IMAGINING HENRY VIII:  
CULTURAL MEMORY AND THE TUDOR KING, 1535-1625

DISSERTATION

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By

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Tudor and early-Stuart writers refashioned the posthumous reputation of King Henry VIII during the reigns of Henry’s royal successors in response to ongoing debate over the interconnected themes of English religious and national identity. Henry’s legacy as a potential supporter of these notions was ambivalent owing to the shifting policies in religious affairs that he displayed during his own lifetime. This ambivalence enabled writers to manipulate Henry into either a partisan supporter or strong opponent of competing religious and political ideologies after his death. By employing an interdisciplinary methodology encompassing archival research and the study of early printed materials, this study analyzes literature written about Henry in its political and historical contexts. It redresses our present lack of knowledge of how Henry acquired his modern-day status as one of England’s most memorable and recognizable monarchs.

From the publication of the first complete English Bible in 1535 to the death of James I in 1625, authors manipulated Henry VIII from widely divergent perspectives and agendas. In the process, they shaped his cultural presence by arguing about his relevance to disputes over the future of the nation’s religious and political affairs. Counselors and propagandists in and around the royal court flattered both Henry and his successors in order to obtain patronage and shape the direction of policy. They frequently reminded the
Crown that Henry had begun an evangelical Protestant Reformation that needed to be carried through to completion. They envisioned the completion of religious change according to the pattern of Henry’s program, even when, as was often the case, Henry himself had not desired additional changes. Following the return to Roman Catholicism during the reign of Queen Mary I, counselors took a slightly different approach, using Henry’s example to instruct the queen about what not to do. Following the return to Protestantism under Queen Elizabeth I, Catholic opponents continued to employ Henry’s reputation as a benchmark for their own agenda for English Christianity. Their highly biased and semi-fictional prose histories of England’s break from the Church of Rome contain the most virulent criticism of Henry VIII to appear during the early modern era. Contrary to those who would flatter Henry’s memory, they condemn him as a violent and lustful tyrant and reject Queen Elizabeth and her government as the product of Henry’s recklessness.

Protestant writers under Elizabeth resented the treatment of Henry by their Catholic opponents, but they themselves struggled to understand Henry’s ambivalent cultural legacy. Many authors paired Elizabeth and her father in dynastic arguments in order to stress that Elizabeth should continue Henry’s policies even when those policies conflicted with the queen’s own views. Queen Elizabeth herself expressed reservations about her father’s cultural influence and manipulated his example to her advantage in her letters and speeches. As Elizabeth’s reign progressed, writers longed for a return to the reign of Henry VIII as an alternative to present troubles like the problem of the royal succession. Nostalgia coupled with humor reminded readers of the nation’s successes
under Henry. Henry appears explicitly as a literary character in prose fiction and drama during the 1590s, the last decade of Elizabethan rule, where his ostentatious behavior often evokes nationalistic sentiments.

Following the accession to the throne of James VI and I in 1603, playwrights such as Samuel Rowley, John Fletcher, and William Shakespeare exploit Henry VIII as dynastic model for the Stuart monarchy. In so doing, they usher in a new era of Henry’s cultural presence. Following the death of Elizabeth, the desire to flatter and not offend the Crown ceases to play a significant role in treatment of Henry’s posthumous legacy. Writers instead began increasingly to bring their representations of Henry into line with the political agendas of their respective royal patrons. Shakespeare and Fletcher’s Henry VIII, for instance, represents the Tudor monarch as a precursor to James’s own relationship with the religious policies of mainstream Protestantism during this era. In particular, Henry provides an anachronistic model for James I as a king who rises above factional conflict. Their version of Henry contains high topical appeal, since James struggled with Parliamentary factionalism during the opening decade of his reign.

Throughout the Tudor and early Stuart periods, Protestant and Catholic authors disagreed about the meaning of Henry’s life both with each other and among themselves. Through their disagreements, they recreated narratives of Henry’s life as a platform for their own political engagement. In doing so, they gave this historical figure his enduring influence as one who shaped England’s literature, its polemical writing, and its understanding of its identity as a nation.
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I am humbled when I consider how many individuals have selflessly assisted this project. In their own ways they have each improved this study and do not share in my responsibility for flaws that may remain in its present form. John N. King, my dissertation director and doctoral program adviser, has been an outstanding model of academic rigor and personal generosity. I am very grateful to him and to my other readers, Richard Dutton and Christopher Highley, who each tolerated my sprawling early drafts and lent substantial expertise to every stage of the work. This study first came to life during my enrollment in a seminar on Tudor historical documents conducted by my fourth reader, David Cressy. I thank him for teaching me how to look more critically at sources. Greg Walker offered a valuable response to chapter one. All of my teachers have provided wise counsel at crucial moments, but Andrew Escobedo, Alan Farmer, Loreen Giese, Phoebe Spinrad, Roger Taylor, and Luke Wilson deserve special thanks. I am also grateful to Sir John Baker, Tom Betteridge, James K. Bracken, Christopher Brown, Harry Campbell, Kent Cartwright, Marisa Cull, Peter Davidson, Peter Happé, Robert Harding, Jean Howard, Drew Jones, Kathleen Kennedy, Lisa Kiser, Peter Lake, Thomas McCoog, S. J., David McKitterick, Glyn Parry, James Phelan, Elizabeth Renker, Alec Ryrie,
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These findings and a facsimile reproduction of a page from the manuscript appear in this study thanks to permission granted by the Venerable English College. The copyright of the copy I received remains that of the Venerable English College at all times.

I thank the following institutions for permission to reproduce illustrations from their collections: the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (Figures 13, 16); the British Library (Figures 1, 14, 15); the Folger Shakespeare Library (Figures 2, 12); the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library of The Ohio State University Libraries (Figures 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); St. John’s College Cambridge (Figure 3); and the Venerable English College, Rome (Figure 5). I acknowledge permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford and the Folger Shakespeare Library to transcribe selections from manuscripts in their collections in the form of an appendix.

Portions of this dissertation represent revised versions of talks given at various professional conferences and symposia, and I would like to thank the participants of these meetings for supplying helpful feedback. I delivered early versions of chapters two and four to the fourth and fifth International Tudor Symposia, which met in 2004 and 2006, respectively, at Hampton Court Palace and Kingston University, in London; and at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, in Piliscsaba, Hungary. I likewise delivered an early version of chapter six at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America and an early version of chapter one to an Ohio State University English Department Summer Fellowship reception in 2004. Financial support for travel to conduct archival research or deliver papers at professional meetings was provided by a Visiting Scholar’s Residential Fellowship at the Bridwell Library, a Shakespeare
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>BL</td>
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<td>Bodl.</td>
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<td>Folger</td>
<td>The Folger Shakespeare Library</td>
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<td>PRO</td>
<td>Public Record Office (now National Archives)</td>
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LIST OF NOMENCLATURE

Unless otherwise noted, reference to early printed books in this dissertation is to first editions. When pagination is lacking or exceedingly irregular I supply signature references, but I do not provide the abbreviation “sig.” unless it is needed for clarity. Quotations to early printed books preserve old-style spelling except in instances of “u”/“v,” “i”/“j,” and “w,” which follow modern practice. When making literatum transcriptions from both manuscripts and early printed books I expand contractions and brevigraphs in italics and supply conjectural reconstructions in square brackets. Titles generally appear in shortened format and modern spelling. This dissertation designates early editions of John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments by their dates of publication (1563, 1570, 1576, and 1583). I quote materials from the first edition of Foxe in which they appear. Unless otherwise noted, translations from the Latin are my own.
CHAPTER 1
COUNSELING THE PRINCE

Henry VIII’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon in 1533 marked the beginning of a new era of royal counsel in England. The nation’s break from the Church of Rome, the immediate effect of the divorce, provided ongoing opportunities for evangelical reformers as well as conservative scholar-intellectuals to influence the decisions of Henry VIII by offering him counsel. The problem of counsel had always been fraught with difficulty, as thinkers since Plato had grappled with whether or not learned individuals should pursue lives of quiet contemplation or enter public service.¹ The best early Henrician attempt to reconcile this longstanding problem is of course Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*, a work that expresses More’s personal struggle to attain either a life of quiet study or one of waiting upon the tables of the great.² Following the advent of humanism with its return *ad fontes* as the new standard for academic enquiry, More and other scholars diverged in opinion over how best to use knowledge in the service of the state.³

This chapter investigates the dilemma that such writers faced during the second half of the reign of Henry VIII. Once Henry declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England in 1534, the issue of how to advise the monarch took on unprecedented significance as the Crown gradually assumed unprecedented powers in
spiritual affairs. Conservative courtiers who supported the Supremacy, such as Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, or Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, had to decide when, if at all, to take a stand against the king and in defense of traditional religion during the shifting religious landscape of the 1530s. On the other hand, those sympathetic to scriptural reforms faced an increasingly recalcitrant monarch during the late 1530s and throughout the 1540s, after Henry VIII organized a nationwide conservative reaction in religious matters. I follow the trend of recent historiography in describing these early Protestants as “evangelicals,” many of whom chose to accommodate themselves to uncertain royal policy rather than face either exile or martyrdom. Writers during these years sought to dissociate themselves from charges of flattery and at the same time offer usable advice to the Crown, but the boundary between counsel and flattery during the Henrician period was seldom if ever precise.

Counseling an authoritarian king like Henry VIII was dangerous business, and those who advised him adopted sophisticated rhetorical strategies of praise and blame in order to survive. Beginning with the publication of the first complete Bible in English (1535), these strategies provide a coherent model for understanding how writers attempted to influence the direction of government policy in counsel-literature directed at both aristocratic readers and wider reading publics. The present chapter offers a new approach to the problem of counsel by shifting the debate away from how writers grappled with the challenge of offering royal counsel to questions concerning the nature of counsel itself during a period of rapidly shifting and ongoing religious and political reformations. In particular, I argue that authors generated competing images of Henry
VIII’s spiritual leadership in order to advise Henry himself, whose agenda for religious reform frequently did not match anyone else’s; the king’s royal successors, whose policies frequently departed from those of their father; and even readers, who received polemical instruction concerning how properly to understand Henrician policies. Early modern monarchs always benefited from maintaining the appearance of being willing to listen to good advice and allow debate about controversial subjects under properly controlled conditions. If Henry followed any advice that subsequently proved unsuccessful, the king could figuratively blame the counselor who recommended that action while appearing himself as a reforming prince who rejected “flattery” by gravitating instead toward “better” counsel. This process became much more complicated, however, when Henry’s own precedents in national religious policy were the subject of advice literature in the decades following England’s break from the papacy. Focusing on Henry became both an object and a method of advice giving in mid-Tudor England.

Writers modified their approach to Henry over time and in response to the king’s increasingly tyrannical tendencies during the second half of his reign and during the reigns of Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. During the Marian restoration of Roman Catholicism, writers regularly invoked Henry’s achievement in religious reformation as a negative precedent in counsel-literature directed at the Marian regime. Editors and publishers of folio Bibles likewise manipulated Henry’s example as a means to advise. In prefaces and dedications to folio editions of Henrician Bibles published during the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, editors censure Henry for failing to establish a more overtly
Protestant religious settlement and also urge Henry’s successors to continue Henry’s supposedly unfinished Protestant reforms. Among evangelical writers most annoyed by Henry’s perceived return to conservative religion during the 1540s, John Bale, the dramatist, reformer, and polemicist, attempted to persuade Henry to complete the now-stalled evangelical Protestant reformation. He smuggled inflammatory publications into England during periods of continental exile. On the other hand, following the restoration of Catholic worship and papal loyalty during Mary’s reign, writers sympathetic to the old religion and antagonistic to Bale themselves extended the counselor-tradition to fit the demands of current politics. Even though the courtier-poet William Forrest has suffered from undue neglect, for example, he reinterpreted the “Patient Griselda” story familiar from the *Canterbury Tales* as an allegory of Henrician court politics that urged queen Mary to avoid her father’s mistakes. His narrative poem *The History of Grisild the Second* (1558) rewrites Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon as a Counter-Reformation saint’s life whereby Catherine’s pious example undermines Marian Protestant “heresy.”

1.1. **The English Vernacular Bible as Royal Counsel**

As barometers of religious orthodoxy, printed editions of the English Bible represented ideal vehicles for royal counsel. Vernacular Bibles had been proscribed in England since the Lollard movement of the early fifteenth century, but they became an even more intractable challenge for authorities following the publication of William Tyndale’s landmark English New Testament (1526). Smuggled copies of this edition sold
well (albeit illegally) to a population that had been barred from access to the Bible in its own language for over a century. Henry VIII opposed Tyndale’s translation. In a royal proclamation of 1530, the king argued that “it is not necessary, the sayde scripture to be in the englisshe tonge, and in the handes of the commen people.” In a move that anticipated his future ambivalence in religious policy, however, the king also declared that an officially sanctioned, error-free translation might be produced at a convenient time. 11 English Bibles continued to appear over the next few years, as Henry’s religious policies shifted among competing court factions and as government-sponsored reformations or religious retrenchments proceeded according to the devotional preferences of Henry’s royal successors. Given these conditions, the complexity of Henry’s relationship to early editions of the English Bible is more complicated than is sometimes recognized.

The story of the first English Bibles is well known. In the autumn of 1534 Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, led a failed attempt to produce a version of scripture that Henry could approve. Working from various translations (but not from the original languages), the translator Miles Coverdale succeeded in producing the first complete English Bible from Antwerp in 1535. 12 This work contains a well-known woodcut title page border by Hans Holbein the Younger in which Henry VIII distributes the scripture to his bishops while flanked by the Israelite king David and by St. Paul (Figure 1). The appearance of the royal coat of arms beneath the king in this illustration suggests that official support for this Bible was expected. 13 William Tyndale was burned at the stake for heresy in October 1536, but John Rogers, one of Tyndale’s associates,
retrieved Tyndale’s unpublished notes and produced a new vernacular Bible in 1537. Rogers incorporated text from Coverdale for portions left untranslated by Tyndale. Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII’s vicegerent for spiritual affairs, obtained a royal license for Rogers’s work, which Rogers had published under the pseudonym of Thomas Matthew. Even though Cromwell’s injunctions of 1536 and 1538 mandated the placement of a vernacular Bible in every parish church, the so-called “Matthew Bible” touched uncomfortably close to Tyndale’s heterodox ideas. It is based closely on both published and unpublished Tyndale translations and contains the initials “WT” printed among the preliminary pages in some copies. Cromwell accordingly commissioned Coverdale to produce a new Bible under royal auspices. Cromwell selected the Parisian establishment of François Regnault for the printing but was forced to salvage the project following intervention by French authorities. Edward Whitchurch and Richard Grafton, who had published the Matthew Bible, completed Cromwell’s new Bible from London in 1539.

Each copy of the Great Bible displayed a prominent title page illustration of Henry VIII overseeing the hierarchical reading (and hearing) of the scripture by his subjects (Figure 2). This book immediately sold well, with six subsequent editions appearing within two years. Scholars have long been aware that editors and translators of both the Coverdale and Great Bibles manipulated the iconography of Henry VIII upon their title pages in the attempt to persuade the king more fully to support an evangelical Protestant agenda. By incorporating a number of typological comparisons between Henry VIII and scriptural exemplars that include Moses and David, so goes the argument,
the title pages reinforce Henry’s newfound religious authority and implicitly suggest to
the king the advantages of ruling in the manner of these biblical leaders.\footnote{16}

Henry VIII maintained an equally important typological presence throughout the
various subsequent editions of the Coverdale, Matthew, and Great Bibles that continued
to appear into the 1560s.\footnote{17} This ongoing presence has received significantly less attention
than the figure of Henry upon the titles of the initial editions of these Bibles. Evidence
provided by evolving prefaces, dedications, title pages, and other textual features across
all sixteenth-century folio editions of these texts reveals editors and translators adopting
an exceedingly nuanced approach to the issue of royal counsel concerning Henry’s
policies. After all, Henry VIII had always been problematic patron of free access to the
English Bible. Editors and translators wrestled with the burden and responsibility of
advising Henry’s royal successors, whose father had only supported wide access to the
English Bible when people did not use scripture to foment dissent. Indeed, Henry had
rescinded the privilege of access as soon as he determined that his subjects were
interpreting scripture in an unorthodox manner.\footnote{18} Those responsible for publishing these
later Bibles employ typological argument to order to express both how much they desired
to put forth their edition under Henry’s figurative support and how much they feared
associating their work with such an uncertain patron. Because the king’s commitment to
the evangelical cause was unreliable, Henry receives counsel in these Bibles. Publishers
and editors employ typology and other rhetorical devices for the benefit of the king
himself, his royal successors, and potential purchasers. In the process, Henry becomes
associated with the politics and processes of monarchical counsel itself.

7
In the first place, the apparent iconographical stability of the Coverdale and Great Bible title pages actually masks the uncertainty faced by the vernacular Bible project during the 1530s. The Bibles’ initial dedications and prefaces provide a complicated backdrop for their title pages’ argument concerning Henry’s supposed similarity to scriptural exemplars. Desiring free access for all readers of the vernacular text, the translators possessed very different motives for undertaking the work than did Henry, who believed that a vernacular Bible would reinforce his authority to set national religious policy and determine orthodoxy. Prefaces and dedications utilize typological argument in order to compensate for this discrepancy of motive between translator and patron. Scriptural dedications often undertake the reconciliation of the royal agenda with that espoused by the translator, who praised Henry as a successor to biblical prototypes in order to critique distasteful royal policies or hesitations in pursuing religious change. These biblical texts deliver censure within a framework of typological praise.

Such complex typological counsel first appears in Miles Coverdale’s dedication to Henry in the Coverdale Bible of 1535. Lodging a direct appeal to the king, Coverdale consciously manipulates biblical texts in order to encourage Henry to support his edition of the Bible, but he also raises alternative interpretations of Henry’s conduct through the careful selection of typological examples. Coverdale argues that Bible reading promotes obedience to princes that include Henry VIII, for instance: “oure Balaam of Rome [i.e., the pope] [is] so lothe that the scripture shulde be knowen in the mother tonge: lest . . . the people beyng taught by the worde of God, shulde fall from yᵉ false fayned obedience of hym and his disguysed Apostles, unto the true obedience commaunded by Gods owne
Elsewhere in his dedication, Coverdale manipulates his sources in order to gloss over Henry’s moral failings. In a passage in which Coverdale compares Henry VIII to a series of Old Testament patriarchs, for example, the translator wishes that “the lucky and prosperous age with the multiplicityon of sede whiche God gave unto Abraham and Sara his wyfe, be given unto you most gracious Prynce, with your dearest just wyfe, and most vertuous Pryncesse, Quene Anne, Amen” («Ⅱ ii»). While praising Henry VIII as the fulfillment of Abraham, a scriptural prototype of righteous government, Coverdale cannot refrain from citing the incongruity between the fecundity of Henry’s typological predecessor and Henry’s own lack of a legitimate male heir.

Additional evidence of typological discontinuity appears when Coverdale discusses scriptural figures that challenge secular authority at moments when that authority departs from divine law. Coverdale attempts to deemphasize Henry’s own moral transgression in these instances. The New Testament prophet John the Baptist’s censure of Herod Antipas, the New Testament tetrarch of Galilee, for marrying Herod’s brother’s wife receives special emphasis.22 Coverdale paradoxically retains Herod as an exemplar for unrighteous kingship and foil to Henry while simultaneously downplaying Henry’s own marriage and subsequent divorce of Catherine of Aragon, who had married Henry’s brother Arthur in similar fashion to Herod’s marriage to his own brother’s wife: “And as Johan Baptyste durst saye unto kynge Herode: It is not lawful for the [i.e., thee] to take thy brothers wyfe. But to my purpose I passe over innumerable mo ensamples both of the olde Testament and of the new, for feare lest I be to tedyous unto your grace”
Coverdale’s hurried conclusion at the moment of discussing this scriptural exemplar indicates the passage’s potential to implicate Henry. Indeed, John the Baptist provided a convenient predecessor to other writers who opposed the king’s divorce from Catherine. Henry’s problematic similarity in this regard to the scriptural King Herod would later attract the attention of hostile Catholic commentators.23

By supplying keenly chosen typological exemplars, Coverdale hints towards the king’s inadequacies and, at the same time, encourages Henry to reform himself. Because some of Henry’s proposed scriptural predecessors may adversely implicate the king in sensitive political debates, Coverdale extracts moral commentary from his texts in ways that preserve Henry from censure. Nevertheless, the translator cannot fully ignore the disturbing potential for critique inherent within the careers of his selected scriptural prototypes. Recognizing these difficulties, the translator frequently struggles to avoid implicating Henry VIII when making comparisons that retain value as royal compliments. Ignoring the changed political circumstances that ensued in England over the course of more than a decade, for instance, Coverdale claims that Pope Leo X misjudged Henry’s character in awarding him the title fidei defensor following the king’s authorship of the anti-Lutheran polemic Assertio septem sacramentorum (1521).24 Coverdale tendentiously argues that by awarding the king this title, Leo inadvertently prophesied Henry’s alleged future support for the circulation of the vernacular Bible, support that Coverdale knew had not yet materialized by 1535. Coverdale makes this point by analogy, arguing that Caiaphas, the high priest responsible for Christ’s crucifixion in the New Testament, wrongly dubbed Christ a blasphemer but nonetheless prophesied accurately that it was
better that Christ die rather than incite a rebellion. In similar fashion, Balaam, the Old Testament Aramean seer, prophesied accurately concerning the future prosperity of the Hebrews even though Balak, King of Moab, had hired him to deliver curses. In interpreting these narratives as prefiguring the Henrician Reformation, the translator asserts that “the truth of both these prophecies is of the holy ghost ... though they that spake them knew not what they said” (ii r). Coverdale cites these biblical accounts as forerunners of Leo’s supposedly serendipitous honoring of Henry VIII and then prunes their negative associations in order to manufacture a rationale for Henry’s hoped-for support of his Bible translation.

Typological argument may certainly gloss over seeming inconsistencies and contradictions. Nevertheless, Coverdale’s typological comparisons to Henry VIII prove tenuous upon close examination. The rhetoric of his arguments would have been apparent to a culture steeped in scriptural narrative. Hardly a flattering prototype for the Henrician Reformation, Balaam was eventually slain by invading Hebrew armies as punishment for prophesying against them, and Caiaphas provides an equally inauspicious forerunner to Henry’s “righteousness.” Coverdale goes on to compare the advent of the English Bible to the rediscovery of the Law of Moses during the reign of Josiah, the preeminent Old Testament prototype for Protestant evangelical kingship during the early modern period. According to Coverdale’s dedicatory address, Henry’s “Pryncely hert” abounds “with such ferventnes to [God’s] honoure” that the king’s “most ryghteous admynistracyon” has rediscovered the vernacular scripture (iii v) in the manner of Josiah’s rediscovery of the Mosaic law after centuries of apostasy. Such ideas should spur
Henry on toward reform as much as they praise him, since in 1535 the king still viewed himself as an exemplary Roman Catholic in all but his anti-papal outlook. Josiah’s iconoclastic fury against “idolatry” dominates the corresponding biblical narrative, but because Henry had taken no lasting step to authorize a Bible in English prior to 1535, perceptive readers would have been aware that the biblical account of Josiah’s reforming zeal supplied an inadequate description of the realities of the Henrician church at this stage.28 Coverdale’s desire to counsel Henry VIII to countenance the English Bible forces the translator to lodge complicated typological comparisons that figuratively express Henry’s present lack of support at the same time that they make an appeal for future assistance.

Later editions of the Coverdale Bible display a similar degree of fluidity regarding Henry’s problematic hoped-for support of the vernacular Bible. Significantly, only the 1535 and 1537 Coverdale Bibles contain the prominent Henrician woodcut title border (Figure 1). The switch to quarto format in surviving Coverdale editions of 1537, 1550, and 1553 forced the design of a new title page, but these volumes do not contain even a redesigned version of Holbein’s iconography on smaller scale.29 Arguing from such absences is treacherous, but in this case the disappearance of the well-known title border from the Coverdale Bible after 1537 and its replacement by the Great Bible (1539) belies the tendency of some scholars inextricably to associate Henry VIII, the Coverdale Bible, and this woodcut design in their interpretations of Henrician religious politics.30 Without the title design, the Coverdale Bible lacks a portion of its argument that Henry ruled after the manner of biblical prototypes. The need to persuade the king to support the Bible
project had evaporated following the licensing of the Matthew (1537) and Great Bibles. The absence of the title border from later Coverdale Bibles accentuates the topicality of the first two editions and suggests that the association between the Coverdale Bible and Henry’s shifting policies toward Bible reading was relatively short lived.

Additional evidence of these Bibles’ changing approach to Henrician kingship appears in the dedication to the king in the second folio edition, published in 1537 by James Nicholson, who was probably a Dutchman resident in London. The royal dedication to the new text lauds “your dearest just wyfe, and moost vertuous Pryncesse, Quene Jane, Amen.” Some extant copies of the 1535 first edition contain versions of this dedication rather than the original, which had contained a prayer for the king’s second wife, Anne Boleyn. Henry married Jane Seymour after Anne’s execution for high treason in May 1536. The two dedications are otherwise identical. The change would seem natural to the editor or printer of subsequent editions, but the presence of the newer dedication in surviving copies of the first edition, which appeared when Anne Boleyn still lived, is significant. This replacement suggests that some readers evidently deemed the original statement honoring Anne to be impolitic after Henry had repudiated Anne in favor of Jane, his third wife.

An even more telling instance of dynastic fluidity appears in Christopher Froschauer’s quarto edition of the Coverdale text, which he printed from Zurich in 1550. Froschauer prints a version of Coverdale’s dedication to Henry VIII that has been rewritten in response to the political circumstances surrounding the minority rule of Edward VI. That the new dedication preserves much from the original text indicates how...
the book’s Protestant editors fashioned Edward after the example of his father, Henry. In the 1535 version we learn that the pope made a mistake by awarding Henry VIII the title *fidei defensor* “only because your highness [Henry VIII] suffered your bishops to burn God’s word” ( irresistible). By 1550, the new dedication informs Edward that the papal title was given to “your grace’s most noble progenitors” in what is now a prophecy about how, “by the righteous administration and continual diligence of your grace [Edward], the faith should be defended” (ii). In lodging an appeal that Edward should follow the example in “godliness” set by his father, editors of the Zurich edition transfer Henry’s alleged willingness to defend the “true” faith onto the new king, who they trust will rule after the example of his father. The Froschauer dedication thus anachronistically reconstructs Henry as having anticipated the “godly” reforms that had already been enacted by Edward VI. Speaking of the people’s lack of knowledge of scripture in both Henrician and Edwardian England, the Froschauer dedication also revises Coverdale’s original comparison between Henry and the Old Testament monarch Josiah to fit the new contexts of the Edwardian religious settlement, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1535 Version</th>
<th>1550 Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As it was afore the tyme of that noble kynge Josias, and as it hath bene also amonge us unto your graces tyme: by whose most ryghteous admynistracyon</td>
<td>As it was afore the tyme of that noble kynge Josias, and as it hath bene amonge us unto your graces most noble fathers tyme: by whose &amp; by youre majesties most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
... it is now founde agayne (†iii') ryghteous administracyon ... it is now founde agayn (†iii')

Froschauer echoes other evangelicals who praise Edward VI as a latter-day Josiah, and, indeed, much about their reigns seemed similar, at least according to some contemporary Protestant commentators. Nevertheless, as in the case of Coverdale’s typological arguments concerning the moral character of Henry VIII, the 1550 dedication manipulates the scriptural text in order to counsel Edward and his advisors to proceed in religious affairs in a manner that would supposedly have pleased Henry. Froschauer or his aids would have been aware of the biblical text, in which King Josiah did not purge the land of idols until the twelfth year of his reign and did not rediscover the Mosaic Law until his eighteenth year in power. Froschauer’s dedication veils the incongruity between the English Bible and the rediscovered Deuteronomic Law in the same way that evangelicals invoked Edward VI as a second Josiah during the young king’s minority in order to justify radical Protestant reforms while simultaneously suppressing biblical chronology. Such a rhetorical strategy echoes Coverdale’s desire to preserve Herod as an anti-type for Henrician rule while suppressing the potentially uncomfortable associations between Herod and Henry, two kings who could both be accused of wrongly marrying their brother’s wives.

If the Coverdale Bible expresses ambivalence over the typological basis for Henry’s power, the Matthew Bible of 1537 greatly expands upon the scope of that ambivalence. Coverdale had counseled Henry in his royal dedication to teach his
subjects obedience by giving them an English Bible. John Rogers, the translator who
produced the Matthew version and who became the first victim of the Marian persecution
against Protestants when he was burned at the stake in 1555, advises Henry to support
vernacular Bible reading in exchange for an enduring reputation for Protestant
evangelical kingship. If Coverdale provided the model of a king who supplied the
vernacular text, Rogers, in his dedication to Henry VIII, praises Henry as its actual
expounder. Henry’s fame is much more enduring and metaphorical in Rogers than
Coverdale. Ignoring the king’s doctrinal conservatism and his hesitancy to sanction a
vernacular Bible, Rogers argues that Henry possesses “Godly moderacion” and “hevenly
polycye” that he uses to “suppresse supersticyion and mayntene true holynes.” As is the
case with Coverdale’s dedication, typology constitutes a significant portion of Rogers’
mythmaking strategy. This is why Rogers reminds Henry of the Mosaic prophecy that
blessings would follow that prince who remained “affectuously anymated unto the
kepynge of the [scriptural] lawe” (*v*).

Like Coverdale, Rogers forces particular interpretations onto his scriptural
sources in typological arguments designed to persuade Henry to support the English
Bible project. Addressing Henry VIII as a latter-day Moses is not exceptional, but the
assumptions that underlie Rogers’s use of this comparison are relevant in connection to
the translator’s desire to counsel the king as potential patron. In his dedication to Henry,
Rogers records Moses’s stipulation that when the Hebrews eventually decide to set up a
king for themselves, that king must obey the law of God and teach others to do the same.
In his desire not to offend Henry, Rogers conveniently neglects to mention that the very
institution of Israelite monarchy displeased God elsewhere in the Old Testament, wrenching his Mosaic example into the service of his purposes instead. When the translator argues that the “rote of all Godlynes” lies in princes “amplyfiynge” the Bible to their subjects, he simultaneously manufactures a narrative of Henrician reform that does not accord with actual events. In these ways Rogers praises Henry as a worthy dedicatee for having already accomplished the very evangelical reforms that the dedication persuades the king to undertake (*vi*).

Rogers also employs the motif of false counsel in order to associate Henry’s moral character with the purportedly desirable achievements of Old Testament reforming monarchs such as Hezekiah and Josiah. The translator’s goal is to persuade the king to emulate these predecessors. By observing how “the wylye juggeling of ye preastes in persuadyng ye princes & rulars to be conformable to their invencyons . . . dyd oft & many tymes fyll all full of supersticyon and Idolatrye,” Rogers criticizes the English clergy as conspirators and flatterers who allegedly preyed upon Henry’s conscience. He joins the Henrician writers Simon Fish and Christopher St. German in blending anticlerical satire with a reformist agenda couched in terms of good counsel. When compared to Rogers’s scriptural sources, however, this account’s discrepancies invariably emerge. Rogers does not report how the Old Testament kings Manassah and Jehoahaz, his prototypes of “wicked” kingship, frequently embraced “wickedness” on their own initiatives and apart from the influence of any counselor. This data would needlessly have provided Henry VIII with justification for hesitancy or moral leniency, and Rogers accordingly omits it. According to Rogers’s account, if the kings Hezekiah and Josiah,
the “righteous” fathers, respectively, of these “wicked” monarchs, had successfully kept “false” counselors in check during their reigns, their sons failed to do the same. Rogers argues that Henry will be able to reverse this genealogical trend by bequeathing his own “righteousness” to his hoped-for son, whom he will father by Jane Seymour.

The intensity of Rogers’s typological arguments shrouds the uncertainties inherent within this attempt to counsel Henry VIII as a reforming evangelical monarch. Rogers tendentiously prays, for example, that Henry would receive thirty years of extended life on the model of supplemental years given to the Old Testament king, Hezekiah, so that “ye maye the better accomplish your most godly intent” (*vi*). Rogers makes the unwarranted assumption that Henry’s intent is “godly” while simultaneously laboring to persuade the king to adopt such an intent. The Matthew Bible dedication interpolates Henry into a polemical equation based on a one-sided reading of scriptural exemplars that Rogers deliberately manipulates in order to persuade the king and render insignificant the king’s actual views.

Subsequent editors of the Matthew Bible associate this book with Henry VIII as a reflection of their own ideological commitments in a manner that matches Rogers’s editorial decisions. In his 1549 revision of the Matthew Bible, for example, Edmund Becke replaces Rogers’s dedication to Henry with a new address to Edward VI. Becke replicates Rogers’s discussion of the relationship between kings and the vernacular Bible excerpted from the book of Deuteronomy. Kings must take the lead in reading scripture so that both lesser magistrates and the people will be encouraged to pursue justice, obey the monarch, and shun vice. Perceptive readers of Becke’s dedication might recall the
image of Henry from the Great Bible title page (see Figure 2) in Becke’s reminder to Edward that “David disdayned not to say, ‘Thy woorde (O Lord) is a lanterne to my fete’” (A5v); Henry had appeared as a latter-day David on the earlier illustration uttering those very words. More directly, Becke believes that readers of his Bible will come to understand how Edward’s “Godly procedinges” were “tendynge to fynysh the frame that your graces father of famous memory, kyng Henry the eyghte (who with all honor I name) dyd princely begyn” (A6r). Henry here supplies Becke with an important precedent for counseling Edward.

The most important vernacular Bible to appear during Henry’s lifetime is also the most complicated in terms of how its editors and publishers adopted strategies for counseling the monarch. Under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, Edward Whitchurch and Richard Grafton published an extraordinary seven folio editions of the Great Bible between 1539 and 1541. Large and bulky, this Bible was intended for public display and reading in parish churches and cathedrals, and it remained the officially authorized church Bible until supplanted by the Bishops’ Bible in 1568. The lack of a royal dedication in the Great Bible of 1539 is explicable given Henry’s proclamation on 16 November 1538 that imported English Bibles should contain “onely the playne sentence and texte” and should omit “any annotations in the margyn, or any prologe or additions in the calender or table” unless the same had been approved by the king’s representative. Printers of later editions of the Great Bible omitted royal dedications to satisfy this proclamation because they had already obtained Henry’s license for undertaking the
Editors, publishers, and readers of the Great Bibles nevertheless displayed similar sensitivities to Henry’s shifting political priorities as those displayed by successive editions of the Coverdale and Matthew Bibles. In a proclamation of 14 November 1539, Henry called for the “free and liberal use of the Bible in our own maternal tongue,” provided that reading the text did not disrupt obedience to the crown. Following Henry’s lead, a preface by Thomas Cranmer in the April 1540 version argues that “it is convenient and good, the scripture to be redd of all sortes & kyndes of people, and in the vulgare tongue” and that Henry’s “royall assente . . . ought to be a sufficienete reason” for “all true and obedient subjectes” to read the work (2v). In the years following the passage of the Act of Six Articles (1539), which imposed harsh penalties for denying the validity of traditional religious doctrines, editors “revised” the text in the hope of ensuring ongoing royal support at a time of uncertainty for publishing vernacular Bibles. Following the execution of Thomas Cromwell in July 1540, for example, someone gouged Cromwell’s heraldic arms out of Grafton and Whitchurch’s title page block. The July 1540 imprint still contains Cromwell’s arms on the title page, even though Cromwell fell during that month, but the arms do not appear on the titles of subsequent imprints. In conjunction with the arms’ first absence, the title of the November 1540 version explicitly mentions royal sanction of the project for the first time, as if to reassure potential buyers that the Bible maintained its legitimacy even after the downfall of Cromwell, its original patron. Purchasers learn that the Great Bible has
now been explicitly “auctorysed and apoynted by the commaundemente of oure moost redoubted Prynce, and soveraygne Lorde Kynge Henrye the. viii. supreme heade of this his churche and Realme of Englande.” In another instance of possible appeasement directed at Henry VIII, the figure of Cromwell has been replaced with an old man in a brown coat on the hand-illuminated title page illustration of a copy of the April 1540 version, which the London merchant, Anthony Marler, presented to the king in handsome vellum. Marler may have modified the design of his copy in response to Cromwell’s ignominy in order to render his gift acceptable to its royal recipient, especially if he undertook the work after Cromwell’s disgrace had become known but before the July 1540 imprint was available for purchase. These data indicate the felt need to reassure the king that the Great Bible was his own project in the wake of Cromwell’s demise.

Following its initial appearance in 1539, subsequent editions of the Great Bible published during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I alter or even eradicate Henry’s original presence in response to the shifting religious politics of the English Reformation. Scholars should not overlook the fact that the King’s Printer, Thomas Berthelet, produced his own edition of the Great Bible in 1540 in order to compete with Grafton and Whitchurch, whose six editions had dominated the market. Berthelet reused the Coverdale title page design in order to sanction the legitimacy of a work that lacked the prominent Grafton-Whitchurch title illustration because Berthelet did not own this valuable piece of printer’s equipment. Indeed, because the famous Great Bible title illustration was never firmly associated with the Bible to which it is now so closely attached, scholars would do well to analyze this title border as only one among
several title page designs to appear on Great Bibles published during the course of almost three decades. Rooted firmly in the politics of the 1530s, the Grafton-Whitchurch border appears in no surviving copy of the Great Bible published after 1541, not even in a redesigned format.\textsuperscript{54} In his 1549 version, Whitchurch replaces the prominent title image with a new border that sheds its explicit Henrician associations while retaining the royal arms.\textsuperscript{55} The prominent “H[enricus] R[ex]” monogram that features among the preliminary leaves of the earlier Grafton-Whitchurch imprints has likewise vanished to reflect the new dispensation under Edward VI. The continued recurrence of the Coverdale title border on Bibles published by Berthelet (1540), Raynalde and Hyll (1549), and a syndicate led by Hyll (1551) proves the fluidity of this particular piece of Henrician iconography.

The fortunes of Cranmer’s prologue in later editions also demonstrate how editors and publishers used their Bibles to respond to ongoing political reformations in England. The prologue text vanishes in Nicholas Hyll’s 1552 quarto edition of the Great Bible\textsuperscript{56} and does not reappear until the folio edition of Richard Harrison (1562).\textsuperscript{57} The same prologue does not appear in the next surviving edition, published by Richard Carmarden at Rouen (1566),\textsuperscript{58} nor in the remaining Elizabethan quarto editions, the last of which appeared in 1569.\textsuperscript{59} Edwardian editors and adaptors of earlier versions of the Great Bible evidently viewed the prologue, which describes strategies for acceptable and unacceptable Bible reading under the authority established by Henry VIII, with suspicion. This document was perhaps deemed incongruous following the publication of the Second Prayer Book (1552) and the promulgation of new royal injunctions designed to foster
widespread Bible reading. On the other hand, Harrison may have chosen to incorporate the preface in his 1562 edition in response to the uncertain early years of the Elizabethan religious settlement. As officials began the revision of the Great Bible that would become the Bishops’ Bible (1568), the prologue once again became unnecessary, especially since the forward Protestant editorial principles underlying the Geneva Bible (1560) rendered superfluous Cranmer’s distinction between acceptable versus unacceptable scriptural reading. Prior to the appearance of the Bishops’ Bible, the Great Bible enjoyed Crown support, and for this reason editors freely modified the original contents of the 1539 version, with its heavily Henrician overtones, in order to fit the evolving political circumstances under which Henry’s original motives in sanctioning the Bible were perceived to be shifting and of uncertain relevance.

The 1566 Rouen edition of the Great Bible provides a noteworthy exception to the work’s gradual departure from its Henrician moorings. Published by Richard Carmarden, a customs agent with ties to Elizabeth’s secretary of state, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, its Rouen imprint appears to be genuine. The Bible contains a new prologue “shewing the use of the scripture” signed by its Rouen printer, Cardin Hamillon. Carmarden may have undertaken the publication of this edition as a business venture through preexisting contacts in the Rouen book trade. The choice of Rouen as a location for the printing of the text seems to have provided a satisfactory alternative to publishing in London in competition with Harrison, who had produced the previous folio Great Bible and who would go on to publish the only other large-format Great Bible in Elizabeth’s reign. Rouen was a major shipping center that contained a strong Huguenot
population during the 1560s at a time when presses in England were just starting to rival the output of their continental counterparts. Carmarden may have also sought a continental press to avoid ecclesiastical censure, since Harrison had been fined for printing his 1562 edition without a license. Rouen offered strategic importance for Carmarden or, more likely, Cecil, since an English garrison had undertaken the defense of the city under the terms of a 1562 peace treaty that governed England’s support of the Huguenots in the French Wars of Religion. Given these connections, it seems likely that Cecil underwrote a portion of the cost of this venture, although definitive evidence is not immediately forthcoming.

Whatever his motivation and financial connections, Carmarden certainly designed his Bible under the influence of iconography contained within both the original Coverdale Bible and John Foxe’s recently published *Acts and Monuments* (1563). Carmarden modified this iconography as a coherent strategy to counsel Queen Elizabeth. His title page provides multiple linkages among Foxe’s publisher, John Day; Carmarden’s own ostensible royal patron; and her father, Henry VIII. Most noticeably, the Coverdale title-border design undergoes modification in Carmarden’s new title design (Figure 3; compare Figures 1-2). Elizabeth carries a staff of office and a Bible bearing the designation “Verbum Dei.” Several iconographical topoi recur on both the Coverdale and Carmarden title borders. They include the Tetragrammaton (i.e., the Hebrew letters YHWH) appearing above the queen at the pinnacle of the image, with a translation into Greek, Latin, and English, and the figures of Moses and Christ. Accompanied by scriptural texts, these biblical prototypes flank either side of the title block to symbolize
dual dispensations of law and grace made manifest through Elizabeth’s descent from Henry VIII. Cherubim draw back a curtain to reveal the queen flanked by the virtues of Faith and Hope, who bear their respective emblems of the shield and anchor. Such iconographical imagery recurs elsewhere in Tudor dynastic panegyric. Here it provides a conceptual link between the figure of Henry VIII on earlier folio Bibles and that of Elizabeth, who appears in similar fashion on the titles of two separate folio editions of the Bishops’ Bible later in the decade.65

Following the practice of editors and publishers who reused Coverdale’s title page design as an advertising strategy, Carmarden retains recognizable iconographical elements while modifying others as an explicit strategy for counseling the queen. Carmarden employs his title page to fashion the queen as one who distributes scripture in the manner of Henry VIII. The image of Elizabeth at the base of Carmarden’s title-border displaces Henry from a similar position on the Coverdale design. Carmarden simultaneously replicates the historiated initial C that opens John Foxe’s dedication to Elizabeth in the first edition of his Acts and Monuments (1563) (Figure 4). This text encouraged the queen to protect the English Protestant church in the manner of a latter-day Constantine, the Roman Emperor who halted religious persecution throughout the Empire. Foxe’s dedication offers Carmarden an example of royal counsel magnified through the reused Eliza enthroned design. Foxe’s publisher John Day owned this woodblock and did not lend it to Carmarden. The publisher instead commissioned a clever copy that differs from Day’s design in several important elements. Most significantly, the Bible image lacks the figure of the pope, who is entwined in serpents at
the base of the C initial in Foxe. In addition to other subtle differences, close scrutiny reveals that the artist responsible for the new illustration worked in mirror-reverse from his exemplar, since the queen raises her eyes to her left in Day’s figure and to her right in Carmarden’s. By modeling his queen on Day’s, Carmarden portrays Elizabeth as the victorious monarch whose tragicomic story of survival during the reign of Mary I greeted readers of Foxe. The Rouen title page incorporates elements from the Day woodcut design in order to portray Elizabeth as an enthusiastic supporter of the vernacular scripture in a martyrological tradition that anachronistically encompasses Henry VIII as its champion.

Evidence provided by textual features, prefaces, and dedications to these early Bibles reveals a lack of consensus among early evangelicals over the meaning of Henrician Protestant kingship. Those responsible for these materials responded to England’s ongoing political and religious reformations by attempting to persuade Henry’s royal successors to rule after their father’s example, even though that example was in substance a rhetorical device that they themselves designed. As vehicles for complicated layers of royal counsel given to three Tudor monarchs, these Bibles transcend mere propaganda. They make Henry himself the subject of their advice in order to position Edward VI and Elizabeth I as their father’s ideological successors.

1.2. John Bale and the Subject of Counsel

John Bale is best known as the author of polemical drama under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell during the late 1530s and as the scholar responsible for the first
published bibliography of British writers, the *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum*. Throughout his career Bale also frequently assumed the role of counselor in the attempt to direct the course of English church policy under Henry VIII. His works manipulate Crown religious policies as a propagandistic strategy of persuasion. Bale’s counsel differs from that produced by writers at court, whose royal advice typically addresses either king or Privy Council directly. In a series of controversial treatises written from the disadvantaged location of continental exile, Bale addresses audiences and dedicatees that range from the monarch (either Henry VIII, Edward VI, or Elizabeth I) to members of the nobility and, more generally, to the reader himself. He focuses his efforts less on guiding the prince toward virtuous kingship than on guiding his readers toward proper interpretation of Henry’s responsibility for the failure of the evangelical Protestant Reformation in England. During the course of Bale’s career as a Protestant polemicist, Henry or his establishment sometimes supplies the focal point for counsel. Bale’s historical morality play, *King Johan* (c.1538), which I will discuss below, provides a case in point. More often, however, Henry VIII occupies the subject of Bale’s counsel. In these instances Bale offers counsel not to the king but to broader audiences whose views of the Henrician Reformation he attempts to change. As he counsels readers toward a “correct” understanding of Henry’s religious politics, Bale tends to replace literal counsel concerning Henry’s policies with a more abstract but no less relevant inquiry into the complex representation of counsel itself.

Bale was born in Dunwich, Suffolk in 1495. Originally an orthodox Carmelite friar, he rejected his conservative beliefs during the early 1530s and began writing plays...
in support of the Royal Supremacy under Cromwell’s patronage. The fall of his patron in 1540 must have encouraged Bale to flee the country, and throughout the 1540s he wrote vigorous Protestant propaganda from the continent. He returned to England under Edward VI and accepted appointment as a missionary bishop to the see of Ossory in Ireland, only to flee again at the accession of Mary Tudor in 1553. Bale returned home a second time when Elizabeth succeeded Mary to the throne. He died in November 1563 after holding a prebendary in Canterbury Cathedral.

Bale’s views about the Henrician Reformation are extremely conflicted. As the basis of his attempt to use propaganda to move his readers toward evangelical Protestant devotion, Bale frequently manufactures a fictional history of forward Protestant reform under Henry VIII in order to provide a precedent for the hoped-for accomplishment of his own even more radical religious agenda at some future time. The year after Queen Mary reinstated papal authority in England, for example, Bale claimed in the prefatory address to his history of the papacy, *Acta Romanorum Pontificum* (1555), that the country had “most shamefully forsooke the holye Gospel of christe” in favor of Antichrist, of whom Henry VIII “had good proofe, when he caused the houses of the hooded hypocrites, & the colleges of the masse-mongers in his kingdome . . . to be visited.”

According to this argument, if Henry had discovered evidence of Antichrist during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, which his ministers carried out during the late 1530s, England was loyal to “the holye Gospel of christe” prior to Mary’s accession. Bale argues that the authority of the papacy over the monarch had regretfully endured from the time of King Alfred, in the ninth century, until the Dissolution. In Bale’s opinion Henry
eventually oversaw an evangelical Protestant reformation, but Bale does not associate this example of victory over Antichrist with the Royal Supremacy. That legislative act did not instantaneously produce Bale’s desired changes even though Henry made progress against Bale’s enemies during the latter half of his rule. Nevertheless, Henry VIII allegedly brought cessation to the domination of the Beast from the book of Revelation, whose number of six hundred sixty-six equals the number of years between the reigns of Henry and Alfred. Passages such as these represent rhetorically crafted interpretations of Henry’s achievement in religious affairs rather than unambiguous celebrations of the king’s legislative accomplishment that Bale makes them out to be.

As part of his attempt to educate readers concerning what he perceives to be the tenuous nature of Henry’s decisions, Bale often resorts to typological argument in order to criticize the king during the uncomfortable 1540s, at a time when Henry was not rapidly advancing the cause of the gospel. Paradoxically, Bale’s Yet a Course at the Romish Fox (1543) compares Henry to “victoriouse Josaphat,” an Old Testament prototype for righteous kingship, while at the same time explaining away Henry’s rejection of the evangelical party following the fall of Cromwell. According to the biblical narrative, the task of extirpating idolatry fell to Jehu, who ruled after Jehoshaphat, and Bale accordingly articulates his belief that some latter-day Jehu would arrive to rule England and correct Henry’s errors. Jehoshaphat is a reforming monarch whose failure more frequently to pursue “godly” policy nicely matches Bale’s opinion of Henry VIII in this analogy. Here and elsewhere, however, Bale also qualifies his censure
so as not to discourage Henry from resuming the “reforming” ways that Bale associated with royal policy during the previous decade’s break from Rome.\textsuperscript{73}

Bale employs multiple strategies of persuasion in his published and unpublished writings as a means of interrogating and questioning Henry’s supposed advocacy of an evangelical Protestant agenda. By likening Edward VI and Henry VIII as two princes who shared the same mind in pursuing this cause, for example, Bale overwrites what were from his perspective the negative consequences of Henry’s recent return to conservative religious policy. Bale yokes Henry and Edward as effective evangelical Protestant monarchs despite their obvious dissimilarities. Bale’s caustic inventory of the alleged sexual improprieties of the clergy and monastic orders, \textit{The Acts of English Votaries} (1546),\textsuperscript{74} demonstrates how this theory of Henrician kingship works in practice. The “preface of thys boke” instructs the nobility to throw off the purportedly oppressive clerical yoke on the basis of the “righteous” example of Henry VIII:

\begin{quote}
No poyn of nobylete were yt, nor yet of lerned worthynesse, to be as ye have bene of late yeares, styll servaunt slaves to a most fylthye whore, and to her whoredome and whoremongers. Our most christen Emprour of Englande, kinke Henrye the .viii. of that name, as a most worthye mynystre of God, hath gone before yow in that behalfe. He hath made open unto ye the waye, and dryven awaye from your gates the great adversarye . . .(A6v-7r)
\end{quote}

In the same way that revised prefaces in the Coverdale Bible urge Edward VI to follow the supposed reforming ways of Henry VIII, Bale later updates this very preface in order to praise Edward for following in his father’s footsteps. In a new edition of the \textit{Acts}
published in 1551, he speaks collectively of how both kings have set a reforming example for the nobility by adding “& now his most learned & gracieouse sonne kynge Edwarde the .vi” immediately after mentioning Henry’s name in the reprinted text of the above passage.75 Bale also revises the conclusion to this work in the expanded second edition. England’s governors initially have an obligation to “folowe the Christen pryncyples of your most worthye Josias, kynge Henrye the .viii. which hath graciouslye begonne to smell oute in that false generacyon the engynnes of the Devyll” (K5r). The latter version replaces the name of Henry VIII with “kynge Eduward the syxt and his noble father afore him” (K5r). At the same time, Bale underscores the tendentious nature of these revisions in Yet a Course at the Romish Fox by affirming, in his prefatory address “to the Christen Reader,” that Henry VIII may have been a latter-day Jehoshaphat, but the more “godly” King Josiah was yet to come. Bale looks for the reincarnation of this ideal prototype of Old Testament kingship after the reign of Henry VIII, even though he describes Henry as the second Josiah in The Acts of English Votaries: “Soche a full Josias schall ye have yf ye be thankefull, as will perfyghtlye restore the lawes as yet corrupted, and breake downe the buggerye places that are yet in the howse of the lorde.”76 These examples suggest how Bale aligns Henry with a particular typological exemplar only when it suits the propagandistic purposes of the moment. Typological argument in Bale is a process of apparent contradiction rather than fixed certainty.

In his narrative of the imprisonment and execution of the Lancashire gentlewoman Anne Askew, Bale continues to appropriate the figure of Henry. Bale’s
edition of Askew’s interrogation by clerical authorities during the final years of Henrician rule represents the earliest surviving version of her text, which Bale obtained and published in two separate segments during his first period of exile.\textsuperscript{77} Despite valuable recent studies of the ways in which Bale delimits Askew’s discursive voice with his strident accompanying commentary, the extent to which Bale comments upon Henry VIII in the treatise has gone unnoticed by scholars.\textsuperscript{78} Bale tendentiously remarks, for example, how “the Byshoppes and prestes with their frantyck affynyte, the great Antichristes upholders” opposed both the circulation of his own books and “the kynges most noble and godlye enterpryse” of evangelical Reformation.\textsuperscript{79} Henry’s religious orthodoxy vis-à-vis Askew’s heterodoxy was certainly controversial. Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, complained against Bale’s edition of the \textit{Examinations} in a letter to Edward Seymour, Protector Somerset, dated 21 May 1547. The bishop pleaded that the “agreement in religion made in the time of our late soveraign lord [i.e., Henry VIII]” should have a stronger force of judgment than either Askew, Bale, or other “[c]erten printers, players, and prechers” who undermined traditional belief in the sacrament of the altar.\textsuperscript{80} Claiming the king’s loyalty for himself, Bale affirms that Henry would never have given a preaching license to Askew’s interrogators: “If the kynge admit soche preachers (as I can not thynke it) a sore plage remayneth both to hym and to hys people” (34). By showing Henry sympathetic to Askew and disinclined toward her clerical tormentors, Bale claims the moral high ground and achieves polemical capital in his debate against those who celebrated the king for hindering the evangelical platform. Bale is counseling readers to accept Henry VIII as Bale’s own co-religionist.
Askew’s *Examinations* emphasizes Henry’s centrality to Bale’s agenda for religious reform. Before the king may lead the nation into evangelical renewal, Bale argues that readers must first come to the proper conclusion concerning Henry’s identity as a reforming monarch. This strategy is in keeping with Bale’s address to the reader accompanying the *First Examination*, which establishes a similitude between Askew and Blandina, a second century Christian martyr. Bale reminds readers that only their proper response to Henry’s failure to intervene on Askew’s behalf will encourage God “to change a kynges indignacyon” (71). Paradoxically, Bale’s proper response to the Henrician Reformation is a turning from Henry to God himself, as he admonishes the officials who illegally racked Askew in the Tower of London: “Ye feare least your temporall and mortall kynge shuld knowe your madde frenesyes. But of the eternall kynge, which wyll ryghtlye ponnysh yow for it, with the devyll and hys angels (unlesse ye sore repent it) ye have no feare at all” (135). Bale implies that readers should look away from local details of Henrician religious change toward a larger pattern of divine history that will explain that change. At the same time, he believes that Henry offers the best hope to reverse the present course of conservative reaction in the country.

The significance of Henry’s break from the papacy in terms of authority, obedience, history, and counsel is especially acute in Bale’s pamphlet controversy with James Cancellor, one of Queen Mary’s chaplains and choristers. In 1553, Bale published an autobiographical narrative on *The Vocacyon of Johan Bale to the Bishopric of Ossory in Ireland.* In this account of his travails as a Protestant missionary bishop, Bale compares his experiences to the sufferings of St. Paul’s own missionary journeys.
Cancellar responded stridently to the *Vocacyon* in his *Path of Obedience* (1556) by arguing for obedience to secular and religious authorities that include both the queen and the pope. Someone in Mary’s government may have specifically commissioned Cancellar to produce this work. On 6 July 1561, Bale completed his refutation of Cancellar and vindication of his autobiographical *Vocacyon*. John Day, the publisher of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, obtained a license to publish this treatise from the bishop of London, but although the first few pages of the manuscript bear signs of casting off for print publication, a printed edition never materialized. Bale’s holograph manuscript, however, survives at Lambeth Palace Library.

Bale’s treatise, which he titled *A Return of James Cancellar’s Railing Book upon his Own Head*, argues trenchantly that Cancellar and other writers loyal to the Church of Rome had tried to undermine Henry’s status as the leader of the return to the “true” church in England. Following a lengthy list of individuals whom Bale honors for defying centuries of papal “tyranny,” the *Vocacyon* had established Henry’s status as a champion for the cause of the gospel: “so doth he [God] now agayne before his generall comminge to judgement / [c]all togther his churche of true belevers / by the godly preachers of thys age. That wonderfull wurke of God / that noble prince Kynge Henrye the .8. within thys realme by hys royall power assysted.” Once again, Bale appropriates Henry to his own ideological position and ignores the king’s actual policies. Cancellar does the same thing, but from the perspective of a reforming humanist loyal to the Church of Rome: “if we therfore wil marke what enormities folowed after oure forsakinge the Apostolyke churche of Rome, we shall finde so manye in number of them as before hath not bene seen, and
Debate for the symbolic ownership of Henry’s religious agenda became increasingly common during mid-Tudor England, even though that agenda differed greatly from views expressed by both Bale and Cancellar in these treatises. Bale, Cancellar, and others nonetheless attempted to align the king to their particular causes.

Responding to these challenges, Bale’s reply to Cancellar in *A retourne* fictitiously describes Henry as occupying an unambiguous place in the genealogy of the “true” church. As an “anoyned potentate,” Henry VIII deserves Cancellar’s loyalty but allegedly does not receive it, thereby proving Cancellar’s allegiance to the king’s “manyfest aduersarye, the Antichriste of Rome” and vindicating Henry. Cancellar had argued that Henry betrayed the “truth” when he had executed Sir Thomas More and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, but Bale repudiates this argument by showing how Cancellar’s disloyalty to the king’s authority actually legitimates Henry’s decision to execute these alleged traitors:

An other subtile questyon is moued of Canceller, accusynge kynge henry the eyght of tyrannye and murther, for iustly ponryshynge popish traytours and scismatyckes . . . But lyke a vyle traytour ye meane kynge henry the viii. and hys counsell, whych were then your hygh magistrates. O cowardly papiste, ye now prate lyke a parret, but ye were than glad to hyde your dronken heade for feare of an halter.”

For Bale, the truth-telling historian, only an accurate interpretation of Henry’s status can provide the conceptual foundation on which the Reformation can move forward. As he
stakes his claim to his own share of Henry’s legacy, Bale must educate his readers in the proper understanding of both scripture and history in order to ensure that they will come to the same conclusion. He thus rejects Cancellor’s description of Henry VIII as a latter-day Korah who rebelled against the papal Moses. According to the Old Testament, Korah led an uprising against Moses in the desert, but Bale describes this particular typological comparison as erroneous:

An other frantyck questyon of thys ydell headed dronkarde. Haue we not also had amonge us (sayth Cancellor) Chore, dathan and Abiron (he meaneth kynge henry, byshoppe Cranmer, and the lorde Cromwell) whych disobedently haue gathered themselues togyther agaynst Moyses and Aaron (by whome he undrestandeth yᵉ pope, with Gardyner and Boner, as herafter apeareth). Bale reclaims this scriptural narrative as an account of legitimate punishment against traitors. In so doing he differs substantially from Cancellor in applying biblical and Henrician history to contemporary politics.

The point to be made is that Bale and Cancellor employ the same rhetorical strategies in their attempts to discredit each other’s approach to Henry VIII. They both co-opt Henry’s own political stance toward the nature of religious reformation into the service of competing agendas for the Church of England following Henry’s death. Henry had to be brought into polemical controversy for Bale’s readers to come to know his ambiguous and ambivalent responsibility for the nation’s recent religious history. Bale may offer oblique counsel to Henry himself or his royal successors in all of these controversial writings, but his chief efforts are directed towards laying down a persuasive
account that can adequately reconcile Henry’s troubling policies with Bale’s views for the future of church and state.

In at least one instance, however, Bale did have the direct ear of the Henrician regime, and he took advantage of that opportunity to argue that Henry had begun an evangelical Protestant Reformation that needed to be carried through to completion. His morality play *King Johan* (1538) rewrites John’s struggles against the papacy during the thirteenth century as a manifesto for Henry VIII’s own eradication of papal authority in England. John becomes a type for Henry in his struggle to preserve the allegiance of the three estates of Clergy, Nobility, and Civil Order. These estates support a group of allegorical vices, led by Sedition, who double as historical figures from John’s reign. Joined by Usurped Power, Dissimulation, and Private Wealth, Sedition conspires against John for resisting him. Faced with excommunication and the prospect of a French invasion, John surrenders his crown to the papal legate and is fatally poisoned by monks. The figure of Imperial Majesty enters the playing space at the end of the play as a thinly veiled analogue to Henry and then proceeds to reprove the estates for betraying their ordained monarch to the Church of Rome.

The earliest known performance of the play provides evidence of its function as royal council directed at Henry VIII. Records identify a play about John among the entertainments performed at the household of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, during Christmas 1538, and Bale’s activities during that time as a playwright under Cromwell’s patronage suggest this play to be his. Scholars are aware that the culture of Henrician political drama invited writers like Bale, John Skelton, or Thomas
Heywood to criticize or counsel a patron through the dramatic medium in ways that would have been more difficult or even impossible through other venues and genres of advice giving. Given its treatment of Henry’s religious policies and the known auspices of its first performance, it is probable that in *King Johan*, Bale offers praise of and counsel to both Cranmer and Cromwell as royal agents. By adopting a more radical stance against objectionable religious practices within a broader framework of critique that would more easily appeal to Henry’s interests, Bale tries to persuade the Henrician establishment to undertake more thoroughgoing evangelical reforms. The supposed seditious nature of auricular confession and outward ceremony, for example, occupies a central place in the drama because Henry was opposed to both elements of traditional worship. On the other hand, a play about the dangers of the roman-rite mass would have been less likely to appeal either to Henry or his principal advisors. *King Johan* functions not only as regime propaganda likely produced under Cromwell’s auspices. Because the papal-backed character of Sedition is scarcely punished in the play, it also attempts to persuade Henry to do more for the Protestant cause.\(^{93}\)

Not only did *King Johan* offer counsel to Henry VIII and his associates, however. It also presented the same story of an intractable, omnipresent Sedition who flouted royal authority at the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign. The play yokes John and Henry VIII in response to Henry’s handling of the Royal Supremacy, but we know that Bale made changes to the text as late as the early 1560s. *King Johan* did not reach print until the nineteenth century, but it survives in a manuscript that provides evidence of Bale’s ongoing revisions over the course of more than two decades. The play exists as a
composite text in two separate hands that have been described as the “A” and “B” texts by modern editors. The first is that of a scribe and may represent a version of the play similar to that performed during the 1530s. The second hand is Bale’s own and records a number of substantive changes, including the addition of passages and the whole-scale rewriting and expansion of the play’s conclusion. Internal evidence reveals that some of his additions can date no earlier than the early years of the reign of Elizabeth, and a portion of the pages that record Bale’s autograph changes contain an unmistakably Elizabethan watermark. Some scholars believe that the changes contained within the “B” text accurately represent the contents of the lost conclusion of the “A” text, but we should not be quick to dismiss the work in its current form as a record of Bale’s views concerning Henry VIII as they evolved over a number of years. At the same time, dating Bale’s changes to the “A” text is very difficult, and much of the new material may simply be “A” material reworked in a slightly different way. The answers to these questions may never be found, since the original ending of the “A” version is lost. The revisions may have been substantial, especially given the possibility that Bale reworked the play for performance before Queen Elizabeth a few years before his death. The conclusion of the “B” text contains an apparent reference to Elizabeth’s proclamation against Anabaptists and an explicit comment from the character of Nobility that the current ruler is a female. Moreover, the nineteenth-century discovery of the manuscript in an archive in Ipswich, where we know Elizabeth visited during August 1561, raises the possibility that Bale may have made some of his changes with an eye toward an Elizabethan royal performance. In any event, the notion of a ubiquitous Sedition certainly possessed
relevance to the estates of the realm during the period that intervened between the play’s initial performance and Bale’s death in 1563. Bale very possibly invested effort over the course of many years in this dramatic story as a vehicle of counsel about King Henry’s involvement in England’s spiritual affairs.\textsuperscript{98}

Unanswered questions surround the \textit{King Johan} manuscript. The large number of extant “B” text lines suggests that this version may go significantly beyond the lost “A” text. Both versions of the text draw attention to John’s resistance to clerical conspiracy. This would have resonated with Henry’s policies of the 1530s and confirmed Bale’s conflation of the John-Henry persona. Bale heightens this conflation in his revisions. Near the end of the first act, for example, the vices agree to unite their efforts in opposing John. Sedition predicts that after they subdue John, “for three hundred yers all Englond shall yt rewe” (line 776). Because John ruled during the first two decades of the thirteenth century, Sedition’s remark brings the period of the vices’ influence through to the initial years of Henry’s reign. It is significant that Imperial Majesty succeeds in preserving the loyalty of the estates where John had failed, and, in this respect, Henry VIII functions as John’s successor in the struggle against Antichrist. Because Imperial Majesty appears nowhere in the surviving “A” text, Henry’s presence in the play through this character may represent an afterthought on the part of Bale.\textsuperscript{99}

If Imperial Majesty enters the play after the initial performance of \textit{King Johan}, Bale’s revisions transform the traditional anticlerical satire of the “A” text, much of which derives from morality drama, into a detailed response to the successes and failures of the Henrician Reformation. The character of Imperial Majesty might have appeared in
the lost “A” text, but the possibility that he comes into the work later should not quickly be dismissed. Bale’s goal in making his changes is persuasion. Assuming that Bale made them with an eye toward performance, both Henry’s royal successors and the magistrates who served them would have received instruction in Henry’s good beginning in reform, and they would have been warned that Sedition’s activities were still ongoing. For this reason, the fact that Bale made substantive changes years after he first wrote the play matters more than arriving at an accurate date for each individual revision. Clergy’s offer to make Imperial Majesty “the supreme head of the Churche” (l. 2389) echoes the submission of Convocation to Henry VIII in 1532, and this text appears among Bale’s series of subsequent changes. As supreme head, Imperial Majesty replicates similarly charged rhetoric from Bale’s descriptions of Henry in his prose polemics. The best evidence for interpreting Imperial Majesty as a part of Bale’s ongoing response to the Henrician Reformation, however, appears in the speech by the Interpreter, which Bale adds in his B-Text revision to close act one and create a new two-act structure to the work. In this revised segment, King John represents a faithful but failed Moses who could not lead his people out of papal domination. Bale constructs the pope as “proude Pharao” and the English clergy as “Egytyanes” who hold the people in “the lande of darkenesse.” John leads England into the desert, where it languishes until “duke Iosue which was our late kynge Henrye, / Clerely brought us in to the lande of mylke and honye” (lines 1108-13). Dating as it does sometime after Henry’s death in January 1547, this passage provides either a manufactured historical foundation for Protestant change during the reign of Edward VI or an implicit lament for lost opportunity during the reign
of Mary Tudor. In both possible readings, Bale brings Henry’s image up-to-date and
demonstrates its malleable nature. Paradoxically, both Henry and Sedition appear equally
malleable in the play. Through the treatment of each character, Bale shows that he is
attuned to the changing fortunes of the Protestant Reformation.  

Bale augments and expands the relationship of Henry VIII to John through the
counterpart of Imperial Majesty throughout his B-Text revisions to King Johan. Because
Henry’s reformation fails to end Sedition’s presence in England, Queen Elizabeth
requires providential aid in order to maintain the “glorye of the Gospell” (line 2691). As
if to emphasize this point, Sedition defies the estates during his final onstage appearance.
Bale connects Sedition to the established church under Elizabeth and suggests ways in
which his own critique of the church can be seditious but not threatening because Bale
employs an acceptable linguistic register that differs from that of the vices. Under
interrogation by Imperial Majesty, Sedition reports that the clergy of the realm obey
neither the royal injunctions nor the command to preach the scripture. As a solution to the
problem of Antichrist, Sedition’s subsequent execution seems a hollow measure, since
the estates follow Sedition’s hanging by directly asking the audience to persevere against
the still-undefeated Antichrist. At the end of the play, the Henry who appears as a latter-
day victorious Joshua yields to an Imperial Majesty whose final lines describe victory as
hopeful but by no means inevitable.

King Johan is consciously aware of its own status as counsel, particularly in the
“B” text. The character of Interpreter claims that “the begynnynge of kynge Iohan” serves
as a “myrrour” to indicate “[h]ow he was of God  a magistrate appoynted . . . To see
maynteyned the true faythe and relygyon” (lines 1087-90). At the same time, Bale manipulates the historical record of both John’s and Henry’s reigns in order to counsel the reigning monarch in both versions of the text. On the eve of the emergence of the Act of Six Articles (1539), which reinstated statuary penalties for the failure to adhere to traditional religious doctrines, Bale’s “A” text presents John as an advocate of legislative as well as evangelical change in order to affirm Henry’s current religious policies and encourage Cranmer, Cromwell, or even Henry to pursue more evangelical policies. In the “B” text, Bale seems to compress this ambivalent Henry into a stricter binary that involves the “true” church’s ongoing struggle against Antichrist. Bale’s ultimate goal is, of course, to encourage Elizabeth to take up the struggle that her father began.

This goal of counseling Elizabeth proves difficult to achieve. In order to meet his polemical objectives Bale must insist throughout King Johan on John’s divine authority while simultaneously limiting John’s power against Sedition. Were John able to overpower Sedition and defeat his clerical adversaries, his usefulness as a prototype for advising both Henry and Elizabeth would diminish, given Bale’s belief that the Henrician Reformation remained unfinished. In King Johan, Bale reflects upon the complex politics involved in advising the monarch both during his own lifetime and after his death.

1.3. William Forrest, Tudor Courtier Poet

As Bale’s ongoing revisions to King Johan demonstrate, the frequent shifts in religious policy associated with the accessions of successive monarchs shaped the form and content of royal counsel produced for the benefit of those rulers. Counsel-literature
certainly thrived under Mary Tudor despite the changed circumstances of her return to the Church of Rome. The career of William Forrest, a prolific courtier poet and chaplain to the queen, demonstrates the importance of poetry as counsel during Mary’s reign and throws into relief the strategies of counsel adopted by editors of folio Bibles and by Bale. Forrest has been unduly neglected despite his wide interests in courtly verse, humanism, and prose polemic. His reworking of the “Patient Griselda” story familiar from the 

*Canterbury Tales* is germane to the present inquiry because Forrest takes this opportunity explicitly to urge queen Mary to avoid her father’s mistakes. In the hands of his posthumous image-makers, Henry could supply both a benchmark to exceed and a standard to avoid, depending on the politics of the individual counselor and his goals in offering counsel. In Forrest’s case, his narrative poem *The History of Grisild the Second*, which he presented to the queen in 1558, rewrites Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon as a Counter-Reformation saint’s life whereby Catherine’s pious example undermines Marian Protestant “heresy.”

The career of William Forrest is extraordinary in a number of ways. Along with other writers at court, he survived the shuttlecock changes in religious policy that followed the reigns of four Tudor monarchs. Unlike Henry Howard, the poet Earl of Surrey, Forrest did not explicitly adopt an adversarial poetic and dynastic program of self-aggrandizement against the policies of Henry VIII. Surrey bears the distinction of being Henry’s last victim, having gone to the block just eight days before Henry’s own death. In contrast, Forrest thrived at court during the latter years of the Henrician period because he valued loyalty to the state over adhering to an ideological creed. John
Heywood, the longsuffering epigrammatist and courtly dramatist who began his literary career under Henry VIII, could not exceed the span of Forrest’s longevity at court: Heywood’s own brush with religious heterodoxy in 1545 for denying the Royal Supremacy presaged his flight into exile during the reign of Elizabeth. Active at the Tudor court from the 1540s into the 1570s, on the other hand, Forrest adapted to successive regimes. It was certainly not unusual for courtier poets to conform to changing religious demands rather than face exile or martyrdom. Verses by Thomas Vaux, second Baron Vaux, and others share this characteristic with Forrest. However, unlike Vaux, who fled the court in 1536, at the height of evangelical reformation under Henry VIII, Forrest remained at court. His ability long to endure near the center of Tudor power helps render his career the more remarkable.

Forrest interpreted the volatile political world around him through a very wide range of poetic forms and modes. His career displays an ongoing interest in the rhetoric of monarchical counsel regardless of which Tudor monarch ruled at a given time. Forrest combines traditional religious views with sympathy for the Royal Supremacy and loyalty to the Crown to create a poetic voice that is distinctly moderate in mid-Tudor England. He frequently urges both the Crown and the nobility to pursue virtue and reforming humanist ideals, for example. The most remarkable facet of Forrest’s career nevertheless remains his ability to perform well the role of counselor both late in Henry’s reign and during the ideologically opposed reigns of Edward VI and Mary I. He creatively adapted and revised the work of Chaucer, Boccaccio, and other medieval writers in order to comment upon political realities at the Tudor court. He infused conservative devotional
modes with new political significances. His most important works include narrative verse epics written in rhyme royal, a form that the Elizabethan poet George Gascoigne and the critic George Puttenham both identified as the English stanza of choice for serious verse.

Moreover, Forrest was an active seeker of patronage. Nearly all of Forrest’s works survive in single-copy autograph presentation manuscripts often written on vellum, which the author presented to a range of dedicatees as the situation warranted. The diverse audiences among members of the aristocracy for these poems reveals an author willing to manipulate his politics to fit the prevailing winds at court. His relationship with Mary Tudor in particular reveals an active poet who adopted the persona of the loyal counselor in order to advise the queen on how to avoid the errors of her father, Henry VIII.

Forrest’s career provides the necessary context for understanding how Henry’s posthumous significances shaped Forrest’s performance of the counselor role under Mary. Forrest’s early life is obscure, although he seems to have been a relation of John Forrest, the Franciscan Friar whom Henry VIII executed in 1538. He was a student at Cardinal College, Oxford (later Christ Church), and was present when that university gave its opinion against Henry’s marriage to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in 1530. In 1545 Forrest dedicated an epic narrative in verse on The History of Joseph the Chaste to William Parr, Henry VIII’s brother-in-law and Earl of Essex. Three years later, in 1548, he completed a translation of Aegidius Romanus’s De regimine principum in the speculum principis tradition under the title of The Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practise. This poem survives in the author’s vellum presentation copy with a joint dedication to Edward VI and Edward Seymour, Protector Somerset. In his epistle to
Seymour, Forrest speaks of the importance of educating youth in sound learning and virtue, and, in his address to Edward, Forrest fashions himself as a latter-day Aristotle offering counsel to the monarch. The young king accordingly serves as the modern-day Alexander to whom Forrest offers his instruction. These fictional roles speak volumes concerning Forrest’s poise as a writer in a world in which patronage supplied the only viable means for advancement. The poet affirms that even though Edward has other advisors to speak on princely behavior, *The Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practise* can succeed in educating the king in proper princely conduct where other works fail.¹¹⁰ Forrest also dedicated his 1551 English translation of fifty metrical psalms to Seymour, who had by that time fallen from power.¹¹¹ In his epistle Forrest declares that he has undertaken the work following the example in Psalm versification set by Thomas Sternhold, who had recently published an edition of nineteen psalms in English meter.¹¹² Forrest compares himself to John Lydgate, the medieval poet, who undertook his influential counsel-work *The Fall of Princes* at the behest of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was himself Henry VI’s Lord Protector and an important fifteenth-century patron of letters.¹¹³ Since Seymour had lost the office of Protector before receiving Forrest’s dedication, the poet’s choice of him as dedicatee after the fallen duke had ceased to be a substantial purveyor of court patronage suggests an attempt on Forrest’s part to employ psalms to assuage the bitterness of his erstwhile patron’s adverse political fortunes.¹¹⁴

In contrast to the fluid and occasionally paradoxical approach to royal counsel found within Bale and vernacular folio Bibles, Forrest proceeded according to a model
similar to that adopted by conservative Henrician courtiers such as Sir Thomas Elyot and Sir Thomas Wyatt. Before he commenced writing *The History of Grisild the Second*, Forrest had learned to exploit the model of the good counselor to his advantage at court. *Grisild the Second* extends Forrest’s career-long preoccupation with counsel by consciously reenacting models of advice giving that had thrived under Henry VIII. According to this approach, the writer reminds the monarch of the existence of various abuses and the monarch chooses to follow the proffered advice in order to appear to be ideologically committed to the principle of reform. If Elyot, Wyatt, and others chose to employ royal counsel through both poetry and prose in the attempt to deter Henry VIII away from tyrannical kingship, *Grisild the Second* recognizes the disastrous effect of Henry’s schism from the papacy and especially his marriage to Anne Boleyn and offers counsel to Mary, Forrest’s dedicatee, that she might restore the moral fortunes that the kingdom had suffered during Henry’s reign. With *Grisild the Second*, Forrest adapts this popular model of counsel to the changed political circumstances of Marian England by reflecting upon Henry VIII in a fictionalized historical narrative of advice offered to Henry’s daughter. The poet presents Queen Mary with the option of rejecting her father’s errors so that she might rule more successfully than he had done while also appearing as Henry himself had allegedly appeared: the wise and beneficent governor who listened to good advice.

Dated 25 June 1558, *Grisild the Second* replicates the medieval “patient Griselda” motif as a verse allegory of Henry VIII’s divorce from Mary’s mother, Catherine of Aragon. Forrest casts Catherine as the saintly Griselda and Henry as her unfaithful
husband, Walter, in order to commemorate Catherine as a latter-day martyr, herald the accession of Mary as a return to “true” religion in England, and counsel the queen to shun the moral and political improprieties of Henry VIII. The poet’s quasi-hagiographic approach to Queen Catherine anticipates similar treatment found within Nicholas Sander’s *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*, posthumously published in 1585 as the first printed history of the Henrician Reformation written by an English Catholic.\(^{117}\) Forrest adopts the persona of the righteous counselor when writing about Henry’s moral failings by blunting his harshest censure against the king and interpreting his reign in a manner explicitly calculated not to offend Mary. On multiple occasions, for example, Forrest does not vilify Walter even though his behavior clearly displeases the poet. Forrest sometimes presents Henry positively despite the king’s repudiation of Catherine and unflattering correspondence to Walter within the narrative.

At least one eyewitness report suggests that Forrest’s task of persuading Mary to moderate her harsh views towards the memory of her father might have been difficult indeed. Sir Francis Englefield, a Privy Councilor, reportedly told the Jesuit, Robert Persons, during Elizabeth’s reign that he had witnessed the exhuming and burning of Henry’s remains for heresy. Mary was said to have authorized her Archbishop of Canterbury, Reginald Pole, to commit this act. This story may or may not be credible.\(^{118}\) Mary also told members of her council on 21 December 1555 that she would abdicate if Henrician legal precedent continued unchanged as the law of the land.\(^{119}\) On the other hand, Pole informed Mary that she aught not respect Henry VIII as a pious Catholic and
“king of most affectionate memory” because such respect diminished the honor of those who, like Thomas More, had resisted him.\textsuperscript{120}

Forrest’s restraint towards Henry provides valuable insight into the sensitivity and complex ambiguity with which Mary’s father was viewed at court.\textsuperscript{121} On the evidence provided by the dedication of \textit{Grisild the Second}, the poet evidently believed that Mary valued restrained representations of Henry VIII even though Henry had treated her harshly following his split from her mother, Catherine of Aragon.\textsuperscript{122} By acknowledging Henry’s errors in a non-strident manner, Forrest creates the rhetorical space necessary to instruct the queen regarding how she should exceed Henry in religious reforms grounded upon a conservative humanist doctrinal base. This was on the one hand not very difficult, since Mary’s education exposed her to the conservative Catholic humanism of the Henrician clerics John Colet, Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester.\textsuperscript{123} On the other hand, Mary’s views toward her father seem to have been conflicted. Perhaps as a strategy for avoiding ambiguous rhetorical territory, the poet gives primary emphasizes to Catherine’s virtues as characteristics of the reform-oriented humanism on which Mary herself had been trained.\textsuperscript{124}

\textit{The History of Grisild the Second} frequently offers Mary exemplars of “evil” counsel for her to shun in accepting Forrest’s own version of events. Such an analysis of the Henrician Reformation was an appropriate subject for Mary, who had blamed Anne Boleyn for her troubles rather than the king himself.\textsuperscript{125} The poem contains twenty chapters of varying length. They recount in chronological order the circumstances of Catherine’s marriage to Henry VIII, the virtuous piety of her married life, the divorce

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proper and Henry’s marriage to Anne Boleyn, Catherine’s lamentation following the divorce proceedings, and the rejected queen’s death. Interspersed within this historical narrative are anecdotes of the queen’s popularity among the people and Henry’s struggle and eventual coercion to obtain approval for his divorce plans from the theologians at Oxford University. At this moment in the narrative, Forrest vilifies the dean of Christ Church, Richard Cox, as “a Chauncellor of the Dyvyls sendinge” and the sort of adviser whom Mary should shun. Cox had allegedly wielded harmful influence at Oxford during the latter years of Henry’s reign and during the reign of Edward, when he served as a royal visitor to the university and supported the controversial ideas of the Italian theologian and Divinity chair, Peter Martyr Vermigli. Cox provides Forrest with an example of the heretical counselor who preyed upon Henry VIII and set himself up as an enemy to the moral center of the poem, Queen Catherine. Indeed, the poet blames Cox and those like him for fostering a society-wide disregard for virtue that directly undermines the queen’s attempts to instill “true” virtue and advise the king in proper governance.

Forrest links a disregard of humanistic virtue with the spread of evangelical Protestant heresy, but it is notable that he does not describe the so-called “conservative reaction” in religious affairs that occurred during Henry VIII’s last years as an effective solution to the problem of combating religious heterodoxy. Instead, if Catherine’s death in 1536 had provided a platform for the growth of Protestant heresy, heresy had continued to grow unchecked during the course of twenty-two years and had become rampant by 1558. This is significant. Forrest continually describes the pernicious result of
a king’s and a nation’s failure to emulate Mary’s mother. This failure supplies the poet with an overarching historical framework and a justification for writing about Catherine in the first place. It is worth asking, therefore, about Henry’s specific function in Forrest’s historical and rhetorical analysis, especially given the current orthodoxy among some scholars to cite Henry’s final “conservative” decade as a kind of over-arching narrative to explain national religious policy.¹²⁸

A portion of Forrest’s agenda involves his attempt to advise Mary to avoid the kinds of “false” counselors who had supposedly preyed upon Henry VIII-as-Walter following the king’s break from the papacy. Henry emerges from the poem to an extent as unwitting victim. “Perhaps for synne,” writes Forrest in his “Prologe to the Queenis Maiestee,” the king “was leadde in some parte by meanys of the light [i.e., the morally uncommitted]” to repudiate his wife.¹²⁹ In a summary “Table” of contents, which contains a brief description of the narrative as a whole, Forrest observes how Henry sought a divorce from Catherine “at the Dyvyllis (and certayne of his) instigation,” becoming, through this harmful influence, “a man so headye furyous.” Once the king had determined his desired course of action, “flaterers abowte hym will finde cavyllations ynoughe to bringe it unto passe, as in this present case.” These same advisors “shranke from the truthe” by not resisting Henry’s divorce more forcefully.¹³⁰ The implication is that Mary should read the poem and learn to do otherwise. The notion that Henry suffered victimization from pernicious counsel was not new, however, and it likewise constitutes only a portion of Forrest’s portrayal of the queen’s father.
Forrest’s representation of Henry VIII is complex because the poet fails to emphasize Henry’s personal responsibility for Catherine’s downfall even while he simultaneously employs pointed typological exemplars against him. The poem’s best example of such combined censure-restraint is its implicit comparison between Henry and King Rehoboam, the Old Testament Israelite monarch who lost control of his kingdom when he adhered to the counsel of his young companions rather than the sage advice of more experienced advisers. This analogy is unflattering to Henry VIII, given the disaster of Rehoboam’s reign and Forrest’s belief that the rejection of Catherine of Aragon opened the door for Protestant heresy in the country. It was not difficult for Forrest to compare the division of the Kingdom of Israel into two smaller entities with the spiritual divisions of England following the onset of Protestant heresy. Forrest nevertheless extracts the specifics of the biblical story in order to preserve Henry VIII from undue critique. Thus, in his introductory “Table,” the poet warns that “A kyngis Cownsell oughte to bee choase of thauncient sorte, for their wisedom and experyence, and not of younge gaddinge wittys.” Furthermore, concerning Walter’s decision to relinquish Griselda, “the grave sorte weare pensife and sorye, the light wittys weare joyous and gladde.”

Like Rehoboam, Walter embraced the advice of his young companions and rejected that of the old in this metaphor. Henry VIII himself had followed a similar path when he ordered the execution of his father’s ministers, Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, and gravitated toward youthful advice during his first decade in power. Forrest certainly does not allow this allusion to reify into pointed criticism against Mary’s father. The Rehoboam story endured as a framing device for
articulating the idea of reform at the Tudor court. James VI and I, Henry VIII’s great
grandnephew, explicitly styled himself as an anti-Rehoboam during a speech given to his
first Parliament in order to suggest his willingness to listen to his subjects’ grievances.
James argued by implication that Henry’s daughter, Elizabeth, had ruled too harshly as a
second Solomon who imposed forced labor onto her own people.133

Within the context of Forrest’s address to Mary, his opinions about Henry VIII
differ strikingly from those of expressed by other Catholic commentators, who certainly
intended their views to reach the ear of the Crown. A number of writers active during the
reigns of Mary and Elizabeth share in the belief that Henry’s divorce from Catherine of
Aragon and marriage to Anne Boleyn had inaugurated a period of national political and
moral disaster. Forrest describes “what calamyteis and myseryes ensued in this Royalme
upon the goinge furthe of this dyvorsement, and specyally upon usurpinge the
Supreamacye.”134 Catholic oppositional literature written against Henry is nevertheless
usually much more antagonistic and vitriolic than Grisild the Second. Works such as
Nicholas Harpsfield’s Treatise on the Pretended Divorce between Henry VIII and
Catherine of Aragon and Nicholas Sander’s De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis
Anglicani unleash fury against Henry for destroying England’s devotion to the Church of
Rome and creating an environment for heresy to thrive. Several factors help explain
Forrest’s more moderate treatment of Henry when compared to that found within these
writers. Forrest’s sole intended royal reader had different needs than the wider audiences
envisioned by the other treatments. The damage that Henry had inflicted on the English
church probably seemed fully reparable to Forrest prior to Mary’s death and Elizabeth’s
accession. In June of 1558, when he offered Mary his poem, Forrest could not have known that the queen had less than five months to live. Furthermore, as scholars of the religious culture of Mary’s reign are now discovering, Forrest would have had every reason to be optimistic that Mary’s early successes in restoring the Roman Catholic faith would continue unabated. Henry VIII’s wayward policies could have been interpreted as carrying relatively minor significance. Forrest (and Mary herself) may have viewed England as well on the road to recovery. Mary’s rule was, after all, firmly established. Elizabeth’s government would eventually harden the resolve of English Catholics to oppose Henry VIII precisely because Henry had sired Elizabeth by Anne Boleyn. Queen Elizabeth’s anti-Catholic policies became increasingly more noxious to Harpsfield, Sander, and others as her reign progressed. When the Elizabethan regime took an uncompromising stand against the outward practice of Catholic devotion in the country, it provoked theses whereby Elizabeth’s actions appeared as the spiritual fulfillment of Henry’s own objectionable conduct. During Mary’s reign, however, the second Roman Catholic displacement into exile had not yet occurred. The first exile of English Catholics, under Edward VI, had been short-lived, but the Elizabethan diaspora would continue for decades. *The History of Grisild the Second* contains only an embryonic version of the anti-Henrician rhetoric that would become more pronounced during the rule of Elizabeth.

Forrest moderates the tone of his rebuke, but he nonetheless criticizes Henry VIII in the attempt to shape the ways in which Queen Mary received advice. Henry had received counsel from the wrong people and had deteriorated morally as a result. On
occasion, the poet speaks openly of Walter’s hypocrisy, as when Griselda’s husband
“wolde bee seene to dooe all uprightlye” when in actuality “his feche [i.e., fetch] was
cleane to the contraye.” Forrest expostulates on “what daungre ensueth to breache of
faithe when pryncis dooe strey from their bownden promyses,” in a clear directive to
Mary to honor her moral commitments in a way Henry presumably had not done. More tellingly, Forrest devotes his entire eighteenth chapter to explicating, among other
topics, “A conferrynge betweene the first Walter and the Seconde.” Despite the
discourteous deeds of his prototype, King Henry emerges decisively lacking in this
comparison. “Walter the Firste ignoraunte of Goddys lawe, bycawse he was an Infydele,”
writes Forrest, “somuche his offence the lesse if he had played the like parte; but Walter
the Seconde a Chrystyan, somuche a greate deale his fawte the greater.” Forrest’s
moderation becomes apparent when he ultimately allows his royal reader to decide
whether or not Henry had been the primary mover in the affair of the divorce or if he was
merely a pliable tool in the hands of corrupt counselors. Among the opening stanzas of
the poem’s fifth chapter, which introduces the divorce narrative, Forrest declares that it
“shall not (at this tyme) of mee bee dyffynde” whether or not the idea to repudiate
Catherine of Aragon first originated in Henry VIII’s “headye mynde.” By withholding
his own judgment, Forrest leaves the choice instead to his sole audience, the queen.

Through skillfully deploying rhetoric either of praise, blame, or a combination of
the two against Henry VIII, Forrest establishes the relevance of the counselor motif from
his medieval sources to the politics of propaganda at the Marian court. Because false
counsel harms more than offering no counsel at all, Forrest prefers that royal counsel be
prudent and not compelled, but he also stresses the difficulty of employing a king such as Henry for instructing Queen Mary. His fellow Catholics would soon express less patience with the errors of Henry VIII. Like Forrest’s, their typological arguments discredit Henry. Following the accession of Queen Elizabeth, however, the need to counsel a like-minded queen disintegrated and the need to develop channels of opposition to a hostile regime gathered momentum in its place. As a result of this shift from the agenda of the counselor to that of the determined and even rebellious political opponent, Catholic writers broke new ground in their treatment of Henry’s cultural significance. They crafted the most critical narratives of Henry VIII that would appear anywhere during the early modern era.


10 No vernacular Bibles appeared in England during the return to Catholicism under Mary.


17 The following analysis relies upon research conducted at the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which is on deposit at Cambridge University Library. I am grateful to Rosemary Mathew of the Bible Society for permission to consult its archive and additional assistance.

18 The Act for Advancement of True Religion (1543) restricted Bible reading to class status in an unambiguous statement of the king’s belief that his subjects had abused their access privileges. 34 & 35 Henry VIII c. 1.

19 Cromwell’s first set of injunctions (1536) set a deadline for parish churches to procure a copy of the vernacular Bible by 1 August 1537, but this command was problematic given Henry’s opposition to Tyndale’s illicit translations and the fact that the unlicensed Coverdale version was the only other alternative at that time.

Coverdale Bible (1535), + ii³. Herbert, 18; STC 2063; Bible Society BSS 201.B35 3.

Subsequent references will appear in the text.


See chapter 2, below.


Cf. 2 Kings 22 for Josiah’s rediscovery of the Mosaic Law.

See the description of these volumes at Herbert, 33, 84, and 101.
Daniell’s *The Bible in English* remains a fine study, but see at pp. 174-76.


Herbert, p. 10.

Coverdale Bible (1550): Herbert, 84; *STC* 2079.8; Bible Society BSS 201. B50 1. The publisher of this edition, Andrew Hester, also produced an edition from London (*STC* 2080), possibly from the press of Stephen Mierdman, during the same year. This version contains a different set of preliminary leaves and no dedication. See Herbert, pp. 46-47.

See, for instance, Thomas Cranmer’s speech at the coronation of King Edward VI on 20 February 1547, cited in John Edmund Cox, ed., *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846), pp. 126-27. See also note 27, above.

Cf. *Deuteronomy* 17: 14-20 and *1 Samuel* 8.


*Matthew Bible* (1537): Herbert, 34; *STC* 2066; Bible Society BSS 201. B37 5.

The figure of Moses appears positioned above that of Henry VIII on the Coverdale title border as the king’s predecessor in “godly” governance, and later English reformers, such as John Bale, would appropriate this scriptural figure as an analogue to Henry VIII. See *King, Tudor Royal Iconography*, pp. 54-56.

Cf. *Deuteronomy* 17: 14-20 and *1 Samuel* 8.


40 Compare Rogers’s analysis of these monarchs at *vi* with the account found in 2 Kings 21 and 23:31-35. Manasseh in particular seems to have exercised a high degree of personal rule.

41 Cf. 2 Kings 20.

42 Herbert, 74; *STC* 2077; Bible Society BSS 201 B49.4. The dedication occupies sigs. A5r-6r.

43 See note 15, above.


48 See note 18, above.


51 This Bible is preserved at the British Library, shelf mark C.18.d.10. A notice in an italic hand on the opening flyleaf confirms this book as “April 1540,” which agrees with Fry’s assessment, *A Description of the Great Bible*, p. 12.

52 Marler was rewarded for his pains on 25 April 1541, when the Privy Council granted him permission to sell unbound copies of the Great Bible for x s. and bound copies for xii s. Herbert, p. 33. Pollard, ed., *Records*, pp. 260-65.

53 Berthelet Great Bible (1540): Herbert, 52; STC 2069; Bible Society BSS 201.B40.

54 Considerable wear to the woodblock may be observed in copies at the Bible Society Library, but subsequent folio editions do not employ a version of this image that has been re-cut. As a point of comparison, the eighth edition of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1641) contains a new title page border re-cut on the basis of the original design after the original wood block had deteriorated.
Great Bible (1549): Herbert, 76; STC 2079; Bible Society BSS 201.B49 10.

Great Bible (1552): Herbert, 98; STC 2089; Bible Society BSS 201.B52 1.

Great Bible (1562): Herbert, 117; STC 2096; Bible Society BSS 201.B62.

Great Bible (1566): Herbert, 119; STC 2098; Bible Society BSS 201.B66.

Great Bible (1568): Herbert, 122; STC 2102.5; Bible Society BSS 201.B66; Great Bible (1569): Herbert, 127; STC 2102; Bible Society BSS 201.B69.2.


Herbert, p. 66.


65 King, *Tudor Royal Iconography*, figs. 29 and 75.


67 Because Mary Tudor’s regime proscribed vernacular Bible reading, editions of the Coverdale, Matthew, and Great Bibles do not appear during her reign.


69 I am grateful to Anne-Marie Schuler for discussion of these points.

70 *Acta Romanorum Pontificum* (Basle: Johannes Oporinus, 1555), sig. )()(5v; *The pageant of popes*, tr. John Studley (1575), *e2r-v. STC* 1304.


74 The Acts of English Votaries, Comprehending their Unchaste Practices and Examples by All ages, from the World’s Beginning to this Present Year, Collected out of their Own Legends and Chronicles (Wesel [i.e. Antwerp: S. Mierdman], 1546). STC 1270.

75 The First Two Parts of the Acts or Unchaste Examples of the English Votaries, Gathered out of their Own Legends and Chronicles (London: S. Mierdman for John Bale, 1551), A7r. STC 1273.5.

76 John Bale, Yet a Course at the Romish Fox, B3r.

77 John Bale, ed., The First Examination of Anne Askew (1546). STC 848; The Latter Examination of Anne Askew (1547). STC 850.


77-85.

81 STC 1307.

82 STC 4564.


87 James Cancellar, *The Path of Obedience* (1556), C1r-v.

88 *A retourne*, fol. 6r.

89 *Ibid.*, fol. 15r.


91 Cf. Numbers 16.


94 The manuscript of *King Johan* (Huntington Library MS HM 3) provided the basis of J. P. Collier’s 1838 Camden Society edition of the play. A complete listing of differences between the two texts appears in Barry B. Adams, ed., *John Bale’s King Johan* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1969).


98 I am indebted to correspondence with Greg Walker for assistance in working through ideas in this paragraph.

99 The final two leaves of the A-Text are no longer extant, though they may have contained a version of the B-Text character. If this were the case, his role is still much expanded in Bale’s revisions. See Adams, “Introduction” to *John Bale’s King Johan.*


101 Ibid., pp. 172-75.


Forrest describes his relationship to Heywood in BL, Additional MS 34791: see *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years 1894-1899* [Additional manuscripts 34,527-36,297], Part I Descriptions (London: The British Museum, 1901), p. 87.

104 For the culture of conformity under Henry VIII, see Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII*. On Vaux’s activities, see King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 244-45.


107 The following information derives from the *ODNB* entry on Forrest.

108 BL, Additional MS 34791.

110 BL, Royal MS 17.D.iii, fols. 2r-4r (Somerset) and fols. 8r-10r (Edward).

111 BL, Royal MS. 17 A. xxi.

112 Thomas Sternhold. *Certayne Psalmes Chosen out of the Psalter of David, and Drawen into Englishe Metre* (c. 1549). STC 2419. Forrest’s dedication is BL, Royal MS 17.A.xxi, fols. 1-3r.

113 *ODNB* on Lydgate.

114 On Seymour as patron, see King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 106-12.


116 Besides W.D. Macray’s Roxburghe Club edition of *Grisild the Second*, which he published in 1875, the poem must be consulted in author’s vellum folio presentation manuscript to Queen Mary. This survives as Bodl. MS Wood empt. 2. Macray does not preserve Forrest’s punctuation or font selection and does not assign line numbers to individual lines of verse, but he is textually reliable and orthographically faithful to the original manuscript. In this chapter I will therefore refer both to Macray page numbers (using the designation “Macray”) and foliation of the Bodleian MS (using the designation “Forrest Bodl.”). See Falconer Madan, et. al., *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, vol. 2, part 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), p. 1198.

117 On Sander, see chapter two, below. I am grateful to Drew Jones for discussion on this point.


122 Loades, *Mary Tudor*, pp. 76-133.


124 Catherine of Aragon commissioned Juan Luis Vives in 1523 to write his treatise on the education of women, *De Institutione Foeminae Christianae*. This helped determine the tenor of Mary’s education. Loades, *Mary Tudor*, pp. 31-33.


126 Macray, p. 68; Forrest Bodl., fol. 32r.

G. W. Bernard probably goes too far in emphasizing Henry’s centrality in determining policy at the expense of more conservative counselors. At the same time, however, the notion of an unequivocally conservative decade of retrenchment brought about by royal advisers may also be overstated. See *The King’s Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); and Ethan Shagan’s review in *The Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006): 889-91.

Macray, p. 5; Forrest Bodl., fol. 3r.

Macray, p. 49; Forrest Bodl., fol. 22v.

Macray, pp. 10-11 and 51; Forrest Bodl., fols. 4v-5r and 23v-24r. Relevant events of Rehoboam’s reign are described in 1 Kings 12.


Macray, p. 15; Forrest Bodl., fol. 7r.


Macray, p. 16; Forrest Bodl., fol. 7v.

Macray, p. 21; Forrest Bodl., fol. 9v.

Macray, p. 49; Forrest Bodl., fol. 23r.
CHAPTER 2

TYPOLOGY, TYRANNY, AND CONTROVERSY

Compared to the Catholic polemicists who would succeed him, William Forrest adopts a moderate approach to King Henry’s cultural presence. Later Catholic writers describe his reign with hostility as a watershed between the time when their faith enjoyed a privileged position of state-sponsored orthodoxy and the following time characterized by ascendant Protestant rule. Their highly biased and semi-fictional prose histories of England’s break from the Church of Rome succored persecuted recusant readers who faced draconian penalties during Queen Elizabeth’s reign for maintaining loyalty to the papacy and who often conformed outwardly to mandated Church of England services. These “church papists” possessed different priorities than the Catholic theologians who fled the realm following Elizabeth’s accession and formed intellectual communities at Louvain, Douai, and Rome. From there they smuggled inflammatory propaganda into England designed to support those faithful who endured the regime’s stringent policies. One such satirical pamphlet, titled *A Treatise of Treasons* (1572), for instance, blamed William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper, as “wicked” counselors bent on the annihilation of English Catholicism.¹ The failure of the Northern Rebellion in 1569 to restore Roman Catholic devotional practices and the promulgation of Pope Pius V’s bull of excommunication against Elizabeth, *Regnans in excelsis* (1570), hardened the regime’s resolve to resist all forms of Catholic worship on
English soil. Plans for the invasion of England by a Catholic prince and the overthrow of the “schismatic” Elizabeth simmered for more than a decade before Spain’s invasion attempt of 1588 exacerbated an already precarious situation. Tensions between Protestant England and the continental Catholic powers centered during these years on the status of Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth’s Catholic heir presumptive prior to her execution in February 1587. The infamous Jesuit Mission of 1580-81 increased views of a dangerous Catholic enemy dedicated to the destruction of the nation, even though the missionaries themselves denied any explicit political purpose to their activities. By the 1590s, the threat of Catholicism had shifted to debate between Protestants and Catholics over the royal succession. This debate was lessened to some extent as a result of jurisdictional disputes between English Jesuits and secular priests over the future of the English Mission.²

This chapter scrutinizes the reputation of Henry VIII within the manuscript and printed writings of English Catholics during the second half of the sixteenth century. It opens with analysis of Catholic prose histories of Henry’s reign that have been neglected by most scholars. Despite the fact that Catholics used history no less polemically than did their Protestant antagonists, studies on early modern history writing and polemic remain largely silent on this vast body of written material.³ Such neglect is not surprising given the marginalization of Catholic studies in the academy that has only recently begun to be redressed by the “Catholic turn” in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historiography.⁴ The failure of scholars more fully to explore early modern Catholic perspectives on Henry VIII has impoverished our understanding of how Henry acquired enduring status as a cultural icon and created the false impression that his posthumous image makers
focused solely on his alleged positive attributes in order to please either Henry’s
daughter, Elizabeth, or her Stuart successors. In actual fact, Henry’s status as either bête
noir or celebrated patriarch of the English Church was controversial. Catholic theologians
and Elizabethan Protestant divines argued about the king’s status following the
publication of the Apologia Anglica Ecclesiasticae (1562) of John Jewel, Bishop of
Salisbury. This tract became a barometer of Elizabethan Protestant orthodoxy, and
translations quickly circulated both within England and on the continent. In his
inflammatory “Challenge Sermon,” which he preached before Elizabeth, Jewel promised
to convert to Catholicism if his opponents could legitimately prove the validity of their
doctrines from the scripture. Catholic theologians appropriated and condemned Henry’s
life in pamphlet controversies with Jewel and other Protestant writers, particularly during
the 1560s, 1570s, and 1580s.

The Catholic authors germane to this study developed sophisticated theses
concerning the perceived disasters that followed from Henry’s break from the Church of
Rome. These authors include Nicholas Harpsfield, the former Archdeacon of Canterbury
who was imprisoned shortly after Elizabeth’s accession, and Robert Persons, the English
Jesuit and exiled religious controversialist who led the Jesuit mission to England in 1580.
It also includes Nicholas Sander, the exiled Oxford theologian, whose De Visibili
Monarchia Ecclesiae (1571) constitutes a systematic refutation of perhaps the most
important early modern Protestant history, the Magdeburg Centuries (1559-74). Harpsfield, Persons, and Sander wrote historical works about Henry VIII from a Catholic
perspective in both Latin and English for the benefit of learned and vernacular readers
who dissented from the religious policies of the Elizabethan regime. Other Catholic writers, including Thomas Harding, Edmund Campion, and William Allen, further criticized Henry as the initiator of the English schism. Unlike William Forrest, John Foxe, and others who produced accounts of Henry’s rule for the benefit of the Tudor establishment, these Catholic writers did not fear condemning the king himself, rather than his advisors, as the primary cause of England’s troubles. This group of writers generated unashamedly hostile analysis of Henry as the central, crucial figure in the development of religious and cultural fragmentation in England.

These narratives of the Henrician Reformation repudiate standard Protestant approaches to that subject, such as those found within prefaces and dedications to Henrician folio Bibles. As we have seen, Tudor rulers often emerge in these treatments as typological successors to supposedly “godly” monarchs and other worthies from the Bible. Some commentators describe Henry as the typological successor to the Israelite monarchs David and Solomon, for instance. In rejecting such interpretations, Catholic controversialists attack Henry VIII as a violent and lustful tyrant responsible for the “disaster” of England’s schism. Indeed, Catholic writings on Henry employ virulent typological argument based on anti-regal narratives drawn from the Old Testament. Although some scholars have identified the presence of “negative” typological argument as a coherent Catholic strategy for critiquing Henry, typological satire directed against the Tudor king is more widespread and complex than has been realized. Catholic history writers find precedent for viewing the Henrician court as a seedbed of tyrannical misrule within scriptural accounts of providentially ordained national disaster. Distinctive to their
experience as Catholics marginalized by the Elizabethan regime, such arguments belie the false notion that the Henrician Reformation constitutes a triumphant precursor to the policies of Henry’s Protestant successors. Catholic writers focus on the prurient details of Henry’s personal moral failings in order to explain what they saw as the disturbing influence of Henry’s nationwide religious upheaval.

2.1. Henry’s “Pretended” Divorce and its Consequences

Catholic historical controversy over Henry VIII expanded upon the complaint voiced by Henry’s conservative opponents, especially Reginald Pole, the future Archbishop of Canterbury. His Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione (1536) describes Henry’s personal moral failings as the cause of England’s religious problems. Anticipating the strategies of the Elizabethan Catholic historians, Pole styles himself in the manner of an Old Testament prophet who advises Henry to heal the rupture within the English Church. This kind of typological argument also characterizes the writings of Nicholas Harpsfield, who spent the last fifteen years of his life in the Fleet prison in London for refusing to acknowledge Elizabeth’s authority in religious affairs. Harpsfield wrote his Life and Death of Sir Thomas More during Mary’s reign. This work applies Davidic typology to More’s zealous devotional life, which thrives in the seclusion of his Chelsea estate rather than at Henry’s court. Harpsfield rejects the Protestant thesis of Henry VIII as a latter-day King David, the just lawgiver. The scriptural account of David’s “hopping and dauncing naked” on the occasion of the arrival in Jerusalem of the Ark of the Covenant legitimates More’s religious devotion and opposition to Henry,
according to Harpsfield’s argument. Harpsfield and Protestant apologists like Coverdale employ Davidic kingship in contrasting ways when assessing Henry VIII and his regime, particularly in the area of religious affairs. Confronting readers with the specter of imminent divine judgment against the nation, and departing from his Protestant contemporaries, Harpsfield likens Henry to monarchs whom the Old Testament describes as idolatrous, particularly in his Treatise on the Pretended Divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. This work circulated in manuscript, along with his More biography, during the Elizabethan period. Mainly a legal treatise that responds to five works that supported the king’s desire for an annulment from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Harpsfield’s book concludes with a historical and typological analysis of the effects of the divorce. Here as well as elsewhere in his work, he describes sixteenth-century England as a latter-day Israel. His Latin sermon oration Concio quaedam admodum (1553), for instance, anticipates the Elizabethan propagandists by praising Mary Tudor as both a second Judith and a second Deborah, the biblical prototypes of righteous female governance. The future Protestant Bishop of London, John Aylmer, heralds Elizabeth’s accession in 1559 in similar terms.

Harpsfield’s Treatise on the Pretended Divorce encouraged sympathetic readers to compose their own treatises against Henry VIII. It provided the principal source for an anonymous invective written in May or June 1557 titled Vita Henrici VIII, for example. The Vita Henrici VIII satirizes Henry as a tyrannous monarch by comparing him to Ahab, the tyrannical King of Israel. Both the Vita Henrici VIII and the Pretended Divorce incorporate this comparison by recounting a sermon preached before Henry by William
Peto, a chaplain to Queen Catherine and provincial of the Franciscan Observants of Richmond. According to these accounts, Peto cited the biblical story of Micaiah and Ahab in order to rebuke Henry for pursuing Anne Boleyn and for allegedly surrounding himself with flatterers. Drawing upon Peto’s sermon allows these Roman Catholic polemicists to excoriate Henry as the wickedest monarch in England’s history in the same way that Ahab enjoyed similar status as Israel’s most iniquitous king.

Marginal glossing in the Geneva Bible’s version of this narrative provides a helpful point of comparison between Protestant and Catholic accounts of this scriptural narrative. It identifies the story’s four hundred lying prophets as “flatterers” who “served for lucre.” Both the Vita Henrici VIII and Harpsfield’s Pretended Divorce go further than the Geneva glossators, however, by citing the activities of these “flatterers” as evidence that Henry willfully cultivated deception at court. According to the writer of the Vita Henrici VIII, Peto envisioned the sermon, in which “lyeinge Prophetts beguiled Achab, only Micha tould him true,” as a direct attack against the Henrician regime: “I am (quoth he) that Michas which thou wilt hate becaus I must tell the truth that this marriage is unlawfull . . . and other Preachers (quoth he) whi[ch otherwise perswade you are the 400 Prophetts who in the spiritt of lyeing doe deceaue yo[u], but take you heed least in beinge seduced you find Achabs punishmen[te] whi[ch was to haue his blood licked upp of the doggs . . .

This Old Testament narrative provoked competing interpretations among Protestant and Catholic commentators. Some Protestant writers described Queen Mary as a latter-day Ahab in their controversial publications. One anonymous tract used this
narrative to warn Queen Mary, from the safety of the continent, to beware “false”
counselors and cease incarcerating English Protestants. Those who suffered for their faith
at home are the latter-day Micaiahs whom Mary, the second Ahab, has imprisoned: “This
example I wold desyre your grace to marke well / and geve not so mych credence / to
your false bysshopps and clergye / which wyth ther lyes decevyth you (as that
multytude off false prophets deceivyd King Ahab to hys dystructyon) and cawsith the
trwe preachers and prophets / which have preachyd gots [sic] worde truly to be put in
preson.”²² The Catholic historians, on the other hand, use this narrative’s satirical edge to
revile Henry VIII as the originator of their troubles. Both the Pretended Divorce and the
Vita Henrici VIII report that following Henry’s death, the king’s burial procession halted
at the remains of Sion Monastery en route to Windsor. Henry there shared in Ahab’s
gruesome fate:

there the leaden chest wheren the body was being Cleft by the shakeing of the
waggon the Pavemen" of the Church was wett with his blood and other putrified
stuff droppinge out att the said Cheste, in the morninge came the Plumbers to
mend y^e said Chest under whose ffeete (I tremble to write it) there was seene a
dogg suddenly creeping lickinge upp the kings blood soe dropped out . . .²³

Henry’s grotesque body symbolizes the disorder that he wrought upon both church and
state in this and other Marian histories of the Reformation.²⁴ The Vita’s anonymous
writer’s “I tremble to write it” testifies to the Catholic polemical culture that understood
the Henrician schism from the papacy to represent the fulfillment of this Old Testament
type of “wicked” kingship. By describing Henry VIII as a latter-day Ahab who
deservedly receives Ahab’s punishment, these Catholic histories identify Old Testament narrative as a model for understanding divine disapproval of Tudor government following Henry’s reign. The seemingly historical account of the fate of Henry’s corpse reinforces the Catholic appropriation of the Micaiah story in these texts.

Alongside this anecdote, the *Vita Henrici VIII* deprecates Henry from a decidedly Catholic perspective by employing vituperative language reminiscent of the writings of John Bale. We have seen how strongly he focuses on the tensions and contradictions associated with the Henrician Reformation in order to educate readers. The same degree of invective saturates the *Pretended Divorce*. The *Vita* narrates the litany of blasphemies associated with Henry VIII and allegedly overseen by the Reformation Parliament (1529-35), for instance, which it describes as a “bloody Parliamen”.

In its account of the Royal Supremacy, its author recounts how “The Image of Christ crucified was Cancelled in holy places, And the kings Armes of the Lyon and Grayhound sett upp in the place thereof.” The ruin of monasteries and the starving of the poor occur “all to maintaine the Ravinous and Sacrilegious thefte of Courtly theeves.” Harpsfield’s account differs slightly in emphasis but not theme from the corresponding section of the *Vita Henrici VIII*. Harpsfield employs apocalyptic language to describe the Edwardian Reformation as an amplification of Henry’s abuses. As we have seen, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and other Protestant propagandists had described Edward VI as a second Josiah, the Judean king and ideal Old Testament prototype for “godly” rule. Harpsfield, however, constructs Edward as an anti-Josiah. “Displeasing and disliking to God and
unprofitable and noyfull to the realm,” England’s young king “increased and amplified
the errors and abuses that his father began.”

The *Vita Henrici VIII* expands upon the language and tone of its Harpsfield
source. In Henry’s “Warr” against God, “Iohn Baptiste was behedded in Prison but
Balthasor did drinke in, nay did use more irreverently (whích I am ashamed to name) ye
vessells of the Church belonging to the service of God, Jesabell persecuted the Prophetts,
Julian Commaunded religious people to breake their vowes, [and] Church treasures weare
brought into ye kings treasury.” These scriptural and historical analogues function as
prototypes for the despotism under which England suffers as a result of Henry’s
activities. The writer of the *Vita Henrici VIII* describes Henry as more irreverent than
Belshazzar, whom the Bible identifies as an allegedly blasphemous king of the
Babylonian empire. Recourse to Henry as a latter-day Belshazzar condemns the Tudor
king as a pagan reveler whose kingdom will shortly be wrenched from his control
through divine retribution, even as Belshazzar himself suffered that same fate. Julian
the Apostate, Emperor of Rome (361-63), attempted to reintroduce pagan worship after
Constantine I had legalized Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. By establishing
Henry VIII as a latter-day Julian, the *Vita Henrici VIII* repudiates contemporary
Protestant panegyric that compares Henry to Constantine in order to justify the
Supremacy. These typological comparisons supply inauspicious, indeed catastrophic,
analogues to Henry’s schism from Rome. After blaming Henry for additional abuses, the
*Vita* incorporates the biblical image of the Abomination of Desolation as a figure for the
Antichrist in a damaging critique of Henry and his court: “Would not this perswade any

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man, that this was the abominacion of desolacion spoken of by Daniell, surely though it
weare not the same, yet it was the ymediate foreruner thereof."32

Protestant apocalyptic discourse concerning the Abomination of Desolation
provides the backdrop against which Harpsfield and others developed their own
typological and apocalyptic theses concerning Henry’s failed religious policies. The
Henrician courtier John Lascelles, for example, describes the Roman-rite Mass, which
remained in use in England until the reign of Edward VI, as the fulfillment of biblical
prophesies about the Abomination of Desolation.33 In a treatise addressed to Henry, the
German Lutheran reformer Philip Melanchthon described private masses in the same
terms.34 Martin Luther himself explicitly compared the papacy to the Abomination of
Desolation when replying to Pope Leo X’s bull of excommunication against him.35 By
using this metaphor to describe Henry’s displacing “the image of Christ crucified” with
the Royal Arms in English churches, the Vita Henrici VIII censures the king with one of
the sharpest and most damaging biblical analogues available. Contemporary readers
would immediately have recognized this remark as a uniquely Catholic reply to standard
Protestant typological imagery.36

As the fulfillment of biblical types of “godless” rule, King Henry appears in the
Vita Henrici VIII as an abominable image of monstrosity. His unbridled wickedness and
physical grossness function as metaphors for his moral corruption and heresy. The king’s
“doatinge fury” leads him to make a “beastly suite” to Anne Boleyn, his second wife, for
her chastity. Henry’s “title of supreame head of the Church was putt in execucion, by
flleshing his sword in Bishopps and his gravest and wisest Councillors blood.” His
despoiling of shrines equates him “like to a furious beare who to enjoy the poore Bees honey whereby they starve, ffirst Steale it awaie and then tread their hive under foote.” Plundering these shrines produces “Costly Curious and dainty fare, for his filthy paunch.” Henry’s sale of former monastic lands following the Dissolution of the Monasteries earns him the sobriquet, “Grand Captaine Paunch.” The *Vita Henrici VIII* describes a monarch whose lack of moral rectitude prompts him to select Cranmer for the see of Canterbury from among the crowd attending a bearbaiting. Overawed by “three notorious vices, Letcherie Couetousnes, and Cruelty,” Henry leads the nation astray.\(^{37}\)

In the *Treatise on the Pretended Divorce*, Harpsfield goes even further than the *Vita Henrici VIII* in the intensity of his invective against Henry VIII. He vilifies the king’s physical body by incorporating a series of pointed mythical exemplars into his history of the Henrician schism. Harpsfield tells how the abbots of the larger monastic houses hoped to survive the Dissolution, since only the smaller houses initially came under attack. In an unflattering analogy between Henry VIII and Homer’s one-eyed giant Polyphemus, Harpsfield claims that these abbots “got that benefit that Poliphemus promised Ulysses, that is, that he would be so gracious and favourable to him that he would spare him and eat him last of all his fellows. But yet Ulysses got himself by policy out of danger. But these men could by no means provide, but that their abbeys were at length eaten and devoured.”\(^{38}\) Ulysses’s men had of course escaped Polyphemus by blinding him with a hot poker and then escaping his cave by clinging to the bellies of sheep. As a latter-day Polyphemus, however, Henry succeeds in consuming monastic lands. Moreover, Harpsfield doubts whether Henry ever consummated his marriage with
Catherine Howard, his fifth wife, “for the grossness and indisposition of [his] body.”

After divorcing Catherine of Aragon, the king “was most ugly, deformed, and transformed” into a “monstrous shape” prone to heresy, so that although he had once been “a benign, gentle and mild prince, he was now turned to a tiger or ramping lion, raging and roaring after blood.” These images draw sharp contrast between the figure of Henry VIII in his early manhood and the king who has defeated the Church of Rome. Besides the comparison to Polyphemus, Homer’s *Odyssey* provides the basis of a second analogy to Henry VIII, “[t]his insatiable glutting Charibdis and Sylla,” who devours everything in his path to satisfy his greedy lusts. Harpsfield is literally saying that Henry was a powerful and greedy monster not unlike these prototypes. The king eradicates papal authority in England as a natural extension of recklessly dividing his body among his many wives.

Harpsfield delivers his most bitter reproach against the Tudor king in a number of expansive typological arguments that employ pointed Old Testament anti-regal prototypes to denounce Henrician rule. According to the *Pretended Divorce*, Henry’s break from the Church of Rome proves that the English king and his court had descended to a level of decadence equal to that attained by the Hebrews at the moment of their exile to Babylon in the early sixth century B.C.E. Harpsfield once again wrests this episode in Israel’s history from the pens of Protestant polemicists, including Martin Luther, whose *De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae* (1520) disparages the Church of Rome as a latter-day Babylonian empire and undermines Roman Catholic devotional practices as corrupt and “ungodly.” Harpsfield encountered Luther’s work while writing his biographical
account of Thomas More, who was among those who assisted Henry in refuting Luther’s treatise. Harpsfield describes the king’s *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum Adversus Martinum Lurtherum* (1521) as “a notable erudite booke” that “most evidently and mightily” counters Luther’s “shamefull, vile heresies against the Catholike faith.” The king received his title “Defender of the Faith” for writing this piece. Luther’s response to the king, the *Contra Henricum Regem Angliae* (1522), accordingly contains only “scoffing and sawcie jesting” and “almost nothing els . . . but the faire figure of rhetorike called sawce mallepert.” Harpsfield praises More’s *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523) as such a successful answer to the “monstrous opinions, and manifest and manifolde contradictions” of Luther’s rejoinder that “neyther he [Luther] nor any of his generation durst ever after putt penne to the booke to encounter and [re]joyne with his [More’s] Replye.”

By reinterpreting the Babylonian Captivity as a figure for Henry’s split from the Church of Rome, Harpsfield rejects Luther’s understanding of Roman Catholicism as a latter-day Babylon in favor of the theory that Henrician England best embodies this biblical narrative type. Rejecting the use of this figure as an analogue for the captivity of the Protestant “true” church, Harpsfield applies the Babylonian Captivity to the experience of English Catholics discomfited by the rule of Henry VIII. On three separate occasions in the *Pretended Divorce*, Harpsfield’s narrative persona envisions himself as a latter-day Ezekiel, the Hebrew prophet who rebuked the sins of the Israelites during the early years of their captivity in Babylon. It is worth recalling the biblical account, in which God informs the prophet that the “monstrous abominations” practiced by the
Hebrews have driven the divine presence from the Temple of Solomon. In a vision of the entrance of the Temple court, Ezekiel receives a command to dig through the wall and enter to “see the vile abominations” that transpire within. Ezekiel enters and discovers images of “reptiles, beasts, and vermin, and all the idols of the Israelites” depicted on the walls. The seventy elders of Israel, who stand worshipping these images, wrongly believe that their idolatry remains a secret. Ezekiel’s account culminates a discourse of several chapters in which the prophet predicts famine, death, and continued exile as consequences of the nation’s iniquity.

Unsurprisingly, Ezekiel’s vision provoked controversy during the religious debates of the sixteenth century. A passage from John Bale’s *Acta Romanorum Pontificum* (1555) established a connection between the alleged sexual profligacy of English monastic orders and the seventy Israelite elders in this story who prostrate themselves in pagan revelry. It appears within Bale’s dedicatory preface to prominent continental reformers, whose ideas would have been freely accessible as he wrote this book during employment as a corrector for Johannes Oporinus, the Basle printer. His treatment of Ezekiel’s narrative differs radically from Harpsfield’s use of the story to censure Henry VIII. Bale links the iniquity of the seventy elders with the alleged sexual profligacy of England’s unmarried clergy: “If Ezechiel now should pearce through the wall, and should be brought into their entries, halles, and darke chambers, he shoulde not see the Israelites bewayle Thamnum, but gelded men unmaried, worthy to be woundred at, for the godly profession, offering their sacrifice to Baal peor, Bacchus, & Venus.” “Thamnum” embodies Bale’s broader viewpoint concerning scriptural Protestant
orthodoxy, since, according to the Old Testament, the Thummim comprised part of the elaborate clothing worn by the high priest whenever the Hebrews properly enquired of God through divinely established channels. Rather than seek God’s will, Bale’s unmarried cleric prostrates himself to Phoenician and Hellenistic idols that function in this interpretation as representatives of clerical sexual promiscuity.

Harpsfield, on the other hand, interprets this narrative as a type for England’s schism from the Church of Rome during the reign of Henry VIII. On multiple occasions throughout the *Pretended Divorce*, Harpsfield establishes himself as a modern-day Ezekiel in order to censure Henry for rejecting the papacy. As a new Israel, Henrician England corresponds to the Israelite nation at its worst moment, when God had forsaken it and it stood on the brink of obliteration. This biblical analogue is part of Harpsfield’s effort to find the most damning scriptural precedents for Henry’s perceived offenses. By rejecting the needs of the royal conscience as an acceptable explanation for Henry’s first divorce, Harpsfield affirms that God has rejected England’s king:

> Yet now, meethinke God saith as well to us as he said once to Ezechiell . . . ‘Dig a hole in the wall to see and behold the great abominations done in the Temple,’ which temple is every man’s heart, and for this present matter the King’s own heart. Let us, I say, dig the said wall; let us search and examine the secrets of his heart; then will at length many abominations appear. Then will appear the idols, which the King did secretly worship.47

The forsaken Temple of Henry’s heart embodies the image of a Tudor monarch who has fallen from grace into pagan revelry, just as Solomon’s majestic structure had been
corrupted, in Ezekiel’s vision, as a result of the transgression of a long series of wayward Judean monarchs. In his second point of applying the Ezechiel narrative, Harpsfield inveighs against Henry’s marriage to Anne Boleyn when he accuses the king of attempting to have two wives at once. “Let us dig another hole or two in the wall with Ezechiell,” he writes, “and then shall we see . . . other great filthinesses and abominations.” In describing how the king allegedly manipulates the law to secure a fraudulent divorce from Anne of Cleves, his fourth wife, Harpsfield further admonishes about how “[w]e must dig two great holes in Ezekiell’s wall” in order to record “the great foul filthiness lying and lurking” within the statutes abolishing the Cleves marriage.

These typological analogues condemn Henry’s actions as deserving of punishment in the same way that the Old Testament prophet explained the Babylonian captivity as just retribution for Israel’s wrongdoing. This inherently agonistic scriptural narrative legitimizes the vengeful arguments of both Protestant and Catholic antagonists in Tudor England. Harpsfield employs the story to facilitate his uniquely Catholic response to the Henrician regime.

The *Treatise on the Pretended Divorce* employs other scriptural precedents to explain God’s wrath against Henry for leading England into heresy. In one example among many, Thomas More and John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, appear in the *Pretended Divorce* as latter-day prophets who reprove Henry for his error in seeking to marry Anne Boleyn: “They said as truly to King Henry as ever did . . . St. John Baptist reproving King Herod for . . . adultery.” Harpsfield argues that had John the Baptist lived during Henry’s time, he “would have been wonderfully discontented with the King and
with the patrons of his cause, for so shamefully abusing his name and authority for the furtherance of the divorce. For, as I have said, the said story of Herod is shamefully abused, and applied to that which St. John neither said, nor meant, nor thought.”

Harpsfield explicitly distinguishes his use of scriptural precedent concerning John the Baptist from that of his Protestant opponents, who allegedly misuse this figure in their own typological arguments to defend instead of attack the royal position.

Typological argument proves especially flexible in describing the moral decline of the Henrician court. Drawing upon the Jewish historian Josephus, Harpsfield narrates the untimely deaths of the biblical figures of Herod Antipas, Herodias, and Salome as types for Henrician England. The demise of these figures transfers opprobrium back onto Henry himself. As a latter-day Salome, Anne Boleyn desires the heads of England’s prophets, and her death corresponds to that meted out to her biblical prototype. “This woman [Anne Boleyn] which at such time as with her playing, singing, and dancing . . . never ceased (as the other dancing damsel that craved St. John Baptist’s head importunately) to crave the good bishop’s and Sir Thomas Moore’s heads . . . to her perpetual shame and ignominie, lost her head also, as did the foresaid dancing damsel.”

Because Henry had ordered both More and Fisher to the executioner’s block in 1535, “the hand and plague of God did hang still full heavily upon him.” Harpsfield adopts the guise of a latter-day Old Testament prophet to condemn the king in harsh terms:

God, I say, hath poured such vengeance upon the King himself, upon his new wives and new marriages, upon the chief procurers of the same, yea, and upon the whole realm (as the horrible events thereof since ensued have shown), that we
have been wonderfully thereby at home astonied, plagued, and afflicted, and have been (as the prophet saith) a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to all that are found about us.\textsuperscript{51}

According to Harpsfield, Henry might have avoided national disaster and divine displeasure by following the example of the Israelite king David, who repented his adultery with Bathsheba after receiving censure from the prophet Nathan.\textsuperscript{52} “Happy had it been for King Henry and the realm,” says Harpsfield, “had . . . [Henry] fallen with King David . . . to repentance and penance, and thereby to have saved his poor soul . . . But he (the more pity) did exasperate his fault with other greater faults, and after carnal adultery accumulated also spiritual adultery by schisms and heresies, to the utter undoing of his own and many a hundred thousand souls besides.”\textsuperscript{53}

Harpsfield explicitly reclaims and reapplies Davidic typology used by Protestant writers. Accordingly, Henry’s lust surpasses that of all of his predecessors, bringing divine wrath against himself and the nation through the barrenness of his later marriages. The match to Catherine Howard, his fifth wife, reveals how “[God] hath . . . turned the King, as it were, into a salt stone as he did Lot’s wife, following her concupiscence, and made him a spectacle, I say, for all men . . . to wonder at.”\textsuperscript{54} This biblical analogue equates Henry’s alleged lechery with the moral corruption of Sodom and Gomorrah, prototypical Old Testament cities of wickedness. Lot’s wife had elected to gaze backward toward those cities as they fell into ruin. In all cases, Henry’s heinous actions against the Church of Rome result in the gravest of national disasters.
The conclusion of the *Pretended Divorce* describes how England’s recent troubles follow naturally from Henry’s offenses. Harpsfield thus resorts to the Old Testament prophet Joel to describe the accession of Edward VI as an invasion of locusts that succeeded on the basis of Henry’s improprieties:

That which the palmer worm left the grasshopper did eat, and that which the grasshopper left the canker worm did eat, and that which remained from the canker worm the caterpillar did eat. Thus seemed Joell to cry out rather to us than to the Jews,—O, you priests, gird yourselves and lament; cry out and howl, you that are ministers of the altar; come you the ministers of my God, and lie all night in sackcloth, for the meat-offering and the drink-offering (the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ) is taken away from the house of our God.55

In this metaphor the grasshopper, canker worm, and caterpillar complete the destructive labors of the Henrician palmerworm. The wearing of sackcloth signifies abject despair throughout Harpsfield’s Old Testament sources, so his plea for Tudor clerics to gird themselves in sackcloth is desperate. The religious situation in England is dire because of the errors of Henry VIII. Joel’s grief over the cessation of propitiatory sacrifice in the Temple of Solomon anticipates the Edwardian regime’s abandonment of the Mass-rite in England as a consequence of Henry’s schism. Uniquely Catholic typological invective of this sort evokes the idea of the body politic distempered, saturating the *Pretended Divorce* as the only acceptable explanation for the wounds that Harpsfield believes Henry had inflicted on the nation.
Nicholas Harpsfield’s historical writing on Henry VIII contains polemical themes that recur elsewhere in works by contemporary Catholic historians. Robert Persons, the prominent Elizabethan Jesuit, for example, envisioned his Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicanae as a continuation of Harpsfield’s Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica (1622) that would bring that history up to date for the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. In a manner similar to John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments, Persons’s Certamen combines the annalistic style of medieval chronicle history with a selection of documents transcribed into a coherent narrative of English church history. It also contains similarly violent Old Testament typological invective against Henry. Persons describes Henry as a latter-day Jeroboam, for instance. He was the first ruler of the divided kingdom of Israel and functioned as a prototype for idolatrous monarchy in Tudor England. Henry also emerges as a modern-day Nimrod, the legendary founder of Babylon according to the Old Testament. Printed marginal glosses in the Geneva Bible (1560) again provide a helpful point of comparison to the discussion of this prototype by Persons and his adversaries. The biblical sobriquet, “Nimrod yᵉ mighty hunter before the Lord,” provokes the Geneva glossators to reflect on how “[h]is tyrannie came into a proverbe as hated bothe of God and man: for he passed not to commit crueltie even in Gods presence.” This text defines Nimrod’s alleged “mightiness” as signifying “a cruel oppressor & tyrant.” Persons, however, co-opts this interpretation into the service of Catholic polemic. He redefines these Protestant allegations as part of a broader Roman Catholic strategy to reclaim the Babylonian Captivity as a figure for the Henrician schism. In implicit agreement with Harpsfield’s rejection of the Protestant interpretation of Babylon as a type for the Church
of Rome, Persons selects Nimrod as a fitting analogue for Henry, the “tyrannical” progenitor of the new “false” Church of England.

Following the example of Harpsfield’s *Treatise on the Pretended Divorce*, the *Certamen* describes Henry VIII as the modern-day equivalent of a number of Old Testament prototypical figures of “wickedness.” Chief among these are Israelite and Judean monarchs whom the Bible describes as highly unsuccessful and tyrannical. In one instance, Persons identifies Edward VI, Henry’s son and successor, as a modern-day Nadab, the “wicked” son and successor to King Jeroboam. This comparison enables Persons to make another debilitating allegation against Henry VIII as a new Jeroboam, the ruler who exceeded the wickedness of all of his predecessors.  

Nadab’s fate provides another damaging association against Henry. According to the biblical narrative, a conspirator named Baasha led a divinely ordained insurrection against the house of Jeroboam and destroyed it completely; Persons, as a latter-day Baasha, believed that Queen Elizabeth, as Henry’s successor, should be deposed through force of arms. It is tempting to wonder whether Persons compared himself to Baasha explicitly, since he participated in intelligence gathering and international espionage in the attempt to undermine the House of Tudor.  

Moreover, Persons sees Edward VI as a latter-day Amon, the king who acceded to the throne of Judah following the death of his father, Manasseh. Amon was an iniquitous ruler and an idolater, but this comparison again condemns Henry VIII. Manasseh desecrated the Temple of Solomon with his idols and practiced child sacrifice, witchcraft, divination, and tyranny in greater measure than had various iniquitous Canaanite nations. As a latter-day Manasseh, Henry replicated these
crimes as far as Persons is concerned. In the Old Testament, the nation’s sins provoked unnamed prophets to predict the destruction of the kingdom of Judah by its enemies. This fate again provides a fitting analogue to the activities of the militant Persons and his Catholic co-religionists. At the same time, the image of Edward VI as a latter-day Amon responds to Protestant apologists like Cranmer, who, as we have seen, praised Edward as a modern-day Josiah, the “godly” son and successor of Amon himself. Persons rejects this comparison between Edward and Josiah and instead condemns Edward as the “ungodly” son of his even more reprehensible father, Henry VIII the latter-day Amon. In still another bitter comparison, Persons invokes the Song of the Exiles (Psalm 137) to censure both Henry VIII and Edward VI. The Psalmist laments the Babylonian exile of the Hebrews, suggesting that happiness might be found in seizing the infants of their captors and smashing them against rocks. Persons insinuates that Henry would have crushed his son, Edward, to death had he known that Edward would go on to approve such a high level of destruction against the Church of Rome. Persons here again co-opts the Babylonian Captivity of the Israelites for Catholic propagandistic purposes. By incorporating contempt against both Henry and his royal successors into this work, Persons explains the nation’s suffering as the consequence of Henry’s moral failures.

2.2. Heresy and Incest in the First Published Catholic Response to Henry VIII

Following Elizabeth’s accession to the throne in 1558, Catholic writers could not publish their analyses of Henry’s schism within England. The first such work to appear in print is Nicholas Sander’s *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*, which was
published posthumously in Rheims, in all likelihood, in 1585. This work established the definitive Catholic interpretation of Henry VIII that would endure until being supplanted by the researches of the nineteenth-century Catholic historian, John Lingard. Originally published in Latin for a learned continental audience eager for knowledge of the causes of England’s schism, the *Schismatis Anglicani* went into a number of early modern editions that offer substantially different analysis of Henry VIII as a figure responsible for the plight of displaced English Catholics. The reasons for the revisions to the book’s treatment of Henry are not far to seek. Editors updated Sander’s book in light of developments that had transpired since the previous edition had gone to press. Sander’s work incorporated new historical detail through narrative accretion in successive early modern editions. As editors transformed Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* over time, narrative material on Henry VIII underwent substantial modification through a process of ongoing topical revision. Studying these differences comparatively allows the researcher to assess Henry’s evolving importance in the minds of subsequent Catholic editors of this important and largely understudied work.

The importance of the *Schismatis Anglicani* to the posthumous reputation of Henry VIII cannot be adequately assessed without understanding the nature of these revisions and the differences between the book’s earliest editions and extant contemporary manuscript copies of the work. Even though scholars have not wholly neglected this subject, difficult problems still remain unsolved. In particular, the failure adequately to account for the substantial changes between the first (1585) and second (1586) editions of the *Schismatis Anglicani* has restricted knowledge of the response of
the Elizabethan Catholic community in exile to Henry’s break from the papacy. Because the second edition, which appeared in Rome in 1586, established a textual model for subsequent editions, the present inquiry does not investigate later printed versions. It does consider two extant manuscript copies of the book, however, which differ significantly from the first printed editions and which have largely eluded sustained analysis. One of these manuscripts is the more important because it contains substantive marginal annotation in the hand of Robert Persons. Although two English translations of the *Schismatis Anglicani* have appeared in print, neither displays an awareness of these manuscripts nor provides a satisfactory account of the book’s textual history. Consequently, scholars relying upon either published translation at the expense of the earliest texts risk perpetuating misinformation about the ways in which the Elizabethan Catholic community used Sander’s work to ponder Henry VIII as the originator of their troubles.

Nicholas Sander was born about 1530 in Charlwood, Surrey, at a time when Henry was already moving to distance England from the Church of Rome. After being educated at Winchester School, he held a fellowship at New College, Oxford, but left England for Rome after Elizabeth acceded to the throne. Sander attended the final meeting of the Council of Trent as a theologian assisting the German Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius, with whom he traveled to Poland after the conclusion of the Council. He then joined the theology faculty at the University of Louvain and resided among the English Catholic community in exile. From there Sander published controversial works in response to John Jewel’s “Challenge Sermon” (1560) and *Apologia Anglicanae*
Ecclesiasticae (1562) and also worked on his most important work, the De Visibili Monarchia Ecclesiae. Following its publication in 1571, he returned to Rome and then migrated to the court of Philip II at Madrid, where he began to compose the Schismatis Anglicani and attempt to persuade King Philip to finance an invasion of England. He traveled to Ireland in 1579 to assist in an attempt to overthrow the English occupation of the island, subdue the people to Catholicism, and establish a staging ground for the reconquest of England. After this rebellion met defeat, Sander died of dysentery in 1581.  

English Protestant authorities displayed an awareness of Sander’s threat to orthodox interpretations of Henry VIII and his reign. Writing to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, from Paris on 16 July 1567, for example, Sir Henry Norris derided Sander as “a most wicked Englishman” “who has set forth two most detestable works . . . wherein he speaks most irreverently of Henry VIII.” In a letter to Cecil dated 22 November 1572, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, describes Sander’s recently published De Visibili Monarchia Ecclesiae as a “bablinge booke,” and in a second letter, dated 13 December of the same year, Parker informs Cecil that he has commissioned a rebuttal of those portions of this work “as concerneth the hono’r and state of y’ realme, the dignitie and legitimacion of our Prince with iuste defence of kinge henries honor, Quene Annes, and partlie yo’ owne.” Cecil himself calls Sander a “lewde schollar.” The seventeenth-century ecclesiastical historian Peter Heylyn articulated a widely accepted viewpoint when he described Sander as “Dr. Slanders” for allegedly disseminating pernicious information concerning Henry VIII. Heylyn accordingly called the Schismatis Anglicani “his pestilent and seditious book.”
Such antagonistic rhetoric against Sander ignores the specific material circumstances that underlie the first published editions of his book. There is agreement among scholars that the 1585 Rheims edition of the Schismatis Anglicani preserves Sander’s own text for the pre Elizabethan material. Edward Rishton, the seminary priest who prepared this edition for publication, revised Sander’s own draft of the Elizabeth material, but the Henry VIII segment is probably the author’s.\textsuperscript{77} Sander’s goal above all was to discredit the legitimacy of Elizabeth’s government by undermining the character of the queen’s parents. For this reason he publicizes the highly contentious theory that Henry VIII incestuously sired Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth’s mother, before marrying her. A number of passages describe Henry’s personal moral character as irreverent and scandalous. In one instance, the king laughs when Sir Francis Bryan, one of his counselors, sanctions his sovereign’s alleged debauching of both Anne and her mother, Elizabeth, by comparing the same to the act of devouring a hen and then consuming its chicks. In reply, Henry compliments Bryan as his “vicar of hell.” When Anne’s purported father, Thomas Boleyn, questions the king about Anne’s paternity, the king dismisses him brusquely, and his wisest counselors attempt to dissuade him from marrying a woman of such reportedly loose morals.\textsuperscript{78} These charges against Henry are similar to the corporeal imagery from the Catholic manuscript histories. They give Sander’s book a narrative flavor and a fuller and more systematic expression than would be present in a more traditional theological polemic.

The Schismatis Anglicani fuses various satirical commonplaces with razor-sharp resentment against King Henry. Cardinal Thomas Wolsey attracts a standard rebuke, for
example, as a sycophant at the Henrician court who is partially responsible for the king’s insolence. Sander employs a chatty, gossipy tone to depict the court as a haunt of swindlers and heretics who orbit the king. Henry appears as it were like the unofficial ringleader of this group. The king is fully humanized, a man who succumbs to religious error on account of his wayward passions. At the same time, Sander never departs from his harsh caricature of a depraved king who deliberately scorns his own salvation in order to possess Anne. He argues that God himself had given Henry over to corruption and the worship of his passions. In this particular moment, Sander places Henry among the rejecters of religious “truth” from Saint Paul’s letter to the Romans. The first chapter of that letter tells how these individuals forsake “truth” in exchange for sexual perversion. Henry displays this pattern by putting away his legitimate wife and embracing Anne, whom Sander vilifies as a whore who enjoyed the favors of the king of France before being embraced by Henry. Sander further condemns Henry as the fulfillment of scriptural prophecy concerning the Antichrist, whose improprieties are akin to those of the Old Testament kings who led the people in the worship of the Canaanite god, Baal. Like Harpsfield’s Treatise, the Schismatis Anglicani speaks well of the beginning of Henry’s reign, but the king’s attraction to Anne changes the course of his rule. It reenacts the errors of the Israelite king Solomon, who abandoned his wisdom in exchange for numerous concubines.

Sander’s themes concerning Henry’s concupiscence, his status as the fulfillment of Old Testament prototypes, and his corpulence derive from Harpsfield, whose works may have been available to him. Readers learn from the Schismatis Anglicani how
Henry becomes so physically massive at the end of his life that he can barely pass through doors and cannot climb stairs. His blood congeals on his deathbed, leading him to despair his life. In these and other instances, Sander shares Harpsfield’s association between the king’s grotesque physical appearance and his moral health. The attempt to explain England’s religious turmoil as the result of Henry’s immorality and the subsequent effort to cure that immorality through history writing characterizes the sixteenth century Catholic community in exile. In this way the \textit{Schismatis Anglicani} extends the same project undertaken by Reginald Pole’s \textit{Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione} (1536). The Elizabethan Catholics desired to compose a collective history of Henry’s reign from their own perspective.

The only known early translation of the \textit{Schismatis Anglicani} into English does not measurably alter the caustic analysis of Henry VIII found within the 1585 Rheims edition. The translator does not identify himself on the manuscript itself, which resides among the Hargrave manuscripts in the British Library and represents a fair copy written in a contemporary late-Tudor or early-Stuart secretary script. Comparison between the manuscript and early printed editions indicates that the translator worked from the 1585 Rheims text. Evidence of a government crackdown late in Elizabeth’s reign against an English translation-at-press survives among the State Papers in the National Archives, but if this English edition was ever produced it cannot now be located, and nothing on the manuscript identifies it with this project in any case. The manuscript does provide evidence of the ways in which Sander shaped hostile response to Henry VIII, however, as at least one later reader found delight in the discussion of Henry found here. An
eighteenth-century cursive hand describes the work as treating “Calumnies concerning A Boleyn.” The same hand records colorful marginal assertions throughout the text, such as “Henry had carnal knowledge of the Mother of A Bullen.” These interpolations focus on Henry’s alleged sexual profligacy with both Anne Boleyn and her mother.  

Sander’s responsibility for shaping hostile response to Henry VIII was the product of posthumous interpretation of the *Schismatis Anglicani*. Editors and publishers expanded and updated the book in different ways. The so-called Tower Diary appeared as an appendix beginning with the 1586 Rome edition, for example. This extraneous narrative describes recent sufferings of English Catholics in the Tower of London and shifts the focus of the *Schismatis Anglicani* from history writing toward martyrology.  

Henry likewise attracts new condemnation in subsequent editions, particularly in the 1586 Rome edition. Editors of this version thoroughly revised the 1585 Rheims edition in preparing this text. It contains twenty-five percent more paper than its predecessor, even though both editions are octavos. At thirty-four sheets per book, the Rome edition was costlier to produce than the Rheims, which required about twenty-seven sheets per book. Paper was the most expensive single component in the production process of a hand-press book. The second edition’s greater investment in paper stock corresponds to its title-page claim to be more accurate than its 1585 predecessor (*nunc iterum locupletius & castigatius editi*).  

The 1586 Rome text accentuates and expounds themes of opposition to Henry VIII found within the earlier edition. New emphasis on homebred disorders during the Boleyn ascendancy at court (1533-36) over and above the intrigues of foreign Protestant
evangelicals demonstrates the complicated ways in which Sander’s analysis of Henry’s reign provoked ongoing revision by later editors. These changes influenced the portrayal of Henry himself in the new version. The 1586 text interpolates lengthy discussions, for example, that clarifies Henry’s responsibility for religious error. When the schism from the papacy permanently separated Henry from the Catholic Church, “the King himself and some Bishops he appointed or drew to his party, abandoned by the spirit of God, defiled the simplicity of the faith with various errors.” By revising sacramental doctrines as he saw fit, Henry betrayed his desire “to pass for a pious king, and one filled with veneration for the saints.” Nevertheless, he “seized on the church vestments, and confiscated the shrines and precious relics of the Saints to his exchequer. He was, in a word, a king, devoid of faith or religion; a second Mahomet, whom from many religions, formed one, according to his own inclination.” This edition of Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* presents Henry as a more fully realized tyrant than does the 1585 Rheims text.

The editor(s) of the 1586 *Schismatis Anglicani* frequently provide additional polemical and historical details designed to accentuate or even “correct” Sander’s initial analysis. The “unrelenting and savage barbarity” with which Henry “pillaged” the monasteries thus provokes a new notice in the 1586 edition to the effect that, should Henry VII rise from his tomb, he would “curse the hour, he begot him [Henry VIII], and the day, which gave birth to a monster, so disgraceful to so pious a family.” Furthermore, Henry II, who had ordered the murder of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170, “was a bad prince, indeed; but, by far less cruel than Henry VIII,” who had “loaded twenty-six waggons with the spoils” taken from Becket’s shrine at Canterbury. Pope
Paul III laments in the 1586 edition that, in addition to other improprieties, Henry VIII “banished the monks, and supplied their place, with wild beasts, honored them with his society, as he clothed himself with their nature, and thus transformed himself into a brute: an act of atrocity, as unheard of among Christians as even among Turks.”

Details concerning Henry’s fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves and the king’s taxation policy following the Dissolution bring condemnation against “this sacrilegious and profligate prince” whose actions emerge from “unbounded rapacity” and “intolerable pride.” Although Henry converts some former monastic holdings into parish churches near the end of his life, this ferocious assault against his perceived lechery does not abate. “So unbridled was his passion for the sex, especially when advanced in years, that he scarce ever saw any beautiful female, whom he did not desire, and desired but very few, whom he did not violate.” “Henry’s death was agreeable to his subjects” because they “detested him, for his infamous conduct.” None of this invective appears in the 1585 Rheims edition of the Schismatis Anglicani.

The question of who is responsible for the differences between the 1585 and 1586 editions of this book is complicated, but the Schismatis Anglicani manuscript that survives in the Venerable English College, Rome, enables scholars to extend knowledge about this textual history. Edward Rishton’s prefatory address to the reader in the 1585 text establishes his involvement in preparing that text for publication. William Allen, the de facto leader of the Catholic exiles, very likely oversaw the editing and publication of the Rome version. A passage in Persons’s Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicani attributes the composition of the whole of Sander’s second book to Allen; having worked closely with
Allen for a number of years, Persons could easily have known of Allen’s authorship, and, indeed, the 1586 Rome edition supplied Persons with the foundation for the Certamen’s whole analysis of Henry VIII.96 The Persons marginal annotations that appear in the English College manuscript do not extend beyond the point in the narrative that discusses Henry’s relationship with Anne Boleyn. These annotations are extensive (see Figure 5). Even though scholars no longer use these annotations as evidence that Persons edited this manuscript for print in 1586,97 the question still remains as to why Persons would focus his annotations of this Sander manuscript so thoroughly on Henry’s reign and neglect to annotate the remainder.

It seems equally possible that Persons made his annotations to his Sander manuscript as part of his attempt to demonstrate, in a series of historical works on Henry VIII, the king’s responsibility for beginning the troubles of the Elizabethan Catholic community in exile. Rector of the College from 1597 until his death in 1610, Persons worked on the manuscript while completing other historical treatises about Henry and the English Reformation. It is important to recall that the English College manuscript diverges in a number of ways from the Rheims and Rome print editions, which themselves differ on significant points.98 The manuscript base text (written in a hand other than Persons’s) represents a version of the 1585 Rheims edition. Comparative textual analysis reveals the account of Henry’s secret marriage to Anne Boleyn, in 1532, to be the point at which the 1586 edition begins to differ most drastically from 1585. Because some passages in the English College manuscript do not appear in either print edition, book one, which discusses Henry’s reign, offers scholars the difficult challenge
of deciphering the substantially different account of Henry’s character that appears in each of the three versions. In many instances, identical points in the narrative attract revision in all versions, thereby suggesting ongoing response by different copyists and editors to a central set of issues from Henry’s reign.

Close study of the English College manuscript suggests its affinity to the printed 1586 edition in that many of Persons’s marginal additions correspond to material that first appears in the Schismatis Anglicani Rome edition. However, in the absence of corroborating evidence, the survival of substantial 1586 text in the form of Persons’s marginal annotations does not alone prove that Persons authored this text, as scholars have tended to assume. Persons’s emendations cease near Sander’s discussion of Henry’s clandestine marriage to Anne Boleyn. This is the very moment in the narrative when the 1586 version begins to depart most drastically from 1585. However, Persons’s additions to the manuscript correspond to the text in 1586 that bears the closest resemblance to the corresponding section of 1585. The annotations do not automatically correspond to new 1586 material. This manuscript thus presents scholars of the posthumous image of Henry VIII with a number of difficult mysteries. Both the manuscript and the marginal additions contain text about Henry that appears in neither the 1585 nor 1586 versions, while, at the same time, some Persons additions occur in the 1585 as well as 1586 print edition. A sizeable number of the Persons emendations appear in the 1586 but not the 1585 edition, but some passages present in the first two print versions do not appear in the manuscript’s non-revised text. In addition to this, some text appears in the 1586 version but in neither the 1585 edition nor the non-revised
manuscript text, whereas other passages occur in both the non-revised manuscript text and the 1585 edition but not in the 1586 version. The most thorough study to date of this manuscript concludes that Persons began to revise his copy but did not complete the work. It further surmises that both Rishton and Allen incorporated selected Persons’s annotations when preparing, respectively, the 1585 and 1586 versions. This theory is limited, however, by the assumption that the English College manuscript predates the 1585 Rheims edition. Close study indicates that this need not have been the case.

Given its complicated relationship with the first two print editions of the book, Persons’s manuscript appears to emerge from a complicated and now largely obscure network of coterie transmission that involved other manuscript copies of the *Schismatis Anglicani*, copies that either do not survive or have yet to be rediscovered. After making his initial marginal additions, Persons further revised his work by inserting brief phrases or words into his earlier marginalia that he may have missed from his exemplar. These changes suggest the manuscript to have been a fairly polished working copy beyond the early stage of a working draft. Those emendations that do not appear in either print edition suggest that Persons might have worked from a manuscript exemplar that contained material seen by neither Rishton nor Allen. The possibility that Persons obtained a now-lost or still unidentified manuscript copy of Sander, which he then used as the copy-text from which to make his additions, should not be discounted.

Corroborating evidence lends support to the tentative theory that Persons annotated this copy of Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* as part of his ongoing historical researches into Henrician church history. His heavy reliance on the 1586 version of
Sander in the *Certamen* suggests that his annotation of the *Schismatis Anglicani* may belong to the earliest years of the seventeenth century, the period during which he labored on that lengthy history. Persons’s frequent use of John Stow’s *Annales of England* (1592) as a source for the *Certamen* also provides a clue to the function of his annotations. There is some similarity between the notes that Persons took while reading Stow’s book, which survive partially intact in the English College Archive, and the handwritten marginalia in the Sander manuscript. In the absence of further documentary research, the evidence remains only suggestive. Persons may have undertaken both projects as *aides mémoire* for the historical works that occupied him during the 1590s and 1600s. These included, in addition to the *Certamen*, his systematic reply to Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* that he titled *A Treatise of Three Conversions from Paganism to Christian Religion*. Among the Stow notes is “A catalogue of those that suffered under King Henry the eight. Of whome some were martyres, some confessoures some doubtfull and shall heareafter be signified by these letters. M. C. D. gathered out of Stowe his chronicles.” Written in Persons’s hand, this large folio sheet, along with similar notes, records important historical information from the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, in many cases also including page citations to Stowe’s *Annales*. Persons reveals an interest in a range of important events, including the Dissolution of the Monasteries, selected proclamations and legislation against English Catholics, lists of martyrs prior to 1590, the falls of prominent courtiers, and other historical material. The notes extract details, for instance, to describe the activities of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, against Henry VIII: “Bishoppe ffisher of Rochester spoke against the kinge,
the archbyshoppe of Canterburye William Warram, and against Cardnall Wolsey in an assembly where the kinge declared the cause of his divorcement: and said, that he could not be divorced. pag. 925.”

Overlap between Persons’s studies and Sander’s analysis of Henrician England raises the possibility that Persons found Sander to be an historian who could vindicate his own lamentation against Henry VIII. Both scholars saw Henry as the beginner of devastating changes to the fortunes of English Catholics.

Of course, suppositions are not facts. The Stow notes may merely preserve thematic extracts from Persons’s researches that match his annotations in the *Schismatis Anglicani* manuscript, which he may have recorded a decade or more previously. This is an extremely difficult issue that only a modern critical edition of Sander’s book will solve. Persons’s opinions about Henry VIII as preserved in his annotations are nonetheless instructive, both in terms of Sander’s own posthumous reputation among readers and as evidence of Henry’s increasing importance in the mentality of the Elizabethan exiled Catholic community. As the exiles increased their opposition to Elizabeth over the course of the reign, they turned more centrally to Henry VIII in order to provide a symbolic language for articulating that opposition.

### 2.3. Henry VIII and the Catholic Response to Elizabethan Protestantism

Tracing the complicated textual history of Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* provides one measure for assessing the importance of Henry VIII to the Elizabethan exiled Catholic community. Catholic replies to propaganda written in defense of the Elizabethan regime supplies another. The Jewel-Harding controversy in particular supplies one of the
most fertile fields among the vast primary literature in which writers debated the meaning of the Henrician religious settlement to current Elizabethan religious debate. Led by the exiled theologian and controversialist Thomas Harding, who resided in Louvain and later taught at the University of Douai, Catholic writers engaged Jewel and his Protestant co-religionists in printed works of controversial theology during the 1560s and early 1570s. Debate began when Jewel delivered his “Challenge Sermon” (1560) to the royal court and published his *Apologia Anglicanae Ecclesiasticae* (1562) in response to Elizabeth’s refusal to send delegates to a new session of the Council of Trent (1545-1563). In the pamphlet onslaught that followed, Catholic writers followed Harding and provoked Jewel and other Protestant divines to defend Jewel’s works and themselves from Catholic rebuttal. This “Great Controversy” helped set both the tone and agenda for Protestant-Catholic argument for the whole of Elizabeth’s reign.

Harding and his fellow Catholic theologians disagreed with Jewel concerning Henry’s importance as a precedent for establishing the English church’s doctrinal and devotional policies under Queen Elizabeth. The present discussion focuses on the Catholic response to Henry in this debate. Harding’s own works provide a coherent and complex perspective on the ongoing cultural presence of the Henrician monarchy. When Harding replied to Jewel’s “Challenge Sermon” with *An Answer to Master Jewel’s Challenge* (1564), Jewel responded with *A Reply unto Master Harding’s Answer* (1565). Although these works discuss major themes including the nature of the priesthood and the Roman-rite Mass, they do not yet discuss Henry VIII in any significant degree. Because Jewel initiated this challenge in his sermon by focusing on
the primitive church, Henry simply was not initially relevant to the discussion. Henry became relevant, however, after Jewel published his *Apology* because that work is more wide-ranging in its defense of the Elizabethan religious ethos.

As the battle of books broadened into heated dialogue over the legitimacy of Protestant versus Catholic approaches to English Christianity, Henry began to function in the controversy as an arbiter of orthodox doctrine. Harding displays considerable argumentative skill in his publications against Jewel by modifying his stated views about King Henry in order to drive home any particular point. He shares this ability with John Bale. Within a broad category of polemical rhetoric, Harding treats Henry VIII as a flexible subject, at once a supporter of the exiles’ position as well as their enemy or even a figure of irony and jest. In this regard, Harding anticipates the nostalgic and humorous treatments of the Tudor king that would emerge more forcefully during the 1590s. In all cases Harding does not revile Henry as strenuously as do the Catholic writers of manuscript histories. Harding is certainly not happy about Henry, but he displays a complex understanding of the king as both a historical and a rhetorical figure whose example could be made to serve the changing needs of the argument as it unfolded.

Harding sometimes employs Henry VIII to reaffirm his own orthodoxy and to censure the heterodoxy of his enemies. This Catholic controversialist brought out a double answer to Jewel’s *Reply unto Master Harding’s Answer*. The second of these, his *Rejoinder to Master Jewel’s Reply Against the Sacrifice of the Mass* (1567), refutes Jewel’s argument that the Protestant victims of the Marian religious persecutions suffered as martyrs. Harding argues that if Jewel opposes the recently reinstated heresy laws
used by the Marian government to justify the burnings, he should fault not the Roman Catholics, who did not make the laws, but his own champions, including Henry VIII: “If you finde faulte with the Lawe, that punisheth heretikes by death . . . blame King Henry the eight, who (as ye knowe) made a Law for punishment of heretiques holding and maintaining false doctrine touching the six Articles.” In this argument the Marian persecution of Protestants succeeds anachronistically from Henry’s own persecution of heretics, whom Harding defines as those opposing the Act of Six Articles. Harding praises Henry VIII as his fellow in opposing heretics. Jewel and his co-religionists who fled the realm to escape the Marian regime are consequently made akin to those whom Henry had condemned for opposing his religious policies. Harding uses the example Henry VIII to lend support to his own position and discredit that of his enemies.

Exiled Catholic writers were on the whole hesitant to condemn Henry VIII in works printed for immediate smuggling into England. This hesitation differs strikingly from the harsh typological rhetoric directed against Henry in historical treatises that circulated surreptitiously in manuscript. Because Harding recognized how Henry’s conservative example could reinforce the exiles’ entrenchment against the perceived unorthodoxies of the Elizabethan regime, the theologian moderated his critique against the Tudor king. This dynamic of complex response to Henry VIII appears forcefully in Harding’s debate with Jewel that ensued following the appearance of the latter’s Apologia Anglicana Ecclesiastica. Harding brought out his Confutation of a Book Entitled An Apology of the Church of England (1565) in reply to the authorized English translation of Jewel’s Apology (1564). Here Harding defends Henry VIII as the
staunch enemy of the German reformer Martin Luther and, implicitly, as his own co-
religionist:

Now for the procedinges of your matter, knowe we not, how Luther proceded
from evill to worse and worse, preached openly his heresies, wrote hereticall
bookes, and wrought all the spite he could against the church, against the clergy
of all degrees, against the highest states and princes of the world? among whom
who knoweth not how villainously he demeaned him selfe against king Henry the
eight a prince of famous memorie. 114

A printed marginal note beside this passage reinforces Harding’s opinion that Henry
defended religious orthodoxy against Luther: “Luthers villanie against Kyng Henry
theight.” In these and similar instances, A Confutation of a Book Entitled An Apology
demonstrates the complexity of the Catholic response to Henry VIII. In this example,
Henry throws Jewel’s alleged association with heretical Lutheran ideas into greater relief.

Harding believed that the Elizabethan religious settlement went further than
Henry VIII would have allowed in terms of sanctioning heterodox doctrines and
devotional practices. He thought that the settlement failed to provide proper
accountability in determining policy. In pursuing this argument, Harding claims that The
Institution of a Christian Man (1537), which represented the first official doctrinal
statement of the new Henrician church, could earn Catholic allegiance, even though the
doctrines that it codified were not ideal, because it received lawful approval from both
clergy and Henry VIII. Not so Elizabeth’s determined resistance to the Church of Rome.
Jewel’s claim in the *Apology* that his church has submitted itself to oversight and the judgment of proper authority appears to Harding as utterly false:

> Ye yeld up an accompt of your faith in writing ye saye. But to whom do ye yelde it up? and by whom is it yelded? from whom commeth the same? Do ye acknowledge no laulfull . . . Consistorie in the whole world? . . . Why toke ye not example of the booke conteining the institution of a christen man set forth in king Henry theightes tyme? Though the doctrine of it be not in certaine pointes sounde and catholike, yet the maner of the publication of it resembleth auctoritie and due order. The like example I wene hath not ben sene before these dayes.\(^{115}\)

In constructing his argument, Harding draws attention to the least objectionable elements of Henry’s religious policy. He then refashions them as polemical ammunition in his debate with Jewel over the merits of Elizabethan policy. Henry VIII appears both nostalgic and more fully orthodox than his royal daughter.

The Elizabethan Catholic response to Henry VIII was thus at least twofold. Privately circulated manuscript histories and polemics reviled Henry, but Harding suppresses Henry’s errors in order to defeat his own polemical opponents. He does what it takes to win his point. Harding certainly argues that Henry had no authority to change England’s centuries-old Catholic settlement. He asserts how kings had not been permitted to meddle in religion since classical times and singles out Henry by name as an offender in this respect.\(^{116}\) Still, the printed Catholic response to Henry VIII was on the whole flexible enough to accommodate the always-shifting demands of any particular polemical
moment in the battle of books. In response to Jewel’s claim that the Church of Rome was not infallible, for example, Harding rejoins,

A man would have thought, you would have brought some substantiall argument whereby to prove, that the churche erreth . . . But all your proufes depend upon your iffes, which being denied, you have nomore to saye . . . Yea forsooth if all iffes were true, then if heaven fell, we should catch larkes. And if a bridge were made between dover and Calys, we might go to Boleine a foote, as William Somer once tolde king Henry, if it be true that I have heard saye.¹¹⁷

Harding destroys Jewel’s credibility as a critic of the Church of Rome by directing attention toward Henry’s relationship with his court fool, William Somer. Somer acquired his own posthumous reputation for wit that he directed against the king’s excesses.¹¹⁸ The image of Henry joking about traversing the English Channel by foot, with the implication that France (Boleine) might be the more easily conquered, brings Henry VIII out of the realm of theological debate and into the arena of the humorous jest as a means to discredit Harding’s opponent. The jest disarms Henry as a threat to Harding’s position in the act of undermining Jewel’s. Harding can demonstrate loyalty to Henry and an unwillingness to implicate the king in the problems facing the Church in England. As far as Harding is concerned, Jewel and his fellows are the intellectual and spiritual descendants of Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli, not of Henry VIII.

Henry’s status within the Jewel-Harding controversy is still more complex than this account may suggest. One of the most interesting problems that arises when reading Harding’s vernacular rebuttals to Jewel is how to categorize and classify Harding’s
legitimate rebukes against Henry. Such rebuke is comparatively infrequent, but it shows Harding’s skill as a polemicist and is no less detached from the specific contexts within the ongoing argument with Jewel. When Jewel cites papal tyranny toward King Henry in the Apology, for example, Harding argues forcefully that papal error does not justify England’s schism. “[K]ing Henry the eight likewise [was treated poorly] of the Popes in our time about matters yet fresh bleeding,” Harding affirms.¹¹⁹ These “matters” doubtless refer to issues concerning the authority of the monarch to set the nation’s religious course apart from the Church of Rome. If such issues still bleed, it is not always clear whether Henry VIII had caused the bleeding. After Jewel brought out his Defense of the Apology of the Church of England (1567), Harding replied in his Detection of Sundry Foul Errors . . . Uttered and Practiced by Master Jewel in . . . A Defense of the Apology (1568).¹²⁰ Harding here places blame for the English schism squarely on Henry’s shoulders:

[W]hen M. Jewel, or any of his fellow Ministers, shal truly, and with sufficient reason prove unto us . . . that King Henrie the eight did wel . . . when he tooke upon him to be Supreme Head in earth of the Churche of England . . . and likewise when for maintenance of the same title he hanged, headded, and quartered so many holy and learned men of al degrees, now blessed Sainctes, and crowned Martyrs in heaven: when I say, either he, or they, or any of them shal prove this much unto us . . . then wil we say with them, o worthy Kinges, o naughty Popes, yea then wil we saie too, o the crowe is white. Neverthelesse I doo not here justifie al the deedes of the Popes.¹²¹
Through a skillful use of irony, Harding denounces Henry VIII while not appearing as too enthusiastic a supporter of papal authority. His tone matches his earlier assertion concerning the infallibility of the church in the analogue of Henry jesting with Will Somer. Still elsewhere, Harding describes Elizabethan apostasy as built upon the foundation established by Henry VIII. In a passage discussing the differences between Martin Luther and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Harding speaks of Henry as the prince “that afterwarde prepared the waie for your heresies to procede lustily.”

Harding can adopt conflicting perspectives on Henry as the need arises.

Throughout his vernacular publications in response to Jewel, Harding consistently alleges that Jewel has misread and improperly analyzed church history, the apostolic fathers, and the medieval scholastic theologians. Unlike works by Harpsfield, Persons, or Sander, none of Harding’s publications constitute a full-scale response to the Henrician Reformation. Moments in which Harding comments directly on Henry are infrequent, especially given the length of the increasingly massive tomes that constitute this controversy. The evidence of a coherent response to Henry’s policies nonetheless may be found. Harding proves that Catholic writers took a more nuanced position on Henry’s posthumous importance in their printed treatises than they did in works that remained in manuscript. His contribution to the debates with John Jewel shows the extent to which Henry VIII simultaneously afforded the opportunity and the compulsion for exiled Elizabethan Catholics to define—and redefine—their unique, displaced religious identities. The Catholic community in exile employed manuscript and print publication and drew upon historical, semi-fictional, and polemical modes in order to express
themselves vis-à-vis Henry’s schism from the papacy and discuss its important
aftereffects on their fortunes. Their complex and varied responses show beyond
reasonable doubt that such discussion was ongoing and remained unresolved throughout
Elizabeth’s reign.

* * *

Historians and literary scholars of the Catholic Reformation in England must
cease ignoring the Elizabethan Catholic response to Henry VIII when drawing
conclusions concerning Protestant religious conformity and national identity. Current
questions over early modern Catholicism’s relationship to the pace of religious change
and the nature of conversion should evolve so as more fully to encompass Catholic
historical writing. Catholic prose history undeniably provides valuable perspectives on
the Henrician regime and the early phase of Reformation in England. By disseminating
largely hostile but also subtle theses concerning Henry VIII among an international
audience and by writing vernacular polemic designed for consumption by sympathetic
readers at home, Catholic writers attempt to rally support against Queen Elizabeth.
Elizabeth faced multiple challenges in responding to this facet of the Catholic threat. She
also had to negotiate conflicting opinions about Henry that her own subjects expressed to
her.

1 A Treatise of Treasons against Queen Elizabeth and the Crown of England (Louvain:
John Fowler, 1572). STC 7601. On this work see McCoog, The Society of Jesus in
England, Scotland, and Ireland, pp. 88-89 and Michael Questier, “Elizabeth and the

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6 For a recent overview of Jewel’s career, see Gary W. Jenkins, *John Jewel and the English National Church: The Dilemmas of an Erastian Reformer* (Aldershot: Ashgate,


9 Christopher Highley, “‘A Pestilent and Seditious Book’: Nicholas Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* and Catholic Histories of the Reformation,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68 (2005), pp. 161, 167-69, for example, identifies Sander’s strategy of criticizing Henry VIII as a latter-day Solomon, who rejected God at the end of his reign. Cf. 1 Kings 11.


Reformation (Selinsgrove, PA, 1984), pp. 219-24, 228-29; and Mayer, Reginald Pole: Prince & Prophet, pp. 25-7 discuss Pole’s use of Old Testament typology against Henry VIII.


14 This work was written during the 1550s but first appeared in print in Nicholas Pocock, ed., A Treatise on the Pretended Divorce between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon (Westminster, 1878). Pocock’s preface discusses its manuscript circulation. Hereafter cited as Pretended Divorce.

15 The five works are as follows: a) The Gravissimae atque exactissimae, illusstrissimarum totius Italiae, et Gallicae academiarum censurae (1531), which summarizes the findings of the universities against Henry’s marriage, along with Thomas Cranmer’s English translation, The Determinations of the Most Famous and Most Excellent Universities of Italy and France. Cf. STC 14286-14287. Edward Surtz, S. J.,
and Virginia Murphy, eds., *The Divorce Tracts of Henry VIII* (Angers: Moreana, 1988) supplies modern editions of both works. [*Pretended Divorce*, pp. 25-120]; b) a fourteenth-century controversy between Pope Clement VI (1342-52) and Bernard, Earl of Arminach, who sought a papal dispensation to marry his brother’s wife, by whom he had sired two daughters. One Egidius de Bellamera had argued that the Pope could not dispense with this marriage, but Harpsfield disagrees. [*Pretended Divorce*, pp. 121-33]; c) an unnamed treatise by Marcus of Mantua, a Paduan lawyer who wrote in Henry’s favor. [*Pretended Divorce*, pp. 133-49]; d) The *Syntagma de Hebraeorum codicum incorruptione* (1534) of Robert Wakefield, chaplain to Henry VIII and former Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, who had written in defense of the king’s marriage before migrating to the king’s camp. [*Pretended Divorce*, pp. 149-69]; and e) *A Glass of the Truth* (1532), an anonymous dialogue between a lawyer and divine based on themes that receive fuller expression in the *Censurae* and *Determinationes*. Cf. *STC* 11918-11919 and Richard Rex, “Redating Henry VIII’s *A Glasse of the Truth,*” *The Library* 7th series 4 (2003), pp. 16-27. [*Pretended Divorce*, pp. 170ff].


Cf. 1 Kings 22 and 16: 30-31.


BL, Sloane MS 2495, fols. 15v-16f.

*A Supplication to the Queen’s Majesty* (Strasbourg: Wendelin Rihel, 1555), fol. 4v. *STC* 17563. This treatise reprints selections from the works of prominent Henrician clerics, including Stephen Gardiner, Edmund Bonner, and Cuthbert Tunstall. See J. W. Martin, “The Marian Regime’s Failure to Understand the Importance of Printing,”


25 BL, Sloane MS 2495, fol. 21v.


27 Pretended Divorce, p. 282.

28 Ibid., fols. 22r-v.
29 For the fate of John the Baptist, see Matthew 14: 1-11. On the persecutory activities of Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, see 2 Kings 9:7.

30 Daniel 5.


33 Lascelles makes this claim in a letter that appears within both the 1563 and 1570 editions of John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Days: (1563), sig. PP3v-4v; (1570), pp. 1421-22.

34 Foxe, A&M (1570), p. 1342. See also The Epistle of the Famous and Great Clerk Philip Melanchthon Made unto King Henry the Eight, for the Revoking of the Six Articles (Wesel [i.e., Antwerp]: Steven Mierdman, 1547). STC 17789; and “Melanchthon and King Henry VIII” in John Schofield, Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).


37 BL, Sloane MS 2495, fols. 2r-v, 3r, 11v, 27v, 38v, 41r, 53r.

38 Pretended Divorce, p. 300.

39 Ibid., p. 277.


43 Ezekiel 8:3-12, New English Bible.

44 The reformers are Simon Sulzer, the Lutheran leader of the Protestant church at Basle; Heinrich Bullinger, who succeeded Huldrych Zwingli at Zurich; Jean Calvin, who led the Reformed church at Geneva; and Philip Melanchthon, the associate of Luther at Wittenberg. See Andrew Pettegree, ed., The Reformation World (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

45 I follow John Studley’s translation in John Bale, The Pageant of Popes (1575), *c4v. STC 1304. The original passage appears in Acta Romanorum Pontificum (1555), sig. )f 5v: “Si Ezechiel modo perfoderet parietem, introductusque in uuestibula, atria & cubicula
istorum abscondita, esset: non ibi Israelitas plangentes Thamnur, sed castra tos coelibes, sanctitatis professione spectabiles, Baal Peor, Baccho, Veneri litantes cerneret.”


Pretended Divorce, p. 185.

Ibid., p. 236.

Ibid., p. 261. The statutes are 32 Henry VIII c. 25 and 32 Henry VIII c. 38.


Pretended Divorce, pp. 255-59.

II Samuel 12: 15-20. See also Psalm 51, traditionally assigned to the period following David’s adultery with Bathsheba.

Pretended Divorce, pp. 15-16. See also p. 256.


S. J. Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicanae (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1964) calendars Person’s unfinished history, which survives in a unique manuscript in Stonyhurst College, and prints a number of illustrative passages. My discussion of this work relies entirely on Simons’s synopsis and analysis. I am grateful to Thomas McCoog, S. J. for bringing Persons’s history to my attention.

Simons, Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicanae, pp. 85-86. See also 1 Kings 12 and Genesis 10: 8-9. The typological arguments discussed in this paragraph appear in the Certamen at I, 677 (Simons illustrative passage VIII); II, 241v (Simons illustrative passage XXI); III,
380 (Simons, p. 86); III, 560 (Simons p. 86); and IV, 34-48 (Simons illustrative passage XLIV).

58 1 Kings 14:9.


60 2 Kings 21, citing verse 9.


64 At least forty early modern editions, translations, or derivations of Sander’s work are extant. The most important adaptations include the second edition of Rome (1586) and the editions of Pedro de Ribadeneira (1588; Allison & Rogers 1.993), Girolamo Pollini (1591, Allison & Rogers 1.990), Bernardo Davanzati (1638), and François Maucroix (1676). Thomas F. Mayer, “A Sticking-Plaster Saint? Autobiography and Hagiography in

65 “Mr. Gladstone’s Charge against Blessed John Fisher,” The Tablet (9 November 1889), pp. 725-26 discusses differences between the first two editions of the work. See also Joseph Gillow, “Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lewis’s Translation of Sander’s Anglican Schism,” The Tablet (9 November 1889), pp. 740-41; and Highley, “Nicholas Sander’s Schismatis Anglicani,” pp. 152-54.


67 A manuscript English translation of the 1585 text is preserved at the British Library (Hargrave MS 311, art. 3). It is written in a contemporary secretary script and contains colorful handwritten marginalia in a later cursive hand. See A Catalogue of Manuscripts formerly in the Possession of Francis Hargrave (London: British Museum, 1818), p. 89. I am grateful to Peter Kidd and Sir John Baker for assisting my researches into the provenance of this manuscript. The second manuscript survives as Liber 1388 in the
As early as 1697, the English Jesuit, Christopher Grene, inserted a hand-written note into a volume of documents that he collected regarding the martyrdom of English Catholics under Elizabeth. He reported the existence of the English College Sander manuscript and identified Persons as the annotator. Stonyhurst College Archives, Collectanea P I, fol. 181v; cited in Simons, Robert Persons S. J. Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicanae, pp. 5-6 at p. 6 n.2. Pollen also identifies Persons as the annotator in “Dr. Nicholas Sander,” pp. 42, 44. After examining the marginal annotations and comparing them to autograph Persons letters that reside in the English College Archive, I concur that Persons is indeed the annotator.


Anne Dillon, The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 82 observes incorrectly, for example, how
“Sander’s posthumous bestseller was not translated into English until the nineteenth century.” She cites Veech and the Lewis translation but makes no mention of either that of Kinsella and Dean or BL, Hargrave MS 311, art. 3.

71 This paragraph derives from Veech, *Dr Nicholas Sanders and the English Reformation*; Pollen, “Dr. Nicholas Sander”; and the ODNB. Veech remains the best overall account of Sander’s career but requires updating in light of recent scholarship.


73 *Cal. State Papers, Foreign Series, Elizabeth (1566-1568), n° 1463*. The two books are Sander’s *Treatise of Images of Christ and his Saints* (1567). STC 21696; and *The Rock of the Church* (1567). STC 21692. Both contain censure against Henry VIII. Veech, *Dr Nicholas Sanders and the English Reformation*, p. 102.

74 BL, Lansdowne MS 15, fols. 97r and 99r.


77 Pollen, “Dr. Nicholas Sander,” pp. 41-42; and Highley, “Nicholas Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani,*” pp. 152-54 discuss the circumstances of publication, as does Rishton in the preface to the work.

79 Veech, *Dr Nicholas Sanders and the English Reformation*, p. 239.


81 Veech, *Dr Nicholas Sanders and the English Reformation*, p. 256.


84 Attempts to locate additional information on this manuscript’s early provenance have proven fruitless. I am grateful to Peter Kidd and J. H. Baker for assistance on this point.


86 BL, Hargrave MS 311, title page and fols. 84r, 85r, 108v.


88 These figures derive from my analysis of the copies of the work held at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at The Ohio State University, call number BR375 S6 1585 and BR375 S6 1586. The calculation is based on the following copy-specific figures:


Ibid., pp. 134-37.


Ibid., p. 151.

Ibid., pp. 163, 171.

Ibid., pp. 186, 188.


About three quarters of the discussion of Henry VIII and Edward VI from the Rome edition appears in the *Certamen*, either by way of direct quotation or paraphrase. This equates to two hundred forty of a total three hundred twenty-four pages from Sander that bear directly on Persons’s analysis. This calculation is based upon my analysis of Sander’s book and upon Simons, *Robert Persons S. J. Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicaenae* (pp. 90-208), which documents Persons’s sources meticulously and always mentions when he quotes from Sander. For Allen’s authorship, see Simons, pp. 30-31. For Persons’s relationship to Allen, see McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in England, Scotland, and Ireland*.

My account of the differences among three versions of the *Schismatis Anglicani* builds on Simons’s work.


This view underlies both Gasquet, “A Treasure of the Archives” and Pollen, “Dr. Nicholas Sander.” Even Simons believes that “the fact that some of Persons’s notes are to be found in the 1585 ed. proves that he made his annotations before the work was printed at Rheims” (p. 302). Why might not Persons have selectively copied material out of the 1585 edition at a later date onto the margin of his manuscript copy of the *Schismatis Anglicani*?


We know that the work circulated in widely in manuscript because Rishton’s preface to the 1585 version indicates the existence of manuscripts of the book in both Italy and Spain. Lewis, trans., *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, p. cxli.


N. D. [i.e., Robert Persons], *A Treatise of Three Conversions of England from Paganism to Christian Religion* (St. Omer: François Bellet, 1603-04). Allison and Rogers 2.638.

Venerable English College MS Scritture 36.4.3, fol. 1r. Other relevant documents include Persons’s “Catalogus martyrum Anglorum sub Henrico 8 et Elizabetha eius filia”
(MS Scritture 36.4.4) and other notes possibly in his hand: MSS Scritture 36.4.5, 36.7.2, 36.7.3.

107 Jewel’s challenge was published as The Copy of a Sermon Pronounced by the Bishop of Salisbury at Paul’s Cross (London: John Day, 1560). STC 14599a.

108 For a listing of works published in this exchange, see Peter Milward, Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources (London: The Scolar Press, 1977), chapter 1, and Southern, Elizabethan Recusant Prose, pp. 60-118. The term “Great Controversy” is Southern’s (p. 60).


110 See chapter 5, below.


112 Ibid., fol. 178v-179r.


114 Harding, A Confutation of a Book Entitled An Apology, fol. 16r.


Examples include Thomas Nashe’s *Summer’s Last Will and Testament* (1592), and Samuel Rowley’s dramatic rendition, *When You See Me, You Know Me* (1605). See also the *ODNB* on Somer.


Harding, *A Detection of Sundry Foul Errors*, fols. 17v-18r. Harding refers in this excerpt most prominently to Sir Thomas More and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, both of whom Henry had had executed.

Ibid., fol. 108r.
123 Michael Questier, “What Happened to English Catholicism After the Reformation?”


In 1588, on the occasion of the anticipated invasion of England by the Spanish Armada, Queen Elizabeth I appeared before her assembled troops at Tilbury, in Essex. There she delivered a speech that professed her commitment to shed her own blood in defense of her country. According to the recollection of witnesses, the queen reassured her listeners that she would lead her men into battle despite her gender. “I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king,” she remarked.¹ The queen here invokes the concept of the king’s two bodies whereby the sovereign’s mortal body, which represented the physical royal person, remained distinct from his or her ideal body, which represented the political nation itself.² Elizabeth’s kingly, “male” body could protect her subjects from invasion in a way that her mortal, female body could not. When Elizabeth speaks of her kingly stomach at Tilbury, however, she also invokes an image of powerful kingship associated with the earlier rule of her father, Henry VIII, whose reign was just within living memory in the late 1580s. The gendered political discourse of the queen’s speech hints at Henry’s posthumous presence, which saturated Elizabethan Protestant literary culture. Elizabeth’s Tilbury speech provides an opportunity for modern scholars to ask how Henry VIII influenced
the rhetoric of the queen’s royal self-representation during the course of more than forty years on the English throne.

Both as a literary figure and a subject of polemical satire, Henry attracted ongoing debate over the right to possess royal power in Elizabethan England. The queen’s claim to the throne depended upon her legitimacy as his successor, following the reigns of her half-siblings, Edward VI and Mary I. Elizabeth’s legitimacy was by no means assured. Among the rival claimants to power was Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, who had emblazoned English royal arms on her heraldry in a possible attempt to succeed to the throne following the death of Queen Mary Tudor in 1558. For the next two decades and more, she was Elizabeth’s heir presumptive by virtue of her descent from Henry VIII’s elder sister, Margaret. Nevertheless, Henry’s will had explicitly excluded Margaret’s descendents in favor of those of his younger sister, Mary, in the event that his own line should fail. As it became increasingly likely that Elizabeth would bear no heir, the question of the succession remained the principal political issue for the regime. Elizabeth forbade discussion on the subject, while, at the same time, she reminded others, in her letters and speeches, that she was her father’s legitimate daughter.

Elizabeth expressed complex opinions about Henry VIII in her extant poetry and prose works. As is the case in the writings of both John Bale and Thomas Harding, she proved versatile in manipulating the meaning of her father’s life and reign in order to suit the needs of the occasion. The method of her expression about Henry is as varied as its content, as the queen employs the modes of epistolary, poetic, oratory, and so forth in describing her father’s significance. Elizabeth needed Henry’s legitimating
potential to shield her from the satire and invective of Catholic commentators like Nicholas Sander, who, as we have seen, attacked her legitimacy on the basis of Henry’s alleged incestuous union with her mother, Anne Boleyn, while still lawfully married to Catherine of Aragon, his first wife. The queen herself could also be sarcastic and blunt when reproving those who misrepresented her father to her, however. She may even have harbored conflicted, even hostile, emotions toward Henry, especially during the 1540s. The evidence of Elizabeth’s feelings is not beyond dispute, but the king’s marriage to Jane Seymour, his third wife, and the birth of his long-desired male heir, the future Edward VI, certainly precipitated Elizabeth’s exclusion from the order of succession by act of Parliament. Elizabeth learned to manipulate her paternity toward her own ends throughout the course of her reign.

Henry’s importance to Elizabethan literature is more significant than is sometimes recognized. Although scholars have spoken of Elizabeth’s character resemblance to Henry VIII, the queen’s skillful rhetorical shaping of her father’s life in her own works has attracted insufficient attention. A range of other writers besides the queen likewise debated Henry’s posthumous applicability to a range of controversies, in poetic treatises and prose polemics that they presented to Elizabeth in expectation of receiving a favorable response. This group includes courtier poets such as Sir Thomas Chaloner, dramatists and history writers such as Thomas Norton, and patronage seekers such as Edmund Spenser. In the monarchical republic of Elizabethan England, these individuals viewed themselves as both subjects and citizens whose duty it was to advise the monarch on matters relating to the good of the realm, regardless of whether she accepted their
They were capable of counseling the queen on their own initiative or under the auspices of more prominent courtiers or Privy Councilors, and a number of instances survive of both kinds of royal advice. These individuals reminded the queen that she was her father’s daughter by blurring the line separating Henrician and Elizabethan mythmaking. Indeed, extant primary sources sometimes conflate praise of Henry VIII specifically and Tudor dynastic engagement more generally. In such instances, Henry frequently appears alongside his father, Henry VII, or even as the chief royal exemplar among equals, who are all manipulated with the intent of provoking Elizabeth. A wide range of poetic, dramatic, and epistolary works employ a distinctive rhetoric either of persuasion or counsel designed to capitalize on Henry’s presumed posthumous ability to motivate the queen and produce change.

3.1. Her Father’s Daughter

Even though Elizabeth’s own writings have attracted wide scholarly interest in recent years, the place of Henry VIII within those works has eluded close scrutiny. On the evidence of her surviving letters, Elizabeth’s relationship with Henry VIII during her father’s lifetime is important but difficult to assess. Henry appears to have served the princess as a role model during her teenage years in the 1540s. The princess discusses her relationship to Henry in what is now her earliest extant letter, which she wrote to her stepmother, Catherine Parr, Henry’s sixth and final wife, on 31 July 1544. Henry was away campaigning in France, and in her letter, Elizabeth thanks the queen for attending her with the diligence of her absent father. Elizabeth says that she has “not dared to write
to him” out of deference to court protocol, but she entreats Parr to remind Henry of Elizabeth in the queen’s own letters to the king, and she further requests that the queen would pray that Henry would gain victory on the battlefield so that both daughter and stepmother “may rejoice the sooner at his happy return.”¹¹ This kind of conventional sentiment suggests the daughter’s fondness for her father and is to be expected given the generic constraints of the epistolary framework.

Much more interesting, however, is the possible resentment toward Henry that Elizabeth harbored during this same period. The evidence is only suggestive, but it cannot easily be dismissed. Henry’s decision to order the execution of Elizabeth’s mother, Anne Boleyn, and stepmother, Catherine Howard, on charges of adultery provided a possible source of antagonism. More material evidence of Elizabeth’s reaction to him appears in her 1545 English translation of Marguerite d’Angoulême’s *Miroir de l’âme pechereuse*, which she prepared as a New Year’s gift for Catherine Parr. Marguerite was sister to King Francis I of France and an important cultural patron at the French court. Her poem employs a series of familial metaphors to express the speaker’s absolute dependence upon God, within a Pauline theological framework.¹² Elizabeth’s presentation manuscript translation of Marguerite’s poem bears the title “The glasse of the synnefull soule.”¹³ It contains curious omissions and mistranslations with regard to the speaker’s relationship to God as daughter to father. Elizabeth confuses mother with father when rendering text about a father’s love for his daughter, for example, and she also omits material when comparing the mercy of God to a father forgiving his daughter. In a mistake that may carry particular resonance from the perspective of the marital
politics of the Henrician court, Elizabeth reverses genders in a passage of Marguerite’s that speaks of husbands who have their adulterous wives executed. In Elizabeth’s version, the husbands themselves perish. These departures from Marguerite’s text suggest that Elizabeth perhaps fostered feelings of anxiety mixed with anger toward her father. While it is probably unwise to make too much of the princess’s errors, she was a precocious child. The departures from her source text are also basic enough to rule out the likelihood of innocent error. The mistakes may reveal the depth of personality that would later characterize her reign. In any event, John Bale published Elizabeth’s translation without correcting her mistakes under the title *A Godly Meditation of the Christian Soul* (1548). In text appended beneath a title-page woodcut image of Elizabeth kneeling before the figure of Christ, Bale invokes the authority of Henry VIII by reminding readers that the princess is the learned daughter of the recently deceased Henry, “the most serene king of England.”

The balance of evidence from Elizabeth’s childhood indicates that she revered her father in a manner appropriate to her station as royal child. Her only surviving letter to Henry himself appears at the beginning of her trilingual translation of Catherine Parr’s *Prayers Stirring the Mind unto Heavenly Meditations* (1545), which Elizabeth prepared as a New Year’s Gift to Henry for 1546. This work, along with the *Lamentation of a Sinner* (1547), established Parr’s reputation for forward Protestant religiosity at the Henrician court. In Elizabeth’s version, she tells her father with conventional deference that royal, natural, and divine law bind her to him. Combining flattery with knowledge of the king’s positive character traits, Elizabeth describes herself “not as an imitator of your
virtues but indeed as an inheritor of them.” Elizabeth’s self-description anticipates her future practice of explicitly styling herself as Henry’s symbolic successor as a means of consolidating her authority as queen. Besides foreshadowing the queen’s future treatment of her father, however, Elizabeth’s opinions about Henry in her juvenilia afford only glimpses of her mature appreciation of his political importance.

That appreciation evolved slowly as Elizabeth adapted to the successive regimes of her brother and sister in the years following her father’s death in 1547. Over the course of the following decade, powerful nobles like Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and Elizabeth’s sister, Queen Mary I, successively governed the nation. Elizabeth embraced Henry’s approach to religious affairs as a means of anchoring her own situation during these years, since her fortunes were uncertain. John Foxe’s influential Acts and Monuments, which first appeared in 1563, preserves a tragicomic narrative of Elizabeth enduring persecution for her religious beliefs during the reign of her sister. According to a note that survives at the British Library among Foxe’s source papers for this narrative, Elizabeth is reputed to have defended her father’s reputation while attending sermons with Queen Mary at Richmond Palace. When court preachers repudiated the Protestant religious settlements of Henry VIII and Edward VI, these preachers were “very grevous for her to hear.” Elizabeth later conformed to her sister’s request that she observe her private religious services in Latin rather than the vernacular, but not without protesting that these services were “set forth in the kyng my Father hys dayes.” Foxe certainly had his own agenda in compiling this material, but Elizabeth herself later practiced a kind of Protestantism that represented a modified
version of Henry VIII’s supremacy in religious affairs. It is not implausible to interpret
these anecdotes as evidence of her appreciation of the value of Henry’s example.

During the uncertain early months of her own rule, which began in 1558, Elizabeth
continued to rely upon her understanding of Henry VIII’s royal authority as a model for her own actions. The evidence now becomes much more concrete. The queen frequently emphasized Henrician policy to others in order to solidify her rhetorical hold on power. She viewed experience in governance gained from service at the court of Henry VIII as an ample prerequisite for the rendering of similar service at her court, for instance. In a speech delivered perhaps as early as 20 November 1558, just days after acceding to the throne, Elizabeth described those councilors who “have been of long experience in governance and enabled by my father of noble memory” as the group from whom she expected to select her principal advisors. At the same time she defended her authority to govern the country by proclaiming how she ruled on account of her direct descent from Henry VIII: “I am the most English woman of the kingdom. Was I not born in this realm? Were my parents born in any foreign country?” she wrote to the Spanish ambassador. In an even more pointed example of Henry’s importance to the trajectory of Elizabeth’s new government, Elizabeth described English monarchical power as a bulwark against clerical usurpation in the aftermath of her father’s break from the Church of Rome. This idea was familiar from plays by John Bale including King Johan, which, as we have seen, Elizabeth may have witnessed in performance during the early years of her reign. It is all the more noteworthy that Elizabeth espoused these views at the moment when her religious settlement was in its infancy. In her letter of 6 December 1559 to five
conservative bishops, the queen defends Henry’s authority over a recalcitrant clergy as both a benefit to the nation and viable model of governance. The bishops plead that Elizabeth not allow herself to be influenced by her Protestant advisors, as Henry VIII allegedly had been. In reply, the queen lays the blame for England’s troubles back onto the bishops themselves:

As for our father being withdrawn from the supremacy of Rome by schismatical and heretical counsels and advisers; who, we pray, advised him more, or flattered him, than you. . . . Are not ye then those schismatics and heretics? If so, suspend your evil censures. Recollect, was it our sister’s conscience made her so averse to our father’s and brother’s actions, as to undo what they had perfected? Or was it not you, or such like advisers, that dissuaded her, and stirred her up against us and other of the subjects? 24

Harmful clerical counsel rather than Henry VIII’s religious policies is to blame for Elizabeth’s mistreatment during Mary’s reign in this instance. The queen believes that even Mary herself would have refrained from “undoing” what Henry “had perfected” if conservative clerics had not intervened. This letter survives in a seventeenth-century compilation by the ecclesiastical historian, John Strype, who is not always a reliable source. If he imposed his own agenda for the history of the Church of England onto his sources, some of which are now lost, he continued patterns of Henrician mythmaking that were already underway in Elizabeth’s day.

Elizabeth’s paternity supplied her with a powerful weapon against dissent and sedition throughout her reign. Following the suppression of the Northern Rebellion in
1569, the most serious domestic uprising that Elizabeth would confront, the queen sanctioned the delivery of a speech in her name from all pulpits in the country. In this *Declaration of the Queen’s Proceedings in Church and State*, the queen affirms that Henry’s reign provides a high point of obedience to the “laws of God and this Realm.” Elizabeth reviews her father’s royal authority in an explicit attempt to impress upon a national audience her strategy to join him as a formidable enforcer of justice:

We know no other authority, either given or used by us, as Queen and Governor of this Realm, than hath been by the laws of God and this Realm always due to our progenitors, sovereigns and kings of the same . . . [T]rue it is that this authority hath been in the time of certain of our noble progenitors some hundred years past, as by laws, records, and stories doth appear (and specially in the Reign of our noble father King Henry the viij\(^{\text{th}}\) and our dear brother King Edward the vj\(^{\text{th}}\)) more clearly recognized by all the estates of the Realm, as the like hath been in our time.\(^{25}\)

Elizabeth goes on to declare that her father’s lawful successor, only she has the authority to set the religious policy of the country. The queen’s involvement in writing this work may have been minimal, but if that is the case, Henry provided the broader Elizabethan governmental establishment with a benchmark for determining policy, not just the queen herself. Paradoxically, however, rebellion also afforded Elizabeth the opportunity to assert mercy as a coherent and deliberate departure from her father’s more draconian measures. In a 29 June 1573 letter to Sir William Fitzwilliam, Lord Deputy of Ireland, the queen reproves Fitzwilliam for mishandling a series of incidents, one involving the
murder of a friend of the deputy’s nephew by a servant. Elizabeth warns Fitzwilliam that Henry had removed one of his deputies merely for insulting another councilor—a much less serious crime:

If this had been in our father’s time – who removed a deputy thence for calling of one of the Council dissenting from his opinion, “Churl” – you may soon conceive how it would have been taken. Our moderate reign and government can be contented to bear this, so you will take this for a warning, and hereafter have before your eyes . . . first God’s honor and then justice and our service.26

These instances reveal how Elizabeth and her publicists manipulated Henry’s reputation in order to assert political control in governing the realm.

At moments of political unrest, the queen attempted to profit from her father’s reputation as a harsh enforcer of justice. She did this either by aligning her own response alongside his or employing his behavior as a standard that she could attain if she wished but chooses instead to avoid. More fundamentally, she used his reign as a framework for advancing her agenda for England’s religious identity and the future of the nation. Attuned as she was to the rhetorical demands of the moment, she skilfully transformed her personal memory about his life into a blueprint for political action. In her letters and speeches she combines individual recollection with an evolving sense of Henry as an embodiment of the best political stability of the English nation. By professing this interpretation of her father’s rule, she earns symbolic capital that she would spend in encounters with her subjects.
If Queen Elizabeth never forgot the propaganda value of her father’s posthumous reputation, she did not anticipate the extent to which her subjects would remember it as well. Henry’s flexible significance was widely debated in Elizabethan England. Writers regularly reminded the queen of her father’s accomplishments in the attempt to persuade her to undertake action that she did not necessarily desire to pursue. As they did so, Henry shaped conflict between the queen’s vision of the country and that of her subjects even as he influenced her self-fashioning as a monarch. As a persuasive force, Henry was neither inherently subversive nor merely a tool to advance state propaganda. His reputation was instead a site of ideological contest between the government and the people. As a living cultural presence, Henry’s image blended these “official” and “popular” representational trends, the one appearing from the queen’s own pen and the other emerging in the flexible rhetorical space of the encounter between monarch and people. The remainder of this chapter will analyze key instances of Elizabeth’s interaction with her subjects. It demonstrates how they forced posthumous images of Henry VIII to conform to their own various anachronistic – and competing – political agendas in the attempt to manipulate the queen. Of course, such a strategy did not always produce the desired favorable response.

3.2. Her Subjects’ King

Elizabeth’s own opinions of her father’s reputation form only part of the story of Henry VIII’s importance to the political and literary culture of the reign. Writers besides the queen often manipulated Henry’s legacy into the service of various religious and
nationalistic agendas, either on their own initiative or on behalf of powerful patrons under whose auspices they wrote.

Elizabeth’s annual progresses throughout central and southern England provide an ideal starting point for analyzing Elizabethan writers’ shaping of Henry’s posthumous reputation in connection with issues concerning the English church and nation. Even though the pageantry that accompanied Elizabeth on her travel has been well documented, there exists no account of the political significance of Henry VIII as he appeared in these tableaux. As a strategy of royal panegyric, comparing Elizabeth to Henry was not an innovation; the citizens of York pledged themselves to King Henry VII in his 1486 visit, for instance, with a tableau of England’s six preceding monarchs named Henry plus the Israelite king, Solomon, all yielding their scepters as an expression of fealty. In Anne Boleyn’s coronation entry into London on 31 May 1533, Elizabeth’s mother received comparison to St. Anne and the three Marys (the Blessed Virgin, Mary Salome, and Mary Cleophe), while Mary Tudor and Philip II of Spain witnessed a tableau comparing Philip to the four Philips (Philip of Macedonia, Philip of Swabia, Philip the Bold, and Philip the Good) in their 18 August 1554 ceremonial passage through London. Within the tradition established by such royal panegyric, however, Henry VIII always provided Elizabeth’s pageant designers with a flexible vehicle for the glorification and persuasion of the monarch. Pageantry afforded opportunities for aristocratic hosts, civic officials, and others to discuss Henry’s ongoing relevance to debates that were anachronistic to the king’s own reign. They shaped Henry VIII fictively by lodging
persuasive appeals to the queen that they hoped would gain either prestige or financial rewards for themselves.

In what is now probably the most frequently discussed example of a progress, Elizabeth undertook her ceremonial entry into London on 14 January 1559, the day before her coronation. The printer-publisher Richard Grafton, who, as we have seen, partially funded the Great Bible (1539), received a commission from the city in December 1558, along with several others, to design the pageantry for this occasion. For this reason, London’s interests and relationship with the monarch overshadow the surviving records of this ceremonial procession. Richard Mulcaster, the humanist-educator and headmaster of Merchant Taylor’s School, published the official synopsis of these tableaux. Henry VIII’s role as a vehicle for counseling the monarch in this pageantry is familiar to scholars because Mulcaster’s pamphlet has received more attention than surviving records documenting Elizabeth’s other civic entries. At Gracechurch Street, the queen witnessed a multi-tiered stage displaying “The uniting of the two houses of Lancastre and Yorke.” Above Henry VII and Elizabeth of York sat their royal son, “crowned w’t a crowne imperiall,” and Anne Boleyn, his wife. Mulcaster rehabilitates Elizabeth’s mother by asserting the queen’s imperial authority, which she inherited from her father. This is significant because Anne Boleyn had fallen out of favor during the reign of the Catholic Mary I. Henry appears in Mulcaster’s account “as the knitting up of concorde” following a period of civil strife. By offering didactic advice to the queen, Mulcaster flatters the queen’s parents for bequeathing peace and stability to the realm. Such a thesis would have been attractive to the civic authorities funding this
event, since these individuals desired to obtain Elizabeth’s favor early in her reign. Their message to the queen is simple: only by emulating Henry’s deeds would Elizabeth rule peacefully as his successor in her father’s stead.\textsuperscript{35} Mulcaster’s concluding discussion emphasizes this point:

In Cheapeside her grace smyled, and being therof demaunded the cause, answered, for that she had heard one say, Remember old king Henry theight. A naturall child, which at the verie remembrance of her fathers name toke so great a joy, yt all men may well thinke, that as she rejoysed at his name whom this realme doth holde of so woorthie memorie: so in her doinges she will resemble the same.\textsuperscript{36}

By reporting Elizabeth’s joyous response to the mere mention of her father, Mulcaster describes this scene as an anonymous “popular” appeal to Henry. He conveys counsel by shaping this encounter between queen and subjects rhetorically from a perspective favorable to civic officials. He also offers advice directly by presenting the queen with an ostensibly populist opinion about her father that was not necessarily in line with the plans of his civic employers. In both cases, this panegyric interprets the political realities of Henry VIII’s reign for Elizabeth’s benefit.

Elizabeth’s travel frequently provided writers with the opportunity to debate the meaning of the Henrician legacy. For instance, when the queen ceremonially visited the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford during the 1560s, academics brought agendas to bear upon the memory of Henry VIII that did not necessarily accord with the queen’s own opinions. The queen made these visits in order to exercise symbolic control over
these training centers for Church of England clergy. However, she encountered intellectuals who reminded her of Henry in order to argue that the queen must favor the universities. Their works regularly request that Elizabeth would advance the cause of learning after the supposed manner of her father. Drama and poetry produced on the occasion of these visits spoke for itself as well as on behalf of patrons in either the universities or the aristocracy who had vested interests to manipulate the queen. In his description of Elizabeth’s August 1564 Cambridge visit, for instance, Abraham Hartwell, the Latin poet and translator, speaks of the queen as a supporter of learning beyond her predecessors, including Henry VIII. Hartwell and others display little interest in documenting Henry’s particular reasons for giving money. The mere fact that he had done so carried a significant enough persuasive appeal to enable their addresses to the queen to proceed unhindered.

Cambridge scholars displayed the same flexibility in treating Henry’s example for Elizabeth’s benefit as Elizabeth herself displayed in her own writings. Both the queen and her academic hosts could discuss Henry VIII differently according to the needs of the political moment. Much of the school-literature offered to the queen during these visits articulates broad institutional agendas and does not convey individualized counsel to emulate Henry as such. Designers of the queen’s itinerary for this August 1564 visit seized opportunities to remind Elizabeth of Henry’s generosity to the university by selecting venues associated with his activities. For example, the queen lodged at King’s College, whose Chapel Henry VIII had completed. Likewise, when the queen took her formal progress through the city, Bartholomew Doddington, Regius Professor of Greek,
capitalized upon Henry’s endowment of Trinity College in his address to Elizabeth before its gates. Abraham Hartwell records this speech in his account, which he published in 1567 under the appropriate title of *Regina Literata*. Hartwell regards Doddington’s appeal that Elizabeth emulate her father as proof of her learnedness:

While he spoke, he recollected the mouth of the father in the daughter,

And the light of life, although she is a virgin, that man pierces

And behold, he says, the mouth of the parent, the queen of the king

Behold gifts, he says, again the gifts of the parent.

Unaided, she sings the name of the father, and with [his] gifts she speaks.

It was of Henry VIII, the gifts of the parent, he said.  

By recording this physical comparison between father and daughter, Hartwell reminds his learned readers – and Elizabeth – of Henry VIII’s monetary gifts to the university. When flattering Elizabeth as one supposedly committed to diligent study, Hartwell employs Henry as a tool to persuade the queen to follow his example in largess.  

Elizabeth made similar ceremonial visits to the University of Oxford twice during her reign, first in September 1566 and then again twenty-six years later, in September 1592. Henry’s posthumous relationship with Oxford was extremely political, as these visits made clear. During the 1590s, for instance, university canon lawyers debated the extent to which a precedent from the reign of Henry VIII could influence the university’s relationship with the crown decades later. Roger Jones of New College penned *An Apology for the Government of the University of Oxford against Henry VIII*. This short tract, which carries a date of 1597, emphasizes Henry’s forceful methods of extracting
the support of Oxford theologians for his divorce from Catherine of Aragon during the early 1530s, methods that William Forrest also described in his *Grisild the Second*. Similar to the memoranda regularly drafted by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and other government officials in order to explore the merits and drawbacks of adopting a proposed policy, Jones’s paper warns against adopting proposals for additional royal administrative oversight of the university.

Henry’s posthumous image presented theologians at Oxford with a complex precedent during Elizabeth’s reign. During the queen’s actual visits, intellectuals manipulated Henry’s reputation in order to extract from the queen as many favors as possible, all on the basis of Henry’s supposed congenial relationship with the university. During the queen’s first visit, she encountered a number of appeals contrived along these lines. Following her arrival, George Etherege, the former Regius Professor of Greek, presented her with a manuscript of Greek elegiac verse panegyric in praise of Henry VIII, together with a Latin prose argument and a Greek prose dedication to Elizabeth. Etherege’s formal argument to this work states that his book “encloses the right healthy praise of the most invincible king, Henry VIII” and enumerates “the highest favors of his to either the Oxford or Cambridge universities.” Etherege encourages Elizabeth to emulate Henry’s supposed virtues by giving more money to the university. He thus explicitly compares Elizabeth to Henry in the hope of obtaining financial remuneration: “To all these things in this manner enumerated, the author himself congratulates the country and the republic, because the most illustrious queen has initiated these virtues, and stands in the footsteps of her father; to this resemblance is eternal praise about to be
Elizabeth had multiple opportunities to comply with these requests. In addition to his gifts to Cambridge, Henry had taken over the endowment of Cardinal College, Oxford, following the fall of its first patron, Wolsey. The king renamed it Henry VIII’s College; it is now Christ Church. The faculty and students of Cardinal College reminded Elizabeth of her father’s activities in the attempt to secure further rewards in the aftermath of this visit. James Calfill, a student at the college, wrote laudatory verses comparing Henry to Elizabeth and attached these to the college gate where she was to pass by. These speak of the college as “Entering the unfinished monuments of your parent.” Thomas Neale, Regius Professor of Hebrew, and John Bereblock, Fellow of Exeter College, also presented the queen with a manuscript that contains a fictional dialogue between herself and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Chancellor of Oxford University. Neale and Bereblock praise the queen and Leicester in the attempt to secure patronage. In their contrived account, Dudley urges Elizabeth to exceed the virtues of Henry VIII, whose good work to the university needs to be continued. Henry has “given to study contributions worthy of nurturing” but Elizabeth is “the offspring, of such a kind and by such a great degree of the highest resemblance to your father.” Neale and Bereblock fictively ask of the queen, “May this liberal comfort be made continuous by your hand” when Leicester urges Elizabeth to “proceed not to be unequal to your parent.” Still another orator, “young in years, but in discretion, a man,” reminded Elizabeth of the favors of Henry VIII toward the university. These examples suggest the significant extent to which scholars at Oxford sought to please the queen and gain favors by reminding her of her father’s activities. By removing Henry from his own time,
they apply him anachronistically to the political occasion of the royal visit in hope of extracting money from the queen.

The late king’s presumed involvement in Elizabeth’s education became the subject of further debate even after the visit to Oxford. In order to mollify both Roman Catholic and nascent Puritan undercurrents at the university, Elizabeth deemphasized the success of her Protestant upbringing while also affirming her authority in religious affairs in her departing oration to her civic and academic hosts.\textsuperscript{53} Following the visit, however, one coterie of readers manipulated the queen’s image in order to portray Elizabeth as successfully educated in the Protestant faith under the direct supervision of Henry VIII. Substantive marginalia inserted into a surviving manuscript copy of the queen’s Latin oration alleges Elizabeth’s predilection for academic study in order to make Elizabeth appear to be the inheritor of Henry VIII’s supposedly Protestant academic interests.\textsuperscript{54} The queen is made to remark, “Indeed I confess that my father took most diligent care to have me correctly instructed in good letters. And I was engaged in the variety, truly, of many languages. Of some of these I have gained knowledge, which although true, yet I say so – modestly. I have had many teachers who have labored diligently to render me erudite.”\textsuperscript{55} This remark reasserts the queen’s sympathy with the Protestant humanism in which she was trained and anachronistically situates Henry within the same academic tradition. The interpolated material could have served as an encouragement that the queen would continue to favor the university in a tradition of royal generosity allegedly practiced by Henry.
There is no way to determine the extent to which this academic coterie may have influenced Elizabeth’s action. The queen was notoriously parsimonious and certainly did not endow new colleges. Nor was hoped-for endowment the only motivation for which the queen’s subjects manipulated the reputation of Henry VIII during Elizabeth’s civic and ceremonial journeys. During Elizabeth’s August 1566 visit to Coventry, for example, John Throgmorton, the city Recorder, invoked Henry’s generosity in order to persuade Elizabeth to enact justice. When describing Elizabeth’s “most quiet and peacable government,” Throgmorton assured her that “the like whereof, without flattery, cannot be found in any of your noble progenitors’ times.” He hoped that this panegyric would prompt Elizabeth to rectify an abuse of her father’s generosity:

Your noble father King Henry VIII equal with the best of his predecessors in felicity and noble prowess, and willing not to be inferior to them in liberality and bountifulness to this City, amongst his so many princely benefits bestowed in all parts of this Realm, founded also in this City, for the maintenance of learning, a free-school, or rather a College as he intended, for the better education of the youth of this City in virtue and learning, and for continuance thereof passed or let go certain lands of great value, which this City doth not enjoy, but are unjustly deprived of the same by sinister, underhand, unjust means…. Throgmorton perceives Henry’s position in the scripted ceremonial encounter between the queen and civic authorities differently than does the London aldermen who financed Elizabeth’s coronation entry. Rather than signify hoped-for peaceful government, Throgmorton’s Henry echoes the universities’ version of the Tudor king as a meritorious
benefactor whose generosity has in this case been spoiled by corruption. Elizabeth can remedy Coventry’s loss by mimicking Henry’s supposed original intent in establishing this endowment.

When Elizabeth visited Warwick in August 1572, Edward Aglionby, the city Recorder, hoped for a similar change to his city’s fortunes but did not need to praise Henry VIII in the attempt to secure it. Aglionby instead cited Henry’s own lack of generosity toward the city in a strategy designed to prompt the queen to rectify her father’s mistake. This approach differs from the representation of Henry during the Coventry, Cambridge, and Oxford royal entries. As a prelude to his request for a royal grant, Aglionby recounted the history of Crown grants to Warwick. After being sacked by the Danes, only “the countenance and liberality of the Earles of that place, especially of the name Beawchampe” staved off utter ruin, until the male offspring of that house failed during the reign of Henry VI. Aglionby continued:

And so this Earledome being extinct in the tyme of your Heighnes’ Graundfather King Henry the Seventh, remained so all the tyme of your noble Father, our late dear Sovereigne King Henry the Eight, who, having compassion of the pitifull desolacion of this towne, did incorporate the same . . . endowing them also with possessions and lands to the value of £54. 14s. 4d. by yere; injoyning them withall to kepe a Vykar to serve in the Church, and dyvers other Ministers. Even an additional annual endowment of £50 from the Earl of Leicester, however, could not support a preacher in the city, “by reason that the necessary charges and stipend of the Ministers and other Officers there farre surmount their yerely revenue,
notwithstanding the bountifull gift of your noble Father bestowing the same to their great good and benifyt.”

Because Henry did not give a sufficiently large amount, Elizabeth should rectify his oversight in order to preserve the honor of the city. Aglionby’s oration again serves as a mouthpiece for larger civic interests. His oblique censure of Henry VIII falls well within the acceptable limits for an exercise in rhetorical persuasion and probably would not have offended the queen. Aglionby blunts the possibility that the queen would take offence from his commentary by alleging that the princely bearing of Henry VII and Henry VIII “reman[s] [sic] [i.e., remains] naturally in your Highnes.”

The supposed historical or even mythic origins of the English nation provided civic hosts with still another point of reference from which to comment upon Henry VIII’s posthumous importance during Elizabeth’s progresses. When Elizabeth entered Worcester in August 1575, an oration from “Mr. Bell” described the city’s indebtedness to Henry VIII and other “y’ Majesties noble Progenitors.” The list of royal benefactors includes Saxon and Plantagenet kings but highlights “that pollytike Prynce, y’ Majesties Gr’ndfather, Kynge Henry the Seventh; yo’ Highnes Father, of famous memory, Kinge Henry the Eyght; that Prince of grettest hope, King Edward the Sixte, yo’ Majesties Brother; and Queen Mary, yo’ Highnes dearest Sister.”

This statement of Tudor dynastic panegyric differs from other similar appeals in that the entire dynasty serves as a precedent for generosity to the queen. In another example, inclement weather prevented an actor dressed as King Gurgunt, the legendary founder of Norwich, from offering his welcoming oration during the queen’s August 1578 entry into Norwich. An account of this ceremonial entry appears in a collaborative poem written by Thomas Churchyard,
who is known for his contribution to that collection of *de casibus* verse tragedies, the *Mirror for Magistrates*. Along with the poets Henry Goldingham and Bernard Garter, Churchyard also helped to design the pageantry for this visit, and Garter restores Gurgunt’s oration before the queen to its proper place in the printed account. Gurgunt compares his own reign to Elizabeth’s in a metaphor anchoring the origins of the Tudor dynasty in the legendary past:

> When doubtfull warres the British princes long had wroong,
> My grandsire first uniting all did weare the Crowne.
> Of Yorke and Lancaster, who did conclude the broiles?
> Thy grandsire Henry seventh, a king of great renowne.
> Myne uncle *Brennus* eke, my father joyning handes,
> Olde Rome did raze, and sacke, and halfe consume with fire:
> Thy puissant father so, new rome that purple whore
> Did sacke, and spoile hir neare of all hir glittering tire.\(^63\)

Churchyard describes Henry VIII as a latter-day Brennus, a legendary Celtic invader of Rome. According to the Roman historian Livy, Brennus sacked the city in about 390 BCE; Henry’s victory over the Church of Rome continues the same nation-building project. For Churchyard, legendary British history becomes an analogue to modern Henrician religious practice that Elizabeth has inherited. Later in the visit, Stephen Limbert, master of the Norwich grammar school, observed how the Norwich Hospital was “instituted by the moste mightie King Henry your highnesse father” and “confirmed with the great seale, by the moste noble King Edward your brother.” Because Elizabeth
has successfully augmented her father and brother’s generosity, she “may not now
worthyly rejoice so muche in others ornaments, as [her] owne vertues.”

During the 1580s Elizabeth traveled less frequently than she did during the
opening decades of her reign, perhaps in response to perceived threats to her security
from the possibility of invasion or assassination. When she resumed her progresses
during the 1590s, the figure of Henry VIII had ceased to be as important an historical
precedent for orators and civic officials looking for strategies to ingratiate themselves to
the Crown. Henry’s declining importance in pageantry associated with the queen’s
progresses during this final decade may likewise be explained by the dimming living
memory of Henry’s reign by that time. The times had changed. The queen was old. Hosts
became more reluctant to house Elizabeth’s costly entourage. With Elizabeth obviously
approaching the end of her reign, those who possessed a personal stake in manipulating
Henry’s image for the sake of obtaining favors from his daughter were scarcer to be
found. People began instead to focus their energies toward speculation over the
succession.

In political literature focused on the problem of the royal succession, writers
throughout Elizabeth’s reign were ambivalent in describing Henry as Elizabeth’s most
fitting exemplar. This ambivalence was much more pronounced in succession treatises
than in accounts of ceremonial royal entries and civic progresses. Thomas Norton, the
dramatist, is best remembered as co-author of the succession play *Gorboduc* (1561), a
performance of which the queen viewed in 1561, but he also produced a rhetorically
charged account of English history that discussed Henry VIII in terms of the succession
Commissioned by Francis Walsingham, the queen’s personal secretary, this work, titled “Of the v periodes of 500 yeares,” divides two thousand five hundred years of British history into periods of approximately 500 years’ duration. According to Norton, a transition from one period to the next always occurred following some catastrophic event or “alteration.” Norton argues that the normal interval of five hundred years had elapsed in his own time without a major change, but “A most blessed beginninge” had nevertheless resulted when Henry VIII had “betiden the change of religion” by rescuing England from papal control. Henry’s auspicious start convinced Norton that Elizabeth, who had allegedly persevered in evangelical religion following her father’s positive beginning, would still possess the throne at the moment of Apocalypse, when she would deliver it to no earthly heir, but to Christ himself. By evicting the pope, Henry VIII had hastened the Second Advent.

Others were less optimistic than Norton in their discussions of Henry VIII as he pertained to the royal succession. Sir Thomas Chaloner, a diplomat who served in various ambassadorial duties under four Tudor monarchs, revised his verse panegyric on Henry VIII and presented it to Elizabeth as a 1560 New Year’s Gift. Chaloner wrote an earlier version of *In Laudem Henrici Octavi* during the 1540s. In his dedication to the queen in the latter rendition, Chaloner says of Henry VIII that “no greater king ever ruled in our shores” and encourages Elizabeth that “nothing will be more worthy than for you, descended from a noble lineage, to be like your noble father.” Chaloner concludes the treatise by enjoining Elizabeth to “bestow the bonds of your modesty on a husband” so that “then a little Henry will play in the palace for us, a handsome child who happily will
bring to mind his grandfather, than whom no man was ever more handsome or more outstanding for handsome deeds." Preserving the memory of the deceased Henry VIII and ensuring the future of the Tudor dynasty provide Chaloner with compelling reasons for Elizabeth to take a husband and produce a male heir. Norton looks to the end of history as a solution to the Elizabethan succession problem, whereas Chaloner revises his Henrician verse treatise for presentation to Elizabeth. His appeal focuses solidly on the here and now.

Elizabethan men of letters adopted various stances toward Henry VIII in their discussion of the queen’s marital status. Both of them members of Parliament, Norton and Chaloner join others in that body in appealing to Elizabeth on the marriage question during the first half of her reign. Henry provided Parliament with a rhetorical advantage over the queen’s desire to remain a virgin. In a sermon preached to a joint session of Parliament and Convocation during January 1563, Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, asked, in a rhetorical manner, where Elizabeth would be had her parents followed the queen’s present course and not married. A member of Parliament announced in 1566 that Elizabeth should follow the example of Henry VIII in establishing the succession. These messages are carefully worded supplications directed to the queen herself. A French ambassador testifies that the queen received these messages fully aware of the agenda with regard to Henry VIII that they contained. In 1566 the queen described the Commons’ petition as “very rebellious” and retorted that they would not have presumed to countenance “such things during the life of her father.” Again, Elizabeth’s significant poise allows her to redirect the energy of this
exchange about Henry’s precedent in her favor. Anticipating the rhetoric of her Tilbury speech and providing evidence for the reading of that speech offered above, the queen remarks during the same parliament that “[T]hough I be a woman, yet I have as good a courage, answerable to my place, as ever my father had.” Once again Elizabeth differs from her subjects’ interpretation of Henry VIII as a tool for counsel and persuasion. They believe that Henry’s action in settling the succession should provoke Elizabeth to like action, but she believes that Henry maintained a standard of courtly decorum that their petition had violated. At the same time, Elizabeth fashions Henry in her own image in the attempt to bolster loyalty among her subjects.

Disputed interpretations of Henry VIII resided at the heart of ongoing debates on the Elizabethan succession and provide a framework for understanding Henry’s importance within appeals to Elizabeth on this subject. The validity of the old king’s last will and testament provoked debate. Many writers used the will to make a case for the Stuart succession as early as the 1560s, even though Henry had explicitly forbidden that line from succeeding. Others interpreted the will as a statement favoring the Suffolk descendents of Henry VIII’s younger sister, Mary. John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, went so far as to argue that Henry’s tangled succession policy did England no better than kings Lear and Gorboduc, whose own succession policies precipitated civil war. Henry’s appearance in these treatises as a latter-day Lear or Gorboduc constitutes mythmaking at its height, as writers transform the queen’s father’s reign into a figurative landscape that can be rewritten and juxtaposed with the failed rules of these ancient British monarchs. Leslie’s treatise comparing Henry to Gorboduc appeared in print eight years after
Elizabeth witnessed a performance of Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville’s play *Gorboduc*, which reenacts the disasters of the nation following a reckless power sharing agreement between the play’s principal characters. Shakespeare’s *King Lear* was still decades away, but Leslie provides an example of how the Lear narrative could take on political significance when the monarch in question was an heirless and aging queen. This scenario differs from that which greeted the initial performance of Shakespeare’s play during the opening decade of the seventeenth century, when England’s king had two legitimate and healthy sons. We don’t know whether Elizabeth read any of these succession treatises, even though they circulated around court, but the disputed Stuart succession did provide a backdrop for another, different debate over Elizabeth’s marital status.

Competing narratives of Henry VIII figured prominently in discussion over Elizabeth’s proposed marriage to François, duc d’Alençon, during the late 1570s. This was Elizabeth’s last serious marriage negotiation, and it provided the occasion for a well-known treatise whose author had his right hand severed for offering the queen unsolicited counsel. Published in 1579 as an implicit appeal to the queen not to pursue the French match, John Stubbs’s *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf whereunto England is Like to be Swallowed by Another French Marriage* offers Henry VIII as a corrective against Elizabeth’s apparent hasty willingness to marry d’Alençon. According to Stubbs, French royal marriages always reaped disaster for England. In his opinion, Henry VIII wisely chose to avoid a French marriage for himself – Elizabeth should do the same. This discussion of Henry appears at the conclusion of Stubbs’s segment devoted to the
“example auncient” of English monarchs who entered into French marriages. Stubbs remarks, “I think, I might set dovvue [sic] all such matches, as unhappy ones” and continues by describing “those matches . . . for the most parte prosperous, which were made eyther at home or in other places, as weren al those mariages made . . . by her father.” Stubbs cares not that Henry VIII had six wives, but he is glad that none were French. By praising Henry for not marrying a Frenchwoman, Stubbs offers an alternative interpretation to the adversarial theses of Henry VIII’s marital woes that were available during the 1570s in Nicholas Harpsfield’s manuscript publications. Stubbs also cites Henry VIII when replying to the theory that a French marriage would not be prejudicial to England’s friendships with other nations. Anyone who advocates this idea “forgets how in times past our king Henry the eight could not be at once friend with the Emperor and the French king; but the league with one was present defiance to the other.” As a private citizen offering what he perceived as sensible advice for the good of the realm, Stubbs turns Henry VIII into an opponent of the proposed Alençon marriage.

Elizabeth disagreed with the interpretation of her father’s marital policies held by Stubbs and his circle. Taking a position opposite to her earlier opinion, which she expressed to Parliament, the queen viewed her father as a progenitor whose line must be continued rather than as an opponent of the unpopular courtship. Elizabeth addressed her privy council on this subject on 2 October 1579. According to Burghley,

[S]he uttered many speeches, and that not without shedding of many tears, that she should find in her Councillors . . . any dispositions to make it doubtfull whether there could be any more surety for her and her realm than to have her
mARRY AND HAVE A CHILD OF HER OWN BODY TO INHERIT AND SO TO CONTINUE THE LINE OF
HENRY THE EIGHTH; AND SHE SAID SHE CONDEMNED HERSELF OF SIMPLICITY IN COMMITTING
THIS MATTER TO BE ARGUED BY THEM.78

ELIZABETH QUESTIONS OPPOSITION TO THE MATCH ON THE COMPARETIVELY NON-CONTESTROVERSIAL
GROUNDS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF THE ROYAL MARRIAGE AND A CERTAIN SUCCESSION. IT IS HENRY’S
LINE THAT IS IN JEOPARDY, THE QUEEN ARGUES. OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MARRIAGE DEBATE,
INCLUDING THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A FRENCH ALLIANCE AND FEARED ONGOING SPANISH
INCURSION INTO THE LOW COUNTRIES, FADE AWAY IN THE QUEEN’S SPEECH. BY MENTIONING
HENRY, ELIZABETH ASSUMES THAT HIS NAME WILL GIVE HER A RHETORICAL EDGE OVER HER ADVISERS,
EVEN THOUGH THEIR INTERESTS WERE NOT NECESSARILY AS SHARPLY DIVIDED FROM HER OWN AS THE
QUEEN MAKES THEM OUT TO BE. THE GROUP OF OPPONENTS TO THE MARRIAGE EXTENDED BEYOND
THE PRIVY COUNCIL PERHAPS TO INCLUDE STUBBS’S PRINTER, HUGH SINGLETON, WHO HAD ALSO
PUBLISHED EDMUND SPENSER’S INFLUENTIAL PASTORAL POEM, THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDAR
(1579). SPENSER SHARED A POLITICAL AGENDA WITH ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER, INTO
WHOSE SERVICE HE ENTERED IN 1578 OR 1579. LEICESTER HELPED LEAD THE OPPOSITION TO THE
ALENÇON MARRIAGE AT COURT.

FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF HIS OWN OPPOSITION TO THE MATCH, SPENSER TRIUMPHANTLY
DESCRIBES HENRY AS ELIZABETH’S DYNASTIC PRECURSOR. UNLIKE THE QUEEN, HOWEVER, HE
ASSUMES THAT ELIZABETH’S DESCENT FROM HENRY SHOULD COMPEL HER TO REMAIN A VIRGIN RATHER
THAN EMBRACE A HUSBAND. THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDAR INTERPRETS HENRY AS A SYMBOLIC PILLAR
OF NATIONAL STABILITY THAT THE QUEEN CAN ONLY SAFEGUARD BY PERSEVERING IN HER UNMARRIED
STATE. THE APRIL ECLOGUE, WHICH SPENSER DESCRIBES AS “PURPOSELY INTENDED TO THE HONOR

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and prayse of our most gracious souereigne, Queene Elizabeth,” praises Elizabeth as the scion of virtuous classical prototypes who double for her own parents:

Of fayre Elisa be your siluer song,

that blessed wight:

The flowre of Virgins, may shee flourish long,

In princely plight.

For shee is Syrinx daughter without spotte,

Which Pan the shepheards God of her begot:

So sprong her grace

Of heauenly race,

No mortall blemishe may her blotte.79

In his commentary on these lines, Spenser’s anonymous glossator, E.K., identifies Anne Boleyn as Syrinx and Henry VIII as Pan in an analogy that compares Pan’s classical significances to Henry’s own contemporary Elizabethan relevance. On the one hand, the lovesick Pan pursued Syrinx, who fled before him and “of the Gods was turned into a reede.” Pan comes to the spot and crafts a pipe “in remembraunce of his lost loue.” According to E.K.’s interpretation, the poet selects these figures as analogues to Henry and Anne in order to describe Elizabeth’s parents’ divinity and immortality rather than to establish their classical prototypes as such. Spenser follows Mulcaster in rehabilitating the fortunes of Elizabeth’s mother, whom Henry had had executed on charges of adultery.
As part of the political satire and topicality found throughout *The Shepheardes Calendar*, E.K. here speaks openly of Henry’s modern-day importance. “[B]y Pan is here meant the most famous and victorious King, her highnesse Father, late of worthy memorye K. Henry the eyght. And by that name, oftimes (as hereafter appeareth) be noted kings and mighty Potentates: And in some place Christ himself, who is the verye Pan and god of Shepheardes,” he writes. Henry provides a benchmark standard for judging (“noting”) the achievement of other, modern-day kings and potentates in the same way that Christ, as “the very Pan and god of Shepheardes,” provides a standard for measuring the acts of Henry VIII. E.K. is describing Elizabeth’s parentage in a highly crafted discourse designed to re-inscribe Henry as the guarantor of political orthodoxy. The queen is so virtuous, according to this argument, that she may be likened unto Christ in the same company with her esteemed father. Spenser uses this commentary on Henry VIII to establish a dynastic and moral foundation for the widespread Cult of Elizabeth as the unmarriageable virgin, which began to thrive in plays and entertainments produced for the queen during the late 1570s. As a figure of national stability for Spenser, Henry sanctions the queen’s virginity by his status as her parent. The poet dedicated *The Shepheardes Calendar* to his friend and fellow courtier poet, Sir Philip Sidney, who spent time away from court in temporary disfavor after inscribing his own epistle to Elizabeth urging her to avoid the Alençon marriage. Spenser’s poem emerged in a circle of court poets working within the orbit of the queen, and Spenser allegorizes his satirical arguments elsewhere in the work as if he anticipated a powerful and influential
readership. His appeal and discourse concerning Henry VIII envisions the queen’s circle if not the queen herself.

Spenser also discusses Henry VIII as a moral foundation for the queen’s continued virginity in *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96), which he dedicated to Elizabeth. In this treatment, the ongoing stability of the English nation relies upon her virginity following the successful reign of her father. Spenser manipulates his reign fictively in order to support this legitimating narrative. The poet’s use of Henry differs from those who urged Elizabeth to marry in order to achieve stability; only by remaining unmarried will stability endure. Several moments in the poem describe the queen’s paternity as a means of uniting her virginity with England’s power as a nation. Merlin prophesies to Britomart, for instance, about the “famous Progeny” that will spring from Britomart’s union with Artegall. Following Henry VII’s victory over Richard III and establishment of the Tudor dynasty, “Then shall a royall Virgin raine, which shall / Stretch her white rod ouer the Belgicke shore, / And the great Castle [i.e., Castile] smite so sore with all / That is shall make him shake, and shortly learn to fall.” Spenser simultaneously discusses Elizabeth’s purported victory over Spanish influence and her virginity, as if both relied upon the prior achievement of Henry VIII’s father, Henry VII. In an even more telling instance, Henry VIII legitimates Elizabeth’s moral virtues. After Guyon and Arthur arrive in the Castle of Temperance, they read of the history of Britain and the overlapping history of Faerie. As a figure for Elizabeth, Gloriana descends from Oberon, who embodies Henry VIII. The relevant passage appears following Spenser’s account of the death of Henry’s brother, Prince Arthur, whom Spenser calls *Elferon*:
Whose emptie place the mightie Oberon
Doubly supplide, in spousall, and dominion.

Great was his power and glorie ouer all,
Which him before, that sacred seate did fill,
That yet remaines his wide memoriall:
He dying left the fairest Tanaquill,
Him to succeede therein, by his last will:
Fairer and nobler liueth none this howre,
Ne like in grace, ne like in learned skill;
Therefore they Glorian call that glorious flowre,
Long mayst thou Glorian liue, in glory and great powre. 84

In this device Elizabeth achieves a successful reign following her father’s own successful rule. Spenser discusses both reigns in identical terms of power and glory. The poet couples Henry’s “dominion” and Elizabeth’s fairness, as he describes both Tanaquill and Glorian as the queen’s prototypes. Henry’s success “yet remaines his wide memoriall” during the 1590s, when debate raged anew over who would succeed Elizabeth. These lines help solidify the queen’s claim to a positive legacy that can build upon that already handed down to her by Henry. Elizabeth’s father plays an integral role in Spenser’s agenda for flattering his sovereign.

As the queen aged, the possibility of marriage as a strategy for solving the succession crisis vanished. A new round of late Elizabethan succession treatises
accordingly resurrected controversies regarding Henry VIII’s applicability to the succession debate in order to chastise the queen or support a rival candidate. As one of the most prominent and controversial of these works, *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (1594) circulated under the pseudonymous authorship of Robert Doleman. Actually written by a group of Catholic exiles that included Robert Persons and Richard Verstegan, a printer and informant, this work contains a dedication to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and targeted the Elizabethan political establishment. By blaming Henry for the root causes of England’s current succession crisis, *A Conference* throws Spenser’s opposite agenda in *The Faerie Queene* into greater relief. It thus narrates how both Henry and Elizabeth allegedly extinguished the nearest candidates for the succession in a desperate attempt to secure and safeguard their own tyranny. England’s lack of a viable candidate to succeed Elizabeth results from the fault of the queen herself and especially the fault of her father, who “passed al the rest in crueltie, toward his owne kynred, for he weeded out almost all that ever he could find of the blood royal of York, and this either for emulation, or causes of meere suspicion only.” As the heir in cruelty to her father, Elizabeth unjustly extinguished Mary Stuart, the Catholic queen of Scotland. After vilifying Henry for executing virtually all of his political opponents, *A Conference* sardonically contends that “yf we looke uppon but fower or five yeares together of the reigne of this mans children, we shal see the like course continued.” The collaborators propose alternative candidates for Elizabeth’s throne on grounds that both she and her father are corrupt.
Catholic succession polemics like this one provoked Protestant responses over who would succeed the queen. Both Parliament and the queen took notice. Peter Wentworth, a forward Protestant member of Parliament, found himself in and out of the Tower for offering strongly worded advice to the queen about issues such as Parliamentary privilege in religious affairs as well as the succession. In two separate works Wentworth cites Henry’s handling of the succession issue as a precedent in urging Elizabeth to declare James VI of Scotland as her lawful successor. Both are explicitly directed at Elizabeth. *A Pithy Exhortation to her Majesty for Establishing her Successor to the Crown* belongs to the period just following the execution of Mary Stuart in 1586. He wrote *A Treatise Containing Master Wentworth’s Judgment Concerning the Person of the True and Lawful Successor to these Realms* as a rebuttal of Persons and Verstegan’s *A Conference* during one of the periods of his incarceration.\(^8\) *A Pithy Exhortation* describes Elizabeth’s filial piety as the source of her perceived desire to safeguard the future of the country. “Marke (gracious Queene),” writes Wentworth, “your deare father in his wisdom fore-saw wonderfull miseries immediatlie and directlie arising, from his leaving of his subjectes without succession knowne, and established . . . God (for his Christs sake) grant your grace to prove his naturall childe heerin.” With bald flattery, Wentworth describes one of Henry’s own parliamentary speeches on the dangers of an uncertain succession as “Christian and sweet words, worthie such an heroicall and mightie Potentate of the world.”\(^9\) Henry here becomes the potentate whom Elizabeth would desire to emulate, as “his naturall childe heerin.” Wentworth drives home his comparison between Elizabeth and her father in a printed marginal note alleging “[t]he
application and enforcing of this example of K. Henry 8. to her Majestie.” Given her age and lack of offspring, however, Elizabeth faces a much more serious threat of uncertain succession than her father ever did. Henry’s care over the succession should prompt the queen to exert even more care and concern:

And trulie, Madame, we think there is none that dulie considereth in what termes the title of the crowne after you standeth nowe amongst us, but he presentlie seeth, that if it were so dangerous then when your father uttered these words, he having then issue of his owne bodie to leave the Realme unto, without further determination & declaration of his right heire: that it cannot, but be far more dangerous for you, nowe to leave it quyte without establishment, to whomsoever can catch it.

As a strategy for proposing James VI of Scotland as Elizabeth’s best succession option, Wentworth then argues that were Henry VIII’s elder sister, Margaret (James VI’s great-grandmother) still living, her claim to the English throne would be beyond dispute.  

Wentworth employs Henry to argue for a Stuart succession despite the fact that the king’s last will and testament had explicitly excluded the Stuart line from succeeding him.

In advising Elizabeth on matters relating to Mary Stuart, Wentworth involved himself in debate over the future direction of the Church of England no less than controversy surrounding the succession. Elizabeth unsurprisingly differed with her subjects over interpretations made upon Henry VIII’s accomplishment in religious affairs. Many took every opportunity to attempt to pry an ecclesiastical policy shift from the queen on the basis of Henry’s achievement in the religious arena. Perhaps intending
to defuse these initiatives, Elizabeth rejected the title of *Supreme Head of the Church of England* in favor of the more conservative *Supreme Governor* in the attempt to distance her regime from those of her father and brother, who had both claimed the former title. In this decision she followed the example set by her sister, Mary. Henry clearly and obviously supplied a powerful precedent for the attempted manipulation of Elizabeth in matters related to the faith.

Within the overarching framework of Elizabethan Protestantism, Henry’s expelling papal jurisdiction from the country afforded a convenient and crucial foundation for the offering of royal advice in religious matters. Men of letters returned to Henry in order to debate the nature and limits of religious (and regal) authority with the queen, both on their own behalf and under the auspices of others. The royal agenda predictably extracted different meaning from Henry’s legacy than did the agendas for church and state championed by diplomats and writers seeking patronage at court. When making comparisons to Henry’s leadership over the English church, supplicants to Elizabeth recalled aspects of her father’s reign that they desired to resurrect while simultaneously and conveniently forgetting those elements of Henrician politics that undermined their individual religious sympathies. A multi-layered and complex Henrician legacy to Elizabethan religious politics emerged through this process of negotiation between competing interest groups that included the Crown, the bishops, the clergy, and the laity.

Suitors to Elizabeth reshaped Henry in their own images in order to advise the queen in the affairs of church governance. This kind of self-mythologizing about Henry
characterizes an October 1559 request of the Archbishop (elect) of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, and four other bishops elect. In their petition to the queen, these supplicants flatter Elizabeth as more knowledgeable than Henry in the hope that she would support a learned clergy as fervently as he had allegedly done:

\[\text{As your most noble father of immortal memory, King Henry the VIIIth . . . in [his] princely zeal which [he] bare to the state of Christ’s faith did much tender the advancement of learning by cherishing of students and encouraging of ministers . . . so we trust undoubtedly that your Grace, being endued with the benefits of knowledge far above any of your noble progenitors, will be inclined no less to the maintenance of learning for the setting forth of Christ’s true religion, now for want of sufficient ministers in great jeopardy of decay.}\]

Among this letter’s suggestions is an additional request that Elizabeth “continue the new erected sees founded upon great considerations by your noble progenitor the said King Henry.”

As a “cherisher of students” and an “encourager of ministers,” Parker’s Henry pushes Elizabeth toward similar policies, but this version of the Henrician legacy, like the many others that we have been considering, is a rhetorical construction. As a chaplain in the household of Queen Anne Boleyn during the 1530s, Parker could hardly have failed to perceive Henry’s determined opposition to the proposed re-founding of medieval friaries and Roman Catholic cathedrals as centers for the training of preaching clergy. Together with Queen Anne, Parker’s own Archiepiscopal predecessor, Thomas Cranmer, had cultivated hopes that the king could be persuaded to support evangelical preaching.
These attempts to persuade Henry were unsuccessful. Less than a year after Elizabeth’s accession to the throne, Parker and his colleagues are refashioning the queen’s father into a pro-clerical Protestant reforming monarch in the hope that the queen will look favorably upon themselves as bishops-elect. Elizabeth would go on to show loyalty to Parker and other advisers who had aided her and her mother during their periods of duress, not because of this instance of persuasion, but because of their earlier actions. Here and elsewhere Parker represents Henry anachronistically, motivated by his own political agenda.

Elizabeth did not need to hear about her father when ordering the finances of her church. Paradoxically, even Parker himself later reversed the logic of his supplication by testifying to Elizabeth that Henry had in fact not labored for the financial independence of the clergy. In a letter dated 27 December 1570, Parker defended himself to the queen against opprobrium that he had received. He claims in this letter that some of his opponents desire to abolish the archiepiscopal office but predicts that this will be difficult to accomplish because clergy have been providing the Crown with an important source of income, from the days of Henry VIII until the present time:

[W]hen they have brought about [this desire] . . . that this room [i.e., Parker’s office] should be either too low abased or quite abolished, I think your Highness’ council should have too much ado . . . considering the wonderful impoverishment of the most of the clergy, partly by the great and interminable exactions of these arrearages . . . paid afore by their predecessors, and yet called for again, even from your father’s days.²⁶

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In this complex passage Parker describes Henry as one who imposes an excessive financial burden on the clergy. Such a burden is not necessarily a detriment, however, since its immediate tangible result is an increase in the royal coffers. Like Elizabeth in her own writings, Parker displays a degree of rhetorical poise by reversing his earlier position over Henry’s involvement in this issue in order to satisfy the political need of the moment. Parker would obviously continue in his job and pay an uncomfortable financial obligation than allow his detractors to persuade the queen to abolish the episcopacy.

Polemic against the bishops increased in volume throughout the queen’s reign, however. It culminated in the Martin Marprelate scandal and its demand for a presbyterian format of church government. The posthumous figure of Henry VIII proved a fierce battleground between the religious establishment and its dissidents during these debates. Anti-episcopal treatises directed at the queen and her political establishment used Henry’s legacy to advance a number of controversies in church government. The queen for her part resolutely backed episcopacy and desired an ordered religio-political establishment above all. During the late 1570s she opposed Archbishop Grindal over the Puritan “prophecyings,” or unorthodox preaching and Bible study meetings, because she desired that the English clergy not encourage heterodoxy.

Henry’s involvement in controversy over the nature of the Elizabethan church was pointed and polemical. One of the most important controversial publications of these days, John Field and Thomas Wilcox’s *An Admonition to Parliament* (1572), for instance, called for the completion of the allegedly unfinished Reformation on an agenda supposedly established by Henry VIII. Field and Wilcox were being as disingenuous as
Parker in attempting to recreate Henry VIII as a partisan supporter of their agenda for the English Church. To the discomfort of the Bishop of London, Edwin Sandys, anti-episcopal libels circulated in his diocese during the 1570s and exposed him and other bishops as unfaithful to the principles of Henrician reform. Because Sandys and his associates represented the public face of the Elizabethan church, an attack on them was an attack on a more broadly defined brand of Protestant orthodoxy in which Elizabeth took direct interest. One such antagonistic work, *A Friendly Caveat to Bishop Sands* (c.1573), scorns Sandys and his colleagues for conforming to standards of unacceptable behavior not seen in England since Henry VIII abolished the monasteries:

> Therefore nowe my Lordes, purchase what you can . . . for if in King Henries daies, idle, loyterous, and hypocriticall Friars and munks . . . were in despite of the Pope put downe: why shoulde you thinke it an impossible matter in Queene Elizabethe dayes, to make a search amongst those that are their successors, & to saw off some of your branches, that make you all to bee as evil, if not worse then a great sort of your predecessors were: that is idle overseers, slow preaching Pastours, vainglorious Prelates, refusers of reformation, and maliciously and wilfullie blinde Bishops.99

This anonymous libel alleges the existence of similarities between the Elizabethan Protestant settlement and the perceived offenses of the Church of Rome under Henry VIII and sarcastically urges the government to remedy this detriment. It employs satire and invective as a strategy for manipulating Henry and scorning its opponents, the queen and defenders of episcopacy. Taken together, this group of instances indicates the complex
ways in which religious radicals and the episcopal bench produced competing versions of
the Henrician religious settlement that competed for royal attention.

Henry provided a similarly conflicted precedent when Elizabeth confronted
Archbishop Edmund Grindal over the objectionable “prophesying” meetings that began
in 1576. Grindal invoked Henry in defense of his behavior in his 20 December 1576 letter
to the queen. It defends his decision to disobey Elizabeth and refuse to put a stop to the
illicit meetings. Grindal reverses the argument of *A Friendly Caveat to Bishop Sands* by
declaring that those who *oppose* bishops (and not the bishops themselves) are the
intellectual descendents of objectionable Henrician clerics:

> Some there be also, that are mislikers of the godly reformation in religion now
> established; wishing indeed that there were no preachers at all; and so by
depraving the ministers impugn religion . . . much like to the popish bishops in
> your father’s time, who would have had the English translation of the Bible called
> in, as evil translated; and the new translating thereof to have been committed to
> themselves; which they never intended to perform.¹⁰⁰

Grindal identifies himself and his episcopal colleagues as the spiritual heirs of William
Tyndale and other Henrician Bible translators who were being immortalized as Protestant
heroes in John Foxe’s monumental history of the English church, the *Acts and
Monuments*. That martyrological tome appeared in 1563 and then again in revised form in
1570, 1576, and 1583. Conservative bishops such as Cardinal Wolsey or Cuthbert
Tunstall of London, who had opposed the circulation of the vernacular Bible during the
1520s and whom Foxe condemns, anticipate Elizabethan presbyterian heterodoxy in

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Grindal’s framework. The religious ferment of Henrician England provides Grindal with a fertile field to justify the upheavals within English Protestantism that he had been supporting. The archbishop argues that those who oppose the “prophesyings” oppose all preaching and thus also stand against religion itself, in the same way that Foxe’s villains had attempted to restrict Bible reading. By equating “the godly reformation in religion now established” to the agenda of the “prophesying” meetings, Grindal indiscreetly compares Elizabeth, who opposed the meetings, to the bishops who stood against Henry VIII’s alleged support of the English Bible! The Protestant vernacular Bible was less controversial in Elizabethan England than during the reign of Henry VIII, and Grindal chooses this debate wisely in order to attempt to put the “prophesyings” onto the same orthodox footing that the Bible enjoyed. The historical Henry had of course been hesitant to countenance unrestricted access to the vernacular Bible, especially when he became convinced that such access promoted disunity in opinion among his subjects. Ignoring such historical realities, Grindal reinvents Henry VIII and the religious atmosphere of the 1520s as a symbolic precedent that legitimates Elizabethan Protestant heterodoxy despite Elizabeth’s opposition. Grindal and the author of *A Friendly Caveat to Bishop Sands* each invoke Henry in support of a Protestant agenda that ran counter to the official line of the government, albeit from different positions. The terms of their debate differ from that engaged by Matthew Parker and others aligned closer to the Protestant religious establishment.

Henry VIII’s religious settlement attracted competing interpretation among those who championed the Protestant church and those who wished to see it further cleansed of
its residual “popish” practices. In his Lenten sermon preached before the queen at Richmond on 6 March 1578, Richard Curteys, Bishop of Chichester, delivered his own brand of pro-Tudor panegyric as propaganda for Elizabeth. His discourse affords a contrast to the contentious interpretations of Henry to which feuding parties within the church were subjecting the queen at that time. As God’s “noble Moses,” Henry VIII had rescued England from “the Egypt of error, blindness, and superstition.” Henry “did not goe over Jordayne,” however, but instead “dyed in the Land of Moab.” The rest of the story follows predictably, with Edward VI taking the part of the triumphant Joshua, successor to Moses, who led the nation into the Promised Land. During the rule of Mary, England “served Baal and Asteroth,” but Elizabeth emerges as “a gratious Debora” to rescue the people.  

Curteys lauds Henry VIII as a latter-day Moses in a manner similar to the typological portrayals of Henry by John Bale, and he echoes John Aylmer, who had addressed Elizabeth as a second Deborah on the occasion of the queen’s accession, nineteen years before receiving promotion to the see of London. These comparisons leave open the possibility that even such a narrative of religious triumph might cast Henry VIII in an unflattering light. The Bible, after all, presents Moses’s failure to enter the land of the Canaanites as divine punishment against his personal moral failings. We have seen how Elizabethan Catholic commentators seized upon the Old Testament’s negative typological tradition in order to vilify Henry VIII as an idolatrous tyrant. Curteys’s remarks expose the semantics of typological praise during Elizabeth’s reign. Curteys rhetorically shapes his address in order to compare Henry and Elizabeth favorably to biblical precursors. Henry becomes a laborer who has laid the groundwork
for his Protestant royal successors. Curteys has the direct ear of the queen and uses this occasion to attempt to educate her in the methods of evangelical Protestant government.

As late as 1586, members of Parliament believed that Elizabeth’s paternity might still provide leverage to advance controversial religious reforms. A draft bill for imposing presbyterian governance on the English church claims that Henry VIII had made a good start but argues that Elizabeth must go beyond the religious settlement of her father in order to achieve “godliness.” This argument and all of the others concerning Henry’s legacy that writers offered to the queen were polemical and topical rather than factual. According to the bill, the queen had acted out of necessity during the tumultuous spiritual upheavals of mid-century, when she adopted a religious settlement sympathetic to the terms of the Henrician church. Further labor must still be undertaken, though, in order to complete Henry’s Reformation properly and, paradoxically, to depart from the ultimately inadequate spiritual standards of the Henrician age. For all of its complexity, this interpretation provides an incomplete canvas on which to diagram Henry’s place in the Elizabethan cultural memory. Many others cited Henry as evidence for appeals to the queen that she halt the English Reformation in its tracks. When discussing Henry’s importance to Elizabethan religious affairs, writers discovered that every imaginable interpretation of Elizabeth’s father could be used in the attempt to advance competing policies. Even Elizabeth herself proved able to manipulate the meaning of her father’s life. The history of the English Reformation and Henry’s responsibility for its innovations were malleable in the hands of presbyterians and bishops who rewrote the Tudor king in order to advance their own disparate visions for the spiritual life of Elizabeth’s church.
In an address to Parliament in 1593, Elizabeth insisted that among all of her royal predecessors, only Henry VIII exceeded her in the intensity of his own affections for the English people. Nevertheless, the queen could not monopolize interpretation of either her father’s accomplishments or his contemporary relevance. Henry’s perceived importance evolved over time and in response to the changing political climate of Elizabeth’s rule. Writers anachronistically commented upon Henry VIII at every opportunity and embraced flattery, propaganda, and the fictive shaping of source materials in the hope of persuading Henry’s daughter, Elizabeth, to favor their competing agendas for both church and nation. Even under the broad umbrella of supposed Protestant orthodoxy, Henry was a focus of competing historical and political interpretations and anachronistic applications to current controversies. Both Elizabeth and her subjects reinvented the king as the need arose and in the process disagreed about the meaning of his life in response to the debates of their time.

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2 See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), and Marie Axton, *The Queen’s
Anne McLaren describes how, “faced with the problem of legitimating a female ruler as holder of the imperial crown, theorists and apologists in Elizabeth’s reign drew on and referred to a history of conceptions of political authority that dated from Henry VIII’s reign.” *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558-1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 3, 235.


See chapter 2, above.

Elizabeth was eventually reinstated in 1544 (35 Hen. VIII c.1).


10 See the ODNB entry on Elizabeth.

11 BL, Cotton MS Otho, C.X. fol. 235, reprinted and translated in Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, eds., Elizabeth I: Collected Works, pp. 5-6. In this essay translations are my own unless otherwise noted.


Pearl of the Valois and Elizabeth I,” pp. 68-71. See also the “Introductory Note” to Prescott’s facsimile edition of Elizabeth’s translation, in the version published by John Bale in 1548 (Ashgate, 2001), p. x.


16 BL, Royal MS 7.D.X, fols. 2r-5r. This manuscript also contains the princess’s own embroidered cover, which is illustrated in Carley, *The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives*, p. 142.

17 King, *ERL*, p. 105.


21 BL, Additional MS 34563, fols. 54r-55r, cited by Freeman, “John Foxe’s Notes on the Imprisonment of Princess Elizabeth,” p. 115.

22 PRO SP 12/1/7, transcribed in Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, pp. 51-52.


The Passage of our Most Dear Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth through the City of London to Westminster the Day before her Coronation (London, 1558). STC 7590.


Richard DeMolen argues that this treatise tries to persuade readers that “surely, Elizabeth’s rule would be safely grounded if Englishmen were convinced that their monarch was as able as Henry VIII and as Protestant as Edward VI.” “Richard Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry,” p. 212.


Binns, pp. 297-98. For an account of Henry’s motivation in completing King’s College Chapel, see King, *TRI*, pp. 40-41 and 85-89.

*Du* m loquitur, patris in nata reminiscitur ora,

Luminaque, haec quamvis virgo, vir ille foret.

Et mox, en inquit Regis Regina parentis

En dona, atque iterum dona parentis, ait.

Sponte patris nomen canit, et cum dicere dona

Octaui posset, dona parentis ait.

40 On differences between Elizabeth’s historical progress festivals and the manipulation of these events in printed festival books, see Axel Stähler, “Imagining the Illusive/Elusive? Printed Accounts of Elizabethan Festivals,” in Christa Jansohn, ed., *Queen Elizabeth I: Past and Present* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), pp. 61-88.


43 BL, Royal MS 16.C.x. Warner and Gilson, 2.183.

44 “rectem sanem Encomium Inuictissimi Regis Octaui, hic libellus continet”; “summa eius in utramque Academiam Oxoniam et Cantabrigiam beneficia recensentur.” BL, Royal MS 16.C.x., fol. 5r.

45 Ibid., fol. 5v: “His omnibus adhunc modum enumeratis, author ipse patriae ac Reipublicae gratulatur, quod has virtutes Regina illustriissima initetur, et ad similes hoc est aeternas laudes parandas paternis vestigiis insistat.”

46 Cardinal College is now Christ Church.
Calfill also wrote a now-lost Latin tragedy that was performed before the queen during her visit. John R Elliott, Jr., “Queen Elizabeth at Oxford: New Light on the Royal Plays of 1566,” *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988), p. 227.

“Imperfecta tui subiens monumenta parentis.” Four lines of Calfill’s verse are transcribed from among the Wood manuscripts (now in the Bodleian Library) by John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (1823), 1.209. A record of these verses also appears in Edmund Campion’s *Narration About the Divorce of King Henry VIII*. Campion accompanied Robert Persons on the Jesuit Mission of 1581 and was executed by the government. He sharply criticizes Henry VIII’s endowment of Cardinal College, following Wolsey’s fall: “today its founder is recognized as Henry because he did not destroy the building nor did he relegate its proceeds to his treasury.” Calfill’s poetry was nothing more than “little verses in big letters,” and Campion laments that “the memory of a most outstanding patron [Wolsey] should be obliterated, and the memory should be conferred on him [Henry] who betrayed all honor, who mixed all things divine and human, and who extinguished religion and the republic of Britain.” The *Narration* appears as an appendix to Nicholas Harpsfield’s *Historia Anglicana Ecclesiastica* (1622), pp. 733-40, with relevant citations at p. 737. I am grateful to Christopher Brown for assistance in translating Campion’s Latin.


“dederit studiis stipendia digna fovendis;” “Tu proles tali tantoque simillima Patri.”
51 “Haec larga foveas continuata manu”; “proceed not to be unequal to your parent.”


52 “aetate juvenis, sed prudentia virili.” BL, Harleian MS 7033, fol. 131: Nicholas Robinson’s “Of the Actes done at Oxford when the Queen’s Majesty was there,” reprinted in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 1.234.


55 Mueller and Marcus, eds., p. 126n5 prints the Latin marginal assertion and provides a translation, which I have followed.


57 Ibid., 1.195-96. For further analysis of this petition, see Cole, *The Portable Queen*, pp. 116-17.
Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 1.313. Nichols extracts this material from *The Black Book*, a manuscript in the Corporation of Warwick Record Office that discusses Elizabeth’s 1572 visit to that city.

Ibid., 1.314.

Ibid., 1.311.

Ibid., 1.545-46. Nichols cites pp. 9-10 of “the Chamber Order Book at Worcester.”

On the trope of foul weather in printed accounts of Elizabethan festivals, see Stähler, “Printed Accounts of Elizabethan Festivals,” pp. 69-70, 73.

*The Joyful Receiving of the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty into her Highness’s City of Norwich* (1578), B3r. STC 11627.

Ibid., D4r.


68 I owe this point to Patrick Collinson’s ODNB entry on Elizabeth. Perhaps the correct response did not consciously occur to Nowell: because she had been conceived out of wedlock, Elizabeth would have been indisputably illegitimate, as her Roman Catholic critics insisted she had always been.

69 Qtd. in Levine, The Early Elizabethan Succession Question, p. 176. See also Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559-1581, p. 142.


72 John Leslie, Treatise Concerning the Defence of the Honor of the Right High, Mighty and Noble Princesse, Mary Queene of Scotland . . . With a Declaration . . . of her Right, Title, and Interest, to the Succession of the Crowne of England (1569). STC 15505. An account of this work appears in James Anderson, Collections Relating to Mary Queen of Scotland, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1727), 1.ix. See also Axton, “The Influence of Edmund
Plowden’s Succession Treatise,” pp. 211, 223-24; and Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies*, pp. 35-37.


75 See chapter 2, above.


80 Ibid., pp. 67-68, glossing line 50.


84 Ibid., 2.x.75-76.


86 *A Conference about the Next Succession*, Y8r-Z1r.

87 Ibid., Gg1r-v

88 Wentworth’s works appeared as a single posthumous volume in 1598. *STC* 25245.

89 *A Pithy Exhortation*, C1v-2r.

90 Ibid., K3r.

91 See the *ODNB* entry on Wentworth.

92 The other bishops were Edmund Grindal (London), Richard Cox (Ely), William Barlow (Chichester), and John Scory (Hereford)

93 Corpus Christi College Cambridge, Parker MS 121, art. 30, reprinted in John Bruce and Thomas Thomason Perowne, eds., *Correspondence of Matthew Parker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853), pp. 97-98.

94 Ibid., p. 100.


96 *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, eds. Bruce and Thomason, pp. 373-74.


The Act for the Advancement of True Religion (1543) (34 & 35 Henry VIII. c. 1) restricted Bible reading to members of the upper classes, perhaps because the king believed that unrestricted access would undermine his authority.

Richard Curteys, *A Sermon Preached before the Queen’s Majesty at Richmond* (1578), C3r, 4r, 8v-D1r. *STC* 6139. See Peter E. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics*


104 Cf. Deuteronomy 32: 48-52.

105 I argue this point in chapter 2, above.


CHAPTER 4
REREADING HENRY VIII IN FOXE’S ACTS AND MONUMENTS

Containing one of the most important histories of Henry VIII published during the early modern period, John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Days* is germane to this study of Henry’s cultural legacy. Foxe’s analysis of church history from the time of the apostles to the reign of Elizabeth helped shape the thought patterns of the English Protestant nation for many years; narratives exist of people reading tattered folio copies in English churches as late as the nineteenth century.¹ Foxe deserves a prominent place among Elizabethan writers who express ambivalence about Henry’s status as a Protestant king and prototype for the Elizabethan religious settlement. To a significant extent Foxe describes Henry as an ideal Protestant king and whitewashes his failures for the benefit of the queen and her regime. At the same time, the martyrrologist cannot avoid rebuking Henry for losing a number of opportunities to safeguard evangelical Protestantism into the future. Foxe frequently objects when the king encourages objectionable, “popish” tendencies in the English church. The importance of the *Acts and Monuments* as a manifesto for sixteenth-century English Protestant identity is its remarkable ability to hold these two conflicting perspectives on Henry VIII in tension.
The *Acts and Monuments* describes how Henry VIII orchestrated England’s break from the Church of Rome but also persisted in espousing allegedly “popish” doctrines. Even though this work is tendentious by any measure, scholars have not fully appreciated how its approach to Henry VIII evolves over the course of four editions (1563, 1570, 1576, and 1583) published during the lifetimes of Foxe and John Day, his publisher. Foxe and Day collaborated on producing what became perhaps the most frequently read English vernacular publication besides the Bible. Tension inherent within Henry’s apparent simultaneous Protestantism and Catholicism forced Foxe to work toward a single-minded viewpoint in his revisions between separate editions and in his use of paratext, marginal annotation, and other textual features. During Henry’s own lifetime, the boundaries between competing confessions were more fluid than they would become during the reign of Elizabeth. Henry VIII himself was adept at the rhetoric of persuasion, using the term “catholic” to describe his own religious policies and condemn those espoused by the papacy.

Movement toward unanimity over the meaning of Henry’s life produced ambivalent analysis in the *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe and his associates formed a collaborative enterprise that worked together collecting, editing, arranging, and publishing the book. They produced and commented upon a myriad number of documents when preparing their account of the Henrician Reformation. Foxe himself was a biased compiler of information rather than an author in the traditional sense; indeed, he regularly sifted material provided by informants who themselves shaped their testimony into rhetorically charged narratives. Although, as we have seen, Henry’s split
from the Church of Rome provided the Elizabethan Church with one of its most powerful legitimating narratives, Foxe’s network of compilers and informants hesitates to praise Henry as an evangelical Protestant. The *Acts and Monuments* is more critical in its analysis of the queen’s father than one might at first expect, given the foundational achievement of Henry’s split from the papacy.

This chapter revisits the first (1563) and second (1570) editions of the *Acts and Monuments* in order to reassess the generic and rhetorical function of praise in its analysis of two key moments in the Henrician Reformation: the Royal Supremacy and the schism from the Church of Rome. The substantial revision represented by the 1570 edition established the text for Henry’s reign that would recur with little variation in successive editions published during Foxe’s lifetime. Unlike many of the Reformation polemics that we have been discussing, the *Acts and Monuments* usually does not employ typological argument based upon Old Testament monarchical topoi in its discussion of Henry VIII. Instead, it accentuates the conflicted thematic perspectives of its sources by supplying controversial marginal commentary and highly biased transitional passages between reprinted documents. Marginalia and transitional moments in the text praise and blame Henry VIII for simultaneously expelling papal jurisdiction from England and failing to complete an evangelical Protestant Reformation. By inserting this editorial material into what is otherwise little more than an anthology of sources, the work describes Henry as a flawed agent more effectively than could be achieved by using binary typological polemic alone. Through its use of nuanced rhetorical framing of this kind, the *Acts and Monuments* describes Henry as both a Protestant champion and as a
hindrance to effecting religious change along Protestant lines. The form and content of its analysis of the earliest phase of English Protestantism evolves in response to the challenge of discussing the significance of this most important forbearer to the Elizabethan Protestant church.

4.1. Henry VIII and the Ordering of Ecclesiastical History

The Acts and Monuments superimposes narrative subdivisions based on regnal genealogy onto its ordering of ecclesiastical history in all of the early folio editions (i.e., 1563, 1570, 1576, and 1583). Differing treatment of these subdivisions in the book’s first two editions in particular affords a glimpse into Henry’s evolving importance to Foxe’s history. The reigns of Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I each correspond to a decisive shift in the organizational structure of the 1563 edition, which contains six major narrative subdivisions. Three of these superimpose major transitions at points coincident with the accessions of Henry VIII’s children, whose reigns comprise significant chapters in Foxe’s ecclesiastical history. Indeed, the accession of Edward VI is marked by an elaborate initial capital “E” in this edition. The accession of Henry himself does not attract special notice, however, and Thomas of Eckelles, the book’s first Henrician martyr, underscores Henry’s comparative insignificance at this stage. Readers lacking knowledge of Henry’s accession date (1509) do not learn that a new king has appeared, since the martyrrologist gives only Eckelles’s name and year of death (1510) in the margin (Figure 6). The 1563 edition of the Acts and Monuments draws no special attention...
Henry’s accession in part because it occurred prior to the decisive event of the king’s break from the Church of Rome.

The publication history of the *Acts and Monuments* sheds further light on why the 1563 edition treats Henry VIII as less significant even though his rule constitutes an important milestone in Foxe’s history of the “true” church. The work originated as a Latin history during Foxe’s continental exile following the return to Roman Catholicism under Mary I. Its narrative of the life of Martin Luther provided a textual hinge for two planned volumes, the first of which would cover the Lollard persecution of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the second the Protestant Reformation. This second volume would have afforded an opportunity for analysis of Henry VIII, but that book never appeared because events forced Foxe to revise his plan. When news of the recent deaths of English Protestants reached Strasbourg, where Foxe had migrated following Mary’s accession, Foxe began to collaborate with other exiles on a new project to produce two treatises on the Marian burnings, one in Latin and the other in English. The first of these, Foxe’s *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum* (1559), collapses the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI in order to bridge the earlier Lollard material and the newly obtained data on the recent burnings of English Protestants. Although this layout enables Foxe seamlessly to connect the Lollard and Marian martyrs as united in suffering, it also forces him to forego detailed discussion of Henry VIII’s reign. The *Rerum* contains an address to the reader in which Foxe affirms that the original plan would have designated the death of Henry VIII (rather than his accession) with a narrative break. After his return to England following the accession of Elizabeth, Foxe undertook additional research for
what would become the *Acts and Monuments*, but the first edition of his vernacular
martyrology preserves unchanged the *Rerum*’s pattern of narrative subdivision.

Foxe does not isolate Henry VIII’s reign as an independent narrative unit at any
stage in the early development of the *Acts and Monuments*. There was no good reason for
him to do so. After all, Henry had ruled for nearly forty years and did not sever England’s
relationship with the papacy until his third decade in power. The persecution of English
Protestants by Mary’s government was initially more important. The 1563 edition revises
the *Rerum*’s conflation of Edward’s reign with Henry’s by recognizing the Edwardian
church with its own narrative subdivision. This organizational shift provides context for
Foxe’s discussion of the lost opportunities for ongoing Protestant reforms during Mary’s
reign. Dividing the narrative structure of the *Acts and Monuments* at Elizabeth’s
accession in 1563 also made good sense to Foxe, whose dedication to the queen in that
edition records his hope that she would undertake Protestant change as a latter-day
Constantine, the Roman emperor who brought a cessation to religious persecution. With
the Marian persecution on his mind following his return to England, Foxe appears to have
found the first two decades of Henry’s reign less than extraordinary.

The account of Henry VIII in the *Rerum* and the *Acts and Monuments* (1563)
demonstrates how Foxe’s commitment to ecclesiastical history overrides monarchical
history in these editions. The political affairs of any monarch only attract attention when
they advance the book’s antipapal history. Discussion of Henry II in the 1563 edition, for
example, focuses primarily on Thomas à Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury who
allegedly fomented papal usurpation of secular authority.\(^\text{13}\) The account of King John in
the same edition alleges the existence of a clerical conspiracy against John that does not appear in the chronicle sources for this account.\textsuperscript{14} By designing the book’s second major narrative subdivision around the career of John Wyclif, the Oxford theologian and proto-Protestant reformer, Foxe passes over events occurring between the dates c.1250 and c.1370. The reigns of Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III vanish from Foxe’s story, presumably because the martyrrologist could not procure antipapal material on these kings’ reigns during his researches.\textsuperscript{15} Henry V appears in the 1563 version primarily against the backdrop of the trial and execution of Sir John Oldcastle, the proto-Protestant martyr, and the Council of Constance, which precipitated the burning of the proto-Protestants John Hus and Jerome of Prague. The book’s third narrative segment continues the history through the reign of Henry VIII. Foxe has little time here for the Wars of the Roses because they provide him with no exploitable link to the history of the fifteenth-century English church. Although Book Three takes the year of Henry VI’s accession to the throne (1422) as its point of departure, John Day inserts a martyrlogical woodcut in this location to commemorate the burning of William Tayler (Figure 7). Furthermore, even though the story of Henry VIII occupies the majority of Book Three, he is not its subject.\textsuperscript{16} Book Three does not give focused attention to the political history of the Henrician monarchy until its account of the tumultuous 1530s, when royal history again intersects with church history. Only the latter half of Henry VIII’s reign supplies relevant material for ecclesiastical history, which dominates and exists prior to regnal history throughout the first edition.
In the second edition of 1570, however, Foxe reorganizes the book’s narrative subdivisions so as to devote increased attention to monarchical history. He inserts “A table describyng the vii. kyngdomes of the Saxons, raygnyng here in Englande” (1570, pp. 149-52) into a new book two, which discusses “such thinges specially touched, as have bene done in England, from the tyme of Kyng Lucius, to Gregorius, and so after to the tyme of Kyng Egebert” (1570, pp. 145-79). In collaboration with John Day, Foxe now employs headlines to designate regnal divisions. Beginning in the third book, which treats “the next .300 yeares, from the raigne of K. Egbertus to the time of W. Conquerour” (1570, pp. 180-221), new paragraph subdivisions mark the accession of every monarch, both legendary and historical, even monarchs who had been completely overlooked in the first edition. Despite his practices elsewhere in the Acts and Monuments, Foxe deliberately employs page layout to draw special attention to monarchical accessions in these portions of the 1570 version. Recall that monarchical accessions in their own right went unnoticed in the 1563 edition. In the second edition of 1570, paragraph subdivisions intervene into Foxe’s history of fifteenth-century proto-Protestant martyrs to mark the accession of Plantagenet monarchs, thereby enabling new discussion of the history of the English monarchy as it pertains to Lollard persecution under Henry V. Monarchical and ecclesiastical history have become closely related at the level of the materiality of the text.

The heavily revised 1570 edition of the Acts and Monuments departs from its predecessor by elevating regnal history to a position equal with ecclesiastical history. Identifiable historical and political factors shaped Foxe’s changes between editions and
his views about Henry VIII during the intervening years. Foxe redirected his efforts as a compiler in 1570 toward including narratives that depicted the struggles of the monarchy as an institution against the papacy, whereas in 1563 only church-state and papal-imperial relations during selected reigns attracted analysis. Moreover, in revision the martyrrologist formulated new opinions about Henry as the prime exemplar of a strong English monarch achieving victory over an allegedly tyrannous clergy. The contemporary political atmosphere in England prompted these changes. Exiled English Catholic historians at the University of Louvain and elsewhere, including Thomas Harding and Nicholas Sander, had explicitly challenged the reliability of the 1563 version of the Acts and Monuments, and Foxe sought to refute their criticism.\textsuperscript{18} As we have seen, they attempted either to appropriate Henry VIII as their own co-religionist or to vilify him, in both cases as grounds for their opposition to Elizabeth. These writers also claimed many of England’s kings for new Roman Catholic national histories that could validate their religious marginalization.\textsuperscript{19} Such critique forced Foxe to clarify his thinking concerning the religious policies of Elizabeth’s ancestors, particularly Henry VIII, who assumes new prominence in the work as a result of these factors. Moreover, Foxe frequented the household of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury following his return to England from continental exile. Rethinking the history of the English monarchy aided Parker’s scholarly researches by documenting the historical and monarchical origins of the Elizabethan Protestant settlement.\textsuperscript{20} The queen’s failure to reintroduce Protestant changes as fervidly as Foxe had hoped may also have helped to provoke the new emphasis on Henry’s reign.\textsuperscript{21} Finally, the potential for disagreement between Elizabeth and her more
forward Protestant advisers, like Burghley or Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, raised the specter of failed reformation in the minds of Foxe and others who were sympathetic to further change in religious affairs. For these reasons Foxe defines Henry’s rule as a bulwark against clerical usurpation more thoroughly in 1570, perhaps in the hope that Elizabeth would receive instruction from Henry on how to overcome religious apathy and “popery.” The second edition of the *Acts and Monuments* offers a new approach to Henry VIII that responds directly to such challenges. By identifying Henry as an antipapal and even reforming monarch who could be made to respond anachronistically to the political challenges facing the Elizabethan nation, Foxe established a precedent that would go on to generate additional controversy among readers of seventeenth-century editions of the *Acts and Monuments*.

When rewriting his analysis of Henry VIII in the 1570 edition, Foxe amplifies his interest in the affairs of this king by manipulating the proportion of text dedicated to Henry versus other topics. Although discussion of Henry VIII had occupied approximately one-sixth of the total number of pages in the 1563 edition, this figure increases to about a quarter in the 1570 version. The intensified emphasis on Henry is actually more pronounced than these figures reveal, since the second edition also incorporates a higher number of sheets (i.e., large leaves of paper folded twice in the printing house to create four folio pages each) than its predecessor and because each sheet is significantly larger than those used in the first edition. Furthermore, whereas in the 1563 version Henry’s reign did not comprise the subject of even one narrative subdivision, Foxe now devotes two complete subdivisions of his total twelve to Henry.
This equates to five hundred and fifty eight large folio pages that narrate Henry VIII’s struggle against the Church of Rome with renewed fervor. As a result of this shift in emphasis toward regnal history in the second edition, however, Henry’s imperfections paradoxically receive both heightened emphasis and increased de-emphasis in the *Acts and Monuments*. On the one hand, Foxe refocused his attention as a compiler to obtaining new documents that could transform Henry into a triumphant Protestant predecessor and exemplar for Queen Elizabeth. At the same time, the *Acts and Monuments* betrays Foxe’s fears that Henry could not be described as such a precursor. A conflicted interpretation of Elizabeth’s father’s reign results from this ambivalence.

To the extent that its sources would allow, the *Acts and Monuments* attempts to portray Henry VIII as an evangelical Protestant reformer, especially beginning in the 1570 edition.²⁵ In one account that appears for the first time in 1570, Foxe defends Henry’s reputation against his adversarial Catholic readers by reprinting and commenting upon a letter taken from the episcopal registers of St. Andrews, Scotland. Theologians from the University of Louvain had written to Cardinal James Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, to thank him for overseeing the execution of Patrick Hamilton, the Scottish proto-martyr. Foxe obtained a skeletal narrative of Hamilton’s demise from John Bale’s bibliography of British writers, the *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytanniae . . . Catalogus* (1557-59), when compiling the 1559 *Rerum*, and he translated this account unaltered into the 1563 edition of the *Acts and Monuments*. During his preparations for the 1570 edition, however, Foxe acquired eyewitness testimony of Hamilton’s death from John Winram, a prominent Scottish ecclesiastical official, in time to augment the account.
of Hamilton’s suffering. Winram probably provided Foxe with the Louvain letter from his own researches in the St. Andrews registers. In the new version, the Louvain theologians praise Beaton for refuting Hamilton’s heresy by the authority of scripture, but a marginal remark scorns this assertion, saying, ‘If ye could shew to what place of the scripture, we woulde gladlye heare you.’ The theologians likewise encourage Beaton to persever therfore, being moved therunto by the example of England, your nexte neighbour, which in thys most troublous tyme, is not chauigned, partly by the working of the bishops, among the which Roffensis [i.e., John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester] hath shewed him selfe an Evangelicall Phænix [sic], and partlye of the king, declaring him selfe to be an other Matthias of the new lawe: pretermitting nothing that may defend the lawe of hys realme.

The writers of this letter align Henry VIII with John Fisher, one of England’s most conservative prelates, and Mattathias Maccabees, the Jewish priest who led a revolt against Antiochus IV, King of Syria (c. 215-164 B.C.E.), in defense of orthodox Jewish religious practices. Both comparisons defend Henry VIII as a champion of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, but Foxe reclaims Henry as an evangelical monarch and defender of the Protestant cause by repudiating the theologians’ argument in two pointed marginal notes. The first note judges Fisher, whom Henry had executed in 1535 for refusing to support the Royal Supremacy, as ‘beheaded for treason.’ The second marginal addition gloats about how ‘K[ing] Henry 8. is here a Matthias, when he maketh with you, but when he put downe the pope & hys Abbeyes, then ye make hym an hereticke’ (1570, p. 1109). Foxe extends his adversaries’ argument concerning Henry VIII’s religious zeal: as
a latter-day Mattathias, the king defends evangelical doctrines and opposes allegedly
corrupt Catholic religious practices with a degree of fervor that equates the Henrician
Reformation with the Maccabean revolt against ‘false’ religion. Foxe exploits the
apparent hypocrisy of these Louvain theologians and dismisses Henry’s alleged support
of Archbishop Beaton as a discredited notion. Given Foxe’s caustic remarks against his
Louvain critics in his revised dedication to Elizabeth in the 1570 edition of the Acts and
Monuments, this letter and Foxe’s commentary afford Foxe an opportunity to advance
new evidence concerning Henry’s forward Protestantism in response to adverse
commentary from contemporary readers.

The 1570 edition of the Acts and Monuments devotes significantly more attention
to Henry’s struggle against the papacy than do preceding versions. Henry emerges from
the 1563 edition as an exemplary monarch, but the second edition breaks new ground by
treating the king’s reign as a coherent chapter in the larger story of ecclesiastical history
for the first time. In a powerful testimonial to the increasingly intertwined relationship
between monarchical and ecclesiastical history, Henry supplants Martin Luther as the
textual hinge of the book’s two-volume structure, which Foxe re-adopts following his
decision to publish the first edition in just one volume. It is significant that Henry
supplants a theologian and reformer as the most prominent modern champion of “true”
religion. As scholars have recognized, the memorable “proud primacie of Popes”
woodcut sequence, which concludes volume one of the Acts and Monuments from the
1570 version onward, gives Henry unique prominence by narrating the encroachment of
papal tyranny against medieval monarchy prior to his accession. According to the
iconography of this sequence, Henry VIII is the first monarch since Henry IV, the
eleventh-century Holy Roman Emperor, who does not subjugate himself to the Church of
Rome. By prevailing over the pope, Henry VIII surpasses the achievement of his
medieval predecessors who struggle to break free from papal “tyranny.” Henry’s triumph
over the papacy provides one of the book’s climaxes, and Foxe emphatically stresses that
the king himself oversaw this shift in the balance of religious power.30 Foxe just as
emphatically attempts to transfer the blame for Henry’s failures onto the shoulders of
Henry’s conservative counselors, especially Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester.
This dual approach to Henry’s legacy is ambivalent to the extreme, and Foxe makes no
significant attempt to reconcile the tension.

Foxe does look for opportunities to apply his analysis of Henrician religious
policies to the Elizabethan church, however. Readers of the 1570 edition of the Acts and
Monuments discover that Henry VIII rescued England from centuries of papal
domination. In order to advance this thesis, Foxe reprints his own earlier antipapal tract
on A Solemn Contestation of Diverse Popes as an extended gloss of the “proud primacie
of Popes” illustration series. In support of this new monarchical focus, Day
commissioned eleven of the images in this series specifically for the 1570 edition.31 By
affirming that Pope Gregory VII “began first to bring the Emperour (which was Henry 4)
under foote,” Foxe’s tract corroborates the visual iconography of the illustration
sequence. With Henry VIII in mind, the martyrologist argues that the domination of
“Emperours, kings, and subjectes” under “the Popes judiciall authoritie” endured “till
these later yeares.” Even though the medieval
kynges of this realme of England being prudent Princes, and seyng right well the
ambitious presumption of those Romish Byshops, dyd what they could to shake of
[i.e., off] the yoke of their supremacie . . . yet for feare of other foreine Princes,
and the blynd opinion of their subjectes, such was then the calamitie of that tyme
that neither they could nor durst compasse that, which fayne they would (1570,
MM23).

At the opening of volume two, Foxe celebrates Henry VIII for finally “exil[ing] and
abolish[ing] out of the realme the usurped power of the Bysh[op] of Rome, Idolatrie &
superstition somewhat repressed, Images and pilgrimages defaced, abbays and
monasteries pulled downe . . . scriptures reduced to ye knowledge of the vulgare tongue,
and the state of the Church and Religion redressed” (1570, p. 924).

In another significant change to the story of Henry’s rule in this location, John
Day bolsters Foxe’s argument for successful Henrician government by inserting a new
woodcut illustration at the opening of volume II (Figure 8). Crafted by Jacob Faber, a
Basel woodcutter,32 this illustration portrays Henry VIII sitting beneath the royal arms
and crown imperial and surrounded by twenty-five councilors. Even though this cut is not
intrinsically controversial, when read against Foxe’s text proper it refocuses attention
from papal religious abuses onto Henry VIII and his government. In this way the image
enhances the 1570 edition’s renewed emphasis on regnal history. Day obtained this
image from the printing establishment of Richard Grafton, who had commissioned it for
use in Edward Hall’s Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and

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York (1548). Hall provides Foxe with one of his most important Protestant sources for Henry VIII in the *Acts and Monuments*.

The second edition of the *Acts and Monuments* devotes increased attention to Henry VIII as an exemplary forerunner to evangelical Elizabethan Protestantism. Yet both this and subsequent editions also sharply criticize Henry. Henry’s example proves to Foxe and later editors that antipapal sentiment does not always translate into forward evangelical Protestant change. Both the compiler and his informants embrace Henry’s victories and villainies within the larger antipapal framework of the second edition. Much of the 1570 version of Henrician rule contains reprinted sources and editorial commentary that expose Henry’s problematic status as a Protestant hero.

4.2. The Meaning of the Royal Supremacy

The *Acts and Monuments* does not always speak favorably about the antipapal accomplishment of Henry VIII. Metaphors of the king’s spiritual blindness from time to time accentuate Foxe’s unflattering descriptions. Through selective compiling of source materials, the martyrrologist argues that Henry frequently fell victim to the supposedly pernicious influence of clerical advisers, who at times dominate the king and control policy. Foxe frequently reprints narratives that present Henry as a willing accomplice and even puppet to clerical tyranny, especially during his account of the so-called “conservative reaction” in religious affairs during the 1540s. This highly useful and polemical approach oversimplifies significant complexities of Henrician religious politics. In laying down the initial grounds for the Royal Supremacy, Foxe proposes a
Henrician framework for educating readers about the nature and limits of royal power. Henry emerges from these reports as a vexed figure who attracts both praise and blame.

Sensitive to the ambivalence surrounding Henry’s posthumous reputation, Foxe’s informants sometimes employ the motif of light and darkness either to praise the king for enabling open discussion of clerical abuses or to censure him for his ongoing spiritual blindness. Both kinds of reports appear beginning in the 1570 edition of the *Acts and Monuments*. One document describes how, following the opening of the Reformation Parliament (1529), the Commons enjoyed new freedom to debate their grievances against the clergy, since “God had illumined the eyes of the kyng” (1570, p. 1131). Because Henry progresses in this example from spiritual blindness to spiritual revelation, he allows clerical abuses openly to be debated. On the other hand, the image of Henry VIII’s spiritual blindness supplies a provocative lens from which to examine the disappointment of some of Foxe’s informants that Henry did not reject conservative doctrines that were anathema to Protestant reformers. John Day includes a memorable woodcut illustration of the death of William Tyndale, the Bible translator, for example, in each of the first four editions of the *Acts and Monuments*. A banderole or speech scroll extends from Tyndale’s lips in this image and records his putative final words before undergoing martyrdom: “Lord open the king of Englands eies” (Figure 9). A reprinted passage from “Tyndals supplications to the king, nobles, and subjectes of England” reiterates the same theme: “If the persecution of the kynges grace and of other temporall persons conspiryng with the spiritualtie, be of ignoraunce, I doubt not but that theyr eyes shalbe opened shortly and they shall see and repent, and God shall shewe them mercye” (1570, p. 1231).
The informant responsible for providing Foxe with this narrative would presumably have disagreed with other informants who believed that Henry VIII had already received spiritual foresight. Henry’s contradictory personification in these examples allows readers to decide themselves whether the king’s eyes had actually been opened.35

Because of his conflicted significance to Elizabethan religious culture, Henry’s authority over religious abuses is never self-evident to Foxe, especially beginning in the 1570 edition. It always requires explanation, justification, or even deflection. The best example of such rhetorical strategies of deferred praise occurs surrounding John Day’s well-known woodcut illustration of Henry VIII ascendant over Pope Clement VII (Figure 10). Despite its apparent lack of ambiguity, this illustration precedes a number of reprinted documents that qualify its triumphant iconography.36 Scholars should not automatically assume that either Foxe or his readers interpreted this image as an unambiguous statement of Henry VIII’s defeat of papal authority. Its rhetorical style and accompanying documents actually represent a calculated attempt to persuade readers to accept Henry as an antipapal Protestant king. Indeed, the 1570 edition of the Acts and Monuments often presents Henry’s religious settlement as a time in which Protestant evangelical change progressed haltingly and even haphazardly. This antipapal woodcut migrates to the opening of volume II in the fourth edition (1583), supplanting the figure of Henrician conciliar government (see Figure 8) in that location. It appears adjacent to Foxe’s discussion of the Act of Supremacy (1534) in the 1570 and 1576 versions. The rhetoric of this illustration provides a good example of conflicted response to Henry VIII in the Acts and Monuments: the image signals the overthrow of the pope as one of the

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great successes Henry’s reign but also requires contextual framing that threatens to undermine its very antipapal enthusiasm.

A key to the image’s iconography lies in two contrasting thematic impulses that both appear in the 1570 edition. The visual design of the image suggests a prior fall of the pope, since he is already lying beneath Henry’s feet. The title of the image also speaks of Henry’s victory having already occurred: “The Pope Suppressed by K[ing] Henry the Eight” (my emphasis). The marginal statement that the pope has been “unhorsed” links the pontiff’s sprawled estate with the richly caparisoned horse that a waiting monk holds in the lower left corner of the image. The image accordingly depicts “[t]he lamentable wepyng & howling of all the religious route for the fall of their god the Pope.” The marginal commentator nevertheless fears that clerical attendants stand “ready to hold the stirup for him to get up agayne.” The illustration as a whole argues, significantly, that Henry VIII’s triumph over the Church of Rome has not yet transpired. It will occur in the future, after the pope returns. Marginal notice of “An olde prophecie of the fall of the Pope” accompanies a caption below that announces, in the future tense, how “the pope will soon die; Caesar will reign everywhere; and soon the joys of the vain clergy will end” (1570, p. 1201, my emphases).37 The king may appear as a latter-day Caesar in this figure, but the caption, title, and marginal glosses provide detailed analysis of the status of the Henrician Reformation and its connection to the pope’s fall.38 Henry’s defeat of the papacy in this image is more complex than may at first appear.

Reprinted text from a range of anti-papal sources follows this image ostensibly to present Henry VIII as an unambiguously Protestant monarch. In actuality, this material
further qualifies the antipapal message of the woodcut. In an extended gloss upon the enforcement of the king’s newfound religious authority, Foxe devotes the following thirteen folio pages to the subjection of England’s bishops to Henry in the 1570 edition.\textsuperscript{39} These submission narratives represent a rhetorical reversal of the dominant theme of monarchs yielding themselves to clerical authority that ordinarily prevails throughout the \textit{Acts and Monuments}. The rhetorical style of these narratives provides a carefully constructed interpretation of the Supremacy by indicating that Henry’s spiritual authority against the Church of Rome emerged through a process of negotiation rather than as an instantaneous victory.

Foxe excerpts the first major narrative of clerical subjection under Henry VIII from the work of Stephen Gardiner, whom many Elizabethan Protestants hated for his alleged responsibility for influencing Henry VIII toward embracing conservative doctrines, especially during the 1540s. By including Gardiner excerpts in the \textit{Acts and Monuments}, the martyrologist thus capitalizes upon a lengthy Protestant satirical tradition. Gardiner’s vexed reputation also arose during his lifetime from his apparently fluctuating loyalty to Henry’s religious policies, as controversialists accused him of shifting allegiances during the reigns of subsequent monarchs. He offered a convenient scapegoat for Marian and Elizabethan writers who wished to minimize the potentially uncomfortable appearance of Henry VIII’s conservative religiosity.\textsuperscript{40}

An expert in canon law, Gardiner rapidly rose to prominence in the household of Cardinal Wolsey and earned royal favor for assisting Henry’s attempts to obtain a papal annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Preferment to the position of the
king’s principal secretary and the bishopric of Winchester soon followed, inaugurating his prominent career as a theologian and diplomat. Gardiner doubtless offered Foxe a problematic source for any attempt to justify the Royal Supremacy as an antipapal triumph. He once claimed to a papal nuncio in France that he wrote *De vera obedientia* (1535), his defense of the Henrician Reformation, under compulsion from Henry, who did not always favor the minister. Henry’s last will and testament explicitly rejected Gardiner as one of the council of executors that would govern the country during Edward VI’s minority, for example. The *Acts and Monuments* reprints a document that clarifies the king’s deathbed opinions about Gardiner: “I my selfe could use him, and rule hym to all maner of purposes, as seemed good to me,” the king affirms, but “you should never rule hym, he is of so troublesome a nature.”41 The *Acts and Monuments* often vilifies Gardiner for opposing English Protestantism, as in its account of the bishop’s alleged leadership of a conspiracy to overthrow queen Catherine Parr, Henry’s sixth wife and the ally of English Protestants at court.42 Imprisoned during Edward’s reign for refusing to support the government’s Protestant agenda, Gardiner returned to favor under Mary, holding the office of Lord Chancellor until his death in November 1555.

Through a judicious selection of source materials, Foxe uses Gardiner to provide contextual framing around the sensitive issue of Henry VIII’s spiritual authority. The 1570 edition of the *Acts and Monuments* reprints extracts from Gardiner’s *De vera obedientia* in the implicit belief that Henry’s victory over the papacy cannot stand on its own but requires the creation of this legitimating narrative. Indeed, English Protestants had published three highly polemical translations of Gardiner’s book during Mary’s reign.
in the attempt to expose Gardiner as disloyal to the principles of Henrician ecclesiastical supremacy. Foote evaluates Gardiner’s argument regarding the competing jurisdictions of temporal and spiritual authority in a section following the Henrician antipapal woodcut titled “Winchesters reasons agaynst the Popes supremacie.” Selected passages from Gardiner explicitly justify both Henry VIII’s reform program and Day’s decision to commemorate that program through the insertion of the woodcut. Foxe reprints focused moments from Gardiner in order to delimit the significance of Henry’s Sword and Book, two of the image’s prominent iconographical emblems that also appear elsewhere throughout Protestant royal iconography:

In the processe of hys foresayd booke hee alledgyng the old distinction of the Papistes, wherein they gyve to the Prince the regiment of thyngs temporall, & to the Church of things spiritual, comparyng the one to the greater light, the other to the lesser light, he confuteth and derideth the same distinction, declaryng the sworde of the Churche to extende no farther then to teachyng and excommunication, and referreth all preheminence to the sworde of the Prince (1570, p. 1204)

The Acts and Monuments provides a second excerpt from Gardiner in order to bolster the woodcut’s iconographical program: “Paule [i.e., St. Paul] makyng no exception nor distinction of subjection, save only of that which belongeth to God, willeth all men to obey their Princes, and what Princes? Those Princes whiche beare the sword.” As if to counter Gardiner’s apparent support of Henrician religious authority in these extracts, a sarcastic accompanying marginal annotation reminds the reader of Gardiner’s erratic
loyalty during a later phase of his career to the cause for which Henry VIII toppled the pope: “Step[hen] Wint[on] Taketh his *Vale* of the Pope, but not hys *ultimum vale*” (1570, p. 1205).

These Gardiner excerpts join other reprinted texts that Foxe has gathered to explain the meaning of the Henrician Royal Supremacy. A second example appears in a document newly transcribed into the 1570 edition of the *Acts and Monuments*. “A Protestation in the name of the king, and the whole Counsaile, and Clergie of England, why they refuse to come to the Popes Councell at hys call” explains Henry’s refusal to send representatives to a general council of the church under Pope Paul III. The statement vilifies papal pretensions to authority in England by comparing Henry VIII’s sword of temporal authority with the misused sword of the Church of Rome: “[The pope] thinketh, he playeth Christes parte well, when he may say as Christ dyd: Non veni pacem mittere in terram, sed gladium: I come not to make peace in earth, but to sende swordes about: and not such swordes, as Christ woulde his to be armed withall, but such as cruell manquellers, abuse in the slaughter of their neighbours.” A marginal gloss alleges papal misreading of Christ’s words concerning the sword of the Gospel: “The Pope bringeth not peace but the savorde to the earth, otherwyse then Christ dyd” (1570, p. 1236). This proclamation and gloss advance Henry VIII as the consummate wielder of the sword of Christ in a manner that accords with biblical precedent and Day’s antipapal woodcut. The pope, on the other hand, emerges as an abuser of spiritual authority.

These sources personify Henry VIII’s religious authority not as self-evident or self-asserting, but rather requiring of elaboration, clarification, and reinforcement within
the *Acts and Monuments*. An antipapal sermon preached by Cuthbert Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, in the presence of the king thus appears here in the 1570 edition. This sermon reiterates themes contained within the woodcut illustration. Relevant selections from *The Institution of a Christian Man* (1537), which we have already encountered in a disagreement between Thomas Harding and John Jewel, also appear in support of the woodcut’s iconographical message. This ostensibly official doctrinal statement for the English Church in actuality never received Crown approval. Given the ambivalences of the Henrician religious settlement, Foxe describes this source as only partly suitable for his agenda to elaborate (and therefore reinforce) Henry’s spiritual authority: “In the which booke, although many things were very slender and unperfecte, yet as touching this cause of the Bishop of Romes regalitie, we will heare (God willyng) what their [the bishops’] whole opinion and provincall determination dyd conclude” (1570, p. 1210, my emphasis). Next appears a letter to Reginald Pole “provyng the Byishop of Rome to have no speciall superioritie above other Byishops.” It’s purported authors, Cuthbert Tunstall and John Stokesley, Bishop of London, composed treatises that we have encountered as models for the historical diatribes of Harpsfield and Sander. Pole, its addressee, was a distant cousin of Henry VIII who defended Roman Catholic orthodoxy from exile during the 1530s. This letter appears in the 1563 version of the *Acts and Monuments* at a location later in the chronology of Henry’s reign. Its appearance at this location in 1570 reveals the Henrician supremacy to be a flexible rhetorical concept that can be manipulated and must be defined and defended. The arrangement of documents
throughout these thirteen pages skillfully legitimates the woodcut’s argument for Henry VIII and the Royal Supremacy.

Besides its refusal to take Henry VIII’s spiritual authority for granted, the 1570 edition of the *Acts and Monuments* sometimes blames the king for mishandling that authority. Despite achieving significant victories against the Church of Rome, Henry did not complete the Reformation he so optimistically began and thus failed to satisfy the expectations of those who praised him as an ideal Protestant king. In a second major strategy for expressing ambivalence about Henry’s Protestantism, the *Acts and Monuments* mixes royal praise for Henry with anti-monarchical reproach. Foxe needed to praise Henry as a Protestant champion, not least because his opening dedication to Elizabeth had praised her as the typological successor to the Roman emperor Constantine. According to this logic, Elizabeth would follow her Roman predecessor by taking the Church of England in an acceptably Protestant direction. Henry VIII strengthened Foxe’s search for appropriate precursors to the Protestant Elizabeth. Indeed, the illustrated capital C that opens the dedication to the queen shows her triumphing over the pope (see Figure 4) in a manner not unlike Henry’s own pose with feet planted on the pope’s back. The problem for Foxe was, of course, Henry’s imperfect record of anti-papal Protestant governance. The martyrrologist needed to reproach Henry in order to purge his image of papal dross and fashion the king according to a broader anti-papal polemical agenda that could serve the Church of England during the reign of Elizabeth.

Disappointment in Henry VIII coalesces around the king’s alleged mishandling of the incident of John Lambert, a Norfolk evangelical whose heresy trial became a cause
célebre when Lambert appealed directly to Henry to hear his case. According to the Acts and Monuments, after a period at Cambridge Lambert went to Antwerp. There he came under the influence of William Tyndale and John Frith, two prominent English Protestant reformers then in exile. After returning to England, he challenged John Taylor, the future Bishop of Lincoln, following the latter’s sermon on the sacrament of the altar given at Paul’s Cross, London’s central outdoor pulpit located in the churchyard of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Henry agreed to adjudicate the dispute and, after a public disputation, approved of Lambert’s condemnation as a heretic. Foxe reprints an account of the trial as well as other documents on the reformer’s career, including Lambert’s replies to forty-five articles of heresy. By inserting among these materials his own vitriolic statement against Henry VIII, Foxe capitalizes upon the Lambert story as a vehicle for chastising the king. Even though Gardiner ultimately receives much of the blame for Lambert’s death, Foxe speaks more bitterly against Henry here than anywhere else in the Acts and Monuments. This narrative thus occupies an important place in the martyrologist’s representational strategy for coping with the king’s ambivalent legacy. John Day commissioned a large woodcut illustration of Lambert’s execution, which transpired on 22 November 1538. This woodcut appears in all early editions of the Acts and Monuments (Figure 11).

Henry’s role in condemning Lambert to death provokes Foxe to embarrassment and anger. The martyrologist inserts his own lengthy prose commentary in order to declare how the king should have known better than to allow the execution of someone who shared the king’s own antipapal views. Foxe follows his informant, who may have
been his fellow Marian exile Anthony Gilby, in describing Lambert’s end as “first occasioned & afterwarde brought to pas by no other then by such [i.e., by Henry VIII], whome for the common society of the profession of the Gospel it had bene more mete to have ben authors of his savegard, rather then the causers of his destruction” (1563, BB6v). Lambert’s martyrdom enables Foxe to showcase Henry’s responsibility for not eradicating objectionable Roman Catholic doctrines that persisted during the second half of the reign. Henry’s allegedly heterodox belief regarding the sacrament of the altar, for instance, emerges in Lambert’s treatise to the king that the Acts and Monuments partially reprints. Lambert appeals to Henry to adopt a spiritual interpretation of *Hoc est corpus meum*, Christ’s words at the consecration. It is problematic for Foxe that Henry could serve as an arbiter of orthodoxy while also failing to avoid “popish” doctrinal practices that were shunned by many early modern Protestants.

Thematic features of the Lambert story evolve between the 1563 and 1570 versions of the Acts and Monuments. These differences amplify Foxe’s disappointment in Henry VIII in accordance with Henry’s greater prominence in the second edition. In the first edition, we learn that “the king geving eare more willyngly, then profitably or godly immediately received ye mad counsel [of Stephen Gardiner].” The second edition reports how, “the kyng gevyng eare more willyngly, then prudently or godly to this Syrene, immediately receyved the wicked counsaile of the Byshop.” Subtle rhetorical shifts between these separate accounts reprove Henry for his moral failings. If Stephen Gardiner appears in the 1570 edition as a wicked counselor and “Syrene” ready to lure the king to destruction, Henry still receives reproach for accepting “false” advice in the
first place. Henry also appears in the 1570 version as explicitly lacking prudence, whereas he merely fails to distinguish profitable from unprofitable counsel in 1563. In a second example, the 1563 rendition reports how “the kynge hym selfe dyd come as Judge of that great controversy environed with a great gard, clothed all in white like a lambe, secretly dissimuling the severyty of judment [sic].” On the other hand, according to the 1570 edition, “the kyng hym selfe dyd come as Judge of that great controversie, with a great garde, clothed all in white, as covering by that colour and dissimuling severitie of all bloudy judgement.” The second version sheds the potentially redeeming phrase “like a lambe” when describing Henry’s entry into court on the occasion of Lambert’s trial. Henry’s judgment also appears “bloudy” in the second version, whereas the first version reports only its “severyty.” By adjusting the language of this account, the Acts and Monuments creates a more pessimistic characterization of Henry VIII in the 1570 version of these events.

Other significant changes to the 1570 version of the Lambert narrative suggest that Foxe may have obtained new eyewitness reports or documentary evidence that he lacked when compiling the first edition. By omitting whole paragraphs that had appeared in the earlier account, the 1570 version shifts the rhetoric of argument surrounding the consequences of Lambert’s trial as a strategy further to implicate Henry VIII. For example, the new version does not contain an extended passage that compares the objectionable “manners & facions of our kings and princes” to the “meke and gentle” behavior of Christ. The absence of this text in 1570 suggests how Henry VIII no longer rules according to models of Christian meekness and gentleness that served as measures
for judging his reign in the 1563 edition. Elsewhere, Henry joins others in the 1563 version who fail to provide “solace and conforte . . . unto the miserable in necessity” and become “lesse then beggars or thinges of no estimacion” who ought “worthely be ashamed of them selves.” The second edition expands this particular judgment against Henry by affirming that the king will face “the tribunall seate of that great judge” in order to answer for his deeds against Lambert. Mere shame for betraying Lambert takes on apocalyptic proportions in 1570. Apocalyptic rhetoric against Henry appears at another location in the 1563 version of the story, as in this prophecy of Henry’s suffering on the Day of Judgment:

> What shall then happen (if these miserabl e heretickes whyche you here in this world doo so affine and tormente, shall come with Christe and hys Apostles and martirs . . . sitting upon their seates, if they with like severity shall execute their power uppon you) what then I saye, shall become of you? Wyth what face wil ye behold their majesty whyche here in this world have shewed no countena ns of pity upon them? With what hart wil ye implore their mercy, which so unmercifuly rejected and cast them of [i.e., off] . . . (1563, CC3r)

This passage describes Henry VIII as the typological successor to the rich man in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus. Both Lambert and other “miserable heretickes” will have the opportunity to repay Henry in kind for his tormenting them during life. As part of its rhetorical shaping of source materials, the 1570 edition replaces these vivid details with a more streamlined statement that still condemns the king as guilty. By threatening to deemphasize rather than heighten Henry’s culpability in condemning Lambert, this
particular revision offers a testimonial of the complicated changes in the account of Henry VIII and Lambert between the first and second editions. It draws attention to ambivalence as a governing rhetorical strategy for the selection and presentation of text.

Changes to the Lambert narrative between the first and second edition of the *Acts and Monuments* do not undermine its overall polemical thrust. Foxe laments bitterly over Henry’s failure to save Lambert in both editions. Marginal commentary variously describes the compiler’s lament as an “apostrophe to king Henrye” in the 1563 edition and as instructions on “the part of a good Prince, what to doe” in the 1570 version. The use of the rhetorical device of the apostrophe reveals the extent to which the *Acts and Monuments* shapes Henry VIII into both a victorious and an unsuccessful Protestant king. The device of the apostrophe anticipates readers’ approval for Foxe’s censure against Henry, whom the compiler chides as if he were present. It also allows Foxe to build emotion into his description of Henry’s failings as a Protestant monarch. Foxe clearly believes that Henry falters in his role as the triumphant prince who paradoxically overcame papal influence in the country. Readers of the 1563 version learn how

nothinge seemed more unworthy, then the undecent and the uncomelye behaviour of the kinges majestye at that daye, whiche assysted so manye proud and furious bishoppes to execute their cruelty in the death of one poore and miserable manne. But howe muche more commendable had it beene for thee, O kynge Henry . . . if thou haddest ayded and holpen the poore litle sheape, beinge in so greate pearils and daungers, requiringe thy aide and healpe againste so manye Vultures and Libardes [i.e., leopards], and haddest graunted hym rather thy
authoritye to use the same for his savegarde, rather then unto the other to abuse it unto slaughter. (1563, CC3r)

The “undecent and the uncomelye behaviour” of Henry, who had begun the Protestant reformation so optimistically, attracts this sharp reproof. By assisting bishops in opposing Lambert, Henry partakes of their pride, fury, and cruelty. Foxe interprets Henry’s complicity in Lambert’s fall in terms similar to the biblical imagery of innocent sheep surrounded by ravening wolves. Henry takes on characteristics of predatory, clerical vultures who collude in Lambert’s death.

Henry’s determined opposition of Lambert emerges even more forcefully in the 1570 version of Foxe’s apostrophe. Foxe remarks what a

great pitie it was, and much to be lamented, to see the kynges hyghnes that day so to oppose and set his power and strength so fiercely and vehemently in assistyng so many proud and furious adversaries, agaynst that one poore seely soule, to be devoured. Whom his majesty with more honor might rather have ayded and supported beyng so on every side oppressed & compassed about without helpe or refuge, among so many woulves and vultures . . . (1570, p. 1284)

These lines probably preserve Foxe’s most outspoken written reproach against Henry VIII. As a metaphorical wolf, Henry “fiercely and vehemently” helps devour Lambert by assisting the martyr’s enemies. The fulsome panegyric of Henry VIII as abolisher of papal abuses, which opens volume II in the 1570 edition, has vanished, and Foxe’s shame that Henry mistreated Lambert has emerged in its place. At this moment, at the
conclusion of the account of Lambert’s martyrdom, the figure of Henry VIII triumphant over Pope Clement VII could not have been farther from Foxe’s mind.

At least one contemporary recognized Foxe’s discomfort with Henry’s involvement in the Lambert incident. In the scurrilous anonymous libel written against selected members of Elizabeth’s privy council, *A Treatise of Treasons* (1572), Foxe attracts scorn for simultaneously commemorating Lambert as a martyr and, elsewhere, exonerating Henry VIII as Lambert’s would-be executioner. This work describes the Church of England as “a Religion that maketh your Q. to her owne dishonour the birde that blemisheth her own nest, by condemning her Sister, her Brother, her Father, and all her Progenitours, as murderers of Martyrs, and slaiers of Saintes, who condemned that for heresie, wherof she for Treason condemneth the contrary.” A marginal gloss at this location invokes Foxe in the guise of Elizabeth: “Lambert printed for a Martyr by this Q. whome her fathers owne mouth sentenced to be burned.”56 The writer of this libel capitalizes upon Foxe’s problem of justifying how Henry VIII managed to put down the authority of the pope and at the same time actively condone the burning of Lambert, whose chief crime was the denial of transubstantiation. Henry’s hypocrisy affords the writer of this piece of Catholic propaganda an opportunity to undermine the Elizabethan church.

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Foxe struggles throughout the *Acts and Monuments* to assert that Henry VIII was a good king who could have done better. In his remarks on Henry’s death and
posthumous legacy, Foxe pursues the ambivalent approach that characterizes his whole discussion of the reign. On the one hand, Henry was exceptional among princes for successfully defying Roman Catholic “tyranny.” Foxe invariably mutes this praise, however, by arguing that Henry could not effectively rule as an evangelical monarch without access to a continuous supply of evangelical counsel: “So longe as Quene Anne, L[ord] Cromwel. B[ishop] Cranmer. M[aster] Denney, D[octor] Buts with such like were about him, & could prevail with him, what organe of Christes glory did more good in the church than he?” Problematically, Henry himself had approved the execution of Anne Boleyn, whom Foxe describes as a “counselor,” and Thomas Cromwell, the king’s vicegerent in religious affairs.\(^57\) Because these and other individuals assist Henry too intermittently, the king loses the ability to demand respect as an effective Protestant monarch. Foxe paradoxically describes the king as an “organe of Christes glory” who did more good in the church than anyone else, even though Foxe also says that Henry only behaved as an “organe of Christ” when assisted by others.\(^58\) Such guarded optimism shapes Foxe’s final assessment. Henry sheds his status as a champion for evangelical Protestantism and becomes a man who made mistakes that needed rhetorical shaping and justifying.

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‘Protestant Nation’: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England


and Microfilm: Reading and Misreading Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs,’ Sixteenth Century
Journal 30 (1999), pp. 42-45; and Freeman, “Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe’s Book of

While the third (1576) and fourth (1583) editions introduced changes to the introductory
matter, the narrative of Henry VIII’s reign in these editions remained substantially the
same as the second edition (1570). It is possible to discuss the broad trajectory of Foxe’s
ambivalent response to Henry’s conflicted legacy while still recognizing that some
individual narratives underwent modification across each of the four editions that Foxe
oversaw. I discuss below Henry’s continually evolving role in the pattern of illustration in
the 1576 and 1583 versions. See also King, FBMEMPC, pp. 123-33.

“The fourth section or part of the ecclesiasticall history conteining Such actes and
recordes, as happened in King Edwards dayes” (PP6⁻*KKk6⁺); “The fifth section of
Tome of this Ecclesiasticall historie conteynyng the horrible and bloudye tyme of Queene
Marye” (LLl1⁺-NNNN2⁻); and “The sixt tome or section of the Ecclesiastical history,
containing such actes and records as happened in the most florishing reigne of Quene
Elizabeth” (NNNN2⁺-PPPP1⁺). Other narrative subdivisions in A&M (1563) are discussed
below.

For a facsimile reproduction of this woodcut, see King, FBMEMPC, p. 172.

Foxe published volume one in 1554 as Commentarii rerum in Ecclesia gestarum
(Strasbourg: Wendelin Rihel, 1554). J. F. Mozley, John Foxe and His Book (London:
Published at Basle by Nicholaus Brylinger and Johannes Oporinus, the *Rerum* still constituted part one of a planned two-part Latin ecclesiastical history. Henricus Pantaleon focused on continental martyrs in his *Martyrum historia* (1563), which he published as a supplement to the *Rerum*. See Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, pp. 122-23.


*AdM* (1563), F5v-13r

Foxe’s friend John Bale seems to have written this text as a planned continuation of his *Acts of English Votaries* (1546), which treats similar themes but concludes at the reign of Richard I. Thomas S. Freeman, “John Bale’s Book of Martyrs? The Account of King John in *Acts and Monuments,*” *Reformation* 3 (1998), pp. 199 and 202-03.

“The second part of this ecclesiasticall historie contening the Actes of Martirs” opens the treatment of Wyclif’s career (K1r). The previous page describes events that transpired during the reign of Henry III.

Foxe earmarks three hundred twenty five folio pages of the three hundred fifty one total pages of Book Three (or ninety-three percent) for Henry VIII. The Book occupies Ii6r-PP6r.

For details on how Foxe manipulates paragraph divisions in his reprinted version of Anne Askew’s *Examinations*, see Thomas S. Freeman and Sarah Elizabeth Wall, “Racking the Body, Shaping the Text: The Account of Anne Askew in Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs,”’ *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001), pp. 1176-78.

Written during the 1550s, Nicholas Harpsfield’s *Treatise on the Pretended Divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon* circulated in manuscript during the 1560s. Harpsfield, an archdeacon of Canterbury during Mary’s reign, employs scathing typological argument against Henry VIII. Nicholas Sander, the most outspoken Roman Catholic critic of the Henrician Reformation, also wrote historical propaganda at this time.


21 On contemporary reaction to Elizabeth’s apparent toleration of images in churches, see the 1559 letter to the queen by Archbishop Matthew Parker and other bishops: Corpus Christi College Cambridge Parker MS 105, art. 11, reprinted in John Bruce and Thomas Thomason Perowne, ed., Correspondence of Matthew Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853), pp. 79-95. See also Margaret Aston, The King’s Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 97-99, 101, and 106-07.


24 These figures are based on sheet count calculations performed following study of copies of A&M (1563) and (1570) in the collections of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, The Ohio State University and at the Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University. Because most if not all of the extant copies of the first two editions of the Book of Martyrs are imperfect, such calculations cannot be considered absolutely precise.
They nevertheless provide a rough-and-ready index for Foxe’s expansion of the project as concerns Henry VIII.

25 See Patrick Collinson’s remark that “the manner in which [Foxe] composed his history” is “a matter not of invention, still less of forgery, but of discrimination, interpretation, and most of all of omission and deliberate exclusion,” in “The Veracity of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*,” p. 36.

26 Freeman, “‘The reik of Maister Patrik Hammyltoun,’” pp. 45, 47, and 55.

27 *A&M* (1570), *i*-ii*.

28 King, *FBMEMPC*, pp. 284-320 discusses Foxe’s responses to contemporary readers.


30 The extent of Henry’s direct supervision of the religious changes of the 1530s is controversial. Bernard, *The King’s Reformation* argues decisively for Henry’s involvement. In addition to Ethan Shagan’s review cited above, Christopher Haigh (*English Historical Review* 121 (2006), pp. 1455-57) provides an important corrective.


35 According to Ryan Netzley, Foxe does not allow readers to come to their own conclusions on matters of interpretation but rather enforces a Protestant interpretation. See his “The End of Reading: The Practice and Possibility of Reading Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*,” *English Literary History* 73 (2006), pp. 187-214. Extensive responses to the *Book of Martyrs* by both Catholic and Protestant readers, however, suggest that the work does not automatically inscribe a Protestant ethos in responses to the text. Scholars are becoming increasingly aware of the very wide range of possible reading strategies of Foxe during the early modern period. See King, *FBMEMPC*, pp. 230-43 and 284-320.


37 “Papa cito moritur, Caesar regnabit ubique, Et subito vani cessabunt gaudia cleri.”
The figure of Henry VIII as a latter-day Caesar accords with an iconography of both Henry and Elizabeth wielding the Sword of Justice against the papacy in illustrations found throughout the *Book of Martyrs*. See Elizabeth H. Hageman, “John Foxe’s Henry VIII as Justitia,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10.1 (1979), pp. 35-44; and Yates, *Astraea*, pp. 42-50. This may also constitute an oblique reference to Cesare Borgia, the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI.


42 “The story of Q[ueen] Katherine Parre late Queene, and wife to K[ing] henry 8. Wherin appeareth in what daunger she was for the Gospell, by the meanes of Steven Gardiner and other of his conspiracie: and how graciously she was preserved by her kinde & loving husband the king.” *A&M* (1570), pp. 1422-25.


44 For the iconography of the sword as a symbol of royal authority, see note 35, above, as well as John N. King, “The Royal Image, 1535-1603” in Hoak, ed., *Tudor Political Culture*, pp. 104-32.
Cf. Matthew 10:34.

46 *A&M* (1570), pp. 1206-1210. Foxe’s source is an earlier printed edition, *STC* 24322. The failure of the sermon to appear in the 1563 edition suggests that Foxe learned of its existence during the same interval of time in which Day commissioned the supremacy image.

47 *A&M* (1563), Kk1r–4v. See also *STC* 24321.

48 Gilby’s identity as Foxe’s informant is suggested by the initials “A. G.” that appear at the end of this narrative. *A&M* (1570), p. 1284. An evangelical clergyman and religious writer, Gilby helped to translate the Geneva Bible and advocated continued religious reform along presbyterian lines in *A Pleasant Dialogue Between a Soldier of Berwick and an English Chaplain*. Gilby wrote this work during the 1560s but did not publish it until 1581.


50 *A&M* (1563), CC1r-v; *A&M* (1570), p. 1281.

51 *A&M* (1563), CC1v.


54 *A&M* (1563), CC3r; *A&M* (1570), p. 1284.

55 Cf. Matthew 7:15.

57 The other counselors in this passage are Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Anthony Denney, an evangelical courtier, and Dr. William Butts, Henry’s personal physician.

58 Ad&M (1563), PP5v; Ad&M (1570), pp. 1441-42. I follow the orthography of the 1563 edition.
CHAPTER 5
HENRY VIII AND THE NOSTALGIA FOR “MERRY” ENGLAND

Henry VIII left an uncomfortable legacy to Elizabethan Protestant writers. During Elizabeth’s reign, however, many longed for a return to Henrician England. They reshaped Henry into the embodiment of this nostalgia and either overwrote or ignored the ambiguities associated with the king’s shifting religious policies. Their works draw attention to the supposed greatness of the nation and the king’s accomplishments as alternatives to modern-day problems under Elizabeth. From this perspective, Henry could be made to appear very attractive. The myth of Henry’s rule as a time of plenty and benevolence in fact begins to enter into English culture during the last decades of the sixteenth century, as writers collectively forget the dearth, warfare, and other unpleasant matters that actually afflicted the nation during the 1510s through the 1540s. Henry’s cultural presence begins to shift away from counsel-literature and intricate theological argument as a result. It more explicitly gravitates toward humor and nostalgia. In signifying England’s strength as a nation and the “truth” of its Protestant religious policy in these texts, the king offers an alternative as well as a foundation to the Elizabethan Protestant establishment. In a range of works, Henry appears to celebrate the “merry” England that has forever vanished. This new stage in the representation of his image
gathers momentum during Elizabeth’s reign and becomes a legitimate option for writers wishing to celebrate the Henrician heritage into the Stuart period.

Nostalgia for the lost rule of Henry VIII thrived during the reigns of Queens Mary and Elizabeth and into the reign of James VI and I. It prompted dramatists, balladeers, and writers of prose fiction to refashion the king’s image in new and unprecedented directions. As Elizabeth’s reign progressed, writers invested Henry’s reputation with a nostalgia that it did not earlier possess. This trend to reshape Henry culminated during the 1590s, at the moment of the imminent end of the Tudor dynasty and as an explicit embodiment of nationalistic fervor. Nostalgic reinterpretation of the king’s life and reign accompanies his explicit emergence as a literary character in historical fiction, ballads, and history plays, particularly during the final decade of Tudor power and into the early Stuart period. Writers revisited Henry’s image from these perspectives in part as a response to Elizabeth’s ongoing failure to declare her successor. Their works coped with the threat of an uncertain succession by representing Henry VIII as a champion of the nation and as a presumed guarantor of stability in response to widespread doubts over England’s future. For the first time, Henry’s rule invited treatment through humor and historical irony in ways that did not interest earlier writers, who had focused mainly upon the king’s applicability to political controversy. Less explicitly political than these interpretations, the new nostalgia for Henry VIII as a sympathetic monarch circumscribed fresh interpretations of the English nation as jolly, stable, and united.
5.1. Shaping of Henry VIII in Elizabethan Historical Fiction

Thomas Deloney’s fictionalized prose history _Jack of Newberry_ (c.1597) offers a very good example of how this new nationalistic strand shaped evolving uses of Henry’s cultural memory in literary texts. Deloney, a cloth worker and ballad writer, began producing prose fiction during the late 1590s as part of a new vogue for the genre established by works such as George Gascoigne’s _The Adventures of Master F. J._ (1573), John Lyly’s _Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit_ (1578), and Thomas Nashe’s _The Unfortunate Traveller_ (1594). _Jack of Newberry_ is set during Henry’s reign and incorporates Henry as an actual character in the fictional narrative. This rags-to-riches account of a self-made cloth worker satirizes the economic and social consequences of the recently improved status of the merchant class. A portion of the work tells of Henry’s royal progress in Bedfordshire. Jack of Newberry, the title character, meets the king on the road and requests that Henry disembark in order to meet him (rather than the other way around) as he sits atop an anthill. Taking upon himself the persona of marquis of the Ants, Jack protects his newfound subjects from an attack of butterflies. Through this particular narrative, Deloney satirizes the so-called “bees’ commonwealth” topos of social relations that had provided a rallying cry for agrarian dissent at least since the medieval period.¹

Deloney draws from chronicle history and standard royal progress narratives in creating nostalgia for the lost and “merry” England that was the reign of Henry VIII. If the “great” Henry VIII was willing to humble himself before this fictional marquis who ironically sits atop an anthill, anything might be possible. This fanciful narrative reshapes Henry’s rule into a legitimating narrative that could buttress the Tudor dynasty during its
twilight in the 1590s. Deloney’s image of a “merry” England is nowhere more apparent than in this analysis of Henry’s visit to Jack’s country house. The visit occurs after the Battle of Flodden Field (1513), in which English troops defeated an invading Scottish force while Henry was away campaigning in France. This battle conveniently invited analysis of the English nation at one of its highest moments of glory in recent memory. Because Henry had taken the bulk of the army to France, the English victory with a diminished force fostered later portrayals of national pride in texts such as Deloney’s.

*Jack of Newberry* tells how Jack is required to supply six troops to the army in order to defeat the invading Scots. He sends 150. Subjected to slander for his enthusiastic defense of the nation, Jack defends himself before Catherine of Aragon, who ruled as regent during Henry’s absence: “‘Most gracious queen,’ quoth he, ‘gentleman I am none . . . but a poor clothier . . . Nevertheless, most gracious queen, these my poor servants and myself with life and goods are ready at your Majesty’s command not only to spend our bloods but also to lose our lives in defence of our King and country.’” Jack displays zeal for nation and king in this unquestioned expression of loyalty in the face of adversity. When the battle is won before this muster can even be completed, Catherine celebrates by placing around Jack’s neck “a rich chain of gold, at what time he, with all the rest, gave a great shout, saying, ‘God save Katherine, the noble Queen of England!’”² This statement itself gives voice to Deloney’s nostalgia. His positive portrayal of Catherine of Aragon is notable in an age in which writers like Richard Mulcaster and Edmund Spenser praised Anne Boleyn as a means of flattering her daughter, Queen Elizabeth. Deloney’s treatment of Catherine recreates a “merry” version of Henrician England in which Henry’s first
wife could receive this positive portrayal even though Elizabeth still lived. Henry gains in esteem simply because he governed the nation during these years of supposed national success.

Deloney’s portrait of a “merry” Henrician England also extends to the figure of Henry himself. There is a satirical edge to Deloney’s approach to the king. On the one hand, Deloney associates Henry’s character to a certain extent with Jack’s. When Henry meets Jack during the king’s progress, he describes his host as a “pleasant fellow” and alters his course to speak to him, as if between friends who share character traits. As we have seen, however, Jack demands that Henry come to him on the anthill. He makes this request on grounds that “while I am away our enemies might come and put my people in hazard as the Scots did England while our King was in France.” For a brief instant Henry seems on the verge of losing credit for ruling England during a time of military victory. The king joins this jest against his own foreign policy, however, noting upon his arrival, “‘here be pretty fellows to fight with butterflies.’”3 Taken together, these passages bring to life the old anti-French stereotype and recapture Henry’s attempt to regain England’s medieval fiefs in France. Nostalgia for these days of success in the French wars accompanies nostalgia for this image of Henry, who is able to brush away the historical and political specificity of the engagements and preserve a denuded and simplified character in its place. After the king decides to lodge in Jack’s house, Deloney portrays Henry’s receiving the benevolent hospitality of his host in the manner of an idealized Elizabethan travel narrative. The giving of gifts and the ensuing sumptuous feast anticipates the viewing of a tableau of a beehive supporting a tree with golden apples that
is protected by allegorical figures of Prudence and Fortitude. Deloney uses the hospitality motif associated with the ceremonial royal civic entry in order to generate an ideal Henrician past, one in which the king benefits from the bounty of his subject and distributes liberality in return.

Deloney’s Henry VIII uses jesting and ceremony as a strategy for governing “merrily” in Jack of Newberry. The king praises the weavers who entertain him during an after-dinner tour of Jack’s weaving establishment, for instance. “‘Well sung, good fellows . . . light hearts and merry minds live long without grey hairs,’” he exclaims in reply before giving them permission to take four bucks from a local forest without falling under penalty of the usual forestry laws. Benevolence and merriment characterize Henry’s interaction with his subjects in this departure from earlier polemical and typological treatments of the king. Henry controls people by participating successfully in Jack’s world, one that is governed by standards of hospitality, humor, and generosity. Deloney’s representation of Henry VIII appears calculated to satisfy a nostalgic as opposed to polemical agenda.

This rendition may also constitute an anticipated response to perceived market demand for fairly inexpensive nostalgia about Henry. Appearing just a few years earlier, for example, Nashe’s picaresque travel narrative of The Unfortunate Traveller (1594) is set during Henry’s reign, although the king himself does not appear as a character in that work. Even though this text and Jack of Newberry offer the appearance of being politically innocuous, Deloney’s portrait of Queen Elizabeth’s father at this particular moment in the 1590s represents a highly political choice. Jack’s bucolic estate builds
upon the generic device of the pastoral retreat that had arguably afforded opportunities to
critique the court and its environs in works as diverse as John Skelton’s *Why Come Ye
Nat to Court* (1522), Edmund Spenser’s *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579), and
Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Writing within this tradition, Deloney finds it more useful
to give a humorous rather than a dour Henry in terms of his nostalgic interest. The figures
of Jack, the benevolent host, and Henry, the graciously responsive guest, long for a return
to the Henrician past in the same way that Andrew Marvell’s *Upon Appleton House*
(1651) longs for the supposed joys of a pre-Civil War state. Both are rhetorically charged
narratives that express a particular version of the national past in order to find an
alternative to some present moment of difficulty or duress.

Henry’s good-humored behavior in *Jack of Newberry* appears designed to invoke
feelings of longing for this earlier embodiment of national stability. The case for this
interpretation is ultimately circumstantial and based upon a reading of the fictional story.
The evidence is nonetheless fairly strong. When Henry VIII leaves Jack’s estate, Fame
and Victory visit him with orders from “the goddess of chastity” to “wait upon this
famous prince forever.” This peroration stresses not only Henry’s fame but also his
generosity, since he selects a dozen children from among the performers of his final
pageant and gives them places either at court or at university. Jack, however, refuses a
knighthood. He insists instead that he must remain at home loyal to his people. This
material gathers into a cumulative significance. Henry earns praise because of his deeds
but more so because he knows people like Jack of Newberry, whom Deloney presents as
a pillar of his community and of the nation. Jack’s local leadership facilitates this portrait of “merry” England that Deloney transfers onto his interpretation of England’s king.

5.2. Henry VIII in the Broadside

Deloney’s treatment of Henry VIII as a “merry” monarch who ruled during a “jovial” time carries over into Henry’s appearance in other forms of manuscript as well as printed texts. As the least expensive print available, for example, the single-sheet broadside was perhaps the most prominent, although certainly not the only, means by which writers expressed a longing for a return to Henrician rule. A broadside by definition contains an entire text printed on one or both sides of a single sheet of paper that is sold without requiring folding. This form of “cheap” print was ubiquitous, portable, and inexpensive. One recent estimate allows for three thousand distinct broadside ballad titles published between 1550 and 1600 and a total number of copies ranging from the hundreds of thousands to perhaps a few million circulating. Broadside ballads constitute a sub-group of this category of print; the total increases when counting other broadside texts besides ballads alone. As scholars have recognized, members of the aristocracy as well as the literate and semi-literate classes all read ballads. Their contents shaped the nostalgic presentation of Henry VIII other genres including courtly verse that circulated in manuscript. The broadside thus provides an almost unique opportunity to study the similarities and differences in treatments of Henry found within this kind of “popular” text versus more “elite” texts of theological or political controversy. Because of the ballad’s widespread distribution throughout Elizabethan
England, nostalgia for Henry’s England during the 1590s culminates a half-century of similar treatments, all of which long for the supposedly better days when Henry ruled the country.

Soon after the king’s death in 1547, writers began to produce highly rhetorical texts that describe Henry VIII as an embodiment of national stability and greatness. These texts continued to appear into the 1590s and beyond. Their nostalgic portrayals are both artificial, in that they deny the historical specificity of Henry’s government, and powerful, in that they appeal to deep-seated emotions of emerging national identity. These broadsides offer scholars another category of textual material through which writers “wrote” national identity into Elizabethan consciousness, albeit on the basis of England’s accomplishment under Henry VIII. They frequently cite national instability and weakness. In July 1553, immediately following the Duke of Northumberland’s unsuccessful attempt to divert the succession from Mary Tudor to Lady Jane Grey, for example, a new ballad exposed traitors against previous monarchs in order to reinforce national solidarity against those who did not defend the Marian succession to the throne. This text significantly appeared at the moment of transition from the reign of Edward VI to that of Mary I. An invectye agaynst Treason warns would-be traitors by citing the alleged conspiracy of Edmund Dudley and Sir Richard Empson, both of whom Henry VIII had had executed on 18 August 1510: “Lyke treasone to our last henry was wrought by haynous spyght / By olde Hemson and by Dudley, as traytours most untrue,” the ballad writer affirms. By including Dudley among the list of schemers, the ballad provides a persuasive pedigree of recent treachery, since Northumberland was this man’s
son. “Yet many treasons mo were done agaynst this noble kynge [Henry VIII] / By
dyvers men of wyckednes, as is most evydent,” the ballad writer continues. In the face of
such challenges, Henry enjoys providential favor in exposing and defeating traitorous
schemes.¹² This is an extremely topical text. Henry and his successors prevail over a
series of conspiracies by defending stable monarchical government against malcontents
who seek to undermine royal power.

Other ballad writers active early in Elizabeth’s reign conflate Henry with his royal
successors in order to express nostalgia for the late king’s reign. We have already
encountered this impulse to praise Henry alongside other Tudor monarchs. It enables
ballad writers to create nostalgic versions of Henry that can either flatter or critique the
policies of his descendants. John Pyttes’s A Prayer or supplycation made unto God by a
yonge man (1559), one such broadside, conflates the religious differences of Henry VIII
and Edward VI and compares the reign of Elizabeth to that of her brother and father.
Pyttes prays that Elizabeth might be empowered to “set abroad” the scripture “nowe in
her time as before hath bene / By her godly father & brother.”¹³ By pleading for an
evangelical Protestant religious settlement, Pyttes’s narrator observes how Henry VIII
presided over a now-lost dispensation of “righteousness” and “godliness.” This broadside
follows traditional themes of Henrician Protestant propaganda by describing how Henry
has “abolyshed the byshop of Rome from us / And by thi [i.e., God’s] mighty power
plucked down much idolatri.” It also claims, more anachronistically, how Henry imposed
a Protestant scripturalism onto the nation: “Thy commaundementes he set forth abrode /
In our owne native speache moost truly / Teachinge us alwayes on the for to crye.” The
ballad then resorts to typological argument to celebrate Henry as Elizabeth’s predecessor: “Even as Esechias was unto Judae / So was Kynge Henry unto Englande.” By describing Henry as a latter-day Hezekiah, the Old Testament reforming monarch whom we have already encountered as Henry’s model, *A Prayer or supplication* attributes a coherent and explicitly Protestant evangelical motivation to Henry’s involvement in the religious changes of the 1530s. The speaker longs for the reintroduction of Henry’s supposedly scriptural agenda for English religious life and compares Elizabeth to her father in this regard. Henry in turn supplies the benchmark for the speaker’s interpretation of biblical monarchy in this narrative. This broadside folio invokes Henry with the longing of a writer dissatisfied with the current religious establishment.

Pyttes’s broadside provides evidence of how writers could simplify the complexities of the late king’s life as a method for encouraging potential purchasers fondly to revere his memory. The method by which it expresses nostalgia for Henrician times differs significantly from Deloney. As we have seen, Henry was not a zealous promoter of Protestant evangelical religion, but he emerges in this text as a latter-day Hezekiah, the Old Testament monarch who destroyed “false” religion after the rediscovery of the Mosaic Law in the Temple of Solomon. The single-sheet folio format of this publication does not lend itself to nuanced analysis of Henry’s ambiguities as a religious leader, and Pyttes chooses to forgo historical accuracy in favor of mythmaking. The king thus “broke the Pilgrimages going / to this saint and that saint, to and fro.” Even though Henry had restricted Bible reading according to class status in *The Act for the Advancement of True Religion* (1543), this broadside instructs Elizabeth to
embrace the Bible as wholeheartedly as Henry VIII allegedly did. Pyttes’s longing for a return to an England governed by Henry VIII combines Protestant evangelical religion with a certain kind of Tudor dynastic nationalism, since each stanza concludes in a refrain that requests God’s ongoing favor in order to preserve the health of the nation.

Henry VIII appears in early Elizabethan ballads and broadsides as a figure whose favorable memory evokes national solidarity and delivers Protestant evangelical propaganda. In another, undated Elizabethan ballad, this approach to the Henrician past emerges decisively. *A Newe Ballade* confronts the queen with a catalogue of past English monarchs who struggled alike against conspiring, popish clerics. Again, Henry appears at the head of a group of royal worthies who offer a benchmark for current royal policy. Its anonymous writer R. M. speaks about the potential dangers of an unchecked spirituality, echoing such Henrician works on that theme as Christopher St. German’s *A dialogue between the spirituality and temporality* (1529) and John Bale’s *King Johan* (c. 1538). Henry VIII and others serve as bulwarks against unrestrained clerical authority in the text. R. M. opens with a warning to Elizabeth to beware the spirituality: “O Dere Lady Elysabeth, which art our right and vertuous Quene / God hath endued the wt mercy & fayth, as by thy workes it may be sene / Wherefore good Quene I counsayle thee, Lady Lady / For to beware of the spiritualtie moste dere Lady.” R. M. then tells of the “sharpe showers” and “evell hap” that came to “King Henry ye viii. which was a prince of victory” when he failed properly to protect the nation from clerical machinations. On the basis of unnamed chronicle sources, R. M. describes how Henry “deposed them all straight, when he had spyed their Idolatry” and prays that “God graunt your grace may do
no lesse moste dere Lady."

Tracts like this one offer Henry VIII as a prominent example for the benefit of Elizabeth.

Ballads and broadsides containing material on Henry VIII often include contextual framing drawn from lengthier works of Protestant propaganda. This polemical technique awards Henry’s character an anachronistic Protestant identity that Henry himself never possessed. This is part of the humor of reading these texts. A ballad by William Birch resorts to the 1563 edition of the *Book of Martyrs*, for instance, in the attempt to cultivate anti-Catholic bias through a nostalgic discussion of Henry VIII. Birch incorporates Foxe’s tragicomic narration of the imprisonment of Elizabeth in the Tower of London during Mary’s reign. A *songe betwene the quenes maiestie and Englande* (1564) contains a verse dialogue between Elizabeth (designated “B”) and England (designated “E”) that is based on Foxe’s account. After Elizabeth recounts her sufferings, England expresses disbelief that Elizabeth’s jailors

\[
\text{did not knowe}
\]

That ye were daughter unto Kinge hary

And a princesse of birth / one of the noblest on earth

and sister unto Quene Mary.

The princess’s status as the queen’s sister ultimately depends on the paternity of both queen and princess. Henry’s name should have protected his daughter because he himself had begotten this royal scion. The king’s name carries a kind of currency that signifies credible character and the safety of an earlier time that extends beyond the particular circumstances of the princess’s incarceration. A similar nostalgia appears later in the
ballad, as the character of England prays that traitors would be quickly exposed. The queen’s persona mentions her pedigree as a warning against those who would presume to mistreat her:

I trust all faithful heres / wil play tru subiects part

Knowing me their Quene & true heir by right

And that much the rather / for the love of my father

That worthy prince King Henrie theight.\textsuperscript{18}

The queen asks readers to “play tru subiects part” on the basis of her own merit but more fundamentally on the basis of her paternal descent. Birch’s ballad attempts to impose already-established belief in effective Henrician monarchy onto the person of Elizabeth, who will draw upon her father’s authority during her reign. This approach shows how the queen’s government derives its legitimacy from the bygone days of Henry’s rule.

By the 1590s, nostalgia for a period of Henrician rule, when “merry” England thrived, had advanced beyond earlier levels. Slander against Henry in broadside ballads becomes an occasion in the later texts, for instance, of anachronism over interpretation of the lost days of Henrician monarchy. \textit{The Story of Ill May-day}, a late Elizabethan ballad and prominent example of this kind of nostalgia, sets out to explain how “Ill May-day first got the name.”\textsuperscript{19} “Ill May-day” refers to the apprentice revolt of 1519 in which London apprentices attempted to expel foreign workers who were allegedly hoarding employment that rightfully belonged to them. By the late Elizabethan period, this particular moment of Henrician xenophobia had evolved in the cultural consciousness to the point of becoming almost a myth of English national accomplishment. Even though
the English workers did not accomplish their goals in the revolt, the writer of this ballad believed the story to have occurred against the backdrop of “merry” England “when King Henry th’eight did raigne, / and rulde our famous kingdome here.” As is the case in *Jack of Newberry*, which we have already encountered, and William Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII*, which I discuss below, this ballad rehabilitates Catherine of Aragon, who sues to Henry to pardon those arrested in this uprising and who enjoys high popularity among the people. The writer expresses joy that Henry can find good use for the pardoned apprentices by sending them to his foreign wars. Once again, Englishmen extend their national pride into a foreign field. It is not difficult to see why this interpretation of Henry VIII may have appealed to purchasers during the 1590s, when, again, Elizabeth was old and had not declared her successor. This ballad connects Henry’s benevolence to his goals for the greatness of the English nation:

And when King Henry stood in neede

    of trusty soldiers at command,

These prentices prou’d men indeede,

    and feard no force of warlike band.

For at the siedge of Tours in France

    they shewd them selues braue English men;

At Bullein also did aduance

    S. Georges glorious Standard then.

Let Turwen, Turney, and those townes

260
that good King Henry nobly wonne,

Tell London prentices renownes,

and all the deedes by them there donne.

The ballad shifts its emphasis away from the social complaint of the apprentices, which caused the original uprising, and toward a grand narrative of continental invasion led by Henry VIII. In this way the king’s personal reputation benefits from the “merriment” associated with this rendition of his government. In an argument for the greatness of the nation, the English forces carry the standard of Saint George, England’s patron saint. It survived the iconoclasm of the English Reformation in popular culture because of its value as a symbol of dynastic nationalism. All of the cities mentioned in this excerpt witnessed military engagements during Henry’s multiple French campaigns. These incursions came to nothing and cost Henry more than one fortune, but the mere fact that they happened is all that matters to this writer. In expressing longing for the former days of Henrician rule, *The Story of Ill May-day* transforms a narrative of social inequality into a story of Henry VIII and England’s national glory.

5.3. **Nostalgia for Henry VIII in Courtly Verse**

The symbolic return to the supposed greatness of Henrician England saturates early modern courtly verse as well as the broadside. The career of William Forrest offers a further case in point. We have seen how William Forrest reinterprets the “patient Griselda” narrative from *The Canterbury Tales* as an allegory for Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Forrest expressed nostalgia for Henry VIII in a collection of poems
about the Blessed Virgin. It is not surprising that Forrest would couple longing for a return to King Henry with longing for a return to the worship of the Virgin, whose cult had not survived the iconoclasm of the Reformation. Forrest created this anthology within the context of a coterie, possibly at the Marian court. Forrest’s autograph in his surviving fair copy of this anthology identifies its date as 27 October 1572, but a later hand has inscribed “Wm Forrests poems to Q. Mary MS” onto a front flyleaf. In this instance Forrest appears to revise or at least revisit what may have been a Marian project during the reign of Elizabeth. The anthology contains poems by Thomas, second Baron Vaux, who died in 1556, and John Heywood, the court poet and epigrammatist. Both were Roman Catholics. Although Heywood fled the country in 1564, his writings would have been accessible to Forrest through his association with the household of Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk. He was an influential Catholic landowner to whom Forrest dedicated his revision of his historical poem, *The History of Joseph the Chaste*, in 1569. Forrest’s verse anthology on the Virgin preserves a humorous anecdote about Henry VIII written in the poet’s hand. The Henrician poet and clergyman Alexander Barclay appears as a persona within the poem. He argues for the Virgin’s power as divine mediator between the supplicant and God. The speaker treats Barclay fondly by recalling the days during Henry’s reign when veneration of the Virgin proceeded unhindered. The poem’s unnamed speaker informs the narrator, Barclay, and one of Henry VIII’s yeomen that he had himself fallen from his horse the previous day without harm because of the Virgin’s protection. “Barclay” then recalls knowing this guardsman three years earlier as “a long lubber” and “lout” until he entered into the king’s service:
But playnely, further forth to tell,
If Kinge Henry, though poure farre odde,
Had not putt to his helpe with God,
It might bee sayde and allso sworne
Yee hadde continued as beforne.
Therefore in naminge oure Ladye
No harme, then [i.e., than] naminge Kinge Henrye.26

By granting preferment to the yeoman, Henry’s generosity appears here as the symbolic equivalent of the Virgin’s benevolence in protecting the speaker. “Barclay” longs for Henry’s rule because it was a time when the Virgin could be appropriately honored. Forrest is drawing upon the king’s positive reputation in order to defend the Virgin’s.

Neither Forrest nor Barclay was a traditional Catholic, at least in outward practice. After a career as a secular priest, a Benedictine monk, and a Franciscan friar, Barclay seems to have accepted Protestantism and preferment to multiple benefices under Edward VI. Barclay’s early career as a chaplain at the church of St. Mary Ottery may explain his loyalty to the Virgin. He died in 1552. Forrest capitalizes upon Barclay’s poetic reputation and also perhaps draws upon personal knowledge and friendship with Barclay in attributing this anecdote to him.27 The significance of this narrative lies in its nostalgic portrayal of the reign of Henry VIII and devotion to the Virgin in similar language.

The longing for a return to the days of Henry VIII appears elsewhere in Tudor courtly verse. Much of this verse contains humorous treatment of Henry, possibly with
the simple intent of entertaining coterie audiences. The use of a humorous as opposed to polemical mode for interpreting Henry’s legacy endures to the present day. The genesis of this approach in Tudor courtly verse represents a significant moment in the development of Henry’s enduring cultural presence. Given the well-known reluctance of many poets to publish their verse in print during this period, it is not surprising that much courtly verse about Henry VIII remains in manuscript. Manuscript publication allowed a writer more easily to control the size of his readership, and, as a result, manuscript verse sometimes employs mocking raillery and humorous commentary in order to present Henry as an alternative to current court life. In this material writers and coterie audiences discussed Henry in a manner dissociated from more formalized genres of counsel or theological discourse.

Along with other kinds of lyric poetry, nostalgic verse on Henry VIII circulated throughout Elizabeth’s reign among sympathetic readers at court, the universities, the Inns of Court, and elsewhere. This material survives in manuscript poetic miscellanies and anthologies. One such poem appears during the 1580s in an anthology of verse, astronomical writings, and other matter. The speaker of “Ravysshed was I that well was me o lord to me so fayne” expresses pleasure at witnessing Henry VIII dancing with one of his unnamed daughters. (For the text of this poem, see Appendix.) Although it is impossible to determine whether Mary or Elizabeth is meant, this poem nonetheless humorously contemplates the public reputations of Henry VIII and the royal family in a diversionary manner. This twelve-line poem combines praise of the king with the joys of the pleasant memory that the speaker is recounting. The king appears here as a family
man alongside his daughter, although the pair also strike the speaker as “a god and a goddess” (l. 4). By admitting his astonishment at seeing this king dancing with his daughter and claiming to have praised his virtues in the past, the Elizabethan speaker betrays Henry VIII as the probable subject of this poem. The explicit praise of the child’s mother, the status of England’s government by a female monarch at the time of the anthology’s compilation, and the poet’s explicit mention of the lack of a male heir all provide added poignancy and further probability that the compiler gravitates toward this poem for inclusion in the miscellany because of its diversionary topical associations during the reign of the heirless Elizabeth. Henry, of course, had an heir in the form of the daughter, even though the speaker also asks for a forthcoming son. This versifier expresses nostalgia for a lost Henrician past because the royal succession was at that time more assured.

Besides containing insightful but ultimately diversionary humor, manuscript verse appraisals of Henry sometimes long for a return to Henry’s reign in the form of pointed invective on subjects of current controversy. An allegorical fable concerning the health of the Church of England under Henry VIII and his successors constitutes a polemical reassessment of the early phase of Reformation in England and its influence on current church policies during the reign of Elizabeth. “In written bokes I fynde it // A kynge whiche had a well” compares religious upheaval under three Tudor monarchs to the potable condition of a well whose water sometimes heals spiritual ailments but sometimes does not, depending on which monarch holds the keys that will provide access to the water.31 (For the text of this poem, see Appendix.) The poem concludes with a
moral in which Queen Elizabeth restores the well’s purity by returning its use to the pattern established by her father and marred by her sister, Queen Mary Tudor (lines 22-29). Written in a contemporary secretary script, marginal identification of Mary and Elizabeth as the two royal daughters ensures that readers will identify Henry VIII as the “famus kynge” who bequeaths the well to his successors as a model of religious governance for the country. The speaker implies throughout that only Henry’s governance establishes viable guidelines for future health for the Protestant nation.

As an image of the English church under Henry VIII, the well initially provides “great cowmfowrte to the Countrie,” since all who suffered from “any kynde of sycknes” (lines 2-3) could come and be healed. The speaker speaks of the well as “a goodly pleasure” and “A comfortable treasure” (line 5), but the moral nevertheless will not allow either a simple celebration of pre-Reformation devotional practices or a fond memory of Henry’s conservative religiosity. The poem instead implies that Henry gravitated toward unhealthy religious policies associated with Mary I during his final years. The nostalgia in the poem is complex, since according to the speaker Henry is himself both a flawed historical agent and the guardian of the well’s keys. When Henry delivered those keys to “his eldest dawghter,” he “taught her / she sholde beware none shold cum theare without a token brought her” (lines 7-8). The well predictably loses its prophylactic properties, and Mary’s mismanagement of the keys becomes a figure for unhealthy religious practices that endured through Henry’s lifetime and into the reigns of his successors. The immediate consequence of Mary’s mishandling is Henry’s own death. “Moved to lack yë thynge he loved,” an ailing Henry “cam to drynke the same” but died because “the well
hathe dryed” (lines 11-13). Mary’s marriage to Philip II of Spain further poisons the well and denies Mary relief in her own last illness. Following the accession of Elizabeth, however, “the godes” restore the well on the condition that “no wighte shoulde beare the keyes of it / In all the lande but she” (lines 16-18). After agreeing to this constraint, Elizabeth “did call her people all / And gave to them fruicyon // If any kynde of sycknes, disparsed awaye withe quyckenes” (lines 20-21). After overseeing the restoration of the well, Elizabeth “kepes the keyes so charye” that “no enemy shall cum theare at all / to make y° water varye” (lines 29-30).

This verse fable insists that England’s monarch should directly oversee the nation’s religious affairs or delegate to appropriate individuals who bring the tokens demanded by Henry VIII for access. It is important that the well suffers whenever the monarch loses direct control over its keys; even Henry VIII can no longer benefit after relinquishing the keys too soon. This poem equates the Elizabethan Settlement of Religion with an anachronistic interpretation of the supposedly halcyon days of early Protestant change under Henry VIII, when the king himself had full control of the keys. The keys themselves satirize the Papal Keys, symbols of the authority that Christ supposedly bequeathed to St. Peter and his successors but which became controversial during the sixteenth century (see Figure 4). The physical illnesses of both Henry and Mary represent spiritual ailments that they suffer as penalty for their mismanagement. The poem encourages Elizabeth to follow the example of the healthy Henry in order to avoid suffering a similar ailment herself.
This metaphor of Henry VIII’s well offers a fictional model for the nostalgic desire for a return to the spiritual health of the king’s rule. The anonymous poet yearns for Elizabeth to set the course of her reign according to the best successes of her father. In examples such as these metaphor afforded court poets a figurative distance from which to reflect upon Henry VIII. The court astrologer Simon Forman utilizes an arboreal metaphor to record his remembrance of Henrician England. In a manner not dissimilar to the iconography of the Tree of Jesse, whereby Christ traditionally emerges as a scion of Jesse, the Biblical father of King David, Forman praises Elizabeth as the scion of Henry VIII, the tree worthy of highest praise. His poem survives in a holograph manuscript that has been sewn into a folio miscellany containing several other of his papers. (For the text of this poem, see Appendix.) At the opening of the poem, the speaker reviews a range of flora and fauna, angels, devils, tyrants, and figures from classical mythology, hoping to find some suitable subject for laudatory verse. Eventually, Henry VIII emerges, under the guise of a tree, as the only subject worthy of the speaker’s praise. As the speaker begins to praise the tree, a marginal note in Forman’s hand reveals that “the tree was king henrie the eighte” (lines 83-85). Fact and fiction merge in the speaker’s statement that this “tree / Of worthie fame And praise” “yealded frut habundauntlye,” “wast of wondrouse might,” and “Abrode did spred his fame: / Throughe Europe Affricke Assia / Theie all did knowe his name” (lines 82-89). The speaker describes two kinds of fruit produced by Henry VIII:

The firste frute that this tre did yeld

Wast worthines of fame:

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And justice prudence / equitie

did flowe frome of the same

In vertue alsoe he did flowe

And Prudent Pollicie

In marshall feates he did excell

To quenche Imagerie. (lines 94-101)

The trope of Henry’s fecund body and healthy heirs once again emerges. It provides additional evidence that writers expressed this kind of nostalgia for Henrician England as an implicit response to Elizabeth’s own barrenness. The content of these treatments incorporates but also transcends simply describing Henry’s skill as an effective monarch.

In Forman’s poem, Henry’s wise kingship and ability to defend the realm establishes his first legacy to his offspring, Elizabeth. It is notable that Henry’s second fruit, “encrease of childrene,” does not transfer to his successors. After describing how Henry VIII withers and his three offspring each succeed him, Forman flatters Elizabeth in the remainder of the poem for superseding classical, mythological, and Biblical prototypes (folios 253r-60r). Praise of the queen’s parentage compliments Henry VIII: “of Parents free she came / And of noe bondage slaue / Of praise againe she worthie is / Whose Parents hath noe peare” (lines 117-20). A further note tells how she “sprange of Parents wise” and came from parents who “wer of corage stoute / And boold in fild to fight” (lines 124, 129-30). Forman joins Richard Mulcaster and Edmund Spenser in devising this poetic praise of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth’s parents,
presumably in the hope that such flattery would translate into royal patronage.

Nevertheless, this poem seems anxious that Elizabeth’s failure to produce offspring had jeopardized Henry’s ability to transmit his own effective kingship to his successors (folios 254v-55r). The speaker’s hopes for the health of Elizabethan government rest on his belief in the prior success of Henrician government. In this sense, the speaker offers advice about how the queen should rule on the basis of his nostalgia for the rule of her father.

Nostalgia for a return to the days of Henry VIII reached an apogee in the writings of the courtier and author, Sir John Harington. Harington is deservedly famous for translating the first complete English version of *Orlando Furioso* (1591), the epic poem by Ludovico Ariosto, the Italian poet. He also wrote epigrams, a tract on the royal succession, satire, and various historical treatises. Following the accession of James I, Harington sought patronage at court. He may have tried to bring into reality his conviction that James’s accession brought the nation back to a Henrician model of strong male kingship, whereby courtiers could serve the Crown as effective bishops.

Harington’s application for the Archbishopric of Dublin in 1605, however, was unsuccessful. In any case, his longing for a return to the time of Henry VIII appears throughout his works. Much of this material looks to Henry merely as a source for entertaining diversion. In a letter to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, dated 1595, for example, Harington claims to have found “merry” verse about Henry VIII in “an old book of my father’s,” and he sends this to Burghley for his relief, “when (as you say) weighty pain and weightier matters will yield to quips and merriment.” Harington
published this same verse in his satirical treatise of *A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, called the Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596). In Harington’s account, “[t]his verse is called the *Blacke Sauntus*, or monkes hymne to *Saunte Satane*, made when Kynge Henry had spoylede their *synginge*. My father was wont to say, that Kynge Henry was used, in pleasante mood, to sing this verse.” In claiming that Henry VIII sang a song in praise of “*Saunte Satane*” this passage verges on the absurd, but Harington’s point is that Henry’s posthumous legacy should be made amenable to “merry” treatment. The verse text itself bears similarities to the crabbed, satirical Latin found in works such as *Doctor Doubble Ale* (1548), that anti-clerical satire by the mid-Tudor Protestant controversialist, Luke Shepherd. The humor of this recollection of Henry’s dissolving the monasteries receives higher emphasis than the act of dissolution itself, since Harington affirms, on the one hand, that Henry put a stop to the monks’ singing, and, on the other hand, that he actually joined in their song. This is a significant point. Harington provides evidence of Henry’s widespread familiarity, insofar that he can create this jest on the assumption that his readers will know and understand his meaning. Harington further shapes the evolving cultural presence of Henry VIII as a vehicle for merriment.

Harington’s Henry takes on attributes of the jolly, swaggering, “merry” monarch whose broadening image in mid-Tudor and Elizabethan literature we have been discussing. If this portrayal seems less explicitly nostalgic than other late-Tudor representations, its nostalgia is implicit through its humor. Henry’s cultural legacy had become safe enough to provide the subject for laughter between poet and patron. Although Harington himself was Queen Elizabeth’s godson, the poet recognized that
Henry VIII could provide shared ground for intellectual engagement with hoped-for patrons. Harington thus discusses Henry in verse presented to various persons. Two poems about Henry appear in Harington’s collection of epigrams, which he revised repeatedly during the 1590s and 1610s as presentation copies. In a manuscript collection offered to Prince Henry Frederick, James I’s son and heir, on 19 June 1605, for example, the controversial politics of Henry VIII’s reign evolve into material for wit and recreation among like-minded courtly readers. Harington’s treatment of the king is conservative and anachronistic and rests upon a certain unstated favorable stance on the part of both parties toward revering Henry’s life and reign. The presentation manuscript to Prince Henry contains a total of 408 epigrams on wide ranging subjects, including “A newyeares guift to the King’s Majesty of Scotland,” an epigram welcoming James to London in 1603.

The sixty-fifth epigram in book two of Harington’s manuscript, “A Groome of the Chambers Religion / In king Henry the eights time,” offers a humorous response to the religious uncertainties of Henrician England. (For the text of this poem, see Appendix.) The poem’s joke relies upon the unlikelihood that the historical Henry would have expressed concern that his closest servants, the Grooms of the Chamber, should embrace “true” religion. Harington’s Henry, somewhat absurdly, does express such a concern, even though Henry’s religious policy had fluctuated widely over the course of his reign. This epigram has a topical connection as well. Its language concerning royal favoritism and the presence of minions draws attention to Henrician factionalism, but savvy Jacobean courtly readers would have recognized in these terms an applicability to
modern-day factional debates that emerged between James I and Parliament shortly after the Jacobean accession. Harington’s thirty-ninth epigram in book three similarly marries entertainment and political commentary. “Of king Henry the 8. his / Woing” shows how Henry’s marital relationships supplied a fitting subject for intelligent humor during the early Jacobean period. (For the text of this poem, see Appendix.) Henry’s royal marriages ironically appear as “matters of great weight” (line 4) despite the veneer of triviality that they possess as subjects for Harington’s amusements. If the “great vertues” and “good carriadge” (line 6) of Henry’s multiple wives had been a matter for debate in early Stuart England, Henry appears in the poem as a conventionally fickle Petrarchan lover who enjoys “chaunge of paster” (line 7). This treatment of Henry carries a hint of brashness, as readers are encouraged to imagine him wooing a “stately great outlandish Dame” (line 1) rather than some homegrown beloved. Shrewish but politically aware, Henry’s would-be wife politely and humorously refuses the king’s suit by reminding readers that one third of Henry’s wives lost their heads at his command. These Harington epigrams provide evidence of a new direction in Henrician mythmaking and nostalgia. Harington turns to Henry for intellectual diversion and amusement at the same time that he asks members of the new royal family to evaluate the successes and failures of the Henrician monarchy.

5.4. Celebration of the Jacobean Accession and Elegies for Queen Elizabeth

King James VI and I succeeded to the throne of England after Queen Elizabeth died in March of 1603. At this moment of transition, laments for the old queen
circulated widely in verse. Nostalgia for the days of Henry’s government provided the stability that many writers sought in order to weather the transition from Tudor to Stuart power. As apologists welcomed the opportunity to mourn for Elizabeth and simultaneously celebrate the accession of James, they also attempted to secure patronage from the new regime through their nostalgia for Henry VIII. Henry accordingly represents national and dynastic greatness in these texts. The longing for a return to that greatness frequently accompanies newly offered counsel to James, that he might begin his reign by following the successes of both Henry and Elizabeth. In these treatments, England’s glories begin to emerge from the political turmoil of the early Tudor period; Henry’s reign enjoys prominent status as an originating point for a number of legitimating narratives for national greatness in these elegies. England’s loss of a queen accompanied the failure of the Tudor dynasty to place an heir via lineal male descent on the throne. James enjoyed royal descent from Henry VII, father to Henry VIII and progenitor of the Tudor line.

The playwright Henry Chettle celebrates James’s accession to the throne with praise for England’s new king and a dirge for Elizabeth. His *England’s Mourning Garment* (1603) tells how Henry VIII exceeded the accomplishments of other Tudor monarchs. Chettle collaborated on a number of dramas, including *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (c. 1592), a play in which Henry maintains a shadowy presence. He employs a pastoral mode in *England’s Mourning Garment* to respond to Edmund Spenser’s *Colin Clout’s Come Home Again* (1594). Both works praise the virtues of Queen Elizabeth, but although Spenser’s Colin lauds the queen after returning to Ireland
from visiting the royal court, Chettle’s “Shepheards Spring-Song” between Thenot and Colin laments her death. As in book six of the *Faerie Queene*, Chettle’s Colin breaks his pipe, in this instance to mark the queen’s passing.

Like Spenser, Chettle glorifies the accomplishment of Henry VIII. Henry VII had “left *England*, rich, beautiful, and full of peace,” but Henry VIII exceeded the already glorious accomplishments of his father: “[T]he Father of our *Elizabeth*, was to his Enemies dreadfull, to his friends gracious, under whose Ensigne the Emperour himselfe serv’d: so potent a Prince he was: besides, so liberall and bounteous, that he seemed like the Sunne in his Meridian, to showre downe gold round about the Horizon: But hee died too.”

This passage contains highly mythologized and anachronistic nostalgia for the rule of Henry VIII. The Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I, had marched under Henry’s banner at the sieges of Thérouanne and Tournai (1513), as Chettle implies, but only because Henry had hired him, and he also had his own French rivalries that he hoped to settle in the process. Maximilian was certainly not daunted by the martial prowess that Chettle attributes to Elizabeth’s father. Nor was Henry as liberal with financial gifts as Chettle implies. Like many of the other writers who we have been discussing, Chettle’s aim is rather more mythic than factual. He caricatures Henry’s military successes as a foundational point for celebrating the life of Elizabeth. This strategy in turn generates momentum to usher in the reign of James, whose accession follows such successful monarchs. Chettle’s longing for the halcyon days of Henry’s reign provides the direct point of departure for his flattery of James’s progenitors and, by extension, of James himself.

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In all likelihood, the new king represents an implied audience for many such laments. James’s descent from Henry VII provided the basis of his claim to the throne, but commentators nevertheless rehearsed the accomplishments of Henry VIII as a strategy for counseling the new king. These texts suggest that Henry VIII enjoyed a degree of cultural presence that even Henry VII had lacked. I. F.’s *King James his Welcome to London. With Eliza’s Tomb and Epitaph, and our King’s Triumph and Epitome* (1603), for instance, supplies a political history of the English monarchy since the early fifteenth century. James’s lineage from Henry VII receives emphasis only to prove that prior to Henry VIII, kings never obtained England’s crown without struggle:

For Kings which I have named, first attain’d
Their seates with blood, and still in feare they raign’d.
Yea *Richmonds* worthy selfe [i.e., Henry VII] sate not so sure:
But traytors still rebellion did procure.
And *Henry* his successor (though renown’d)
Sought how to make his weake religion sound.
When with much toyle he did from *England* banish,
The Popish crew, whose fraud like smoake did vanish,
Leaving his heire in Protestancie learned:
Who after his decease the same confirmed. (B1v)

These verses recall Henry VIII’s shoring up “weake religion” by exiling “the Popish crew” with its “fraud.” I.F. believes that James will rule in similar fashion, even as Edward VI, Henry’s heir, followed the example of his father in effective monarchy. I.
F.’s hope for James to avoid both secular and ecclesiastical contagion relies upon this interpretation of Henrician kingship.

In these royal dirges for Elizabeth, Henry’s responsibility for political and religious change during his lifetime represents an essential component in educating James about the duties and responsibilities of his new throne. In his Elizabethan funeral elegy, the cartographer and devotional writer John Norden adapts John Foxe’s tragicomic narrative of the imprisonment of the Princess Elizabeth in order to remind James of still-current religio-political realities that had been established by Henry VIII. Norden’s *Pensive Soul’s Delight* (1603) is in part an enthusiastic and nostalgic encomium to Henry VIII. In summarizing selected conspiracies against the life of Queen Elizabeth, Norden argues that Henry’s victory over the Church of Rome immortalizes both his deeds and his very name. In fact, Henry’s name must endure to counter the pope’s name, which has become a by-word for sedition. The pedigree of Elizabethan and, by extension, Jacobean government relies upon this nostalgia for Henry’s successes:

Her [Elizabeth’s] famous *Father* to the worldes admire,
First foyled Romish *Pharoh* [i.e., the pope] in the feelde:
When *Pharohs* troupes were neere him, and in Ire
A miracle to make proud *Pharoh* yeelde.
Yet loe perforce he [the pope] lost his golden fame
Within this Realme, thrice happy, if his *name*
Had dide [i.e., died] likewise, drownde in *oblivion*
And not have livde here, father of *sedition,*

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The nurse of Envy, and the gulph of shame.  

Victory over the Church of Rome in the field is not enough for Norden’s Henry VIII. The poem goes on to recount how the Tudor Protestant dynasty sprung from Henry and took root under both Edward and Elizabeth. Not surprisingly, Mary I undermines her father’s achievement, but Henrician monarchy nevertheless thrives upon its providential foundation. It is this foundation that Henry bequeaths both to Elizabeth and James. As Norden’s speaker says of God, “the Truth he sent / By Henries hand.” Later, the speaker observes how “This Love, this Light, this Truth Jehovah sent / By Henries hand and Edwards.” As is the case in dynastic panegyric given to Queen Elizabeth during her progresses, Henry appears prominently alongside other royal worthies. James needs to know that the divine “love,” “truth,” and “light” came to England through the supposed generosity of Henry VIII. It is important to realize how anachronistic and nostalgic this interpretation of Henry actually is. The description of the pope as Pharaoh is a sixteenth-century Protestant commonplace. In Norden’s treatment, however, Henry receives explicit and polemical providential support in order to continue his battle against the pope in the discursive as well as literal “feelde.”

Longing for a return to Henry VIII, or at least measuring Elizabethan and Jacobean rule by Henry’s accomplishment, represents a major continuing thread throughout these laments for Elizabeth, just as it occupies writers of broadside folio ballads and other works. In many instances, mention of Henry merely provides the occasion for discussing hoped-for successes under James. This is certainly the case in two collections of funerary verse collected and published by students at Oxford and
Cambridge. Poems in both collections specifically mention Elizabeth’s paternity as one of many reasons to lament her death. She was the last Tudor monarch, and few if any writers at the time of her death survived from Henry VIII’s reign. In these and other cases, Henry provides a prominent part of the background canvas on which these eulogists celebrate the Tudor dynasty. Once Elizabeth dies, however, writers experience new and unprecedented freedom to express their nostalgia as an alternative to the political establishment. For this reason, the early Stuart period represents still another new moment in the history of Henry’s evolving cultural presence.

5.5. Henrician Nostalgia Onstage

Henry VIII appears onstage as a dramatic character in only two early modern plays. Two years after James acceded to the throne of England, one of these two plays appeared in print. Samuel Rowley’s *When You See Me, You Know Me* (1605) harks back to nationalistic memories of the Tudor age by reorienting the figure of Henry around the militant Protestantism of Prince Henry Frederick, the son and heir to King James. In addition to the patronage connections surrounding this play and Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Henry VIII*, connections that receive detailed analysis below, *When You See Me, You Know Me* represents a late flowering of the Elizabethan longing for a return to the “merry” days of Henry VIII.

Rowley produced this play for performance by Prince Henry’s Men at some point prior to the 1605 quarto edition. Its most nostalgic moment is a series of scenes midway through the drama. Seeking relief from politics and diplomacy, Henry disguises himself
and travels incognito into London at night for the purpose of entertaining himself and outwitting his own soldiers. Theatergoers would have encountered a double layer of humor in the form of Rowley’s humorous portrayal of Henry who is also attempting to humor himself. After fighting with a ruffian named Black Will, the king is arrested and sent to one of four Counter prisons. There he holds a mock court before he is “rescued” by members of the nobility, who arrive according to prearrangement and take the king back to the actual court and the political world of the rest of the play.

This episode builds upon Elizabethan nostalgia for Henry’s reign by presenting the king as a “bluff” and fun-loving figure who swaggers his way across the stage. In the same way that the pastoral tradition frequently offers writers a chance to criticize excesses of town and city life, Rowley’s Henry’s urban escapade satirizes the excesses of court life. Rowley also incorporates the prominent Shakespearean theme of the heavy weight that wearing the crown brings to the royal conscience. This idea appears multiple times in such history plays as Richard II, II Henry IV, and Henry V. The trope of the disguised monarch enjoyed a lengthy history, but Rowley goes further than Shakespeare in having his Henry VIII take extreme delight in his own joviality. Shakespeare’s Henry V quarrels with the soldier Williams but returns comparatively effortlessly to his life as king. The burden of actually fighting with Williams falls to Fluellen and not Henry. Rowley’s Henry VIII, on the other hand, brawls with Black Will, a self-confessed murderer who may allude to the character of the same name in an earlier play, Arden of Faversham (1592). Henry’s “rescue” and return to court occurs only through a stratagem that involves the king in a jailbreak. This dramatic material generates
a significant amount of irony and humor that does not appear in the Shakespearean treatments. In this way, *When You See Me, You Know Me* introduces a new approach to Henry’s cultural legacy. The king’s “merriness” escalates to the point that he becomes a calculating jester and trickster. To the extent that Henry sheds this persona when he returns to court, his adventure through the London streets shows one way in which the advent of Stuart rule could license new thinking about Henry’s cultural presence among writers no longer worried about pleasing Henry VIII’s daughter, Queen Elizabeth.

During these scenes of escapade and disguise, Henry’s cloaked body embodies his authority. The implication for theatergoers is, according to the play’s title, that Henry cannot fail to be recognized once he has been seen. The same principle adheres to the famous Privy Chamber mural of Henry VIII by Hans Holbein the Younger, in which Henry stands broadly and prominently in an assertion of power and dominance. This impulse of recognition ironically runs against the premise of the disguise scenes and includes the audience in their joke, since viewers of course know the king’s identity. The problem of Henry’s visible physical body likewise challenges the standard separation between the king’s two bodies that, as we have seen, enabled Queen Elizabeth to compare herself to her father at Tilbury. The debate over the recognizability of Henry VIII in *When You See Me, You Know Me* provides a compass for Henry’s broader cultural status early in James’s reign, at a time when writers experimented with new ways to discuss his importance.

Rowley employs the disguise scenes as a dramatic device to investigate issues of moral behavior and royal authority. The king requires “some disguise” that will allow
him to “see our Cities government” and evade his guards without being detected: “This night we meane in some disguised shape, / To visit London, and to walke the round, / Passe through their watches, and observe the care / And speciall diligence to keepe our peace” (lines 930-33, 37-38). Like Shakespeare’s protagonist in *Henry V*, Henry VIII concerns himself obsessively with matters of self-presentation. After he successfully eludes the constable’s watch, the king argues that the responsibilities of government must be shared between monarch and subject:

Fond heedlesse men, what bootes it for a King,
To toyle himselfe in this high state affaires,
To summon Parliaments, and call together
The wisest heads of all his Provinces:
Making statutes for his subjects peace,
That thus neglecting them, their woes increase. (lines 1054-59)

These lines suggest that unlike Shakespeare’s Henry IV and Henry V, who express similar ideas when weighing the burdens of kingship, Henry VIII in *When You See Me, You Know Me* tests the application of royal authority rather than its ideological foundation. All of this would have been poignant to Jacobean audiences, whose monarch attempted to maintain a commitment to divine right kingship despite facing a recalcitrant Parliament and other challenges. Rowley’s disguise scenes thus anticipate some of the tensions of Jacobean rule in their analysis of Henrician government. Given Henry’s reputation for his dominating physical presence, embodied by his Holbein Privy Chamber mural and elsewhere, it is noteworthy that Rowley’s Henry recognizes his own
weaknesses. By recognizing the limits that unruly subjects place on royal power, these unhistorical scenes infuse the play with anachronism.\

Henry’s mythic joviality veils his character’s contemporary political significance throughout the sequence of royal disguise, capture, and return to court life in *When You See Me, You Know Me*. As a satire on the abuse of court power, these scenes wryly comment on Henry’s naiveté. The king is all too successful in his attempt to be seen but not known during his excursion. When Henry convenes a “court” of justice from his imprisonment, he inverts the court proper. He thus informs his jailor: “Well Master Constable, you have made the Counter / This night, the royall Court of Englands King” (lines 1251-52). Henry corrects injuries done to these prisoners but cannot recognize the abuse that he himself receives in the play from the aspiring Cardinal Wolsey, who has hoarded church wealth and exacted exorbitant taxes behind Henry’s back to support his bid to obtain the papacy (see lines 123-26, 534-40, 1621-23, and 3005-06). Rowley follows sequences in some of Shakespeare’s plays, such as *I Henry IV*, in which characters take on courtly roles and stage inverted court scenes. In *When You See Me, You Know Me*, however, this theme contains a forceful twist, since it is Henry VIII and not Falstaff who is being gullied. The king’s statement to his prison-suitors, that “much wrong Kings men may do: / The which their maisters nere consent unto” (lines 1354-55), condemns himself more than anyone else.

*When You See Me, You Know Me* offers theatergoers a complex view of kingship that builds on earlier, Elizabethan nostalgic treatments of Henry VIII but then begins to depart from them. In this, the play’s nostalgia seems designed to please London’s
commercial theatergoers. The king’s evening romp and brawl with Black Will, followed by the mock-court at the Counter, would have resonated with audiences at the Fortune playhouse, located in Finsbury in the suburban parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate north of London, where the initial public performances of the play occurred. As an establishment that catered particularly to members of London’s laboring classes, the Fortune frequently hosted rowdy theatergoers who came seeking the slapstick and humorous kind of entertainment that this escapade provides.  

* * *

Elizabethan and early-Stuart nostalgia for a return to the reign of Henry VIII anticipates the king’s modern-day presence in popular culture, song, and even film. A number of simultaneous strands emerge in these early modern treatments of Henry’s legacy. On the one hand, writers find value in looking back to Henry as an alternative to modern problems. They remove Henry from the historical contexts and social inequalities of his own day in order to make him serve as corrective for their own troubles. Henry’s example could provide rhetorical stability at moments of national uncertainty, as in the case of nostalgia arising in connection with the Elizabethan succession. At the same time, Henry increasingly became the subject of raillery and jest. The humorous and nostalgic often blend together with the explicitly fictional in works like Jack of Newberry. Courtly verse similarly engages overtly fictive representations by portraying Henry as the owner of an allegorical well or as a tree, for instance. In each of these cases, writers looked back
to Henry in order to consolidate their sense of national or religious identity. The terms of these discussions would continue to evolve throughout James’s reign. Were James’s pacifistic policies for England’s future a better choice than the new king’s son and heir, Prince Henry Frederick, who offered forward Protestant evangelicals the hope of more militant engagement for the cause of Protestantism on the continent? Writers fought over the meaning of the legacy of Henry VIII to find the answer.


3 Ibid., pp. 343-44.

4 Ibid., p. 345.

5 Ibid., p. 349.


7 Ibid., p. 355.


10 In 1595, Nicholas Bownde identified “houses of great personages,” “shops of artificers,” and “cottages of poor husbandmen” as locations where one would likely encounter “one of these newe Ballades.” See his *The Doctrine of the Sabbath* (1595), p. 242. STC 3436.


13 John Pyttes, *A Prayer or supplycation made unto God by a yonge man, that he woulde be mercifull to us, and not kepe his worde away from us, but that the truth maie springe* (London: William Herforde, 1559). Society of Antiquaries, Lemon 53.

14 2 Kings 18.

15 34 Hen. VIII. c. 1.


20 King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 150.


23 See the *ODNB* on Heywood and Vaux.


27 *ODNB* on Barclay. See also White, ed., *Eclogues*, p. xxxv.


31 Bodl. Gough Norfolk MS 43, fol. 40. All citations to this poem are to this folio. The document appears in the commonplace book of Thomas Brampton, a Norfolk and Suffolk landowner, who during the 1580s inscribed various moral and religious poems in addition to letters and documents relating to the management of his tenements. Falconer Madan, *A
32 The double virgule in this line designates my insertion, since the copyist employs single virgules throughout the poem to designate breathing marks. The copyist uses double virgules in the opening line.


34 Forman’s career is described in the ODNB and in James Orchard Halliwell, ed. The Autobiography and Personal Diary of Dr. Simon Forman, the Celebrated Astrologer (London, 1849).

35 For an Elizabethan example of a modified Tree of Jesse iconography, see the title page of Christian Prayers and Meditations (1569). See King, Tudor Royal Iconography, pp. 112-14.

36 Bodl. Ashmole MS 208, fols. 250r-60r. See also Black, Ashmole Catalogue, pp. 168-70. Manuscript ruling suggests that Forman may have designed the poem for circulation among a coterie audience.

37 Bodl. Ashmole MS 208, fols. 250r-51v.

38 Because Henry VIII actively discouraged foreign exploration, his reputation very likely was wholly unknown in Africa and Asia.

39 See the ODNB on Harington for details in this paragraph.


42 Compare the title of this verse in the *Metamorphosis of Ajax* (*Nugae Antiquae*, 1.14) to Harington’s letter to Burghley.


44 See chapter 6, below.


47 Ibid., A4v-B1r.

48 *ODNB* on Henry VIII.
49 I. F. King James his Welcome to London. With Eliza’s Tomb and Epitaph, and our King’s Triumph and Epitome (1603). STC 10798.


51 Ibid., B4r.

52 Ibid., B4r-v.


54 See chapter six, below.


57 See chapter three, above.


CHAPTER 6
HENRY VIII AND DYNASTIC PROPAGANDA DURING THE REIGN OF JAMES I

Nostalgia for the reign of Henry VIII continued to thrive following the accession of James VI and I in 1603. It shaped portrayals of the Tudor king in works presented to members of the Jacobean royal family in the hope of obtaining patronage. From this perspective, Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Henry VIII*, which the King’s Men performed at the Globe Theater in 1613, takes on new meaning when scholars understand its engagement with contemporary treatments of Henry VIII that circulated at court.

Jacobean writers invoked both Henry VII and Henry VIII as precursors to the dynastic stability that King James brought to the throne. When James became king after the death of Queen Elizabeth, he already had two healthy sons: Henry Frederick and Charles. More than a century earlier, Henry VII, the progenitor of the Tudor dynasty, produced his two sons, Arthur Tudor and the future Henry VIII. As the first English monarch since Henry VII to father two legitimate and healthy sons, James stimulated a fresh outpouring of literary works in which authors represented Henry VIII as prefiguring the Stuart regime.

Samuel Rowley’s play *When You See Me, You Know Me* underscores these dynastic similarities. It appeared as a printed quarto edition in 1605, two years after James came to the throne. Throughout the play, Rowley exploits Henry VIII as a dynastic
prototype for Prince Henry Frederick, James’s heir apparent, who was only eleven years old when this drama appeared in print. As we have seen, Rowley does not indulge the longing for a return to the days of Queen Elizabeth that thrived following her death. Instead, his play harks further back into the Tudor age. If the disguise scenes depict a humorously nostalgic Henry VIII, the play’s court scenes represent Henry VIII as a typological foreshadowing of the new Stuart heir. Henry Frederick attracted praise during the first decade of Jacobean power as a militant Protestant who could lead England’s continental armies in defense of “true” Protestant religion. Rowley’s comparison between Henry VIII and Henry Frederick accordingly gravitates to a militant model of Protestant kingship as represented by Henry Frederick and rejects James’s desire to pursue a foreign policy of pacifism and disengagement from continental religious warfare. When You See Me, You Know Me invests Prince Henry as a latter-day Henry VIII by co-opting the Tudor monarch as a militant alternative to James’s own more conservative approach to kingship. The play helps to generate Prince Henry’s reputation for militant Protestantism at this early moment in James’s reign.

When You See Me, You Know Me has attracted much less scholarly attention than Henry VIII. Studies of Shakespeare and Fletcher’s play that do not examine Rowley’s concurrent treatment of Henry VIII, however, are necessarily the more impoverished for not doing so. Rowley’s approach to Henry VIII in When You See Me, You Know Me differs significantly from Shakespeare’s and Fletcher’s in Henry VIII. That play’s performance in June 1613, when the Globe caught fire and burned to the ground, occurred eight years after Rowley’s drama first appeared onstage. Because Henry
Frederick had died the previous November, he does not influence *Henry VIII*’s representation of Jacobean politics. Repudiating Rowley’s interpretation of Henry VIII as a type for Henry Frederick, Shakespeare and Fletcher represent the Tudor monarch as a precursor to James’s own relationship with the religious policies of mainstream Protestantism. In particular, *Henry VIII* provides James a model of a king who rises above factional conflict at a moment when James was himself engaged in struggle with court factions and recalcitrant Parliaments. Although Rowley does not eschew faction when interpreting Henry’s personal rule, the playwrights differ in their approach to factionalism by aligning their separate representations of the Tudor king with the perceived agendas of their respective patrons, Prince Henry and James himself. Evidence for patronage appears in connection with Rowley’s employment for Prince Henry’s Men and Shakespeare’s for the King’s Men.

*When You See Me, You Know Me* and *Henry VIII* should be understood as appeals for patronage that occurred within established patronage networks at the Jacobean court. Writers who sought patronage from Henry Frederick prior to his death in 1612 associated the prince with an evangelical Protestant agenda in the tradition of Elizabethan courtiers like Sir Philip Sidney, particularly in the area of foreign affairs. Because James was himself a poet and man of letters, writers seeking royal patronage faced the entirely different challenge of proving to the king that he even needed their services. Unlike Henry Frederick, the king also preferred a disengaged approach to religious conflict at home and abroad that would tolerate religious differences so long as those differences did not hinder people’s obedience to the Crown. His management of the Hampton Court
Conference in 1604, in which he granted minimal religious toleration but did not please either the more extreme Protestants or the more conservative Catholics, provides perhaps the best example of his approach to national religious affairs. The separate political priorities of these two would-be patrons forced Rowley and Shakespeare and Fletcher to re-imagine the meaning of Henry VIII’s legacy in different ways. These playwrights offer a version of the Henrician Reformation designed separately to please Henry Frederick or James himself. By reinterpreting the meaning of Henry’s life according to two contrasting models of early Stuart monarchy, Rowley and Shakespeare and Fletcher extend the debate concerning the importance of Henry VIII and the Tudor past to early seventeenth-century political concerns.

6.1. Henry VIII and Prince Henry Frederick

Both Rowley and Shakespeare and Fletcher react to representations of Henry VIII by contemporary writers in their characterization of Henry onstage. These contemporary treatments illuminate the dramatists’ choices concerning the Tudor monarch and deserve brief analysis. In one prominent instance during the summer of 1607, an anonymous London preacher prophesied how “Henry the 8. pulld down Abbeys and Cells / But Henry the 9. shall pull down Bishops and bells.” This jibe describes Henry VIII ostensibly as a type for Henry Frederick, whom this orator invokes as the future Henry IX. The rhyme expresses the anachronistic desire that Prince Henry would abolish the institution of episcopacy as a logical continuation of Henry VIII’s hostility to monastic orders. Prince Henry learned of the rhyme’s existence from Sir John Harington, who
derided it in his *A Supplie or Addicion to the Catalogue of Bishops to the Yeare 1608*.

Harington presented a manuscript copy of this work to the prince on 18 February 1608 as a continuation of Francis Godwin’s *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England* (1601). In a 6 September 1607 letter to Sir Thomas Chaloner, the son of the poet who had presented his revision of *In Laudem Henrici Octavi* to Queen Elizabeth in 1560, Harington expressed indignation that “this most reasonles ryme” had been “scatterd in diver places” by a “traitorous heart” who “prepare[d] an ill conceit of him [Henry Frederick] that should be the comfort of our posterity.” Harington dismantled the preacher’s typological argument by implying that the English people desired Henry Frederick not to impose religious reforms after the manner of Henry VIII.10 This opinion shows Harington’s belief that King Henry had pursued sufficient reforms in the church; the king’s life could be jested at in epigrams but should not be cited in order to advance a concrete political agenda.

This incident demonstrates the debated applicability of Henry VIII as a role model for the Stuart prince.

Others shared this orator’s willingness to describe Henry Frederick as a typological successor to Henry VIII. They include Prince Henry himself, who knew that Henry VIII had been the most recent monarch to receive formal investiture as Prince of Wales prior to his own investiture. In 1609, when the prince was fifteen years old (older than the typical age for heirs apparent to be invested), he commissioned Richard Connock, one of his auditor-generals, to research the history of the Principality.11 Connock’s report of his findings survives from the prince’s personal library under the title *A collection of the names of all the Princes of this kingdome of England such as have*
Written on vellum and still in its original blue velvet binding, this folio manuscript contains a dedicatory address to Prince Henry in which Connock describes how the prince had commissioned him “out of confused Recordes, where those thinges laye scattered, to make a collection what euery of the Princes of this Kingdome ye eldest Sonnes of Kings had either from their Fathers . . . with suche Reasons as I coulde frame to proue that the same is as needfull in these our dayes, as in former tymes.” Even though English heirs apparent no longer governed Wales directly in the early seventeenth century, Connock describes the Principality of Wales as an institution that still possessed political and cultural value.

Arguing that the Henry VIII’s annexing of Wales in 1536 did not invalidate the institution of the Prince of Wales, Connock advocates Henry Frederick’s right to receive the principality as the figurative successor to the Tudor king. Connock refutes David Powell, the Church of England clergyman and historian, whose *History of Cambria Now Called Wales* (1584) shows how Henry VIII had made redundant the principality by incorporating Wales under Crown jurisdiction. Connock gives “an aunswere . . . to that w[h] hath byn published by Doctor Powell in his Welsch Chronicle . . . against ye creating of Prynce Edward sonne to King Henry ye 8 and all other succeeding Princes,” including Henry Frederick. Powell had asserted that Edward VI “was none otherwise Prince of Wales than under the generall title of England: as the king his father was king of England, and under that name K[ing] of Wales as a member of England; neither doo I read of anie other creation or investiture that he had to that principalitie.” As Connock affirms, however, “this Example alleadged” does not constitute “a Presydent for
succeeding tymes.” Henry VIII would certainly have invested Edward, he declares, since “the same Principallitie was not incorporated into yᵉ Crowne by the Statute made the 27th yeare of King Henry the Eight [i.e., the 1536 annexation of Wales], but by his alteration from the estate of a Prince into his royall Soueraignty uppon the death of his father King Henry yᵉ Seauenth.”17 In this flexible analogy, Connock describes Henry Frederick as successor both to Edward VI, as Prince of Wales-to-be, and Henry VIII, his actual predecessor in the principality. This manuscript invokes the cultural memory of both Henry and Edward in support of Prince Henry’s hoped-for investiture.

The courtier-poet and illustrator Henry Peacham goes a step further than Connock when he marshals Tudor iconographical symbols to represent Henry Frederick as a latter-day Henry VIII. Peacham compares the Stuart prince to Henry VIII in his Minerva Britanna. Or, A Garden of Heroical Devices (1612), which he dedicated to Prince Henry.18 This work describes Henry VIII as one of “many and almost unimitable Impresa’s of our owne Countrie.”19 Peacham praises James’s son as a latter-day successor to the Tudor king in a chivalric emblem addressed specifically to Henry Frederick (Figure 12). Attached verses encourage “young Henry” [i.e., Henry Frederick] to shine “in armes before thy people” and be “a prodigie for foes to gaze upon.” In this way, “Britaine scarcely shall thy courage hold.” The prince’s exploits will excel “all the Henries ever liv’d before,”20 including, most recently, Henry VIII. Like the anonymous London preacher, Peacham anticipates Prince Henry’s accession as Henry IX, at which time he will surpass the martial exploits of all previous Henries.
Seeking royal patronage, Peacham also incorporated elements of Tudor dynastic iconography into a series of manuscript emblem books that he presented both to James I and Henry Frederick between 1603 and 1610. These books adapt James’s *Basilicon Doron* (1599), a book of fatherly advice on kingship that James had offered to guide the education of his son and heir.\textsuperscript{21} Peacham undertook the first of these volumes, *ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΩΡΟΝ In Heroica Emblemata resolutum* [“Basilicon Doron Opened in Heroic Emblems”] (1603-04), “in thanks to the most serene prince Henry Frederick.”\textsuperscript{22} The eighteenth emblem in this volume employs the familiar Protestant iconography of the Sword and Book. We have already seen the importance of this iconography on the illustrated title-page border of the Coverdale Bible (1535) and in John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*. Queen Elizabeth also displays these figures as symbols of her dynastic authority as her father’s successor.\textsuperscript{23} Peacham uses this iconographical device to praise Prince Henry as the typological successor of Henry VIII and other Tudor Protestant monarchs. In his drawing Peacham places a perpendicular sword propping open a book with its hilt (Figure 13). The attached feathers of the Principality of Wales emphasize a direct link from this iconographical device to the prince. Peacham instructs his dedicatee in virtuous governance in a manner not dissimilar from the rhetoric of counsel inherent within sixteenth-century manifestations of this iconography. This emblematic device signifies “the praise of virtue in action,”\textsuperscript{24} since “it is not enough that yee have and retaine (as prisoners) within your self neuer so many good qualities and Virtues except yee impoy them, and set them on work, for the weale of them that are committed to your charge.”\textsuperscript{25} The third, much expanded version of these emblem books, *ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΩΡΟΝ in
Basilica Emblemata totum versum, singula suis iconibus et tetrastichis Latinis donata (1610), confirms the Sword and Book design as a specific typological association between Henry Frederick and Henry VIII. In this instance, the inscription “Biblia” identifies the book as a Bible and recalls Henry VIII’s appearance within this iconographical scheme on the title pages of sixteenth-century vernacular Bibles (Figures 14 & 15; compare Figures 1 & 3). The inscription does not appear in the first two versions of this device. In these emblem illustrations, the Sword and Book provide a vehicle for Peacham’s dynastic and typological theses concerning Henry Frederick and King Henry’s successor.

6.2. Henrician Typology in When You See Me, You Know Me

Samuel Rowley’s When You See Me, You Know Me incorporates typological argument in a manner similar to works by Connock, Peacham, and others. This play represents the only surviving early modern drama besides Henry VIII to award the Tudor monarch a speaking role. It contains crucial themes such as the representation of national identity, political history, and theories of kingship, all of which have preoccupied scholars in recent years. Its sources include John Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and other works of Elizabethan Protestant propaganda. The play’s narrative is familiar from the pages of Foxe and other sources: as Cardinal Wolsey seeks the papal crown for himself, Henry VIII witnesses the birth of his son, the future Edward VI, and the death of his wife, Queen Jane Seymour. Henry receives his dynastic title “Defender of the Faith” from the pope. Henry’s humorous gambol through the streets of London follows. After
the king weds Catherine Parr, his final wife, Wolsey and Bishops Bonner and Gardiner conspire against the ascendant “Lutheran” triumvirate of Protestant clerics, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, all of whom were burned at the stake for their religious beliefs during the reign of Mary I. When Edward intercedes with Henry on Catherine’s behalf, the king relents from his plans to have her executed. Prince Edward concludes the play with a welcoming oration to Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, on the occasion of Charles’s visit to London.

Rowley establishes Henry Frederick as the fulfillment of Henrician prefiguration in *When You See Me, You Know Me*. The Stuart prince’s relationship to the play is central to its reenactment of Protestant history. Anticipating the researches of Richard Conock, the Principality of Wales supplies Rowley with a flexible vehicle for dynastic praise and inquiry into the politics of Protestant royal succession for the Stuart dynasty. The 1605 quarto edition of the play identifies the Stuart prince as heir to the throne and Prince of Wales on its title page (Figure 16). Within the play itself, when Henry bids farewell to Jane Seymour as she leaves the playing space for her delivery of the future Edward VI, the king can hardly contain his enthusiasm:

Now Jane God bring me but a chopping boy,
Be but the Mother to a Prince of Wales
Add a ninth Henrie to the English Crowne,
And thou mak’st full my hopes. (lines 265-68)

As the play’s Henry VIII invokes the future Edward VI as the “ninth Henrie,” audiences would have recognized Henry Frederick rather than Edward VI as the future Henry IX.
and figurative offspring of Henry VIII. In the event, Henry christens his son Edward (rather than Henry) in honor of his birth on St. Edward’s eve (lines 494-95). Subsequent lines describe Henry’s new son as a “gallant prince” (line 459) and imply Henry Frederick’s “descent” from Henry VIII as a “chopping boy” who was no more than a child when Rowley’s play first appeared in print. In constructing this analogy between Edward VI and Prince Henry, Rowley’s Henry VIII yearns that his child might “mak’st full my hopes” by ruling as his namesake.

Rowley represents Edward VI as Prince Henry’s prototype in virtuous kingship throughout this play. Comparison between Prince Henry and Prince Edward suggests the Stuart prince’s status as Henry VIII’s figurative successor and counterpart to Edward, King Henry’s lineal successor. When King Henry says that his son represents “the hope that England hath” and holds “all our hopes, / That what our age shall leave unfinished, / In his faire raigne shall be accomplished” (lines 2186 and 1557-59), the Tudor king points toward hopes that many contemporaries associated with Henry Frederick’s future accession. Indeed, as we have seen, many anticipated that his forthcoming reign would redirect the course of English foreign policy by ushering in a more militant Protestantism at court. Rowley’s play identifies the origins of these hopes in Henry VIII, who becomes a fatherly model for the emerging public identity of Prince Henry Frederick as a Protestant monarch. The best example of this modeling occurs when Edward’s life is in jeopardy during his birth. Henry VIII invokes the successes and failures of previous rulers named Henry and longs that his son might not dishonor his own accomplishments.
When You See Me, You Know Me transforms these musings into a dynastic appeal to Henry Frederick:

Perhaps he [i.e., God] did mould forth a Sonne for me,
And seeing (that sees all) in his creation,
To be some impotent and coward spirit,
Unlike the figure of his Royall Father:
Has thus decrede, least he should blurre our fame,
As Whylome did the sixt king of my name
Loose all, his Father (the fift Henrie) wonne.
Ile thanke the Heavens for taking such a Sonne. (lines 399-408)

Rowley extends the theme of dynastic decline familiar from Shakespeare’s Henry VI trilogy in King Henry’s warning both to Henry Frederick, England’s would-be Henry IX, and his father, James I. According to this logic, Henry VIII had distinguished himself and now fears that the future Henry IX might diminish his accomplishment in the same way that Henry VI, another child-king, lost the French territories of Henry V in a prelude to civil war. Henry VIII’s speech about shunning “some impotent and coward spirit” who might “blurre our fame” thus awards a martial ethos to the Stuart prince. The play’s Henry VIII supplies an image of Protestant kingship that accords with the kinds of dynastic strategies through which Henry Frederick’s admirers constructed his public image as Henry VIII’s typological successor.

It seems likely that Prince Henry witnessed performances of When You See Me, You Know Me and imbibed its dynastic argument. Following the death of Queen
Elizabeth, the Admiral’s Men were reorganized under the prince’s auspices in time for the 1603-04 Christmas festivities at court. Rowley wrote the play for performance by this newly organized company. The Prince’s Men performed twice at court in the presence of their patron during that season, and we know that Henry Frederick exhibited goodwill to the players and attended private performances at that time. During the following year the company performed seven times for Prince Henry, and the year after that, after *When You See Me, You Know Me* had appeared as a quarto edition in print, they gave six performances for the prince. King James joined his son in witnessing subsequent performances of the Prince’s Men during 1607-08. The company performed on three additional occasions before James and Henry prior to April 1609 and two additional times in the prince’s presence in 1612, the year of his death. This likelihood of court performances and the play’s themes together suggest that Rowley’s relationship with his patron was more than merely symbolic. After all, at least two of the surviving eleven plays from the repertoire of the Prince’s Men draw explicit attention to the emerging cultural status of Henry Frederick as Prince of Wales and as a militant Protestant ruler. Both courtly and public performances would have afforded the company the opportunity to advance its patron’s interests.

*When You See Me, You Know Me* rewrites Henrician cultural and religious history from a Protestant perspective that points towards Prince Henry as a Protestant leader and typological successor to Henry VIII. This interpretation of King Henry is quite removed from his own religious views and tailored instead for the perceived status of Prince Henry in early Stuart England. By generally avoiding explicit references to controversial
religious doctrines and focusing instead on Henry VIII’s desire for a male heir, the play’s early scenes establish the Tudor king as a dynastic precursor to Henry Frederick more than as a Protestant prototype *per se*. These two representational trends become one and the same strategy after Henry VIII receives the papal title “Defender of the Faith.” In offering thanks to the papal messenger, Henry foreshadows the iconographical imagery of Sword and Book through which writers such as Henry Peacham proclaimed his authority and the authority of Henry Frederick as specifically Protestant monarchs: “whilst we have life, his grace shall see, / Our sword defender of the faith shalbe” (lines 861-82). Will Sommers, the royal fool, criticizes Henry’s boast that his new title will make a difference in the outcome of upcoming war against the Turks: “the true faith is able to defend it self without thee, and as for the Popes faith (good faith’s) not worth a farthing” (lines 895-97). Henry rebuffs this jest by returning to the dynastic theme and remarking of his son, “hee shall be defender of the faith too, one day” (lines 907-08). These lines gesture, again, toward Henry Frederick’s status as surrogate to the play’s Edward VI.\(^3\) Furthermore, as we have seen, the disguised-monarch sub-plot, whereby King Henry eludes his guards and is arrested, manipulates the trope of the disguised king familiar from Shakespeare’s *Henry V* into a foundational narrative for the Elizabethan and Jacobean Protestant regimes. After all, the historical Henry VIII had viewed Henry V as his own typological precursor.\(^3\) Through both its sub-plot and its larger dynastic argument, *When You See Me, You Know Me* places Henry Frederick into a succession of like-minded kings whose reigns dated back at least two centuries.
Tutoring scenes focused on Prince Edward likewise contribute to Rowley’s typological argument. These scenes and their theme of princely education dominate the second half of the play and provide a topical connection to Prince Henry, whose age at the publication of the 1605 quarto edition was comparable to that of the character of Prince Edward. The tutoring sequence combines the Protestant dynastic focus on Henry VIII with a degree of topical applicability to Prince Henry, who preferred athletics to academics at an early age in the same manner that the play’s Edward VI shuns his books in favor of martial activities.\(^{34}\) James himself exercised control over his son’s studies by composing the *Basilicon Doron*, but he entered into conflict with his wife, Queen Anne of Demark, concerning the prince’s education.\(^{35}\) It is therefore not surprising that Rowley’s play alludes to the father’s concern for properly educating his son. King Henry selects as his son’s tutor Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose reputation for evangelical Protestantism had intensified following his immolation for his religious beliefs during the reign of Queen Mary: “*Cranmer, you must ply the Prince, / Let his wast howers be spend in getting learning*” (lines 1548-49). Prince Edward questions Cranmer about the existence of purgatory by observing, “*This Land ye know stands wauering in her faith, / Betwixt the Papists and the Protestants*” (lines 1991-92). Perhaps aware of James’s own struggles to control the education of his son, Rowley tells how Henry VIII forces his son Prince Edward (and, by extension, Henry Frederick) to follow his own lead in pursuing a Protestant religious understanding. “I like not this difference in religion,” King Henry remarks. Elsewhere, the character of Queen Catherine Parr asks why the Bible should “not be red and followed,” and Henry replies, “I thinke tis lawfull
to peruse and read [the scriptures]” (lines 2189-90, 2212, 2215). Rowley makes Henry
VIII an advocate for vernacular Bible reading, a crucial tenet of evangelical
Protestantism. As a decidedly Protestant monarch, King Henry models effective kingship
for Prince Henry.

Henry’s association with Protestant belief, however, emerges only gradually in
When You See Me, You Know Me. The play condemns Roman Catholic devotional
practices as leading to treason by associating those practices with the activities of
Bishops Bonner and Gardiner and with Cardinal Wolsey, all clerical antagonists in this
play. These figures become foils to Henry VIII’s nascent Protestant understanding. In one
instance, when Queen Jane Seymour retires to deliver the future Edward VI, Wolsey
remarks that “In all Cathedrall Churches through the land, / Are Masses, Derges, and
Prosessions sung: / With prayers to heauen to blesse her Maiestie” (lines 91-93).
Wolsey’s scheming to seize the papacy renders unappealing these Catholic practices and
more attractive the policies of Henry VIII, his apparent victim (see lines 123-26). When
Wolsey returns from an embassy in France, Prince Edward further describes the
cardinal’s Catholicism as traitorous in a passage that implicitly supports Henry’s nascent
Protestantism (lines 2430-32). In another example, Queen Catherine opposes her
enemies’ Catholicism immediately after Henry expresses his belief in the merits of
vernacular Bible reading. She asks Bishops Bonner and Gardiner whether they would
obey the king instead of the pope if the teachings of the Bible were on the king’s side.
Her views adumbrate Henry’s in this instance:
Pray tell the King, then, what Scripture haue yee,
To teach religion in an vnknowne language?
Instruct the ignorant to kneele to Saints,
By bare-foote pilgrimate to visite shrines,
For mony to release from Purgatorie,
The vildest [sic] villaine, theefe, or murderer,

All this the people must beleeue you can,
Such is the dregs of Romans religion. (lines 2253-60, italics in original)

In keeping with the portrayal of the clerical conspiracy against Queen Catherine in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, Rowley’s source for this narrative, the queen’s enemies initially persuade Henry to oppose her. Eventually, however, Henry accuses Bonner and Gardiner of suborning the pope “to vsurpe vpon our government” (line 2739).

As Henry VIII emerges as a champion of Protestantism in Rowley’s play, the Tudor king supplies a model in government for the young Prince Henry. The representation of confessional strife in When You See Me, You Know Me ultimately favors Protestantism over Roman Catholicism because only a Protestant Henry VIII can anticipate Prince Henry’s presumed attraction to Protestant ideals. Catholic antagonists portray Lutheranism as a prelude to rebellion in the play, but Henry himself exposes and condemns this thesis by describing Wolsey and his associates as “false abusers of religion” and chiding Wolsey as a latter-day Caiaphas, the high priest who crucified Christ (lines 2998, 3009). The king’s gradual association with Protestant belief provides
the Stuart prince (and members of the audience) with an aid for discerning “true” (i.e., Protestant) from “false” (i.e., Catholic) religion.

6.3. *Henry VIII* and the Personal Monarchy of James I

*When You See Me, You Know Me* and *Henry VIII* both investigate King Henry’s response to the tumultuous upheavals of the Protestant Reformation. In their Prologue to *Henry VIII*, however, Shakespeare and Fletcher explicitly depart from Rowley’s interpretation of the Tudor king as a Protestant prototype for Henry Frederick. In a probable reference either to Rowley’s representation of Will Sommers, the royal jester, or to his play’s royal disguise scenes, we learn that audiences of *Henry VIII* would not receive “a merry bawdy play, / A noise of targets, or to see a fellow / In a long motley coat guarded with yellow” (lines 14-16). *Henry VIII* departs explicitly from the humorous and nostalgic tradition of Henrician representation that governs works such as Deloney’s *Jack of Newberry* and the royal disguise scenes in *When You See Me, You Know Me*. 37 Other significant differences between Rowley and Shakespeare and Fletcher also exist. Both establish Wolsey as primary antagonist, but only *Henry VIII* devotes significant attention to the minister’s remorse following his fall from power. Both plays contain a clerical conspiracy extracted from Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*: in *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare and Fletcher describe how Bishop Stephen Gardiner unsuccessfully attempts to bring about the downfall of Thomas Cranmer. Cranmer concludes the play by delivering his famous prophesy over the newly born Princess Elizabeth, who would become Queen Elizabeth I. 38
In spite of possessing considerable thematic overlap, these plays’ discussions of
the linkages between Henrician and Jacobean kingship diverge to a large extent. In its
most salient departure from Rowley’s play, Henry VIII explores Henry’s status as a
prototype for King James as distinct from Prince Henry. In anticipation of the king’s
comparatively moderate approach to religious affairs, Shakespeare and Fletcher avoid
discussing doctrinal controversy at any length, on the one hand, and devote significant
attention to Henry’s response to court faction as a role model for James, on the other
hand. James himself has replaced Henry Frederick as the most direct influence upon
Henry VIII’s approach to the reign of the Tudor king.39

Writing the play for performance by the King’s Men rather than the Prince’s Men
provided Shakespeare and Fletcher with a motive for replacing Prince Henry’s agenda
with the king’s as a governing factor for their interpretation of Henrician rule. Henry VIII
shapes its representation of King Henry in response to James’s own priorities in matters
of religion and court politics. Shifts in emphases in Henry VIII foreground its alternative
assessment of the importance of Henry VIII as a precedent for Jacobean political debates.
James’s reputation as a lover of peace, for example, found expression through his motto
Beati Pacifi ("blessed are the peacemakers"), his determined attempt to settle religious
conflict by convening an ecumenical general council, and his attempts to marry his
children to the opposing sides in continental religious conflicts as a means to pacify
strife.40 Aware of the royal agenda for peaceful rule, Henry VIII devotes increased
attention to the process by which Henry imposes his own version of Protestant orthodoxy
onto the court in order to quell disruptive factional alliances. Henry’s function as
determiner of religious orthodoxy is much deemphasized in *When You See Me, You Know Me*. On the one hand, Shakespeare and Fletcher avoid moralistic typological commentary of the sort practiced by contemporary writers such as Rowley, Henry Peacham, William Thorne, Henoch Clapham, or George Wither. These authors had adopted typological argument in order to praise James or Henry Frederick as an evangelical Protestant ruler. *Henry VIII* nevertheless characterizes Henry as a prefiguration for James in orthodox governance by adding the Tudor king to a pantheon of Jacobean royal prototypes that included the biblical king Solomon and the Roman ruler Constantine.\(^{41}\)

King James took a more conservative approach to the affairs of the Church of England than did Prince Henry’s admirers, whose works emphasize the prince’s reputation for militant Protestantism. It is not surprising, therefore, that *Henry VIII* departs radically from *When You See Me, You Know Me* in its representation of Henry VIII and religious controversy. Shakespeare’s and Fletcher’s hesitancy to delve into doctrinal disagreement unmistakably points toward the interests of James, who had written polemical treatises engaging with Catholic controversialists and others in the attempt to enforce religious orthodoxy by the time *Henry VIII* first appeared onstage.\(^{42}\) Furthermore, King James convened the Hampton Court Conference in the attempt to smooth religious tensions and hinder the spread of radical Puritanism. Under the patronage of the King’s Men, Shakespeare and Fletcher devote significantly less attention to the details of doctrinal disagreement between Protestantism and Catholicism than does Rowley. Their hesitation to discuss disputed doctrines suggests the more conservative policies of James as compared to his son. Discussion of the Mass, pilgrimage, Purgatory,
and vernacular Bible reading receive barely a passing mention in *Henry VIII*. The religious controversies of the Protestant Reformation are not completely absent, of course. When Buckingham describes Wolsey as “this holy fox, / Or wolf, or both” (1.1.158-59), for example, he alludes to the biblical narrative of the Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing. This evangelical commonplace figures prominently in the “May” and “September” Eclogues of Spenser’s *The Shepheardes Calendar* and in other works of religious controversy.43 In another instance, Henry blames the delays at his divorce trial on “dilatory sloth and tricks of Rome” (2.4.234). As a member of the literary circle that praised Prince Henry as a radical Protestant, Rowley simply places greater emphasis upon explicit doctrinal material than do Shakespeare and Fletcher.44

Both plays establish the connection between religious controversy and social unrest, but *Henry VIII* goes further than its predecessor in reorienting questions concerning religious orthodoxy around the person of Henry VIII as a surrogate for James. Shakespeare’s and Fletcher’s representational decisions prefigure James’s own approach to questions of obedience and authority in a way that Rowley’s do not. Both works discredit the connection between Lutheranism and social unrest by censuring villains like Wolsey. With James specifically in mind, however, only *Henry VIII* describes Wolsey’s fall as a violation of the medieval statute against *praemunire*, or appealing to a foreign jurisdiction. Henry VIII had used this statute as a means to force the subjection of the English clergy to royal authority in the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1532). Under the terms of this statute, the king accused the entire clergy of *praemunire* and received about £118,000 in compensatory damages.45 As if aware of this historical backdrop, *Henry VIII*
focuses on the king’s right to try cases within his own realm, thus establishing a topical connection between Henry VIII and King James. Suffolk cites Henry’s anger against Wolsey for committing the offense of *praemunire*:

> Lord Cardinal, the King’s further pleasure is—
> Because all those things you have done of late,
> By your power legantine within this kingdom,
> Fall into th’ compass of a praemunire. (3.2.338-41)

This passage points specifically to the monarch’s supreme authority in religious affairs and is directly applicable to James’s political fortunes. *When You See Me, You Know Me* limits its analysis of Wolsey’s downfall to his ambition, but *Henry VIII* shows the Cardinal punished specifically for flouting the king’s prerogative. The fact that *Henry VIII* is a King’s Men play with established patronage connections to James helps explain this shift in emphasis.

The two plays also differ in their representation of Henrician court factionalism. James himself had gained experience balancing Scotland’s volatile political factions prior to acceding to the throne of England. His approach to the problem was complex. During his English rule, he inadvertently fostered competition at court by selling reversions to governmental offices in the attempt to keep full the royal coffers and by patronizing royal favorites like Robert Carr and the Duke of Buckingham. At the same time, defeating factionalism was a topic of especial interest to him, since his policies often floundered in the face of recalcitrant Parliaments. This is especially true in the case of his hoped-for union between Scotland and England. The king attempted to bypass
Parliamentary opposition to this project through the use of royal proclamations, but political compromise often prevailed by necessity. Scholars have recognized ways in which the early Stuart political world shapes the representation of cutthroat Henrician politics in *Henry VIII*. Although both *When You See Me* and *Henry VIII* demonstrate King Henry’s ability to rise above faction, factional conflict remains subsidiary to doctrinal controversy in Rowley’s play. This is not the case in *Henry VIII*, where detailed analysis of doctrinal disagreement almost always gives way to analysis of the king’s management of competing factional interests. Given their obligation to James and the King’s Men, Shakespeare and Fletcher’s version of Henry VIII triumphing over court faction represents a calculated and sympathetic appeal to the Stuart king.

The trial scene of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, provides an excellent instance of how Henry dominates factional interests in *Henry VIII*. He does so through surveillance, the judicious use of the royal prerogative, and the control over both his favorite archbishop and the shaping of political events. The incident reenacts the most prominent event from the Henrician Reformation to appear in the play other than the divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Its historical counterpart is the “Prebendaries’ Plot” of 1542-43, in which Bishop Stephen Gardiner and various disgruntled Canterbury clerics and Kentish gentry attempted to remove Cranmer from the king’s favor by charging the archbishop with heresy. Henry’s authority to govern his recalcitrant council and, implicitly, to pursue doctrinal change according to his own agenda emerges from Shakespeare’s and Fletcher’s dramatic shaping of these materials. When Henry reassures Cranmer on the eve of his trial that “Thy truth and thy integrity is rooted / In us, thy
friend” (5.1.115-16) and predicts that “They shall no more prevail than we give way to” (5.1.144), the king reinforces his regal authority to determine “truth” through a direct assertion of the royal will. The king makes good this assertion by giving Cranmer his signet ring and, on the following day, personally confounding the plans of the conservative Catholic faction that had united against the archbishop. *Henry VIII* does not attempt to protect King Henry from the influence of faction but instead reveals a strong monarch who remains in control of political events and who displays his ability to overturn and defeat factional interests at will.

Shakespeare and Fletcher frequently represent Henry VIII as a precursor to James’s own self-assumed responsibility for defining religious orthodoxy and dissent at the expense of factional interests. Archbishop Cranmer’s famous concluding prophetic oration to Henry underscores James’s prominence in early Stuart debates over the nature and limits of Protestant orthodoxy. Cranmer not only predicts the successful reign of the Princess Elizabeth (the future Elizabeth I), but he also describes James as exceeding her accomplishments:

> Who from the sacred ashes of her [Elizabeth’s] honour  
> Shall star-like rise as great in fame as she was,  
> And so stand fixed. Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,  
> That were the servants to this chosen infant,  
> Shall then be his. (5.4.45-49)

The vivid language of this passage supports the notion of strong and centralized Jacobean monarchy. If James can direct the course of “[p]eace, plenty, love, truth, terror” at court,
little space exists in Cranmer’s speech for competing interests to thrive. *Henry VIII* concludes with the monarch having defeated opposition and produced, albeit anachronistically, his desired heir in the person of Elizabeth I.

Cranmer’s speech also addresses James’s privilege to define and set the agenda for English Protestant policy. The archbishop prophesies that in Elizabeth’s days (and, by extension, in James’s), “God shall be truly known” (5.4.36). This propaganda identifies the monarch as the standard for assessing and prescribing the terms under which God might be known in the early seventeenth-century English church. Moreover, the passage culminates a theme of royal flattery that extends throughout the play. It is no accident that the trajectory of this flattery closely evokes James’s own career as a theological polemicist. Bishop Gardiner describes Henry as “such a prince, / Not only good and wise, but most religious. / One that in all obedience makes the church / The chief aim of his honour” (5.2.149-52), for instance. He echoes James’s own opinions about religious orthodoxy that the king expressed in his controversy with the Jesuit theologian, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, who observed that the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance, by which all subjects were required to swear allegiance to the Crown, needlessly disrupted structures of Church authority. In particular, the Oath dislodged “the Authoritie of the head” from “the successour of S[aint] Peter, to the successour of King Henry the eight.” To this James rejoined:

> Of which vnapt and vnmannerly similitude, I wonder he [i.e., Bellarmine] should not be much ashamed: For as to King Henries Successour (which hee meaneth by mee) as I, I say, neuer did, nor will presume to create any Article of Faith, or to
bee Iudge thereof; but to submit my exemplarie obedience vnto them, in as great humilitie as the meanest of the land.”

James adopts a deferential pose concerning articles of belief, but the royal stance is disingenuous. James knew full well that his status as Supreme Head of the Church of England descended to him from Henry VIII himself. This title was likely the more meaningful for James given the fact that his two previous royal predecessors, Queens Mary and Elizabeth, had both denied it and adopted instead the title of *Supreme Governor*. Bishop Gardiner describes Henry’s “pious” devotion to the very church that the king himself governed, but this seems to be a diversion designed to flatter the king who held the highest authority in the nation’s religious affairs. For Gardiner, this king was Henry VIII, but for Shakespeare and Fletcher, he was James.

*Henry VIII joins When You See Me, You Know Me* in pointed debate about the ongoing political importance of Henry VIII for Stuart theatergoers. Shakespeare’s and Fletcher’s play complements works by Rowley and others on this subject. If writers posed typological arguments designed to represent King Henry according to the perceived interests and agendas of both Prince Henry Frederick and James I, *Henry VIII* joins the latter group by writing a play to flatter their royal patron. These works of propaganda manipulate the posthumous reputation of the Tudor king, sometimes for James’s benefit and sometimes for the benefit of the very different ideological interests of his son.
1 Samuel Rowley, *When You See Me, You Know Me. Or, the Famous Chronicle History of King Henry the Eight* (1605). *STC* 21417.


11 Biographical information on Conock appears in the card file for Folger, MSS L.b.635 and L.b.636. These manuscripts are dated 1612 and contain correspondence between Conock and Sir George More, treasurer to the prince. See also Pauline Croft, “The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales,” *Historical Research* 65 (1992), pp. 177-93.
Trinity College Cambridge, MS R.5.25 (hereafter cited as *A collection*). This manuscript came to Trinity from Henry Puckering, the son of Adam Newton. Newton had served as tutor and secretary to Prince Henry and presumably removed the book from Prince Henry’s library following the prince’s death in 1612. See Montague Rhodes James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901). I am grateful to David McKitterick for explaining the provenance of this manuscript.

*A collection*, fol. ii\(^v\).

I am grateful for discussion with Marisa Cull about the cultural importance of the Principality of Wales during the early modern period.

*A collection*, fol. i\(^f\).


*A collection*, fols. 16\(^f\), 35\(^v\)-36\(^v\), 38\(^f\).

*STC* 19511.


Ibid., p. 17.

22 Bodl. Rawl. poet. MS. 146. The opening of the dedication reads, “in gratiam serenissimi principis Henrici Frederici.”

23 See Crispin van de Passe’s *Elizabeth I Memorial Portrait* (c.1603-04) at King, *Tudor Royal Iconography*, p. 265. Hans Holbein the Younger had employed this iconographical device to symbolize the secular and religious authority united in Henry VIII as a Protestant “godly” monarch on the title page of the Coverdale Bible. King, *Tudor Royal Iconography*, pp. 54-67, 264-66, and fig. 87. See also King, “The Royal Image, 1535-1603,” pp. 104-32.

24 *Virtutis Laus in actione.*


BL, Harleian MS 6855, art. 13, is described in the *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts, in The British Museum*, p. 441. For dating the emblem books, see the *ODNB* entry on Peacham.

27 It is possible that Henry VIII took a speaking role in now-lost Admiral’s Men plays like Henry Chettle’s *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (1601) and Chettle, Michael Drayton, and Wentworth Smith’s *The Rising of Cardinal Wolsey* (1601). Henry does not appear onstage in either the collaboratively written *Book of Sir Thomas More* (1592-93) or *The True Chronicle History of the Whole Life and Death of Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1600).


31 I am indebted to Richard Dutton for discussion of theatrical patronage. The two Prince Henry’s plays are *When You See Me, You Know Me* and *The Valiant Welshman*.


33 Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, pp. 21-23.

34 Strong, Henry, Prince of Wales, pp. 10-11.

35 See the ODNB entry on Henry Frederick.

36 Rowley’s source is “The story of Q[ueen] Katherine Parre late Queene, and wife to K[ing] henry 8. Wherin appeareth in what daunger she was for the Gospell, by the meanes of Steven Gardiner and other of his conspiracie: and how graciously she was preserved by her kinde & loving husband the king,” in John Foxe, Book of Martyrs (1570), pp. 1422-25.


39 Shakespeare elsewhere represents the Protestant hopes surrounding Prince Henry more directly. For example, Coriolanus may evoke Henry Frederick, whose reputation for aggressive militarism had become a symbolic focus for the goals of militant
Protestantism by 1607, when *Coriolanus* appeared onstage. Robin Headlam Wells,


46 I build on and extend findings presented in the *ODNB* entry on James.

47 See note six, above.

49 The existence of factional conflict at the court of Henry VIII remains controversial. Arguing consistently that Henry controlled the direction of politics, G. W. Bernard denies the role of faction in the religious and political uncertainties of the reign, most recently in The King’s Reformation. Nevertheless, Diarmaid MacCulloch has observed that “in Henrician domestic politics, we would be foolish if we did not take account of faction.” See The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety, ed. MacCulloch (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1995), p. 3.


Figure 1. *Coverdale Bible Title Page* (1535).
Figure 2. Great Bible Title Page (1540).
Figure 3. Great Bible Title Page (1566).
Figure 4. *Queen Elizabeth I Enthroned*. From John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), B1r.
Figure 5. Venerable English College, Rome, MS Liber 1388, fol. 41v. Facsimile reproduced from Robert Persons’s Manuscript of Nicholas Sander’s *De Origine Ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*.
Figure 6. John Foxe, Acts and Monuments (1563), Mm1r.
Figure 7. The Third Part or Section of this Ecclesiastical History, with the Burning of William Tayler. John Foxe, Acts and Monuments (1563), IIi6. 
Figure 9. *The Description and Manner of the Burning of Master William Tyndale.* John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), BB2r.
Figure 11. *The Martyrdom of John Lambert*. John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), FF3'.  

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Figure 12. Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britanna, or a Garden of Heroical Devices* (1612), p. 17.
Figure 13. Henry Peacham, *Emblema XVIII. Virtutis Laus in actione*. Bodl. Rawl Poet MS 146, fol. 17v.
Figure 14. *Initium sapientiae*, from Henry Peacham, ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΩΡΟΝ in Basilica Emblemata totum versum, fol. 4'. BL, Royal MS 12 A lxvi.
Figure 15. *Initium sapientiae*, from Henry Peacham, *ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΩΡΟΝ in Basilica Emblemata totum versum*, fol. 4r (detail). BL Royal MS 12 A lxvi.
When you see me,
You know me.

Or the famous Chronicle Historie
of king Henry the eighth, with the
birth and vertuous life of Edward
Prince of Wales.

As it was playd by the high and mightie Prince
of Wales his servants.

By Samuell Rowly, sertant
to the Prince.

LONDON,
Imprinted for Nathaniell Butter, and are to be sold
in Paules Church-yeard neare Saint
Swithin gate, 1605.

“Ravished was I that well was me oh lord to me so fain”
Bodl. Ashmole MS 176, fol. 100v-101r.

Ravysshed was I that well was me o lord to me so fayne
to see y^t^'sighte that I dyd see I longe full sore ageyne
I sawe a kynge & a prynces daunsynge before my face
most lyke a god and a goddess I pray christ save their grace

This king to see of whom we haue songe his vertues be right muche 5
but this Prynces being so yonge there can be sound none suche [page break]
So facunde fayre she ys to see to her lyke ys none of her age
w'hout grace yt cannot be so yonge to be so sage

This king to see w^th^ his fayre floywre the mother standing bye
yt dothe me gad yet at this howre on them when y^t^ thynke I 10
I prae christ sowe father & mother and this yonge Ladye fayre
and send her shortley a Brother to be Englandes righte heire

finis.

fols. 100v-101r
“In written bokes I fynde it // A kynge whiche had a well”
Bodl. Gough Norfolk MS. 43, fol. 40r.

In written bokes I fynde it // A kynge whiche had a well.
great cowmfowrte to the Countrie / whearas the kinge did dwell.
If any kynde of sycknes / to any body cam
as many as did drynke of it / was healed by the same.
whiche was a goodly pleasure / A comfortable treasure. 5
Wherfor the kynge made of the thinge / A ffountayne passing measure
And till his eldest dawghter gave the keyes & taught her.
she sholde beware none shold cum theare without a token brought her
And she nothinge mysdowbtinge, but graunted therunto
the well have losed Immediatelye. that it was wonte to do 10
The kynge he waxed moved to lack y\textsuperscript{e} thynge he loved
when sycknes cam to drynke the same / to small effecte he proved
As the well hathe dryed / the kynge fell sicke and dyed:
evenso did she right sone as he faste buryed by his side.
The yongest daughter lyvithe / neste prynces of this lande 15
made humble sute unto the godes to have their helpinge hande
To make y\textsuperscript{e} water well agayne. the things if it mighte be
no wighte shoulde beare the keyes of it / In all the lande but she
And uppon this Condicicon / theye graunted her petycyon.
then she did call her people all / And gave to them fruicyon 20
If any kynde of sycknes, disparsed awaye withe quyckenes
nowe this fyne songe it is not long. Sithens England sawe y\textsuperscript{e} likenes
The famus kynge y\textsuperscript{t} lefte us, the worthie well of lief
his eldest dawghter after hym becam a straungers wiff 25
And poyesoned the good water. And she then by and bye
ffell sick and coulde not have a droppe / the fountayne was so drye.
The yongest next succeded. Knowinge her people nedye
hathe made the well for to excell. god prosper her prospedinge
for she is wyse and wareye. / And kepes the keyes so charye 30
no enemy shall cum theare at all / to make y\textsuperscript{e} water varye.

ffinis.

fol. 40r.
“Late as I walked on the way.” By Simon Forman (1552-1611).
Bodl. Ashmole MS 208, fols. 250r-60r.

f. 250r
Late as I walked on the waie
I mused in mye minde:
Of thinges whiche wear bothe quick & dead
Sum Auncient thinge to find.
Wherof I mighte beste wright my minde
In anie and ragged verse:
Mie pene I tooke in hand to write
Of sum ons worthines.
The beasts, the hinds, the fishe the fowell
and hearbes I vewd that growe:
I vewd alse the worms that creape
where thei to me could showe.
sume worthie thinge of them to write
Or praise worthie of fame:
Or secreat vertues in them hide
I might declare the same.
And firste I markte the nimblenes
Of birds alofte that flie:
with melodie and merie notes
doe seme to climbe the skie
Alsoe I markte the greater soulls
And beasts on Earth that be
Of savage kind bothe wild and tame
which much amazed me.

f. 250v
Alsoe the wormes that on the Earthe
with pinchinge paine doe crepe:
The fishes alsoe in the seas
Wher be bothe small and greate.
In Riuers Runninge and in Poolles
in Welles and lakes alsoe:
I vewd all thes in mie minde
even wth a thousand moe
The monsters alsoe that haue bine
And ar nowe at thes dayes.
I vewd them all and eke found none
that worthie wase of praise

345
The skies alsoe alofte I climbde
    And alsoe vewed them well
And forthewithe downe I did descend
    into the depthe of hell.  
To see the Ragged sortes of fenderes
    And Angles brighte of howe:
The hearbes alsoe I vewed well
    That in my waie ther grewe.

f. 251r
Ther did I se A monstres sorte
    Of ugle fends Araide
Twas none of all thes uglee sightes
    Could make me ance Afraid
Nor quivering Tartares frostie could
    nor flames of Phlegethon:
Nor ugle Charons dreadfull loocke
    With bristled heares upon.
I vewed the sunn that is soe bright
    In whirlinge spheres that Rune
The moone Alsoe that changethe ofte
    And from the sunn dothe Runne.
The Plannets seven And signs welne
    And fixed stares that be
with Charells waine And creping snake
    Whiche often we doe see.
Of bloddie broiells what should I talke
    And wares that made great waste
Or cruell Tirants that haue bine
    since all thes things ar paste.

f. 251v
This studie trobled muche mie head
    When that I could not find
Sum excellent thinge where I might
    beaste to declare mie minde
Againe I looked round abought
    the Tres at laste I spide
Whiche erste before I had forgote
    in all things I discride
And vewinge all the Lustie tres
    That on the earth did growe
Amonge the which sum on I found
That vertue forth did showe
Of which sum think I will declare
Whose vertues haue bine sene
Therfore his vertues to declare
I will forthe withe bigine.

f. 252r
Of the tree
Sumtims in England wase A tree
Of worthie fame And praise:
The tree was
Whiche yealded frut habundauntlye
Wherof we haue thes taies.
This tree he wast of wondrouse might
Abrode did spred his fame:
Throughe Europe Affricke Assia
Theie all did knowe his name.
Too kindes of frute out of this tree
Ther did sumtime forthe springe
The on yealdes frute yet to this daie
Thoughe thother none doe bringe
The firste frute that this tre did yeld
Wast worthines of fame:
And iustice prudence / equitie
did flowe frome of the same
In vertue alsoe he did flowe
And Prudent Pollicie
In marshall feates he did excell
To quenche Imagerie

252v
The other frute whiche from him sprange
Weer Pearlese Princes thre:
Which Afterward bye course did rulle
When withered was the tree
Thes thre plantes sprang of that tre
Which are of worthei price:
As fair ase bright as clear & puer
As is the floware delice.
But too of them haue rund their course
And ar nowe led to reste

1 This is written in the same hand, in the margin, although there is no exact correspondence to the lines of the text proper, since this hand is smaller.
The third remains: of that to speake dead...
 Therfore to thinke hit beste Elizabeth remains

f. 253r
Of queen Elizabeth.
This braunche I saie ẉhe yet remains dewe praise deserues to haue for that of Parents free she came And of noe bondage slaue Of praise againe she worthie is Whose Parents hath noe peare; Nor bred the like in egland wase This manie hundred yeare: Againe dewe Praise she doth deserve that sprange of Parents wise And like A Prince his lyf he led And note in foolishe gwise And once Againe let her haue praise That praise deserues bye right Whose Parents wer of corage stoute And boold in fild to fight. And for her oẉn desarts Alsoe Cease not to praise her still Ffor whye she alwaies readie is To execute gods will And to Augment his praise alwaịes she daylye dothe devise Sum sonets songs And pleasaunt psalems As David did the wise

f. 253v
Therfore the lord hathe blessed her in Roiail seat to raigne: And to sit on her fathers seat Ase other braunches twaine. Therfore I saie let use not cease To celebrat her praise Whoe is soe wise soe vertuouse And suer in All assaies Behould howe Ladie Temperaunce Bie her dothe pleasure .... Behould in her the luiclye glasse
The paturne true ase stylle
Appollo maye repent him self
for Counting Dapthney faire:
And maye wishe to revocke his lines
And her transformed hair
Now Parrise wisheth once Againe
his goulden Baull in hand
And yow the fowarth Amonge y's Queens
in presence once to stande
[…………………………………]

f. 254r
David a king sumtime did raigne
In Israell ale I read
Whoe did defend the people still
from them from whom theie fled
for whie he wase a prudent Prince
A man choson of god
To saue And kepe his people still
from scourging of his rood.
In his time wase ther much Adoe
w't enemise great store
But he did Overcom them all
Ase I haue said before.
And After him Raigned Sallomon
A Prince exceding wise
for sute he had that gifte of god
him self sett to advice.
And unto him ther come from far
The Queen of Sabase Lande
When of his prudence shee did hear
And wisdom understand

f. 254v
To him she gaue great store of giftes
And Treasure verie muche
And did reioice with him to talke
his wisdom great wase suche
his people all theye did reioice
That suche a Prince thei had
That did defend them from their foes
And yet noe wares thei made
Such wisdom wase ther in this man
That God him self did giue
his Countree And the People all
That dwelt on everye side
In Peace in rest and amitie
Thei Liued all his daies
In Tracte alsoe of godlines
Thei still did oune his waise
And david kinge did propheseie
that sum should frome the Lord
When ase he spake thses wordes fewe
Which followes after ward
A People straunge to me unknowen
and yet thei shalt me forme
And at the firste Obeie my worde
Wher ase my owne will swarne.

f. 255r
O England thou moste bright of hewe
A People straunge thou art:
Unto the place wher david dwelt
Or Christe did suffer smarte.
Yet art thou cald unto the Light
That Longe haste dwelt in Thrall
And subiect waste unto the Pope
And to his drenches all
According to the Prophesie
Therfore serue thou the Lord:
Embrace the gosple willinglie
And still Obserue his word.
Thoughe david kinge in ther be dead
Yet Sallomon dothe liue:
To whom straunge people com from fare
And Princlye giftes doe giue
Of whom her People doe reioice
As of A father dear:
And wishinge her with willing harte
To raign A thousand year.

f. 255v
whose name doth spred the Occean seas
And mightie Hills doth Climbe
Through Europe Affricke Asia
    in places darke And dimbe
for whie she hath A Prudent hart
    And wit doth rulle hir mind
In here alsoe is corag bold
    And men doe mercie find
In wisdome Like to Sallomon
    In bewtie Venus heire
In chastitie Penelope
    In vertue passage faire
In Pacience she Iob excells
    King david in mercie
In Convinge feats Prometheus
    In Elloquence Tullie.
As iuste for truth As Ioseph wase
    who loued well his fa: tar
In pittie lyke to Harpagus
    In Love Cleopetra

  f. 256r
Her vertuouse sreams showes like sunn beams
    We all ioie of her sight
David the kinge in her is sime
    To maintain truth And right
No Phillis nor no Brisis brane
    Ase I doe thinke in mind
Nor yet Cleopetra can depraue
    The grace to thee Assigned
No dido nor no Hero can
    Defame thie princly grace
No Priamms daughter born in Troie
    Nor Hellen stains thie face
Whose feature fine the heuens haue framd
    in sacred seat diuine
Whom pandora that noble dame
doth love to name Assigne
Milena she her lump shall take
    Nowe straight waie w’th out staie
And shall resound the noble praise
    Throughe Land and Lake allwaie

  351
The Muses Ruld ther in their laps
which makes thee showe so cleane
And suckt she hath minervase paps
As plainly doth Appeare
It sems diana Toke in thee
delight great w'out fear
And vestra hath thee taught A weiger
moste lyke Caliso cleare
O comlye corps O noble nimph
Of semlye shape soe sound:
O phoenix rare O perlese pept
from scooll of state redound
The driads And the Niads both
of woods and watrie place
With trippinge And w'lepping both
Reioice to see thy grace
Cassandra she that Noble dame
Thie scooll mistres she was
And Pallas she hath furdred thee
to sesers [i.e., Caesar's] seat to pas

Of skilfull Queen Eudoxia
Replet with Eloquence
Or learned dame Cornelia
Whose wits ar full of sence
should prese for Praise wher now ther staies
more follie suer hit wear
sith prudent Pallas guids thy wais
whose frut thy breste doth beare
such vesture And such gesture to
with noble hart And mind:
In Romans or in Grecian Towns
I deam wher hard to find.
Brage then no more of hollew fare
Which sumtime did bear swaie
Your gloriouse grekes giue this ample place
her princelye part to plaie
Retire youe Romans sone Againe
I Counsell youe profaie
In England nowe A Queen doth raigne
wher still she means to staie

whos worthines A brod to Blase
my wits I feell to faint:
Sir Chancers pene hit wood A mase
hir Praise in verse to paint
She is so fair / so vertuouse
And Curtuouse A dame:
In All things is she most skillfull
And of A passing frame
Yf wit might compase willing will
devoid of All Annoye
Yf will might wish emploied skill
Of right she should enioye
No Crokodill [i.e., crocodile] w'i fained teares
Nor gredie grep can charme
No tiger fell nor vipers whelp
Can doe hir Any harme
Ech valiant hart And noble mind
with Loftie corage hie
The mighti mountains sekes to climb
And let the mooll hill lye.

[There is a leaf torn out of the manuscript at this point.]

Thou therfore England Longer shew
maiste iustlye nowe reioice
With bowed kne And upright eye
To god lyft up thy voice
Iuste cause hast thou to praise the gods
That aids thy prince so well
Who skilfull is in vertues lawes
And Princes doth excell
O England nowe w'i joyfull Inns
Loocke up w'i morie ther
And praise thy god And so howe braue
Thy Princes doth Apeare
Behould diana w'i vertue nowe at hand
Ase bright as Chirstall clear
Behould I saie the muses nine
That coms now in a race
soe wippinge nowe so braue so fine
which saues dianae grace
Whose eyes ar Lyke to shinerm go shaftes
As bright ase Christall cleare

That use to flye: So dothe bright bems
out of her eyes appeare.
What wisdome wants w her comngs still
Of vertue doth abound
What can dame Pallase doe w eras
dame vertue nawe is found.
As bright Ase Ani hellicon
To whose redoubted race
In honour Iove in Power mars
And pallace nowe giues place
A pearlesse crowe A dyademe
blown up by blaste of fame
Whose deads whose tachs & worthines
hath gote immortal name
A prince more like to venus suer
Then Ani mortall weight
A princes lyke to Iudith suer
Elizabeth she height
A prince in combate feare And bold
in Triumphth passing braue
In Judgment right and valiant sight
The name ther of he haue

A princes of more excellent fame
Can nowe no wher be found
A monge the Princes that doe raign
Or liue upon the grownd.
Reioice England reioice therfore
with hart w'ly might And maine
for god hath giuen the a prince
Ase none sore yet did raigne
for ase hir Phoebus in his course
    showes forth his glittering beams
So doth your vertue nowe surmount
    The flowe of Brittain streams
The praise of vertue is soe great
    in then wher hit dothe dwell
And she that vertue moste doth use
    shall wine & were the bell
Yone youe ar she ase I doe thinke
    for All men so maye saie
That of all Queans in Orbe soe round
    Ought wear the braunch of baye
Whose yeniter is heighe Iehoue
    A Parent with out pear
Experience hath proued yo'r name
    by tract of many A year

f. 259v

for as fier Phoebus in his course
    showes forth his blittering beams
Soe doth your vertue nowe surmount
    The flowe of Brittaine streams
As nilus when hit overflowes
    doth fate And feed the soill
Wch after that abundaunt frut
    dothe yeld withouten toyll
Even so doe youe to mortall weightes
    more by A thousand parte
send swete relik in hard distres
    To ease their pinchinge smarte
Yo'r vertues thei ar knownen beyond
    The farthest part of Ind
In that youe helpe in everie coste [i.e., coast]
    wher so be soe ar found
Ase lyiblase hill of perlese praise
    That swettest home brings
soe ar youe waid wth wordly weights
    Aboue All other things
for whye youe haue Apundent harte
    And wisdome Rulls yo'r mind
In youe Alsoe is fortitud
    And men doe iustice find
Therefore your name as persons fluid
    Doth flowe fore evermore
Because for All the sects of men
    you haue wisdome in store
And that yo' name doth eflowe so fare
    in helping ech degre
howe can men saie And not deny
    Run on surpasseth thre
for Cronose she that Auncient dame
    that beares at things in mind
shee that declare your bounteousnes
    showed all waiies to mankind
whoe can of fountains dried up
    sheet waters mistly craue
whoe steks of Cedrus simple foull
    a prinely gifte to haue
Mie simple skill wants Tullies quill
    for to declare my mind
for Barrains had my pen hath led
    wherfore I heare doe end

fols. 250r-60r.
A Groome of the Chambers Religion
In king Henry the eights time [break]

One of king Henries favorites began
to moue the king one day to take a man
whom of his chamber he might make a Groome
Soft said the king, before I graunt that roome
It is a question not to be neglected
how he in his religion stands affected?
for his religion aunswered then the minion
I do not certaine know what’s his opinion,
But sure he may talking with men of Learning
Conforme himself in less then ten dayes warning.

Of king Henry the 8. his
Woing.

Vnto some stately great outlandish Dame
a messenger from our king Henry came;
That Henry of famous memory the eight
to treate with her in matters of great weight.
As namely how the king did seeke her marriadge,
bycause of her great vertues and good carriadge
But she, that heard the king lov’d chaunge of paster,
Replyde, I greatly thanke the king your master,
And would (such loue in me his fame hath bred)
My body venture so: but not my head.
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