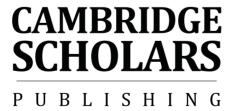# Early Modern Communi(cati)ons

Early Modern Communi(cati)ons:
Studies in Early Modern English Literature and Culture

Edited by

Kinga Földváry and Erzsébet Stróbl

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

To the Memory of Professor István Géher
(1940–2012)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

Introduction

Early Modern Communions
and Communications

Kinga Földváry and Erzsébet Stróbl

The essays in the current volume have grown out of the fruitful discussions that characterised both the panels on early modern literature and culture, and the series of Shakespearean sessions at the 10th biennial Conference of the Hungarian Society for the Study of English, held on 27–29 January, 2011 at Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Piliscsaba, Hungary. The number of papers dedicated to Renaissance and particularly Shakespearean research at the conference aptly demonstrated the powerful presence of early modern studies in Hungarian academia, a presence which has been one of the traditional strengths of English studies in the country, and the animated discussion among scholars of early modern studies proved that there is not only a past but also a promising future for such collaborations. Taking up on the offer of Cambridge Scholars Publishing, the essays have been developed into research articles, with a conscious effort to emphasise links among individual contributions, thus strengthening the cohesion within the volume as a whole.

The title of the volume, by its rather general tone admitting to the simple fact that there are many types of connections and communications within a field as diverse as early modern studies, also speaks of each and every contribution in particular, and the whole volume in general. More than anything, the volume demonstrates that the connections and common points of reference within early modern studies bind Elizabethan and Jacobean cultural studies and Shakespearean investigations together in an unexpected number of ways, and therefore no researcher should afford to keep themselves excluded of this discussion by focusing exclusively on a narrow and limited field.

The variety of meanings associated with both key words hidden or laid over each other at the heart of the title *Early Modern Communi(cati)ons,* lend themselves to a particularly easy introduction of the individual

contributions. At the same time, the words also reflect on the ties that bind the various topics and discussions to the collection as a whole. "Communion" is rooted in the Latin adjective *communis*, meaning "common," and this sense of sharing notions, images, or particular pieces of creation and tradition is central to the argumentation of most essays in the collection. Communion is also defined by the *OED* as "the sharing and exchanging intimate thoughts and feelings, especially on a mental and spiritual level," and it is hard not to feel this intimacy of approach, this emotional proximity that each and every author displays toward their own respective topics. Moreover, most pieces also focus on an exchange, a handing over of traditions, over time and space, from classical and medieval origins, frequently pointing beyond the early modern period. Communion is also regularly used with strong religious connotations, which is equally relevant in our case, since several of the essays deal at least in part with a sacred or clerical context within which elements of literary tradition gain an additional meaning of divine import.

The root of "communication," on the other hand, is none other than the Latin verb *communicare*, meaning again "to share," and as most of the essays in the collection demonstrate, sharing is an inherent feature of the early modern period, in between the relatively closed cultural spheres of the Middle Ages, and the liberated thinking of the enlightenment. Early modern culture could not choose but share most of the traditions it inherited from the medieval period, particularly in the more informal spaces of low and popular culture, even though authors associated with high culture are often characterised by a conscious turning back to the art of the Antiquity. At the same time, the period also functioned as a bridge towards modernity, selecting and transforming elements of both pagan Antiquity and Christian Middle Ages to preserve and share with later eras.

Set in the above delineated contexts of communions and communications, the first group of essays deals with early modern culture, presenting the socio-historical context which is necessary for any in-depth literary investigation, as exemplified through analyses of outstanding literary achievements from the period. The section is headed by Erzsébet Stróbl's reading of a prayer book compiled for Queen Elizabeth I, where the significance of the visual layout of an Elizabethan book with the alternative narrative presented by the border illustrations is underscored. While the inherent relationship of text and margins is widely acknowledged in the context of pre-Reformation devotional books, the essay argues that during the first half of the Elizabethan period this tradition survived and was fostered by one of the outstanding publishers of Protestant works, John Day. In her essay Stróbl examines both the

religious and political implications of the parallel messages offered by the dramatic juxtaposition of the prayers of the English Queen and the accompanying images of the *danse macabre* cycle.

The following essay, still dealing with the mid-Tudor era, focuses on a short chapter from William Harrison's *Description of England*, the chorographical text published as an introduction to Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Kinga Földváry's reading of Harrison's treatise on giants shows that such a pseudo-historical topic, still in circulation in scholarly discussions of the period, helps the modern reader to get insights into themes as diverse as the Puritan belief in a providential interpretation of human history, the variety of Bible translations, and, first and foremost, the particular working methods of William Harrison himself. She argues that for all the textual and scholarly failings of the Puritan clergyman, Harrison's text displays a personal dedication to the cause of Protestantism that elevates even the passages otherwise little characterised by individual authorial creativity.

Similarly to the previous essay, Ágnes Strickland-Pajtók's piece also approaches an often neglected aspect of a well-known late Tudor literary work. She offers an enquiry into another cornerstone of early modern literature from the Elizabethan era, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, focusing on a group of characters within the epic whose fate does not often trouble readers or critics: those female figures whom she calls middle women, since they belong neither to the impeccable and exemplary positive heroines, nor to the evil antagonists of the romance, but fall somewhere in between on a moral scale. The author argues that it is precisely their fallibility, their occasional weaknesses and proneness to commit mistakes what makes them human, and what invokes the sympathy not only of modern readers, but apparently also Spenser's narrator, who shows a more lenient treatment towards them than what fallen women could reasonably expect in the age.

The last two essays in the first part of the volume move beyond the sixteenth century, and approach two of the major authors of the seventeenth, John Donne and John Milton. Noémi Najbauer chooses a new perspective to examine the vast body of the extant sermons of Donne, the theory of mind, combining the philosophical, theological and literary approaches of scholarship on Donne. After introducing the basic concept of *ars memoriae,* the antique rhetorical technique of the art of memory, the essay argues for its relevance in the Anglican preaching tradition in general, and in the construction of the structure and imagery of Donne's sermons in particular. Najbauer shows how both Donne's use of mental spaces as structural units, and the variety of striking metaphors he

employed testify to the significance of the art of memory in the homiletic literature of the early seventeenth century.

No volume on early modern English literature would be complete without reference to the greatest masterpiece of English epic poetry, and thus an essay by Gábor Ittzés completes the first part of the volume, re-examining a key issue of the interpretation of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*: the temporal aspects of the terrestrial action. Through the careful investigation of Milton's use of cognitive and poetic-metaphorical indicators of time, and the meticulous study of the scholarship of the last three hundred years, the author offers a comprehensive analysis of Milton's earthly chronology from Satan's entry into cosmos until the day of the expulsion. Ittzés also establishes the general narrative principles of presenting the passing of time in Milton's work, and calls attention to the pitfalls of the overinterpretation of the text.

Set against the backdrop of the above delineated early modern literary traditions, the second part of the volume focuses on the oeuvre of the most famous representative of the age, William Shakespeare, with individual chapters creating a tangible continuum, moving from the cultural and literary context that informs his work, to the interpretation in present-day performances and their theoretical background. Tibor Fabiny's article explores the influence of the language of the Bible upon the making of early modern culture. Going back to the time of religious controversies in the early Tudor period, Fabiny claims that the works of the first Bible translator, William Tyndale played a key role in the formation of the English language. Through analysis of the linguistic, theological and literary connotations of the word "atonement" coined by Tyndale, the essay presents how the word first used in Biblical-related contexts ultimately contributed to the artistic principle of "reconciliation" in the plays of William Shakespeare, and became the key motif in his mature comedy, *As You Like It*.

The next two essays deal with the broader context of Shakespearean theatre, investigating various literary and performative traditions of sixteenth-century popular culture. Krisztina N. Streitman's article, after introducing the most influential critical theories on early modern popular culture by C. L. Barber, Michael Bakhtin, and Peter Burke, outlines the major elements of this predominantly oral tradition, and provides an extensive analysis of its influence on the formation of the character of Falstaff in the Shakespearean canon. Writing about the arguably most famous Elizabethan entertainer, William Kemp, the essay sketches out the parallels between the life and career of Kemp as a star performer of the morris and jig, and the various character traits assigned to Falstaff by the

bard in the *Henry IV* plays. Streitman argues that the metaphorical links between the historical and the fictional figures, both associated with the carnival and the Lord of Misrule traditions, may also provide support for a biographical connection between the two.

In close communion with the previous piece, Natália Pikli's essay also investigates the popular culture of the age of Shakespeare, albeit from a slightly different perspective: she underlines its transformation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as brought about by the disappearance of certain medieval festive and religious rituals due to the Reformation. Looking at one of the most interesting elements, the figure of the hobby-horse, a physical and metaphorical link to medieval traditions, Pikli unveils the palimpsest of inherited and translucent cultural and linguistic layers that inform the dramatic texts of the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, proving the hobby-horse to be no less than a treasure trove of cultural connotations.

Another exciting link between past ages and the early modern period is exemplified by the work of a young scholar, Zita Turi, in her essay on *The Ship of Fools*. Turi follows the appearance of the theme from Sebastian Brant's fifteenth-century High German text, to its development into a widely used metaphor in English literature by the end of the sixteenth century. The author relies on an in-depth reading of critical literature to show the roots of the metaphor in popular culture, and to argue that by virtue of the tradition of the emblem book and the *impresa* behind the first English translation by Alexander Barclay, the volume may even be considered as the first emblem book printed in England. She then moves on to investigate various uses of the theme in the dramatic literature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, identifying and interpreting references to *The Ship of Fools* in the work of Thomas Nashe, Thomas Dekker, beside the oeuvre of William Shakespeare.

The very same rich dramatic tradition of the age provides the backdrop to the chapter by Attila Kiss as well, whose writing focuses on the presence of violence, horror, and transgression in the imagery of early modern tragedy. With examples from Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*, and through the analysis of *The Revenger's Tragedy,* Kiss argues that the enhanced use of the "dissected, tortured, anatomized and mutilated human body on the Tudor and Stuart stage" signifies an epistemological change, and marks out the audience's interest for hitherto unrevealed dimensions of the human anatomy. To substantiate his claims about the preoccupation with representations of the human body of an anatomical precision, he turns not only to dramatic literature, but also alludes to other artistic and narrative genres of the period where an intensified desire to

present and test the "inward dimensions of the human body and mind" is detectable.

Moving on from the heritage of past ages, the following group of essays also bears witness to the communicative power of the Shakespearean text, reaching out from the early modern period to our own times, constantly re-acquiring its relevance via new interpretive and performative traditions. The chapter by Géza Kállay examines the relationship between names and personal identity in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* and the related question of the various uses of the word "part" within the play. Relying on ideas of the theory of names by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Peter Strawson, John Searle and Saul Kripke, the essay analyzes the power of the name and naming above identity, and attempts to offer answers to questions such as how far a name may penetrate into the self of a person, or how it determines personal characteristics, or whether it is a social frame that can be discarded with ease.

This analytical and systematic reading of *Romeo and Juliet* is followed by the close reading of the text of *Hamlet* by a young scholar, Balázs Szigeti. His analysis of the soliloquies of Hamlet and Claudius by the methods of pre-performance criticism sheds light above all on the text's theatrical potential. Szigeti claims that the conflict and struggle of the two characters is manifested in the power of the soliloquies to best express the two characters' inner thoughts and to secure the support of the audience. He enumerates the alternative performance possibilities the text provides for actors and interpreters, and approaches the play from a directorial aspect, sensitive to the living connection between *Hamlet* on the page, that is, in critical writing, and in live performance on the stage.

The final chapter in the volume, Veronika Schandl's essay may be easily read as a conclusion that reinforces many of the themes investigated by other contributors. She focuses on two Hungarian theatre productions, an 1986 performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by István Somogyi, and Sándor Zsótér's 2009 *Hamlet*. Her interpretation places both productions not only in the historical context of the fall of communism and the subsequent changes in the cultural and theatrical life of the country, but she also intends to point beyond the generally accepted categories offered by theatre historian Árpád Kékesi-Kun, and argues for the significance of metatheatricality and polyfunctionality as the key terms we may use to describe the postmodern developments in the theatre in the past two and a half decades.

In the same way as the volume comprises writings on a diverse but still coherent range of topics, the authorial team is equally representative of diversity and continuity at the same time. The authors include several

senior scholars working in the Hungarian academic community, representing all significant research centres in the field from all over the country, but a number of essays have been contributed by promising young talents as well. The editors hope that in the same way these essays have developed a network of communication between locations and generations, individual scholars and research communities, they will also manage to inspire further generations of early modern researchers, at times and places far removed from the birth of these essays.

We wish to dedicate the volume to the memory of the late Professor István Géher, the father figure of Hungarian Shakespeare scholarship, whose vision and personality contributed to the formation of the close-knit scholarly community of early modern English studies in Hungary. We hope that these essays may communicate to the world at least part of his heartfelt enthusiasm for the early modern period, and his dedication to William Shakespeare's oeuvre in particular, which is the true legacy of his life and work.

PART I

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN EARLY MODERN TEXTS

THE QUEEN AND DEATH:
AN ELIZABETHAN BOOK OF DEVOTION

ERZSÉBET STRÓBL

In an early Elizabethan prayer book of 1569[1] one's eyes meet with the depiction of a queen being led off by a skeleton. The verse lines accompanying it warns the reader "Queene also thou doost see: As I am, so thou shall be," and the bottom border illustration further increases the threat by an effigy of a queen inscribed "We that were of highest degree; Lye dead here now, as ye do see."[2] The prayer framed by this margin is a Latin language composition speaking in the persona of a queen. It asserts her unworthiness, gives thanks for God's protection and asks for his help: "Extend, O Father, extend, I say, to Thy daughter from thy sublime throne those things Thou judgest to be necessary for her in such an arduous and unending office."[3] The Queen's words and the image of Death appeared in close proximity on the same page. Could it be a coincidence, or was it an editorial choice?

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Latin* was popularly known as Queen Elizabeth I's prayer book, and the section where the Dance of Death sequence appeared contained the foreign language prayers speaking in the Queen's personalized voice. Although this arrangement is conspicuous, no attempt has been made yet to study the reading of the text of the prayers and the border images together as a complex means of communication. The following article argues that this prayer book needs to be analysed in the way early modern books—especially devotional books—were read, that is,

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[1] Richard Day, *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Latin* (London: J. Day, 1569).
[2] Ibid., Oo3r.
[3] "Porrige pater, porrige inquā è sublime solio filiæ tuæ, quæ illi ad tam arduú necessaria esse iudicas," ibid., Oo4v. The translation is from the edition of the prayers in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works,* ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 159–60.

we have to take into consideration the implications suggested by the possible connection between the image of the Queen fashioned in the prayers and the illustrations depicting the figures of Death. The aim of the present paper is to look at this visual aspect of the printed page—illustrations, arrangement, and the medium—in order to enrich the understanding of the cultural significance of the text and to enfold the multiple layers of meaning inherent in this unique prayer book.

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* (1569) was published by John Day, a printer of important devotional books composed in a Reformation spirit. It is a compilation of prayers for private use and relies heavily on Henry Bull's *Christian Prayers and Holie Meditations*[4] published a year earlier. However, it contains additional prayers, among them some English language prayers scattered in the volume and a bunch of foreign language prayers printed together at the end of the book that address God in the first person singular spoken by the persona of the Queen. The book itself stands out among contemporary devotional writings by using figurative border illustrations throughout the entire volume. The richness of the illustrations reflects the influence of the Catholic private prayer books, the Books of Hours. While the Reformation launched an attack on religious images, John Day's book is an example of the contrary process. Instead of purging his work from pictorial representation an attempt was made to establish a relevant Protestant visual imagery for private prayers. A degree of official approval of the project is expressed by the allusions to the Queen's person. A portrait of Elizabeth I in prayer opens the volume, and her prayers end the book. The final position of the Queen's compositions enhances the role of the *danse macabre* theme of the border decoration which also appears at the end of the work. Could this layout have any religious or political overtones on the eve of the Catholic Northern Rebellion and in the climate of severe disputes in Parliament about the Queen's succession?

The following study renders a cultural reading of the pages of *Christian Prayers and Meditations* where the image of the printed page is "understood as a cultural agent rather then a passive medium"[5] and the significance of the layout of texts and borders are treated as important ingredients of the compiler's intentions. The analysis of the visual experience of the reader, the pre-existing cultural, social and political formations and the text of the prayers shed light on one of the aspects of

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[4] Henry Bull, *Christian Prayers and Holie Meditations* (London: Thomas East, 1568).
[5] Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville; London: University Press of Virginia: 1993), 3.

this early modern devotional writing, the message inherent in the dramatic juxtaposition of the image of the English Queen and the figure of Death.

A Book of Devotion: Re-Forming a Catholic Tradition

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* is a collection of devotions for private use in the tradition of the medieval Books of Hours. The Book of Hours (in Latin "Horae," in English "Primer") was the single most popular book of the late Middle Ages representing the "innermost thoughts and most sacred privacies of late medieval people."[6] Modelled on the Latin books used by the clergy it contained a simplified version of the seven daily offices, the Gradual Psalms, the Penitential Psalms, the Litany of Saints, and the Office of the Dead. While the richly illustrated manuscript versions cost a fortune, with the arrival of printing cheap editions were available for a broad layer of society including not just the prosperous aristocracy, but also the gentry, the mercantile classes, shopkeepers and even domestic servants.[7] This laicisation of the clerical forms of prayer was typical of the heightened seriousness of interior religious life that penetrated late medieval society. By 1530, there were at least 760 editions of Books of Hours, among them 114 produced for England.[8] These books appeared also on many portraits[9] to accompany a rich sitter and became icons of an age where private and public beliefs were the subject of the highest political importance. Books of Hours represented not just a valuable possession to be bequeathed in legal testaments, but they were in use for several generations containing notes about their owners as well as remarks about the births and deaths of family members.

After the Reformation the practice of using primers did not cease in England in spite of the concern to enforce communal observance rather than the suspect forms of private prayer.[10] As the devotional life of people

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[6] Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240–1570* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 4.

[7] Ibid., 4, 19, 25, 28, 30.

[8] Ibid., 36.

[9] See the *Portrait of a Young Man* (National Gallery, London) by Petrus Christus, the *Portrait of Mary Wooton, Lady Guildford*, 1527 (St Louis Art Museum, Missouri) and *The More Family*, 1527 (Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel) by Hans Holbein. The portrait of *Princess Elizabeth*, 1546–47 (The Royal Collection at Windsor) attributed to William Scrots represents the English princess with a similar book to the one appearing in the Holbein portraits.

[10] There was a primer printed or reprinted nearly every year between 1534 and 1559 by printers such as N. Bourman (1540), John Byddel (1534, 1535, 1536),

is by nature conservative,[11] even official primers were produced to cater for the unchanged demand for this type of devotional literature. In 1534 a Protestant primer was produced under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell where the denounced doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church (e.g., the rubrics referring to indulgences, or the Office of the Dead) were cut. In 1539 the bishop of Rochester compiled an official primer in Latin and English, and in 1545 an official royal primer was issued where only the doctrinally incorrect prayers (for indulgences, or the Office of the Dead) were left out, but other old prayers used by a broad layer of society remained untouched. During the early reign of Elizabeth primers also continued to be printed[12] and the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* fits into this tradition by its content and layout. Among the old forms of prayer it contained were the Litany, the Seven Penitential Psalms, the arrangement of prayers according to the hours of the day, scriptural prayers and meditations. John Day, its printer and perhaps compiler, who was one of the champions of the Reformation printing trade, realized the continued demand to furnish people with such prayers. The layout of the book, with its sumptuous border illustrations from the life of Christ, the Dance of Death and the Last Judgement furthermore associated the work with primers and catered for the unchanged visual appetite of people.

From the earliest times primers contained a rich selection of illustrations. There were elaborate borders, initials as well as full-page images. A Book of Hours by the sixteenth century in most cases started with the calendar that was accompanied by a set of twelve prints containing the twelve different ages of man, and a depiction of the Anatomical Man. The opening of each of the hours was also illustrated by a set of standardized scenes from the life of Christ, as well as powerful single images, among them a reference to death by the depiction of the

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Robert Clay (1555), Arnold Conings (1559), R. Copland (1540), John Day (1557), T. Gaultier (1550), T. Gibson (1538), Thomas Godfray (1535), Richard Grafton (1540, 1542, 1545, 1546, 1547, 1549, 1551), Richard Kele (1543, 1548), John Kyston and Henry Sutton (1557), John Mayler (1539, 1540), John Mychell (1549), Thomas Petyt (1540, 1542, 1543, 1544, 1545), J. Le Prest (1555, 1556), R. Redman (1537, 1538), Francis Regnault (1535, 1538), C. Ruremond (1536), Wilhelm Seres (1560, 1565, 1566, 1568), Robert Valentin (1551, 1554, 1555, 1556), John Wayland (1539, 1555, 1558), Edward Witchurche (1545, 1546, 1548).

[11] About the reluctance of the population to conform to regulations demanding burning or defacing of images during the early Elizabethan period see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 565–92.

[12] It was only by the late 1570s that the form became old-fashioned. Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 171.

Legend of the Three Living and Dead. Another allusion to the topic of death was the Dance of Death series, which appeared mostly with male characters, though could contain a separate male and female sequence, as for instance in the primer printed in Paris in 1502 by Philippe Pigouchet (STC 15896). Books of Hours for English use were printed not only in England, but on the Continent as well, where their layout was much more elaborate than that of their insular counterparts.

After the Reformation—despite the attack of certain images (those about Mary, Thomas Becket or other saints)—visual representation was not altogether abandoned. Although numerically being slightly less than in other parts of Europe, between 1536 and 1603 more than five thousand images were catalogued in England, and with a moderate estimate of two hundred copies for each volume, over one million images had been in circulation throughout the country by the end of the sixteenth century.[13] Speaking about early modern images Patrick Collinson pointed out that by the later reign of Elizabeth I the mode of representation shifted towards the emblematic, exempting the visual experience from popular culture and making it "terse, cryptic, and allegorically bookish."[14] Instead of the "sacramental gaze" of late-medieval piety, images were looked upon with the "cold gaze" of the reformers that assessed "images in a more didactic and doctrinal way."[15] No such tendency appeared in the books published by Day, which set out to establish a popular visual tradition within the Protestant faith.

John Day was one of the earliest publishers of Reformation polemics. During the Catholic Marian years, he was presumably the printer of the radical Protestant tracts published by the clandestine press under the name of Michael Wood.[16] With the reign of Elizabeth his reputation as a printer of the new faith grew further by becoming the publisher of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. While Day's Protestant allegiances cannot be disputed, it is obvious from his works that he was no puritan iconoclast. Foxe's volume showcased Protestant faith and devotion not just by its text but also by its memorable images. In the various editions of Foxe's martyrology Day created a visual propaganda of the English Reformation

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[13] David Jonathan Davis, *Picturing the Invisible: Religious Printed Images in Elizabethan England* (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2009), https://eric.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/85653/DavisD.pdf?sequence=2, 33.

[14] Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 236.

[15] Davis, *Picturing the Invisible,* 39.

[16] Elizabeth Elveden, *Patents, Pictures and Patronage: John Day and the Tudor Book Trade* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 30–34.

and laid the foundations of a Protestant religious imagery. In the first 1563 edition fifty-three illustrations with fifty-seven occurrences appeared, while in the enlarged 1570 edition 105 illustrations with 149 occurrences were published.[17] Far from rejecting visual representation, Day's work demonstrates a deliberate attempt to continue the long pictorial tradition of Christianity, creating memorable images about the life and struggle of the church. Day's other work, attempting a similarly ambitious task, his *Christian Prayers and Meditations* also attests to his attempt to produce visually pleasing, deluxe editions of writings that advocate the new faith in order to popularize its beliefs not by refusing visuality but by re-forming it. The volume's association with the Queen, both through her personalised voice in some writings and by the royal approval proclaimed in the two full-page royal arms (depicted at the beginning and the end of the book), granted him a chance to explore the possibilities the old medium offered for the new material.

One of the copies of the book, which was specially prepared for the Queen as a presentation copy with hand-coloured illustrations,[18] shows that the taste of the Queen was not against such editions. In 1578 a very similar prayer book with the foreword by John Day's son Richard was published under the title *A Book of Christian Prayers*.[19] In its content this book is usually regarded as a separate work rather than a new edition of the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* as it drastically rearranged its material, deleted and added parts, omitted the foreign language prayers of the Queen, and changed her English language prayers from the first person to the third. However, in its scheme of illustrations it continued John Day's earlier program of using a parallel visual narrative on its borders. The scope of illustrations was largely extended: in addition to the representations of the Life of Christ cycle, the male and female sequences of the Dance of Death and a Last Judgement scene appearing in the 1569 prayer book, it included spectacular new sequences on the Signs of Judgement, the Works of Mercy, the Five Senses, and a procession of Virtues accompanied by their corresponding Vices.[20] This magnificent prayer book was far from unpopular and was reprinted in 1581, 1590, and 1608. However, one may wonder why the Queen's prayers were left out

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[17] Ibid. 100–101.

[18] This copy is in the Lambeth Palace Library. It was hand-coloured presumably by artists in the workshop of Archbishop Matthew Parker at Lambeth Palace for the personal use of the queen.

[19] Richard Day, *A Book of Christian Prayers* (London: John Day, 1578).

[20] See Samuel C. Chew, "The Iconography of *A Book of Christian Prayers* (1578) Illustrated," in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (May, 1945): 293–305.

from these later versions. But before seeking an answer to this question, it is worth considering what importance the margins—in which such illustrations appeared—had in early productions of the printing press and in the reading process of the early modern public.

Texts and Margins

In modern editions early modern works appear as abstract texts detached from the actual visual form in which they were presented to their original audiences. Yet books, especially scriptural ones, were often accompanied by extensive commentary and illustration in the margins which formed part of the experience of reading and added further layers of meaning to their study. For instance, the annotation of scripture was a common practice in Catholic works from the earliest times. Their importance over the interpretation of the core text was decisive, and Reformation theologians, fearing the influence the glosses exerted over the Word of God, often condemned the use of them. In England, a royal proclamation of 1538 explicitly banned all marginal annotations in devotional texts,[21] which shows that the margins were estimated as an important place of communication to the reader. In spite of the prohibition, the practice continued and even in Protestant editions of devotional works compilers often added their own comments on the margins.[22] Illustration as a means to extend the appeal of the text also survived in books after the Reformation and was used extensively both in religious and secular contexts. For instance, in Edmund Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar* (1579) both the images preceding the eclogues of the individual months and the glosses of E. K. added valuable aspects to the comprehension of the lines of the *Calendar*. Such works provide a clue to the reading methods of the early modern period and justify the comparative analysis of margin and text as parts of a single concept.

James A. Knapp described the early modern reading process as a "movement back and forth—between text and image—[. . .] to merge the effects of a book's verbal and visual information to produce a totally complex and hybrid object."[23] He pointed out that illustrations were "related to the words in a way that drew on prevailing cultural tastes while simultaneously capitalizing on the power of images to convey a variety of

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[21] Duffy, *Marking the Hours,* 150.
[22] Tribble, *Margins and Marginality,* 9–12.
[23] James A. Knapp, "A Bastard Art: Woodcut Illustration in the Sixteenth Century," in *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England,* ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 165.

messages" and "images opened the text to multiple and sometimes contradictory readings (and viewings)."[24] D. J. Davis also reached a similar conclusion when writing on early modern religious images. He claimed that images appearing on the borders of a page "illustrate the text, but often they represent a parallel narrative to the text and usually act as guides for the reader."[25] The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* contains both text and images in its margins and invites readers to such a parallel reading. Though it has been examined many times by those interested in the iconography of one of the most richly illustrated books of the Elizabethan period,[26] and by those examining the change and purging of religious practices in the early reign of Queen Elizabeth,[27] and also by those writing about the literary achievements of England's female monarch,[28] in all approaches, the text and the illustrations were divorced from each other, appearing as autonomous entities in two different genres and their complementary relationship and significance were disregarded.

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* used two themes to illustrate its contents. There were seven sequences of the scenes from the Life of Christ represented in a typological layout, with the image in the middle of three marginal compartments containing the New Testament scene and the two Old Testament types shown below and above it. There were also three sequences of the *danse macabre*, two with male and one with female characters, each page containing two episodes. Appropriate verses accompanied all images, thus it was possible to flip through the pages and just enjoy the reading and viewing of the margins. Both of these themes were common in book illustration and though the woodcuts were presumably designed and cut for this volume (perhaps by foreign workmen living in the vicinity of John Day's workshop)[29] they presented

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[24] Ibid., 161, 151–52.

[25] Davis, *Picturing the Invisible,* 36.

[26] Chew, "Iconography," 112–15.

[27] Duffy, *Marking the Hours,* 171–74.

[28] Jennifer Clement, "The Queen's Voice: Elizabeth I's *Christian Prayers and Meditations,*" in *Early Modern Literary Studies* 13, no. 3 (January, 2008): 1.1–26, http://purl.oclc.org/emls/13-3/clemquee.htm; Steven W. May, "Queen Elizabeth Prays for the Living and the Dead," in *Elizabeth I and the Culture of Writing,* ed. Peter Beal and Grace Ioppolo (London: The British Library: 2007), 201–11.

[29] John Foxe, whose *Acts and Monuments* was printed by John Day too, made a request to William Cecil, that the number of foreign workmen working for Day should be allowed to be raised. This fact shows the increased amount of work Day was facing in the 1560s. Evenden, *Patent, Pictures and Patronage,* 96–108. Twenty-one of the Life of Christ designs in the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* bear the initials "I C," while in about half of the Dance of Death images the initial

well-known narratives to their audience, and were more or less free copies of illustrations from France.[30]

It was a common practice in early modern print that woodcuts appeared in more than one book. This recycling of images "created numerous messages by being re-contextualized"[31] and mapped out an interesting iconographic, religious, cultural and commercial interrelationship between widely different texts.[32] The design of the individual cuts was often not original, but imitated postures and gestures of figures in a long line of tradition of religious iconography. However, the arrangement of text and image was always unique to a volume, mostly not even repeated in the different editions of the same work. Thus, the recycling of the woodcuts meant a repetition of images, but not a repetitive pattern of reading as this depended on the complex layout of the page.

The representation of the scenes of the life of Christ was a common topic for Books of Hours. In the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* the series contained thirty-eight plates appearing in all the seven repetitions of the cycle, and some additional episodes in certain sequences. Samuel C. Chew's iconographical analysis of the border illustrations concentrated on the chronological misplacements in the sequences and carefully enumerated the "errors" in the line of events and the instances where these were set right. He blamed Day's business where "there was not very alert supervision of the press-men [. . .] who unintelligently returned to the original wrong order and had to be corrected again."[33] However, he failed to realize a possible connection between the structural units of the prayer book and the corrections, and missed the examples where the misplacement of a scene could have been deliberate to reflect the meaning or the structure of the text.

A marked adjustment to the content of the prayer book is the fitting of the beginning of the fourth sequence of the Life of Christ to the new material introduced in the book. Up till that point Day's compilation contained prayers selected from Bull's *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, but there it continued with an old form of prayer, not included in Bull's compilation but part of the Catholic primer tradition, the Seven Penitential

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"G" appears. Most scholars agree that the craftsmanship exhibited on the woodcuts was above the level of the native workmen. Ibid., 96, Chew, "Iconography," 395.

[30] Chew mentions that the design for the Last Judgement scene that concludes the Dance of Death is practically identical with one used by Pigouchet. Chew, "Iconography," 294–95.

[31] Davis, *Picturing the Invisible,* 65.

[32] Davis, *Picturing the Invisible,* 34.

[33] Chew, "Iconography," 296.

Psalms. While the second sequence of the Life of Christ started during a meditation, and the beginning of the third was also unmarked, this fourth sequence commenced with new material within the book. To enable a fresh start of the episodes of the Life of Christ, the editor inserted the first English language prayer of the Queen at this point, and, as this ran just beyond the last scene of the sequence used so far, he included additional cuts (chronologically misplaced) to fill in the space. These new images (the Miracle of the Pool at Bethesda, Christ and the Canaanite Woman, the Walking on the Water) celebrated God's power over sin, sickness and nature that rhymed with the words of prayer "how [. . .] shall I thy handmaide, being by kinde a weak woman, have sufficient abilitie to rule [. . .] unless thou [. . .] doe also in my reigning endue and help thy heavenly grace, without which, none, even the wisest among the children of men, can once think a right thought."[34]

This section break of the book was also marked by an interrupted pagination. After P4 it started afresh with A1. Furthermore, in the central textual unit of the page layout on the top corner of the pages Arabic numerals (from 41 to 88) appeared, which may point to a possible borrowing of the typeset of the middle section from an older work. While the continuity of the layout of border illustrations gives a unified impression, the transition from one type of prayer to another was definitely stated by pictorial means in the margins.

Another similar break in the pagination occurs after the second N2, which continues with Aa1, and which again uses Arabic numerals (from 1 to 48) in the top corners of the central section of the page. The episodes of Christ's life are also interrupted here: the line of the sixth sequence being at the scene of the Transfiguration reverts to the Flight into Egypt. Once again, new content is introduced here: a Mirror for Princes ("Of the kingdome of God, and how all kinges ought to seeke his glory," "Promises, admonitions and counsels to good kinges with examples of their good successe," "Sentences of threatening to evill kinges and examples of their evill successe"). It is interesting to notice that in these two sections, marked by a definite break both in the illustration and the pagination, the confused order of the episodes of the Return from Egypt and the Baptism of Christ within the sequence of the Life of Christ (noticed by Chew in his analysis as an "error") is corrected. While Chew was right that these corrections reflect a more alert supervision of press-men, he did not notice that the enhanced interest in these parts resulted

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[34] *Christian Prayers and Meditations,* P4r.

from the content of the prayers. The new material introduced in these parts was emphatic as it addressed the Queen directly or indirectly.

A further example of adjustment of the borders to the content of the prayers can be seen in the conclusion of the fifth sequence of the Life of Christ, where the second English language prayer of the Queen is placed. Here again, to enable a prominent ultimate position, additional images were used (thus extending the set of the Life of Christ to forty-three cuts, the most complete within the book). Furthermore, while Chew pointed out the chronological misplacements of the scenes, these can be explained by the editor's intention to match the prayer's words about relief in sickness by scenes depicting Jesus's power to heal the sick in body and soul. The Queen's prayer "In Time of Sicknes" appears next to three scenes (used already next to the first prayer of the Queen) about three miracles of Christ and new scenes on sin (Woman taken in Adultery), power to work miracles (Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes) and redemption (Healing of the Sin of the Palsy).

According to Chew's study the Life of Christ sequences are followed by the Dance of Death "with casual abruptness and no relation to the text of the prayers."[35] However, again the content of the prayer book changed with the new set of illustrations. This part of the book contained the foreign language prayers of the Queen. Although the Queen's first, and part of the second French language prayer was illustrated by the last scenes of the last Life of Christ sequence, the great majority of her prayers appear next to the images of the *danse macabre*. As there is a correspondence between image and prayer both in structure and in content at the most important parts of the compilation, this proximity of the words of the Queen and the representation of death must not be overlooked or dismissed.

The Motif of the Dance of Death

The dramatic juxtaposition of the living with the dead was an ancient motif in western culture. In the Middle Ages the theme received a growing attention with several literary genres exploiting its associations. From the thirteenth century representations of the legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, in which three young men on a hunt met three dead men, served as a warning for the right manner of living.[36] The medieval *vado*

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[35] Chew, *The Iconography,* 297.

[36] "Quod fuimus, estis; quod sumus, vos eritis" (Where we were, you are; what we are, you will be). About the legend see István Kozáky, "A haláltáncok struktúrái,"