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Issues in Review

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Popular Theatre and the Red Bull

Governing the Pen to the Capacity of the Stage: Reading the Red Bull and Clerkenwell

In his introduction to *Early Theatre*'s Issues in Review segment 'Reading the Elizabethan Acting Companies', published in 2001, Scott McMillin called for an approach to the study of early modern drama which takes theatre companies as 'the organizing units of dramatic production'. Such an approach will, he suggests, entail reading plays 'more fully than we have been trained to do, taking them not as authorial texts but as performed texts, seeing them as collaborative endeavours which involve the writers and dozens of other theatre people, and placing the staged plays in a social network to which both the players and audiences – perhaps even the playwrights – belonged'.[1] We present here a variation on this approach: three essays that focus on the Red Bull theatre and its Clerkenwell locality. Rather than focusing on individual companies, we take the playhouse and location as our organising principle. Nonetheless, we are dealing with precisely the kind of decentring activity that McMillin had in mind, examining early drama through collaborative performance, through performance styles and audience taste, and through the presentation of a theatrical repertory in print. Each essay deals with a different 'social network': Anne Lancashire re-examines the evidence for the London Clerkenwell play, a multi-day biblical play performed by clerks in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; John Astington takes a look at acting traditions and repertory composition at the Red Bull and its fellow in the northern suburbs, Golden Lane's Fortune playhouse; and Marta Straznicky looks at questions relating to the audience for Red Bull plays in the playhouse and the print-shop.

Each of the essays printed here deals, in its own way, with questions of evidence and with assumptions about the Red Bull and Clerkenwell, to which potent scholarly traditions have attached themselves. The Red Bull, which was built between 1605 and 1607 and was in use by autumn 1607,[2] is often stereotyped as the low-status home of low-brow entertainment. In *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, G.E. Bentley devotes a separate section to 'The Reputation of the Red Bull Theatre', describing it as the 'least reputable' of the Jacobean and Caroline theatres and asserting that from early in its existence 'violence and vulgarity seem to be the usual association with the Red Bull'.[3] It has often been assumed that theatre companies must have been desperate to escape from Clerkenwell, with its rowdy and predominantly citizen audiences. As recent work by Eva Griffth and Mark Bayer demonstrates, however, these narratives are at least in part exaggerated.[4] There was undoubtedly unrest at the Red Bull from time to time – as was the case for all of the large amphitheatres and, occasionally, the indoor theatres too; unfortunately, however, scholars have tended to take jibes from the writers working at other theatres at face value, and have rarely looked in detail at the plays performed there.

One interesting aspect of the Red Bull's reputation is the way in which companies and dramatists working at the theatre at different times are aware that such a reputation exists but are confident that it should not be attached to them. The prologue to *The Two Merry Milkmaids*, performed by the Company of the Revels at the Red Bull around 1619–20, entreats

> All that are hither come,
> To expect no noyse of Guns, Trumpets, nor Drum,
> Nor Sword and Targuet; but to heare Sence and Words,
> Fitting the Matter that the Scene affords.
> So that the Stage being reform'd, and free
> From the lowd Clamors it was wont to bee,
> Turmoyl'd with Battailes; you I hope will cease
> Your dayly Tumults, and with vs wish Peace.[5]

The prologue asserts that the spectators have been badly trained by the material they have been provided with so far, and that a different form of drama will (or should) be reflected in less rowdy behaviour. Similarly, John Tatham's prologue *spoken upon removing of the late Fortune Players to the Bull*, written in 1640, claims that the company, 'Disdaining Fortunes mutability', hope for the Red Bull audience's

kinde acceptance; then wee'l sing
(Protected by your smiles our ever-spring;)
As pleasant as if wee had still possest
Our lawfull Portion out of Fortunes brest:
Onely wee would request you to forbeare
Your wonted custome, banding *Tyle*, or Peare,
Against our *curtaines*, to allure *us* forth.
I pray take notice *these* are of more Worth,
Pure Naples silk, not *Worstead*; we have ne're
An Actour here has mouth enough to teare
Language by th'eares; this forlorne Hope shall be
By Us refin'd from such grosse injury.[6]

Both of these prologues were written for incoming companies who are somewhat nervous about the reputation of the Red Bull audience. Each labours to put a safe distance between 'us' and 'them', just as George Wither in a 1613 poem aims to distance himself from a foolish poetaster whose 'poetry is such as he can cull / From plays he heard at Curtain or at Bull'.[7] The reputations of the Red Bull and its audience were in development from a remarkably early point in the theatre's history, but they were not stable or static. Depending on the needs of the writer the Red Bull can even be linked with the indoor theatres. In a dedicatory verse addressed to William Davenant in the quarto edition of *The Just Italian*, for instance, Thomas Carew excoriates '*th' untun'd Kennell*' who '*still slight / All that exceeds Red Bull, and Cockpit flight*' in his attempt to defend Davenant's play, which failed in performance at Blackfriars.[8]

Distinctions between the Red Bull and other theatres were not as fixed as some would have liked, and companies, dramatists and actors swapped between playhouses throughout the period. The Red Bull's occupants between 1607 and 1642 included Queen Anna's Men, Prince Charles's (I) Men (patronised by the future Charles I), the Company of the Revels (a reorganised group of erstwhile Queen's Men, formed after Anna of Denmark's death in 1619), a 'Red Bull' company, Prince Charles's (II) Men (patronised by the future Charles II), and, finally, another 'Red Bull' company that had previously played at the Fortune. Queen Anna's Men and Prince Charles's (I) Men moved between the Red Bull and the indoor Cockpit playhouse, Prince Charles's (II) Men played at the indoor Salisbury Court, moving to the Red Bull and later to the Fortune, and the 'Red Bull' company moved from the Fortune to accommodate them. Philip Massinger, a playwright often associated with the King's Men at the Globe and Blackfriars, wrote for the Red Bull

near the beginning and near the end of his long career,[9] while Thomas Heywood's plays were successful at Red Bull and Cockpit alike.

In one particularly intriguing example of interaction between a Red Bull company and another troupe, on 13 and 14 January 1612 Queen Anna and Prince Henry were entertained 'By the Queenes players and the Kings men' at Greenwich. The combined company performed 'The Siluer Aiedg: and … Lucre<ce>'.[10] Our standard hierarchy of companies might lead us to expect that any joint performance of the King's and Queen's Men would see the King's Men take the lead and the play(s) performed be taken from their repertory, which at that time included Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*, and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* and *A King and No King*. This does not seem, however, to have been the case: the two plays, Thomas Heywood's *The Silver Age* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, were both popular Red Bull productions. Although the selection of plays might have been influenced by the fact that the plays were performed before the queen and prince and not before the king, George Buc, the Master of the Revels, must have thought these plays suitable for court performance.

The Silver Age in particular would benefit from the enlarged cast even if court performance restricted the extraordinary special effects recorded in the quarto text of 1613. As Marta Straznicky notes in her essay below, the Red Bull repertory was 'famously spectacle-driven'. This reputation is perhaps unsurprising: amphitheatres such as the Red Bull were well suited to large-cast plays and were well-equipped for the production of special effects. Eva Griffith suggests, indeed, that the Red Bull may have been particularly well suited to the use of fireworks, which are prominent in Heywood's *Ages* plays and Dekker's *If It Be Not Good the Devil Is In It*, because it seems to have been made from brick, not wood.[11] Spectacle is not necessarily unsophisticated in its use, and much Red Bull dramaturgy depends on an audience which is theatrically literate and able to 'read' spectacle correctly.

The kinds of issues relating to evidence, location, audience, reputation and technique that I have raised briefly here are tackled in greater depth in the essays which make up the main body of this Issues in Review segment. In 'Multi-Day Performance and the London Clerkenwell Play', Anne Lancashire takes another look at the evidence for performances of the London Clerkenwell play, or Skinner's Well play, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In particular, responding to Lawrence M. Clopper's recent questioning of evidence relating to the play, she explores whether this is likely to have been, at least in some years, a major production of plays following new and old testament narratives, performed over more than one day. Having

revisited documentary evidence – some of it found in royal payments, some in chronicle histories – she suggests that interpretation will always be, to some extent at least, in the eyes of the beholder or dependent on differing 'plausibility contexts'. If a theatre historian thinks that a multi-day play is plausible, she will interpret the available evidence in different ways to a historian who believes it implausible.

As a response to this potential impasse, Lancashire explores the grounds on which a belief in the plausibility of the multi-day Clerkenwell play might be based: 'Would Londoners around 1400 have been likely to have produced and watched a multi-day play? – or would such a production have been so unlikely as to cause us to look at other possible meanings of the Clerkenwell play records?' She therefore looks at the play in a variety of contexts: other major theatre events in London, such as royal coronation entries, the London Midsummer Watch and entertainments for the visits of foreign dignitaries; the prevalence of multi-day biblical drama on the continent and in Cornwall; and the availability of performers and finances in London. She also puts forward the intriguing suggestion that the Clerkenwell play may at times have served as a prelude to major royal events, expanded on an occasional basis in the same way as the London Watch was expanded into a 'greater Watch'.

John Astington's 'Playing the Man: Acting at the Red Bull and Fortune' juxtaposes the Red Bull's repertory, personnel and acting style with that of its neighbour, the Fortune. Taking a sceptical attitude towards the 'cultural fashion' of condescension towards these theatres – in the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries alike – he traces continuities and discontinuities in the companies operating in them. There are striking continuities, for instance, between the performances of Edward Alleyn at the Fortune around the turn of the seventeenth century, when he returned to the Admiral's Men to revive roles such as Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, and Richard Fowler's performances in some of the same roles in the 1630s. Astington suggests that Alleyn's comeback seasons 'set a fashion for retro' in the northern playhouses, with audiences demanding a particular, perhaps to some eyes old fashioned, performance style; the actors were perfectly capable of performing in different styles, but were deliberately preserving 'a broader, showier, declamatory tradition'. His account of the interactions between repertory and performance styles is congruent with the work of Martin Butler, who suggested in his seminal book *Theatre and Crisis 1632–1642* that we ought to pay more attention to revivals and to the retention of older styles. As Butler notes, '[b]y concentrating on those elements in a period which to hindsight appear

progressive we subtly but inevitably misrepresent the way things looked to contemporaries'.[12]

On the other hand, the deduction that the Red Bull and the Fortune found success only through aping older performance styles and dramatic modes is an exaggeration. These theatres may have been 'guardians of old dramatic and theatrical traditions', but, as Astington points out, they could and did appeal to a range of different markets, using different playing styles and performing different kinds of plays. Prince Charles's Men, for instance, began their career at the Salisbury Court, a small indoor theatre, and their move to the Red Bull around 1633 was not necessarily a move 'downmarket'; they continued to perform before royalty throughout the 1630s and there is no reason to believe that they ceased performing plays that had been successful at Salisbury Court.

In 'The Red Bull Repertory in Print, 1605–1660', Marta Straznicky's concern is with the 'cultural work' performed by the attribution of a printed play to the Red Bull. The essay thus tackles one of the major issues raised by Scott McMillin in his introduction to 'Reading the Elizabethan Acting Companies', in which he suggested that 'the textual problems which have tantalized Shakespeareans since the eighteenth century could be opened to new solutions if the field were widened to include all the texts of the Chamberlain's/King's Men' (112). She focuses, however, on a more problematic print canon than that of the Chamberlain's/King's Men. Scholars have suggested that publishers were reluctant to advertise this playhouse on their title pages, but Red Bull attributions in fact compare favourably with attributions to the Globe or Fortune. There was, it seems, a readership for a 'Red Bull' repertory in print. Moreover, the appearance of features such as continuous printing, title page attributions to authors, Latin on title pages, dedicatory or prefatory epistles, lists of dramatis personae, and regular division into acts suggest that the printers of Red Bull plays treated them as having literary status. This raises a number of intriguing questions. Why were Red Bull audiences so often presented as unsophisticated and uneducated? Who did read the Red Bull plays? Was there any connection between the audience of the print and theatrical repertories?

Straznicky analyses design and typographical elements in printed plays, re-examines attitudes towards the Red Bull audiences in the theatre and in the print-shop, and draws on evidence of the ownership of Red Bull playbooks. Rather than seeing a 'high' print audience displacing a 'popular' theatre audience, she suggests that there may have been a significant cross-over between the two. She develops the work of recent critics such as Zachary Lesser, suggesting that while some publishers may have created a literary

identity for plays which originally failed in performance, Red Bull plays instead present text and performance as complementary. With their detailed stage directions, theatrically oriented prefatory material, and carefully arranged songs, Red Bull quartos serve as encapsulations of performance, rather than displacements of it.

Using as an organising principle the theatre and locality rather than a single company creates some distinctive opportunities for this 'Issues in Review'. By looking across different periods and repertories we can present a broader view of the ways in which locations, specific social contexts, and cultural fashions all played their part in the production and consumption of drama in Clerkenwell. As Lancashire reminds us, the Red Bull in the early seventeenth century was continuing a tradition of large-scale performance in Clerkenwell. Indeed, this theatre's repertory seems to look back to the biblical drama of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in its inclusion of a large number of saints' plays in the years 1618–22.[13] Focusing on Clerkenwell and the Red Bull also enables us to unpick some of the stereotypical attitudes towards locality and theatre that circulated from at least the middle of the seventeenth century. As Astington argues, we do not want to lose sight of the legends surrounding the Red Bull, but we also need concentrate our efforts on increasing the amount of 'reliable evidence' available to us.

To conclude my contribution to this Issues in Review segment, I want to pick up a particular question raised by our focus on theatre and locality: what happens to the playwrights? McMillin's brief manifesto for a repertory approach, quoted at the start of this essay, is telling on this point. His tongue-in-cheek assertion that this approach will place plays 'in a social network to which both the players and their audiences – perhaps even the playwrights – belonged' suggests the reluctance of many scholars to acknowledge fully the collaborative contexts within dramatists worked. As he states explicitly, a repertory approach 'does not mean neglecting the playwrights', but it does mean de-centring them and approaching their contribution from other angles and through other concerns.

As a way of thinking about what a Red-Bull-centred approach might mean for a individual playwright, I intend to take a brief look at one figure from the playhouse's long history. Thomas Jordan, born around 1617, first appears as an actor with the Children of the Revels, a company originally set up as a children's troupe and a training ground for future King's Men, which began to perform at Salisbury Court circa 1630.[14] His first play, *Money is an Ass* (c 1631–2), was written before he was fifteen, seemingly for production by this company. Jordan stayed with the Revels Children after they were reor-

ganised into something closer to the standard adult company model, during which period they relocated to the Fortune and then, in 1633, back to the Salisbury Court. He took the role of Lepida in their performances of Nathanael Richards's *Messallina* (c 1634) and appeared in a list of King's Revels performers refused permission to play at Norwich on 10 March 1635.[15] During the long closure of the theatres from May 1636 to October 1637, he appeared as the muse Calliope in an entertainment designed for King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria by Thomas Bushell.[16] He also prepared his first publication, a collection of non-dramatic verse entitled *Poetical Varieties*, which appeared in late 1637. It is possible that he was involved with the troupe of actors who appeared at John Ogilby's Werburgh Street playhouse in Dublin, which was established around 1635–6.[17] In 1640, Jordan published dedicatory verses for *Messallina* and for Thomas Rawlins's *The Rebellion*, another King's Revels play, and by 1641 he was working as a dramatist for the Red Bull.

His second extant play, *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with the Humours of Woodstreet Compter* was licensed for performance at the Bull, 'upon several reformations and not otherwise', in August 1641.[18] The printed edition of the play published in 1657 appends to the main text Henry Herbert's final licence: 'This Comedy, called, *The Walks of Islington and Hogsden, With the Humours of Woodstreet-Compter*, may be Acted: This 2. August, 1641'.[19] Its inclusion may have been accidental, but would have had its own significance in 1657, particularly for the royalist Jordan, who had published anti-parliamentarian tracts including *Rules to Know a Loyal King From a Disloyal Subject* (1642). It was performed by the 'Red Bull' company that had moved from the Fortune only a couple of years earlier and, according to the 1657 title page, 'it was publikely Acted 19. days together, with extraordinary Applause'. In his dedication to Richard Cheyney, the author with (mock?) humility writes that in the 'jocund days' prior to the cessation of regular playing, 'this Comedy gained the success of a good Censure, and received more Acceptation then I thought it merited' (A2r).

Theatre historians have often doubted Jordan's claims – G.E. Bentley, for instance, remarks on his 'well-known mendacity'[20] – but it is not implausible that this play was as popular as the dramatist claimed. Although it is little-read today, *The Walks of Islington* is a fine example of what we tend to think of as 'popular theatre', and it is not untypical of the kinds of comedies performed at the Red Bull and the Fortune in the Jacobean and Caroline periods. Funny, unpretentious and, in places, cheerfully vulgar, this is a cleverly constructed piece of entertainment in which a group of gallants and citizens move through

a series of clearly delineated locations in the northern suburbs of London. The first stage direction requires that characters '*Enter as at the Sarazens Head in Islington*' (A4r), and the action relocates successively to the King's Head in Hoxton and the Harrow Tavern in Little Wood Street before ending up, as the play's title promises, in the debtors' prison in Wood Street.[21] Fittingly for a play with so many tavern scenes, there is much singing, on-stage music and dancing, and there are also some neat parodic references to other plays current on the stage in the 1630s, such as when the ridiculously jealous husband, Trimwel, complains that his 'jealousie hath yet no occular proof' (C2r).[22] Jordan and the Red Bull company seem to have been rightly proud of the intricate plot-lines of *The Walks of Islington*, at the conclusion of which a dead man is brought back to life and not one but two long-absent disguised brothers are revealed. After describing the play's characters, some of which may have been based on real individuals, the Prologue says, 'Here my Commission ends, lest I betray / The Plot, and shew the Clock-work of the Play' (A3v).

Jordan seems to have returned to the Red Bull for surreptitious performances in the 1640s and 1650s. The epilogue to his play *Love Hath Found his Eyes, or Distractions*, printed in *A Royal Arbor of Loyal Poesie* (1663), contains references which seem to fit the period between 1642 and 1648 better than the 1660s.[23] Cupid, who speaks the epilogue, tells the audience,

> All our distractions now are out of date,
> I would they were so too in Church and State,
> That *Englands* King and People were at rest
> Without confounding eithers interest;
> That jealousies and fears may never more
> Let loyal hearts lie weltring in their gore;
> That so the God of Love may often view
> This Island and present himself to you.[24]

Jordan is also thought to have been the '*Tom Iay*' mentioned in a ballad in *Sportive Wit* (1656) as being among a group of actors arrested at the Red Bull on an occasion when Londoners 'Would needs go see a Play, / But they saw a great rout at the red Bull'.[25]

The Red Bull, the Cockpit, and the Salisbury Court were the only Caroline playhouses to be re-utilised in 1659–60; in the first half of 1660 the Cockpit was used by John Rhodes' company, and the Salisbuty Court by William Beeston's, while the 'scattered Remnant of severall of … [the old] Houses, upon King *Charles*'s Restoration, Fram'd a Company' which played

at the Red Bull.[26] Jordan testified in 1665 that this company had come together 'aboute the end of the yeare 1659 & begining of the yeare 1660' and that he was 'then booke keeper to them'.[27] *Love Hath Found his Eyes* seems to have been performed at the Red Bull in May 1660; he also wrote a number of prologues and epilogues for plays performed that year, including the famous prologue for the first woman to play Desdemona.[28] *The Walks of Islington* itself may have been performed in the 1660s. Despite William Van Lennep's protest that this is '[c]ertainly not the type of play that would have amused Charles II and his courtiers!',[29] a 1663 reissue of the 1657 quarto introduces a prologue 'to the KING' which contrasts performances pre- and post-Restoration:

> We have been so perplext with Gun and Drum,
> *Look to your Hats and Clokes, the Red-coats come.*
> *D'amboys* is routed, *Hotspur* quits the field,
> *Falstaff's* out-filch'd, all in Confusion yield,
> Even Auditor and Actor, what before
> Did make the *Red Bull* laugh, now makes him roar.
> We curse the Misery in which our Trade is,
> And are imprison'd, but our large siz'd Ladies
> (Thinking to 'scape them) are torn by the throats
> And like Wine Porters put in Petty-coats)
> Dragg'd to the *Muse* for Plotters; But *Your Presence*
> Hath nullified their power, and given us Essence.[30]

Jordan may have still been involved with the company in July 1661, when they performed in Oxford a number of plays associated with pre-Civil War Red Bull companies: *Greene's Tu Quoque*, *The Milkmaids* (probably *The Two Merry Milkmaids*), Daborne's *The Poor Man's Comfort* and Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*.[31]

Although the Desdemona prologue has been much discussed by Shakespeareans and by scholars of the Restoration theatre, they have often overlooked Jordan's earlier career. Jordan had not only written female roles to be performed by boy actors at the Salisbury Court and Red Bull, but had himself worked as a 'boy actress'. He was thus intriguingly placed to talk about the introduction of female performers. A series of prologues and epilogues in *A Royal Arbour of Loyal Poesie* show him engaging with the practical problems raised by disruptions to the theatre industry and the break-down of pre-Civil War systems for apprenticing and training boy actors. In '*A Prologue to the King*' he asks the audience to suspend their disbelief and to accept the actors

in their female roles: 'We have play'd all our *Women* into *Men* […] They'l rather be taken for Amazons / Then tender maids'.[32] A few pages later we find the two performance traditions – the residual use of boy actors and the emerging use of female performers – in neat juxtaposition on the printed page. An epilogue for Fletcher's *The Tamed Tamed*, 'spoken by the Tamer, a woman' on 24 June 1660 – apparently spoken by a male actor in the role of Maria, Petruchio's second wife – is printed opposite a '*A Prologue to introduce the first Woman that came to Act on the Stage in the Tragedy, call'd* The Moor of Venice' (C2v–C3r), usually dated to 8 December 1660.[33] This latter prologue, like '*A Prologue to the King*' emphasises the deficiencies of the male performers:

> Our women are defective, and so siz'd
> You'd think they were some of the Guard disguiz'd;
> For (to speak truth) men act, that are between
> Forty and fifty, wenches of fifteen;
> With bone so large, and nerve to incomplyant,
> When you call *Desdemona*, enter Giant; (C3v)

Although obviously exaggerated, Jordan's negative comments on the standards of boy actors demonstrate not only an attempt on the part of the theatre companies to naturalise female performance, but also, perhaps, a professional pride which has been affronted by the sub-standard work of the younger generation.

'Reading' Jordan's career from a Red Bull perspective allows us to bring together aspects of his career that would otherwise be difficult to reconcile, divided as they are by generic, institutional and period boundaries. As actor, dramatist, and book-keeper, his various roles allow us to keep in view the kinds of collaborative interactions that must have been common in the seventeenth-century theatre. His career provides an example of the interactions between companies, actors, dramatists, and playhouses in the 1630s and early 1640s, and of continuities in the performance and writing of plays between the 1630s and the 1660s. Not only was he involved in the pre- and post-Civil War theatrical industries, but he also seems to have been writing and, perhaps, performing at the Red Bull during the shadowy and often overlooked period between 1642 and 1660. He is, like that other pre-Civil War survivor, William Davenant, a valuable reminder that theatrical production did not cease in the 1640s and 1650s.[34]

As the preceding discussion has suggested, Jordan's career, like that of other actor-dramatists such as Samuel Rowley, William Rowley or William Shake-

speare, is particularly suited to an approach which views companies or playhouses as 'organising units of dramatic production'. I would suggest, however, that even those very few dramatists who had no role with theatre companies other than to write plays can be profitably assessed from such an angle. As the preface to the Red Bull play *The Two Merry Milkmaids* suggests, '*Every Writer must gouerne his Penne according to the Capacitie of the Stage he writes too, both in the Actor and the Auditor*' (A2r). Writers – even those with an eye to publication and literary immortality – must, in the act of writing a play, consider the bodies and capabilities of their actors, the facilities and special dynamics of their playhouses, the social contexts of their locations, and the tastes and viewpoints of their audiences.

Lucy Munro

Notes

1 *Early Theatre* 4 (2001), 111.

2 The earliest evidence of the playhouse seems to be Martin Slater's petition against a prohibition against the building of a theatre, thought to have been written before 31 May 1605. See Herbert Berry, 'Playhouses, 1560–1660', *English Professional Theatre*, Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram (eds) (Cambridge, 2000), 568; see also William Ingram, 'Playhouses Make Strange Bedfellows: The Case of Aaron and Martin', *Shakespeare Studies* 30 (2002), 118–27, who cautions against assuming that the playhouse in question is the Red Bull. In 'Building Playhouses, the Accession of James I, and the Red Bull', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 18 (2005), 61–74, Berry draws on Eva Griffith's important ongoing research into the Red Bull to argue that the playhouse was finished in the first eight months of 1607 and first used regularly for commercial performances when Queen Anna's Men took up residence in the autumn of the same year.

3 *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford, 1941–68), 6.238 and 247.

4 Griffith, 'Playhouse, Company, Repertoire: The Queen's Servants at the Red Bull, Clerkenwell, 1605–1619', PhD thesis (King's College London, 2003); Bayer, 'Queen Anne's Men and the Commercial Life of London's Neighborhood Economies', PhD thesis (Ohio State University, 2002). See also Griffith, 'New Material for a Jacobean Playhouse: The Red Bull Theatre on the Seckford Estate', *Theatre Notebook* 55 (2001), 5–23; Bayer, 'Moving Upmarket: Queen

Anne's Men at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, 1617', *Early Theatre* 4 (2001), 138–48.

5 *The Two Merry Milke-Maids. Or, The Best Words Weare The Garland* (London, 1620), [A]2v.

6 *The Fancies Theater* (London, 1640), H2v–H3r.

7 *Abuses Stript and Whipt* (London, 1613), D3v.

8 *The Just Italian* (London, 1630), A3v.

9 Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* was licensed for the Red Bull on 6 October 1620; the 'History of Will: *Longesword*, son to Rosamund' was licensed in 1639. See N.W. Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford, 1996), 135, 205. For further comment on *Will Longsword* see John Astington's essay below.

10 W.R. Streitberger (ed), 'Jacobean and Caroline Revels Accounts 1603–1642', *Malone Society Collections* 13 (1986), 49.

11 'New Material for a Jacobean Playhouse', 20.

12 *Theatre and Crisis 1632–1642* (Cambridge, 1984), 184.

13 Extant plays include William Rowley's *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (c 1618); Henry Shirley's *The Martyred Soldier* (c 1619), *The Two Noble Ladies* (c 1619–22), and Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* (1620).

14 The best short account of the King's Revels company is G.E. Bentley, 'The Theatres and the Actors', *The Revels History of Drama in English*, Philip Edwards, Gerald Eades Bentley, Kathleen McLuskie and Lois Potter (eds) (London and New York, 1981), 105–8, which draws on his earlier essay, 'The Salisbury Court Theater and Its Boy Players', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 40 (1977), 129–49. In a Chancery deposition of 1665 Jordan claimed that he was aged around 48: see Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'New Light on English Acting Companies in 1646, 1648, and 1660', *Review of English Studies*, ns 42 (1991), 500, n 26. I am very grateful to David Kathman for originally directing me towards this essay.

15 David Galloway (ed) *Norwich, 1540–1642* REED (Toronto, 1984), 218.

16 The speech was printed in Jordan's *Wit in a Wilderness of Promiscuous Poetry* (London, 1660), as '*A Poem composed, and spoken by the Author to the late King at the Dedication of Mr. Tho. Bushel's Rock at Enston in Oxon, 1638. in the person of Caliope*.' Although Jordan claims that the speech was composed in 1638, it is probable it belongs to the entertainment prepared by Bushell for the visit of the king and queen to his estate on 23 August 1636. For further discussion of this event see C.E. McGee, '*The Presentment of Bushell's Rock*: Place, Politics,

and Theatrical Self-Promotion', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 16 (2003), 39–80.

17 For a summary of evidence, see Lynne Hulse, 'Thomas Jordan (c 1614–85)', *The* Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Brian Harrison (gen ed) (Oxford, 2004) <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/15122> accessed 20 August 2006]. See also Allan H. Stevenson, 'James Shirley and the Actors at the First Irish Theater', *Modern Philology* 40 (1942–3), 147–60; Alan J. Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland* (Cork, 2000), 442 (n 45).

18 The play was licensed as '*Youths Figaries* all^d^ upon several reformations and not otherwise 1641. Made by Jordan for the Bull Comp^y^' (Bawcutt, 209); *Walks of Islington* closes with the lines '*To marry and be civill our next care is, / We now have done enough for Youths Fegaries*' (H4r). It was entered in the Stationers' Register on 21 April 1657 as 'a book called the Walkes of Islington and Hogsdon with the Humors of Woodstreet Compter, a Comedy as it was acted at the Red bull in St. Iohns Street', but the theatrical attribution did not make it to the printed title page. See Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 4.688–90.

19 *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with The Humours of Woodstreet-Compter* (London, 1657), H4r.

20 *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 2.487.

21 The play is most often examined in the context of 'place realist' comedy of the Caroline period. The classic account of 'place realist' comedy is Theodore Miles, 'Place-Realism in a Group of Caroline Plays', *Review of English Studies* 18 (1942), 428–40; Miles considers *The Walks of Islington* – 'a strange and individual play' (435) – only briefly, and does not consider it to fit his strict definition of this sub-genre. Matthew Steggle, 'Placing Caroline Politics on the Professional Comic Stage', *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era*, Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (eds) (Manchester, 2006)), 154–70, considers the play at much greater length and convincingly suggests that its 'local satire is combined with, indeed resonates with, a broader, macropolitical, frame of reference' (164). I am very grateful to Dr Steggle for sharing this essay with me before publication.

22 Sir Humphrey Mildmay saw *Othello* at the Blackfriars on 6 May 1635, and it was performed at court on 6 December 1636. See G.E. Bentley, 'The Diary of a Caroline Theatergoer', *Modern Philology* 35 (1937), 67; Joseph Quincy Adams, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623–1673* (New Haven, 1917), 75.

23 See Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 4.685; for summaries of Jordan's activities during the Civil War see Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 2.487–90; Hulse, 'Thomas Jordan (c 1614–1685)'.
24 *A Royal Arbour of Loyal Poesie* (London, 1663), C2r.
25 *Sportive VVit: The Muses Merriment, a New Spring of Lusty Drollery, Joviall Fancies, and A La Mode Lamponnes* (London, 1656), 2F4v.
26 John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (eds) (London, 1987), 3; Milhous and Hume, 'New Light', 499.
27 Milhous and Hume, 'New Light', 499.
28 William Van Lennep, 'The Death of the Red Bull', *Theatre Notebook* 16 (1961–2), 128, follows a suggestion of W.J. Lawrence in unpublished notes preserved at Harvard and states that '*Love Hath Found out his Eyes*' was performed about May 1660. It was entered in the Stationers' Register by Humphrey Moseley on 29 July 1660; see Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 4.685.
29 'The Death of the Red Bull', 130.
30 *Tricks of Youth, or, The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon with the Humours of Woodstreet-Compter* (London, 1663), [A]2v. The prologue is also printed in *A Royal Arbour of Loyal Poesie*, where it is titled 'A Prologue to the King, August 16. 1660' (B8r).
31 See Van Lennep, 131–2. The other plays performed were William Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust*, James Shirley's *The Young Admiral*, Thomas Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters*, *The Spanish Lady, or the Very Woman*, and Tatham's *The Rump*.
32 *A Royal Arbour of Loyal Poesie*, B6v.
33 See Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660–1700* (Cambridge, 1992), 19.
34 For recent reappraisals of drama during this period see Dale B. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama 1642–1660* (Lexington, KY, 1995); Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998).

Multi-day Performance and the London Clerkenwell Play

The London Clerkenwell play (or Skinners' Well play, as it is alternatively called) is one of the more significant theatrical phenomena to be associated with London over the four hundred years between the 'holier plays' noted by William Fitzstephen in his 'Description of London', at the end of the twelfth century,[1] and the start of the Shakespearean period, in the mid to late sixteenth century. Very few records of it have come down to us, however; and what has come down – a couple of royal payment records, some chronicle reports, a civic prohibition – is brief, and some of it lacking in detail.

For many decades, nevertheless, theatre and other historians have pretty well agreed in general on what the Clerkenwell play was: a major London biblical play covering subject matter from both the old testament and the new (the creation to the passion or doomsday); the medieval London equivalent – in subject matter, size, and significance – of the great biblical dramas of the English provinces which were presented regularly in urban centres such as York and Coventry from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century into the sixteenth century; performed at Clerkenwell over several days, by London clerks, on a regular basis in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century (and perhaps even back to the early fourteenth century, though that has been a speculation by some rather than a widely held view[2]); and then seemingly vanishing by the reign of Henry V.[3] (There are no further records of it after 1409.[4]) There have been some points of individual disagreement, and some challenges over the years, but in general the consensus has held.[5] Recently, however, the general agreement has been challenged again: in significant part on the grounds that the Clerkenwell play has been recorded as a multi-day performance event, while the provincial biblical sequences/cycle dramas – with the exception of Chester's in the sixteenth century–involved one-day-only performance.[6] It has been suggested, with a citing of the provincial norm, that London's so-called Clerkenwell play occurred, as a major event, only in two years, 1390 and 1409, and that it was not a series of biblical plays like the provincial sequences but was, rather, either a 'sight' only – a display of 'stationary tableaux vivantes' – or a play or plays limited in scope and size to one day and simply repeated on a number of following days, probably as a parish fundraiser in conjunction with London's annually occurring late-Au-

gust Bartholomew Fair.[7] A new look at the records of the Clerkenwell play would seem to be called for, along with consideration of whether multi-day biblical play performance in late fourteenth century London would indeed have been unlikely to have taken place.

A major, biblical presentation in some form – which we'll call the Clerkenwell 'play' (leaving open, for the time being, just exactly what that term might mean) – most certainly took place, at least briefly if not longer, in late fourteenth and early fifteenth century London: or, rather, not in London itself but just outside its walls, north of Aldersgate, in the vicinity of the great Priory of St John of Jerusalem (the wealthy and powerful base in England of the religious order of the Knights Hospitaller) and of the smaller St Mary's Priory. In this location both the so-called Clerk's Well and Skinners' Well were to be found; hence the alternative names used for the play, both in early records and chronicles and in modern theatre history.[8] This area was also just northwest of the Priory of St Bartholomew, outside of which, in Smithfield, for three days once a year in late August, the great Bartholomew Fair took place. Smithfield was also a major location for royal tournaments at this time. We have royal account records and chronicle history references indicating a major biblical performance of some kind at Clerkenwell, covering both old and new testament material, in both 1390 and 1409. In 1391 a royal payment of ten pounds, an Exchequer Roll tells us, was made to the clerks of London (both parish clerks and other clerks) because of their 1390 performance after St Bartholomew's Day, ie, after 24 August, at Skinners' Well, of the passion of our lord and the creation of the world.[9] Late sixteenth century historian John Stow tells us that this performance took three days – although we do not know Stow's sources, and his information at this level of detail is not always reliable.[10] Then, in 1409, the royal Wardrobe Accounts record payment for the construction at Clerkenwell of a timber scaffold upon which the king (Henry IV), the prince (ie, Prince Henry, later to become Henry V), and the nobility would sit to watch a great play/performance (a 'magnum ludum') showing how God created the heavens and earth, and Adam, and on to the day of judgment.[11] The 1409 scaffold payment record does not mention clerks; but it has been generally assumed by modern historians that the same performers would have been involved as in 1390, when performance of the same or similar subject matter, possibly or probably over three days, also attracted royal attention. *A Chronicle of London* tells us that the 1409 'playe' took place over four days – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday (ie, four non-consecutive days) – after which a great tournament began in Smithfield, involving the seneschal of Hainault and his entourage.[12] *A Chron-*

icle's detailed account of the tournament has it occupying, it seems, eight days out of the next twenty (ie, the eight days of jousts were not consecutive).[13] Other chronicles largely agree that the play preceded the tournament and that the tournament occupied eight days;[14] and the Wardrobe Accounts show that the tournament – for which another scaffold was built in July for royal and noble spectators, this one in Smithfield – was in mid-to-late July to early August, as about 4 August (apparently at the conclusion) the king gave a feast for the participants at Windsor.[15] The Clerkenwell play performance must therefore have been in early to mid July.[16] Records and references thus indicate a performance at Skinners' Well/Clerkenwell of biblical material ranging from the creation, to the passion of Christ, and/or to the day of judgment, in both 1390 and 1409, probably both times (but at least in 1390) by London clerks, and probably both times (but at least in 1409) over several days, though once (in 1390) in late August and once (in 1409) in early to mid July.

But we do not have only 1390 and 1409 evidence for major July and August performances of some sort at Clerkenwell in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. We also have records or references indicating three other significant performances, at least two of them recorded as involving London clerks, and with two of them scheduled (as in 1390) in August, and one (as in 1409) in July. First: the *Westminster Chronicle* (a usually reliable source of historical information) reports a five-day 'ludum valde sumptuosum' (very lavish performance) by London clerks at Skinners' Well in 1384, beginning on 29 August (ie, three days after the ending of Bartholomew Fair).[17] Second: in 1385 a London civic order on 12 August prohibits wrestlings at Skinners' Well, and also 'le iew qest ordeine destre fait' by 'gentz de . . . la Citee' (the game/play scheduled to be put on by people of the city), until news should come of the king's activities.[18] (Richard II was then away from London/Westminster, conducting a military campaign against Scotland; and there were also fears of an invasion of the London area by the French.) Third: the *Westminster Chronicle* also reports a four-day 'ludum satis curiosum' (elaborate game/play/performance) by London clerks, of both old testament and new testament material, at Skinners' Well in 1391.[19] The chronicle gives the specific 1391 performance start date as 18 July – which indicates fairly strongly that this is not a misascription to 1391 of the late August/early September 1390 performance rewarded by Richard II but another, similar performance the next year.[20]

Although each record or chronicle reference *could* be to some different kind of performance activity,[21] and although each one of the various records and references does not include all the details we would like it to include for a

secure connecting together of all of them (no clerks specifically mentioned, for example, in either the 1385 prohibition or the 1409 scaffold payment), it has always seemed to historians more likely than otherwise that this accumulation of records and references shows major and ongoing (though not necessarily annual) multi-day biblical performance activity, by London clerks, at Clerkenwell in the years at least between 1384 and 1409. An actual/theatrical play or sequence of plays has also seemed the logical answer to the question of what was being performed: given the subject matter (old testament and new testament material, as specified for three of the five years concerned) like that of the extant provincial biblical plays of the late fourteenth to sixteenth centuries; and it might also be noted, given the recent suggestion that pageant display or repeated play performances were likely what was taking place, that pageant presentations or other such kinds of visual display would have been unlikely to have been made over several days in one location in early London (multi-day pageantry in London normally involved processions and multiple locations[22]), and that multi-day performances attracting the attention of royalty and of chroniclers would also seem unlikely to have involved the same material simply repeated each day for several days.

The accumulation of records, then, between 1384 and 1409, with the matching details found in some of them, has been for most historians a persuasive demonstration of the likelihood of large-scale theatrical activity by London clerks, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, involving the same kind of biblical material that we find in the English provinces in their sequential biblical dramas covering the religious history of man from the creation to Doomsday, and therefore being probably a play or plays equivalent to (though not necessarily identical to) the provincial ones.[23] Royal interest and attendance, and/or chronicle attention, also indicates a major activity.[24] But it is of course possible to examine each record separately, as Lawrence Clopper has recently done, and to question its meaning: questioning the terminology each record uses (for terms such as ludus, jeu, and play are notoriously slippery in the medieval period, usually depending – as indeed 'play' still does today – on context for their meanings), and questioning the relationship of each record/reference to the other records/references (since no one record/reference is complete, in all details, in what it tells us). The records and references, in short, cannot be put together with certainty to prove what was happening at Clerkenwell between 1384 and 1409; they can be read in different ways, depending on what is believed to have been likely. That is, they can be differently read when placed within what we may call different 'plausibility contexts'. This brings us back to the issue of multi-day perform-

ance. If one thinks, for various reasons, major multi-day biblical-play performance in London in the late fourteenth century to be, in itself, plausible, one tends to read the records as traditionally scholars have read them. If one thinks, for various other reasons, such performance in London to be implausible, one looks for other ways in which to read the records. The plausibility or implausibilty of multi-day theatrical performance in late fourteenth-century London thus becomes an important factor in speculations about the London Clerkenwell play. Would Londoners around 1400 have been likely to have produced and watched a multi-day play? – or would such a production have been so unlikely as to cause us to look at other possible meanings of the Clerkenwell play records?

If we look at the general picture of festive celebration, entertainment, and performance in late fourteenth and early fifteenth century London, it would seem that multi-day play performance would not have been an unusual aberration then from performance practice in general, and that perhaps – as not in the provinces – in London it would even have been expected. Londoners and the royal court were accustomed to celebrations, entertainments, and other festivities that took place over a number of days. Throughout England, of course, some multi-day festivities were common: a variety of entertainments, for example, spread over the twelve days of Christmas; other church-associated celebrations, such as Shrovetide, extending over more than one day; spring-time hocking, a popular folk activity, taking place over two consecutive days.[25] But London also had other multi-day festivities – performance events – which in the city were fairly common and elaborate and in the provinces were infrequent or less elaborate, or in some cases non-existent. Most royal coronation entries into London, for example, involved two related days of elaborate civic street pageantry: one when the to-be-crowned king or queen processed across London Bridge to the Tower, where s/he spent the night, and one (usually but not always the next day) when s/he processed from the Tower to Westminster.[26] Accounts of such events (eg, of the 1445 royal entry into London of Margaret of Anjou) describe the pageants presented as though they took place as an undivided sequence; but historical sources show that they were spread over two days.[27] The coronation itself, the culmination of the pageantry, in which major city officers were also involved, took up a third day. A second multi-day example is the great London Midsummer Watch, which had begun to be a decorative processional spectacle (as well as the military demonstration it was mandated to be) in the late fourteenth century, and took place on the evenings to mornings of 23 to 24 plus 28 to 29 June: ie, on two evenings-to-mornings five days apart from one

another.[28] The Watch was thus a major London 'performance' event taking place on two non-consecutive nights over a seven-day period (though repetition was indeed involved, as not in a coronation entry); and in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (we do not know about the late fourteenth), royalty and the nobility would at least sometimes attend as spectators.[29] A third multi-day example involves tournaments: foreign visitors to the court at Westminster or at Windsor – ie, in the immediate area of London – were entertained, with a variety of entertainments, over not simply multi-days but often over weeks, and sometimes with a multi-day tournament as a focus.[30] A tournament would take place for part of a day only, over several not always consecutive days, with feasting, music, and other entertainments put on for the enjoyment of the tournament participants and other guests in their 'down' times.[31] These tournaments, although royal events, often took place in London itself: either within its walls, in Cheapside, or just outside its walls, in Smithfield. Multi-day tournaments took place in Smithfield, for example, in the late fourteenth century, in at least the years 1362 (for five days), 1375 (seven days), 1386 (two days), and 1397 (fourteen days), as well as in the two years of the recorded royal notice of the Clerkenwell play, 1390 (between two and four days of jousts) and 1409 (eight days of jousts, as we have seen, spread over twenty days).[32] Given these examples of multi-day performance events in London (and others could be given as well), it can be argued not only that multi-day performance would have been familiar to both Londoners and the court in the late fourteenth century but also that, for any performance event to have had major status (such as would have led to a royal reward, or to being noted in a chronicle), multi-day performance might have been expected or required. It should also be noted that all-day performance at Clerkenwell, for several days, is not likely to have been the case; the use of multiple days would have precluded the need to cram as much as possible into a day. None of the three examples given, of coronation entry, Midsummer Watch, or tournament, required all-day spectatorship on any one of its performance days.

But is multi-day performance specifically of a biblical play or plays to be found elsewhere, outside London, at this time? Yes indeed. Mercantile and educated London, of course, like the court itself, usually looked to the continent, and not to the English provinces, for its entertainment and ceremonial norms (as when it founded a continental-type puy – an elite musical society – just before 1300[33]); and on the continent, from which came important visitors both to mercantile London and to the court, multi-day performance of religious drama had begun at least as early as about 1300 (in northeast Italy)[34] and in France by the fifteenth century was a norm.[35]

Moreover, within England itself there is also an early non-London example of such multi-day play performance: the fourteenth century Cornish *Ordinalia*, which, as the recent Records of Early English Drama edition of the records of Dorset and Cornwall tells us, consisted of three large biblical plays – each including several parts – performed over three days.[36] (Some scholars believe that this was originally a full cycle of plays.) The extant *Ordinalia*, with its first play on the creation of the world and its second on the passion of Christ, also seems remarkably close to what the Exchequer Roll tells us was being performed at Clerkenwell in 1390 (also in three days, Stow tells us): which was also the creation of the world and the passion of Christ (though listed in the reverse order in the Exchequer Roll).[37]

I have my own speculative suggestion about the Clerkenwell play, involving my own 'plausibility context'. The London Midsummer Watch in at least the fifteenth century apparently existed in two forms: the ordinary Watch, and 'the greater Watch' (as the London Mercers' Company's manuscript Acts of Court calls it).[38] The 'greater watch', which is recorded as having taken place on 28–9 June in 1477 at the request of the king, to impress visiting ambassadors from France and Scotland, involved many more marching armed men than the ordinary watch; and at this watch there was also a morris dance and a portable pageant apparently of the nine worthies.[39] (It is unclear whether the dance and the pageant were also special – part of the augmentation of the watch – or were usual but only recorded in this year because the whole event was special.) Further, in 1445, Bale's *Chronicle* tells us, royalty attended a splendid London Midsummer Watch ('the royallest wacche th*a*t ever was seyn ther a fore') on both of its nights;[40] presumably the occasion was worth chronicling because the Watch was augmented as well in that year (though I am speculating again) because of the 30 May coronation, just a few weeks earlier, of Margaret of Anjou, queen of Henry VI. Bale specifically notes the jousts and the Watch as following the coronation. That is, fifteenth-century London had a regular, ongoing, multi-day festive Watch which could be turned into a 'greater watch' for special occasions involving, in the one or possibly two fifteenth-century examples we have, royalty; and such occasions might be chronicled, as regular ones were not. Did the same perhaps pertain to the Clerkenwell play in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century? May there have been an ongoing play which, in some years only, was augmented, perhaps even at the king's request, and also then recorded by chroniclers? In 1409, for example, the play appears to have served as a kind of warm-up act for the major royal tournament immediately following it; and in 1390 the play, 'after' St Bartholomew's Day, would have been six or fewer weeks before

the great tournament, proclaimed in June, which began in Smithfield in early October. Might Richard II, for example, have encouraged the 1390 Clerkenwell performance (and later given it a special reward) as a useful advance attraction for his October 1390 tournament, in a year when, according to Froissart, the king was trying to emulate the recent magnificence of the reception at Paris for Queen Isabel of France?[41]

The question has been raised as to how a major London biblical play – whether multi-day or not – could have been organized and financed, since neither the city itself nor its craft guilds as a group appear to have been involved, as was not the case in provincial centres such as York and Chester. But London had several times the wealth, population, parishes (over one hundred), and independent religious institutions of any other urban centre in England at this time; it would not have lacked for potential sponsors of major biblical performances, and elsewhere I have suggested several possibilities, including major religious institutions such as St John's Priory (in the vicinity of which the play was performed), or a combination of such institutional sponsors.[42] The city itself – as was not the case in the provinces – did not need to be directly involved (although it could have been indirectly so[43]). And we must also not forget that clerks in general (legal, administrative, and so on), not only parish clerks, were performers and/or producers of the Clerkenwell play; none of the original records and references are to parish clerks specifically/only, but to clerks more generally, with the Exchequer payment explicitly mentioning both parish clerks and other clerks. Not only the potential sponsorship base, but also the production base, is thus much larger than is often realized, given the large numbers of clerks in medieval London, and the large number of institutions and households within which they were to be found.[44]

The London Clerkenwell play may have been performed only a few times, at irregular intervals, in the 1380s/90s to 1409; or it may have been a regular, even annual, event. It may have been confined to the years approximately of 1384 to 1409, or it may have extended before (and after?) those dates, in some version(s), and have been recorded only in years when it was in some way 'beefed up' into special-event status. It may have been a general popular event or, as has been suggested by Mervin James,[45] an event designed for a predominantly royal or courtly audience (given the far readier availability of such an audience – on a regular basis if desired – in London than in provincial centres). But, whatever its performance history, there seems no inherent improbability in its having been a multi-day biblical play: with the interesting

possibility that it may at times have served, perhaps even by royal request, as a kind of warm-up act for a major royal event.

We cannot conclusively answer any questions about the London Clerkenwell play, from the records and references that have been found so far; but the odds seem strongly on the side of a major, multi-day biblical play. And, given the weight of tradition in early London, and the continuities from one century to another, we should also bear in mind the later theatrical history of Clerkenwell: for from 1560 the royal Revels Office, with its store of theatrical costumes and properties for entertainments at court, was housed in what had been part of the dissolved (as of 1540) St John's Priory at Clerkenwell[46] – the Priory having been a possible sponsor of the earlier Clerkenwell play, as noted above, which was performed in its immediate vicinity and which also (regardless of sponsorship), if an ongoing event, would have needed storage (preferably in the Clerkenwell area) for its properties and costumes. The Revels Office was removed from St John's in 1607–8; but by then the popular Red Bull theatre had been built and was in operation in the same area.

Especially if the Clerkenwell play had been a major biblical play, but whatever kind of play it may have been, the Red Bull in the early seventeenth century was thus apparently continuing a tradition, from the 1380s and perhaps even earlier, of Clerkenwell as a major London performance district.

Anne Lancashire

Notes

1 FitzStephen's 'Description' was probably written c 1170–82; see Ian Lancashire's *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain* (Toronto/Cambridge, 1984), #878.

2 For the c 1300–01 records upon which such a speculation is based, see *DTR*, #543; and for the speculation itself, see, eg, Alan H. Nelson, *The Medieval English Stage* (Chicago and London, 1974), 170 (miracle plays at Clerkenwell), and Anne Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre* (Cambridge, 2002), 55.

3 For some examples of this consensus, see Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300 to 1660*, vol 1 (London/New York, 1966), 162–3 (assuming parish clerks specifically), Nelson, *Medieval English Stage,* 170–1, and *DTR*, xvii; the general agreement goes back to the 16th and 17th centuries (see below, n 23), and has also had wide popular acceptance (see, eg, current public online

information sites such as <www.clerkenwell.org/top.html> accessed 28 May 2006).

4 The 1410–11 performance (12 Henry IV: ie, 30 September 1410–29 September 1411) recorded in the *Greyfriars' Chronicle* (and listed as a 1410–11 performance in *DTR*, #549, as well as referred to by modern scholars such as Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1.163) is a misdating by the chronicle of the 1409 performance. See below, n 14. More broadly, John Stow's 1598 *Survey of London* has also sometimes been taken as referring to a continuous play tradition from the Clerkenwell Play to the late 16th century; but Stow can be read – see Charles Lethbridge Kingsford's 2-volume edition of the *Survey* (Oxford, 1908), 1.93 – as simply pointing out a past theatrical tradition being continued specifically in the present, or as referring to plays generally, in London, of all kinds.

5 For points of some scholarly disagreement, eg, concerning specific parallels (or not) between the Clerkenwell play and the provincial biblical sequences/cycle dramas, see Nelson, *Medieval English Stage*, 172. Nelson argues for parallelism.

6 See Lawrence M. Clopper, 'London and the Problem of the Clerkenwell Plays', *Comparative Drama* 34.3 (Fall 2000), 291. His other two major reasons (also on 291) for questioning the consensus are the related reason of the existence, otherwise, of major multi-day play productions only on the continent and (with one exception) from the 15th century, and the doubt that London's 'clerics' could have mounted an elaborate play production. I also look at these two points below, but in the course of focusing on the multi-day issue.

7 Clopper, 'Problem', 297 and 300. It might be noted, however, that with more questions being raised every year about the provincial biblical dramas, a provincial norm is becoming increasingly difficult to identify.

8 The names Clerkenwell and Skinners' Well appear to have been used interchangeably in relation to the play, from at least the late 14th century, to indicate the same physical location. See Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 55 and n 143.

9 Frederick Devon (ed), *Issues of the Exchequer* (John Murray, 1837), 244–5 (Issue Roll, Easter, 14 Richard II). The Issue Roll entry (PRO E/403/533, mb 11) is dated 11 July – one week before what the *Westminster Chronicle* tells us was the start of a 1391 Clerkenwell performance (see below).

10 Stow, *Survey*, 1.15. See below on Stow's likely conflation of the 1390 and 1391 Clerkenwell performances, and his erroneous recording of the 1409 probably four-day Clerkenwell Play as having taken place over eight days. Lawrence Clopper, believing the various Clerkenwell Play performance records to refer

to different kinds of events, suggests ('Problem', 297) that Stow may be confusing the running time of the 1390 Clerkenwell performance with that of the tournament following it. But although, without Stow, we have no information on the running time of the 1390 performance rewarded by Richard II, three days does not seem implausible, given the *Westminster Chronicle*'s recording (see below) of a five-day performance at Clerkenwell in 1384, and of a four-day performance in 1391, and although chronicle sources often disagree on the number of days involved in a given multi-day event (two, three, and four days, eg, are all running times given in different chronicles for the 1390 tournament), they normally do not record as multi-day an event that did not take place over more than one day.

11 James Hamilton Wylie, *History of England under Henry the Fourth*, 4 vols (London, 1884–98), 4.213; PRO E/101/405/22, f 35v.

12 [Nicholas Nicolas and Edward Tyrrell (eds),] *A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483* (London, 1827), 91. Possibly (though not probably) this was in fact a three-day performance; the chronicle reads that the play 'endured Wednesday, Thorsday, Fryday, and on Soneday it was ended; and thanne began the fetees of werre in Smythfeld for diverses chalanges.' John Stow in his *Survey of London* (as in his 1592 *Annales of England*, 539) states (1.15, 93, 2.31, 177) that the play lasted for eight days; but the detail of *A Chronicle* is convincing, and Stow was probably confusing – as Lawrence Clopper has suggested ('Problem', 296) – the running time of the play with the running time (eight days, according to most sources: see below) of the tournament immediately following it.

13 *A Chronicle*'s account (91–2) usefully shows how different sources on any one tournament may disagree, without any one source necessarily being wrong, on details such as the tournament's running time: for one can count, eg, actual jousting days, or the total number of days (of jousting plus of resting) over which the event took place. Also, when tournaments began with an opening procession on one day, the procession day might or might not be included in the count of tournament days; and sometimes (as apparently in 1390) a tournment may have been proclaimed in advance as one length but had changed in length by the time it took place. On the apparent change in 1390, see Froissart, *Chronicles*, 228–9 (two days) and 231–3 (four days): though the *Westminster Chronicle*, 450–1, gives a running time of three days, apparently not counting the opening day. Sometimes, however, the details in different sources simply cannot be made to fit together. Several historical sources, eg, set down the details of the jousts, day by day, for the 1409 Smithfield tournament; and the six-day detail provided in Leland's *Collectanea*, 1. 486,

contradicts the eight-day detail provided in all of *A Chronicle,* 91–9, the *English Chronicle,* 35–6, *Chronicon Angliae,* 55–8, and Fabyan's *Chronicle,* 573–4 (the four of which also do not entirely agree on the eight-day details). *A Chronicle*'s eight-day account is also somewhat unclear as eight-day until read beside the others. Working with chronicle sources, to ascertain what really happened in any one instance, always involves evaluating the sources and weighing probabilities. I have used, for the above chronicles not previously cited: Froissart – John Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and the Adjoining Countries*, Thomas Johnes (tr), vol 4 (1805); *Westminster Chronicle* – L.C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey (eds and trans), *The Westminster Chronicle 1381–1394* (Oxford, 1982); *Collectanea* – John Leland, *Antiquarii de Rebus Britannicis Collectanea* (London, 1770); *English Chronicle* – John Sylvester Davies (ed), *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI.* (Camden Society, OS 64, 1856); *Chronicon Angliae* – Joannes Allen Giles (ed), *Incerti Scriptoris Chronicon Angliae* (London, 1848); Fabyan's *Chronicle* – Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, Henry Ellis (ed) (London, 1811).

14 *A Chronicle* specifies – with credible detail – that the play came first. *The Great Chronicle of London,* A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (eds) (London, 1938), 87, and Gregory's *Chronicle*, 105, in James Gairdner (ed), *The Historical Collections of A Citizen of London* (Camden Society, NS 17, 1876), report the play first and the jousts second, though not stating that order as necessarily chronological. The Wardrobe Accounts (see above) also list the play/performance scaffold before the tournament scaffold. One chronicle – *Greyfriars* (*Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*, John Gough Nichols (ed) (Camden Society, OS 53, 1852) – reports (12) both of these events (play and tournament) for 1410–11 (12 Henry IV), and mentions the tournament before the play; but from the context of other events and dates provided by the chronicle, and a comparison with other chronicles (such as the *Great Chronicle* and Gregory's *Chronicle*), it is clear that *Greyfriars* is in fact misdating as 1411 the events of 1409; and, if its reporting order is supposed to be chronological (which may not be the case), it is in disagreement with the order used by other chronicles, as noted above. (*Greyfriars* also states – in contradiction of all other sources – that the play ran for seven days.) For the eight days of the tournament, see above, n 13.

15 See: Wylie, *History of England*, 3.247–8, 4.212–3, 225; Wardrobe Accounts, PRO E/101/405/22, f 35v; Enrolled Wardrobe Accounts, PRO 361/6, #3 (August feast date). The tournament was originally to have taken place in May, and was postponed, finally taking place in July (Wylie, 3.246–7). The menu

supposedly from the feast (I have been unable to check the original MS source) is printed in Robina Napier (ed), *A Noble Boke off Cookry* (London, 1882), 3–4.

16 *DTR* is therefore wrong (#548) in dating this performance as 24–8 July; it has followed Wylie, who seems to indicate (*History of England*, 4.298) that the king was staying then (24 July) at Clerkenwell (but the records he cites, 3.246, do not necessarily indicate that specific time).

17 *Westminster Chronicle,* 94–5.

18 Corporation of London, MS Letter Book H (currently located at the London Metropolitan Archives, COL/AD/01/008), f 195r. In relation to the 'people of the city' wording, it should be noted that none of the original records and references specifying clerks as Clerkenwell performers restricts the term to parish clerks; see below.

19 *Westminster Chronicle*, 476–7.

20 John Stow in his *Survey* (1.15 and 93) seems either to have largely conflated the 1390 and 1391 performances or to have used 1391 information for 1390; for he records for the 1390 performance an 18 July start date (the start date, according to the *Westminster Chronicle*, of the 1391 performance), when the Exchequer Roll clearly identifies the 1390 performance as having followed St Bartholomew's Day (24 August), and his statements otherwise about the two performances are very similar, and are both accompanied by an account of the 1409 performance.

21 This is what Clopper suggests, 'Problem', 295.

22 See below for the multi-day processional pageantry of the London Midsummer Watch and for the stationary pageantry located along the route of two-day processional royal entries.

23 In the late sixteenth century John Stow, making use of earlier historical materials for his own printed histories of England generally and of London specifically, was persuaded that the Clerkenwell play was a London equivalent of the provincial biblical dramas. In his own personal copy (now in the Guildhall Library) of the earlier *Great Chronicle of London*, he annotated the *Chronicle*'s brief reporting, only, of a 'grete play' at Skinners' Well in 1409 as referring to a play 'of corpus christi'. (See the Thomas and Thornley edition, 87.) Early seventeenth-century antiquarian John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631), citing Stow on the play as lasting for eight days, was confused about the location of the performance (naming Skinners' Hall instead of Well: as also found in BL MS Cotton Vitellius F.IX, ff 1–70v, under mayoral year 1408–9), but also thought that the production sounded like a biblical cycle – a Corpus Christi play (405). The views of Stow and Weever

could be argued to have biased later historians; but their views would not have been accepted had the extant records and references not seemed to support them.

24 The only performance year (of the five recorded) without either a record of royal attendance or a chronicle reference is 1385: when the (city) record is of prohibition of performance.

25 For a useful discussion of hocking festivities, see Sally-Beth MacLean, 'Hocktide: A Reassessment of a Popular Pre-Reformation Festival', in Meg Twycross (ed), *Festive Drama* (Cambridge, 1996), 233–41.

26 See Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 134–5.

27 For Margaret's two-day coronation entry, see Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 188. Isabella, queen to Richard II, had a two-day entry on 3–4 January 1397, with her coronation on a third day; see George B. Stow, Jr. (ed), *Historia Vitae Et Regni Ricardi Secundi* ([Philadelphia,] 1977), 136–7.

28 See Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 50–2.

29 See, eg, 1445 – Robert Bale, *Chronicle,* in Ralph Flenley (ed), *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), 120; 1535 – *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain*, vol 5.1, Pascual de Gayangos (ed) (London, 1886; rpt Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1969), no 179, 506; 1536 – John Stow, *Annales of England* (1592), 967, and the London Mercers' Company, MS Acts of Court 2 (Mercers' Hall), f 89v.

30 Edward III, eg, held a three-week festival of jousts, dancing, and singing to celebrate his marriage to Philippa of Hainault in 1328: see Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments. Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1989), 31–2; and tournaments were customarily associated with dancing and other entertainments: see Barber and Barker, 207, and Richard Barber, *Tournaments* (Harmondsworth, 1978), Section 11. For what we might call the 'touristic' aspects of Richard II's 1390 tournament, see Froissart, *Chronicles*, 229: some visitors came from abroad not for the tournament but to see the manners of the English.

31 On tournaments in general, see Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, and note especially 176 and 207. Juliet R.V. Barker notes, in *The Tournament in England 1100–1400* (Woodbridge, 1986), 15, that there were two types of tournaments in England by the end of the fourteenth century: the courtly game, dominated by pageantry, and the feat of arms, involving real combat between opponents. Elaborate royal tournaments were largely of the first type. Tournaments often began on a Monday or a Tuesday, and in general avoided Sundays and holy days, and Fridays because they were fast days (Barber and Barker, 176). Dances,

feasting, and other entertainments took place during and after a courtly tournament.

32 For 1362, 1375, and 1386, see Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, 36 (and also, for 1375's Smithfield location, *DTR*, #896). For 1397 (after the coronation of Isabel, queen to Richard II), see *The Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng [&] . . . The Continuation by Richard Grafton*, Henry Ellis (ed) (London, 1812), 344. For 1390, see above, n 13.

33 For a full discussion of the London Puy, see Anne F. Sutton, 'Merchants, Music and Social Harmony: the London Puy and its French and London Contexts, circa 1300', *London Journal* 17.1 (1992), 1–17.

34 See, eg, Hardin Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1955; rpt 1967), 100–1.

35 See Grace Frank, *The Medieval French Drama* (Oxford, 1954), 170, and also Peter Happe, *Cyclic Form and the English Mystery Plays* (Rodopi, 2004), 40–57.

36 Sally L. Joyce and Evelyn S. Newlyn (eds), *Cornwall*, REED (Toronto/European Union, 1999), 541–2.

37 Joyce and Newlyn (eds), *Cornwall*, 342; Devon (ed), *Issues of the Exchequer*, 244–5. Two later Cornish religious plays, one of them from the late 15th century, also involved multi-day performance: see *Cornwall*, 543–5, on 'Beunans Meriasek' and a later 'Creacion of the World'.

38 Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 155; London Mercers' Company, MS Acts of Court 1 (Mercers' Hall), ff 32v–33r. The MS entry refers to St Peter's night (29 June), but the evening to morning of 28–29 June is clearly meant.

39 Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 155–6.

40 See Bale, *Chronicle*, 120.

41 Froissart, *Chronicles*, 228–9; for Isabella's entry, see 74–9. Nigel Saul, *The Three Richards: Richard I, Richard II and Richard III* (London and New York, 2005), states, 95, that Richard II held the 1390 tournament to tempt a potential ally, William, count of Ostrevant, into an English alliance. Alan Nelson, *Medieval English Stage*, pointed out in 1974 (171) that in both 1390 and 1409 the Clerkenwell play was followed by a great tournament.

42 Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 57–61.

43 Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 59–60.

44 Clerks in early London were not only men in the service of the church; clerks were also those, outside the church, who could read and write, and they filled various administrative positions (numerous in early London) which required such skills. Many served major institutions and households. The word could also cover students, or scholars, including those at the Inns of Court. See the complete *Oxford English Dictionary*, Clerk, *sb*.

45 Mervyn James, 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', *Past and Present* 98 (Feb. 1983), 24, n 79.

46 W.R. Streitberger (ed), *Collections XIII: Jacobean and Caroline Revels Accounts, 1603–1642* (Malone Society, 1986), xiii (and x). For a brief summary of the responsibilities of the Revels Office by 1552, see Streitberger, *Court Revels, 1485–1559*, Studies in Early English Drama 3 (Toronto, 1994), 226. Streitberger dismisses (65–6, n 77) an earlier speculation (based on Stow, *Survey*, 2.84) that the office of Tents and Toils under Henry VIII was housed at St John's.

Playing the Man: Acting at the Red Bull and the Fortune

The audiences, the repertory, and the acting at the seventeenth-century playhouses of north London have been condescended to since the sixteen-fifties, when Cockayne's dedicatory poem to Brome's published plays spoke of 'Our *Theaters* of lower note.'[1] Condescension in the seventeenth century, however, was something of a trope: Jonson condescends to the Hope playhouse in the prologue to *Bartholomew Fair,* performed in 1614, and James Shirley to the Globe in the prologue to his play *The Doubtful Heir,* played in 1640. By the end of the career of the Elizabethan playhouse, disparagement of the large outdoor theatres had become a cultural fashion, without much discrimination about what actually went on within them. Detailed investigation into those matters today is hampered by the large gaps in our knowledge: we have a very hazy idea, for example, of the working repertory of most of the various companies which played at the Red Bull and the Fortune between 1600 and the 1660s. Notwithstanding, condescension has continued to characterise much modern historical writing about these early playhouses, their performers, and their audiences. The Red Bull is a convenient and habitual low-water mark against which to measure the traditionally high tide of the Globe and the Blackfriars.

Mockery of the taste at the Red Bull began early, soon after its opening,[2] and turned into the sort of cultural fashion I've mentioned, but the Fortune, at least, began its life as a famous place, planned to outdo the rival Globe, 'the fairest playhouse in this town,' according to John Chamberlain in 1621, when it was two decades old.[3] (As the Fortune had been modelled on the Globe, one might wonder if the Red Bull, which opened just a few years after the Fortune, in turn took its inspiration from its predecessor.) The legendary Edward Alleyn came out of retirement to act again with the Admiral's Men at their new venue in 1600, and was seen at the Fortune during the last Elizabethan and first Jacobean theatrical seasons. Old favourites were dusted off for the occasion: *The Spanish Tragedy,* with new additions by Ben Jonson; *Doctor Faustus,* doctored by William Bird and Samuel Rowley; and for a court performance in 1602 *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,* with a new prologue by Thomas Middleton.[4] The revival of older material, I'd suggest, established something of a speciality of the northern playhouses and their performers,

and was part of their appeal: the Bull and the Fortune, by the 1630s, were where you went to see the good old plays, forty and fifty years old, from the age of the good old queen, as if the Royal Court, for example, were regularly to recycle the plays of those who used to be called the New English Dramatists, with capital letters.

Such analogies hardly work. While the traditions of the Royal Court's repertory and its audiences can be traced back at least to the fifties, there isn't much correspondence to sixteenth and seventeenth century conditions in terms of popularity, style, and taste. The legends of the later days of the Bull and the Fortune – and we're rather stuck with legends, in the absence of a great deal of more respectable historical detail– the legends, at any rate, are of a certain amount of old-fashioned crowd pleasing. Edmund Gayton, another writer from the 1650s, speaks of the Shrovetide traditions in the 1630s: 'sometimes *Tamerlane,* sometimes *Jugurth,* sometimes *The Jew of Malta,* and sometimes parts of all these.'[5] The reliability of this memoir is questionable. The play *Jugurth King of Numidia,* probably written for the Admiral's Men in 1600, belonged to the Palsgrave's company at the Fortune in 1624,[6] and *The Jew,* notably, was revived by Queen Henrietta's Men at the Cockpit in 1633 or so, with Richard Perkins as Barabas. But if the Tamburlaine of around 1600 was still Alleyn, that of the 1630s was undoubtedly Richard Fowler, also renowned for a fortissimo version of Hieronimo, certainly an Alleyn part in the early 1600s, as Jugurtha probably also was. The nostalgic seasons of the early years of the century – and Alleyn was then far younger than Mick Jagger is now – set a fashion for retro, and the deliberate retention, perhaps, of an older barnstorming style, like Donald Wolfit in the 1950s. The jibes about the terrible tear-throats at the northern playhouses miss the point; it wasn't that the actors didn't know better, but they were quite deliberately keeping alive a broader, showier, declamatory tradition.

Of the many things connected with the theatre history of the Bull and the Fortune about which I'd like to know more, one is the earlier career of Richard Fowler, evidently a bravura performer, but something of a wraith in terms of hard documentation.[7] He was probably still a youngish man when he first appears as a player in the records of the Fortune in 1618; if he had seen Alleyn on stage at the playhouse fifteen or so years earlier, he can have been only a boy. Who saw whom act, and what impression the experience may have made, are matters always worth thinking about. Fowler himself was watched not only by rowdy apprentices on Shrove Tuesdays, but by the boy who was to become King Charles the Second, when Prince Charles's Men played at court. Within the profession, observation and emulation were considerably impor-

tant. The legend of Robert Armin's meeting Richard Tarlton, while Armin was a teenaged apprentice, and being turned on to comic performance, is actually quite plausible in historical terms, and possibly true. In the years that Armin was performing at the Globe Andrew Cane, the famous later clown of the Red Bull and the Fortune, was himself a teenaged apprentice in London (like Armin an apprentice goldsmith rather than anything to do directly with the theatre). From 1602 onwards, at any rate, Cane had the opportunity to connect himself, through observation in the theatre, with a tradition of comic playing. Twenty years later he joined the troupe at the Fortune as a leading player, and we have no indication that he'd trained himself as an actor in any way other than through observation. His fame, which lasted beyond his death in the late 1650s, as a performer of jigs, suggests that he too had mastered the older traditions of comic performance – stand-up, improvisation, song and dance, and solo virtuosity – rather than, exclusively, performance in fictional dramatic roles.

I'd like to be able to persuade myself more fully of Fowler's observation of Alleyn's last seasons, but it seems no more than a possibility. Probably more likely is that there persisted within the company which remained at the Fortune, changing its title in 1603 and again in 1613, a tradition of Alleyn's heroic style, practiced by his old colleagues, Juby, Bird, and Massey, and perhaps by those who'd trained under him as apprentices. A sensitive new actor with an eye and ear for style – putatively Fowler in 1618 – might have picked up such indications as remained of the grand acting of the early 1590s. Fowler, at any rate, certainly *knew* Alleyn, who was active in the management of the Fortune at the time he joined it, so that he saw and heard the legendary performer offstage, if not on it.

If the companies at the Bull and the Fortune in some respects were guardians of old dramatic and theatrical traditions they were also competitive players in a market. In the first decade of the century, like their colleagues in the King's Men they both had star actors who could attract audiences – Thomas Greene and Richard Perkins at the Bull – and actor-playwrights who could sustain a developing repertory: Heywood at the Bull, and Samuel Rowley, among others, at the Fortune. New plays must always have been important, and the remains of Sir Henry Herbert's office book give us some hints, from the mid 1620s on, of what was being acquired. The fullest view of repertory, as ever, is supplied by Henslowe's theatrical records, which extend to the first seasons at the Fortune, precisely when Alleyn was acting again, and the titles of the mostly lost plays suggest the range of his stage roles. Apart from the older showpieces I've mentioned already, Alleyn no doubt

took the title part in *Hercules,* a Rose piece from the mid 90s revived in 1601, and probably performed it 'rarely.'[8] Some of the plays clearly had an eye on the rivals across the river, and offered parallel roles: *Richard Crookback,* by Ben Jonson; *Caesar's Fall,* by Munday, Drayton, Webster, and Middleton; *A Danish Tragedy,* by Henry Chettle. *Malcolm King of Scots,* in the spring of 1602, may have provided a suggestive idea to the house playwright of the Globe.[9] Andrew Gurr has suggested that the influence of the company's patron might be detected in a certain political strain – nationalistic and anti-Catholic – in the Admiral's Men's repertory,[10] and I'd say this is especially evident in the years leading up to the change in reign, long expected, and in active negotiation some time before early 1603. Thus Chettle's *Cardinal Wolsey* of 1601 is a suggestive title, dramatising as it no doubt did the conflict between native and foreign authority within the kingdom, and with some commanding stage roles, whether Alleyn played the title character, or that of the father of the reigning monarch, and of English Protestantism, a part revived at the Fortune a year or two later, in Rowley's play *When You See Me You Know Me*.[11]

A further feature of the plays being acquired in the early Fortune seasons is, to my eye, a surprising preponderance of scriptural material, which we tend to forget as a staple of repertory, having been told when young that the Elizabethan settlement closed down religious drama. One particularly striking title is *Pontius Pilate,* the dramatic content of which is well worth thinking about, but there was also a string of plays on Old Testament heroes: *Jephthah, Samson,* and *Joshua,* to put them in the order they were written and (probably) produced in 1602, perhaps as a connected series.[12] All three stories in the bible portray godly warrior-heroes overcoming enemies of the chosen people with the guidance of God, and their political application in the period immediately before March 1603 is not difficult to grasp; culminating with the Joshua material, they end with the symbolic destruction of Jericho. There seems to be little doubt that Alleyn would have played the title roles in all these, and they may have been written with him in mind, in that Samson is a kind of Hercules, and Joshua a kind of Tamburlaine. Jephthah is the most truly tragic role of the three, involving a terrible test of faith. Unlike Abraham, and the Jephthah in Handel's oratorio, the biblical figure is not let off the hook of sacrificing his child; I would take it that Munday and Dekker's play followed the bible. Alleyn's performance of anguish must have been especially impressive. Across the river, about the same time, talk of 'the best actors in the world' triggered the mocking reply 'O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst

thou!,' in the mouth of Richard Burbage.[13] The theatrical referentiality of *Hamlet* is a complex business, but that's not a story to be told here.

There's some reason to believe that the Biblical repertory did not entirely die out after 1603, and in fact that that the national, religious, and moral applications of stories of heroism and military victory, blessed by divine approval, fitted very well into the robust, 'manly' aspect of taste of the northern playhouse audiences; the allegory of the deliverers of God's people could have been as readily invoked after 1618 as in the late Elizabethan years, as it certainly persisted in sermons and biblical commentaries. The old play *A Looking Glass for London,* featuring Hosea, Jonah, and God's wrath on Nineveh, possibly first acted in the late 1580s, was revived by Prince Charles's company about 1620, and perhaps similar older plays were occasionally seen at the Bull.[14] One clear instance of revival, although not of scriptural drama, is provided by an entry from Herbert's records as Master of the Revels, the licencer of plays for performance. 'The *Four Sons of Amon,* att the intreaty of Worth, and another, being an olde playe tho' never allowed of before, nor of a legible hand, with promise of my fee 6 Jan. 1623[4], for Prince's Company 1*li.*'[15] One of the men who brought this document in to the Revels Office was Ellis Worth, one of the most fascinating figures of the prewar Stuart theatre, who continued acting until its close, and had begun, as far as we know, at the age of twenty-five, with Queen Anne's company at the Red Bull in 1612.

In early 1624, evidently, Worth was an agent for Prince Charles's Men, who had moved back into the Red Bull in 1623, after an interval with Beeston at the Cockpit. Perhaps Worth had temporarily become an entrepreneur rather than a working actor – he denied knowing anything about a scandalous play performed at the Bull later in 1624.[16] The text of the *Four Sons* he may inherited from the stock of the defunct Queen Anne's company – certainly Thomas Heywood knew of a play by that title in 1612 – and they may have had it from Philip Henslowe. Herbert said it was old and illegible, probably written in a cramped secretary hand, but also that it had never been licensed, and hence never performed, at least legally. Henslowe had acquired the play – or *a* play of the same title – in late 1602 from the actor Robert Shaw, with an option for the Admiral's Men to perform it within the next twelve months. Shaw himself wrote out a receipt in Henslowe's book:

> Mem*o*randum that I Robert Sha*a*/ haue receaued of mr Phillip Henshlowe/ the some of forty shilling*es* vpon a booke/ Called the fow*er* sones of Aymon wch booke/ if it be not played by the company of the/ fortune nor no[r]e other

> company by my [copy] lea< . . > / I doe then bynd my selfe by theis prsent*es* to/ repay the sayd some of forty shilling*es*/ vpon the deliuery of *my* booke att Cristmas/ next wch shall be in the yeare of our Lord/ god 1603 & in the xlvjth yeare of th*e*/ Raigne of the queene[17]

Neither Shaw nor his queen lived to see the following Christmas, in the event: he probably was a victim of the plague, and was buried in Southwark in September 1603.[18] The agreement itself appears to give the Admiral's Men an option on an existing play which was Shaw's own property, and probably some years old (Alleyn himself owned similar older play texts); if they chose to play it he would both keep his advance and perhaps offer it to the company as an outright sale, for a further sum. There are no indications in Henslowe's records that the Admiral's Men made any subsequent preparations to produce the play; as the book was Henslowe's security against an advance of two pounds, we may presume he kept it when Shaw died. The same document, perhaps, still a play text which had not seen production, found its way into Ellis Worth's hands twenty years later, possibly from Edward Alleyn, and eventually was translated into performance on the stage of the Red Bull.

Quite another scenario might be imagined for the history of the book, however, since Thomas Heywood claimed that a performance of a play with the same title had been given, at the latest, within the decade following Shaw's death, although not within the jurisdiction of the Master of the Revels. Amongst the instances of 'guilty creatures sitting at a play' cited by Heywood in *An Apology for Actors* the following account is given:

> at *Amsterdam* in *Holland* a company of our *English* Comedians (well knowne) travelling those Countryes, as they were before the Burgers and other the chiefe inhabitants, acting the last part of the 4 sons of Aymon, towards the last act of the history, where penitent Renaldo, like a common labourer, lived in disguise, vowing as his last pennance, to labour & carry burdens to the structure of a goodly Church there to be erected . . . [His diligence having aroused the envy of the other labourers, they plot to murder him as he sleeps.] Having spy'd their opportunity, they drave a naile into his temples, of which wound immediatly he dyed.[19]

As the actors play this scene there is a cry from 'a remote gallery,' followed by a confession to a murder by the same means. The end of the play Heywood recounts corresponds to the narrative end of the (very long) prose romance translated by Caxton from the French original, and first printed in England in 1504. The romance does not specify the means of the killing of Renaut/

Reynaldo, so that the brutality of the nail is a theatrical invention; we may suspect it of being Heywood's, given his purposes (although he insists on the verity of his other anecdotes), but as theatre it would achieve grim decorum – death by work tools – as well as having emblematic resonance.[20]

Whether or not the dramatic version of *The Four Sons of Amon* played at the Bull early in 1624 ended exactly as did the play Heywood knew, we may take it that it followed a similar dramaturgical line in adapting the material of the old *chanson de geste,*[21] selectively following its story of adventure, conflict, loyalty, and betrayal, and closing with the penitential death of its leading figure. To Heywood and his contemporaries the legend held exemplary pathos and moral power, and proved the effect mouldy tales might have on real lives: the power of representation, simply, was to be recognised as having its own validity, quite apart from the literary coherence of the fiction which supported it. In a period when several different dramatic pieces might be drawn from a common fictional or historical source, and when parallel acting versions were performed by troupes touring on the continent, we cannot easily assume close connections between these various manifestations of *The Four Sons of Amon.* Certainly the actors at the Bull in 1624 performed a piece with a long history of dramatisation, and possibly with a legendary reputation. If you are a clumper rather than a splitter, you might imagine that the 'well known' troupe in Amsterdam had had their text from Henslowe, and that their performers may have included a younger Ellis Worth, later the colleague of Heywood at the Bull, and later still the re-animator of Shaw's old play in that very theatre.

At exactly the same time Prince Charles's company was acquiring newly written plays, both comedies and tragedies: the partnership of Thomas Dekker and John Ford furnished two plays for performance at the Red Bull in 1624, for example.[22] The contemporary troupe at the Fortune, the Palsgrave's men, including the actors Andrew Cane and Richard Fowler, pursued a parallel course, with a similar amount of activity in acquiring new plays, some of them written by the actor-dramatist Richard Gunnell, and in reviving older material: *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,* for example, referred to as having been 'lately played' by the company when it was reprinted in 1630.[23] The Fortune and Bull companies competed for similar audiences, and included contemporary, local news in their material: they both had plays in September 1624 dealing with a family murder in Whitechapel earlier the same year, and the two plays apparently opened just a day apart.[24] Thomas Drew's play at the Fortune probably did not include, as did the Bull play, the secondary material about the seduction and robbery of Anne Elsden, the subject of a

subsequent legal appeal.[25] Up to the time of the death of King James, and the virulent plague outbreak of the same year, 1625, there is every sign that the actors at the northern playhouses were in excellent professional health, and conducting a thriving and active business. After that date it is a good deal harder to tell what was going on there, both because the old companies re-organised themselves, and rather marginal groups of actors moved into the playhouses, and because the fragmentary transcriptions from Sir Henry Herbert's office book become more scattered after 1624. The major revival of the Bull came in 1633, with the move to that theatre of the troupe I consider below. It is hard to imagine that their activity in the next decade, for seven years at the Bull and two at the Fortune, was any less intense than that of the companies of the mid twenties, in which a number of their players had participated, but the corresponding evidence of it, from Herbert's notes about the plays he licenced, does not survive – or its whereabouts are not currently known.

Ellis Worth, Andrew Cane, and Richard Fowler came together into the same acting troupe in late 1631: the newly formed Prince Charles's Company (second of that name, now named for the eldest son of the former Prince Charles, eighteen months old at the time). Of the ten adult actors named in the first surviving record, three had had experience at the Bull, and three at the Fortune; one of the boys, Robert Stratford, was the orphaned son of a former colleague of Fowler, Cane, and Matthew Smith (also a founder-member of Prince Charles's Company) at the Fortune. Their company was to dominate the Red Bull for the final decade before the wars, matching the career of Queen Anne's Men in the first decade of the theatre's life, and then ending up at the Fortune for a couple of years before 1642. Their style gave rise to most of the interregnum and Restoration reminiscences about the Bull in particular. Cane's last performance there may in fact have been in early 1650, when he is reported to have been arrested by soldiers during a surreptitious performance.[26]

Prince Charles's company began life in quite a different context, and the most useful surviving document about their playing, a published play with a cast list, *Holland's Leaguer* (1632), recording the first production at the Salisbury Court playhouse (1631), is a quite conventional Caroline comedy featuring the usual range of humours types: fops, deceivers, true-wits, and would-be-wits, in which the harum-scarum Richard Fowler has a relatively modest role (eighth in the ranking by line-length) as the plain-speaking friend of the deluded lead, played by William Browne, stepson of the Bull actor Thomas Greene, and son of the formidable Susan Baskerville. Fowler's is

decidedly not a 'conquering part,' of the kind for which he was later renowned, even if the character happens to be called Snarl. Cane's role, the largest in the play, is that of a vacuous man of fashion, Trimalchio, gulled into marriage by the impoverished wits; Worth played the fat parasite Ardelio, obsequious flatterer of Philautus, Browne's character. The author of the play, Shakerly Marmion, university-educated and an associate of the courtier Sir John Suckling, seems to have been 'house dramatist' for the first couple of seasons, so that the style of *Holland's Leaguer* might be taken as generally indicative. A lost play called *The Country Gentleman* was 'allowed to be acted' by Herbert in 1632, probably by the Prince's;[27] it was followed by *A Fine Companion,* entered in the Stationers' Register in June 1633, and published as 'Acted before the King and Queene/ at WHITE-HALL,/ And sundrie times with great ap-/plause at the private House in/ SALISBVRY Court,/ By the Prince his Servants.' The court staging may have been at Christmas 1632–3, undoubtedly in the Cockpit theatre completed in 1630.

Any generalisations about actors at the Bull, then, should be made with the recognition that a range of markets, playing styles, and repertory materials was within their reach. In the early 1630s Prince Charles's company were playing up-to-date humours comedy and topical satire in a small indoor playhouse, and at the new theatre designed by Inigo Jones at Whitehall, before the assembled holiday court. After their first two seasons they made a communal decision to change their theatrical territory, and return to a playhouse some of them knew well from previous professional experience. The calculations behind the move were probably economic, but are as likely to have been driven by success as by distress: that is to say the actors were seeking to increase their profits from the larger audiences at the Bull, perhaps also simultaneously reducing their outlay on rent. G.E. Bentley, the canonical historian of the Stuart stage, particularly tends to write as if playing at the Bull was an index of professional failure, or shamelessness, at least. I myself see no indication that Prince Charles's men left a small indoor playhouse in 1633 for the Red Bull because they couldn't hack it. They retained their elite patronage, accompanying the court on progress the following year, appearing at court thereafter several times, and probably also enjoying the support of the Earl of Newcastle, from 1638 onwards the official guardian of Prince Charles, and whose London house stood a mere two hundred yards from Red Bull yard, immediately contiguous to St. James's church.[28]

They presumably took with them to their new house the successful comedies that had proved themselves in performance, to be played occasionally on the Bull stage as part of their operating repertory: the surviving texts

of *Holland's Leaguer* and *A Fine Companion* should be thought of belonging to the Bull as much as to Salisbury Court. The practice of moving repertory from one kind of playhouse to another was hardly new, and was well-established practice for the King's Men. In 1636, on tour in Norwich, the troupe is reported as performing 'with good applause and are well clad and act by candlelight.'[29] That is to say that they were performing at some indoor venue, although their current London base was a daylit playhouse. Bentley, wedded to the paradigm of the Red Bull as an index of vulgarity and cheapness, expresses some scepticism about this account, forgetting the company's origins in indoor playing of stylish dramatic material, and their continuing appearances at court, recorded until late 1639.[30] Comedy, under Cane's leadership, was to remain a speciality of the company. His popular appeal included his knowledge of and skill in the old tradition stretching back to Tarlton: that of the stand-up clown, with a comic persona which might be exploited within scripted plays. The satirical play *The Whore New Vamped,* performed 'for many days together' in September 1639 (and thus a popular hit), landed the company in trouble for its sharp remarks about contemporary monopolies, legal systems, and certain London politicians. The actors were certainly working from a text, which Sir Henry Herbert had presumably passed for performance; he was to be questioned about it, as was 'the [unnamed] poet who made the play.' The fragments quoted in the enquiry documents include some dialogue: whereas one of the speakers is identified as 'one personating a justice of the peace' his interlocutor is simply called 'Cain,' as if actor and character were one.[31] Official anxiety about such material might legitimately include the question of what, in performance, there might have been 'more than is set down.'

Herbert's licences offer a few hints of the other repertory – all now lost as texts – played by the Prince's company in their later career, apart from the older revivals discussed above. The two-part play *The Devil and the Collier* also sounds like an old theme, but it was licensed as new material, in 1638.[32] The *New World in the Moon,* of the same year, sounds more up to date, suggesting as it does the influence of both Jonson and Brome, and thus competition with contemporary comic repertory at other playhouses. In 1639 *Hogshead* was a revival, refreshed with a new scene; no doubt it was a comedy.[33] A second entry from the same year is worth quoting in full: 'Massinger, History of Will: *Longesworde,* son to Rosamund, lic. to the bull 1639.'[34] This tells of a hitherto unknown work by Massinger, then approaching the end of a long dramatic career; G.E. Bentley's belief that he wrote only for the King's Men after 1625 must now be further qualified.[35] The acquisi-

tion of a senior dramatist is a further sign of the commercial ambition of the Prince's company. But the subject was not a new one, and possibly Massinger revised or reworked an old play on the same character, written by Michael Drayton in 1599.[36] The material, at least, was decidedly old fashioned: chronicle romance dealing with a bluff English hero pitted against perfidious French allies in the seventh crusade, and dying valiantly at the battle of Masurah. Whatever refinement Massinger may have lent to the writing, the genre was exotic battle play, and no doubt calculated to appeal to the more robust tastes of the Bull audiences. The heroic title role, we may take it, would have been performed by Richard Fowler.[37]

The rhyme about 'playing the man' from which I draw my title is early: about 1612. It goes like this: 'The players of the Bankside/ The round Globe and the Swan/ Will teach you idle tricks of love/ But the Bull will play the man' – or 'the mon,' to retain the evidently Scots rhyme.[38] This is a partial and broad-brush characterisation. If, as I've suggested, the players in the northern houses responded to their audiences' affection for revivals, and possibly for older styles of performance, there's no indication that any of the troupes at the Bull, from Queen Anne's men onwards, were any less interested in playing the woman. That's to say they included at least the habitual number of boy apprentices trained and training in female roles. When Prince Charles's company was founded by Bull and Fortune actors in 1631 there were six boys to ten men, and two of the boys were apprenticed to Andrew Cane (who, incidentally, hadn't come up that way himself). In terms of contemporary practice that is a company designed, I suggest, for playing erotic comedy, and not, primarily, military action drama. Range and adaptability were the keys to survival in the commercial theatre world, and while some performances at the northern playhouses were undoubtedly more garish and knockabout than one might have seen at the Blackfriars I certainly don't think those were the unvarying and constant notes.

Actors and their acting styles moved among kinds and sizes of theatre and among audiences of differing sophistication and social composition. Richard Perkins, a renowned actor admired by John Webster and Thomas Heywood, began his career performing at the Rose and the Bull, but his revival of Barabas, Marlowe's Jew of Malta, a bravura rhetorical part originally played by Alleyn, was given at the Cockpit playhouse in Drury Lane in the 1630s, where Perkins was the star player, rivalling his contemporary Joseph Taylor at the Blackfriars and the Globe. When they began their new company in the same period, Andrew Cane and Ellis Worth had ambitions to compete with both Perkins's and Taylor's troupes.[39] Assuming that Richard Burbage took

a part in *Mucedorus* when it was played before King James in the Shrovetide holidays at Whitehall,[40] we need not look farther for indications that coarse-grained material was occasionally performed by actors and watched by audiences we might think capable of better. I find the evidence for the marked difference of the Bull and the Fortune from other London playhouses, in terms of playing style, repertory, and audiences, to rest on a remarkably small amount of reliable evidence, and on a good deal of legend. We need to do all we can to increase the former, while keeping an eye on the residual truth of legends.

John H. Astington

Notes

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1 Quoted in G.E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (subsequently cited as *JCS*), 7 vols (Oxford, 1941–68), 6:245. See generally Bentley's section titled 'The Reputation of the Red Bull Theatre,' in this same volume, 238–47.

2 Notably in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* dated 'about 1607' by Sheldon P. Zitner in his edition of the play (Manchester, 1984).

3 Bentley, *JCS,* 6:153.

4 See R.A. Foakes (ed), *Henslowe's Diary,* 2nd ed (Cambridge, 2002).

5 Bentley, *JCS,* 2:690–1.

6 Sir Henry Herbert's licence for the play in that year notes that it had formerly been 'allowed by Sir George Bucke,' and the licensed copy burnt, possibly in the Fortune fire of 1621. N.W. Bawcutt (ed), *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama. The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford, 1996), 151. On the interpretation of Herbert's note see Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels* (Iowa City, 1991), 147–8.

7 Richard Fowler's origins may lie in the parish of St Leonard Shoreditch. The registers of the church record the baptisms of three children of a Richard Fowler, senior, between 1591 and 1594 (none named Richard), and he may

be the father of the actor, who was probably born in the same decade. A Richard Fowler was living in the parish again in 1631–2, with his wife Elizabeth: their daughter Alice was baptised on 8 January 1632; the family was resident in 'Halywell Streete' near the site of the Curtain playhouse (Guildhall Ms 7493. My thanks to Chris Matusiak for checking this reference). Bentley's biographical notes include the marriage of Richard Fowler and Elizabeth Freeman in 1627 at St. Botolph Bishopsgate, a neighbouring parish (*JCS,* 2:439). See the online transcriptions of the St. Leonard Shoreditch parish registers by Alan Nelson: <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/>.

8 Foakes, *Diary,* 185.

9 Foakes, *Diary,* 199, 200, 201, 203.

10 Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* 3rd ed (Cambridge, 2004), 178–9.

11 Foakes, *Diary,* 183, 184, 200.

12 Foakes, *Diary,* 187, 200–5.

13 *Hamlet,* 2.2.403–04. G. Blakemore Evans (ed), *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 2nd ed. (Boston, 1997).

14 A marked-up copy of the undated fourth quarto of *Looking Glass,* with theatrical cuts and annotations, survives in the University of Chicago Library. See C.R. Baskervill, 'A Prompt Copy of *A Looking Glass for London and England,*' *Modern Philology* 30 (1932), 29–51.

15 Bawcutt, *Control*, 148.

16 *The Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother, or Keep the Widow Waking,* which exploited a contemporary local scandal. See C.J. Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (London, 1936).

17 Foakes, *Diary*, 211.

18 E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage,* 4 vols (Oxford, 1923), 2:339.

19 Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London, 1612), G2r–v.

20 The image of Jael killing Sisera was commonly represented in medieval and Renaissance graphic and decorative art. Jael's act was variously regarded: either as heroic, in the tradition of the militant defenders of the Jews, or, within the topos of 'The Power of Women,' as malicious deception. See H. Diane Russell and Bernadine Barnes, *Eva/Ave. Women in Renaissance and Baroque Prints* (Washington, 1990), 147–8, 154–5.

21 The 1554 edition of Caxton's translation was no doubt the source for Elizabethan adaptors.

22 *The Fairy Knight* and *The Bristow Merchant:* see Bawcutt, *Control,* 152, 157.

23 Bentley, *JCS,* 1:156.

24 Bawcutt, *Control*, 154.

25 See note 15, and Bentley *JCS*, 3:252–6.
26 Bentley, *JCS,* 2:401.
27 Bawcutt, *Control*, 174.
28 See my article 'The Career of Andrew Cane, Citizen, Goldsmith, and Player,' *Medieval and Rensissance Drama in England* 16 (2003), 130–44.
29 Bentley, *JCS,* 1:312–13.
30 See my *English Court Theatre 1558–1642* (Cambridge, 1999), 297.
31 Bentley, *JCS,* 2:314–15
32 Bawcutt, *Control,* 202. Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568) initiates the proverbial coupling of devils and colliers.
33 Bawcutt, *Control,* 204.
34 Bawcutt, *Control,* 205.
35 See Bentley, *JCS,* 4:755.
36 See Foakes, *Diary,* 64, 103. Henslowe's records, in fact, offer no strong proof that Drayton ever finished the play. In early 1599 Henslowe paid out two pounds as a partial advance on an agreed fee of six pounds: there are no subsequent records of a complete text having been delivered, nor of preparations to produce it, in Henslowe's book, at least. Complicating evidence is provided by documentation produced by Sir Henry Herbert in pursuing his attempt at asserting the authority of the Office of the Revels after the Restoration. Among these papers was a list of plays licensed in 1598 by his predecessor, Edmund Tilney: 'Sir William Longsword allowed to be Acted the. 24 May. 1598.' (Bawcutt, *Control,* 249; also 255). Unless Tilney, or Herbert, has his final digit wrong, there may have been *three Longsword* plays in the pre-Restoration period, and Drayton's may have been intended as competition to a predecessor, possibly staged at the Globe. If Massinger revised or reworked an old play, then, it need not have been Drayton's.
37 The comic story of Fowler and the inept extras, retailed in 1664, is connected with material such as *William Longsword:* see Bentley, *JCS,* 2:440.
38 The lines come from the fifteenth stanza of a two-part ballad preserved in the Pepys collection at Magdalene College, Cambridge, *Turner's Dish of Lenten Stuff* (London, c.1612), STC 24350.
39 See the prologue to *Holland's Leaguer* (London, 1632).
40 Possibly in 1610, the year of the Q3 edition of the play, which advertises on its title-page new additions, 'as it was acted before the King's Majestie at Whitehall on Shrove-Sunday night. By his Highnes Servantes usually playing at the Globe.' See *English Court Theatre,* 242–3.

The Red Bull Repertory in Print, 1605–60

With remarkable consistency throughout the early modern period, Red Bull playgoers are characterized as unlettered, ignorant, or possessed of a crass literary sensibility. Interestingly, though, they are also imagined as avid readers: Webster's well-known depiction, following the failure at the Red Bull of his *The White Devil,* declares that 'most of the people that come to that Play-house, resemble those ignorant asses (who visiting Stationers shoppes their use is not to inquire for good bookes, but new bookes).'[1] Webster's association of Red Bull spectators with book-buyers suggests that the persistent representations of the low literacy of this audience may obscure the extent to which the famously spectacle-driven Red Bull repertory intersects with early modern print culture. The number of Red Bull plays that were published with an explicit theatrical attribution, and more importantly the similarities in design and typography between them and plays belonging to the more elite indoor repertories, would seem to bear this out. As reading material, the Red Bull plays indicate that a seemingly 'low' or popular theatrical repertory is not sufficient evidence of the social or educational make-up of its audience.

It is crucial at the outset to confront the publication figures that have led scholars to assume that a Red Bull attribution on the title page of a play quarto did not have any meaningful currency in early modern print culture: of the roughly 400 editions of plays published between 1605, when the Red Bull opened, and the Restoration, 17 were marketed as products of the Red Bull theatre.[2] By far the highest number of theatre attributions in this period was, not surprisingly, to the Blackfriars (112), a fact that appears to confirm the general sense we have of the indoor theatres as catering to a more select audience, one that would presumably comprise a larger proportion of readers and book-buyers than would the northern playhouses.[3] But like any set of data, these publication figures tell more than one story. While the Red Bull clearly did not have anything like the profile of the Blackfriars in print, this does not mean that it had *no* profile; on the contrary, it is all the more important to consider why and how the Red Bull attribution *was* used on title pages when the primary audience for this repertory is assumed to have been, in Webster's bitter phrase, 'ignorant asses.'

With this objective in mind, it is worth considering the Red Bull attributions in relation to other outdoor theatre attributions, namely the Fortune and the Globe which were the Red Bull's primary competitors in the outdoor market. In strictly numerical terms, Globe attributions outnumber the Red Bull by more than two-to-one. The vast majority of these, however, are either joint Globe-Blackfriars attributions or appear on editions of Shakespeare's plays. In both cases, the Globe attribution is part of a broader, more complex promotional strategy that trades more on ideas of literariness and exclusivity than the public or popular nature of the outdoor venue.[4] Only seven non-Shakespearean plays are advertised on title pages as exclusively Globe productions: *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (six editions between 1608 and 1660), *A Game at Chess* (three editions in 1625, capitalizing on the prohibition of the performance of this notorious play), *A King and No King* and *Philaster* (published in 1619 and 1620 respectively), *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), Massinger's *The Unnatural Combat* (1639), and two editions of *Albertus Wallenstein* by Henry Glapthorne (1639 and 1640).[5] Notably, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* is the only play to have been published in successive editions with an exclusive Globe attribution, and this throughout the period when it was standard practice for printers to advertise the Blackfriars auspices of the King's Men's plays.

Compared with the surprisingly small figures for the Globe, the number of Red Bull attributions invites some reassessment. Twelve plays in seventeen editions were published as Red Bull productions between 1605 and the Restoration, and while statistically this is too small a group to support a meaningful account of the chronological distribution of the plays, it is striking that Red Bull attributions occur throughout the complex and tumultuous history of the theatre itself (including its use for clandestine performances after the closure of 1642). Perhaps most notable in this regard is that printers continue to advertise Red Bull auspices even after the Queen Anne's Men began performing at the more prestigious, indoor Cockpit.[6] Between the opening of the theatre in 1605 and the Queen Anne's Men's departure in 1617, seven editions of plays were published as having been performed at the Red Bull: Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608, 1609, 1614),[7] *The Golden Age* (1611),[8] and *The Four Prentices of London* (1615);[9] Dekker's *If it be not Good, the Devil is in it* (1612)[10] and a performance by 'Young-men of this Citie' of W. Smith's *The Hector of Germany* (1615).[11] After 1617, when publishers should, according to the marketing logic of the time, have been more inclined to displace the Red Bull with the Cockpit, ten more editions are published as Red Bull plays (seven of which are new attributions): the

anonymous *Swetnam the Woman Hater* (1620),[12] Marlowe's *Edward II* in its fourth edition (1622),[13] Markham and Sampson's *Herod and Antipater* (1622),[14] *The Rape of Lucrece* (1630, 1638),[15] Dekker's *Match Me in London* (1631),[16] *The Four Prentices of London* (1632),[17] W.R.'s *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (1638),[18] John Kirke's *The Seven Champions of Christendom* (1638),[19] and the second edition of Robert Cox's *Acteon and Diana* (1656).[20] Of these, only *Match Me in London* and *The Seven Champions of Christendom* have joint Red-Bull/Phoenix or Red-Bull/Cockpit attributions, while *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* claims to have been 'sundry Times Acted at the Red Bull and other Theaters.' More important, two of these titles – *Edward II* and *Acteon and Diana* – are reprints that specifically *add* the Red Bull attribution to plays previously published with different or no auspices. Many other plays performed at the Red Bull were, of course, published without any notice of this fact, but there is no evidence that printers were deliberately 'concealing their origin as Red Bull products.'[21] On the contrary, the apparently selective use of the Red Bull attribution underscores the fact that this was a *choice* made in marketing individual plays.

Taken as a whole, the plays printed as Red Bull productions represent what was and still is taken as characteristic of this repertory: historical and mythological plays conceived on a grand imaginative canvas, dramas of national and civic heroism, and the non-satirical brand of citizen comedy. This general congruence between the Red Bull repertory in print and performance suggests that publishers (rather than dramatists, actors, or theatrical entrepreneurs) are largely responsible for the construction of an identifiable repertory: their decision to use this particular theatrical attribution for plays they deem to be of interest to readers *as* Red Bull productions in effect consolidated a group of plays that would otherwise not be strictly identifiable with the Red Bull.[22] The reverse case can be made for other outdoor venues such as the Fortune and the Swan, where the paucity of attributions makes it impossible to speak meaningfully of a 'Fortune repertory' or a 'Swan repertory.' There is only a single Swan attribution for the entire period (*A Chaste Maid in Cheapside,* 1630), and, while the Red Bull and Fortune theatres are often said to have provided the same kind of low-brow theatrical entertainment and are often linked in satirical jibes at unsophisticated playgoers, only two plays in the half-century of Red Bull attributions are identified on their title pages as having been performed at the Fortune (*The Roaring Girl,* 1611, and *The Knave in Grain,* 1640).[23] It is fitting, then, that one of the best-known parodies of the Red Bull repertory, Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle,* refers explicitly to a play – *The Four Prentices of London* – that was not only

published with a Red Bull attribution but is identified by Beaumont's otherwise unlettered grocer as a play he has read: dismissing the Boy's concern that 'it will shew ill-fauouredly to haue a Grocers prentice to court a kings daughter,' George urges him to 'read the play of the Foure Prentices of London, where they tosse their pikes so.'[24] It is possible that Beaumont is thinking here of a now-lost edition of the play, especially since the description of its action ('where they tosse their pikes so') accurately describes the title-page woodcut. But it may equally well be the case that Beaumont is more concerned to ridicule George's literary taste than his theatrical allegiance and therefore simply slips on the matter of the play's availability in print. In any event, the line is intriguing: what does it mean that as early as 1607, a year before the first of the Red Bull attributions and some seven years before the earliest surviving edition of *The Four Prentices,* the Red Bull repertory can be signaled by reference to a book?

The cultural work performed by the Red Bull attribution on title pages of plays needs to be assessed, I think, in terms of two narrower questions: who read the Red Bull plays, and what correlation was there between them and the theatrical audience? The evidence for readership is, of course, extremely slight, but attending to publishers' marketing strategies can help us approach the question in terms of who was at least imagined as an audience for the playbook. A general methodology for this kind of inquiry has been mapped out in some recent studies, most notably Zachary Lesser's analysis of the cultural politics at work in the dramatic publications of Walter Burre.[25] Working with the publisher – rather than the author or acting company – as his primary analytic category, Lesser reveals that playbooks could be rhetorically and typographically coded for a specific segment of the reading public. Although Burre's play quartos did not cost more than any other playbook on the market, they appear to be designed for readers who would recognize and endorse the implied division between 'a "high" culture of drama' and plays defined by opposition as 'popular.'[26]

A key typographic feature that could signal such a division was continuous printing, defined by W.W. Greg as any instance 'in which each new speech, instead of (as is usual) beginning a fresh line of print, follows on from the last, with the speaker's name ... within the line.'[27] Occasional use of this technique can be found in many plays, often as a simple space-saving device, but where it is used consistently to preserve the metrical unit of a line of verse it enhances the literary status of the play. Furthermore, by mimicking the typography of classical and academic drama, continuous printing could serve 'to distance the play from its theatrical origins and from the "vulgar" spectacles that win

the favor of audiences in the commercial theater.'[28] This is clearly the case with plays such as Jonson's *Catiline* and *The Alchemist,*[29] Webster's *The White Devil,* Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* and Thomas Tomkis's *Albumazar,*[30] where the heightened literariness produced by the technique of continuous printing is also rhetorically expressed in scoffs at ignorant theatrical audiences made in prefaces to the reader or in the play itself.

Interestingly, in the division of taste that emerges in these published plays – a division, that is, between 'unskilfull' playgoers who 'thinke rude things greater than polish'd,' and the 'Reader extraordinary' who can recognize and appreciate the literary merit of drama – the Red Bull audience figures prominently (and here again it is worth noting that the Fortune audience could have served just as well, but did not nearly so frequently come to mind).[31] The publication of Webster's *The White Devil,* a play that failed dismally in Clerkenwell, is overtly presented as a rebuke of the 'vncapable multitude' who patronize the Red Bull and know nothing of what constitutes a 'true Drammaticke Poem': 'should a man present to such an Auditory, the most sententious Tragedy that euer was written, obseruing all the critticall lawes, as heighth of stile; and grauety of person; inrich it with the sententious Chorus, and as it were life'n Death, in the passionate and weighty Nuntius: yet after all this diuine rapture, O dura Messorum ilia, the breath that comes fro the vncapable multitude, is able to poison it' (A2–A2v). In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* which failed – ironically – at Blackfriars, the ignorant and aesthetically naïve multitude is represented by a guildsman and his apprentice who are regular patrons of the Red Bull and thoroughly familiar with its repertory. And the clown in the university play *Albumazar,* which was also published by Burre and features continuous printing, is ridiculed for wooing a lady in language drawn from Red Bull (and Fortune, in this case) plays: 'O 'tis Armellina: now if she have the wit to beginne, as I meane shee should, then will I confound her with complements drawne from the Plaies I see at the Fortune, and Red Bull, where I learne all the words I speake and vnderstand not' (C4v–D1). In all three instances, the Red Bull audience represents the general vulgarity of the playgoing public, meaning specifically lack of wit, learning, or mental acuity.

The physical evidence of the Red Bull playbooks thoroughly undermines this construction. In terms of typographic design and the use of marketing devices, all of the plays published with a Red Bull attribution are no less self-conscious about their status as literary works than plays like *The Knight of the Burning Pestle, The White Devil,* or *Albumazar.* In addition to continuous printing, features that signal an awareness of drama as a literary genre

include author attribution, Latin on the title page, a dedicatory or other prefatory epistle, a list of speakers or dramatis personae, and regular division into acts.[32] Heywood's *The Golden Age,* for example, is frequently taken as typical of the vulgar fare preferred by the Red Bull's citizen and apprentice audiences, but in print it carries many of the 'formal, classical accoutrements of the well-dressed English play':[33] author attribution, prefatory epistle (A2), a list of 'Persons presented in the Play' (A2v), division into acts, and continuously printed verse. In addition, there are many rhetorical and typographic elements in this playbook that bespeak a careful orchestration of the text for aesthetic effect and ease of reading. Sententiae are in a contrasting font (eg, on B3v), the dumb shows are visually distinguished from Homer's speech, including one instance in which the dumb show is arranged on the page with symmetrically graduated margins (C4), and the many descriptive stage directions are unusually reader-oriented (eg, 'Enter Sibilla lying in child-bed, with her child lying by her,' C2).[34] Other Red Bull plays seem to have been not only printed, but – as Heywood says of *The Golden Age* – 'iudged to the Presse' (A2), including *The Four Prentices of London* which in its earliest printing (1615) sports the author's name, a prefatory epistle 'To the honest and hie-spirited Prentises The Readers' (A2), a list of dramatis personae, and regular division into acts. In the second edition of 1632, these literary designs are complemented by 'a tendency to print speeches continuously.'[35] One might be tempted to think that these typographic features reflect the preferences of the author or printer (Nicholas Okes printed *The Golden Age* and both editions of *The Four Prentices,* along with *The White Devil, The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* and *Albumazar*), but every other play with a Red Bull attribution has some combination of elements that imply literary distinction.[36] Of course one could not claim that there is anything like a coherent or organized agency behind this phenomenon, but perhaps this is the more remarkable point: over a period of some fifty years, nineteen printers and publishers choose a printform that contradicts verbal representations of the Red Bull repertory as sub-literary and its audience as uncultured.

It would seem, then, that the Red Bull repertory was in some sense understood as a literary product, distinct enough to be of enduring interest to readers, and even to readers who made up the market for the most elite forms of dramatic writing.[37] Clearly this sense of audience for the Red Bull plays in print differs considerably from the kind of reception the plays are said to have had in performance, where an audience of apprentices, artisans, and citizens gaped at and cheered an impressive array of special effects, if – that is – they weren't involved in one of the 'dayly Tumults' in the yard.[38] In

the silence and, as it were, civility of print, however, the playtext itself – without the adornment of voice, action, costume, or sound – is the main event. These seemingly conflicting reception contexts demand that we expand our sense of the social range of Red Bull playgoers. Would an audience of London tradesmen be the sole or even primary market for the Red Bull playbooks? While the price of a printed play – around six pence – would not necessarily be prohibitive to this sector, and the evidence for literacy in the London guilds suggests a market large enough to support play publication, the typographical coding of the plays indicates an imagined readership familiar with the conventions of literary drama and could, therefore, include the 'select' audiences who otherwise (or also?) preferred the indoor repertories.[39]

Addresses to readers (which occur in all the Red Bull quartos except *Edward II*) reveal an imagined audience of unusually broad social and occupational range: shoemakers, apprentices, prominent members of London's major trade guilds, women, actors, playwrights, nobility, along with the 'Curteous Gentlemen' who were, as Cynthia Clegg has shown, understood by authors and publishers to be elite males.[40] What evidence we have of the ownership of Red Bull playbooks confirms, too, that gentry were among the patrons of this repertory, although in most cases it is impossible to determine whether they had ever seen the plays at the Red Bull or the indoor Cockpit (where many Red Bull plays would also have been performed after 1617). Six Red Bull plays (including *The Golden Age* and *The Four Prentices,* both of which have the theatrical attribution) are listed in the commonplace book of Henry Oxinden of Barham, Kent, as belonging to his library, and Frances Wolfreston, an avid playgoer in Caroline London, owned a copy of Heywood's *The Iron Age* in which she wrote a detailed plot summary suggesting that she saw the play performed and purchased the quarto as a commemorative edition.[41] Oxinden, by contrast, appears to have been a play-collector rather than a playgoer, so his ownership of Red Bull quartos signals a more strictly bibliographic interest in the drama. The social elite evidently did make up some proportion of the print audience for plays that were originally staged at the Red Bull, just as we can infer that they attended the theatre itself.[42] In this connection, it's worth noting that the one reference we have from the period to a Red Bull playbook being purchased refers to a 'City-gallant,' an ambiguous social group to be sure, but certainly not one of the 'meaner sort' typically associated with the Red Bull playhouse.[43]

Approaching the Red Bull repertory in the context of print thus involves a reassessment both of the social and educational make-up of the audience

for these plays and of the intersection of drama and literary culture at this supposedly sub-literary theatre. From this perspective, it is striking how many of the jibes against the Red Bull audience involve the appropriation and re-circulation of dramatic language – playgoers are mocked for 'culling,' 'gathering,' or 'drawing' words from the stage plays and using them in inappropriate contexts outside the theatre.[44] In one sense, this might be testimony of the kind of literary ignorance denounced by Webster; but it also reveals that, along with its famous spectacles, the language of the Red Bull plays was part of the theatre's 'brand' in the entertainment marketplace. Indeed, the play quartos with Red Bull attributions, taken as a group, reveal that text and performance are complementary rather than conflicting elements of the repertory. Unlike the anti-theatrical slant of many of the plays published as literary drama, the Red Bull quartos promote their status as stage plays and many of them preserve elements of performance that are superfluous to a strictly literary enjoyment: in *The Golden Age,* as noted above, the dumb shows and stage directions are unusually detailed and reader-oriented, Dekker's *If it be not Good* is warmly dedicated to 'my louing, and loued friends and fellows,' the Queen Anne's Men (A3), and in the most popular of them all, Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece,* special care is taken (and advertised) over several editions to set songs in the correct sequence of performance rather than as separate text.[45]

It is likely, then, that the Red Bull quartos are intended to serve as replicas of the stage play rather than displacements of it, as was the case with anti-theatrical publications such as *Catiline, The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* and *The White Devil.*[46] Whether this is just smart cross-marketing on the part of the Queen Anne's Men and publishers is difficult to determine, but given what we know of the financial risks of dramatic publication it would be highly irregular if these particular playbooks were produced without some sense that a significant proportion of the audience for the Red Bull repertory was not only literate but actively interested in reading editions of the plays. Heywood's testimony that the staging of history plays 'instructed such as ca~not reade in the discouery of all our English Chronicles' needs to be balanced, then, against the evidence of typography, book ownership, and addresses to readers, all of which indicates that illiterate spectators were by no means the only audience for the 'drum and trumpet' repertory of the Red Bull.[47]

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Notes

1 John Webster, *The White Divel* (N[icholas] O[kes] for Thomas Archer, 1612), A2.

2 Andrew Gurr and Gerald Eades Bentley both claim, on the basis of the small number of Red Bull title-page attributions, that printers generally thought such an association unlikely to sell copies. See Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* 3rd ed (Cambridge, 2004), 90, and Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford, 1956), 4.225. Publication figures are derived from Appendix B, 'Table of Title Pages with Status, Latin, or Theaters,' in Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'Vile Arts: The Marketing of English Printed Drama, 1512–1660,' *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 39 (2000), 125–52.

3 On the social stratification of theatrical audiences in Stuart London, see Gurr, 164–9 and 177–82, and Michael Neill, '"Wits most accomplished Senate": The Audience of Caroline Private Theaters,' *SEL* 18 (1978), 341–60.

4 For a detailed analysis of the marketing tactics used by publishers on title pages of playbooks, see Farmer and Lesser. On the use of Shakespeare's name in connection with emerging ideas of literariness, see David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge, 2001), 31–48, and Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge, 2003), 56–64. Farmer and Lesser conclude that plays with an indoor attribution were 'more generally designated as elite' (92).

5 *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (Henry Ballard for Arthur Iohnson, 1608), *The Merry Devill of Edmonton* (Thomas Creede, for Arthur Iohnson, 1612), *The Merry Divel of Edmonton* (G[eorge] Eld, for Arthur Iohnson, 1617), *The Merry Deuill of Edmonton* (A[ugustine] M[athewes] for Francis Falkner, 1626), *The Merry Deuill of Edmonton* (T[homas] P[urfoot] for Francis Falkner, 1631); *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (for William Gilbertson, 1655); *A Game at Chess* (np, nd), *A Game at Chesse* (np, 1625), *A Game at Chesse* (Lydden: Ian Masse, nd); *A King and no King* ([John Beale] for Thomas Walkley, 1619); *Phylaster* ([Nicholas Okes] for Thomas Walkley, 1620); *The late Lancashire Witches* (Thomas Harper for Benjamin Fisher, 1634); *The Vnnaturall Combat* (E[dward] G[riffin] for Iohn Waterson, 1639); *The Tragedy of Albertvs Wallenstein* (Tho[mas] Paine, for George Hutton, 1639), *The Tragedy of Albertvs Wallenstein* (Tho[mas] Paine, for George Hutton, 1640).

6 Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford, 1996), 324.

7 *The Rape of Lvcrece* ([Edward Allde] for I[ohn] B[usby], 1608), *The Rape of Lvcrece* ([Edward Allde] for I[ohn] B[usby], 1609), *The Rape of Lvcrece* ([Thomas Purfoot] for Nathaniel Butter, 1614).
8 *The Golden Age* ([Nicholas Okes] for William Barrenger, 1611).
9 *The Four Prentises of London* ([Nicholas Okes] for I[ohn] W[right], 1615).
10 *If It be not Good, the Diuel is in it* ([Thomas Creede] for I[ohn] T[rundle] And are to be sold by Edward Marchant, 1612).
11 *The Hector of Germany* (Thomas Creede for Iosias Harrison, 1615).
12 *Swetnam, The Woman-hater, Arraigned by Women* ([William Stansby] for Richard Meighen, 1620).
13 *The Trovblesome Raigne and Lamentable death of Edward the second, King of England* ([?Eliot's Court Press] for Henry Bell, 1622). The Red Bull attribution is made on a variant title page, where earlier stage history ('As it was publikely acted by the right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruants.') is replaced with what W.W. Greg surmises is more recent information: 'As it was publikely Acted by the late Queenes Maiesties Seruants at the Red Bull in S. Iohns streete.' (See Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration,* [London, 1939], 1.215. The play is entry 129.)
14 *The true Tragedy of Herod and Antipater* (G[eorge] Eld, for Mathew Rhodes, 1622).
15 *The Rape of Lvcrece* (for Nathaniel Butter, 1630), *The Rape of Lvcrece* (Iohn Raworth for Nathaniel Butter, 1638).
16 *A Tragi-comedy: Called, Match mee in London* (B[ernard] Alsop and T[homas] Fawcet, for H[enry] Seile, 1631).
17 *The Foure Prentises of London* (Nicholas Okes, 1632).
18 *A Merrie and Pleasant Comedy: Never before Printed, called A Shoo-maker a Gentleman* (I[ohn] Okes, and are to be sold by Iohn Cowper, 1638).
19 *The Seven Champions of Christendome* (I[ohn] Okes, and are to be sold by James Becket, 1638).
20 *Acteon and Diana* (for Edward Archer, 1656).
21 Gurr, *Playgoing,* 208. George Fullmer Reynolds lists all known or surmised plays in the Red Bull repertory from the period between 1605 and 1625 in *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater, 1605–1625* (New York, 1940), 4–29. For this period, Reynolds identifies a total of 46 plays associated in some way with the Red Bull.
22 Of the 46 plays in Reynolds's list, only 13 can be said with any certainty to have been performed at the Red Bull (5). Fully half of these were published with the Red Bull attribution (*The Two Noble Ladies* survives only in manuscript, but it has a print-ready attribution: 'Often times acted wth approbation

At the Red Bull in St. Johns Streete By the Company of ye Reuells.' [Reynolds, 23]).

23 *A Chast Mayd in Cheape-side* (for Francis Constable, 1630), *The Roaring Girle* ([Nicholas Okes] for Thomas Archer, 1611), *The Knave in Graine, New Vampt* (J[ohn] O[kes], to be sold by John Nicholson, 1640). On the Fortune and Red Bull as cognate venues, see Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford, 1968), 6.239, 241, 243.

24 Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* ([Nicholas Okes] for Walter Burre, 1613), H1v. Interestingly, Nicholas Okes also printed *The Four Prentices.*

25 Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge, 2004), 52–80. See also G.K. Hunter, 'The Marking of *Sententiae* in Elizabethan Printed Plays, Poems, and Romances,' *The Library,* ser. 5, 6 (1951), 171–88, Mark Bland, 'The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England,' *TEXT* 11 (1998), 91–154, and Douglas A. Brooks, '*King Lear* (1608) and the Typography of Literary Ambition,' *Renaissance Drama* n.s. 30 (2001), 133–59. For a range of other approaches to early modern play-reading, see the essays in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England,* Marta Straznicky (ed) (Amherst, 2006). Heidi Brayman Hackel has written two excellent overviews of the subject: '"Rowme of Its Own": Printed Drama in Early Libraries,' *A New History of Early English Drama,* John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds) (New York, 1997), 113–30, and '"The Great Variety of Readers" and Early Modern Reading Practices,' *A Companion to Shakespeare,* David Scott Kastan (ed) (Oxford, 1999), 139–57.

26 Lesser, *Renaissance Drama,* 71. Lesser notes usefully that the construction of a category of literary drama by Burre and others exploits a cultural rather than an economic, social, or educational division in the bookbuying public.

27 Greg, *Bibliography,* 1.xviii.

28 Lesser, *Renaissance Drama,* 67. On the classical origins of continuous print for verse drama, see also T.H. Howard-Hill, 'The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English During the Renaissance,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990), 133.

29 *Catiline his Conspiracy* ([William Stansby] for Walter Burre, 1611), *The Alchemist* (Thomas Snodham, for Walter Burre, 1612).

30 *Albvmazar* (Nicholas Okes for Walter Burre, 1615).

31 Jonson, *The Alchemist,* A3v, and *Catiline,* A3.

32 On the relationship between authorial attributions and ideas of literariness, see Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), 14–65. According to Lesser

and Farmer, Latin 'most clearly marked the boundary ... between the entire commercial theater and the various forms of noncommercial drama' (97). Dedications and prefatory epistles, similarly, served to bolster a play's claim to literary status. See Virgil B. Heltzel, 'The Dedication of Tudor and Stuart Plays,' *Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie* 65 (1957), 74–86. On the classical origins of lists of speakers and act divisions, see Howard-Hill, 'Evolution,' 137, 141. Of course 'noncommercial,' 'literary,' and 'classical' are not identical categories, and much of the cultural politics of early modern dramatic publication can be traced in the way that authors and publishers constructed the intersections among them (see, for example, my study of the typography of closet drama in *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550–1700* [Cambridge, 2004], 48–66). These features do, nevertheless, constitute a typographic rhetoric that asserts a play's elevation above the common rank of stage drama.

33 Howard-Hill, 'Evolution,' 137.

34 The specification here of a 'child-bed' is highly unusual and is arguably a detail meant to assist the reader in imagining the scene. On descriptive stage directions as characteristic of literary playtexts, see Howard-Hill, 'Evolution,' 122. For a list of stage directions involving beds, see *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642,* Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson (eds) (Cambridge, 1999), 24–5.

35 Greg, *Bibliography,* 1.475.

36 I do not have room here to give a detailed account of the features, but an overview can easily be gleaned by consulting the relevant entries in Greg's *Bibliography.*

37 It should be noted, however, that Heywood was unsuccessful in gathering the Ages plays into a collected edition. On this failure and its cultural implications, see Benedict Scott Robinson, 'Thomas Heywood and the Cultural Politics of Play Collections,' *SEL* 42 (2002), 361–80.

38 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage,* 6.243.

39 On the economics of play publication, see Peter W.M. Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks,' *New History of Early English Drama,* 405–13. Blayney finds that a publisher would have to sell all 800 copies of a typical print-run in order to turn a profit and that he would therefore be most likely to invest in plays expected to go into a second edition (412). If Blayney's conjecture is correct, the popularity of the Red Bull theatre could explain on a straightforward economic level the appeal of this repertory to publishers. According to David Cressy, roughly half of London tradesmen were literate in the sense of being able to sign their names. Of the occupational groups said to have

attended the Red Bull, Grocers show an illiteracy rate as low as 6%, Weavers 42%, and Shoemakers 58% ('Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530–1730,' *The Historical Journal* 20 [1977], 5, 10). Cressy concedes that 'passive literacy' would have been far more prevalent than the figures for writing ability indicate: '[m]any of these trades people could no doubt read, even if they had trouble writing, and the class as a whole might be characterized as being on the brink of literacy' (8).

40 'Renaissance Play-Readers, Ordinary and Extraordinary,' *The Book of the Play,* Straznicky (ed), 29. On epistles to readers in playbooks, see also David M. Bergeron, 'Printers' and Publishers' Addresses in English Dramatic Texts, 1558–1642,' *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 27 (2001), 131–60.

41 Giles E. Dawson, 'An Early List of Elizabethan Plays,' *The Library,* ser 4, 15 (1935), 445–56; John Gerritsen, '*Venus* Preserved: Some Notes on Frances Wolfreston,' *English Studies,* supp. to 45 (1964), 273.

42 Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576–1642* (Princeton, 1981), 137–9.

43 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage,* 6.245.

44 Ibid., 238–47, passim.

45 For a detailed bibliographic description of the songs, see Greg, *Bibliography,* 1.407–9 (entry 273).

46 On the anti-theatricality of these and Burre's other dramatic publications, see Lesser, *Renaissance Drama,* 54–63. Interestingly, Webster's *The White Devil* distances itself from the Red Bull theatre and audience but also acknowledges the skill of the actors whose performance of the play was 'the best that euer became them' (M2v). This is important evidence for the potential disjunction of theatres and repertories in the period. See Lesser, 56 n 11.

47 *An Apology for Actors* (Nicholas Okes, 1612), F3.