed to constraining that definition to asides, soliloquies, and whispered confidences between characters.\(^{385}\) To create fictional soundscapes within the action of a play, Smith suggests companies used sonic scene-setting strategies: “not just verbal and physical gestures to throne room or battlefield or bedchamber, each of which would in real life have different soundtracks and different contours of sound, but here-and-now indications of how far the actors’ voices are imagined to carry and who will or will not hear those voices.”\(^{386}\) While


\(^{383}\) Quoted in Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, 17.

\(^{384}\) Quoted in Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, 17.


all these studies use only Shakespeare’s texts as evidence, they do establish a working vocabulary for how to talk about the interrelation of blocking and sound in staging decisions.

In fact, except for Linda Phyllis Austern’s *Music in English Children’s Drama of the Later Renaissance* (1992), there are no dedicated studies to the sound effects and music of the popular playing companies during Elizabeth’s reign that don’t focus explicitly on Shakespeare—including Folkerth and Smith. They do however lend us two basic principles for analyzing Pembroke’s soundscape: first, generally agreeing that the cornet and trumpet were the most pliable instruments to participate in stage action, and second, a theoretical framework to think about the particular acoustemology of the outdoor playhouse Folkerth calls *polythetic meaning*. This mode of experiential meaning is conditioned by the constant disappearance of time that constitutes the play event; it is an irrecoverable and irreparable time frame whose fleeting quality conditions the tools available for processing meaning in the moment. This irrecoverability activates its “poly” aspect: playgoers are provided multiple and simultaneous opportunities for meaning-making “generated out of symbol systems motivated by various forms of prelinguistic engagement with the material world.”

When the trumpeter is asked to go to the walls of Bordeaux and summon the resistant generals, and then is followed by stage directions to play, playgoers are provided with a particular call with martial resonances, perhaps an uncertain or very determined young trumpeter moving across the stage (implying the perceived “rightness” or “wrongness” of the assault by the commoners), and an obedient stage action in response by the generals. The meaning of sound is here polythetic in that it provides three interpretive

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387 Both Smith and Folkerth, as well as Harvey Rovine in *Silence in Shakespeare: Drama, Power, and Gender* (1987) and Robert Shaughnessy’s chapter in *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre* (2012) emphasize equal to that of sound were the intended and unintended spaces for silence.

opportunities (at least), as well as sonic scene-setting by suggesting that within the fiction of the play the trumpet call extends within the great barricaded walls of the affronting castle.

In sum, for Pembroke’s repertory the work trumpet calls do to construct the landscape of a scene is consistently tied to arranging bodies within the stage action in order to visualize political allegiances. Considering the endemic use of these tactics throughout their playtexts, so too may they have been a part of the theatrical experience offered by *Dogs*.

Excursions, flourishes, sennets, alarums, colors and drums clutter up the stage directions of this repertory, facilitating, I argue, a specific kind of political relationship through social blocking: that of factionalism, or the fractious governance produced by clusters of competing and

**FIGURE 5.2:** The Baron’s Men 2016 staging of the battle of Bosworth Field in *Richard III* at the Curtain Theatre in Austin, Texas.
dissenting peers orbiting around a monarch. The plays stage not only factionalism in action but also suggest the conditions necessary for the formation of factions amongst the peerage. Some of the flashier dramaturgical examples include the three suns descending from the Heavens mechanism to portend the necessary unity of the three sons of York in *The third Part of Henry the Sixt, with the death of the Duke of Yorke* (c.1591–2); the two tents set up on either side of the stage in which Richmond and Richard III are visited by ghosts the night before the battle of Bosworth Field in *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt* (c.1592–5); and the plucking of red and white roses from a temple garden, drawing blood in the choosing of sides between Lancaster and York in *The first Part of Henry the Sixt* (1592). In this light, one might go so far as to say that the repertory, including Shakespeare’s War of the Roses tetralogy, is a long-view meditation on the factional fallout from a king who refuses to exercise prerogative.

These visually and aurally spectacular moments become emblematic cores to these plays; suns, ghosts, and roses become important symbols for the nature of factional tension. (Perhaps such a moment touched too close to the quick in *Dogs*?) Figures, too, become emblems around which factions form and reform. Two notable examples from Pembroke’s repertory include the rebel Jack Cade in *2 Henry VI*, and the Earl of Warwick in *3 Henry VI*. Cade and Warwick are both kingmakers of different kinds in their ability to manage the resources of popular opinion and soldiering forces drawn from the yeomanry. For Cade, it is when his resistance turns to mere riot and looting of London, to “Kill and knock down! Throw them into Thames!” (IV.viii.1–2), that he loses his footing. Buckingham and Clifford confront “all his rabblement” (IV.viii.1.1–2),

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389 All references to 2 and 3 *Henry VI* are from the Arden Shakespeare Third Series, ed. Roland Knowles (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 1999), and eds. John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2001), respectively.
offering them “free pardon” (IV.viii.9) if they “go home in peace” (IV.viii.10.). The stage
directions signal the commons to “forsake Cade” (IV.viii.19.). After Cade accuses them of
delighting “to / live in slavery to the nobility” (IV.viii.27–8.), the crowd is directed to “run to
Cade again” (IV.viii.34.). Old Clifford exposes Cade’s unsustainable tactics—“he hath no
home, no place to fly to, / Nor know he how to live but by the spoil” (IV.viii.38–40)—and
successfully inspires the “multitude” to “forsake Cade” one last time (IV.viii.55.). King Henry
VI is absent from the action and its negotiations, which are conducted by Buckingham and Old
Clifford in his interest but not by his direction. Eventually the rabble will be marched in halters
past their king, as directed by the lords, in a show of obeisance; the importance here is the
orchestration of the display of obedience by the lords for their monarch. The lords’ ability to
manage regional uprisings (for which many critics have indicated Cade becomes a catch-all,
representing several historical instances at once)\(^{390}\) demonstrates both their importance in a
network of competing voices of councilor influence as well as the diffuse network of power on
which the monarch’s ability to mechanize his status relies.

More dangerous than the factionalism of the commons is factionalism within the peerage
itself, the stakes of which are made crystalline at the start of act four of 3 Henry VI. The stage
directions give us explicit sound and blocking directions for the scene:

\begin{quote}
Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD, LADY GREY [now QUEEN ELIZABETH],
Pembroke, Stafford, HASTINGS: four stand on one side and four on the other.
(IV.i.7.1–3)
\end{quote}

Like the tents and roses episodes, these clusters would have likely formed around the two stage
pillars, providing a central playing space for contact while enough distance to articulate asides

\(^{390}\) Ronald Knowles’s introduction to the Arden critical edition of Shakespeare’s version of
events takes up this conflation and the scholarly conversation surrounding it in full; see pp. 89–
101.
amongst the factional groups.\textsuperscript{391} Note that only five figures are mentioned but eight are noted in the directions; Richard, George, Somerset, and Montague are already on stage, bringing the total number of bodies to nine. This would suggest that King Edward likely occupies the central space more often than not, attempting to broker between the two groups of four as much as he is subject to selecting from their advice.

The contention here is over the peers’ “mislike” of Edward’s hasty marriage to a widowed Englishwoman. He invites them to “speak freely what you think” (IV.i.24–7), actively seeking out the voices of his peers. One group feels Edward has rejected a French alliance that would “have strengthened this our commonwealth / ‘Gainst foreign storms than any home-bred marriage” (IV.i.37–8). The other side sees alliance an unnecessary burden: the native marriage means they only need “defend ourselves” and “in ourselves, our safety lies” (IV.i.40)—that “England is safe, if true within itself” (IV.i.45–6). Eventually Edward brings the two sides to resolution, wresting from Hastings and Montague, Warwick’s men, “friendly vow” and “true obedience” with the claim that he’d “rather wish [them] foes than hollow friends” (IV.i.138–40). Edward reaffirms the sense of his kingly virtue as that of being able to manage competing interests within his own government.

Edward’s ability to manage competing factional interests doesn’t seem to extend to conflicts where he is out of the room. In the very next scene, Warwick and his French soldiers land in England, where, using the regal plural pronoun, “the common people by numbers swarm

\textsuperscript{391} By the 1597/8 season, the Rose had had its pillars for more than three years. They were not part of its initial construction, but were added in 1592 renovations; see Julian Bowsher, “The Rose and Its Stages,” \textit{Shakespeare Survey} 60 (2007): 36–48. Depending on how closely one assumes architectural development influenced play composition, one could conceivably argue that bifurcated blocking techniques like that of factionalism become more prominent after the playing space is itself bifurcated vis-à-vis the pillars.
to us” (IV.ii.2). He too asks his lords to “speak suddenly” their minds (IV.ii.2.4), casting their relationship in terms of friendship rather than obeisance. When Warwick and his once-bosom friend, King Edward, next meet it is a carefully managed moment of sound and action in which Warwick’s French soldiers—the stage direction notes “silent all”—surprise Edward’s watchmen:

Warwick and the rest cry all “A Warwick! A Warwick!”
and set upon the guard, who fly, crying “Arm! Arm!,”
Warwick and the rest following them.
The drum playing and the trumpet sounding, enter WARWICK, SOMERSET and the rest, bringing KING [EDWARD] out in his gown, sitting in a chair. RICHARD [OF GLOUCESTER] and HASTINGS fly over the stage. (IV.iii.28.1–7)

In this dense bit of stage direction, the text elides the complexity, stage time, and choreography necessary to surprise and capture the new king. It is not only a temporal elision but a sonic one: drum, trumpets, and soldiers’ cries fill the soundscape of this moment, enacting cacophony not only in terms of discordant sounds but in the jumbling of political hierarchies when a peer of the realm resorts to kidnapping his own king. Despite King Edward’s eventual re-instatement, his call for “stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows…sound drums and trumpets!” as a means to bid “farewell” to “sour annoy” (V.vii.43–5) rings hollow on England’s prospects for peace. Similarly able to manage competing interests but at this moment more capable of marshalling followers and resources to his side, Warwick is positioned as a counterpoint to Edward. Rather than merely a tool to construct sonic volume and martial setting, coordinating blocking with trumpet calls stage the limits of a king’s ability to keep dissent within his inner circle in check.
5.1.3 “Their histories resound with drums and trumpets.”

Factionalism is a crucial concept to Tudor historians for describing the nature of Court politics during the second half of Elizabeth’s reign. Defined as “a personal following employed in direct opposition to another personal following,” factionalism “could involve disputes over patronage or debates over matters of state.” Simon Adams has identified two periods of English politics especially marked by factional struggle, one of which was the 1590s, the heyday of Pembroke’s players and Dogs. This characterization of late Elizabethan politics has evolved in recent years to incorporate Jürgen Habermas’ concept of the public sphere. Because a number of interrelated issues including Elizabeth’s marriage, heir, and the threat posed by Mary, Queen of Scots, remained unresolved, Peter Lake argues “personal and political relationships that bound the Queen to her councilors and courtiers and, sometimes despite themselves, one to another” were reified. This seems to have been in part to “appeal to and mobilize various bodies of opinion, or publics” in order to “bounce” or “pressurize” Elizabeth into making final policy decisions.

Expanding work by Patrick Collinson, Paul Hammer, John Guy, Lake, Adams and others, Natalie Mears has developed a more nuanced framework for characterizing the mode of public

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debate in Elizabethan England. She pushes against Habermas’ model of the public sphere characterized as a single, coherent unit. For her, Elizabethan public debate was made up of unsituated discourses: a set of common topics of discussion had between people in different locations and who moved in different circles. Comprising “a whole host of small, individual, physically located, public spheres, defined by their topics of debate, their participants, their motives and the physical forum in which debate was held,” this “arterial network of ‘unsituated’ discourses…connected otherwise distinct and disparate individual spheres principally on the basis on common topics of debate.” Importantly, these public discourses were primarily experienced directly, face-to-face with other participants in a physical location, not unlike a playhouse or inn-yard. I would argue that, aligning Simon and Mears’ definitions, the company repertories made up their own arterial network of unsituated discourses. Pembroke’s, for example, makes a common topic out of the implications of factional policymaking. The combination of trumpet calls with scenes of faction-building effectually stage a core tension within Tudor councilior politics; these dramaturgical strategies were part of the symbolic vocabulary of houses styles, styles that were themselves unsituated discourses.

398 For more on the touchstone arguments for “Tudorbetheans”—such as Guy’s assertion of a changing role of counsel between Elizabeth’s “first” and “second” reigns bifurcated by the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Collinson’s characterization of Elizabeth I’s regime as a “monarchical republic”—see The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade (1995) and The Tudor Monarchy (1997) both edited by Guy, Paul Hammer’s The Polarization of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597 (1999), Simon Adams’ Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan politics (2002), and The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England (2007) edited by Peter Lake and Steven Pincus.


400 Mears, Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms, 268.
What I am trying to get at here is that part of acoustemology of Pembroke’s plays was to encode a particular topical commentary. To make this function of house style clear, it is useful to think of Renaissance plays as staging particular political problems rather than making arguments. (By “political” I do mean in terms of governance and identity.) For me, this is the core difference between reading a play and experiencing a performance: the latter has the additional restriction of time that gave playgoers a focused cognitive arena, the analogy of theatrical experience, in which to consider a political and/or topical question. Attending a play and attending to its polythetic meaning is then necessarily an embodied form of reception requiring presence in a playing space and remaining open to the acoustemology of sound as much as the epistemology of text. While I am primarily invested in what is made possible by the indicative dramaturgical strategies of distinct playing companies, thinking of the playhouse and the house style it inscribed as a regular, recurring unsituated discourse suggests dramaturgy was more than capable of specific questions and concepts. In this light, we can say that, regardless of the text or plot, dramaturgical elements were also and equally at the core of the theatrical experience and political volatility of *Dogs*.

Leading up to their *Dogs* fiasco, Pembroke’s had developed, as I have shown, a manner of playing that capitalized on a military soundscape and a penchant for social blocking arrangements that, intentionally or otherwise, evinced an investment in exploring the political problem of factionalism. While it is materially impossible to trace the degree to which Pembroke’s explicitly, knowingly invested in narratives of recent factionalisms in English history, it is certainly clear that the company offered entertainments that conceived of history as primarily dictated by the contesting forces surrounding but not instigated by a sympathetic monarch. While middle-distance reading of the kind required of the breadth of a company’s
repertory cannot give us a sense of the philosophical complexity or teleological richness of the history of an idea, attending to the politics encoded within the dramaturgy of a repertorial milieu can give us a sense of the relative stress of one political problem in relation to others. It can give us a sense of the ways in which company repertories curated the constellation of political questions to which Elizabethans were willing to pay to entertain and grapple with.

In her essay on the ways in which archives lose peripheral voices while the lives of ordinary Elizabethans are fragmentary at best, at worst silent, Virginia Woolf remarks “their histories resound with drums and trumpets.” Factional blocking is therefore additionally important because it dramaturgically and ideologically decenters kings and queens as a means to underscore the complex network of negotiation between counselors in which, arguably, real power laid in Tudor England. While this context does not tell us what the narrative content of Dogs may have been, it suggests the play may have exercised these strategies to an extremity, satirizing not the monarch or her Privy Councilors, but rather the power dynamic they shared.

5.2 A DUPLICATE CASE

It is logical that history plays and the dramaturgy they required would privilege certain questions of public policy and politics. However, in order to make a substantive claim about what was distinctive to a company’s house style, all genres must be tested for them. Alas, the extant repertory of Pembroke’s gives us only one comic plot, but usefully in two versions. The Taming of a Shrew (c.1592) was one of a number of shrew-taming entertainments circulating in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Theatre historians now concur that this anonymous play, along with Shakespeare’s The Taming of the Shrew (c.1593), both derived from an ur-Shrew
Additional allusions to domestic reform literature of the period that counseled against unseemly physical domination and early 1580s ballads like the anonymous *A merry leste of a shrewde and curst Wyfe* (c.1580) have also been linked to these plays. The shrew trope continued well into the seventeenth century with John Fletcher’s *The Woman’s Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (c.1607), John Lacy’s *Sauny the Scot* (1698), the ballad *The taming of a shrew: or The Onely way to make a bad wife good* (c.1624), and into the eighteenth century with David Garrick’s long-running *Catharine and Petruchio* (1754). 1929 and 1967 film versions were developed as vehicles for Hollywood couples with contestatory public personas: Douglas Fairbanks and Mary

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**FIGURE 5.3:** The title pages to *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1631).

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401 On the complex history of dating these two plays in relation to one another using player records, see James J. Marino’s “The Anachronistic Shrews” in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 25–46.
Pickford first, then Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. These undertakings did rather poorly in relation to their budgets, unlike Gil Junger’s *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), which made $53.5 million at the box-office. Of all these versions, only Shakespeare’s *The Shrew* and the anonymous *A Shrew*—both of which were owned and performed by Pembroke’s players—ask playgoers to step out of the action with the framing induction of Christopher Sly. Following the variations in their inductions, I will show that Pembroke’s comedies were not exempt from factional critique.

A key dramaturgical question a company must address with either of these plays is what to do about Sly. Based on the ancient motif of “The Sleeper and the Waker” where, like *The Arabian Nights*, a lord tricks a commoner, should the induction be kept or cut? If kept, will the part of Sly and the Lord be doubled with other parts in the play or not? Will he remain on stage throughout the performance or disappear in act two after his last interjection? Cole Porter’s *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948), for example, addresses these questions by removing Sly and shifting his metatheatrical work to the rehearsal space of the play, itself a framing device for a musical. In general, however, because the frame device in Shakespeare’s version has no obvious bookend (Sly never returns to close his telling), the majority of adaptations choose to remove the Sly frame altogether.

I would argue that there is, in fact, a closing to *The Shrew*’s induction, but it simply does not include Sly. Shakespeare’s version opens with a Lord concluding his hunting activities for the evening by praising his five male dogs—Meriman, Clowder, Bellman, Echo, and Silver—as

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well as one unnamed female. The dog Silver he “would not lose the dog for twenty pound” (Induction.i.17). Just before they are redirected to kidnap the drunk and sleeping Sly, the Lord puts to his huntsman to two tasks: to “sup them [the dogs] well” (Induction.i.24) and to “couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed brach” (Induction.i.14), referring to a bitch hound with a deep baying voice. In hunting, to couple meant to leash together but, in the context of the play, it implies Clowder is a kind of Petruchio, being knotted to a loud female partner as a reward to either procreate or restrain her into good behavior by being locked together. At the wedding feast of the play’s final act, the grooms make a wager on whose wife will come first when called. Petruchio repeats the sum of the Lord from the induction: “Twenty crowns! / I’ll venture so much of my hawk or hound / But twenty times so much upon my wife” (V.ii.71–3). That Petruchio wins this “bitch bet” provides us with two veins for interpreting the gender politics of The Shrew: either Kate has been successfully tamed and rendered a shell of a character, a mere mouthpiece for sixteenth-century spousal reform tracts; or Kate has carved out a space to exercise her agency by doing more than was asked, bringing her resistant sister to heel, and thus coopting her husband’s power by taking others.

The remainder of this chapter will test the hypothesis that combinations of trumpet calls and factional blocking were endemic to Pembroke’s repertory, regardless of genre, by situating Sly as the locus for whom is being tamed in these plays and orienting the anonymous A Pleasant Conceited Historie called The taming of a Shrew within its larger repertorial and cultural milieu. If I can extrapolate these techniques to other genres and duplicates, this strengthens the

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possibility that *Dogs* also coordinated trumpeted calls with factional blocking. Rather than approaching *A Shrew* as a source, derivative, or competitor to Shakespeare’s *The Shrew*, I provide a reading of the reception implications of *A Shrew* as the only version of the shrew-taming narrative where the subject of instruction, Sly, remains and even interjects all the way through the action. In doing so, my aim is to use Pembroke’s strategies to articulate the communal, factionalized politics at work in the shrew trope—a subject of debate seemingly heated enough to warrant two versions in the same theatrical marketplace.

5.2.1 “loud ‘larums, neighing steeds and trumpets’ clang”

The history of these two plays has been complicated by the collision of their gendered implications with editorial machinations privileging Shakespeare over anonymous contemporaries. From the 1960s through the ‘80s, scholarship of Pembroke’s players was deployed either to hypothesize what Shakespeare was up to during the “lost years” between his disappearance from Stratford and reappearance in London, or to determine the intertextual relationship between his “good” and the “bad” versions of similar plays by contemporaries. The underlying question of these debates is worthy of merit, however: where do we ascribe agency to the changes between duplicate plots? Critics have posited forms of individual agency like piracy and memorial reconstruction, forming a historiography that attests to the pervasiveness of authorship and the need to ascribe texts and their changes to a single, stable subject.406

Assumptions underlying these studies include Shakespeare’s inherent supremacy as an artists

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406 The literature surrounding Pembroke’s players is swallowed by debates regarding “bad” Shakespeare quartos and the company’s “breaking” or failure, promoted by A.S. Cairncross, M.P. Jackson, Mary Edmond, and David George, among others. In the last two decades, these claims have been problematized and refuted by Scott McMillin, Roslyn Knutson, Leah Marcus, and Janet Claire.
who supposedly needed no incubation or training. As one critic put it in a bloated biography, had
“Shakespeare been with Pembroke’s, he could certainly have helped them produce better texts
than they did” and, having laid low, was ready to give the Chamberlain’s Men a hit when the
plague abated.407 As a side note, would it not be more interesting and align with the careers of
other playwrights of the period to consider that Shakespeare’s role in Pembroke’s players may
have been more likely as apprentice and reviser?

This privileging not only of biography, but of Shakespeare’s male biography, has had
additional implications for the shrew plays, centered as they are on forms of masculine
domination. In her seminal study Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton
(1996), Leah Marcus uncovers gendered strategies, distortions, and “textual conservatism”408 in
the editing of The Shrew including a prostitution of the “true” text by the “bad” quarto through a
“language of transgression” wherein “textual errors register as education or spoliation.”409 In A
Shrew “women are not as satisfactorily tamed as they are in The Shrew,” making the Shakespeare
text more “manly” than the anonymous one.410 The history of editorial energy spent on The
Shrew and A Shrew has been to hermetically seal one from the other, the later having “been
perceived as an affront to the editors’ own manhood.”411 With this springboard of editorial
historiography, the next logical step in recovering A Shrew is to asses the play in its historical
context and on its own merits without Shakespeare as its reason d’etre.

408 Leah S. Marcus, Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton (New York,
409 Marcus, Unediting the Renaissance, 102.
410 Marcus, Unediting the Renaissance, 108.
411 Marcus, Unediting the Renaissance, 108.
Amongst its repertorial peers, *A Shrew* includes the hallmarks of the Pembroke’s house style indicated by Knutson, Syme and others, as well as both the strategies I have put forward. For my purposes, I will focus on the use in both *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* of the complex trumpet calls in the induction and wedding scenes to make this point. In *The Shrew*, to the group of men, having banded together as a faction in order to get Kate married so they can again vie against one another for Bianca, Petruchio says:

Have I not in a pitched battle heard  
Loud ‘larums, neighing steeds and trumpets’ clang?  
And do you tell me of a woman’s tongue,  
That gives not half so great a blow to hear  
As will a chestnut in a farmer’s fire? (I.ii.195–9)

Here not only is Kate made a trophy of siege warfare, her voice analogized as battle calls of “trumpets’ clang,” but in the military context “blow” carries connotations of both a horn and the back of a hand. While both plays share this multisensory technique, I will demonstrate that *A Shrew*, in its casting requirements and inclusion of a final bookending scene to the induction, maximally facilitates factional blocking to implicate playgoers as part of a culture that problematically authorizes female censure through non-physical violence.

5.2.2 “better than a sheepe”

Aside from changes in character names, there are four major differences between the plots of *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* aside from the extended induction: in the former, (1) there are three sisters on the marriage market (and the youngest is presumed best); (2) not just Ferando (the Petruchio figure), but also Kate beats servants, two in fact; (3) Kate believes that Ferando is her ideal match in an aside before his taming program begins; and (4) that Kate puts her hands under her husband’s feet is made explicit by a stage direction. Within the induction itself, however, there
are five differences: (1) Slie interrupts the action not once, but four times; (2) the Lord becomes an actor, playing the role of a serving man; (3) a boy actor, not a page, cross-dresses as a female companion for Slie, taking it as a professional challenge that Slie is convinced he’s a woman; (4) the hostess is instead a male Tapster; and (5) the “bitch bet” that stands in to bookend Shakespeare’s version is here only metaphor, and the play ends with Slie’s reawakening.

The version of Slie in *A Shrew* doesn’t actually seem capable of distinguishing between the real and imagined. The play opens with the Tapster booting him out of the alehouse, but Slie doesn’t really mind, finding the ground feels like “a freshe cushion” and makes for “good warm lying” (43). When kidnapped, he is wholly taken in by the illusion that he is now a lord, that the boy actor beside him is a lady, and that the boy actors playing Kate and Valeria are “two fine gentlewomen” (57). This is true so much so that the Lord, under his servant pseudonym, Simon, has to remind Slie “this is but the play, theyre [sic] but in jest” (81). Slie does not express any interest in the characters except for the servants Valeria, Phylotus, and the “fool” Sanders (57). Concerned over their possible arrest, Slie interrupts the action to say, “why *Sim*[on] am not I *Don Christo Vary*? Therefore I say they shall not go to prison” (80–1). The play continues once he is assured they have successfully run away and he is placated with more drink. Despite the posh clothes, wine, and high characters, Slie’s communal associations with the low plot wills out: once he is sure they are safe, he falls asleep for the rest of the play.

Slie and the disguised Lord, Simon, interrupt the play no fewer than four times, the last of which is merely an expression of boredom on Simon’s part. While not seemingly malicious like Shakespeare’s Lord figure, his ploy to improve Slie still fails miserably. The disguising is no

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412 All references to the anonymous play are from Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, eds., *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of a Shrew*, Shakespearean Originals: First Editions (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992).
longer fun when the subject of taming, entirely taken in by the illusion, sleeps through the climax of the play and is seemingly unchanged by the experience. He summons his servants to remove the sleeping Slie, “put him in his one apparell againe, / And lay him in the place where we did find him, / Just underneath the alehouse side below” (83). His removal occurs just before the “bitch bet,” or in this case the “backfired bet.” Aurelius, feeling confident after having tricked his father into blessing his marriage to the youngest of the daughters, challenges his brothers-in-law to see “Who will come soonest at their husbands call…for a hundred pound” (83). Ferando’s response alludes to the opening induction which in this case did take place after a day of hunting but included no hounds:

Why true I dare not lay indeede;  
A hundred pound: why I have laid as much  
Upon my dogge, in running at a Deere,  
She shall not come so farre for such a trifle,  
But will you lay five hundred markes with me, (84)

_The Shrew_ builds an explicit scene out of what is merely metaphor in _A Shrew_. Not only does Ferando win the wager, but the stage directions suggest that Kate does tricks for him on command, like a well-trained dog, hawk, or horse, all of which she is likened to in the play (68). When commanded, according to stage directions, “She takes of her cap and treads on it” (86) and literally “laies her hand under her husbands feete” (88). In _The Shrew_, Kate gets the last word with her long speech of wifely acquiescence. In _A Shrew_, both her sisters rebuke her afterwards. Philena chides her “for making a fool of her selfe and us” (86), and Emelia doubly so by using the incident to correct her new husband that having “a shrew” for a wife is “better then a sheepe” (88). The sisters, in a show of female community, respond to and correct the illusion of wifely obedience presented in Kate as a vacuous animal who does tricks rather than engage as an
embodied subject. Within the action and within the frame (which is to say, for both Slie and these
sisters) the didactic performance of the taming of Kate fails to take with its watchers.

How we read the Slie induction is important to the gender politics of the play because
without him to extirpate us from the narrative, the pressure is placed on Kate’s reformation, not
on playgoers’ assessment of whether physical abuse is the only kind of abuse that should be
censured in domestic life. Without an intensely sardonic portrayal of her final conversion speech
and in light of the opportunities available in A Shrew; Shakespeare’s The Shrew is all the more
incommensurate with twenty-first century feminisms. (The prominence of Shakespeare as a
brand, however, ensures this version will be the one that circulates.) When Slie remains,
however, as in the anonymous A Shrew, the play is not only more dramaturgically coherent, but
offers opportunities for critique that Elizabethans (and in re-mountings, we ourselves) participate
in a cultural tradition that, Emily Detmer argues, “accepts coercive bonding and oppression as
long as they are free of physical violence.”

5.2.3 If The Shrew Fits
The history of Pembroke’s shrew plays gives us not only two versions and two possible subjects
in need of taming, Kate or Slie, but also three models of what we as audiences are supposed to
do with our new knowledge by play’s end: how to tame a shrew. The Duke, Aurelius’ father,
encourages us to reject the notion that identity is communally constructed for us and outside our
control. Encountering Ferando and Kate on the road to Athens (trying to convince him the sun is
the moon) he mutters to himself:

What is she mad to? or is my shape transformed,

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Emily Detmer, “Civilizing Subordination: Domestic Violence and The Taming of the
That both of them persuade me I am a woman,
But they are mad sure, and therefore Ile be gon,
And leave their companies for fear of harme, (78)

This is in direct opposition to Slie, who *is* easily tricked that a man is a woman (and so perhaps should we be that the boy playing Kate is a shrew). Waking from his “brave” dream, Slie’s first instinct is to go to his “Wife presently and tame her too,” now knowing “how to tame a shrew” (89). It is a horrifying surprise to find the simple drunk is married. It is as if Slie has discovered a new way to play an old bar game, as betting on wives to do silly tasks in pubs was in fact a common medieval practice.414 What exactly are we to believe Slie to take as appropriate shrew-taming considering his consistent misreading of the play, sleeping, and drunkenness?

It would be a frightful place to leave playgoers if not for the Tapster. Upon discovering Slie still on his doorstep, the Tapster is asked by Slie “whats all the / Plaiers gone: am not I a Lord?” (89). The Tapster replies: “A Lord with a murrin,” referring to a general cattle blight like mange or plague. Murrain was closely associated with sheep, recalling Emelia’s retort that it is better to be a shrew rather than a mewed, acquiescing ovine. This would suggest the play discourages blindly giving over to the didactic effects of performance, like Slie, and asks playgoers to look at the taming of Kate with a critical eye skeptical of those who merely follow. Noting Slie’s insistence to “tame” his wife, the Tapster’s response is to call him back:

Nay tarry Slie for Ile go home with thee,
And here the rest that thou hast dreamt to night. (89)

The Tapster’s desire to hear Slie’s recounting of his transformation validates the instructive power of theatre to a point. Accompanying the drunk back into his domestic space is a kind of communal policing, which we hope will distract and protect Slie’s wife with the presence of a

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witness in a model of public, group advocacy. Both Sound Studies and Tudor history stressing factional Court politics both imply—in terms of acoustemology and as an unsituated discourse—that in order for the moral instruction of theatre to take, it needs to be mediated through a group environment. Kate is censured by her female community despite the managing of her behavior by the competing male factions of groomsmen. So too is Slie bounced between the interests of the Lord and the Tapster as they work to manipulate his behavior. As playgoers, A Shrew audiences are put in the position to accept or resist the taming instruction of the drama, implicated in the ethics of domestic violence depending on whom we decide, as a group, is more socially aberrant: independent Kate or drunken Slie. Situating A Shrew within the larger Pembroke repertory, the play can be understood as presenting us with three factions, emblematized by the Duke, Slie, and the Tapster, as models for approaching the problem of the historically pervasive association of masculine violence with female agency.

5.3 COMPARATIVE CASES

As Dogs and A Shrew evince, the house style of Pembroke’s players was marked by the interrelation of aurality and obedience. In their War of the Roses history plays as much as in the generic exceptions of the shrew plays, the company’s repertory was preoccupied with social harmony and discord, especially in terms of the obligations individuals have to accept their social norms. In his study of the ways in which the sounds of Shakespeare’s plays express particular forms of ethical and aesthetic experience, Folkerth observes that because “obedience to one’s social superiors is a natural and holy state, an echo of the perfect harmony produced in
the music of the spheres,” sound itself had an ethical valence in the public playhouses.\textsuperscript{415} The act of listening was an act of “winnowing” (or curating) meaning from the acoustic environment:

when we talk about the decisions we make, and don’t make, about what we hear, how we hear, and who we hear, we are talking about hearing as an ethical act involved in assigning value and recognition to particular elements and events in the acoustic environment. Hearing resonates throughout early modern culture as a sense characterized by passivity, community, obedience, and tradition.\textsuperscript{416}

Cade and Warwick, Kate and Slie: these are examples of the Pembroke characters tied to specific trumpet calls and problematize the limits of public obedience. In this chapter I have argued that factionalism served as both a distinguishing staging device and an ideological investment of Pembroke’s house style. If this was true for their histories as much as for their comedies, then so it may have been for their lost plays as well. By expanding the definition of their privileged manners of presentation to include an interrelation between sound and blocking, what surfaces is dramaturgical engagement with the mid-1590s issue of factionalism at the Elizabethan Court. To use Folkerth’s rhetoric, freighting the ethical valences of Pembroke’s repertory was their arrangements of bodies with sounds.

For the purposes of the wider project, Pembroke’s dogs—from the case of its lost \textit{Dogs} to the hounds of \textit{A Shrew}—provide evocative examples of the limits of repertorial curation for companies. If there was nothing demonstrably lacking with the company’s resources or repertorial makeup, as Knutson and Syme show, then their repertory suggests that the factional politics emphasized by their house style walked too often and too close to home for the Master of the Revels and thus, by extension, Elizabeth’s regime. Furthermore, the case of Pembroke’s suggests that the greatest limit to the cultural phenomenon of repertorial curation was the

\textsuperscript{415} Folkerth, \textit{The Sound of Shakespeare}, 19.
\textsuperscript{416} Folkerth, \textit{The Sound of Shakespeare}, 18.
authorizing function of monarchy in and of the theatre industry. The company seems to have been responding to public interest and concern in the aging Elizabeth’s government, among other social issues related to counsel and violence. The company’s search and censure by the head spy master, imprisonment of its actors, and eventual “breaking up” that would take the new Swan playhouse with it provide concrete examples of the extent to which the Privy Council was willing to attempt to control the repertories of the Elizabethan playing companies.

Pembroke’s is also an example of the limits of repertorial curation as a method for the study of Elizabethan plays. Attempting to trace dramaturgical strategies that a set of plays shared rather than plot or genre elements is a useful technique for building narratives of theatre history that do not rely on dismissing printers’ labors or presuming inaccuracy in first-person records. In so doing, this method offers new questions and frameworks with which to approach (and justify the study of) non-canonical plays. For example, Pembroke’s begs the question: when there are duplicate plots within the same repertory, how and to whom do we ascribe agency? To what do we ascribe the act of making? While there is no evidence with which to speculate discrete answers to these questions for Pembroke’s, we can say that the study of house styles generally suggests that creative agency—the making and performing of plays—was done so through a collective process capable of targeted decision-making in terms of presentation and the ideologies to which dramaturgical choices symbolically allude. It would seem that this collective, targeted decision-making process was made possible by the repertory system in a period when the playing companies were not, as an industry, delimited by monarchal patronage and the self-censorship that would have required. That James I and VI took the remaining adult and boy companies all under monarchal patronage upon his ascension makes 1603 a threshold year as important as 1594. It marked the end of a unique manifestation of the early modern public
sphere, the unsituated discourse of the Elizabethan public playhouse, and with it the playing company house style as a dramaturgically-driven economic strategy.


———. “From the Editor: Theatrical Movements.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Fall 2005): iii–x.


———. “The Geography of Henslowe’s Diary.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 325–53.


APPENDIX A: PLAY SUMMARIES BY COMPANY, 1582–1594

Included here are summaries of the action of the plays discussed in this dissertation organized under the heading of the company that owned them. Because several of the plays were owned by multiple companies over time, I have included the summary only once. Each company appearing afterward will reference to initial entry’s page numbers. This strategy makes visible the circulation of particular plays within the marketplace and between companies, as well as establishes the instability of these plays, inevitably revised to varying degrees for the new company, personnel, and venue each time it was bought and sold. Therefore, these texts are best understood as scripts of one version, one moment in the long, complex, and revised life of a Renaissance play.

I have also included the first performance and first print dates of each, which should be considered flexible not only in light of the movement of playtexts as essential commodities that made up the backbone of a company, but for two other reasons particular to this period. First, Philip Henslowe’s Diary, an invaluable source for documenting the purchase, sale, and revision of playtexts, only begins in 1592. In 1594, it records a number of plays owned by the Lord Admiral’s Men, some new with the attribution “ne” and some supposedly stock already in use. Second, you will note that the vast majority of plays have an initial print date of 1594. During and immediately after a particularly virulent period of plague when the playhouses and many other businesses were closed, there is a boom in print sales, in particular of drama and sonnet sequences. Sometimes that print date follows closely behind its entry in the Stationer’s Register, and sometimes not. For this project, the value of the title page lies not in the sales date and location, but in the primacy of the company and the legitimacy the printed texts accrue from
being “sundry and lately enacted.” Of the forty extant texts we know to have been performed between 1582 and 1594, sixty percent include the mention of playing in their titles while only roughly twenty-five mention authorship. Take for example, the following title of a play of which the earliest surviving printing was based on a 10 June 1592 performance, entitled *A most pleasant and merie new Comedie, Intituled, A Knacke to knowe a Knave. Newlie set foorth, as it hath sundrie tymes bene played by ED. ALLEN and his Companie, with KEMPS applauded Merrimentes of the men of Goteham, in receiving the King into Goteham.* It prioritizes first the number of times it has been acted (and presumably made money), second the two main actors (not their parts), and third the company itself before uniquely suggesting the particular performance on which it was based. In short, performance and print dates are included here to reinforce the fact that the most stable principle of inclusion for organizing a study of Elizabethan drama is through the companies rather than chronologies.

As with the plays themselves, the chronologies, lists, and appendices offered in these volumes represent consensus from a past moment in time. As many of these studies are a decade or more out of date, their ascriptions were supplemented with the invaluable digital resources of the Lost Plays Database (University of Melbourne) and the Records of Early English Drama (University of Toronto). The most significant point of distinction between these records is whether to treat very similar plays—notably *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* and *3 Henry VI*, *The First part of the Contention* and *2 Henry VI*, *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Taming of the Shrew*—as a single or separate entry. Considering the duplication in company records of plays we know to be the same, as well as the process of buying, selling and revision, I have decided to treat each as distinct items—as discrete points on a timeline of a text with distinctive performed lives depending on the company that enacted them. Note that the extant and non-extant titles lists are inclusive of the period 1582–94. While the careers of Strange’s, Queen’s, and Sussex’s companies all end in 1594, that of Pembroke’s and Admiral’s are more complex in part because they extend beyond the frame of this study.

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**THE LORD STRANGE’S MEN, 1564–1594**

**Patron:** Henry Stanley, 12th Baron Strange of Knokyn, 13th Earl of Derby (1531–93); Ferdinando Stanley, 13th Baron Strange of Knokyn, 14th Baron of Derby (1559–94).

**Venues:** Cross Keys inn-yard (1589, 1594), The Theatre playhouse (1590–91), The Rose playhouse (1592–93), Newington Butts [aka The Playhouse playhouse] (1594), and at court (1581, 1583, 1590, 1591, 1592, 1600, 1601).

**Non-extant properties:** 17, including *Bendo and Richardo* (1592), *Brandimer* (1592), *Clorys and Orgasto* (1592), *Constantine* (1592), *Cosmo* (1592), *Don Horatio* (1592), *Harry of Cornwall*
(1592), The Jealous Comedy (1593), Jerusalem (1592), Machiavel (1592), Sir John Mandeville (1592), Pope Joan (1592), I and II Tamar Cham (1592), The Tanner of Denmark (1592), Titus and Vespasian (1592), and Zenobia (1592).

**Extant properties:** 16.

*The Battell of Alcazar, fought in Barbarie, betweene Sebastian king of Portugall, and Abdelmelec king of Marocco. With the death Captaine Stukeley. As it was sundrie times plaid by the Lord high Admirall his servants.*

First Performance: 21 February 1592.
First Printing: 1594.

Abdellmeclec (also known as Muly Molocco) is the rightful King of Morocco. His nephew Muly Mahamet, the Moor, is attempting to steal his throne. A Chorus relates, through the use of a dumb show, that Muly Mahamet has murdered Abdellmelec’s brother, Abdelmunen, as well as his two younger brothers. Sebastian, the King of Portugal, promises aid to the Muly Mahamet believing that he is acting honorably. The unseen Amurath, Emperor of the East, sends aid to assist Abdlmeclec. Therefore, both sides of the conflict are buoyed by foreign resources. Abdelmelec is slain in battle, but his brother, Muly Mahamet Seth, decides to conceal the king’s death in order to preserve troop morale. The plot works, and Abdelmelec’s troops are victorious. In the battle that follows, three kings die: Abdelmelec, Muly Mahamet, and Sebastian (inciting a succession crisis for Portugal). Abdelmelec’s brother, Muly Mahamet Seth, is declared King of Morocco after the death of his brother and nephew.

*The Comedie of Errors.*

First Performance: c.1589–95; 28 December 1594.
First Printing: 1623.

Because of recent enmity, no Syracusan is allowed in Ephesus. A Syracusan merchant Egeon, searching for his wife and twin boys separated and lost at sea, has been found there and arrested. The Duke is sympathetic, so gives him a day to find a way of paying his fine before the death penalty has to be carried out. Antiopholus and servant Dromio of Syracuse (S) arrive in Ephesus, on their travels. They are instantly mistaken by the townsfolk to be Antiopholus and servant Dromio of Ephesus (E). Antiopholus (E) meets Dromio (S), who denies knowledge of money given to him earlier. Adriana, the wife of Antiopholus (E) sends Dromio (E) to find his master. They encounter Antiopholus and Dromio (S). Antiopholus (S) does not recognize Adriana, and Dromio (S) denies he received instructions from her. Adriana insists they both accompany her home. The two men begin to wonder if they are going mad.

Antiopholus (E) meanwhile arrives home with merchant Balthasar and goldsmith Angelo, who is making a gold chain for Adriana. Dromio (S) and kitchen-maid Luce refuse to let them in, much to the annoyance of Dromio (E), so Antiopholus (E) goes to a tavern instead. Inside the house, Antiopholus (S) has fallen in love with Adriana’s sister Luciana, much to her amazement; and Dromio (S) is awed by a kitchen-maid who claims him as hers. Antiopholus (S) meets Angelo, who gives him the chain, proposing to return later for the money. Angelo, being himself pressed for a debt, later meets Antiopholus (E) and asks for his money. When Antiopholus (E) denies having had the chain, Angelo has him arrested until he pays the amount. Antiopholus (E) sends Dromio (S) to Adriana for the money, which she immediately sends. Dromio (S) brings the
money to Antipholus (S). They meet a Courtesan with whom Antipholus (E) had dined and who asks for the return of a ring Antipholus (E) had taken, but Antipholus (S) of course denies knowledge of it. Dromio (E) meets the arrested Antipholus (S), who asks for the money to obtain his release, but Dromio (E) obviously does not have it. Adriana arrives with Dr Pinch, who tries to conjure the supposed madness out of Antipholus (E). Both he and Dromio (E) resist and they are arrested and taken away. Adriana and the others then immediately meet Antipholus (S) and Dromio (S) with swords drawn, and, confused by their sudden liberty, flee from them.

Angelo meets Antipholus (S), sees the chain, and prepares to fight him. On the arrival of Adriana and the others, Antipholus and Dromio (S) run into a priory for safety. The abbess, Aemilia, discusses his supposed madness with Adriana, but refuses to let her enter the priory. Adriana decides to complain to the Duke (who is nearby for Egeon’s execution) to get to see her supposed husband. Antipholus (E) and Dromio (E) appear and also complain to the Duke. All parties tell what has happened from their own point of view. Egeon recognizes Antipholus (E) as his son, but Antipholus does not know him. Aemilia then brings out Antipholus and Dromio (S), and all is revealed: Egeon recognizes Aemilia as his wife, the Duke forgives Egeon, and the two pairs of twins are reunited.

The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta. As it was playd before the king and queene, in his Majesties Theatre at While Hall, by her Majesties Servants at the Cock-pit.
First Performance: c.1589–90; 26 February 1592.
First Printing: 1594 (extant 1633).

In the prologue to the play, the ghost of Niccolo Machiavelli expresses the cynical view that power is amoral before introducing the Jewish merchant in question, Barabas, the richest man in Malta. That wealth is quickly seized by the Maltese governor in order to pay off a debt of tribute to the Turks. Incensed, he begins a campaign to engineer the downfall of the governor with the aid of his daughter, Abigail, and a Turkish slave, Ithamore. Barbaras first uses Abigail’s beauty to embitter the governor’s son and his friend against one another, leading to a duel in which they both die. Heartbroken, Abigail consigns herself to a nunery, only to be poisoned by Barabas and Ithamore for becoming a Christian. The two go on to kill the rest of the nuns and a couple of friars who threaten to divulge their crimes. Ithamore himself, however, is lured into blackmailing Barabas by a beautiful prostitute. Barabas poisons all of them in revenge, but not before the governor is apprised of his deeds. Barabas escapes execution by feigning death, and then helps an advancing Turkish army to sack Malta, for which he is awarded governorship of the city. He then turns on the Turks, allowing the governor’s force to kill the Turkish army. The Maltese turn on Barabas and burn him in a boiling cauldron him as they regain control of the city.

The first Part of Henry the Sixt.
First Performance: 3 March 1592.
First Printing: 1623.

This first of the tetralogy dramatizing the War of the Roses begins at the funeral of Henry V attended by the uncles and great uncles of the boy-king Henry VI. Gloucester accuses the church of trying to control him, though Winchester denies it. A messenger brings a bevy of news: the French are revolting, the dauphin has been made king, the English Lord Talbot has been taken prisoner, and the English army under the Earl of Salisbury is weak and close to mutiny. Bedford
vows to go to France to fight. At Orleans, the dauphin is losing to Salisbury until messengers bring news of a virgin-prophetess named Pucelle who seems to have God’s protection. The dauphin allows her to help them fight. He also wants to marry her. At the Tower of London, Winchester will not let Gloucester see Henry VI. They fight, but the mayor breaks them up. At Orleans, Talbot, freed from the French, greets Salisbury. While spying on the enemy from a tower, they are hit by a cannonball. Gargrave is hurt, Salisbury dies, and Talbot swears revenge. Talbot fights Pucelle and loses, though he doesn't die. The French capture the city and the dauphin marries Joan la Pucelle (Joan of Arc), naming her a saint. They celebrate, but the English attack at night by surprise. The dauphin and Joan of Arc flee and the English recapture the city. Talbot visits by invitation the Countess of Auvergne. There she tries to imprison him, but his soldiers rescue him (foreseen by Talbot). Impressed, the Countess feeds them all. In a garden, Richard Plantagenet argues with Somerset about whether he is base and scum because his father, Richard, Earl of Cambridge, was executed for treason by Henry V. Their men select white or red roses to indicate which side they are on.

At the Tower of London, Edmund Mortimer meets his nephew, Richard Plantagenet, in his Tower cell. Mortimer explains that Henry IV imprisoned him because the Percys wanted him to be king after Henry IV deposed Richard II. Then, during Henry V’s reign, the Earl of Cambridge (married to Mortimer’s sister, Richard’s mom) rose against Henry V, failed, and was beheaded. Mortimer declares Richard his heir, then dies abruptly. At Parliament, Winchester and Gloucester regrettably make peace and Richard Plantagenet is declared the Duke of York by young King Henry VI despite Somerset’s reservations. Henry VI goes to France to be crowned king while Exeter repeats the prophesy that Henry V will win all and Henry VI will lose all. Meanwhile at Rowen, Joan of Arc and the dauphin fight the English. The Duke of Bedford is injured, sits and observes the retreat, thus dying happily. Talbot and Burgundy find him. Enraged, Talbot marches to Paris but Pucelle convinces Burgundy to fight for France. In Paris, King Henry VI declares Talbot the Earl of Shrewsbury. Next, Falstaff returns with a letter from Burgundy stating his intentions. Falstaff himself is banished for cowardly behavior in battle. Finally, Henry VI tries with little success to calm the furor between Somerset and the Duke of York. Talbot arrives at Bordeaux to fight, only to find that he is surround by French: the Bastard of Orleans, Charles, Burgundy, Alanson, and Reignier. York cannot send men without Somerset’s horses, and Somerset refuses to help York, so Talbot is greatly outnumbered. Talbot’s son, John, meets him at Bordeaux to help fight, but they both die in battle.

In London, Henry VI agrees to a peace settlement that includes marriage to Margaret, the daughter of a Frenchman, the Earl of Armagnac. Reignier Winchester is now Cardinal and plans to suppress Gloucester (Lord Protector of Henry VI) and control Henry VI himself. At Angiers, York defeats the French and captures Pucelle. The Earl of Suffolk catches Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Reignier and gets the idea that she should marry Henry VI, to which her father agrees. York sentences Pucelle to death by burning. She denies her own father, a lowly shepherd, then claims she is pregnant yet still a virgin in order to sway York, but it is to no avail. She curses England to despair. York is informed of the peace settlement and regrettably makes peace with the dauphin. In London, Henry VI decides to marry Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Reignier, and not Armagnac’s daughter, Margaret. Gloucester is very disappointed and fears trouble, as is confirmed by Suffolk’s statement of intent to control Margaret (via an affair with her), Henry VI (through Margaret), and the realm.
The First [part] of King Edward the Fourth. Containing His mery pastime with the Tanner of Tamwoorth, as also his love to fayre Mistress Shoare, her great promotion, fall and misery, and lastly the lamentable death of both her and her husband. As it hath divers times beene publiquely played by the Right Honorable the Earle of Derby his servants. 
First Performance: c.1594. 
First Printing: 1599 (combined).

This play foregrounds the issue of lay rebellion in order to consider King Edward IV’s problem of personal desire. The first half of the play is explicitly concerned with the rebellious storming of London after Edward IV usurps Henry VI (who dies offstage in the Tower). The King’s mother is upset about his recent marriage to a base subject of his own because she offers no pitiful leverage to reinforce his tenuous legitimacy. This only complicates the rebellion of the suburbanites, led by three rustics and Falconbridge, who are attempting to storm London and free Henry VI. This tension between the London apprentices and the rebels pits the Mayor of London and his city as the central battleground. In the first skirmish the apprentices turn out to be good soldiers, fighting in Smithfield and pushing the rebels back to Mile End Green. The Mayor and Falconbridge attempt to bargain, but with no other motive than freeing the “rightful” king, they skirmish again. The rustics split into two forces and are able to take the city. Edward IV interjects long enough to put a bounty on Falconbridge’s head, knight the Lord Mayor and his aldermen for their service (including Jane Shore’s husband), and then put it in the Mayor’s hands to protect the city and its prisoner from the rebels while he returns to his bride and hunting. Things begin to fall apart in Falconbridge’s camp as the men begin to fight amongst one another; motivated by money, Spicing and Chub betray Falconbridge to the Mayor, and then Smoke turns in Spicing and Chub to be hung as rebels, too.

With his usurpation of England seemingly solidified, the play begins to focus on Edward’s usurpation of Jane Shore from her respectable marriage to the goldsmith. The new Queen and Duchess are hunting when they are impeded by a tanner, Hobs, who cannot understand them when they ask which way a deer went. King Edward’s hunting is also interrupted by Hobs, but being in disguise he engages the tanner and is shocked to find his resistance to picking sides in the two-king problem through a sequence of clever puns on stations. As they talk, the Tanner’s servant steals a horse. Edward helps Hobs reclaim it. He is thanked with a dinner, during which he receives news that Henry VI has died. Although Hobs won’t come back to court with Edward, their conversation gives the king newfound respect for the rebels. This scene alternates with the beheading of Falconbridge by an axe. The king disguised as the royal butcher Ned suggests that Hobs is being substituted for Falconbridge, one commoner for another.

The king finally returns to London and has dinner with the Lord Mayor, his cousin Jane and Master Shore, during which he proceeds to fall in love with her and proposes to make her his mistress. This is a second meal that is interrupted by epistolary: Edward receives news from a group of French nobles that they will help him claim the French crown. Twice Edward visits Jane, disguised, in the goldsmith shop to flirt and convince her to move to court to be with him. To say no would be treason, the Shores realize. Shore packs up to travel abroad and leave Jane behind for the King. While Jane is forced into this new status, she uses her power to procure pardons and restitution for the needy, rejecting all bribes. In the process of hearing suits on the docks one night, she encounters Shore preparing to ship off. She begs to go with him, but with the threat of treason, she can’t and they part. Now that the king’s private desires have been
surfeited, the play returns to macro political problems. Hobs does come to London to both offer the king a loan to help fund his war with France and get Ned (with wool-made gifts from Nell) to help him beg pardon from the king for his robber son who is to be hung. Edward meets him in disguise as Ned, but a passing courtier ruins the trick. Hobs passes out. Once he revives, King Edward pardons both he and his son, marries him off to a rich widow for getting his community to contribute enough money for his war, and then takes Hobs with him to France.

The Historie of Orlando Furioso One of the twelve Pieres of France. As it was plaid before the Queenes Maiestie.
First Performance: c.1590–92.
First Printing: 1592.

All the princes of Africa meet to compete for the hand of the Emperor Marsillus’ daughter, Angelica. In a shocking turning of events, she chooses a visiting French count, Orlando, instead. While her father is fine with the decision, the peers are infuriated and retrench to their territories to raise armies against their monarch for the slight. One of the peers, Sacrepant, and his man hatch a plan to take advantage of the situation and make a play for the throne. They decide to poison Orlando for his baseness and attempt to woo Angelica. Orlando and Count Roussilon rout out Rodamant and Brandimart from their castle, killing all of the court guards and watchmen in the process. While Orlando continues to be victorious, Sacrepant is less so: his attempts to win Angelica are rebuffed. Sacrepant and his man turn to their plot against Orlando: in order to plant the seed of jealousy in his mind, they pin poetry suggesting an affair between Angelica and her servingman, Medor, on every tree in the court grove. Sacrepant’s man, disguised as a shepherd, pretends to have witnessed their infidelities.

Their plan works like a charm. Orlando finds the poesies and is immediately driven mad. In fact, he is so distraught that he tears off one of the legs of the disguised shepherd and wears it around his neck. Marsillus is enraged at the thought of his daughter’s infidelity. He sentences Medor to immediate death and his daughter to poverty in exile. Mandricard, driven from his territory by Orlando, takes up service in Marsillus’ court as his close advisor. Orlando’s madness is mostly characterized by unnecessary brutality against his serving man, Orgalio, as they search for a Moly herb. (Orlando believes this will enable him to enter hell and fetch Angelica—who is not dead—back again.) They are interrupted by two clowns, Tom and Rafe. Rafe describes to Tom the brave mad man who came into his home asking for water while everyone else was at church. When he had returned from fetching some, he discovered the man had run away with the roast, spit and all! Just as he is telling the story to his companion, he sees and identifies Orlando as the man. Orlando beats the two clowns into becoming his soldiers in his battle against Medor (who is dead by this point). Rodamant and Brandimart find the exiled Angelica just in time to save her from Orlando’s army of commoners carrying spits and dripping pans. At the threat of her rape, Brandimart offers himself as a champion in one-on-one combat, but he loses to Orlando. Orlando does not recognize his beloved, thinking her a brave pageboy and knighting her. However, when Orgalio dresses one of the clowns (for money) as a woman, Orlando is able to see right through this guise and beats them both.

Meanwhile, eleven peers of France have arrived on the shores of Africa to revenge the wrongs done to their political kin, Orlando, at the behest of his uncle, Charlemagne. On the road they encounter Marsillus and Mandricard as palmers who narrate the state of affairs in Africa. Realizing their intent and unable to contain his inner nobility, Marsillus reveals himself. While
the French peers do him honor, the exile of Angelica is not enough for them. Orlando, dressed like a poet, is soothed by a fiddler named Shan Cuttelero. It is short-lived: Orlando awakes and steals the fiddle, striking and beating Shan with it as if it were his sword, Durandell. Seemingly inconsolable, an old witch named Melissa brings Orlando wine that outs him to sleep. She summons her satyrs to dance a round about him. When they finished, Orlando awakes entirely cured of his jealously. In all this time we find that Sacrepant has successfully secured the crown for himself. He pursues Marsillus and Mandricard in an attempt to finish them off, but is impeded by Orlando, disguised as a mercenary named Oliver. Orlando successfully delivers Sacrepant a mortal wound, getting him to reveal his treachery and absolve Angelica with his dying breaths. In his fury, Orlando massacres all of Sacrepant’s men. The final scene opens with Emperor Marsillus, Mandricard, Angelica and the French Peers discussing the mysterious mercenary. Angelica still remains at fault in their eyes and the French request that she be burned to death. As Oliver, Orlando challenges all of the French knights for Angelica’s life. In defeating each of them, he reveals himself to his kinsmen. Thus, Orlando clears his beloved’s name and they are reunited, planning to return together to France.

**The Honorable Histories of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay. As it was plaid by her Majesties servants. Made by Robert Greene Maister of Arts.**

First Performance: 19 February 1592.
First Printing: c.1588–92.

Prince Edward, the son and heir of King Henry III, plans to seduce Margaret, a farmer’s daughter from rural Fressingfield, with the help of the eloquence of his friend Earl Lacy. Lacy goes to persuade Margaret, but quickly falls in love with her himself. When Edward learns of the love of Lacy and Margaret, he threatens to kill his friend, but ultimately exercising control over his passions and reconciling himself to the fact. Edward returns to Court, where he marries Princess Elinor of Castile, as pre-arranged. Meanwhile, Margaret receives a letter from the absent Lacy, renouncing his love for her just after she has been the cause of a duel between death of two of her neighbors, Serlsby and Lambert, also in love with her. Lacy intercepts her before she has chance to enter a convent, and they are married together with Edward and Elinor by play’s end.

Another level of plot involves the necromancer Friar Bacon, who displays a range of magical skills including a magic glass that sees events from a distance and transporting people from one place to another. As a kind of ambassador, he wins a contest against the German magician Vandermast, which is witnessed by the monarchs of England, Castile, and Germany. In collaboration with another rural magician, Friar Bungay, Bacon labors toward his greatest achievement: the creation of an artificial head made of brass that can surround and protect England. Bacon’s inability to remain awake and the incompetence of his servant Miles spoil the opportunity. In the wake of his failure, Bacon inadvertently allows two young Oxonians to witness their fathers’ duel in the magic glass. In response, the students duel and also kill each other. Appalled by this outcome, Bacon renounces magic and turns to a life of repentance. Miles, haunted by Bacon’s conjured devils, gets a promise of a tapster’s job in Hell from one of them and rides to perdition on it’s back.

**[John of Bordeaux, or the Second Part of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.]**

First Performance: c.1590–94.
First Printing: Manuscript fragment (MS. 507, Duke of Northumberland’s Library) until 1936
The plot of John of Bordeaux depends heavily on that of the first part. Bacon is visiting the German Emperor’s court. Ferdinand, the son of Emperor Frederick II, fulfills the role of Prince Edward in the earlier play: Ferdinand lustrs after a woman named Rossalin, just as Edward pursued Margaret. Rossalin, unlike Margaret, is married to John of Bordeaux, the commander of the Emperor’s armies in his war against the Turks. In Ferdinand’s pursuit of Rossalin she is disgraced, deprived of her home, reduced to beggary, imprisoned, and even threatened with death. Vandermast, the villainous magician, returns in the sequel for a series of contests of magic with Bacon. Bacon consistency wins. Though the manuscript text is increasingly difficult to read as the narrative progresses, it is clear that Bacon brings about a happy ending with the restoration of John and Rossalin to their prior good fortune and the exposure and repentance of Ferdinand. Bacon’s English servant, Perce, is at the core of the subplot (not unlike Miles from the first part). Among his other stunts, Perce gets German scholars to trade their copies of the works of Plato and Aristotle for a couple of bottles of wine.

First Performance: 8 March 1592.
First Printing: 1594.

King Rasni of Nineveh has just defeated Jeroboam, King of Jerusalem. Vain and arrogant, Rasni relishes the sycophantic praise of his courtiers and tributary kings, proclaiming himself to be a god on earth. The only dissenting voice comes from the King of Crete, who protests against Rasni’s planned incestuous marriage with his sister, Remilia. The protest is fruitless: Rasni deprives the Cretan king of his crown, bestowing it upon the upstart flatterer Radagon, instead. The prophet Oseas is lowered over the stage by an angel and acts as a Chorus; seated on a throne, Oseas comments upon the play’s action and applying its lessons to contemporary English life.

The main plot alternates between the court and and a usurer taking advantage of his borrowers, namely, a spendthrift young gentleman, Thrasybulus, and the virtuous but poor Alcon. The two men try to obtain justice from the law courts, but find that the law is corrupt: the judge is a pawn of the usurer. Meanwhile, Rasni and Remilia prepare a sumptuous wedding, but it is prevented when a thunderstorm rises and Remilia is struck dead by lightning. Rasni rejects the suggestion of divine wrath. To replace his sister, he takes Alvida, the wife of the King of Paphlagonia, as his lover. Alvida poisons her husband, a deed that Rasni praises. Breaking up the action is the portrayal of the Biblical Jonah and his flight to Tarsus and Joppa in order to avoid his mission: to warn Nineveh of its sinful ways. It takes a whale to redirect him: he is “cast out of the whale’s belly upon the stage,” accepts his fate, and heads for Nineveh.

Having failed to obtain justice in the courts, Alcon appeals to his son, who is none other than Radagon, the fast-rising courtier. Radagon is contemptuously dismissive of his poor family. Alcon’s wife curses Radagon and he is consumed by fire. Rasni’s magi define this as a purely natural phenomenon, once again ignoring the portents of divine retribution. They pass off a sign in the heavens, a hand brandishing a flaming sword, in the same way. Alcon and his family are reduced to thievery to survive. Alvida attempts to seduce the King of Cilicia, another of Rasni’s tributary states, but when Rasni catches her, she faints. Jonah arrives at Nineveh, preaching repentance. He is so effective that even the most corrupt are affected. Sinners who fast and
repent, Rasni and Alvida included, are forgiven. Jonah ends the play alone on the stage, suggesting Londoners and Englishmen do the same.

*The Massacre at Paris: With the Death of the Duke of Guise. As it was plaide by the right honourable the Lord high Admirall his Servants. Written by Christopher Marlow.*
First Performance: 30 January 1593.
First Printing: 1594.

The play opens with the pivotal wedding of the Huguenot Henry of Navarre to the French king’s sister, Margaret of Valois, at Notre Dame. Originally arranged to try and heal religious divisions, the union instead incites distrust and malice between three factions: the Catherine de Medici’s malicious intent towards Navarre, and the Huguenot’s severe distrust of the Catholic Guise faction. The Duke of Guise confirms that Huguenot distrust as he sets in motion Machiavellian plots to murder both the Queen of Navarre and Admiral Coligny. They quickly come to fruition as first the Queen of Navarre dies after the Apothecary presents her with poisoned gloves, and then Admiral Coligny is shot from a nearby window as he and others bear the Queen’s body away. The royal family and Guise leaders plan the forthcoming massacre, after which Charles, King of France, goes to see the injured Admiral and offer his sympathies. The Guisian nobles set the massacre in progress with the murder of Admiral Coligny in his bed. The massacre spreads through the city. Guise murders a Huguenot preacher called Loraine. Mountsorrel murders a Huguenot called Seroune. The Guisian nobles murder three Huguenot scholars. Guise engages in some intellectual debate with the eminent French humanist, logician and mathematician, Petrus Ramus, before Anjou kills him in cold blood. The Catholic mob then search for two tutors to Navarre and Condé, who are killed by Guise.

In the aftermath, the body of Admiral Coligny is disposed of while Guise worries over Huguenots possibly hiding in the woods, whom he seeks out and summarily kills. Anjou, the King’s younger brother and heir to the French throne (who we have just seen murder Petrus Ramus), accepts the crown of Poland. Events take a further turn in favour of the Catholics as the guilt-racked King Charles IX dies. His mother, Catherine de Medici, can hardly wait to call his younger brother, Anjou, back from Poland to be crowned as King Henry III of France. Navarre recognizes the danger this represents for him and makes plans to escape the French court. Anjou is crowned and his mother makes a great show of welcoming him, knowing that she continues to be the real power behind the throne. Meanwhile, Guise secretly raises an army with which to attack Navarre, to be supported by Henry through Catherine. Navarre, escaped from the French court and back in his homeland, hears news that the French army organized by Guise, but led by Joyeux, is coming for him. A small step back in time finds King Henry III appointing his minion Joyeux to lead the army that will march against Navarre, and then baiting Guise about being cuckolded by another of his minions, Mugeroun. News reaches Navarre on the battlefield that Joyeux is slain, signaling a Huguenot victory. Mugeroun is murdered by a soldier hired by Guise in revenge. Subsequently, the King and Duke engage in a lengthy political negotiation in which Henry III tries to assert his authority and force Guise to disband his personal armies.

The King distrusts the Duke’s acquiescence, and he and Epernoone plot to escape Paris but murder Guise. Navarre hears news that Guise is taking arms against Henry III, and quickly resolves to offer a pact with the French King to use a joint military force to defeat Guise. On his way to the royal court at Blois, three assassins hired by the King murder Guise. Henry shows the body to the Duke’s son who is then imprisoned. He then orders the murder of the Duke’s
brothers to minimize the risk of revenge. Henry informs his mother of the murder only after the act, and she is devastated at her son’s actions. Guise’s brother, the Cardinal of Guise, is strangled to death by two of the murderers who killed the Duke. Dumaine has received news of his elder brother Guise’s murder at the hands of the King. A Jacobin friar offers to kill Henry and provide the revenge he seeks. The two Kings of France and Navarre join forces to take on the Catholic League in Paris. Under the pretense of delivering a letter, the Jacobin friar gains access and stabs Henry III. Henry kills the friar in the struggle, but when it becomes clear that the King will not survive, he declares Navarre as heir to the French throne. Navarre, now King Henry IV, vows to take revenge upon the Catholic League.

The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As it was Plaide by the Right Honorable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke, and Earle of Sussex their Servants.
First Performance: 24 January 1594.
First Printing: 1594.

Saturninus and Bassianus are in contention for the title of emperor of Rome, but dismiss their followers on the arrival of the great general Titus, returning victorious with his sons from war with the Goths. His prisoner Tamora, Queen of the Goths, pleads for the life of one of her sons, Alarbus, to no avail. Titus is offered the emperorship, but he confers the title on Saturninus, who then asks for Titus’ daughter Lavinia to be his wife. Already betrothed to Bassianus, Titus’ sons stop Saturninus from taking her. Titus calls them traitors, and kills his son Mutius in the struggle. Saturninus then claims Tamora as his bride, and she vows revenge on Titus. On their way out of town, Bassianus and Lavinia discover Tamora with her Moorish lover Aaron. Before Bassianus can tell Saturninus, however, he is killed by Chiron and Demetrius, and his body thrown in a pit. They then rape Lavinia, removing her tongue and hands. Aaron leads Titus’ sons Martius and Quintus to the pit where Bassianus’ body lies, and traps them there. They are accused of the murder, and sentenced to death. Aaron persuades Titus that if someone removes their hand and sends it to Saturninus it will save his sons’ lives, but after Titus sends his own hand it is immediately returned along with the heads of his two sons.

Lucius vows revenge, and leaves to raise an army from among the Goths. In the meantime, with the help of Young Lucius and Marcus, Lavinia informs them who attacked her. Planning revenge, Titus sends weapons to Tamora’s sons, fires arrows with letters attached to them at Saturninus’ court, and then sends a Clown to Saturninus with a knife wrapped up in a letter. At court, Tamora gives birth to a child of dark complexion, which Aaron takes rather than kill. The Goths capture them both, and Lucius (now their leader) threatens the child with death. Aaron agrees to tell Lucius the truth about events, if he spares the baby’s life. In order to trick Titus into sending for Lucius so they might capture him, Tamora, Demetrius and Chiron disguise themselves as Revenge, Murder, and Rape. They think they have succeeded in fooling him, but, when Tamora leaves, Titus kills Chiron and Demetrius with Lavinia’s help. He then invites Saturninus and Tamora to a parley with Lucius at a dinner, having cooked Chiron and Demetrius in a pie. He kills Lavinia, then reveals to Tamora that she has been eating her own sons, and stabs her. Saturninus kills Titus, and is then killed by Lucius. Marcus and Lucius relate to the people what has happened, and Lucius is proclaimed emperor of Rome. An unrepentant Aaron is sentenced to death, the Andronici are given proper burial, and Tamora’s body is thrown to the animals.
In the main plot, William the Conqueror falls in love with the image on the shield that the Marquess of Lubeck carries in a tournament. In disguise, William travels to the court of King Zweno of Denmark to see the original of the portrait; once there, he falls in love with Marianna, a Swedish princess held hostage at the Danish court. Marianna, however, is faithful to her suitor, Lubeck, and has no interest in William; but the king's daughter Blanche becomes infatuated with the newcomer. The ladies stage a plot, in which William absconds with the woman he thinks is Marianna; in doing so he gets in trouble with Zweno, who is under the same mistaken impression. When the woman's true identity is revealed—she is of course Blanche—William accepts her as his wife. Lubeck and Marianne are left, happily, to each other.

In the subplot, Em, the beautiful daughter of the miller of Manchester, is wooed by three suitors: Valingford, Mountney, and Manvile. Preferring Manvile, she pretends blindness to evade Valingford, and deafness to avoid Mountney. But Manvile proves unfaithful to Em. In the end, Manvile loses both of the women he pursues, and Em marries Valingford, the one of the three who has remained true to her; and it is revealed that Em is actually of the gentry—her father is Sir Thomas Goddard, and the miller of Manchester was his disguise. The two plots meet at the end, as William recognizes Goddard’s banishment was unjust and revokes it. Em makes William realize that the world does contain virtuous women, which helps to reconcile him to his marriage with Blanche.
enemy, Fidelia refuses to help. Bomelio suggests they drug her in order get it, and in doing so is able to escape with her back to his son at the cave. Hermione and Fidelia and reunited. Bomelio goes berserk realizing his son has disposed of all of his witchcraft books. Fortune and Venus vie over this round. Mercury interrupts to deliver Jupiter’s arbitration: if neither shall mettle in the other’s affairs, they will be equally sovereign where they choose to show favor. They concur, and Mercury appeals to Fortune to help rather than hinder the lovers’ fate. Their conference is interrupted by manic Bomelio chasing Hermione and Fidelia with a sword. Mercury plays a tune which puts him to sleep. They sprinkle some of Hermione’s blood on his face to restore his senses. The Dukes finds them and charges Hermione with death. Venus and Fortune intercede, showing themselves to the Duke, revealing the noble parentage of Hermione, and urging Fidelia to help cure her brother’s muteness. He is cured, Bomelio awakes, forgives and his exile is forgiven. The servants Lentulo and Penulo are forgiven for stealing a suit of the Duke’s clothes in order to perform a higher class station—having earlier been confused for a servant and a peasant. By commingling their powers, Venus and Fortune are satisfied with the outcome.

The Seconde [part] of King Edward the Fourth. Containing Likewise the besieging of London, by the bastarde Falconbridge, and the valiant defense of the same by the Lord Maior and the Citizens As it hath divers times beene publiquely played by the Right Honorable the Earle of Derby his servants.

First Performance: c.1594.
First Printing: 1599 (combined).

The play picks up in France, where King Edward IV has gone to reclaim the throne with his tanner in tow. The Shores remain separated as Jane unwittingly continues as the King’s mistress. The Constable and Burgundy are not following through with promised aid, but the King pushes forward anyway, announces war with Lewis, King of France. Burgundy’s flip-flopping is at the political center of the first half of the play, and his physical scuffle with Edward, resulting in the death of two men, enrages the English. Edward provides Lewis with the option to either fight or pay tribute, and Lewis happily selects the latter. The Constable and Burgundy suspect this is a false peace, sending offers of immediate troops if Edward will rescind the agreement, to no avail. Things begin to devolve for the aristocratic French rebels as Edward remains loyal to Lewis and returns to England with his new crown. While the King has been away, Gloucester and a small confederaacy have begun plotting dissension.

Once Edward returns to England, focus returns to Jane Shore. She has been asked to aid in procuring a pardon for Lord Brackenbury’s kinsmen, Captain Stranguidge and his crew. They attacked and captured a French ship after Edward and Lewis has struck a peace, so their deaths become essential to solidifying Edward’s loyalty to Lewis. Matthew Shore, her husband, in disguise and making his way back to England to visit friends, is among them. Due to the geopolitical ramifications, there seems to be no hope; Shore confesses to a priest, prays to God, forgives the King, Jane, and asks forgiveness for himself. As the men stand on the scaffold, Jane stops the hanging, bearing a pardon from Edward. She is immediately recalled from the rescue as Edward has mysteriously taken ill and has asked for Jane and the Queen, his wife, at his bedside. News spreads of Edward’s illegitimate children, Gloucester’s drowning of Clarence in a butt of malmsey in the Tower, and Edward’s sudden death. Richard of Gloucester takes over quickly as ward, his first acts being to commit the two young princes to the Tower for their protection, hiring Tyrrell for their murder, and reducing Jane to destitution.
The fates of the Shores collide at the inn of Mistress Bladge on Gracechurch Street, where Jane is taken in by her old friend. In the scuffle to break into the Tower by Tyrrell, Matthew Shore is freed although injured and so sent by Brackenbury to Bladge’s. Under the pseudonym Matthew Flood, he recognizes Jane but she does not him as she binds his wounds with a cordial used by the now-dead King. Meanwhile, just as Tyrrell is about to break into the boys’ cell, he runs into two other murderers, Dighton and Forest, carrying the dead bodies of the boys out. The three conspire to get the Tower priests to bury them. Once this is done, the guilt-wracked priests vow to take a fast until death. A proclamation is sent out against Jane: on pain of death no one is to harbor her. The Lord Mayor and men from the King Richard find her at Bladge’s. They are quickly given up and again rendered destitute. Jane is made to walk across London barefoot, dressed in white, carrying a taper. Along the way several of those for which she procured aid try to help her, bringing her food and drink, but they are whipped and hanged for it. A man named Aire and Matthew both try to give her money, but they are arrested. Aire is hung but Shore is pardoned by King Richard so that he might be made to watch his wife suffer. Husband and wife are reunited under Aire’s scaffold; they forgive one another, kiss and die in each other’s arms. Brackenbury is left to bury the dead. With the heirs dead, Richard III assumes the throne fully. His first order of business, after inquiring about the Shore’s demise, is to break a political promise to Buckingham.

The Spanish Tragedie, Containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo. Newly corrected and amended of such grosse faults as passed in the first impression.
First Performance: c.1584–89; 23 February 1592.
First Printing: 1592.

The Viceroy of Portugal has rebelled against Spanish rule. A battle has taken place in which the Portuguese were defeated and their leader, the Viceroy’s son Balthazar, captured. A Spanish officer named Andrea has been killed by the captured Balthazar. His ghost and the spirit of Revenge serve as Chorus wherein Andrea bemoans the series of injustices. Revenge assures him he will be satisfied. There is a subplot concerning the enmity of two Portuguese noblemen, one of whom attempts to convince the Viceroy that his rival has murdered the missing Balthazar. The King’s nephew, Lorenzo, and Andrea’s best friend, Horatio, dispute over who captured Balthazar. It is made clear early on that it is in fact Horatio that defeated him while Lorenzo essentially cheats his way into taking partial credit. The King leaves Balthazar in Lorenzo’s charge and splits the spoils of the victory between the two. Horatio comforts Lorenzo’s sister, Bel-imperia, who was in love with Andrea against her family’s wishes. Despite her former feelings for Andrea, Bel-imperia soon falls for Horatio. Her courtship with Horatio is motivated partially by her desire for revenge: she intends to torment an amorous Balthazar, the killer of her lover.

As Balthazar is in love with Bel-imperia, the royal family concludes that their marriage would be an excellent way to repair the peace with Portugal. Horatio’s father, the Marshall Hieronimo, stages an entertainment for the Portuguese ambassador to celebrate. Lorenzo, suspecting that Bel-Imperia has found a new lover, bribes her servant Pedringano and discovers that Horatio is the man. He persuades Balthazar to help him murder Horatio. Hieronimo and his wife Isabella find the body of their son, Horatio, who has been hanged and stabbed, which drives Isabella to madness. Lorenzo locks Bel-Imperia away, but she succeeds in sending Hieronimo a letter, written in her own blood, informing him that Lorenzo and Balthazar were Horatio’s
murderers. His questions and attempts to see Bel-Imperia convince Lorenzo that he knows something. Afraid that Balthazar’s servant, Serberine, has betrayed the plot, Lorenzo convinces Pedringano to murder him, then arranges for Pedringano’s arrest in the hopes of silencing him, too. Hieronimo, as the court-appointed judge, sentences Pedringano to death. Pedringano expects Lorenzo to procure his pardon, and Lorenzo, having written a fake letter of pardon, lets him believe this right up until the hangman drops Pedringano to his death.

Lorenzo manages to prevent Hieronimo from seeking justice for his son by convincing the King that Horatio is alive and well. Furthermore, Lorenzo does not allow Hieronimo to see the King, claiming that he is too busy. This, combined with his wife’s suicide, drives Hieronimo to madness. He rants incoherently and digs at the ground with his dagger. Lorenzo goes on to tell his uncle, the King, that Hieronimo’s odd behaviour is due to his inability to deal with his son’s new found wealth (Balthazar’s ransom from the Portuguese Viceroy), and he has gone mad with jealousy. Hieronimo and Bel-Imperia feigns reconciliation with the murderers. They stage a play, Soliman and Perseda, by which they stab Lorenzo and Balthazar to death in front of the King, Viceroy, and Duke of Castile (Lorenzo and Bel-Imperia’s father). Bel-Imperia kills herself. Hieronimo confesses his motive, but refuses to reveal Bel-Imperia’s complicity in the plot. He then bites out his own tongue to prevent himself from talking under torture, kills the Duke, and then himself. Andrea and Revenge are satisfied.

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THE LORD SUSSEX’S MEN, 1572–1594
Patron(s): Thomas Radcliffe, 8th Earl of Sussex (1526–83); Henry Radcliffe, 9th Earl of Sussex (1533–93); Robert Radcliffe, 10th Earl of Sussex (1573–1629).
Venues: The Rose playhouse (1593–4), and at court (1572, 1573, 1577, 1578, 1579, 1580, 1581, 1583, 1592).


Extant properties: 5.

The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta. As it was playd before the king and queene, in his Majesties Theatre at While Hall, by her Majesties Servants at the Cock-pit.
First Performance: c.1589–90; 26 February 1592.
First Printing: 1594 (extant 1633).
See page 256.

The Honorable Histories of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay. As it was plaid by her Majesties servants. Made by Robert Greene Maister of Arts.
First Performance: 19 February 1592.
First Printing: c.1588–92.
The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As it was Plaide by the Right Honorable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke, and Earle of Sussex their Servants.

First Performance: 24 January 1594.
First Printing: 1594.
See page 263.

A Pleasant Conceyted Comedie of George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield. As It was sundry times acted by the Servants of the righte Honourable the Earle of Sussex.

First Performance: 29 December 1593.
First Printing: 1599.

The play triangulates three factions—the Scots, the townsmen of Wakefield, and rebelling English nobility—with three locations—the village of Wakefield, the town of Bradford, and a rural battlefield on the border between James, King of the Scots, and Edward, King of England, where the action begins. Complicating relations between the two crowns is the Earl of Kendall, Henry Mumford, who is inciting border raids as a means to further his claims to the throne.

Struggling to feed the army, the rebel lords Kendell, Bonfield and Armstrong decide to re-provision in the town of Wakefield. Using a Justice as their spokesman, the townsmen of Wakefield agree to send nothing to the traitor Kendall. When the rebels threatening the town with force, George a Greene fights back, becoming the spokesman for the village when the Justice loses courage. Wakefield harbors two other single-parent families to which the libel of “traitor” is attached. Old Sir Musgrove refuses to give up his feud with the Scots despite his son Cuddy’s requests. In the nearby town of Bradford, Beatrice, the daughter of the head shoemaker, Master Grime, is beloved of George in spite of all her fine suitors, which includes Bonfield. Mumford arrives in Bradford to collect the stray Mannering and Bonfield after their bought with Greene. He shares the story, causing Beatrice to swoon. Mannering is sent to lead the battle at Scrasblesea while Bonfield and Mumford remain behind, disguised, in Wakefield.

In pursuit of these rebels, King James comes to stay at the nearby estate of the Barleys. With husband John away, he longs to have Jane, but her little son Ned puts up a fight. First the king threatens to raise the cattle, and then kill her son if she won’t sleep with him. Old Musgrove arrives just in time to give chase and take King James prisoner. In the fray, Cuddy kills James’ lord, Humes. Back in Wakefield, George, bemoaning the supposed loss of his love, is interrupted by Jenkin the clown, who is also bemoaning a lost love, Madge, to a rival, Clim the Sow-Gelder. They become friends. Jenkin finds the rebels’ horses gorging on George’s corn, and when he confronts them, he strikes Mumford at an insult to the king. George quickly realizes the unfair fight into which he has lept, and attempts to negotiate: if Mumford will follow his rightful king, Edward, he will give in. Mumford quibbles in that he rises not against the king per se, but rather his wrongs that cause the poor to suffer. He then proposes that if George comes with him and leaves Wakefield as a counsellor, he will be pardoned. They are interrupted by Willy, poorly disguised as a seamstress’ maid with work for Beatrice which are really letters for George. George sends letters of his own back, but Grime realizes they are for his daughter and seems to lose them. He finds the cross-dressed Willy quite distracting and would marry ‘her’ if he could. Taking advantage of his distraction, Beatrice re-enters in Willy’s disguise, causing her father to flirt with her, in order to escape to George. George, on the other hand, is disguised as a blind old
priest but in his attempt to escape, is impeded by the rebels. They ask if God ordains the King or Mumford to win, and George as the priest responds that they will not be brought down by a King but by a baser man named George. Enraged, Mumford threatens set Wakefield ablaze. At that moment Beatrice miraculously appears, scaring off the lords and allowing her to escape with George.

It is at this point that the play shifts locations to just outside Bradford where the English and Scottish kings have decided to meet. Edward doesn’t understand why their truce has been broken with these border invasions. James is ashamed and thankful that Musgrove alerted him in order to resolve the confusion. Cuddy uses the expression “as good as George a Greene” during the negotiations, and Edward is curious as to whom this is and wants to meet him. As they debate, they are interrupted by the man himself, who has taken Mumford captive in the name of his king, but asks the king’s pardon for Mumford’s good intentions for the commonality. Content with this resolution, Edward plans to go north in disguise for a month with James in order to observe George and do something more lasting about the border rebellions.

On the other side of Bradford’s wood there are similar fringe negotiations between Robin Hood and his band of merry men. Maid Marian is upset because everywhere she goes she hears songs of George and his love for Beatrice. She is jealous, and won’t be satisfied until Robin bests George. Jenkin, through his friends Scarlet and Much, has somehow found his way into this band. Having no stomach to fight, however, he and a shoemaker head off to an alehouse. Robin Hood and his band interrupt George and Beatrice just as they are confessing their love to one another. George takes on Scarlet, Much, and then Robin, who asks George to join his band not unlike Mumford. George suggests they head to the alehouse in town to discuss it. The disguised kings have also made it to Bradford, but commit the community’s faux pas of walking with their staves upright, and are happily corrected by a shoemaker. Robin and George, disguised, oversee this encounter and think the men are peasants pretending to be yeomen. Unlike the kings, Robin and George refuse to drop their staves and the town rises up against them. George bests all of the shoemakers, and it is at that point they realize it is the famous George a Green. They townspeople invite him for a drink until the whole town is falling-down drunk, including the two kings who rechristen the shoemaker’s trade “‘the Gentle Craft.”

Amidst the festivities, Musgrove gives Edward a blade he won from James at Meddellom Castle, with which he dubs Musgrove a knight, gives him that estate, and funds to maintain it. Grime agrees to let his daughter marry George so he can marry the disguised-as-lass Willy. The disguise is revealed, which outs Grimes into a good mood as to give over his daughter and her dowry. King Edward then knight’s George who the rejects it, preferring to remain a yeoman. As a substitute, he asks the King to set the terms of reparation by James for his border skirmishes. In an unsettling conclusion, Edward departs with James to see if Jane a Barley is as fair as he says.

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The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella. As it hath bene divers and sundry times lately acted.
First Performance: c.1582–3.
First Printing: 1605.

Lamenting the loss of his wife and lack of male issue, Leir decides to divide England (via a love test) among his three daughters so they might attract the most powerful husbands. The elder two daughters, smarting over Cordella’s obvious but demure superiority, learn of the king’s intentions before he acts. Assuming her privilege, they conspire against her and their plan works. Leir
divides his kingdom in two, disinherits Cordella, marries his remaining daughters to the Kings of Cornwall and Cambria, and goes to live with Cornwall and Gonorill. Things go badly fairly quickly when Gonorill cuts Leir’s pension in half. Before she can cut it off entirely and force him to Ragan’s, Leir leaves of his own accord with his trusted aide Perillus. Meanwhile, the King of France decides to come to England with his lustful servant Mumford disguised as pilgrims to woo a daughter of Leir. They encounter Cordella, now a poor seamstress. After some stichomythia and verbal sparring, each confesses their identities: she her condition, and he his love without condition or dowry. They promptly find a church to be wed (which happens to be the same day as her sisters) after which they make for France.

Cornwall decides to send a messenger to certify that Leir has made it to Ragan’s. Gonoril intervenes, paying the messenger to kill Leir and report back to her husband falsely. Leir does reach Ragan’s, but she feigns a warm welcome, paying the same messenger to kill both Leir and Perillus. She plans to kill the messenger after the deed is done, but this time Leir and Perillus intervene, talking the messenger out of it and fleeing for France and Cordella. Meanwhile, Cordella’s blue mood suggests to the King of France that a reconciliation with Leir is in order; He, Cordella, and Mumford adopt peasant disguises and head for England. They meet starving and pitiable Leir and Perillus on the road, dressed in sailor’s clothes, taken in exchange for their better clothes to pay for their passage across the channel. After confessions on both sides, the King organizes an army, proceeds to England, and defeats both sisters in what appears to be no battle at all. The sisters and their husbands flee, and Leir concedes his regained kingdom to Cordella and her husband, the King of France.

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THE QUEEN’S MEN, 1583–1594

**Patron:** Elizabeth Tudor, Queen of England (1533–1603).

**Venues:** Bel Savage inn-yard (1588), The Theatre playhouse (1583–4), The Curtain playhouse (unknown), The Rose playhouse (1594), and at court (1583, 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587, 1588, 1589, 1589, 1590, 1591, 1593–4).

**Non-extant properties:** 4, including Felix and Philomena (1585), Five Plays in One (1584–5), Phyllida and Corin (1584), and Three Plays in One (1585).

**Extant properties:** 10

*The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth: Containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court: As it was plaide by the Queenes Maiesties Players.*

First Performance: c.1594.
First Printing: 1598.

Prince Henry and his companions have committed a robbery, stealing £1000 from two Royal Receivers transporting funds to the Royal Exchequer. He meets Jockie Oldcastle and tells him of events. The Receivers, pursuing the robbers, bump into Henry who “forgives” them for losing the money, but also threatens them. The Chief Justice hears about Henry’s antics, arresting him at a tavern after a drunken street brawl with drawn swords. Local tradesmen, commenting on the events, recognizes Cutbert, a pick-pocket, who they take into custody. Cutbert insists that he is a servant of Prince Henry in the hopes it will get him released. Meanwhile King Henry IV laments the shameful lifestyle of his son. He questions the Chief Justice about the arrest of the Prince.
The Justice explains his actions and King Henry accepts their validity. Angry at the Chief Justice, the Prince tells Jockie and his companions that when he is king they shall have major positions of state. The Justice is arraigning Cutbert when Prince Henry and his gang arrive at court. When the Chief Justice refuses to release Cutbert, Prince Henry assaults him.

Prince Henry is summarily upbraided by his father, who is growing steadily more ill. Ashamed, the Prince promises to reform his lifestyle. Meanwhile, the tradesmen act out a clownish version of the conflict between the Prince and the Chief Justice. At the sickbed of his father, the Prince picks up the crown thinking his father is dead. The King revives long enough to scold and then give his son his blessing before dying. Now king, Henry V reneges on his promises to his old companions, banishing them instead. Taken with thoughts of conquest, Henry discusses his claim to the French throne with the Archbishop. The French dauphin sends tennis balls as a present to King Henry as an insult, so Henry prepares for war. One of the tradesmen, John Cobbler, is impressed into the army along with his friend Derick after a fight with his wife, who then laments the argument. Cutbert is also pressed into military service.

In France, Henry first captures the town of Harfleur. Henry defies the large army the French send in stay him, insisting that he would rather die than be ransomed. Before the battle, French soldiers (speaking in comically garbled English) discuss how they will divide the spoils; however, at the Battle of Agincourt the English are unexpectedly victorious. After the battle, Derick and John Cobbler scheme to get out of the rest of the war by accompanying the deceased Duke of York’s body back to England. Henry then travels on to Paris where he negotiates with the French court and woos Princess Katherine. The King of France agrees to make Henry his heir and to marry him to Katherine.

The [second] Part of the troublesome Raigne of John King of England. With the discoverie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named, The Bastard Fawconbridge): Also the death of King John at Swinstead Abbey. As It was (sundry times) lately acted by the Queenes Maesties Players. Written by W. Sh.
First Performance: c.1589–96.
First Printing: 1611 (combined).

The play open with Prince Arthur jumping off the walls of prison, committing a very painful and prolonged suicide. The English barons and Hubert arrive, having planned on conveying Arthur back to King John and saving his political reputation. Enraged by what they assume was a murder on King John’s orders, the barons to decide to invite Prince Lewis, the French dauphin, with the help of Rome to claim the English throne. They bury Arthur and plan to meet on April 10th at the Abbey at Bury St. Edmund. It is Ascension Day back in London and King John fears for his life. Hubert returns and reports the death of Arthur and the barons’ rebellion, motivating King John to have his puppet prophet, Peter, immediately hung. (The queen mother, Eleanor, in the intervening period.) King John sends Philip the Bastard to assuage the barons, and then meets with the papal legate, Cardinal Pandulph. In order for absolution, King John must surrender his crown in penance to Rome. They are interrupted with news that a thousand French ships have been seen off the coast.

At the Abbey at Bury St Edmund, Philip the Bastard arrives in time to hear the arguments: Essex claims that the king’s killing of kin was an act of tyranny; Pembroke is motivated to put Lewis on the throne in order to receive favor from Rome; and Salisbury believes that Arthur’s death by kin is evidence enough that John is not sovereignly ordained by
God. Despite his best attempts to contest the manner of Arthur’s death as suicide rather than murder, Lewis interrupts just in time to convince the barons to swear fealty to him on the shrine. After the English barons leave to amass troops to take London, Lewis confesses to his French lords his plans to kill the barons once they have outlived their immediate usefulness. His rationale is that rebels remain forever untrustworthy, motivating a second act of fealty swearing this time by the French retinue.

In a last effort, King John gives up his crown to the Pope, and it is immediately returned to him on the condition that he remains faithful to Rome—which Philip the Bastard likes not at all. The French have taken everything except Dover Castle, but now that King John has been absolved, the Cardinal requests them to return home in peace. Of course Lewis refuses and the barons rally around him, so the Cardinal excommunicates both Lewis and the rebel peers. King John is still stuck with armies at his gates, so he and Philip the Bastard rally the city archers to try to keep London. In the fight, the French Viscount Melun is wounded and in his last breaths confesses to the English barons Lewis’ plan to kill them. The barons bury his body and then seek out King John to beg forgiveness. Meanwhile, Lewis’ celebrations of victory are interrupted with news: the barons have turned to help King John, but a storm has sunk all of their ships and munitions, as well as the French supply. Feeling he is as good as king at this point, Lewis is sure his father, Philip of France, will send reserves.

In losing the city of London, King John and Philip the Bastard seek refuge in the abbey they once plundered at Swinstead. The monks set up a picnic for King John, Philip the Bastard, the Abbot and Thomas, a monk, in an orchard. Thomas offers the king a drink, and the king asks him to be his official taster. He takes a swig and the king follows too quickly. It has been poisoned with toad innards. The monk dies just before Philip the Bastard himself takes a drink. He immediately kills the Abbot. It is a very painful death for King John: his insides feel like fire and he begins to become paralyzed from the legs up. Just as he curses God, he loses control of his bowels. The barons and John’s son, Prince Henry, find them too late. The king has lost his powers of speech and is foaming at the mouth. With help from the Cardinal, the king lifts his hand to signal his forgiveness of the barons who now support his son, but refuses to lift his hand to signal he dies as a servant of God. He finally dies in the arms of Henry and Philip the Bastard; they crown Henry and leave to parley with Lewis, bringing down Swinstead Abbey as they exit. Mediated by the Cardinal, the problem still remains: who most lawfully has the right to the English throne? Lewis, with his enemy King John dead and lacking support in the region, is ready for peace. While the conditions for surrender are left uncertain, Philip the Bastard and the barons feel this reunion suggests a new period of peace.

The histories of the two valiant knights, Syr Clyomon Knight of the Golden Sheeld, son to the King of Denmarke: and Clamydes the white knight, son to the King of Suauia As it hath bene sundry times acted by her Maiesties Players.
First Known Performance: c.1570–83.
First Printing: 1599.

Clamydes, son of the King of Swabia, has a problem: he cannot marry his beloved, Juliana, until he slays a dragon that has been eating maidens and matrons. Clamydes must bring Juliana its severed head. Juliana’s brother Clyomon, son of the King of Denmark, takes Clamydes’ place when the Suavian king is knighting his son, effectively stealing his brother-in-law-to-be’s knighthood. Clyomon is originally accompanied by a clown character called Subtle Shift, or
Knowledge. Shift quickly changes sides to Clamydes when it’s in his interest (though he later betrays Clamydes as well). Sir Clyomon sets off on his knightly adventures, which lead him to the Macedonia of Alexander the Great. Clamydes pursues Clyomon, seeking revenge for his stolen knighthood; meanwhile he kills the dragon in an offstage fight. When all seems to be set to right, Clamydes falls victim to the spells of the evil magician, Bryan Sans Foy, who steals Clamydes’s arms, apparel, and his dragon's head in order to marry Juliana himself.

Clyomon is driven by storms to the Isle of Strange Marshes where he falls in love with the princess Neronis. He vows his fealty to her, but then returns to his adventures in order to meet and fight with Clamydes and recover his knightly honor. Thrasellus, the King of Norway, also loves Neronis. She has rejects the king, so he denies to kidnap her. However, she escapes in male disguise, finding refuge with the shepherd Corin. (Neronis is the earliest known example of a girl disguised as a page in English Renaissance drama.) Clyomon tries to rescue Neronis, fighting and killing Thrasellus in the process. Yet since the man is a king, Clyomon gives him an honorable burial, decorating the hearse with his own shield. Neronis finds hearse and shield, and mistakes the dead man for Clyomon. In grief, she sings a song and tries to kill herself with Clyomon’s sword, when the personification of providence impedes her. Neronis takes service as page with a disguised Clyomon as he returns home to confront Clamydes. The two knights become friends when Clamydes realizes that Clyomon is a prince of Denmark and Juliana’s brother. Neronis realizes that she is working for the man she loves. Clamydes chases away the cowardly Bryan Sans Foy. Neronis reveals her true identity. The couples plan their weddings to conclude the play.

The Honorable Histories of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay. As it was plaid by her Majesties servants. Made by Robert Greene Maister of Arts.
First Performance: 19 February 1592.
First Printing: c.1588–92.
See page 260.

The Old Wiues Tale. A pleasant conceited Comedie, played by the Queenes Maisties players. Written by G. P.
First Performance: c.1591–94.
First Printing: 1595.

This short interlude-like play (professing to be an hour long) spins a tangential yarn banking on the power of episodic delay indicative of dramatic romance. It opens with a page-boy frame, typically used for the boy companies of this period: three pages have lost their way in the woods. They are found by Clunch the Smith and taken home to his old wife Madge, and their dog, Ball. They beg the woman to tell them a tale to pass the midwinter evening. Her husband goes to bed, taking one of the boys, Antic, with him, while the old wife makes the other two swear they will stay awake. She begins to tell her tale, but shadows of the characters appear on stage and take over for her.

Once upon a time, a duke’s daughter named Delia, “white as snow, and red as blood,” was abducted by a dragon. This was really the conjurer Sacrapant, who takes her to his stone castle where he also keeps a mad woman named Venelia. Venelia is betrothed of a cursed man named Erestus, made to live as an old man by day but a bear at night. In search of their kidnapped sister, Delia’s two brothers encounter Erestus guarding a fork in the road. They give
him some pennies, and in return Erestus provides them with a prophecy. Erestus’ widower neighbor, Lampriscus, brings him some honey, and there is a show of singing harvest men. Booby the Clown and his two-handed swordsman, Huanebango, perform their act of swords and contestatory banter for Erestus, wherein each performer gives him a piece of cake.

The setting changes to Sacrapant’s castle, where he confesses to the audience that he learned his dragon-trick from his mother. He has stolen Delia as part of a charm to revive his youth because, in truth, he is quite old. At this point, her brothers are about to rescue Delia when Sacrapant makes her disappear. Echo steps in to aid the brothers in finding her scent again. Sacrapant strikes both of them down with thunder and lighting, but they are saved by two friars and taken off-stage just as Sacrapant realizes they are the sons of the king of Thessaly. At this point Sacrapant reveals the source of his youth charm: a mirror that cannot be broken except by she that is neither wife, widow, nor maid.

We return to the bear-man, Erestus, who is just leaving his crossroads post for the night. A wandering knight, in love with and thus searching for Delia, decides to nap in Erestus’ spot. Country folk, friends of a recently-dead man named Jack, hassle a churchwarden and sexton to bury their friend. They won’t bury Jack because he didn’t leave enough to the church in his will. They start assaulting the holy men, waking Eumenides, the knight. Remembering Erestus’ prophecy, Eumenides gives everything he has towards Jack’s burial. The singing harvestmen and women return, followed by Huanebango and Booby. Sacrapant interrupts the comedy in a burst of flames, accompanied by two furies. The furies chase Huanebango into the fields to be killed, while Sacrapant blinds Booby onstage (!). Delia, having lost her memory, is rechristened Berecynthia and follows Sacrapant closely behind, herding her enslaved brothers.

In another abrupt change, we jump to the tale of two sisters, Zantipa and Celanta, in search of a husband. Competitive, when Zantipa’s sister arrives, she smashes both their water jugs to chase her away—to no avail. She leaves Celanta (apparently the less lovely of the two for her “black” face) and returns home for replacement jugs. While Zantipa is gone, the furies deposit Huanebango on the far side of the well. Zantipa returns, and when she dips her pitcher in the well, a head rises and begins to speak to her. Startled, she smashes her jug on its head, awakening Huanebango. He is now deaf, and they begin to speak nonsense to one another, falling in love. Meanwhile, Celanta has encountered Booby in the nearby woods and married him, since his blindness means he can’t see the color of her skin.

With Sacrapant’s rampant injuries thwarted, we return to Eumenides, the wandering knight, who encounters the ghost of Jack, the man whose burial he contributed to. In thanks, they head to a nearby alehouse, entertained by fiddlers and footing the bill with the money Jack magically conjures. Once Eumenides purse and belly are full, they are ready to take on Sacrapant. Jack stops up Eumenides ears with wool to protect him. Once they encounter Sacrapant, the invisible Jack removes the conjurer’s sword and crown of laurels, revealing his real age and causing him to die. Eumenides and Jack dig up the mirror, giving it to Venelia (stuck in the limbo of betrothal) to smash. Jack returns with the head of conjurer to confirm their success. The brothers are reunited with their sister, and the curses on Venelia and Erestus are lifted in order to finally be married. Delia and Eumenides are reunited, but Eumenides realizes Jack is in love with her, too. For Jack’s help in freeing her, Eumenides is willing to cut Delia in half and share her. Jack stops her (flipping the morality of the Bible story), jumps into his own grave and buries himself. The living all return to Thessaly. At this point we return to the frame, as the boys have remained awake until the wee hours of the morning while Madge has fallen asleep. They wake her, and off they go for a breakfast of toast, ale, and cheese.
This episodic play opens with London acting as her own prologue: she argues that God's benevolence on London and its queen directly benefits all of England. In other words, a measure of the city is the condition of the nation writ small. Alas, three of London's ladies have been imprisoned by Nemo (meaning 'no-man') and three of her men decide to rescue them. Their respective pages, enacting a kind of courtly competition, argue over which (quality) is best (in a boy); they attempt to interpret their lords' shields, which they carry, each bearing an image and relating inscription in the traditional emblem formula, to get some answers. They meet Simplicity, a ballad and chapbook salesman who attempts to buy their shields to no avail. His ballads seem pretty bad, so the boys negotiate to help improve them (Wit) and sing them in the market (Will) for a profit (Wealth). With explicit references to the player Richard Tarlton, in revising the ballads the boys consider what is wit in drama: “merry finesse.” With his wife about to return, the boys leave the salesman with the parting shot that their masters were brought up courtiers, but citizens born.

In the meantime, the three lords have reached Nemo’s castle and appeal to have the ladies set free. Their argument that they plan to make them honest wives, to reform the ladies through love, compels Nemo to allow them to woo the ladies, assigning each lord to a lady he sees most fit. Before being abducted, the ladies had been mistresses to Usury, Dissimulation, and Simony. The three, led by Fraud, have been using disguises to pass the time—as a friar, woman, saint, and devil—but now are plotting to steal back the maids after the lords free them. In an attempt to be reformed, each of the ladies’ faces have been deformed in some way, and they have been made to sit on uncomfortable stones (labeled Care, Remorse, and Chastity), wimpled, in sorrow. The lords find and unmask the ladies to happy result, their deformities melting away, but instead of taking up with Pleasure, Pomp, and Policy, they leave with three sages: Lucre with Honest Industry, Love with Pious Zeal, and Conscience with Sincerity. Nemo likes this arrangement, but as the three lords begin to decay without the enrichment of the ladies, they prove to him that they must gain them back from the sages.

Diligence interrupts their personal dilemma with news of national import: the Spanish are coming to invade London and then the commonwealth. He asks the three lords for help, delaying the re-rescue of the ladies in order to save the credit and fame of the city. The lords come up with a metatheatric plan of combat as a means of cultivating London’s reputation: Pomp to stage feats, shows, bonfires, etc.; Pleasure to publish plays, put on masques, may games, school feats, puppet shows and bear baiting; and Policy heading to Mile End Green to summon folk participants. The commons rally together to combat the Castilians’ siege of their national reputation of sophisticated cultural production. In the midst of these fortifications, Simplicity is taken captive by Fraud and Usury for not paying his debts and threatening the loss of his ears, forcing him to revert to old criminal practices to get back in the black. It is tough, however, since Londoners have figured out his old pick-pocket tricks. So, the vices become pirates. Simplicity interrupts the three lords and their pages’ preparations for the Spanish in being chased by the law for robbing. In a complicated representational battle orchestrated in a long stage direction, the
Spanish are defeated and exit the stage, followed by a burning ship. The pages, holding up their emblematic shields, rebuff the Spanish lances, and their masters offer an olive branch to make a truce between the Spanish “molehill” and English “dunghill.”

We return to the plot proper, as Nemo allows the lords and ladies to speak to and court one another. The men proffer themselves as gifts, promising virtues and skills. The vices, led by Fraud, make a last attempt to impede these unions. Diligence takes up the challenge for the three lords and three ladies, defeating Fraud and taking him off to Newgate prison. Fraud, however, escapes on the way. In a very last effort by Fraud, he convinces Nemo to bring in three lords of the suburb known as Lincoln (Desire, Delight, and Devotion) as competitors to the three lords of London for their three ladies. Diligence and Simplicity convince the Lincoln lords to give up their claim to the ladies in return for the magical seats on which they seat: Care, made of gold; Remorse, made of brass; and Charity, made of lead. Simplicity goes into business together with Diligence as show-makers (i.e., playwrights); Simplicity makes clear that not to be confused with shoe-makers. In final display of songs by a mensch, Fraud is bound for prison with the help of Simplicity, who is alas blinded in the process—ostensibly paying his debt to society for his youthful criminality.

The tragedy of Selimus Emperor of the Turkes.
First Performance: c.1594.
First Printing: 1638.

This epic plot roughly divides into three major movements: the first focusing on the emperor Bajazet’s debates over how to distribute and prioritize inheritances to his three sons; the second emphasizing the contesting movements of the three sons in vying for supreme control, not just of their designated jurisdiction; and the third focusing on Selimus’ rise to lead the Ottoman empire.

With his deceased wife no longer present to comfort him, the play opens with Bajazet considering his fear of his sons and recent battles with the growing Christian armies, which, having diminished his dominion, are stalled for the moment with a truce and friendly pay-off. He considers splitting his empire into three to allay civil war between his sons—Corcut, the pacifist philosopher; Acomat, the soft politician; Selimus, the successful warrior—but instead decides to manipulate the janizaries and bassas in order to selfishly get his favorite, Acomat, on the throne. Selimus comes to court with a large force of Tartarians to hear the news that while he is clearly the most successful conqueror, he will receive no inheritance whatsoever. Resisting primogeniture in a number of ways, Selimus debates with his bassas, arguing that the wisest should rule and his father should step down immediately. His confidant Occhiali counters with two problems in killing his father: the janizaries probably will not let him get away with it, and it only supplies further motive for his brothers to take revenge upon him. Unable to assuage him, Selimus sends Occhiali to court to ask permission that Selimus may begin a campaign into Christian lands and the Emperor of Russia, meaning that he would need rule over Samandria (bordering Bulgrade of Hungaria). Bajazet gives in while sending forces to reinforce Byzantium and Andrinople against any chance that Selimus might attempt to take them in a move for the crown. At first Selimus feels that his father’s acquiescence is confirmation of his love, but soon realizes it is all a plot to get rid of him. Selimus decides to go after his father instead, hearing of his flight to Byzantium.

Insulted by the questioning of his loyalty, Selimus meets his father in battle at Byzantium. Several important lords on both sides are lost, and Bajazet manages to capture a Tartan prince,
Ottrante. Meanwhile, Acomat begins mustering troops for Byzantium despite a lack of popular support. Both Bajazet and his court are growing increasingly paranoid of his system of rule that includes the killing of kin as a means to maintain sovereignty. Corcut and Acomat both send messengers to Byzantium requesting the crown from their father now, for legitimacy’s sake. Bajazet’s counsellors quibble over the reality of these princes’ having means to take them on, not to mention giving the Christians an opening while tied up with civil brawls. Acomat is enraged by his father’s rejection—betraying secular and religious oaths—so marches on Prince Mahomet of Natolia at Iconium. Mahomet decides to stay with his people and fight, refusing to yield to this tyrant. He and his sister, Zonara, are captured, strangled, their city besieged and people massacred. Their coffins are sent to Bajazet, who then blacks out. The counsellors call for revenge over Acomat’s ignoble attempts for the throne (as opposed to Selimus’ noble contest). Aga, Bajazet’s closest friend, is send to Acomat to negotiate. His eyes and hands are removed and he is sent back with a message that Acomat determined to kill his father. Bajazet, turning to his last option, summons Selimus to court. Moved by the maiming of Aga, Selimus pledges loyalty to his father, who then disinherits Acomat. The captains fill the room with chanting:
“long live Selimus, Emperor of Turks!” Bajazet removes his crown and Selimus places it on his own head. Selimus doesn’t hesitate with this sudden opportunity, putting a plot in motion to solidify his coup: he sends Hali Bassa to strangle brother Corcut at his books, and Cali Bassa to arrange a shipwreck of Acomat’s sons, Amurath and Aladdin, as well as his sister, Selima. He then has Abraham the Jew make a poison for Aga and Bajazet, by which all three die. At their funeral, Selimus literally produces crocodile tears at the Temple of Mahomet.

At this point the scene transitions to a pastoral setting, where a shepherd named Bullithrumble is running away from his beating and cuckolding wife—laughing hysterically all the while. He settles down for a moment to sing and eat. Corcut and his page, disguised as mourners attempting to evade Selimus, come upon the shepherd. At first Bullithrumble is unwilling to share his meal, but the recently converted Corcut convinces him to share at the threat to his Christian soul. Bullithrumble is persuaded and takes him to hide with a parson, Pigwiggens. The page sneaks off to tell Cali Bassa Corcut’s location in exchange for a reward. Corcut is strangled by his own brother (giving his soul to the “God of Christians”) while the page is starved to death for his treason. Selimus then gives Mustaffa the rule of Byzantium while he and Sinam Bassa pursue Acomat’s queen, Alinda, and heirs, Amurath and Aladdin. Having witnessed Selimus’ killing his own brother, Mustaffa decides he is too cruel to rule, and sends janissaries to save Acomat’s heirs from him. Aladdin gets word of Selimus’ approach from Mustaffa and makes off for Egypt while Alinda goes to Persia. Selimus finds the messenger and learns of Mustaffa’s betrayal. Mustaffa and his wife, Selima, are brought before Selimus where Mustaffa justifies his action as loyal rebellion for Selimus’ own good. Selima begs similarly. Selimus has Sinam Bassa strangle Mustaffa first and then Selima. Selimus then tackles Amasia, taking everyone prisoner and having Hali Bassa strangle the queen, Alinda. One of Acomat’s captains, Tonombey, rallies the remaining forces once more: he beats Hali Bassa and Cali Bassa, but is bested by Selimus who takes Acomat prisoner and has Sinam Bassa strangle him as well. Selimus is now unquestionably emperor and the play ends with his reflection back on the literal and figurative path he has travelled since his father’s death. He plans to break his troops for winter before pursuing a campaign against Egypt in the spring.

The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, with the discoverie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarily named, The Bastard Fawconbridge): also the death of King
John at Swinstead Abbey. As It was (sundry times) publikely acted by the Queenes Maisties Palyers, in the honourable Citiye of London.

First Performance: c.1589–96.
First Printing: 1591.

The first part of The Troublesome Reign of King John is arranged in three parts: in England, in France outside on Angiers, and then returning to England. In the first episode, an inheritance squabble between the two Falconsbridge brothers mirrors the divisions between John and Arthur over legitimacy, as well as the division between England and France. The play opens with King John taking over the throne from Richard I, his brother, who has died in France on crusade of an arrow wound. The celebrations are interrupted by Chatillon, the French ambassador, bearing bad news: the son of Richard the Lionheart, Arthur, is in league with Philip, the King of France. Feeling he is entitled to his father’s throne, not Richard’s brother John, Arthur and Philip plan to invade England unless John willingly gives up his crown. John says no, packs up his vassals, and heads for France. He is interrupted in this task, too, by a suit from a local sheriff regarding two brothers who are causing riots in his region over a £2000 yearly inheritance their father gained in the crusades for his service: Philip the Bastard (elder) and Robert (younger) Falconbridge. Robert proves—at least to their satisfaction of the company—that not only is Philip a bastard, but he is the bastard son of his mother and the recently-deceased king! When asked who is his father, Philip the Bastard’s Plantagenet blood refuses to be denied: his lowly prose converts to heroic couplets for the remainder of the play. Later, in private, his mother Margaret confirms the story to Philip and he is adopted by the queen mother, Eleanor. Leaving Essex in charge, finally King John is able to leave for war—a war funded by the plundering of abbey lands.

The scene changes to France, where Chatillon returns with bad news for King Philip: King John and his retinue are close on his heels in a battle for Angiers. The monarchs are unable to solve the problem on their own, so they pose it to the townspeople of Angiers. The citizens appear along the walls, responding that they will only let one of them in once they have enough evidence to determine whom is the lawful sovereign. On the battlefield surrounding Angiers, Philip the Bastard wins Limoges’ (the Duke of Austria, where his father Richard was killed) lion’s skin, but does not kill the duke. Later Philip the Bastard gives the skin to cousin Blanche, to which she responds with a token of her own. Philip suggests the French and English join forces to destroy Angiers, but the citizens counter that if England and France join in peace with the dauphin Lewis marrying Blanche (uniting Castile and England with France) then they will let them all in peaceably. Everybody likes this except Constance, who sees Arthur’s loss in it and swears to go between, and Philip, who had hoped to increase his legitimacy by marrying Blanche. Blanche’s dowry includes cash and five French provinces, as well as some of Spain, and Arthur gets Angiers, Bretagne, and Richmond to quell his desires for noble dessert. On Lewis and Blanche’s wedding day, Philip the Bastard interrupts the proceedings to ask for a reward for his service in war, for which King John gives him Normandy, insulting Limoges. This is interrupted by a Roman cardinal, inquiring why John is impeding the installation of a priest named Langton as the Archbishop of Canterbury, all of which angers the very Catholic French king and retinue. Refusing to acquiesce, the cardinal excommunicates King John, forcing King Philip to break off the marriage. Off to war they go again, and this time Philip the Bastard indeed kills Limoges. In the battle, Queen Eleanor is kidnapped, but is then rescued by King John. In the scuffle the King also nabs Arthur, whom he leaves in the hands of Hubert. Considering this a victory, the English forces return home with their prisoner to ransack the Catholic lands.
Once back in England, Hubert invites his prisoner Arthur for a evening stroll. He takes the bait and is bound by henchmen to a chair in preparation to be blinded by order of King John. Arthur’s nobility enflames Hubert’s conscience, and he refuses to injure him. Meanwhile, Philip the Bastard is sent as his step-brother’s henchman to gather up the gold from the friaries. In one instance, a treasure chest reveals a salacious nun named Alice who seems to be the household whore to the monks. She refuses to be freed, having sought refuge from laymen with the monks, so Philip takes a prophet named Peter instead, who is deceiving people, particularly children, with deceptive prophecies. At the English court, King John boasts of a successful campaign against the French: being tied up with their own concerns in Italy, the papacy was unable to aid the French materially. As their reward for funding and fueling John’s successes in France, John’s vassals request that Arthur be set free, to which he agrees. Philip the Bastard interrupts the celebrations to deliver the gold, jewels, and the prophet Peter to King John. Suddenly, five moons appear in the sky. King John, afraid of omens, asks Peter what this might portend. The prophet says these are the four nations under the yoke of Rome (Spain, Denmark, Germany, France) and the fifth is England, the only one willing to tempt the prelates curse. This presages the end of John’s reign so the King has him locked up again and immediately revokes his promise to the vassals of releasing Arthur. Just as things are about to fall apart, Hubert reveals that Arthur is alive, well, and in possession of his sight.

*The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella. As it hath bene divers and sundry times lately acted.*
First Performance: c.1594.
First Printing: 1605.
See pages 269–70.

*The True Tragedie of Richard the third: Wherein is showne the death of Edward the fourth, with the smothering of the two yoong Princes in the Tower: With a lamentable ende of Shores wife, an example for all wicked women. And lastly, the conjunction and joyning of the two noble Houses, Lancaster and Yorke. As It was playd by the Queenes Maiesties Players.*
First Performance: c.1585–92.
First Printing: 1594.

A truncated version of Heywood’s *Edward IV* plays (and looking forward to Shakespeare’s *Richard III* staged the following year), the play opens with a framing device. Poetry compliments Truth’s forthcoming pageant while they look on Clarence’s ghost, who, recently killed by his brother, Richard of Gloucester, jabbers in Latin. Another ghost is in the making: the English peers including Lords Marcus and Hastings, Richard, and Queen Elizabeth are at the deathbed of King Edward IV. His last request is that Marcus and Hastings strike an accord and in so doing, become protectors of the realm and his boy heir. They eventually yield to the King and Queen’s pleading, and the King dies. Lodowick, a servant to the King’s mistress Shore, reports that Gloucester has been made Lord Protector. She fears for her life, and rightly so. Richard inherits a mess as Lord Protector: the lords Chamberlain and Hastings have amassed an army to fight Marcus, the boy prince is on his way to court to be crowned, and Lord Buckingham has absconded to Wales with his own aspirations to be king. Richard’s page helps arrange for Richard, Buckingham, and the Earl Rivers to meet at an inn to deal with the Hastings/Marcus problem. As a security precaution, Richard has the innkeeper lock all the doors once everyone
had gone to sleep. Rivers, upset at the thought of his dishonesty after generations of loyalty, makes a scene and Richard has him sent to Pompfred jail. Richard and Buckingham head for Stratford and intercept the prince’s progress in order to accompany him. En route, Buckingham accuses Lord Gray’s horse of bumping him, although Gray says barely so. Richard accuses Gray of being unable to hide his hate toward the king’s blood and he is also taken to Pompfred. So in one swoop, both the prince’s lord protectors are out of the picture. Richard then sends his Cardinal to get the Duke of York, brother to the prince, from his mother and have him also brought to the Tower of London to keep the other boy company and in safety.

With a soliloquy from Richard’s all-seeing page, we are told a number of things have happened behind the scenes: the men committed to Pompfred prison have been secretly killed without trial; the Earl of Oxford is now in prison, too; Buckingham is pursuing the Lord Mayor and his alderman to help provide authority to Richard’s claim to the throne; and for aiding Mistress Shore, Hastings and Standley are sent to prison. Even her closest friend Lodowick has shunned Mistress Shore in the public penance she is made to perform. The citizens who happily greeted her earlier are unable to spare even a few scraps of food for fear of their lives. Richard’s page promises to ask to get her penance shortened, however Richard is becoming paranoid even of his closest comrades. He arrests and kills Buckingham for attempting to bring Henry, Earl of Richmond, another conspirator for the crown, into the city. A herald also attempts an arrest, but Buckingham is saved by six of his companions. With his options dwindling, Richard feels it is time to get rid of the boys, asking his page to do the deed for him. The page knows a guy, James Tyrrell, who could get the job done. Richard orders Lord Brockenbury, warden of the Tower, to give the keys to Tyrrell for the night. (He seems well aware of what is about to happen, having been asked by the king many times already.) On his way, Tyrrell runs into Myles Forrest, who says Will Slutter and Jack Denton would be perfect for the task. Tyrrell instructs them to smother the boys between two featherbeds. The boys enter, asking Myles for a bedtime story as well as who it is with the Tower keys in the garden below. Myles slips up, saying Tyrrell is a man of the King. The boys foresee their end, are pressed on-stage, and then removed to be buried.

While paranoid, things seem to be looking up for Richard: Lady Elizabeth has agreed to marry him, and he gets the Lord Stanley’s son, George, as collateral so Stanley will not to aid his other son, Richmond. However, news arrives that his Captain Blunt of the city guard has freed the Earl of Oxford and left to conspire with Richmond and Buckingham to storm London. With all the bad news, Lord Catesby jumps the gun and orders the beheading of George Stanley. Once the news reaches Lord Stanley, the tide in the battle for London turns in favor of Richmond, newly arrived with fresh resources. With friends turned enemies, and well-intentioned loyalties run amok, Richard’s loyal page bemoans the troubles of his lord: the chronicles will only know the evils he is accused of, and not of all the men he helped to raise up. At the battle of Bosworth Field, Richard, injured by Richmond, calls to his page for a fresh horse, which, of course, never comes. The page asks him to flee the field for his life, but Richard refuses. Richmond kills Richard. The page conveys this story to a character named Report, including that Catesby was beheaded at Lester; the Queen Mother’s son, the Marquis Dorset, is allowed to return from exile in France; Henry VII is named king of England and wed to Lady Elizabeth; and that George Stanley was not killed but preserved by two messengers. Each of the historical figures then describe the Tudor monarchs that followed leading up to Elizabeth I, who embodies the fruition of the promised peace in the union of that ancient Elizabeth and Henry Plantagenet.

* * *
THE LORD ADMIRAL’S PLAYERS, 1585–1603

Patron: Charles Howard, 2nd Baron Howard of Effingham, 10th Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral (1536–1624).

Venues: The Theatre playhouse (to May 1591), The Fortune playhouse (unknown), The Rose playhouse (1594), Newington Butts [aka The Playhouse playhouse], and at court (1576, 1577, 1578, 1585, 1586, 1588, 1589 (2), 1590, 1591, 1594).

Non-extant properties: 22, including Belin Dun (1594), I Caesar and Pompey (1594), Cutlack (1594), Diocletian (1594), Disguises (1594), French Doctor (1594), Galiasso (1594), I and II Godfrey of Boulogne (1594), The Love of a Grecian Lady, The Love of an English Lady (1594), The Love of a Grecian Lady (1594), Mahomet (1594), The Merchant of Emden (1594), Palamon and Arcite (1594), Philipo and Hippolito (1594), The Ranger’s Comedy (1594), The Set at Maw (1594), The Siege of London (1594), Tasso’s Melancholy (1594), The Venetian Comedy (1594), and The Wise Men of Westchester (1594).

Extant properties: 15.

The Battell of Alcazar, fought in Barbarie, betweene Sebastian king of Portugall, and Abdelmelec king of Marocco. With the death Captaine Stukeley. As it was sundrie times plaied by the Lord high Admirall his servants.
First Performance: 21 February 1592.
First Printing: 1594.
See page 255.

The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta. As it was playd before the king and queene, in his Majesties Theatre at While Hall, by her Majesties Servants at the Cock-pit.
First Performance: c.1589–90; 26 February 1592.
First Printing: 1594 (extant 1633).
See page 256.

The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth: Containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court: As it was plaide by the Queenes Maiesties Players.
First Performance: c.1594.
First Printing: 1598.
See page 270–1.

The Four Prentices of London. With the Conquest of Jerusalem. As it hath bene diverse times Acted, at the Red Bull, but the Queenes Maiesties Servants. Written by Thomas Heywood.
First Performance: 19 July 1594.
First Printing: 1615.

The old Earl of Boloigne has lost his title, so his four sons (Godfrey, Guy, Charles, Eustace) take up apprenticeships (mercer, goldsmith, haberdasher, grocer, respectively). What little wealth he has left he leaves to his daughter, Bella Franca. With their estate in shambles, Boloigne bids farewell to his children as he goes on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. With their father gone, a Captain quickly enrolls the four apprentices in a crusade led by Robert, Duke of Normandy, King William’s son. After a shipwreck, the four brothers are separated, each believing the others to be dead. Godfrey finds himself on the coast of Spain, helps the Citizen of Boloigne fight against the
Spaniards, and regains his father’s title as Earl of Boloigne. Guy is cast away in France, where he is met by the King of France and falls in love with the princess. She, too, is in love, and follows him for the rest of the action disguised as a page. Charles lands in Italy, where he kills the leader of a band of thieves and takes his place. Eustace, the youngest of the four, is cast away on the coast of Ireland.

The whole company is reunited on their way to the Holy Land, but no one recognizes the other members of their family. The four apprentices fall in love with their sister and often fight to win her love. Tancred, the County Palatine who accompanies them, is enamored of Bella Franca who has also decided to go on pilgrimage. The bulk of her dialogue is spent quelling disputes between her brothers and dismissing romantic overtures. In Jerusalem, the apprentices fight against and eventually defeat the Soldan the Babylonian and Sophy the Persian. Finally reunited with their father, they come to recognize one another and their sister. The news of King William the Conqueror’s death leads to Robert’s succession, who now must crown a king of Jerusalem. Tancred and Godfrey both decline King Robert’s offer. Guy becomes King of Jerusalem, Charles King of Cyprus, and Eustace King of Sicily. Guy is united with the French princess and Tancred with Bella Franca.

The Historie of Orlando Furioso One of the twelve Pieres of France. As it was plaid before the Queenes Maiestie.
First Performance: c.1590–92.
First Printing: 1592.
See pages 259–60.

The Honorable Histories of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay. As it was plaide by her Majesties servants. Made by Robert Greene Maister of Arts.
First Performance: 19 February 1592.
First Printing: c.1588–92.
See page 260.

The Massacre at Paris: With the Death of the Duke of Guise. As it was plaide by the right honourable the Lord high Admirall his Servants. Written by Christopher Marlow.
First Performance: 30 January 1593.
First Printing: 1594.
See pages 262–3.

A most pleasant and merie new Comedie, Intituled, A Knacke to knowe a Knave. Newlie set foorth, as it hath sundrie tymes bene played by ED. ALLEN and his Companie, with KEMPS applauded Merrimentes of the men of Goteham, in receiving the King into Goteham.
First Performance: 10 June 1592.
First Printing: 1594.

This play is structured using a double-plot wherein the King serves as its hinge. On the one hand is the mixed-class love plot of Ethenwald, an earl, and the lowly Alfrida, with whom the King is also in love. On the other is the Hexam family’s manipulation of the commonwealth’s marketplace economics, headed by the King’s own courtier, Perin. The King sees his role as a mandate to cut down abuses infecting the land. Namely, he feels he, as the head of the body
politic, is being made ill vis-á-vis the corrupt peasantry. A peasant named Honesty interjects, arguing that the King has been made ill by believing every flatterer that comes his way. Honesty, the King, and Perin debate the forensics of finding out such a flattering knave, and eventually the King charges Honesty with seeking out and presenting proof of these caterpillars. To complicate matters, Philarchus, brother to the King, has fallen out of favor with their father for some unknown act of willful disobedience. Their father thinks that the only just punishment is death, but the King gets him to settle on banishment and a small pension. After these public discussions, the King debates privately whether to take the peasant Alfrida as his mistress, and sends the Earl Ethenwald to woo in his stead.

Perin also asks for leave in order to visit his dying father, which is granted. His father, a bailiff, gives his four sons a great deal of advice on his deathbed before being scooped up by a devil and taken to hell. He implores them to use their trades to manipulate the poor and take advantage of the marketplace, highlighting the negative stereotypes of each of their disciplines (pickpocket, courtier, thief, farmer) to do so. This scene is anchored by Honesty’s observing and assessing the cyclical relationship of individuals amongst and between the middling classes drawing on, borrowing, lending, and manipulating one another. Honesty encounters Piers Plowman, who reports that a mysterious farmer (Walter, Perin’s brother) has been buying up all the corn and selling it overseas (to the enemy, supposedly the French), starving out the English commoners. Overhearing their conversation, Dunston and Perin also begin buying up corn. Men of Goteham petition the King to brew their own ale rather than buy it from overseas, as it has become too expensive, which he allows, undermining that particular monopoly. Honesty is still out searching for evidence of dishonest counsellors. He encourages a priest (Perin’s other brother) to give some money to a beggar, to no avail. The priest then runs into a neighbor he has no time for as he is off to see a corn farm ill-gotten through usury.

Not unexpectedly, Ethenwald falls in love with Alfrida in his attempts to woo her for the King; the King observes his attempt in disguise. Ethenwald feigns illness in order to do his duty, but ultimately can’t help himself. He confesses his love to Alfrida and gets her father’s permission for her hand. Ethenwald returns to his King and lies about the beauty of Alfrida in order to soften the blow that he has married her. Perin reveals the lie to the king (which he already knows). The King visits Ethenwald at his home, and Ethenwald is terrified that he will attempt to cuckold him. He is so afeared that he has Alfrida and the kitchen maid Kate swap places. Kate’s accent and manners give her away immediately. Alfrida begs the King’s pardon, but is rejected; Ethenwald is sentenced to death. Dunston and a devil attempt to persuade the King to revise his sentence. Nothing seems to assuage him until he sees Alfrida, compelling him to pardon the lovers. Honesty returns, realizing his fool’s errand, but brings in all of the Hexam brothers as proof of his attempt. The farmer is indicted of attempting to buy up all the corn from under the King, the priest of accruing multiple monopolies to undo the commonwealth’s financial stability, Cuthbert for stockpiling corn and locking out the local marketplace, and Perin for levying great sums in the name of the King to finance his brothers’ ends. Honesty is rewarded by the King for his valiant attempt and for revealing the knaves around him.

The Pleasant Historie of the two angry women of Abington. With the humorous mirthe of Dick Coomes and Nicholas Proverbes, two Servingmen. As it was lately playde by the right Honorable the Earle of Nottingham, Lord high Admirall, his Servants. By Henry Porter Gent.
First Performance: c.1594–8.
First Printing: 1599.
After a dinner party at the house of Master Barnes, his wife and that of Master Goursey have an unaccountable falling out. The ruffled tempers of the ladies are not soothed by a game of backgammon at which the women insist upon playing for unnecessarily high stakes. Meanwhile, the sons of the families, Philip and and Francis, play one another at bowls. Their game is friendly enough, though Philip loses heavily; but Francis does not take kindly to being teased by some of the servants. Francis loses his temper but is assuaged by Philip who accompanies him home. Later the same afternoon Master Barnes in his garden reproves his wife for her behavior towards their guests, making matters worse. Master Barnes ceases reproving her further and seeks a remedy by arranging a marriage between their daughter Mall and Francis Goursey. When Mall is consulted, she is not only disposed but eager. Master Barnes writes a letter to his friend Master Goursey, sends it by his old servant Nicholas, who speaks nothing but aphorisms and proverbs. Meanwhile, at the Gourseys’ house, the wife pouts. Nicholas soon arrives with the letter, followed by an eager Philip, and father and friend easily agree. But Mistress Goursey, in anger, snatches the letter from her husband, determined to cross the proposed match. Accordingly, she calls Dick Coomes, her servant, sees to it that he is armed, and sets out for the Barneses’ house.

Francis soon finds Mall, who is wooed and won in a very little time. They are interrupted, however, by Mistress Barnes, who also opposes the match vigorously. Soon her husband arrives and vainly tries to persuade her, and then Mistress Goursey appears with Coomes. While the wives squabble (with the husbands and the butler Hodge joining in), Philip assists his friend and his sister to slip away separately, appointing as their meeting place the coney-green in a neighboring field, whence they can elope to Oxford. Mall finds her way to the warren without mishap, but before Francis can join her, Mistress Barnes apprehends her daughter for a moment before she manages to run away. Francis likewise narrowly escapes being caught by his mother and Coomes. Philip makes his way to the coney-burrow to assist the runaways, and, failing to find them, halloos to them. In the same field, however, are Sir Ralph Smith and his man Will, who have been hunting. They answer Philip’s calls. Eventually both households are enlisted in the search, but confusion reigns in the darkness of night. Fed up, the husbands hatch a new plan to settle the quarrel between their spouses.

When both the angry women and their servants are drawn together by the torch which Mistress Barnes still carries with her, the wives rail at each other and repeat their charges of misconduct. The husbands pretend to believe them and prepare to duel. Their swords drawn, Francis, Philip, Coomes, Will, and Hodge all rush in to part them, and the wives at last come to their senses. The sons at last effect a reconciliation, and the two angry women confess that their hate grew only from suspicion and no other cause. They join hands and cry, embrace and kiss, and end their quarrel. Meanwhile, wandering in the dark, Mall has met Sir Ralph Smith, told him the whole story of her love for Francis and the opposition of their mothers, and the old knight, who approves of the match, promises to aid the young couple in every way he can. When Sir Ralph and Mall at last find the others, the old squire weds them, and invites all to be his guests at dinner after their long night’s labor.

*The Second Part of The bloody Conquests of mighty Tamburlaine. With this impassionate fury, for the death of his Lady and love, Faire Zenocrate: his fourme of exhortation and discipline to his three sons, and the maner of his own death.*

First Performance: 1588.
First Printing: 1590.
Tamburlaine grooms his sons to continue his world domination as he continues to conquer his neighboring kingdoms. His oldest son, Calyphas, preferring to stay by his mother’s side and not risk death, incurs Tamburlaine’s wrath. Meanwhile, the son of Bajazeth, Callapine, escapes from Tamburlaine’s jail and gathers a group of tributary kings to his side, planning to avenge his father. Tamburlaine’s wife, Zenocrate, abruptly dies; he burns down the city as a tribute to her and carries the body on campaign. Callapine and Tamburlaine meet in battle, where Tamburlaine is victorious. Finding Calyphas remained in his tent during the battle, Tamburlaine kills his son in anger. Tamburlaine then forces the defeated kings to pull his chariot to his next battlefield. Upon reaching Babylon, Tamburlaine displays further acts of extravagant savagery. When the Governor of the city attempts to save his life in return for revealing the city treasury, Tamburlaine has him hung from the city walls and orders his men to shoot him to death. He orders the inhabitants—men, women, and children—bound and thrown into a nearby lake. Lastly, Tamburlaine scornfully burns a copy of the Qur'an and claims to be greater than God. In the final act, he is struck ill but manages to defeat one more foe before he dies. He bids his remaining sons to conquer the remainder of the earth as he departs life.

_The Spanish Tragedie, Containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo. Newly corrected and amended of such grosse faults as passed in the first impression._
First Performance: c.1584–89; 23 February 1592.
First Printing: 1592.
See pages 266–7.

_Tamburllaine the Great. Who, from a Scythian Shephearde, by his care and wonderfull Conquests became a most puissant and mightye Monarque. And (for his tyranny, and terrors in Warre) was tearmed, The Scourge of God. Devided into two Tragicall Discourses, as they were sundrie times shewed upon Stages in the Cite of London. By the right honorable the Lord Admyrall, his Servants. Now first, and newlie published._
First Performance: 1587.
First Printing: 1590.

The Persian emperor, Mycetes, dispatches troops to dispose of Tamburlaine, a Scythian shepherd and nomadic bandit. Mycetes’ brother, Cosroe, plots to overthrow the emperor and assume the throne. Meanwhile, in Scythia, Tamburlaine woos, captures, rapes and wins Zenocrate, the daughter of the Egyptian king. Confronted by Mycetes’ soldiers, Tamburlaine persuades first the soldiers and then Cosroe to join him in a fight against Mycetes. Although he promises Cosroe the Persian throne, Tamburlaine reneges on this promise and, after defeating Mycetes, takes personal control of the Persian Empire. Now a powerful figure, Tamburlaine turns his attention to Bajazeth, Emperor of the Turks. He defeats Bajazeth and his tributary kings, capturing the Emperor and his wife Zabina. The victorious Tamburlaine keeps the defeated ruler in a cage and feeds him scraps from his table, releasing Bajazeth only to use him as a footstool. Bajazeth later kills himself onstage by bashing his head against the bars upon hearing of Tamburlaine’s next victory; Upon finding his body, Zabina does likewise. After conquering Africa and naming himself emperor of that continent, Tamburlaine sets his eyes on Damascus, placing the Egyptian Sultan, his father-in-law, directly in his path. Zenocrate pleads with her husband to spare her father. He complies, instead making the Sultan a tributary king. The play ends with the wedding
of Zenocrate and Tamburlaine, and the crowning of the former as Empress of Persia.

The Tragicall History of D. Faustus. As it hath bene acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Nottingham his Servants. Written by Ch. Marl.
First Performance: c.1588–94; October 1594.
First Printing: 1604.

Doctor Faustus, a talented German scholar who decries the limits of human knowledge, believes that he has learned all that can be learned by conventional means. Searching for his next curriculum, two fellow scholars, Valdes and Cornelius, teach him the fundamentals of black magic. Eventually, Faustus summons the devil Mephistopheles and the terms of their pact are agreed upon: in return for his immortal soul, Faustus will be granted twenty-four years of power, with Mephistopheles as his servant. Faustus, after some time, curses Mephistopheles for causing him to lose any prospect of heaven. He finds he can torment the devil by mentioning the name of deity. Beelzebub and Mephistopheles return to intimidate him, and he agrees to think of God no more. Riding in a chariot drawn by dragons, Faustus has explored the heavens and earth and flies to Rome where the feast honoring St. Peter is to be celebrated. Faustus and Mephistopheles make themselves invisible and play a number of tricks before leaving. Faustus returns home where his ill-gotten knowledge and abilities gain him renown. At the court of Charles V, Faustus delights the emperor with illusions and humiliates a knight. Meanwhile, Robin the Clown, having found one of Faustus’ books, has learned some magic of his own.

Faustus continues to use his powers to swindle and humiliate anyone he pleases. Several of his victims, together with Robin the Clown, go to the court of the duke in order to get some justice done, if possible. Faustus wins over the duke and duchess with petty illusions, and toys with Robin. Time is running out for Faustus, however. His servant Wagner suggests that his master is preparing for death by feasting and drinking the time away with other scholars. He summons the appearance of Helen of Troy so she can give him comfort during his remaining time. Eventually, Faustus reveals to his friends that he is a damned soul and that his powers came at a high price. They leave him to his fate. Mephistopheles taunts Faustus, and Faustus blames him for his damnation. The devil gladly takes credit. The clock strikes eleven, and Faustus’s final monologue reveals some measure of fear and regret. At midnight, the devils enter as Faustus begs God for mercy; he is dragged down to hell. The Chorus emerges to reveal that Faustus is gone, and all his great potential has been wasted.

Two Lamentable Tragedies. The one, of the murther of Maister Beech a Chaundler in Thames-streete, and his boye, done by Thomas Merry. The other of a young childe murthered in a Wood by two Ruffians, with the consent of his Vncle. By Rob. Yarington.
First Performance: c.1594–99.
First Printing: 1601.

Yarington’s play cuts back and forth between two stories of kin-slaying and infanticide. Homicide and Avarice are struggling to find folks to corrupt, so together with Covetousness that plan to set a trap for the audience. Truth, overhearing, is the orchestrator of the play, providing two examples to help protect us, the audience, from the vices’ trap. Merry, a tapster, is jealous of his neighbor, Beech’s, comparable wealth and contentment. Rachel, Merry’s sister, and his man Harry, tend the tavern while he drinks away his sorrows. Rachel leaves for her second job, as a
servant in the household of Lord Pandino and Lady Armenia, who on their deathbed are making arrangements to leave the care of their son, Pertillo, to his younger brother Fallerio, his wife Sostrasto, and their son, Allenso. After his uncle and aunt pass away, Allenso realizes his father’s plot to kill his orphaned cousin and take his inheritance. He attempts to counsel his father, but Fallerio threatens to cut out his tongue. Meanwhile, Merry invites Beech (“a little man of black complexion”) over for a drink in order to stab him fifteen times with his cheese knife—a murder so messy he has to wipe his face clear of the blood splatter. Unable to condone her brother nor turn him in, Rachel takes in Beech’s orphaned servant boy, Thomas Winchester. The act ends with Avarice and Homicide, covered in blood, looking forward to further deaths.

Rachel and Merry are afraid Beech’s boy knows too much. Merry attempts to kill Thomas by hitting him in the head six times, and on the seventh leaving the hammer imbedded in the boy’s skull. A maid looking into the shop to buy bread hears the groaning boy just as Beech makes his escape. Beech’s landlord, Loney, is called to the seen by multiple neighbors aroused by the noise; All suspect that Beech is the culprit. Merry finds Rachel asks her to help him dig up and cut up Beech’s body in order to put half the pieces in a ditch and the other into the Thames. Rachel is horrified but agrees to help. Meanwhile, Fallerio admits to himself that he has been infected with a desire for kin-killing despite his honest shows, and so hires two murders/ruffians to kill Pertillo under the guise of an escort to take him to university. While one murderer quibbles with his conscience and debates saving the boy, the other seems to have no issues with the killing of kin or children for that matter, especially when it is worth four hundred marks of gold. Allenso wants to go with his cousin to university, but his father’s rebuffs make him suspicious. Compelled by kinship and his current spotless piety, he plans to follow Pertillo. The act closes on questions of moral complicity.

As Merry and Rachel cut up the body and then cover up their tracks, Rachel begins to fear for her soul. In the woods, the second murderer continues to struggle with his conscience. He gives the first murderer all his money if he will spare the boy. The first refuses and they duel. Pertillo interrupts and the ruffians and is slain before the two die of their own wounds. Not far behind, the Duke of Padua and his hunting party are interrupted by Allenso, who is looking for the way to Padua. They agree to help and just as they begin the journey they encounter the dead bodies. The troop assume this was all Allenso’s doing. The virtuous dying murderer clears his name, but the Duke mets out a severe penalty for his family: Fallerio is to be killed, his kin dispossessed, and his wife and son left destitute. Allenso begs for mercy on his father’s life, to no avail. Murder and Covetousness close the scene, surfeit with the special delicacy of kin-killing.

As Merry and Rachel have been dealing with the bodies, their boy Harry Williams has run off with a companion, Cowley, beleaguered by knowing the awful truth about his employers. Two watermen on their way to pick up their boats trip over a bag of body parts, which they decide to take to Lambert Hill where there has been word of missing people. They arrive in time to interrupt a meeting of Loney’s tenants asking for news of the injured boy (not yet dead!) and if the criminals have been caught. Loney is able to identify the body parts as Beech. He attempts to give the watermen money for their efforts, but they reject it. Then a gentleman and his porter arrive with the rest of the body parts, recovered by his dog sniffing around a ditch on their estate. The community organizes a search party to seek out the psalter who purchased the body bag. He is brought to Loney and confuse he sold it to a servant maid. The neighbors use the psalter in a lineup of local maids, but Rachel is not identified. Merry is overjoyed, but Rachel begs him to repent before Harry turns them both in. In fact, Cowley has finally convinced him to confess to the authorities. Meanwhile, Sostrata is in tears over her missing son and a lack of word at her
nephew’s arrival at university. This so annoys Fallerio that he confesses everything to her, just before Allenso returns to tell his mother all that has happened, including Pertillo’s death. She swoons and dies instantly. Afraid for his father’s life, Allenso has procured a disguise and convinces his father to let him bare the punishment. Fallerio accepts and disguises himself as a shepherd. Allenso is arrested as his father, who, struck by guilt, follows the guard to court for his trial. On the street a constable, two watchmen, and a halberd discuss their disbelief that the tapster Merry could be such a criminal. These men charged with dragging him and Rachel from their beds for murder. Once the siblings are captured, Truth gives us a brief overview of their trial results: Merry is to be hung for his crimes, Rachel for her complicity, as so was Harry except for his ability to read, so he is branded only.

In the last act, Fallerio exposes his son’s counterfeit. Father and son forgive one another, but are still condemned to die by the Duke. Merry attempts to free his sister, but to no avail. Merry and Rachel are hung onstage. Rachel is provided with a funeral by the state, but Merry’s body is sent to be displayed in chains at Mile-End Green. In councilior speeches directed to “Eliza,” Truth, Homicide, and Covetousness close the action of the play.


First Performance: c.1587–94.
First Printing: 1594.

Rome’s senators are stuck in a heated debate over whom should lead their forces against the lord of Asia, Mithridates: old Marius, a life-time senator with some commander experience but immense loyalty to the republic; or Scilla, youthful, immensely successful current general of the Roman armies but whose motivations loyal troops suggest a threat to Rome. After some debate, the senate decides the job is for Marius, but not before Scilla interrupts, refusing to give up his generalship. Even Antony’s sugared words can’t assuage him. After witnessing the debacle at the capitol, their is some debate amongst the troops before deciding to side with Scilla rather than Rome. Scilla would rather wage a civil war with Marius rather than let him tackle Asia. A contingency of senators meets with Scilla to try to convince him otherwise, to no avail. Scilla defeats and beheads the King of Pontus, convincing Pompey (the current head of the senate) to let him lead the Asia campaign. Marius’ followers are stripped of their titles and condemned as traitors. Hearing of his change in fortune, Marius can’t bring himself to give up the campaign although he foresees his own death. His son, Marius the Younger, rallies a troop of men and lords together, planning to sack unthankful Rome. A letter from tribune Cinna notifies Scilla that tributary states are beginning to rally around young Marius. Scilla’s own loyal tributaries also rally and revolt against Rome.

Blaming Cinna, silver tongued Antony appeals to Marius’ rebelling citizens, but the Roman nobles decide to capture and bring old Marius back for trial. Marius is caught by would-be Minturnian assassins, but his noble resolution shakes their resolve. They give the job to Pedro, a Frenchman whose father and friends were slain by Marius. Despite being paid forty crowns, he sees no point in killing the old man, never mind that the old man’s sleep-talking freaks him out. The remaining assassins are convinced Marius is protected by the gods and decide to befriend him instead. Scilla considers his increasing successes in Asia and establishes a new military goal: to claim the crown of Pontus for himself and use his hostages to negotiate for troops and supplies.
to take Rome. Meanwhile, Marius climbs the Numidian mountains, aided by Echo and living on roots. Father and son are reunited on the mount, and they decide to sail to Herturia to gather Germans and Tuscans to scourge Rome. They successfully sack the capitol, but the mercenaries begin killing off senators rather than taking captives. Antony makes a speedy escape. Old Marius takes the throne of state for himself, unelected—precisely what was feared of Scilla—and banishes Scilla and his allies as traitors, having his house burnt to the ground. Scilla’s wife, Cornelia, and daughter, Fuluia, are captured while trying to escape; they are granted two days reprieve for prayer before their deaths, manacled in the meantime.

Young Marius sends three soldiers out in search for Antony, but they are abetted by a drunken clown. Antony nearly talks his way out of capture until a captain enters, immediately stabbing and killing him. In the lengthy stage battle for Rome, Scilla wins and it would seem there is no stopping him. He blames the Roman citizens for the bloodshed, and Carbo the scholar is made a scapegoat: he is killed and his body left for ravens. Young Marius enters to incite another battle where all three factions—Marius’ Roman troops, the citizens, and Scilla’s barbarian troops—go at it again, during which Lucretius commits public suicide. Scilla wins yet again, killing Marius and taking the throne. Pompey confronts Scilla with his tyranny. Scilla takes a walk through Rome in disguise, encountering two burghers, and he doesn’t like what he hears. He re-confronts Pompey, his wife, and daughter before committing suicide. The play ends with a funeral for Scilla, nobly interred, wherein his wife and daughter accompany the hearse dressed in black.

* * *

THE LORD PEMBROKE’S PLAYERS, 1591–1601
Venues: The Swan playhouse (1597), The Theatre playhouse (unknown) and at court (1592, 1593).
Non-extant properties: 2, including The Dead Man’s Fortune (c.1590), for which there does exist a platt of the play, and The Isle of Dogs (1597).
Extant properties: 8.

The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragicall end of the proud Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Jacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorkes first claime unto the Crowne.
First Performance: c.1591–94.
First Printing: 1594.

King Henry VI of England has just married the young Margaret of Anjou. Unbeknownst to him, Margaret is the protégée and lover of William de la Pole, 4th Earl of Suffolk, who aims to influence the king through her. Their main impediment is the Lord Protector, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, popular with the people and trusted by the King. Gloucester’s wife, however, also has designs on the throne, and has been led by an agent of Suffolk to dabble in necromancy. When she seeks out prophecies through dark magic, she is interrupted and arrested by Suffolk’s men. She is banished from court, to the embarrassment of Gloucester. Suffolk then conspires with Cardinal Beaufort and the Duke of Somerset to finalize Gloucester’s ruin. Suffolk accuses
Gloucester of treason and has him imprisoned, but before Gloucester can be tried, Suffolk sends two assassins to kill him. Meanwhile, Richard, 3rd Duke of York, reveals to the earls of Salisbury and Warwick his own claim to the throne, and they pledge to support him.

Suffolk is banished for his role in Gloucester’s death, whilst Winchester contracts a fever and dies. Margaret, horrified at Suffolk’s banishment, vows to ensure his return. He is killed by pirates shortly after leaving England, and his head sent back to the distraught Margaret. Meanwhile, York has been appointed commander of an army but the King in order to suppress a revolt in Ireland. Before leaving, York enlists a former officer of his, Jack Cade, to stage a popular revolt in order to ascertain whether the common people would support York should he make an open move for power. At first the rebellion is successful, and Cade sets himself up as Mayor of London. His rebellion is put down when Lord Clifford (a supporter of the King) persuades the common people to abandon the cause. Cade is killed several days later by Alexander Iden, a Kentish gentleman, into whose garden he climbs looking for food.

York returns to England with his army, claiming that he intends to protect the King from the duplicitous Somerset. York vows to disband his forces if Somerset is arrested and charged with treason. Buckingham swears that Somerset is already a prisoner in the Tower, but when Somerset enters (“at liberty”) accompanied by the Queen, York holds Buckingham’s vow to be broken. York then announces his claim to the throne with lineal and material support from his sons, Edward and Richard. The English nobility take sides, some supporting the House of York, others supporting the King and the House of Lancaster. A battle is fought at St. Albans in which the Duke of Somerset is killed by Richard, and Lord Clifford by York. With the battle lost, Margaret persuades the distraught King to flee the battlefield and head to London. She is joined by Young Clifford, who vows revenge on the Yorkists for the death of his father. The play ends with York, Edward, Richard, Warwick, and Salisbury setting out in pursuit of Henry, Margaret, and Clifford.

The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As it was Plaide by the Right Honorable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke, and Earle of Sussex their Servants.
First Performance: 24 January 1594.
First Printing: 1594.
See page 263.

A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew. As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrook his servants.
First Performance: c.August 1592; 10 June 1594.
First Printing: 1594.

A nobleman, fresh from the hunt with his dogs, stumbles upon a sleeping man named Slie, who has just been tossed out of a tavern for drunkenness. In the hopes of recuperating him, the nobleman orders that Slie be conveyed to the house, dressed in fine garments, and surrounded by a banquet, music, and servants, one of which will be the nobleman in disguise, Simon. Players arrive, offering either a tragedy, or a “commodity” called The Taming of a Shrew. Awaking Slie for the performance, Simon also informs him that the lady (one of the boy actors in disguise) has long mourned her husband’s absence. Slie is distracted from his hopes to go to bed when the play, and its fool, is announced.

Polidor welcomes his friend Aurelius to Athens, having left his father’s court in Cestus.
At Polidor’s, a man named Alfonso passes by with his three daughters Kate, Phylema, and Emelia. Aurelius is struck by their beauty, and Polidor confesses he has long loved the youngest in vain, because Alfonso has sworn that the oldest must be espoused first. A large dowry is also at stake. Aurelius fancies the second daughter, and Polidor is glad they are not competing. Furthermore, he knows of a possible match for the eldest, a man named Ferando. Aurelius switches identity and clothes with his servant Valeria so that he can present himself as a merchant’s son on business. Ferando and his man Saunders arrive to court Kate, about which he had already discussed with Alfonso, and announces the wedding can be tomorrow. While Kate protests aloud, in an aside to herself she confesses contentment in marrying Ferando. Polidor’s boy-servant Catapie wants to deliver a happy message to Ferando, but Saunders has his own for Polidor, who now enters with Aurelius and Valeria. Saunders, on behalf of Ferando, invites Polidor to tomorrow’s wedding. Aurelius sends Valeria to infiltrate Alfonso’s house as a music tutor in order to steal the sisters away. Soon Alfonso is thanking Polidor for sending the musician, and Polidor presents Aurelius as a merchant’s son. He is welcomed heartily. Slie briefly interrupts the play, wondering when the fool will reappear and calling for more drink.

The next day, Kate plays a bit of the lute but goes apoplectic at Valeria’s small criticism, threatening to hit him on the head with the instrument. The other boys continue their own courtships: Polidor exudes praises for Emelia, and Aurelius brags about his travels and possessions to Phylena. Ferando arrives late and ill-dressed the next day. After some conflict with his would-be father in law, all head to the church. Fernando insists they must leave immediately after and forego the sumptuous feasts prepared. Saunders and other servants prepare for the couple, but Ferando pitches a fit and beats the servants. He later confesses his plan is to deprive Kate of food and sleep. Meanwhile, Aurelius has found a merchant, Phylotus, to play his father in front of Alfonso. The ruse works and the two "fathers" talk dowry, scheduling the wedding for the next day. Ferando is tormenting Kate by rejecting a tailor’s work on clothing for her, so they attend her sisters’ weddings tomorrow in plainer garments. Kate tries to correct him about the time, but he pitches a fit and says they will go nowhere as long as she keeps "crossing" him in plainer dress. On their way back, Ferando makes Kate agree with his announcements about sun and moon when they encounter the Duke of Cestus, Aurelius’ real father, on the road. After the weddings, Alfonso wonders what kept Ferando and Kate away. The Duke shows up and it seems that the disguised servants will be made to take the blame. Slie blurs theater with reality when he frets about low people being sent to prison. He calls for more liquor and falls asleep. The Duke steams, but after much pleading he relents. The nobleman calls his servants to carry the sleeping Slie, seemingly un-reformable, back to the gutter.

After supper, Ferando inquires how they can spend their time until bed. Aurelius proposes a test of their wives. After some jibes at his unlikelihood of winning the bet, Ferando laughs off the triviality of a hundred pounds and raises the ante to five hundred marks each. Valeria is sent to summon Philema, but he is rejected. Polidor sends for his wife, and is also rejected. Kate, on the other hand, arrives obediently, and when commanded, stomps on her own cap and then drags in her own sisters. Kate spouts the sexist party line with all the standard biblical authorizations on wifely duty, to shrewish responses from her sisters. Alfonso is so bowled over he throws in another hundred pounds. Ferando and Kate take off for the night.

Enclosing the framing device, Slie’s body is deposited outside the same tavern to be awoken by the tapster. He assumes it was all a dream, but a good one. The tapster warns him that he’d better get home: his wife will be having a fit. The play ends with Sly going off to apply the lessons learned to his own shrew of a wife, accompanied by the tapster to hear his dream.
The second Part of Henry the Sixth, with the death of the Good Duke Humfrey.
First Performance: c.1591–2.
First Printing: 1623.

Picking up from the closing action of first in William Shakespeare’s version the tetralogy, the Earl of Suffolk introduces Margaret of Anjou to her new husband (married via proxy) King Henry VI of England. Pleased, the King responds by elevating him from an earl to a duke. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester is unhappy with Margaret’s lack of dowry, and much less with Henry giving up two fiefs to France in the process. Suffolk sets plots into motion against Gloucester, who is perhaps the only honest supporter of the King at this point; namely, entrapping Gloucester’s wife to be arrested for witchcraft. Meanwhile, Richard, 3rd Duke of York, lurks in the background, convinced of his legitimate claim to Henry’s throne. Gloucester is also eventually arrested on charges invented by his enemies. These he manages to fend off, but the King still orders that he go to trial. During this process, York is sent to Ireland to quell a revolt.

While in Ireland, York will leave it to a henchman, Jack Cade, to muster support among the populace for York to depose Henry. If Cade succeeds, York has an army at his back to use against Henry when he returns from Ireland. In the meantime, Gloucester is murdered at Suffolk’s behest. Henry in turn banishes Suffolk under heavy pressure from the populace. Margaret, who has been having an affair with Suffolk, pleads on his behalf to no avail. Suffolk is en route to France when he is captured by pirates and summarily put to death. Cade’s rebellion is at a standstill, and he marches on London, and the King retreats. Buckingham, however, confronts Cade’s force with an army and pardons to all who abandon the rebellion. Cade must now flee, and after a five-day flight without food, is killed while foraging in a private garden. In the wake of this failed uprising, York returns from Ireland and demands that the King arrest Somerset before his men lay down their arms. The King does so, but Margaret frees him just as quickly, leading York to declare war on King Henry; York will take the crown by force if necessary. At the Battle of St. Albans, Richard, son of York, slays Somerset. The Yorkists then set out in pursuit of the fleeing King and Queen Margaret.

The Taming of the Shrew.
First Performance: c.1590–96.
First Printing: 1623.

In the English countryside, a poor tinker named Christopher Sly becomes the target of a prank by a local lord. Finding him drunk in the street, the lord has his men take Sly to his manor, dress him in his finery, and treat him as a lord. Once Sly recovers, he initially refuses to accept the men’s story until he hears of his “wife,” a pageboy dressed in women’s clothing. Sly wants to be left alone with his wife, but the servants tell him that a troupe of actors has arrived to present a play. This play-within-a-play makes up the rest of the narrative.

Newly arrived to Padua to attend university is a rich young man named Lucentio with his servants, Tranio and Biondello. His priorities change when he sees Bianca. There are two problems: first, Bianca already has two suitors, Gremio and Hortensio; second, Bianca’s father, Baptista Minola, has declared that no one may court Bianca until her older sister, Katherine, is married. Lucentio and Hortensio disguise themselves as tutors to court Bianca in disguise. Licentious plan has a second prong: Tranio dresses up as Lucentio in order to negotiate with
Baptista. Hortensia’s plan also has a supplement: he convinces his friend Petruchio, newly arrived from Verona, to court Katherine for the wealth of her dowry. Petruchio attempts to court Katherine, telling her father he will wed her the next Sunday. Petruchio is late to his own wedding, and when he does arrive, he is dressed in a ridiculous outfit and rides on a broken-down horse. After the wedding, Petruchio forces Katherine to leave for his country house before the feast, telling all in earshot that she is now his property and that he may do with her as he pleases. Once they reach his country house, Petruchio continues the process of “taming” Katherine by keeping her from eating or sleeping for several days and throwing away new clothes in front of her.

In Padua, Lucentio wins Bianca’s heart by wooing her with a Latin translation that declares his love. Hortensio makes the same attempt with a music lesson but to no avail. Hortensio resolves to marry a wealthy widow instead. Tranio secures Baptista’s approval for Lucentio to marry Bianca by proposing a huge sum of money to lavish upon her. Baptista agrees but says that he must have this sum confirmed by Lucentio’s father before the marriage can take place. Tranio and Lucentio, find an old man to play the role of Lucentio’s father, but eventually Lucentio and Bianca decide to circumvent the complex situation by just eloping. It is at this time that Katherine and Petruchio, on the road to Padua again, run into Licentious actual father, Vincentio. In a final act of taming, Petruchio commands Katherine to say that the sun is the moon and that the old man is really a beautiful young maiden. She does so with little dissent. In Padua, Vincentio is shocked to find Tranio masquerading as Lucentio, but Bianca and Lucentio return in time from their private wedding to spare the servant. Vincentio and Baptista agree to the nuptuals. As the wedding feast for all three couples, the new-made husbands stage a contest to see which of their wives will obey first when summoned. Everyone expects Lucentio to win. Bianca, however, sends a message back refusing to obey, while Katherine comes immediately. The others acknowledge that Petruchio has won an astonishing victory, while Katherine and Petruchio leave the banquet to go to bed and consulate their marriage.

The third Part of Henry the Sixt, with the death of the Duke of Yorke.
First Performance: c.1591–2.
First Printing: 1623.

In the wake of their victory at St. Albans, York now has the crown of England. King Henry arranges for a parley and presents an offer to York: Henry will rule England until his death, with ascension at that time passing to the house of York. York agrees, but this infuriates Queen Margaret as she insists the Prince of Wales, her son, will be the next king. At Sandal Castle, Margaret leads an army that defeats the Yorkists, killing the Duke of York and his youngest son, Rutland. A rally by the Yorkists, however, leads to Margaret and Henry fleeing to France and Scotland, respectively. Edward, eldest son of York, assumes the title of King of England. Henry secretly returns to England, where he is captured by Edward and put in the Tower. Margaret, meanwhile, is petitioning the King of France to come to Henry’s aid. However, Warwick enters the scene by trying to broker a marriage between Edward and the King Lewis’s sister-in-law, Bona. In so doing, the French king temporarily lends his allegiance to Edward, only to revoke it when word comes that Edward has hastily wed a woman he fancies, Lady Grey. Warwick, also affronted by the betrayal of his mission, joins forces with Margaret as well. Meanwhile, back in England, further dissension is sown between the York brothers. Richard seeks the throne for himself, and George, Duke of Clarence, is disgruntled with his own lot.
Clarence ends up defecting to Margaret’s side with Warwick and the French forces. Warwick, however, manages to capture Edward before the major combat begins, thus temporarily restoring Henry to the throne. But Richard rescues Edward and gathers a force to meet Warwick. Clarence rejoins his brothers as well, and at Barnet and Tewkesbury Warwick is defeated and slain by Edward. Though the French troops attempt to rally, Margaret and the Prince of Wales are captured. The sons of York slay the Prince, but Edward grants mercy to Margaret. Anticipating Edward’s further mercy to Henry, Richard pays a visit to the Tower the old Lancastrian king is being held. When Henry foretells Richard’s bloody future, Richard kills him. Edward now holds the throne as King Edward IV, but Richard still plots to usurp the crown for himself.

The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the Second, King of England: with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer: As it was sundrie times publiquely acted in the honourable city of London, by the right honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his Servants. Written by Chri. Marlow Gent.
First Performance: c.1592–3.
First Printing: 1594.

The play telescopes most of Edward II’s reign into a single narrative, beginning with the recall of his favorite, Piers Gaveston, from exile and ending with his son, Edward III, executing Mortimer Junior for the king’s murder. Upon Gaveston’s re-entry into the country, Edward gives him titles, access to the royal treasury, and the option of a personal protection detail. Although Gaveston himself is not of noble birth, he maintains that he is better than common people because he craves pleasing shows including Italian masques, music, and poetry. However much Gaveston pleases the King, however, he finds scant favour from the nobles, who are soon clamoring for Gaveston’s exile. Edward is forced to agree to this and banishes Gaveston to Ireland, but Isabella of France, the Queen, who still hopes for his favour, persuades Mortimer to argue for his recall, though only so that he may be more conveniently murdered. The nobles accordingly soon find an excuse to turn on Gaveston again, and eventually capture and execute him. Edward in turn executes two of the nobles who persecuted Gaveston, Warwick and Lancaster.

Edward now seeks comfort in a new favorite, Spencer, decisively alienating Isabella. In response, she takes Mortimer as a lover and travels to France with her son in search of allies. France, however, will not help the Queen and refuses to give her arms. She does manage some aid from Sir John of Hainault. Edward is nothing like the soldier his father was and is soon out-generated and so takes refuge in Neath Abbey. His location is betrayed by a mower, who emblematically carries a scythe. Both Spencer and his father are executed, and the King himself is taken to Kenilworth. After having initially renounced his cause, Edward’s brother Edmund, Earl of Kent, now tries to help him but realizes too late the power the young Mortimer now has. Arrested for approaching the imprisoned Edward, Edmund is taken to court, where Mortimer, Isabella, and the young Edward III preside. Claiming he is a threat to the throne, Edmund is executed by Mortimer despite the pleading of Edward III.

The imprisoned King is then taken to Berkeley Castle, kept under guard by a man named Lightborn. Despite knowing that Lightborn is there to kill him, Edward asks him to stay by his side. Lightborn, realizing that the King will not fall for deception, kills him outright. Maltravers and Gurney witness this before Gurney kills Lightborn to keep his silence. Later, however, Gurney flees, and Mortimer sends Maltravers after him, fearing betrayal. Isabella arrives to warn Mortimer that her son, Edward III, has discovered their plot against his father and their affair.
Before they can plan accordingly, her son arrives with attendants and other lords, arresting Mortimer. He tells Isabella not to weep for him. The Queen begs her son to show Mortimer mercy, but he refuses. Edward III then orders Mortimer’s death and his mother’s imprisonment, and the play ends with him taking the throne.

*The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke, as it was sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his Servants.*

First Performance: c.1592–5.
First Printing: 1595, octavo.
See pages 279–80.