Northumbria Research Link

Reading Politics in 1562: Arthur Brooke's *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* Reconsidered

Abstract

The English Romeo and Juliet tradition is seldom read in a political light. This essay reconsiders the political status of the story's first English adaptation (which Shakespeare would later borrow heavily from) by reading it against a large dataset of 1562 printed texts. I contend that we should read this poem politically because that is it what its readers, including Shakespeare, would almost certainly have done. Arguing against dominant scholarly assumptions of the poem and author's anti-Catholic bias, I explain how The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet *resists religious persecution, instead emphasising tolerance and inclusivity across religious and political divides.*

Learning about political contexts can of course enrich our understanding of literary texts – which, in turn, can tell us much about how subjects lived within, thought about, and reacted to the political events of their time. In 1562, the English state was heavily in debt, mired in recession, and struggling to reorientate to a new political direction. England's political-religious identity was again uncertain, and its boundaries were shrinking. Political tensions were growing with Scotland, there was outright rebellion in Ulster, and the beginning of the Wars of Religion in France marked a prolonged and heightened period of political interest in the geo-politics of England's closest continental neighbours. In this year, English Catholics were leaving England, and many more foreign reformers were arriving and replacing them. The complexion of the English nation (particularly in the southeast) was changing, and this affected the types of texts that people wrote and read.

Then as now, politically engaged readers looked for meanings relevant to the power structures they lived within – for modes of expression and understanding that spoke to

domestic and international political change. In so doing, readers had little choice but to indulge in abstract hermeneutic practices, because they participated in what Annabel Patterson terms the 'highly sophisticated system of oblique communication, of unwritten rules whereby writers could communicate with readers or audiences … without producing a direct confrontation'.[1] With creative and inquisitive minds, contemporary readers practiced active reading by filling in blanks and bridging incompletions where they found them.[2] Given the recalcitrance of political opinion and loyalty in this period, the task of reconstructing how specific texts were read is a slippery task, requiring extensive historicization. This article argues that the task is worthwhile, however; and we now know more about the circumstances and practices of Elizabethan reading than previous generations of literary scholars. That we also find ourselves (and our students) living through a period of intensive political change, makes learning about earlier political engagement through literature an especially timely and valuable enterprise.

This essay reconstructs as fully as is possible the reading context of the year 1562 in England. It does so because this was an important year of English and European political change, and because learning more about what and how English subjects were reading in this year might better inform our understanding of many contemporary and later cultural forms. Literature and politics are intimately tied in this historical context, and my reading demonstrates that the print marketplace of 1562 was overwhelmingly political in substance. The beginning of the French Wars of Religion sparked important international interest in political affairs in this year, and this must have shaped how some (if not all) of the less overtly political texts were read and understood. To explore this connection, I attend to perhaps the most important and popular (in terms of influence) literary text printed in this year: Arthur Brooke's *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*. Applying what we can know about this poem's immediate market and political contexts, I re-evaluate its political status. Beginning with certain paratextual features (preface, frontispiece and the reputations of its author and printer), I challenge the evidence that has hitherto (mis)informed critical perceptions of the poem's anti-Catholic nature. I then mount a reading of the text's Friar Laurence character, arguing that not only does it resist the type of anti-Catholicism that we might expect from this period, but it casts the character as a sympathetic and heroic martyr-figure, aligned to the experiences of exiled Christians of all stripes.

I. POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN 1562

The year 1562 in England was marked by political anxieties, primarily concerning its new religion and political regime, and the prospect of returning (once again) to Roman Catholicism.[3] Political questions fixated upon the succession debate, as the Queen's marital strategy would ultimately determine the nation's devotional direction. At this time, the English economy was mired in debt and recession. The Crown's borrowings were approximately £260,000-£300,000; and subjects had been 'shaken by the experience of bad harvests and epidemics: prices were high, labour short, and the currency still corrupted'.[4] The costly military failures, heightened taxes and inflation, and great coinage debasement of Henry VIII had been followed by the disastrous economic impact of Mary I's loss of Calais – England's last foothold in France. Furthermore, a turgid agriculturally-driven economy, which was highly dependent upon foreign imports, could do little to relieve the social pressures of increased vagrancy levels, wildly fluctuating prices, harvest failures (in 1556, 1557, and 1560), and the spread of influenza, plague, and sweating sickness (1558 was 'the worse year for disease-related mortality in the century').[5] Reinstating reformist devotional culture took time, and though Elizabeth was pronounced 'Deborah': 'the judge and restorer of Israel' at her coronation pageant, her regime faced criticism from both sides of the confessional divide for its confusing (and perhaps confused) *via media* approach to issues of conformity and obedience.[6] Yet even this took shape gradually, and the first five years of her reign were characterized by inertia, with many dioceses lacking effective leadership as Elizabeth struggled to place new bishops in her vacant sees. Between 1558 and 1563, the English queen appointed her privy councillors and bishops from a mixture of men who had advised and served under her half-sister, and those returning from exile.[7] In the year that Brooke's poem was first printed, the Church of England was characterized by political hybridity, discord, and uncertainty.

Internationally, Elizabeth had been forced to abandon any hopes of reclaiming Calais to tend to the more pressing domestic problems posed by her Catholic cousin, Mary Stuart (Queen of Scots) – whose return to Scotland in 1561 triggered the ominous threat of Franco-Scots alliance taking root in the north. The 1560 Treaty of Edinburgh was necessary to broker liberty of worship for Scottish reformers; but despite the Crown's efforts to ease tensions in Scotland and the north more generally, the regional concentration of increasingly disaffected Catholics nurtured recalcitrant energies that would lead to open rebellion in the Rising of the North in 1569. In Ulster, the rebel Shane O'Neill had demanded complete

withdrawal of the English military from his territory in 1561, and would continue to flout and frustrate Elizabeth's Irish regime until his death in 1567.[8] All the while, the political spotlight shone directly on Elizabeth's marital prospects, and the potential futures that they might open up for the English church and nation. The prospect of a Catholic husband was real, and from 1559 throughout the 1560s, the Archduke of Austria Charles II became the favourite foreign match.[9] Elizabeth's foreign policies were assuming vital importance to the future of Englishness, and this was happening at a time of sharpened xenophobia towards foreigners of all stripes, with especial emphasis in London and its surrounding regions.

Antipathy towards foreigners was exacerbated by economic problems, with perceptions of wealthy merchants from the continent licking the fat from defenceless English beards, as native 'economic jealousy naturally sharpened in times of hardship'.[10] Since the Reformation, the steady (if not vast) exodus of English Catholics to the continent doubtlessly also magnified the emotional effect of increasing numbers of foreign subjects.[11] Incoming refugees bolstered these numbers, as Henry VIII's break from Rome had effectively opened England's borders to persecuted reformers from across Europe; and their integration into English culture was far from smooth. Catholic aggression in France and the Low Countries had pushed French, Flemish, Walloon and Dutch immigrants across the English Channel; and just as England's staunchest reformers had sought refuge during the Marian hiatus, Elizabeth's England was now expected to return the favour. She subsequently became one of the key political figureheads for persecuted reformers from across Europe, and this movement had English precedent and prototype. For since the Italian immigrant and convert to reform, Bernardino Ochino, helped establish the first legally-sanctioned 'stranger church' in London in 1547, a tentative English model of devotional diversity had welcomed European religious immigrants to what would become known as the 'Strangers' Church of London' at Austin Friars from 1550.[12] Superintended by Polish evangelical John a Lasco, the church emphasized tolerance and inclusivity, where Lasco 'worked to unite the refugees under a single doctrine and common set of liturgical rites' from 1550 to 1553.[13] Andrew Pettegree estimates that there were between 5000 and 6000 foreigners living in London in 1550, accounting for up to 8 per cent of the total population.[14] 'No matter what the exact numbers', argues Laura Hunt Yungblut, 'the most important aspects of this immigration are the *perception* at the time that it was unusual, and the *reactions* that this perception provoked'.[15]

The year 1560 had also marked a decisive shift in Elizabethan domestic policy towards French Calvinist (Huguenot) refugee 'worship and denization': indeed it was Elizabeth's 'unconditional acceptance of Huguenots [that] led Pius V's papal bull of 1570

that censured the Queen'.[16] Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie assert that it was 'purely the accident of Mary's death that ensured the long-term future of English Protestantism would be played out in a national 'Church', rather than in separatist congregations on the French Huguenot model'.[17] It was years after Elizabeth's accession that English reformers could begin to imagine life without the internal pressure of majority persecution; and it was well over a decade before they could comfortably imagine their belief system as a numerically dominant English institution.[18] Despite the Crown's efforts to forge connections between the incoming refugees and London's English population, xenophobia escalated. A biting satirical ballad of 1562 entitled *The Manner of the World Nowadays*, expressed its despair at the period's social and moral degenerations in striking terms:

> So many ale sellers, In bawdy holes and cellars.
>
> Of young folks, ill counsellors saw I never.
>
> So many pinkers, so many thinkers,
>
> And so many good ale drinkers, saw I never.
>
> So many wrongs, so few merry songs,
>
> And so many ill tongues, saw I never.
>
> So many a vagabond through all this land,
>
> And so many in prison bond, I saw never.[19]

The culturally poisonous 'ill tongues' of 1562 London are equated with the crimes of the capital's drunks, vagrants, and riotous youths (a 'pinker' was a violent swordsman or duellist, *OED n.*1). London's unusually pressurized economic conditions exacerbated what Hunt Yungblut describes as the 'continual anti-alien sentiment' of the English (in and around London), 'which frequently intensified in periods of real or perceived stress.' Many Londoners 'associated difficult circumstances with the presence of foreigners, particularly if that presence was concentrated'. The alien communities in the capital and its vicinities were posing new problems for a growing metropolis, and their 'pattern of concentrated settlement ... apparently made their numbers appear larger than they actually were'.[20] Partly because the immigrant numbers had accelerated so rapidly after 1560, the above ballad's relentless use of 'never' (47 times in total) frames the related social problems as atypical and unprecedented. London was experiencing more severe social problems and immigration levels than ever before, and the crown was simultaneously sanctioning the stranger-presence in England as a religious necessity.

Such tensions inevitably precipitated violence; and Hunt Yungblut identifies strident anti-alien sentiment in rebel discourses surrounding the 1569 Northern Rising and the Midsummer Norfolk Rising of 1570. In these Catholic agitations, 'rebels clearly perceived the aliens as supporting Protestant supremacy in England'; and in both rebellions, they attempted 'to raise support by crying out against aliens in the realm'.[21] Such hostilities were fuelled by the Crown's persistent protection of stranger communities against xenophobic treatment of the native English. (By the time that Shakespeare used Brooke's poem to pen his *Romeo and Juliet*, xenophobic energies had underpinned further London riots in 1593 and 1595.[22]) Between the 1550s and 1590s, London became a fertile seedbed for religious refugee churches, but the city was expanding too quickly and its people were suffering from recession, disease and starvation – all of which affected their political opinions.

With many European strangers settling in and close to London, the political cultures of the continent presented real pressures for the English capital. Events in France in the 1560s held greatest political significance for the English for two reasons: the prospect of the Auld Alliance (personified by Mary Queen of Scots' marriage to the King of France, Francis II in 1558) fuelling northern invasion anxieties; and the sharp increase in persecuted Huguenots crossing the Channel in search of sanctuary. The Treaty of Edinburgh, signed by England, Scotland and France in July 1560, quashed the immediate threat of the former by insisting upon the removal of French forces from Scotland. And whilst the death of Francis II in December 1560 all but diminished Mary's remaining military threat to Elizabeth, it did not sooth Anglo-French political tensions. For when Catherine de Medici assumed regency over her 10-year-old son Charles IX, and displaced the powerful and militantly aggressive Guise family, this political transition drew England far more intimately into the French conflict that ensued. Catherine's attempts to ease religious hostilities through the Edict of Orleans in early 1561 and the Edict of St. Germain of January 1562 allowed reformed worship considerable freedom – sanctioning freedom of worship anywhere in the country outside of the boundaries of walled towns. Catherine's attempts at moderation only inflamed the situation more rapidly, however; and in 1562, religiously motivated violence in France exploded.[23] Outright civil conflict would endure between Catholics and Huguenots for another 36 years. Sparked on 1 March in 1562, when the Catholic forces of Francis, Duke of Guise, slaughtered dozens of Huguenots attending a barn church service in the small town of Vassy in Champagne, tension levels inevitably spiked, and the persecution of Huguenots intensified.[24]

This event became known as the Massacre at Vassy, and it took place less than 8 months before the first edition of Brooke's *Tragical History* saw print for the first time. Consequently, the people that could buy and read Brooke's poem (from places like London, Canterbury, and Norwich) were witnessing an unprecedented increase in Huguenot immigration to England. Though reliable figures do not exist for the number of displaced Huguenots in 1562, by 1573 (the year that followed the Bartholomew's Day Massacre) 'the foreign Protestant churches in England had well over 10,000 members ... and the majority of them were religious refugees'.[25] By 1597, the 'total figure for all foreign churches in the realm' must still have exceeded 15,000.[26] To strengthen our understanding of how this context might bear relevance to how Brooke's poem might have been interpreted, it is useful to consider more closely the reading habits of this year in print.

II. 1562 IN PRINT

A cursory browse through the Stationers' Register for 1562 illustrates the dominance of religious and political texts being issued from London's presses. Using the Early English Books Online (Chadwyck-Healy) database of extant texts (and textual fragments), exactly 142 works (excluding fragments and duplicate results with matching STC numbers) are dated to a 1562 publication.[27] Within this sample, the greatest proportion is accounted for by English legal statutes, injunctions and declarations, which represent almost 25 per cent of all works published. This is in keeping with the legislative drive of the Elizabethan regime: to re-impose reform, and solidify the residual legal flux from Mary Tudor's Catholic reign.[28] If we can categorize martyrologies, prayer books, biblical exegeses, and works which have prominent, sustained anti-Catholic foci as 'reformist religious', then approximately 23 texts (16 per cent) represent this 'category' of prints. Texts which directly addressed the political turmoil in France following the Massacre at Vassy constitute over 11 per cent (16 of 142) of the market share.[29] By any comparative or correlative standard that we could apply to text-survival rates from the period, this represents a notable proportion of the texts available for purchase.[30] Richard Streckfuss estimates that of 26,000 English texts listed between 1475 and 1640, approximately 1,250 were classifiable as 'news publications' (both domestic and international) – representing around 4.8 per cent.[31] The attention to French politics alone in 1562 seems to have more than doubled this figure; in this year, no other domestic or

international political locality received a comparable level of coverage in printed English letters.

The 16 texts (mostly chapbooks and pamphlets) brought English readers reports of the Massacre at Vassy, and the event's international political aftermath – and they did so in polemical and emotive terms. The innocence of the Huguenots was emphasized; and, as we might expect, so was the vicious cruelty of the Catholic aggressors. For instance, in one anonymously authored pamphlet the wife of 'an honest merchant' is reported to have witnessed her son being 'ran through with a sword' in the marketplace: 'wherewith she being moved, hyed her, thinking for pity sake to save him, but she so little prevailed as a horseman ran at her and thrust her through with his sword' before taking 'from her her purse and girdle with other things she had'.[32] Throughout these texts, the Huguenot victims are described in distinctly martyrological terms: a minority of the innocent, godly, and persecuted, who are reformist brethren to the English.

The texts also repeatedly echo the English political support for the Huguenots, which was being spearheaded by Elizabeth's closest advisers including William Cecil and Robert Dudley.[33] After the events at Vassy, Elizabeth's ambassador at Paris (Nicholas Throckmorton) also 'urged support for the Huguenot cause: "you must" he wrote to Cecil, "animate and solicit the Princes Protestant with speed by all means you can, not to suffer the Protestants to be in this realm suppressed"'.[34] Thus, a royal declaration from September 1562 explains and defends Elizabeth's decision to send military aid to France. In so doing, it repeatedly names King Charles IX as Elizabeth's 'brother', and the French as England's closest kin. To emphasize the English stakes, moreover, the declaration explains how Catholic violence was being indiscriminately directed towards English subjects as well, conditioning the Huguenot persecution as a campaign against all reformist subjects. The declaration recounts reports that English ships from Exeter and Falmouth were

> apprehended, spoiled, miserably imprisoned: yea [and] such as tried to defend themselves [were] cruelly killed, their ships taken, their good and merchandise seized, and nothing said nor devised to charge them only furiously calling them all Huguenots, a word [thought] very strange and foolish to many of the honest merchants and poor mariners.[35]

This has clear propagandist goals. Elizabeth argues that the plight of continental reform is directly relevant to English subjects, and that England must lend support to her persecuted

European allies, because their Catholic enemies do not discriminate between regional strands of reform.

Texts like this also spoke to the disquiet caused by the Huguenot refugee arrivals in London. This, again, had direct connections to the Elizabethan regime, whose ranks were bolstered by men who had emigrated under Marian persecution. When Elizabeth began replacing the Marian bishops who refuted her royal supremacy in 1559, she installed as Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker, who had been in hiding since Mary's accession. At this time, Elizabeth appointed five other bishops who had been in exile on the continent, and then in the 1563 Convocation this increased to fourteen.[36] Men like Parker had direct influence over the teachings of the Elizabethan Church; and the crown-monitored presses were putting texts into circulation that stressed the necessity for tolerance of diversity within reformist schools of worship. When, for instance, *Certain sermons appointed by the Queen's Majesty* of the martyr Thomas Cranmer were re-circulated in 1562, they emphasized inclusion and unification. Written against 'contention and brawling', one sermon holds that 'Contention causeth division, wherefore it ought not to be among Christians, whom one faith and baptism joineth in an unity', before invoking St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians: 'If there be any consolation in Christ, if there be any comfort of love, if you have any fellowship of the spirit, if you have any bowels of pity and compassion, fulfil my love, being all like affected, having one charity, being of one mind, of one opinion' (2:1).[37] Within the English printing syndicate, there was a clear drive to condition political reading habits of Londoners in ways that might ease tension and xenophobia towards religious migrant communities.

Whilst this strategy manifests clearly in my survey of 1562's overtly political texts, another printing trend is suggestive of popular political reading habits pertaining to abstract and allegorical interpretive practices. We know that English readers (of all denominations) were superstitious, but the political uncertainty of the early 1560s continued to foster a rising market-demand for texts relating to prognostication. In 1562 alone, at least eight astrological edition runs and five monster-birth broadsides were printed and sold in the capital.[38] Elizabethans looked obsessively for natural and supernatural symptoms of God's favour or anger, attaching spiritual significance to the stars and other natural phenomena – especially the unusual and inexplicable. Therefore, the abstract political reading habits (of texts and events) were prominent concerns for those in power:

Signs from heaven were a constant concern of the government because so many people believed in them. Events like the weather, the birth of deformed children or animals, and astrological prediction all had political implications.[39]

Given the turbulent political and socio-economic effects experienced during the initial decades after the Reformation, these reading practices are to be expected – and we should not be surprized to find the presses issuing texts through which England's political future could be read.   Use of political allegory had of course been present in English reading cultures for centuries, yet John S. Pendergast reads 1560 as a watershed year for the nation's allegorical modes of writing.[40] This was thanks to the delicacy of political matters in the early Elizabethan years, when the Crown could not afford its presses to stir up tensions that it could not contain. We can say with confidence that in this year there was sufficient market-demand for texts with indirect and ambiguous political meanings: curious and creative readers were invested in what they could learn about the present and future from their interpretive practices.

III. READING *THE TRAGICAL HISTORY* POLITICALLY

Despite voluminous research devoted to William Shakespeare's adaptation of the Romeo and Juliet story (and its many afterlives), comparatively little critical attention has been spared for the first English version of the tale, written by Arthur Brooke. Recognition of the poem's political content has in fact been limited to a dubious critical mythology about its author's polemical religious convictions. In 1975, Geoffrey Bullough made the claim that 'Brooke was a serious-minded Protestant moralist' – which, Bullough stated, 'is suggested by the *Address to the Reader* before his poem'.[41] Subsequently, Bullough's reading has stuck, and this part of the poem's preface (the entire evidentiary basis of Bullough's thesis) has become the most often quoted part of the text:

> And to this end, good Reader, is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to unhonest desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends, conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and *superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity)* attempting all adventures of peril, for the attaining of their wished lust; *using auricular confession (the key of whoredom, and treason)* for furtherance of their purpose. [42]

Numerous critics have used this preface to demonstrate the poem's 'anti-Romanist bias', and its author's 'strong Protestant sympathy'.[43]   (This critical position usually serves to emphasise the more liberal approach of later appropriators like Shakespeare). But this is a red herring, because it is the only moment of anti-Catholicism in the entire text. What we actually find in the poem is a range of complex, sympathetically depicted Catholic characters, including a piteous male protagonist who sports the name of Rome. Given the anti-Catholic reaction to the Massacre at Vassy earlier that year, the lack of demonization in this poem is remarkable.

Understanding the disjunct between the pre-text and poem requires some attention to the politics of Elizabethan publishing practices. The above instance seems likely to relate to what Patterson terms 'the hermeneutics of censorship'.[44] In what is still the most sustained treatment of the conditions of censorship and writing in early modern English texts, Patterson distils eight 'hermeneutical principles' around which writing and reading practices shaped themselves. Patterson's second principle highlights the 'provocative semantics of the pre-text', especially in 'features which addressed themselves to reader expectations'. These passages often conveyed instructive messages, shaping ways in which texts could be interpreted – resultantly, and quite logically, they were closely censored. Further, Patterson's fifth principle has it that '[d]isclaimers of topical intention are not to be trusted, and are more likely to be entry codes to precisely the kind of reading they protest against'.[45] So we should not accept the prefatory passage at its word – and, nevertheless, the longer prefatory passage (which no one ever quotes) is much less partisan. The anti-Catholic lines are actually framed within a longer passage which focuses upon the importance of diversity and toleration: the first line states that 'The God of all glory created universally all creatures, to set forth his prayers, both those which we esteem profitable in use and pleasure, and also those which we accompt noisome and loathsome'; it then attests that 'the good doings of the good, & the evil acts of the wicked, the happy success of the blessed, and the woeful proceedings of the miserable, do in diverse sort sound one praise of God'; and it argues that 'as each flower yieldeth honey to the bee: so every example ministreth good lessons, to the well disposed mind'; and contends that 'by sundry means, the good man's example biddeth men to be good' (p.284). Whilst this is the kind of sentiment found in contemporary devotional writing of all stripes, there is a notable rift between these claims of inclusivity and the isolated instance of anti-Catholicism. Furthermore, in a 1565 poem entitled *The tragical and true history which happened between two English lovers* by Bernard Garter, an adaptation of Brooke's poem[46],

the preface is closely emulated – and this emphasis on diversity of worship is retained: 'God the author of all goodness (gentle reader) hath diversely bestowed his manifold gifts on sundry men ... our saviour Christ to save man (which is diversely bent to go astray) hath sent forth his several instruments sundry ways to call him'.[47] This emphasis on multiplicity of worship might be nothing more than moralising spin, but if we read it against the Brooke poem's wider resistance to anti-Catholicism, it may well have meant more to its Elizabethan readers (and appropriators) than recent critics have allowed.

The transactional meanings of paratexts – pre-texts like the above, and also things like epigraphs, frontispieces, and indexes – were explored and explained by Gérard Genette some time ago, as 'thresholds of interpretation'.[48] But whilst Genette and others locate the paratext as a liminal form, the prefatory passage to Brooke's *Tragical History* is certainly the most frequently cited part of the entire text. To problematize the blinkered scholarly treatment of the poem, we might also look to a range of other paratextual features. The frontispiece, for instance, is similarly misleading, because it incorrectly claims that Brooke's poem is a direct translation of Matteo Bandello's 1554 Italian version. Critics have long agreed that this was not the case; *The Tragical History* was almost certainly based upon the 1559 French version by Pierre Boaistuau.[49] Whilst important research by Michael Saenger has traced the inherent commercialism of early modern frontispieces, other motives were clearly at stake; and we have no reason to separate title pages from a religious reading culture in which '[e]very syllable and every letter came under relentless scrutiny'.[50] Heidi Brayman Hackel contends that, of 'all the different paratextual materials', title pages and frontispieces were among the marginal material which 'most explicitly direct[ed] readers' experiences of a text', and were used to 'define and shape' reading experiences. [51] Boaistuau's version of the Romeo and Juliet tale was printed just one year before the author presented a manuscript copy of his *Histoires Prodigieuses* monster-collection to Queen Elizabeth, in person in 1559.

Here we might also apply Patterson's sixth principle: that censorship 'encouraged the use of historical or other uninvented texts, such as translations' that 'provided an interpretive mechanism' to distance an author from sensitive content.[52] Whilst scholars have not traced forms of confessional bias in Boaistuau's Romeo and Juliet adaptation, scholars have identified that the early editions of the *Histoires Prodigieuses* were marked by anti-Catholicism, and Boaistuau has himself been identified as a Huguenot by Alexandra Walsham.[53] Following his very recent presentation of this text to Elizabeth I, Pierre Boaistuau may well have had a reputation among English readers for anti-Catholicism. In light of the Brooke preface's emphasis on tolerance and inclusivity – and his poem's

sympathetic depictions of Catholicism more generally – could the frontispiece have deliberately distanced itself from Boaistuau for commercial and political reasons? In other words, might the author and/or printer have wanted to disguise the French source because of its connections to Boaistuau's anti-Catholic polemic, at a time of heightened Catholic aggression in France? This does not necessarily connote religious bias, but may well reflect a cautionary strategy by printer and/or author to avoid association with any form of religious polemic.

This brings us to the professional profile of *The Tragical History*'s printer, Richard Tottell. Tottell not only printed Brooke's poem, but also its first English adaptation (by Garter in 1565[54]); he also obtained a license to reissue Brooke's poem in 1587.[55] That Tottell's business practice was invested in and impacted by continental affairs (at least materially), is suggested by his use of the 'Hand and Star' print-house sign: which stood 'as an emblematic statement of his dependence on imported paper, which he confessed every time he directed customers to his shop – with the sign of the Hand & Star, a common watermark in early English imprints, signalling paper imported from France or Italy'.[56] In addition, between 1561 and 1565, Tottell's print catalogue was almost exclusively English common law books or abridgements of English law, with a peripheral body of texts relating to classical law and legal-moral philosophy. In all, Tottell printed at least 43 editions of English law books in these years, and his printing of two separate versions of the Romeo and Juliet story stands out markedly from his wider patented catalogue.[57] As Zachary Lesser argues, both writers and readers were sensitively aware of printer specializations in the period; and printer reputations affected the types of texts that they could/would print, and also informed consumer attitudes towards their wares.[58] Adrian Johns claims that a titled stationer's name 'could tell a prospective reader as much about the contents as could that of the author'.[59] Tottell's name was indelibly associated with English law books in these years, with only his later 1565 edition of the *Miscellany* poetry collection (for which he is best known) can otherwise be classed as 'literary', with any 'secular-aesthetic' readership in mind. Secularity is, however, difficult to ascribe in this context, and Tottell's Marian composition of the *Miscellany* seems itself to be marked by political bias. Peter C. Herman argues that Tottell had participated in 'the creation of a distinctly English, distinctly Catholic culture intended to answer the Protestant nationalism arising in response to Mary I's attempt to bring England back into the Catholic fold'.[60] It is unlikely that Tottell could have retained his prominent position in the Stationers' syndicate as a crypto-Catholic, but his hand in the *Miscellany*'s political strategy surely distances him from the anti-Catholic label which

Brooke's preface has attracted to *The Tragical History*. The printer seems to have remained 'a religious moderate' throughout his career, 'rather than a Catholic or Protestant partisan'.[61] Richard Tottell may have had no religious agenda whatsoever in deciding to print Brooke's translation, but his customers could well have associated texts carrying the insignia of his printhouse with a balanced theological stance.

Thinking beyond material textual trappings, whilst we know very little about the life and reputation of Arthur Brooke, politically attuned Elizabethans would have recognized his family name – and would almost certainly have associated it with continental diplomacy and moderate religious views. Arthur was almost certainly the grandson of Sir George Brooke, 9th Baron Cobham (*c*.1497-1558), and first-cousin of Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham (1564-1619) – the man (and family) that Shakespeare offended with his Falstaff-Oldcastle misdemeanour in *1 Henry IV*.[62] According to Julian Lock, the 'Brookes enjoyed diverse family and political connections'. Reformist relatives included Thomas Cranmer, Sir William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon, but the Brookes 'were also related to the Catholic Southwell and Shelley families'.[63] Furthermore, the family line held prominent links to diplomatic and military service on the continent, especially in France. Arthur died in 1563 aboard a royal ship bound for Le Havre (to bolster English martial support of the Huguenots), following the military calling of his ancestry.[64] This was typified by the service of his grandfather, Sir George, who was famed for his military service in France. Having 'served with distinction' in 1522 he was knighted after the English capture of Morlaix; later in 1522 he was appointed as Deputy of Calais, and played a key role in negotiating peace with the French and in the return of Boulogne.[65] Though George Brooke retained a prominent position at court during the reign of Mary I, he was briefly imprisoned in the Tower in 1554 for suspected aid of (his nephew) Thomas Wyatt's insurrection, and was 'distrusted as a heretic and of harbouring 'French leanings', in the words of the imperial ambassador Simon Renard'.[66] George had ten sons and, where evidence survives, it seems that the Brookes (/Cobhams[67]) were encouraged to travel in their youth, and to use the skills they acquired to serve their monarch in diplomatic and military roles on the continent. For instance, George Brooke's fifth surviving son (Arthur's uncle), the peripatetic Sir Henry (1537-1592), accompanied the diplomat Sir Thomas Chaloner to Spain in 1561, joined the embassy of Thomas Radcliff to pursue Elizabeth's Austrian marriage project in 1567, served as special ambassador to the Low Countries in 1570, and carried out diplomatic duties in Spain in 1571. This experience served his reputation well, as '[r]umours of 1572 and 1575 had him receiving the premier diplomatic posting' in France, and he eventually assumed the resident ambassador role in France in 1579

– becoming a key sensor for Walsingham's surveillance of English Catholic exiles on the continent.[68] William Brooke, tenth Baron Cobham (1527-1597), spent time in Padua and the Veneto in the 1540s, was licensed to carry arms in Venice, was enrolled in the Boulogne garrison, before being 'transferred to Calais under his father, and was knighted' in 1548. In 1549 he accompanied Sir William Paget on his embassy to Brussels, and in 1551 he 'joined the French embassy of William Parr, marquess of Northampton'. William played out the rest of his career as a crucial go-between of English diplomacy and various Catholic outposts, particularly in Spain – a position that attracted rumours of pro-Catholic controversy, despite his importance to the Cecil faction.[69] Such was William's Brooke's domestic responsibility for stranger communities, that in 1581 the Privy Council ordered him to investigate and 'supervise restitution' of complaints from the alien community in Sandwich.[70] In short, Arthur Brooke's family was notorious and influential, with deep roots in English aristocratic culture and a clear reputation for foreign diplomatic and military service, especially in France. How this might have affected how Arthur Brooke's poem was read is difficult to gauge; but in the context of 1562, it seems reasonable to conclude that Elizabethan readers could easily have connected the Brooke/Cobham family name with travel, diplomacy and with distinct forms of Anglo-European multiculturalism.

The connections between the Brooke family and European politics go some way to explain the circumstances of Arthur's death: drowned on a 1563 shipwreck which was bringing military aid to the Huguenots, just four months after the first edition of his *Tragical History* was printed.[71] The tragic death of *Romeus and Juliet*'s author has traditionally – and quite logically – supported the thesis that he was a militant Protestant. That the tragedy was also used to market the posthumous publication of his only other known work, a translation of an anonymous Huguenot exegetical tract, has certainly encouraged this partisan conclusion. But if we think of Brooke's wider familial context of Anglo-European communication and cross-confessional mediation, we can consider a more nuanced religious picture.

Indeed if we look to the contents of Huguenot text that Brooke chose to translate, there is substantial continuity with *Romeus and Juliet's* general air of tolerance and inclusivity. Entitled *The Agreement of Sundry Places of Scripture seeming in show to jar*, the translation selects biblical passages that readers and exegetes could see as conflicting or contradictory – unpacking and attempting to resolve apparent scriptural contradictions.[72] Among other advice, the text instructs its Huguenot readers to endure persecution and exile with piety, vindicating religious dislocation as necessary where and when the commonwealth

demands it: exiles are 'not to flee into caves or secret places: but when their labour profiteth not in one town' they 'should withdraw themself unto another'.[73] This intervenes into contemporary disputes regarding the Huguenots (and other reform refugees), by presenting valorous religious migration as acceptable only where one can contribute to their place of exile, in socio-economic terms. This sympathy and sensitivity to the lives of dislocated Christians is expressed in *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, but in this poem it is clearly extended to displaced Catholicism. Despite the suggestive circumstances of Brooke's untimely and tragic death, the evidence is not substantive enough to frame our reading of *The Tragical History* as anti-Catholic.

Even if we set to one side these paratextual details and the print-market and political contexts, it is challenging to imagine how any reader could engage with text of *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* itself as militantly Protestant. The narrative insistently romanticises the story's Veronese setting, and its narrator is 'tremblingly sympathetic' to the plight of Romeus and Juliet.[74] The text's most sharpened portrayal of structures of Catholicism is, however, certainly its (Franciscan) Friar Laurence character. Not only the type of Catholic official demonized by pro-Reform propaganda, Laurence secretly marries the teenagers, hears their confessions, conceals their secret, and (unlike Shakespeare's version) makes the resurrection vial for Juliet – hence the preface deems him iniquitous. But, in contrast to the stock-comic friar that the pre-text sets up, the poem consistently depicts Laurence as wise, thoughtful, and well-intentioned; and his protection of Romeus and Juliet is based upon paternal love, trust, and belief in the validity and sanctity of their marriage. The narrator extends substantial sympathy and admiration for the 'barefoot' Franciscan (565-566): 'Of all he is beloved well, and honoured much of all. / And for he did the rest in wisdom far exceed' (578-579) – who gives council not only to the Montagues, but also to the Capulets and the Prince (580-581). He is also given more complexity than Shakespeare's later version – for example, where we are made privy to his peripatetic backstory. For before describing the sedative 'roots and savoury herbs' that Juliet will use to fake her death, he tells her of his travels:

> ... in my youthful days abroad I travailed
>
> Through every land found out by men, by men inhabited;
>
> So twenty years from home, in lands unknown a guest,
>
> I never gave my weary limbs long time of quiet rest,
>
> But in the desert woods, to beasts of cruel kind,

Or on the seas to drenching waves, at pleasure of the wind,

I have committed them to ruth of rovers hand,

And to a thousand dangers more by water and by land.

But not, in vain (my child) hath all my wandring bin,

Beside the great contentedness my spirit abideth in. (2097-2106)

Twenty years in exile, the Friar describes a time of dislocation in which he accrued knowledge of 'What force the stones, the plants, and metals have to work' (2109): affording him arcane knowledge which he will employ only 'When sudden danger forceth me', yet without 'helping to do any sin that wrekeful Jove forbode' (2114; 2116). And though he has been physically unmoored 'in lands unknown', his spirit 'abided' in 'great contentedness' – mirroring the type of advice which was imparted to Englishmen travelling to distant (often Catholic) places later in the period.[75] The Friar does not, moreover, make his decision to help Juliet lightly, and accepts the judgement that will soon await him:

But now am come unto the brink of my appointed grave,

And that my death draws near, whose stripe I may not shun,

But shall be called to make account of all that I have done,

Now ought I from hence forth more deeply print in mind

The judgement of the Lord, then when youth's folly made me blind,

When love and fond desire were boiling in my breast,

Whence hope and dread by striving thoughts had banished friendly rest. (2118-24)

He terms Juliet 'daughter', and the poem repeatedly presents his relationship to Romeus as paternal. Considering that Brooke's Friar sets the tragedy in motion by conducting the secret wedding and concocting (through use of arcane arts) the sleeping powder for Juliet, it is noteworthy that the text's presentation of him is about as far from 'the naturally fit instruments of unchastity' (that the prefatory 'To the Reader' pre-empts) as we could imagine.

The political disjunct between preface and poem manifests itself particularly strongly around the Friar's relationship with Romeus, particularly in the prolonged episode leading up to Romeus's banishment to Mantua – his punishment for murdering Tybalt. Measured from the moment that Friar Laurence delivers news of the sentence to Romeus at line 1290 ('a banished man, thou may'st thee not within Verona's shroud') until he finally gets moving at

1732 ('Warely he walked forth, unknown of friend or foe'), there are 442 lines of poetry – almost 15 per cent of the entire poem. In this lengthy section, there is little narrative development beyond Laurence (and then Juliet) tending to Romeus's intense and heightened fears of the 'cruel banishment … That from thy native lands and friends thou must depart' (1437-38). He is here repeatedly described as a hopeless and persecuted exile: 'banished man' (1290); 'so wal'treth he, and with his breast doth beat the trodden ground' (1293); 'Enforced to fly from her that hath the keeping of thy heart' (1439); chased by Fortune 'hence into exile' (1447); 'chased by winter's nimble wind' (1483); 'restless Romeus' (1529); 'driven from my friends, of strangers must I crave' (1567); 'I must wander in lands unknown' (1569); 'castaway' (1602); 'alone' (1761); wailing 'most his wretchedness that is of wretches chief' (1766); 'in secret place he walk somewhere alone' (1771); and so on, and so on, and so on.

This is significant, because the text's account of Romeus's exile is melodramatic to the extreme – and bears peculiar relation to *The Tragical History'*s actual Italian geography. When, for instance, Friar Laurence consoles Romeus ahead of his impending land voyage (from Verona to Mantua), he does so with a rather jarring emphasis upon seafaring:

> A wise man in the midst of troubles and distress
>
> Still stands not wailing present harm, but seeks his harm's redress.
>
> As when the winter flaws with dreadful noise arise,
>
> And heave the foamy swelling waves up to the starry skies,
>
> So that the bruiséd bark in cruel seas betost,
>
> Despaireth of the happy haven, in danger to be lost,
>
> The pilot bold at helm, cries, 'Mates, strike now your sail,'
>
> And turns her stem into the waves that strongly her assail;
>
> Then driven hard upon the bare and wrackful shore,
>
> In greater danger to be wracked than he had been before,
>
> He seeth his ship full right against the rock to run,
>
> But yet he doth what lieth in him the perilous rock to shun:
>
> Sometimes the beaten boat, by cunning government,
>
> The anchors lost, the cables broke, and all the tackle spent,
>
> The rudder smitten off, and overboard the mast,
>
> Doth win the long desiréd port, the stormy danger passed. (1359-74)

The use of nautical metaphors to describe the self was of course a standard Petrarchan echo (see, for instance, Wyatt's 'My Galley, Charged with Forgetfulness'), and one which has tended to frame readings of Shakespeare's later use of shipwreck imagery in the Romeo and Juliet narrative.[76] But this sits awkwardly here, because Laurence and Romeus are talking about a literal journey; it is all they have talked about for several hundred lines. The destination of Mantua is less than 40 kilometres south of Verona – hardly one day's travel on horseback. (The account of the actual voyage takes exactly two lines to explain: 'He spurred apace, and came, withouten stop or stay, / To Mantua gates, where lighted down, he sent his man away' (1735-36)). But the fears of exile seem far in excess of the reality of this short journey.

Furthermore, as well as being unjust (because Romeus killed Tybalt in self-defence), the exile itself is framed as necessary because it is in the interests of Romeus's long-term goals. Friar Laurence pragmatically reassures Romeus that 'Unto a valiant heart there is no banishment' because 'All countries are his native soil beneath the firmament. / As to the fish the sea, as to the fowl the air' (1443-45). He calms Romeus's overblown grief, by telling him to play the long game:

> Though froward Fortune chase thee hence into exile,
>
> With double honour shall she call thee home within a while.
>
> Admit though should'st abide abroad a year or twain,
>
> Should so short absence cause so long and eke so grievous pain?
>
> Though thou ne may'st thy friends here in Verona see,
>
> They are not banished Mantua, where safely though may'st be. (1446-52)

Romeus's long-term surety requires exile, in the belief that circumstances will change and he will be recalled with 'double honour': 'So banished hope returneth home to banish his despair' (1486). After this lengthy exchange, Romeus' Pauline blindness is lifted: 'affection's veil is removéd from his eyes, / He seeth the path that he must walk' (1486-87). Friar Laurence describes to him a path of temporary exile; and it resembles the type of advice that surrounded all modes of religious displacement throughout the post-reform period.

Why would a strong moralist Protestant or militant Puritan (as Brooke has been termed), devote such emotive attention to exiled Catholic characters? One answer could be that he was less partisan (or sectarian) than has generally been accepted, and that (given his other familial and personal links to French Protestantism) his writing evidences sympathy for

Christian exiles from both churches: not only in-bound Huguenots fleeing French persecution, but also English Catholics moving in the opposite direction. During Elizabeth's reign, Peter Guilday has demonstrated that Catholics left England for religious reasons in three main waves: after the 1558 accession; in 1569 following the Northern Rising; and between 1575-1588, between Elizabeth's excommunication and the Armada attack.[77] So *The Tragical History* was written as these migrations began (in living memory of the earlier Henrician exodus[78]), as some English Catholics fled to and near overseas seminary colleges and universities in Antwerp, Brussels, Louvain, Paris, Madrid, Padua, and Rome. Given that the poem's main protagonist is effectively called 'Rome', and he is being counselled by a Catholic Friar about an impending overseas voyage in distinctly sympathetic tones (with relentless references to exile), the anti-Catholic content of the preface could not sit more incongruously against the wider political textures of these parts of the text.

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So where (if anywhere) does this leave our understanding of how Arthur Brooke's poem was read by its early Elizabethan readers, and by the subsequent generation that included William Shakespeare? To begin, it is useful to revisit the major points of evidence. The print market of 1562 was overwhelmingly political in substance, and the Massacre at Vassy was *the* dominant news story in English letters in this year. This event was being used to promote tolerance and inclusivity of worship for incoming reformist exiles fleeing persecution; and the English Crown was using its presses to justify military intervention in France under the banner of unity against Catholic aggression. *The Tragical History* was translated by a member of the Brooke/Cobham family which had notable ties to the continent, and who were known for their mixed political alliances to houses of both traditionalist and reformist loyalty. Its translator perished aboard a military vessel sending aid to the French Huguenots, and his only other known translation was of a Huguenot exegetical tract (which also emphasized conciliation and integration). Despite the *Tragical History*'s partially anti-Catholic preface, the text itself resists and subverts the anti-Catholicism that we might expect – given the political events unfolding in France, and the ongoing domestic uncertainties about Elizabeth's marital future and the return of Mary Queen of Scots. Where the poem instead presents its readers with a personification of traditionalism in the Friar, not only does it render him

sympathetically but holds up his actions as selfless, well intentioned, and brave. Read in light of contemporary politics, the text's prolonged fixation on the nautical exile of Romeus also imagines (and fears) an experience of forced mobility more apposite to contemporary Anglo-European diaspora than the Verona to Mantua journey of the narrative. Furthermore, the *Tragical History*'s frontispiece distances itself from its actual source: the French version by Pierre Boaistuau – whose author was known to the English court for presenting an anti-Catholic text to Elizabeth in person. Instead, it claims to be translated from the Italian version of Matteo Bandello. Read in the context of 1562's French religious conflict, the decision to distance it from Boaistuau (and France) may well have been political – which is, in itself, suggestive. Advertising the text as directly derived from Bandello seems likely to have served dual commercial and ideological purposes of associating the poem with Italy rather than France, with any implications of pro-Catholicism hopefully being offset by the isolated instance of anti-Catholicism in the poem's preface.

However it was received by its many readers, Brooke's poem was popular and influential. And it is worth noting that the later editions of *The Tragical History* also certainly coincided with moments of sharpened xenophobia in London. According to Nigel Goose, London experienced surges of anti-alien agitation in 1563, 1567, 1586, and 1595.[79] After its 1562 first edition (and 1563/5 adaptation by Garter), *The Tragical History* was reprinted in 1567, 1583, and 1587. So whichever version of the poem Shakespeare read, it had been printed in the wake of xenophobic disquiet in London; and, given the probable first performance year of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1596/7, Shakespeare composed his version of the story in the shadow of similar circumstances.[80] Whether or not Brooke was motivated by civic eruptions of xenophobia, it is logical to consider the possibility that his readers and audiences associated the text's availability with disquiet provoked by rising refugee and migrant numbers – especially given the poem's emphasis on exile and dislocation. (We know, moreover, that Shakespeare wrote in open support of London's migrant communities through his additions to *Sir Thomas More* in 1593[81], with suggestions that that play was commissioned by the Privy Council to ease xenophobic tensions.[82]) Is it possible then, that in Brooke's poem, Shakespeare found a theologically nuanced and sensitive vehicle that spoke to his own contexts of political division? With all of this in mind, it is a curious critical oversight to divorce the Romeo and Juliet story from the politics of division that the English Reformation had fostered – but also, perhaps, from the period's less documented contexts of integration, tolerance and diversity. For when we read it against what we know about the life and wider family and political contexts of its author and the wider reading habits of its

moment of production, Brooke's poem evidences political moderation. It also opens up valuable avenues for discussing forms of Elizabethan multiculturalism and tolerance – against a backdrop of political brutality and polarisation. Perhaps most importantly, it can remind us that moments of political change prompt nuanced artistic expressions, and that reclaiming lost political readings might better inform the political impact of literary studies for our present and future generations.

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[1] Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison and London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 45.

[2] See Stephen B. Dobranksi, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), passim.

[3] On the period's plethora of political and social crises, see Whitney R. D. Jones, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis: 1539-1563* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1973).

[4] Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon, 1998), 229.

[5] Norman Jones, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 4-16 (11).

[6] *The Passage of our Most Dread Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth* (1559), in *Tudor Tracts, 1532-1588*, ed. A. F. Pollard (Westminster: A. Constable & Co., 1903), 365-95 (387-88).

[7] Williams, *Later Tudors,* 237.

[8] Brendan Kane and Valerie McGowan-Doyle, 'Elizabeth I and Ireland: An Introduction', in *Elizabeth I and Ireland*, eds. Kane and McGowan-Doyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1-14.

[9] Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 73-98.

[10] Laura Hunt Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us: Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), 16.

[11] See Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 227-262; 263-284.

[12] On Ochino's time in London see M. Anne Overell, *Italian Reform and English Reformations, c. 1535-1585*, Second Edition (Abington and New York: Routledge, 2016), 41-60.

[13] Michael S. Springer, *Restoring Christ's Church: John a Lasco and the Forma ac ratio* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 41.

[14] Andrew Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 16-17. On the difficulties of interpreting the evidence pertaining to London's migrants and asylum-seekers, see Hunt Yungblut, 13-14.

[15] Hunt Yungblut, 23.

[16] Bindu Malieckal, '"Boat People" in the Early Modern Era', in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, eds. Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 113-134 (122).

[17] Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Introduction', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* eds. Marshall and Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-13 (7).

[18] See Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1998), ix.

[19] Anon., *The Manner of the World Nowadays* (London: 1562; STC 17255). I have modernized all early modern quotations (including titles) for clarity throughout, unless otherwise stated.

[20] Hunt Yungblut, 37, 29.

[21] Ibid., 39.

[22] Ibid., 40-44.

[23] See Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 134, 137.

[24] On the massacre and its immediate aftermath see Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1626*, Second Edition (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 50-75.

[25] Robin D. Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 30.

[26] Ibid., 30-31.

[27] This dataset was taken in May 2016, and is not a full reflection of every surviving printed text from the year: the ESTC British Library search returns 164 records for the year 1562, including re-issues and textual fragments.

[28] On the slow and uncertain process of legislation reform, see David Chan Smith, *Sir Edward Coke and the Reformation of the Laws: Religion, Politics and Jurisprudence, 1578-1616* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 19-59.

[29] All published in London, in 1562 (STC numbers in parentheses): Anon., *The Destruction and Sack Cruelly Committed by the Duke of Guise and his Company, in the Town of Vassy* (11312); Anon.., *A Discourse upon the Liberty or Captivity of the King [Charles IX] 1562* (5034); Anon., *An History Briefly Containing that which hath happened sens the departure of the House of Guise* (12507); Anon., *The Very Truth of the Conference betwixt the Queen Mother and the Prince of Condé* (4813.4); Théodore de Bèze, *An Oration... accompanied with XI other Ministers and XX deputies of the Reformed Churches, in the Presence of the King* (2027); Théodore de Bèze, *The Second Oration ... in the Open Assembly of [ye] Prelates of France* (2028); William Birch, *A New Ballad of the Worthy Service done by Master Strangwige in France, and of his Death* (2078); Louis Prince de Condé, *A Declaration made by my Lord Prince of Condé* (16849.3); Louis Prince de Condé, *A Declaration*, Second Edition (16849.7); Louis Prince de Condé, *A[nother] Declaration ...* (16851); Louis Prince de Condé, *A Second Declaration ... to make known the causers of the troubles which are at this day in this realm* (16850); Louis Prince de Condé, *The Treaty of the Association ... to maintain the honour of God, the quiet of the realm of France* (16852); England and Wales, Sovereign (1558-1603: Eliz. I), *A Declaration of the Queen's Majesty ... Containing the causes which have constrained her to arm certain of her subjects, for defence both of her own estate, and of the most Christian king, Charles IX, her good brother and his subjects* (9187.3); François de Lorraine, duc de Guise, *The Requests presented unto the French King and the Queen his Mother, by the three rulers or triumvirate, with an answer made to the same by the Prince of Condé* (5042); Walter Haddon, *Dialogus Contra Papistrarum Tyrannidem Interlocutores* (19175); Walter Haddon, *Dialogue Against the Tyranny of Papists*, trans. E.C. (19176).

[30] For the problems posed by text-survival-rates see Oliver M. Willard, 'The Survival of English Books Printed before 1640: A Theory and some Illustrations', *The Library*, Fourth Series, 23 (1942): 171-90; and Alan B. Farmer and Zachery Lesser's recent 'What is Print Popularity? A Map of the Elizabethan Book Trade', in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, eds. Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 19-54 (23-25).

[31] Richard Streckfuss, 'News Before Newspapers', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 75/1 (1998): 84-97 (84). Streckfuss' study excludes ballads and official proclamations. For an overview of international news reporting in the period as market-driven, see S. K. Barker, 'International News Pamphlets', in *Elizabethan Top Ten*, eds. Kesson and Smith, 145-156.

[32] Anon., *Destruction and Sack*, Sig. A5^v.

[33] On the complex relationship that developed between the English government and its Huguenot refugees see Gwynn, 42-59.

[34] Williams, 241: quoting *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth*, ed. Conyers Read (London: Cape, 1955), 244.

[35] *A Declaration of the Queen's Majesty*, Sig. B1^r. The slur 'Huguenot' was coined after the Conspiracy of Amboise in 1560, and 'derived from a ghost said to haunt the region of Amboise at night' – and was applied by French Catholics 'to the Protestants because of their nocturnal gatherings and evil doings' (Benedict, 143).

[36] Williams, 237.

[37] Thomas Cranmer, *Certain Sermons ... to be declared and read by all persons, vicars and curates, every Sunday ... for the better understanding of the simple people* (13650.7), Sig. Y4^r.

[38] Anthony Askham, *A Little Treatise of Astronomy* (857a); Claudius Ptolemy, *The Compost of Ptolomeus, Prince of Astronomy*, trans. C. F. (20481.7); Richard Roussat, *The Most Excellent, Profitable, and Pleasant Book of the Famous Doctor and Expert Astrologian Arcandain or Aleandrin*, trans. William Ward (724); three editions of John Securis, *An Almanac and Prognostication* (509, 510, & 510.3); Erra Pater, *The Prognostication* (439.15); and Nostradamus, *An Almanac for the year 1562* (492.7). The 1562 monster texts: Anon., *The Description of a monstrous pig, which was farrowed at Hamsted beside London* (6768); Anon., *The true report of the form and shape of a monstrous child* (12207); William Fulwood, *The Shape of II monsters* (11485); D. John, *A Description of a monstrous child born at Chichester* (6177).

[39] Norman Jones, *Birth of the Elizabethan Age*, 38.

[40] John S. Pendergast, *Religion, Allegory, and Literacy in Early Modern England, 1560-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[41] Geoffrey Bullough, 'Introduction: *Romeo and Juliet*', in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Bullough, 8 Vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), I: 269-283 (275).

[42] From Bullough, 267-363 (284-85). Emphases mine. All references from this edition unless otherwise stated. Hereafter cited in-text.

[43] James C. Bryant, 'The Problematic Friar in *Romeo and Juliet*', in *Romeo and Juliet: Critical Essays*, ed. John F. Andrews (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 321-336 (325); Jill L. Levenson, 'Arthur Brook', in *Tudor England: An Encyclopaedia*, eds. Arthur Kinney and David W. Swain (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 91. Naseeb Shaheen refers to Brooke as a 'stern Protestant moralist' in *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Newark, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987), 74. More recently, David Pearce describes Brooke's 'biased' poem as wearing 'its author's Puritanism and anti-Catholicism on its sleeve' in *Shakespeare on Love: Seeing the Catholic Presence in Romeo and Juliet* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013), 18-20; and Mark Dahlquist refers to Brooke as a 'severely pious' and 'devout Protestant' in his 'Strange Love: Funerary Erotics in *Romeo and Juliet*', in *Sexuality and Memory in Early Modern England: Literature and the Erotics of Recollection*, eds. John S. Garrison and Kyle Pivetti (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 129-143 (131).

[44] Patterson, 44-119.

[45] Patterson, 48, 57.

[46] Mike Pincombe lists Garter's poem as the first adaptation of Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*. Though he acknowledges that it is 'not a formal imitation of the plot', nevertheless 'the poem shows a clear debt to Brooke's in its tone and genre'. 'Adaptations: *Romeus and Juliet*', in 'Origins of Early Modern Literature: Recovering Mid-Tudor Writing for a Modern Readership', Online database <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/origins/frame.html> [10/09/2018].

[47] B[ernard] G[arter], *The Tragical and true history which happened between Two English Lovers* (London: 1565; STC 11631), Sig. A2ʳ. Emphases mine.

[48] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). On early modern application of Gennette's taxonomy, see Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, 'Introduction', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, eds. Smith and Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-14.

[49] For the pre-Bandello provenance of the Romeo and Juliet story see Christopher Dearner, 'Timeline', in *Romeo and Juliet: A Critical Reader*, ed. Julia Reinhard Lupton (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), xiv-xxiii. On the differences between the Italian and French versions, see H. B. Charlton, 'France as Chaperone of Romeo and Juliet', *Studies in French Language and Medieval Literature presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939), 43-59.

[50] Michael Saenger, *The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 49.

[51] Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005), 88.

[52] Patterson, 57.

[53] Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 72. For the fullest account of the confessional status and reputation of the *Histoires Prodigieuses* and its later adaptations *s*ee Jennifer Spinks, 'Print and Polemic in Sixteenth-Century France: The *Histoires prodigieuses,* confessional identity, and the Wars of Religion', *Renaissance Studies* 27.1 (2011): 73-96.

[54] See note 46 above.

[55] J. J. Munro, 'Introduction', *Brooke's Romeus and Juliet being the Original of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), lxi. All quotations from *The Tragical History* from this edition.

[56] Helen Smith, '"Imprinted by Simeon such a signe": Reading Early Modern Imprints', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, eds. Smith and Wilson, 17-33 (28), quoting John Bidwell, 'French Paper in English Books', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, eds. John Barnard, D. F. McKenzie and I. R. Willison, 5 vols. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999-2012), IV: 583-601 (585).

[57] Tottell held patent over English common law books since 1553 (renewed by Elizabeth I in 1559). See Anna Greening, 'Tottell [Tottel, Tothill], Richard (*b.* in or before 1528, *d.* 1593)', *Oxford DNB*. I have consulted Tottell's known works from Katharine F. Pantzer's index to *A Short Title of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland, and of English books printed abroad, 1475-1640*, eds. Pollard and Redgrave, 3 vols. (London: Biographical Society, 1991), III: 169-170.

[58] Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), *passim,* esp. 26-51.

[59] Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 147.

[60] Peter C. Herman, '*Songes and Sonettes*, 1557', in *Tottell's Songes and Sonnettes in Context*, eds. Stephen Hamrick, James Daybell and Adam Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 111-130 (111).

[61] Stephen Hamrick, 'Introduction: *Songes and Sonettes* Reconsidered', in *Tottell's 'Songes and Sonettes' in Context*, eds. Hamrick, Daybell and Smith, 1-11 (7).

[62] Nina Green, 'Who was Arthur Brooke? Author of *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*', *The Oxfordian* 3 (2000): 59-70.

[63] Julian Lock, 'Brooke, William, tenth Baron Cobham (1527-1597)', *Oxford DNB*.

[64] According to Peter Fleming, the reputations of at least seven members of the family had been firmly associated with military service in France. 'Cobham Family (*per. c*.1250-*c*.1530)', *Oxford DNB*.

[65] C. S. Knighton, 'Brooke, George, ninth Baron Cobham (*c*.1497-1558)', *Oxford DNB*.

[66] Knighton citing 'Simon Renard to the Emperor' (Letter: 1554 May 6, Brussels) in *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain*, eds. G. A. Bergenroth et al., 3 vols., PRO (London, 1892-9; repr. 1949), XII: 239.

[67] The Brookes followed a family custom of using their title (Cobham) as surname.

[68] Julian Lock, 'Brooke [Cobham], Sir Henry (1537-1592)', *Oxford DNB*.

[69] Lock, 'Brooke, William'.

[70] Hunt Yungblut, 50.

[71] The circumstances of Brooke's death were relayed by a 1567 poem: 'An Epitaph on the death of Master Arthur Brooke, drowned in passing to Newhaven', included in George Turberville's *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs and Sonnets* (STC 24326), 143ᵛ.

[72] Anon. *The Agreement of Sundry Places of Scripture*, trans. Arthur Brooke (London: 1563; STC 3811).

[73] Ibid., 261.

[74] Jonathan Gibson, 'Tragical Histories, Tragical Tales', *Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature*, 521-536 (529).

[75] For example, a 1605 travel guide warned English travellers against 'the smooth incantations of [the] insinuating seducer' on the continent, sparing particular emphasis for the dangers posed by the Jesuits fostered by the 'seminary and nursery of English fugitives', Rome. Sir Robert Dallington, *A Method for travel, showed by taking the view of France* (London: 1605; STC 6203), Sig. B2ᵛ.

[76] The most sustained analysis of the nautical conceit is John McGee's 'Piloted by Desire: The Nautical Theme in Romeo and Juliet', *English Studies* 95.4 (2014): 392-409.

[77] Peter Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees on the Continent 1558-1795* (London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914), xvii.

[78] See Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England*, 227-262.

[79] Nigel Goose, '"Xenophobia" in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: An Epithet Too Far?', in *Immigrants in Tudor and Stuart England*, eds. Goose and Lien Luu (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 110-35 (119-20).

[80] On the probable timeline of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* see Dearner, 'Timeline', xxiii.

[81] On Shakespeare's additions to this text see John Jones, *Shakespeare at Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7-29. On the anti-xenophobia of his contribution see E. A. J. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare, *Sir Thomas More* and Asylum Seekers', *Shakespeare Survey*, 57 (2004): 225-235. Goose describes the circumstances of 1593 as provoking the most extreme levels of xenophobia since the Evil May Day riots of 1517 ('Xenophobia', 120).

[82] William B. Long, 'The Occasion of *The Book of Sir Thomas More*', in *Shakespeare and 'Sir Thomas More'*, ed. Howard-Hill, 45-46. Others have unpacked Shakespeare's sustained interest in themes of exile throughout this period, with plays such as *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like it*, *Pericles*, and *The Tempest* representing refugees and strangers in sympathetic lights. See Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Shakespeare's Drama of Exile* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Sabine Schülting, '"What country, friends, is this?" The Performance of Conflict in Shakespeare's Drama of Migration', in *Shakespeare and Conflict: A European Perspective*, eds. Carla Dente and Sara Sonchini (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 24-39.