THE BIRKBECK EARLY MODERN SOCIETY

BULLETIN

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Early Modernists,

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of our Bulletin. It is now June and we have just one more lecture to look forward to this academic year with Professor Julian Swann reflecting upon despotism, public opinion and the crisis of the Absolute Monarchy. We then have our Student Conference in July which I hope you will be able to attend. In addition to this we have trips to the Globe Theatre and a guided walk to look forward to. Details will be sent out shortly.

The committee are working on securing some top-class speakers for next year's programme and we have already managed to book Dr John Ashdown-Hill for October, Dr Andy Hopper for November, Dr David Starkey for December, Dr Frances Harris in January and Dr Helen Pierce for February.

Please don't forget that the committee is always happy to hear suggestions from members, be they connected to a speaker that you would like us to book, or another type of event such as a trip to the theatre or a gallery etc. Suggestions can be e-mailed to our secretary Anne Byrne at anne.m.byrne@gmail.com

With best wishes,

Stephen Brogan

President, Birkbeck Early Modern Society

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hca/current/societies/#earlymodern

http://www.emintelligencer.org.uk/

THE BULLETIN: EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to Issue Fifteen of the *Birkbeck Early Modern Society Bulletin.* This edition continues with the usual mix of a wide and lively range of articles, reviews and forthcoming events.

Our Society is growing from strength to strength and we continue to enjoy a series of fascinating and varied lectures. I do believe that this is an exciting society to be involved with and I have striven to ensure that the *Bulletin* is an essential part of this process. As part of this development I have changed the layout of the *Bulletin* and I hope that this has improved the appearance of the publication.

I am always delighted to receive a review or an article from a non-committee member, so if any particular topics interest you then why not write something for the *Bulletin*? For many people the sunshine means spending time in the garden. So what about writing something about gardening practices in the Early Modern period?

I trust that the *Bulletin* continues to entertain and inform you and that you enjoy this issue, and I look forward to seeing you at one of our events in the near future.

I hope that you all have a marvellous Summer. The next issue will be out in the Autumn of 2010.

John Croxon
Editor
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RECENT EVENTS

The Decline of Magic: The Paradoxical Role of the Royal Society

Professor Michael Hunter

In excess of ninety people turned up to listen to Michael Hunter give a talk on the attitude of the Royal Society to witchcraft and magic, making this the largest ever turnout for one of our events. Indeed, the crowd was so large that we had to vacate the lovely council chamber and go to a lecture theatre.

Professor Hunter began by discussing the inaugural meeting of the Royal Society which was held on the 28th November 1660 with the members of the Society looking towards improving knowledge, such as one leading member of the Society, Robert Hooke, who would publish *'Micrographia'* in 1665. However, there was very little formal debate concerning the question of magic or witchcraft. There was hostility to atheism but it was decreed that theology was not part of the Society's remit. The Society adapted a cumulative, formative role without taking a stance. Many of the

early members of the Society were deeply committed to occult pursuits but the Society as a corporate body chose to ignore the matter and investigations were rare. When Joseph Glandville published his *'Inquires into a World of Spirits'* it was ignored by the Royal Society which turned its back upon such inquires. Papers on astrology were also ignored.

Following on from the writings of Sir Henry Lyons and others it has become commonplace to assume that belief in witchcraft fell after the Royal Society investigated it. This is wrong. There were sceptics among the Society, such as Robert Hooke, but there were also believers, therefore the Society simply avoided discussing the topic and therefore avoided any disagreements.

One of the reasons why the topic was so little debated was the fear of ridicule. Orthodox thought was constrained by fear of secularising tendencies in society, encapsulated by the coffee-house wit, the mocking in the theatres, and the writings of Deists. There was great dread of the powers of the wits and a fear that engagement with them may negatively affect the public image of the Royal Society. Therefore, it became accepted that members might practice inquires but that these must be left behind when at the Society. The power of the wits is epitomised by the case of the *'Drummer of Tedworth'* when the owner of the house was astounded when people came to visit him to poke fun at the sound of the supposed demon drummer.

Individuals continued to write about witchcraft. In A*n Essay Concerning Witchcraft,* published in 1718, Francis Hutchinson repeated the old arguments against witch beliefs but also confronted the psychology of witch beliefs as social panic. He denounced pacts with the Devil as mere imagination and suggested that old women could be coerced into believing that they were witches. Hutchinson wrote within a religious and political framework, but one that had progressed from the earlier theological sceptical writings, and he saw himself as occupying the middle ground between believers in magic and the free-thinkers. Likewise, judicial scepticism was apparent in the case of Jane Wenham in 1712; Judge Sir John Powell displayed scepticism throughout the trial, intimidated prosecution witnesses, and secured a reprieve for Wenham after the guilty verdict.

Gradually, the orthodox came around to agree with the free-thinkers and outright belief in witchcraft seemed more dangerous than scepticism. It is clear that the line taken by a number of writers about the history of the Royal Society that the Society was in the forefront of repudiating belief in witchcraft is wrong, it is just evoking a myth.

The pressure of orthodoxy must have been suffocating. Therefore, the alternative, such as the views expounded by Hobbs, for a free-thinking approach must have been exhilarating. Being a good Christian meant believing in such things was the norm. So scientists looked to other things which offered a wider range of possibilities to explain why things happened. As part of this process scientists appropriated some aspects of magic leaving the rest as peripheral. The reputation of science was transformed from poorly regarded in the seventeenth century to something of great importance and prestige

The Birkbeck Early Modern Society would like to thank Professor Hunter for a lively, erudite and highly entertaining talk.

John Croxon.

A CULTURE CLASH? WORD AND IMAGE IN REFORMATION EUROPE

DR RICHARD WILLIAMS

The old concept of a cultural opposition between Catholicism, as the religion of the visual image, and Protestantism as the sect of the Word, is too crude. This can be seen in the images themselves. For instance in a Cranach *"Christ on the Cross"* Luther himself holds open a bible, a usual signifier, given added force by being in a Reformed context. In a Luther Triptych, 1572, in Weimar, Luther appears three times, once in each panel, as a monk, as Junker Georg and in the middle with an open Bible. The text at the bottom constitutes one third of the work. The degree of emphasis on the text is partly new and grew out of the new situation created by the printing press that meant that the 95 Theses spread throughout Europe in a matter of weeks. However a Carlo Criveli, 1481, V&A, shows St. Jerome with the Bible as an attribute. Luther's Bibles were different in that the text was in German. The Bible was the source of the word – a verification. As such it became a symbol of Protestant militancy.

Henry VIII was never a Protestant and despised Luther. He allowed a degree of reform but would ban anti-transubstantiationists. He practiced what was in effect Catholicism without the pope. An Italian artist he attracted to his court was Girolamo da Treviso, who painted the *"Four Evangelists and the Pope"*, 1540s, Royal Collection. The Pope lies on the ground between a monk and a nun labelled "Hypocrisy" and "Avarice". He is stoned by the evangelists whose names are on the rocks they hold. In the top left hand corner is an enormous candle, presumably representing the gospel truth while an extinguished candle lies at the bottom by the overthrown Romanists. This painting was, until his death, in Henry's private apartments where he would have seen it daily. Girolamo was also a military engineer as well as a painter and was killed in France by a cannon ball. The similarity of his painting to a Stoning of St. Stephen is a reminder of Calvin's concern about how the lower orders would interpret imagery. Another English royal propaganda piece is the anonymous *"Edward VI and the Pope"* in the National Portrait Gallery. Henry VIII on his deathbed points to his son and successor while in front of the young king's dais the pope gets it in the neck from a Bible.

The Coverdale Bible has a title page of 1535 by Holbein symbolizing the reconstruction of the monarchy by Henry. The first translation had been tolerated by the state but had been published abroad. At the bottom of the Holbein title page Henry is enthroned between the Lords Temporal and Spiritual and is handing down the Bible to the bishops. This is a spectacular inversion of the traditional imagery in which the pope gives a religious book, not necessarily the Bible, to a secular ruler. A few years after the publication of this Bible it was decreed that only heads of households should read it: women and the poor were not supposed to consult the Word. Most people would not have been able to afford a Bible in any case and knowledge of the contents was absorbed through preaching.

The Lutherans approved of visual imagery provided it was used to the right ends. An example of acceptable imagery is a round trick print from Nuremberg. Two pieces of paper revolved one against the other reveal monstrous faces and devils as well as humans. Scatological humour is employed. The function of images in Henry VIII's England was confused. The undefined, superstitious use of images was banned as was anything to do with pilgrimages or the lighting of candles, but otherwise pictures, properly used, were legitimate. The didactic function was preserved so there was not a total break from the past. A Pre-Reformation image of St. Etheldreda, 1455, at Ely Cathedral has text in the manner of a modern strip cartoon. Images were increasingly attacked by Archbishop Cranmer, who said that the idea of God as a little old man with a white beard was a false fact. The government under Edward VI made the crucial change to a more robust policy. In 1548 it was announced that all images were to be removed, stained glass included. This was further than Luther or Zwingli had gone.

A print of 1566 shows acts of iconoclasm in Antwerp. Statues of saints on the tops of the piers in a cutaway view of a church are pulled down and, if insufficiently damaged by the fall, attacked with axes. Meanwhile ladders and clubs are used to smash the glass. What happened in the Netherlands was an example of bottom-up mob violence. By contrast English iconoclasm initiated by Edward's government was top-down, the work of form filling bureaucrats. They wanted to know who carried out the destruction and required that there should be two witnesses to what was done. The populace was not involved, carpenters and stonemasons being recruited instead to

carry out the work efficiently. Later under the early Elizabethan regime in the Archdiocese of York there were numerous cases of people caught hiding religious images. These infractions were treated as religious misdemeanours and punished by ritual humiliation. The degradation of offenders could mean that they had to go to church dressed in a sheet with bare legs or had to read out a statement that they had endangered their own souls.

The results of iconoclasm can be seen in the St. Margaret's at Hales in south-east Norfolk where there are two empty niches on either side of the main altar window and traces of polychromy on the walls. Ironically there had been an upsurge of image making just before the Reformation. An even more dramatic reminder of the efforts of the iconoclasts can be found in the St. Andrew's in Fingeringhoe, north east Essex, where there is a fifteenth-century statue of St. Margaret. Half the head has been dramatically sliced off on a diagonal. Iconoclasts usually started with the eyes because eyes create a sense of connection with the viewer or worshipper. In the case of St. Margaret, the locals pushed the defaced image further back into the niche and plastered it up so it could be discovered later.

Wall paintings in many places were often whitewashed over and came to light relatively unscathed. St. Mary's, Tunstead, unusually still has both a rood screen and a rood on a beam. (For various local reasons Norfolk has a great may survivals. "Rood" is a medieval term for Cross so a rood beam bore a generally sculpted representation of the principle figures on Calvary.) At St. Catherine's Ludham, east Norfolk, there is, unusually, a painted rood scene on a lunette or tympanum wall supported on the beam while at All Saints, Catfield, east Norfolk, a similar lunette had a royal coat of arms.

After the English Reformation text could be used to replace the imagery of the old rood. At St. Peter's, Wenhaston, north-east Suffolk, there was a Last Judgement on boards. Holes in the wall over the chancel show how they were secured. All the imagery was whitewashed and the text of the Ten Commandments put over the whitewash. It is said that in the nineteenth century this wooden lunette was taken out into the churchyard where it got rained on revealing the underlying layer. Part of the Commandments still remains. Bohn rood screen had saints and at Binham Priory, central north Norfolk, where the nave became the church of St. Mary, the

Commandments painted over the imagery, which is now coming through. In houses the text of the Commandments was sometimes set on over mantels. At the great house of Felbrigg Hall in north central Norfolk *"Gloria in excelsis Deo"* is spelt out in huge carved letters used as alternatives to more conventional roofline balustrade balusters on the three façade bays with jumbled word order.

Patrick Colvin has claimed that there was a shift from "iconoclasm" to "iconophobia" applied to all images, in about 1580. The evidence, however, does not support this. In the sixteenth century opposition between word and image as retrospectively reconstructed by modern historians did not exist. In this period text was everywhere not just on paper. Queen Elizabeth I said that text would beautify churches, as at Preston, St. Mary's where there is a triptych entirely of text. Poster-sized broad sheets had both images and text. The *"Allegory of Man"* by William Roger, ca.1550s – ca.1600, Tate, has a Risen Christ at the top.

Cranach also combined text and image as in the *"Allegory of the Law and the Gospel"*, 1529, Gotha. The Old and New Law are on different sides while the text is at the bottom. The imagery is reduced to being a diagram of the text. The Christ Crucified is made as unemotional as possible. An English glass *"Deposition"* of 1629 is meant to be taken as historical divine truth, rather than being used as an object of superstition. Hans Vredeman de Vries *"Last Judgement"*, 1594-5, Danzig/Gdansk, is in effect a Calvinist version of the subject, in which Virtues not Mary appear at the top with Christ. By contrast Spanish texts had a dearth of images as did Anglo-Catholic publications, such as the Reims Bible that was entirely without images. By contrast the famous Calvinist Geneva Bible had pictures. In an instance of snobbery, the Jesuits believed that images were a cruder type of stimulus. There was an economic aspect to this. In England books with images were 75% more expensive than those without them. English books were illustrated to a significant extent by foreign woodblock cutters. Some images are common to both the Roman and Reformed churches such as the Mouth of Hell. Some illegal Catholic books produced abroad had images that would hardly be any different in a Protestant version yet again blurring facile distinctions between the two approaches to the visual image.

Timothy Alves

A TRANSFORM'D METAMORPHOSIS- VARIATION AND DERIVATION IN THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH PRINT REPERTOIRE

DR MALCOLM JONES

The full, rather intimidating, title of this lecture was 'A transform'd Metamorphosis- variation and derivation in the Early Modern English print repertoire'. The content was enthralling. Malcolm Jones has spent many years working through an underused resource- the printed images of Early Modern England. Thanks to the bpi1700.org.uk we can all access much of this material from our own homes. Malcolm demonstrated how it can be used to illuminate the interests and concerns of the Early Modern consumers of images.

The work of men such as William Marshall reflected the disquiet felt by those who endured ‘England’s misery’, as their world was turned literally upside down. These detailed prints are worth close study, yielding not only amusing vignettes, such as men trying to bend stone columns and animals taking over the world, but also showing the interconnectedness of many prints. Skilled engravers copied and reworked not only local sources but also continental prints, sometimes reversing their meaning or adding details intended to appeal to British humour. The English seem to have been very familiar with Bruegel, a particularly apt artist for the times, if the number of borrowed figures is to be believed. Prints were produced in Amsterdam for the English market but Italian and German work was also re-imagined. Thomas Trevelyn acted as human photocopier reproducing many German prints, while English work was also used in Germany.

Malcolm explained how the detective work involved in tracing this. Survival is a problem but they can turn up unexpectedly. Engravers worked by cutting and pasting to form new images and sometimes we have only the remnants of an image. Often plates were actually changed and it is possible to see the remnants of an earlier image. Prints were used as wallpaper and for lining drawers. They were also specifically produced for pill boxes. If text is available then Google can produce surprisingly good results.

For those who just want to enjoy the fruit of other’s work Malcolm has produced a book ‘*The Print in Early Modern England*’ which is published by Yale and thus very high quality. He has also contributed to Michael Hunter’s volume *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain* published by Ashgate.

Jackie Mountain

VISITS

Hall Place, Bexley, Kent

In 1537 Sir John Champneys, a powerful civic official and merchant, was looking for a country retreat within easy reach of London. He settled on Hall Place, then owned by William Shelley.

Champneys became master of the Skinners Company, alderman of four different wards, and Lord Mayor between 1534 and 1535. The good roads and waterways made Bexley a convenient location and it was here that he built a traditional looking house, much of which survives today. After his death in 1556, his son Justinian, updated the house and developed the west wing into a more extensive set of reception rooms, including a long gallery, and the house as a whole took on a fashionably outward-facing, symmetrical plan.

In 1649 the house was sold to Robert Austen a merchant from Tenterden in Kent. He added a new red-brick extension forming a courtyard to the south of the house. Further additions occurred as the Austens prospered. In 1738 the 4th baronet, Sir Robert Austen, married Rachael Dashwood, sister to Sir Francis Dashwood, and in 1772 the estate passed into his hands. Dashwood held the posts of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Postmaster General and is known for his involvement with the Hellfire Club.

For many years Hall Place was rented out and as well as being a private residence it was also a school for young gentlemen. In 1935 Bexley Council bought the estate and during the Second World War it was occupied by the U.S. Army. The house was left empty for most of the 1950's until 1957 when it was used by Bexley High School for Girls. In 1969 it became the headquarters of Bexley Libraries. Finally, in 2000 Bexley Heritage Trust was formed to take care of the house and gardens and after restoration was opened to the public.

The South Front was built by Robert Austen during the Commonwealth period. It is of red brick laid in English bond and dressed with limestone. The ground floor retains many of its early windows set into rounded brick arches. The first-floor sash windows were added in the eighteenth century.

From the courtyard one can view the Bell Tower, built during the seventeenth century. A prospect tower was a fashionable addition during this period, used to watch hunts and to entertain.

From the seventeen century the Courtyard acted as the hub of the household. Corridors were a relevatively new development meaning that rooms could become more private and here doors led via corridors to the services and offices of the household.

Parlour

The Parlour is part of the Tudor house dating from 1537. Originally linked to the Great Hall via a door in the east wall, it was the first of the Champneys' private chambers. The wooden panelling and large bay window look impressive, although neither is original to the room.

The central feature of the Chapel is a Gothic window. As private worship declined so the Chapel became less important and eventually the upper-floor level was lowered, cutting off the Chapel window and leaving a rather odd look. The wainscoting on the south wall is a rare example of authentic sixteenth-century panelling within the house. This room was extended in the Elizabethan period and was probably later used for storage.

The original Tudor house consisted of a range of buildings constructed around the Great Hall. At the high status end of the Great Hall is a bay window. The panelling was added in Victorian times.

The Great Hall

Kitchen

In the Kitchen, the considerable changes over the centuries are evident by the patchwork of blocked-up windows and irregular brickwork. It was extended in the 1580's by Justinian Champneys. The central fireplace was inserted into an earlier garderobe shaft from the floor above by Lady Limerick who used this room as a dining room. However, there is nowhere for the smoke to go and is therefore a decorative feature only. Two earlier bricked-up fireplaces are visible flanking this false fireplace.

On the first floor is the Minstrels' Gallery. This has undergone considerable change and may once have been larger. The gallery contains some lovely decorative carvings and two openings overlooking the Great Hall which suggest that originally the gallery was accessed by a porch.

The Great Chamber was used for significant occasions and entertainment or to accommodate important guests. The impressive ceiling is one of the best features of the house and is an attempt by local craftsmen in the seventeenth century to imitate an Indigo Jones beamed ceiling. The ceiling is decorated with grotesque and classical elements which were readily available in the pattern books and prints of the period.

Great Chamber

The vaulted Long Gallery was added in the Elizabethan period to provide views over the estate and to display paintings. The barrel ceiling dates from the eighteenth century.

Hall Place also offers a lovely series of gardens and part of the garden walls date back to Tudor times. The estate covers some sixty-five hectres and stands on the banks of the River Cray. Formal gardens, topiary, glasshouses, herbaceous borders, a herb garden, an Italanate garden, kitchen gardens, a plant nursery, and examples of domestic gardens are all available to view, and the large Jacobean barn has been turned into a good restaurant.

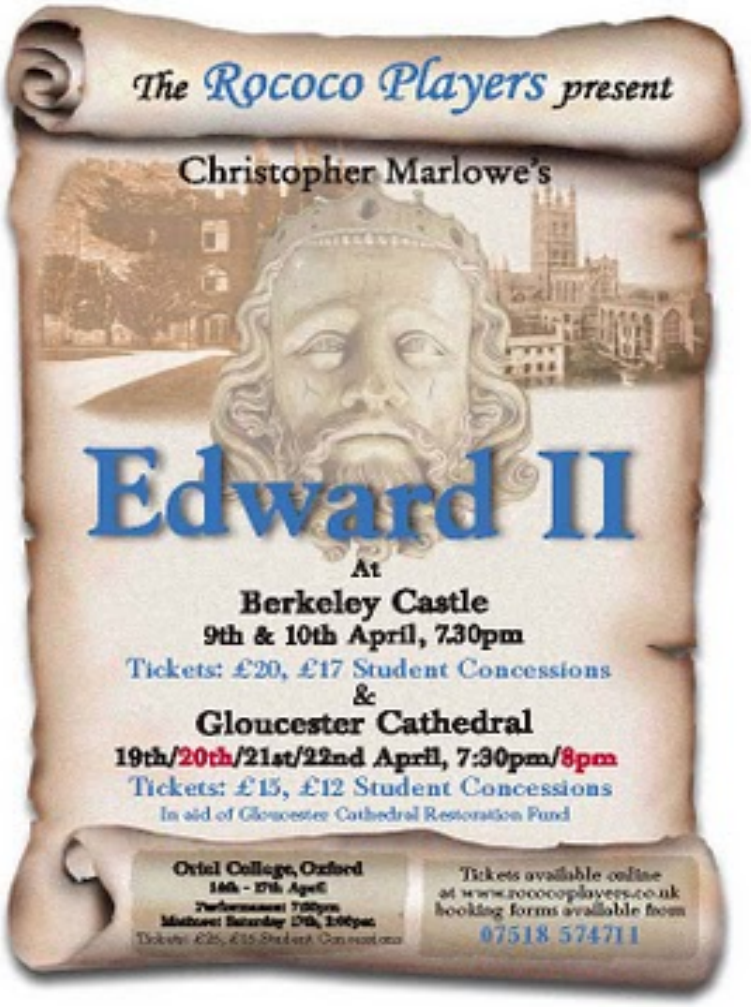
Hall Place is a splendid day out and Bexley Heritage Trust provide free access, so why not, one day this summer, pop down to Bexley and view this delightful building and beautiful gardens?

John Croxon

ARTS REPORT

THEATRE

Edward II by Christopher Marlowe
The Rococo Players
Berkeley Castle, Gloucester



I have always enjoyed Marlowe's plays, and indeed possibly the best theatrical experience I have had was being spellbound for three hours by a mesmerising performance by Anthony Sher as Marlowe's *'Tamburlaine the Great'*. So, when I heard that a theatre group, the Rococo Players (who I last saw perform *'A Winter's Tale'*), was not only staging Edward II, but also at the decidedly apt and poignant venues of Berkeley Castle, Gloucester Cathedral and Oriel College Oxford, I felt it was going to be an occasion that I simply could not miss, with the venue of Berkeley Castle, the real life scene of the gruesome death of Edward II, the obvious and most atmospheric location for me to see it.

Two banks of chairs for the audience either side of the great hall created a narrow rectangular central space for the players, which was handled with great dexterity by director Antoinette Wilson who deployed her large cast with subtlety and also expanded the action intelligently into the gallery above. The play was performed in period costume which worked well, particularly in the opening scene when barons and churchmen progressed up the aisle with sombre expressions somehow creating an early menacing glimpse of the tragedy to follow.

Barry Page as Edward II

When I saw the Rococo Players in *'A Winter's Tale'* some of the performances were somewhat uneven but here the entire cast produced a wonderful moving theatrical experience. Barry Page was totally convincing as an anguished and completely lovelorn Edward, perfectly expressing the king's pain, fury and bewildered last hours, and displaying great mastery of the stage, with the language and the range of emotion required for the character. Page flawlessly expresses the king's changes of mood, his moments of strength and weakness, of euphoria and of despair. Page's skill means that he can convey the deeply unattractive aspects of Edward's nature and yet by the end he evokes great pity. Page was supported by some fine performances; Rachel

Darcy as Isabella initially induces sympathy then, under the thrall of Mortimer, changes into a desperate woman, as much in love with him as Edward was with Gaveston. Dan Johnson, as Mortimer, was convincing as the ruthless baron and then tyrant, projecting forcefulness, self-righteousness and ambition. Hector Molloy was a delightfully smirking and scheming younger Spencer, Chris Moore gave a strong performance as a grim Warwick, Phil McCormick was solid as Lancaster, Keith Franklin was superb as a seductively evil, creepy and sinister Lightbourne, and Paul Pietersee preened, charmed and swaggered as Gaveston. It was good to see a production follow the line that Marlowe intended and Edward's homosexuality was overt throughout the production, including a passionate uninhibited kiss with Gaveston which produced a shocked silence from the older members of this provincial audience.

During the interval the audience was given the chance to view the cell where Edward II was murdered, and certainly the visit to the cell and just viewing the play at the castle added a certain grim piquancy to the event.

In some ways, '*Edward II*' can be viewed as a direct descendant of the medieval morality play, with Edward's horrific death seen as a just reward for his weak and licentious life. Indeed, Marlowe created the character of the murderer Lightborne as the personification of Lucifer. Marlowe constricts Edward's entire reign into a single narrative and its themes of love, power and politics continue to resonate today. At the heart of the play is the king himself; the character of Edward is not an attractive one, although in this strong production the director Antoinette Wilson and the leading actor Barry Page wring the emotions so that by the end the king, filthy, dressed in rags, and bereft of all hope, evokes our sympathy.

With Edward II, the Roccoco Players have succeeded in creating a production of great imagination, conviction and passion, revealing an emotional depth that is not always credited to Marlowe.

For details of forthcoming performances by the Rococo Players see www.rococoplayers.co.uk.
John Croxon.

CONCERT

Mozart Requiem

Hertfordshire Chorus

Barbican Theatre, London

Hertfordshire Chorus

David Temple

Hertfordshire Chorus, directed by David Temple, is one of the finest large choirs in the country, with members from across the Hertfordshire area. They perform a varied repertoire in venues right across the country and in Europe. At the Barbican, they played a three-part concert, featuring *Serenade to Music* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 'Solaris' by Steve Block and after the interval, Mozart's '*Requiem'*.

Serenade to Music

The concert opened with a rendition of *Serenade to Music* by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Vaughan Williams is a central figure in British music and his compositions have often been said to be characteristically English, displaying a subtle patriotism engendered by a feeling for ancient landscapes and a person's place within them.

Vaughan Williams wrote *Serenade to Music* as a tribute to the conductor Sir Henry Wood to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his first concert, and wrote the solo parts specifically for the voices of sixteen eminent British singers. Wood himself conducted the first performance at his jubilee concert at the Royal Albert Hall on the 5th October 1938.

During his lifetime, Vaughan Williams eschewed all honours except for the Order of Merit which was conferred upon him in 1938 and he worked all his life for the democratic and egalitarian ideals in which he believed.

Serenade to Music is based upon '*the man that hath no music in himself..."* passage on music from Shakespeare's *'The Merchant of Venice' Act V, Scene 1*, an evocative scene between Lorenzo and Jessica. This is one of Vaughan Williams' most beautiful occasional pieces and few secular choral works can rival its placid beauty.

Under the direction of the conductor, David Temple, the orchestra produced a very atmospheric and satisfying performance with focussed momentum, unindulgent, and yet completely passionate. The orchestra successfully caught the dreamy pastoralism characteristic of Vaughan Williams with delightful perfection and the chorus and the four soloists mixed well with the instruments. This was particularly well done in a couple of passages; one the expansive blossoming into *"and draw her home with music*" and the hushed modulating magic of *"soft stillness, and the night..."* Here is an example of music which is powerful but not forceful, bringing the story to life with a wonderful expressive presentation, the voices of the chorus beautifully modulating with the orchestra.

Orchestra, chorus and soloists produced a warm, calm and luxurious interpretation of Vaughan Williams' work that was beautifully brought together by David Temple's strong direction.

Solaris

The second part of the evening's performance was a new composition by Steve Block. Steve Block is a member of Hertfordshire Chorus and the Chorus commissioned him to write this work. 'Solaris' was inspired by Joanna Lumley's television documentary in search of the Northern Lights in Norway and events in the early-seventeenth century when the newly-invented telescope was used by a number of astronomers, including the Englishman Harriot and the Italian Galileo, to observe the surface of the Sun more closely than any human had done before. Galileo wrote a fascinating series of *Letters on Sunspots*, in which he argued that these phenomena are indeed on the surface of the Sun itself. The title *Solaris* is simply derived from sol, the Latin for Sun - hence 'solar system', 'solar wind' etc. It represents the Sun as a great parent figure, creating a variety of progeny including the phenomena of sunspots, solar flares, solar wind and of course aurorae. The composition *'Solaris'* combines the science, the myths and the history in a three-part narrative.

Part One (Sunspots) deliberates on the very nature of sunspots, speaking as it were from the surface of the Sun itself. Part Two (The Journey) begins with a massive orchestral solar flare as Solaris 'reaches out to the blank vastness'. As Part Three (Aurora) opens, the solar wind reaches Earth's magnetic field and is drawn down into the polar night - the aurora begins.

This was a strong performance of a new work with orchestra and vocalists combining to produce a vigorous evocation of the power of spectacular natural forces. The Childrens Chorus, calling the solar wind down to them, was very effective, and Hertfordshire Chorus gave a spirited and vocally proficient rendition that musically ignites the images of the Northern Lights in our imagination.

Mozart Requiem

The *Requiem* was Mozart's final composition before his death in 1791 and he died before he completed the final version. During his last few months of illness Mozart was plagued with images of doom. In mid-July 1791 a mysterious gaunt messenger arrived requesting a Requiem Mass to honour the death of the wife of a nobleman. This later transpired to be the son of the mayor of Vienna and the nobleman was Count Franz von Walsegg but at the time, to the suffering Mozart, the stranger was death personified.

Mozart was extremely shaken by this strange commission but accepted the very generous terms and began to write the *Requiem*. However, events began to prey upon his mind and he became seriously ill and gave detailed instructions to his pupil Franz Sussmayr, so that after Mozart's death, Sussmayr was able to finish the work. Whilst Sussmayr filled in parts that were incomplete, Mozart had completed so much of the work and given such detailed instructions, that the completed version is very much what Mozart intended and presents us with a fully integrated piece that ranks alongside Mozart's best compositions.

Both chorus and orchestra had given a superb performance in the first half of the programme but without doubt the highlight of the evening was the Mozart *Requiem* with the performers giving one of the best performances of the *Requiem* that I have ever experienced. The London Orchestra da Camera was in fine form with some superb playing and which was always sensitive so that they supported the singers rather than competed with them as can sometimes happen.

Soloists Miriam Allan (soprano), Diana Moore (mezzo-soprano), Joshua Ellicott (tenor) and Andrew Ashwin (bass) gave highly dedicated performances with all four soloists demonstrating a high range of singing technique and ability with an admirable blend and control.

The *Requiem* is basically a choral work with some real dramatic movements for the choir, and so the real plaudits for the evening must go to the Hertfordshire Chorus. Never in my life have I heard the *Dies Irae* so striking, nor the male/female voice

alternation in the *Confutatis Maledictis* so intoxicating. Their singing sounded fresh and exciting with the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses providing real texture with a flawless blending of voices, producing a vast range of dynamics, colour and intensity. In the *Confutatis,* the stark contrast between the male agitation and the female angelic sections was controlled really well and the contemplative movements, particularly the lovely Lacrimosa, was performed with real beauty and conviction. The explosion of the *Rex tremendae* contrasted with the quiet beauty of *Lacrimosa*, while the complexity of the melodies in the *Kyrie* and the repetition of the same music at the closing *Communio* was clear and articulate. The *Sanctus* was so majestic that for a moment one was swept away in the crescendo of voices and it felt as though the actual Last Judgement was upon us.

This was a marvellous musical evening with top class vocal and orchestral performances. Hertfordshire Chorus proved yet again that they are one of the very best choirs in the country with some superb vocalists and an impressive musical range.

For details of forthcoming performances by the Hertfordshire Chorus visit www.hertfordshirechorus.org.uk

John Croxon

OPERA

The Pearl Fishers

Georges Bizet

This new production of *The Pearl Fishers* directed by Penny Woolcock (who also directed John Adam's new opera Doctor Atomic to great effect at ENO) is a stunning piece of theatre, from the opening moment when swimmers appear to glide through water which seemed to fill the whole of the Coliseum's vast stage to the beautifully portrayed depiction of a desperately poor Sri Lankan fishing village with its rickety wooden huts piled one on top of the other. A keen eye for detail had been used in designing the sets and peopling them with a colourful cast of characters. It is, therefore, a shame that the story of *The Pearl Fishers* itself is, even for opera, so weak and the ending so unsatisfactory. However, ENO's hyper-realistic setting makes the best of the poor plot and does not succumb to the Orientalism that Edward Said so deplored - being all the better for that.

Bizet finished The Pearl Fishers in 1863 when he was 25 years old. He was asked to compose the work by Léon Carvalho, the director of the Theatre-Lyrique in Paris, who also teamed him with two librettists, Eugene Cormon and Michel Carré. Both were later to apologise to Bizet about the quality of their libretto after they had heard the music he had written to accompany it. The Pearl Fishers opened to mixed reviews, but subsequently became popular as audiences began to appreciate its 'local colour'. The work belongs to the genre of portraying the exotic at the time employed by Ingres, Delacroix, Verdi in *Aidi* and *Nabucco* and others. It contains a potent combination of sex and religion which, of course, spells trouble for the main protagonists– the two fishermen and the priestess whom they both love, but have vowed to renounce to save their friendship.

Nadir and Zurga's famous duet was well sung by the Hawaiian baritone Quinn Kelsey (who was perhaps the most consistent performer of the evening) and the tenor Alfie Boe (much hyped lately, but whose voice seemed a little weak for the Coliseum). Less evocative, and certainly not seductive, was Hanan Alattar as the priestess Leila. Prior to the performance it had been announced that she was suffering from a bad throat infection and so begged the audience's indulgence. This seems an unsatisfactory position to adopt particularly with a lead role as either the singer is capable of singing it well, or he or she is not. I have been to performances where the role has been passed to the understudy with tremendous results – notably last year when Eri Nakamoura took on Anna Netrebko's role in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. In this case Alattar should not have sung. That said, the chorus sang rousingly and Rory Macdonald coaxed the orchestra into some powerful and impassioned playing.

Overall, this was as good a production of *The Pearl Fishers* as could be wished for with its striking sets and creative use of the stage. However, it still struggled to compensate for the deficiencies of the opera itself and the lack of inspired singing on the night which failed to conjure up true depth of feeling.

Sue Dale

ART EXHIBITIONS

MICHELANGELO PRESENTATION DRAWINGS FOR TOMASO DE' CAVALIERI AT THE COURTAULD

This exhibition was on a comprehensible scale unlike the 1975 quinquecentenary and 2006 Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master events both at the British Museum. The material that really mattered was all in one room. It focused upon the presentation drawings, highly finished works of art meant to stand on their own rather than being mere preparatory sketches. They were given by Michelangelo to Tommaso de'Cavaliere, a younger man for who he felt, at the very least, a profound admiration. Related and derivative works were also displayed. A second room contained thematically similar works by other artists and a third, confusingly, non-consecutive, room displayed more or less contemporary work already in the Courtauld collections.

The main room was full of work that could be divided into a few themes, the *"Sogno"* or *"Dream"*, the centrepiece of the exhibition, an allegorical work centred on a semi-recumbent nude young man; the *"Fall of Phaeton"* in three versions; several Resurrections of Christ; the *"Rape of Ganymede"*; the *"Bacchanal"*; and the *"Risen Lazarus"*. The later had no direct connection with Tommaso being done instead as a favour for Sebastiano del Piombo, another artist, who used the pose for his painting with Christ and many spectators now in the London National Gallery. This drawing, as early as 1516, British Museum (cat. no. 12), was included as the anatomically perfect figure, coming back to life from death has the most obvious relationships with the Resurrection of Christ himself. and in the Bible is a prelude to the Passion and Resurrection. The figure of Lazarus anticipated of the young man in the *"Dream"*, ca. 1533, especially in the raised leg, both being also derived from Adam in the *"Creation of Man"*, early 1511, on the Sistine ceiling. At the risk of over simplification, all Michelangelo figurative works are about the struggle for spiritual awareness both through, and in spite of, a physically perfect male body. The female figures are strangely masculine.

The modern viewer might think that the repetition of poses is somewhat uncreative. This, however, is not how Michelangelo, known as Il Divino, and his contemporaries would have seen it. Virtually every Michelangelo work makes a deliberate reference to other works of his and would itself become the object of such a reference. To take just one example: the young man in the *"Dream"*, ca. 1533, Courtauld (cat. no.1), is awakened a flying figure, here trumpeting, as are the dead in the Sistine *"Last Judgement"*, 1536-41, where several angels do this, and, as in a sense is Saul in the late fresco, the *"Conversion of Paul"*, Capella Paolina, Vatican, 1536-41. In the latter a gesturing Christ takes the place of the angel or angels with trumpets, the vision psychologically separating Saul from his henchmen and from the rest of humanity, just as the trumpet blast in the *"Dream"* scatters the sins in which the dreamer might engage to a kind of recessed encircling border. The inverted "U" shape of sins being enacted is like the great swirl of figures in the upper Sistine *"Last Judgement"*. The crooked weight bearing arms of the dreamer and the later Saul are recognizably similar.

It might be thought that presenting Tommaso with this drawing implying that he might have a susceptibility to sin was less than complementary. It was, however, acceptable to portray identifiable people both as exceptionally good, their features being given to saints in altarpieces, or as remarkably bad. Examples of the latter include the possible case of the Barbaro brothers, Palladio's patrons, as the Elders lusting after Susanna in a painting, ca. 1585-8, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, in the Royal Academy Palladio exhibition last year, ("Palladio", cat. no. 69), or the case of the papal chamberlain, one of Michelangelo's enemies, who is in Hell having oral sex performed on him by a serpent in the *"Last Judgement"*. The victim complained to Paul III, who explained that, as pope, he had some influence in Purgatory but none whatever in Hell and that therefore he could not intervene (either in a real case or with Michelangelo). Early Modern people, it could be argued, were vessels into which sins and virtues entered rather than fully defined personalities who behave according to a consistent psychological dynamic, or as we would say, personality. The difference is exemplified by Cervantes' *"Don Quixote"* and Mozart's and da Ponte's *"Don Giovanni"*. Don Quixote at the end of the first book returns to sanity and at the end the second again becomes sane and, as his end approaches, makes his peace with God. In these psychologically erratic changes he traverses the range of behaviours from the forbidden to the acceptable. Don Giovanni, by contrast, offered the icy hand of death by the Commendatore, remains true to his character and refuses to repent, signalling the advent of the Modern Age. Thus Michelangelo is not criticizing Tomaso in putting an emblematic young man at the centre of the vices. The young man is Everyman as well as Tommaso. The exhibition contained a copy, 1535-40, by another artist, probably Giulio Clovio (cat. no. 13), as well as a print, engraver unknown, published by Michele Lucchese, before 1545 (cat. no. 14), so that it was possible to see the hand clutching a phallus among the vices, which has become "abraded" on the original, where it is just discernable, but not to anyone unfamiliar with the derivative versions. The moneybag, representing another vice, looks like a scrotum – two vices for the price of one.

The three versions of the legend of Phaeton, British Museum, 1533 (cat. no. 4), Windsor Castle, 1533 (cat. no. 6), and Accademia, Venice, ca. 1533 (cat. no. 5), are in effect compact Last Judgements. Phaeton so mismanaged the sun chariot of this father Apollo that Jupiter had to kill him with a thunderbolt to restore order and to prevent

the world being burnt up. This is yet another case of the mythological character, in this case Apollo, who grants a favour that brings calamity on the suppliant. Phaeton and his horses fall, like Man through pride, and are hurled down as do the falling condemned souls in the Sistine altar wall. The increasingly pious Michelangelo makes certain concessions to the specific legend. The condemning deity at the top, Jupiter not Christ, sits on an eagle. On the ground Phaeton's sisters, the Heliades, are being transformed into poplars, not unlike the deformed Damned and another distressed relative, Cygnus, in two of the drawings has been turned into a swan. At the bottom there is no River Styx as on the Sistine altar wall but there is, in all but the Accademia version, the River Eridanus (Po), the site of the crash, and classical river god with one or more urns from which the river flows or doesn't. It has been suggested that the empty urns, one carried by a man in the background in the Windsor sheet, possibly derived from a figure in Titian's *"Andrians"*, ca.1523-4, Prado, refer to the scorching of the world as a result of Phaeton's mismanagement of the chariot. Michelangelo probably saw the *"Andrians"* in Ferrara and may have visited Titian's studio in Venice, all in 1529.

Unlike Rosso in his *"Apollo"* in a series of prints he designed of the pagan gods, there are no rays of light emanating from Michelangelo's token chariots of the sun. It is too small and in any case resembles in the drawings a crude cart, more something a coffin or shrouded body might be put on than an object to light the world. Phaeton, as an inexperienced charioteer, was doomed all along: in the midst of life we are in Death. The tumbling horses are not really plausible, giving rise to the suspicion that Il Divino couldn't do horses any more than he could women.

The Accademia version, in which Phaeton falls between equally headlong, paired horses, is a remarkable invention. Its relationship to the other two more clearly connected drawings is uncertain. Unusually the emotion is transposed to the animals, one pair of horses virtually embracing in their final moments, not unlike the two young male saints who tightly embrace among the saints on the upper right Sistine altar wall at the last moment of time at which eternity begins. In the other drawing in the pair, the Windsor sheet, a triangle of horseflesh has at its sharp angle Phaeton falling to the ground. If the sheet is rotated so that the right side is at the bottom the horses, cart and charioteer approximate a Renaissance compositional pyramid,

perhaps especially to a terracotta bozzetto for a large sculpture by Leonardo's sculptor follower Rustici. Good examples are Rustici's two very similar terracotta *"Fighting Horsemen"*, ca. 1510, Louvre, RF 1535, and Bargello, Florence, inv. 469 S, (Radke, *"Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture"*, respectively plates 41 & 2; Avery, "*Florentine Renaissance Sculpture"*, ill. 117 for the Bargello version). In both there is only one horse but a dense broad based mass of struggling men compacted together like the Phaeton horses. Rustici puts one horse and rider in a tangle of men; Michelangelo in two drawings expels one man from a complex of horses.

Most finished of the three, the B. M. version, has a horse's back under Phaeton as though he had become detached from it, rather than the cart, while Jupiter in all but the Accademia sheet rides securely on the back of his eagle. Again the procedure of imagining the work having the right side as the bottom is helpful. The enlarged cart, still not a convincing chariot, is placed so as to define a side of the triangle. The horse at the bottom is partly straightened out and elongated to make a more satisfactory base. Perhaps aware that the "sculpture" could become too symmetrical, Michelangelo changes the middle tier of two horses that in the previous arrangement where seen from the side rump to rump. They are now head to rump, one viewed from below the other from above. Most importantly the fourth horse is no longer an apex that is almost disrupted by the demigod's precipitous fall. Instead horse and man seem to engage in balletic sparing above their heads while the rather rounded apex culminates in Phaeton's raised elbow. The semi-engagement with the horse and his more complicated pose of the doomed young man suggest a revolving, elegant fall not mere submission to gravity.

The probable sequential order of the drawings is, in my opinion, Accademia, British Museum and finally Windsor. The Academia version depicts freely falling man and horses, the B. M. example has the first appearance of the triangle in which the horses twist and turn as though able to determine their own pose as they fall while Phaeton is ejected from their group in a more single minded capitulation to the force of gravity. Finally the Windsor drawing includes the human form in the taut bendings and contortions of the horses like fluid dressage in the air. This is the most mannerist example in that the act of falling is contradicted by a kind of suspension of downward movement to allow counter-movements rather like those of the planets on the

Ptolemaic system. All but the Accademia sheet have extensive spirals that cannot be explained as flailing tails or as clouds.

The horses in all three Phaeton drawings are astonishing, almost as though belatedly Michelangelo was resuming his competition with Leonardo, who liked to depict natural calamities, such as floods in which there are many spiralling motifs. Leonardo would have been obsessed by the recent Asian sunami or the Icelandic eruption had he had such events relayed to him by the modern media. Da Vinci's *"Battle of Anghiari"*, 1504-5, was done in competition with and at the same time as, Michelangelo's equally unfinished *"Battle of Cascina"*, the latter being almost entirely nude men caught bathing in the river by the enemy. Leonardo expressed raw energy in the *"Anghiari"* largely through horses who fight each other as viciously as their riders in the episode called the battle for the standard. The Catalogue (fig. 9) had had a *"Neptune and Sea Horses"* sketch, ca. 1504, Windsor Castle, inv. No. R.L.12570, with more raw energy and the spirals of energy in the form of the sea horses scaly tails. An even closer parallel is with another Windsor Leonardo sheet (Wittkower, "Sculpture", ill. 14 chapt. 4) which has, sketches of St. George battling on his horse with the dragon, both animals being contorted, and separate studies of fallen, twisted horses.

Horses did not figure prominently in Michelangelo's work and we must ask why they suddenly appear in what looks like a regression to a lead offered by Leonardo thirty years earlier, which he had not followed. The attitudes derived from modern political correctness could probably only lead to a condemnation of some interpretations of the relationship between Michelangelo and the Tommaso, possibly as young as thirteen, though maybe sixteen, when they first met. Michelangelo was fifty-seven. We don't appear to have reliable evidence of Tommaso's date of birth. However the extreme age difference might explain the, for Michelangelo, unusual emphasis on the horses, the sort of thing an aristocratic young man would take an interest in, like a modern male teenager would in football, violent video games and fast cars. Possibly Tommaso's beauty and (with reservations in view of Early Modern conceptions – see above) "personality" could have inspired the notoriously self-absorbed artist to attempt to view things from someone else's point of view for once. The equine anatomical distortions (not as realistic as Leonardo's) are perhaps forgivable in that

horses in such poses would only be seen for a matter of seconds in the Early Modern equivalent of motorway pile up in the Apennines.

Art should always inspire fresh interpretations, even at our distance from the creation of these works: might young Tommaso, like the young and irresponsible early twentieth-century Italian Futurists, who fantasized about car crashes and other mechanized disasters, and have got a vicarious thrill out of accidents? We do not need to idealize Tommaso's character in line with the sonnets by Michelangelo he inspired. Michelangelo was susceptible to flawed people. He was quite shamelessly exploited by at least one young studio assistant, Francesco di Bernardino d'Amadeo da Casteldurante, otherwise known as Urbino, who knew how to get something out of his attractiveness (Forcellini, "Michelangelo: A Tormented Life", pp. 224-5). Tommaso, as a well off member of the elite, hardly needed to take advantage of his besotted admirer, but it is only reasonable to suggest that aspects of the drawings might be motivated by the everyday human failings and pursuit of normal fashionable pastimes by the intended recipient. If we really wanted to put the boot in we could speculate on a severe, embarrassing case of ("gay") male menopause.

The digression from usual themes in works associated with de'Cavaliere is also apparent in the *"Bacchanal"*, 1533, Windsor Castle (cat. no. 8). This includes the, for this period of Michelangelo's oeuvre, inevitable male nude in the prime of life. In this instance the single example probably represents someone in a state of extreme inebriation. The drawing also involves a horse, upside down, and being carried, perhaps on its way to the huge pot, and masses of putti. (One putto at the horse's buttocks recalls the straining man at the shoulders of Christ in the *"Entombment"*, 1507 [cat. fig. 91], then in Perugia, now in the Villa Borghese in Rome, by Michelangelo's hated rival, Raphael, by then dead for thirteen years.) In other words most of the actors are not the usual nude men or youths or, where required by the subject, the rather strange adult women in nearly all the other works. The subject is astonishingly close to Titian's series of mythological paintings for Alfonso d'Este's Alabaster Room in Ferrara, one of which the *"Andrians"* has already been mentioned.

The only other secular crowd scene Michelangelo work of this period, comparable to the *"Bacchanal"*, is another drawing the *"Archers"*, not in the exhibition, ca. 1530

and before the meeting with Tommaso, Windsor Castle (cat .fig. 5), in which many nude men are in the poses of archers firing arrows at a herm, the later being spatially poorly related to the figures. The weapons are almost entirely omitted. Might the literalness of the setting and the unusual pagan theme of the *"Bacchanal"* be attributable to Tommaso's outlook, not presumably as relentlessly religious as that of a rather morose middle-aged man, and probably closer to Alfonso d-Este's attitudes? Another, very different, recipient we know about of a whole series of presentation drawings by Michelangelo, was Vittoria Colonna, a special friend of his, an aristocratic blue stocking and author, also getting on in years and becoming very religious. The drawings for Vittoria, unlike those for de'Cavaliere, if anything, merely reinforced Michelangelo's natural choice of subject matter. The only other great surviving aberration is a portrait drawing, something he hardly ever did, of Andrea Quaratesi, ca. 1528-32, British Museum, also inspired by a patrician, much younger man. There is no doubt that Michelangelo was a snob as well as "gay". So uninterested was Michelangelo, as a rule, in secular mythology that Alfonso d'Este had to make great efforts to extract a very rare mythological painting from the master by his own hand. This work was the *"Leda"*, by October 1530, now lost but known through copies, and very closely resembling *"Night"*, 1526-ca. 1534, on Michelangelo's Medici tombs.

The *"Bacchanal"* might suggest the more secular culture to which a well-born young man might be more susceptible than that to which an aging, pious artist was drawn, but, as with so many works of its time, it has a religious gloss. The putti are drinking and cooking, consuming flesh and wine as symbolically (and to good Catholics literally) happened in the Eucharist. The reference to the Raphael *"Entombment"* is symbolic. The putti around the cooking pot are a revised re-enactment by infants of the *"Sacrifice of Noah"* after the Flood at the beginning of a new covenant on the Sistine ceiling. The slumped well-formed man looks remarkably like a dead Christ in the more sophisticated type of lamentation or Pieta in which He is not placed on the Virgin's lap but leans against her seated form to eliminate the absurd senario in which the corpse of a man, hitherto in the prime of life, is on a woman's lap. Thus the essential basis of the transformed elements of the communion is made almost explicit. A putto pulls a cloth up the man's back much as Christ's followers in paintings seldom touch his dead body except through a layer of fabric. The old woman with the

children, but for her lack of youthful beauty, is close to a personification of Charity, one of the principle Christian virtues.

The most explicitly homoerotic drawing is the *"Rape of Ganymede"*, 1532, Fogg Museum, Harvard University (cat. no. 3), depicting Jupiter's one significant lapse from his usual hetero-sexual orientation. This is so obvious an interpretation as not to need further comment, although it might be pointed out that the young man is quite old enough to be to conform to modern ideas of an appropriate age to give consent while the eagle's age is, to the non-ornithologically expert, indeterminate, though his feathers look pristine. Michelangelo's predator is more a symbol than a real specimen. A sculpture of the same period of *"Victory"*, begun before 1523 but not finished until the early 1530s, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, has a youth pressing his knee on a crouching figure who is recognizably Michelangelo. It has been speculated that the youth's features are Tommaso's.

'Rape of Ganymede', 1532

The exhibition brings the *"Ganymede"* together with the *"Tityus"*, 1532, Windsor Castle (cat. no. 2, recto), in which an eagle is also vital. For his transgressions the giant Tityus was chained to a rock and had his ever re-growing liver torn out by the bird just as he recovered. Titian did a version of the same subject, 1548-9, for Margaret of Hungary, perhaps his most discriminating Hapsburg patron. It was paired with a *"Sisyphus"*, 1548-9, another victim of an endless repetition imposed by a god, and both paintings now hang in the Prado.

Unlike Michelangelo, who tends to convert physical suffering into spiritual torment, Titian can do real violence with enthusiasm. Titian is perhaps a less perfect artist but has a wider range. His Tityus is in physical agony: he is emphatically chained down and his limbs flail about. Michelangelo's eagle in the drawing is more a symbol with evenly spread wings like those of the trumpeting angel in the *"Dream"* and seems to nestle his beak, head and neck, together forming a phallic shape, against the perfect chest, perhaps too high on it to be about to rip out the liver in the next instant. There is some confusion as to the organ to be removed. Most versions of the legend specify the liver but in the second edition of the *"Lives"* Vasari mentions the heart, possibly as a result of seeing the drawing or a copy. Titian painted a hideous gash across the chest large enough for the extraction of several organs. Michelangelo's version by contrast is more a seduction or symbolic subjugation than a vivisection.

The eagle in the *"Tityus"* places no talons on the beautiful flesh, the only visible set clasping the rock to which the victim is rather unconvincingly chained. The figure is a recumbent version of the two sets of Slaves for the Julius II tomb all only notionally physically bound but tied by their sense of sin or sheer sensuality. There are compositional similarities between the *"Ganymede"* and the *"Tityus"* in the form of small holes in the figurative mass that allow glimpses into the deepest planes behind a practice also followed by Rosso and Pontormo. The two mythological young men, as it were, submit to a superior power rather than being raped or having an internal organ torn out. The acute, undignified pain that Tityus (and Ganymede) do not express, is transferred from the chained giant to a grotesque face growing out of a tree. This may derive from an episode in Michelangelo's beloved Dante, where in the "Purgatorio", Canto XIII, the souls of suicides in Hell are encased in trees. Perhaps Michelangelo

did not want to disfigure Tityus and transferred the deforming effects of pain to the tree as in the Accademia *"Phaeton"* the more overt fear is displaced on to the horses.

One of the most graphic instances of the way in which pagan mythology had become assimilated to the Christian world view was made possible by the display of the *"Tityus"* on a stand in the middle of the principle room of the exhibition so that the reverse of the sheet could be seem. On this, presumably while holding the paper against the light, Michelangelo has traced the basic outline of the reclining figure, so that it becomes an upright resurrected Christ. Tityus, if not a type of Christ, must be a symbol of the Christian soul saved by Christ's sacrifice from what, without divine grace, should destroy it over and over again. The Ganymede has more than a passing resemblance to the more twisted Christ's on the Cross, or the more contorted poses of one of the thieves. Ganymede's arm is bent down over the wing, as are those, over the Virgin's lap or just dangling, of so many dead Christ's (or both arms of the young man in the *"Bacchanal"*), while the risen Christ following the pattern of Tityus' chained arm is bent up to hold the banner of victory. Ganymede was taken into Olympus to serve as Jupiter's cupbearer at the banquets of the gods while Christ, having initiated the communion ritual at the Last Supper, ascended into Heaven to sit on the right hand of God. Such connections are too creative to be part of officially sanctioned thinking but the visual and intellectual connections are too strong not to have been present in Michelangelo's mind on some level.

For Michelangelo, as for almost everyone of his time, Christ's saving intervention in the world was the most important event in all of history. It is hardly surprising therefore that there were so many images of the Resurrected Christ in the exhibition, ca. 1532-3, Windsor Castle (cat. no. 9); ca. 1532, Windsor Castle (cat. no. 10 verso); and ca. 1532, British Museum (cat. no. 11). One (cat. no. 2 verso), as we have seen is derived from the *"Tityus"*. In a fuller if small version, ca. 1532, Windsor Castle (cat. no. 10), that concentrates more on the drama of the escape from the tomb and death, rather than the pristine, idealized body of Christ, there are many athletic figures of the soldiers who have been sent to guard the tomb. The sleep of the all too human apostles was broken by the arrival of Judas and soldiers the night before. Now the soldiers react to the re-activation of Christ. Michelangelo organizes them in a number of poses suggesting states of awareness. One soldier is particularly interesting. He

might be attempting to push the lid back onto the sarcophagus, though Christ is so far out it is too late. It is not quite this simple because, as the visible parts of his legs make clear, he would appear to be on the tilted-up lid without any purchase on the ground; he is also just hanging on. What Michelangelo is doing is revisiting, as he always does, an old idea, not so much in this case a specific pose, but a situation.

The famous figures of *"Dawn"*, *"Dusk"*, *"Night*" and *"Day"*, 1526-34, on the two more nearly complete of his Medici tombs in San Lorenzo in Florence literally lie on the sarcophagus lids, two on a tomb, often with a raised knee, like the soldier or Saul, Adam or the young man in the *"Dream"*. I doubt that the actual bodies of the younger Medici Lorenzo and Giulio are literally in the very elegant sarcophagi. The conceit is, however, that when time ends the reclining figures, the symbols of its, until then, ever-recurring cycles will be blown off and the resurrected glorious bodies will rise past their effigies by Michelangelo set in the wall above. Thus for an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, God's handiwork and Michelangelo's will co-exist. Michelangelo famously said, when it was pointed out to him that the effigies did not look like the deceased, that in hundreds of years no one would care what the two princes looked like. Would Michelangelo's God have had views on the "improvement" of a small part of his creation and how did Michelangelo view this situation? Michelangelo's little drawn soldier on the lid of Christ's tomb is trying, utterly ineffectually but with effort, to turn back Time and prevent the new Christian order coming into being. He is not a major reworking of an idea but even in this minor instance, as ever, Michelangelo seldom lets go of a concept with potential.

It was unfortunate that the catalogue failed to record the works in the third, separate room from the Courtauld collections. The works there included, though this not a comprehensive list, a wonderful Pontormo, the most original of Michelangelo's followers, perhaps the only one of them who could go beyond the stylistic cul-de-sac Central Italian art had been led up by Il Divino. His drawing of an anxious garzone, or studio assistant, is fairly well known. A Tintoretto showed the back of a clay model, or bozzetto, of Michelangelo's never completed *"Samson and the Philistine"*, known through small scale derivations, such as that in the Museum Boymans van Beunningen, Rotterdam (Avery, *"Florentine Renaissance Sculpture"*, ill.142). The Courtauld blurb was wrong to attribute the lumpy musculature to the state of the clay

model as virtually all Tintoretto figure drawings look like this. Another interesting item in the third room was the multiple plate print of the Sistine altar wall.

The three most important items were three more drawings by Michelangelo from periods before and after the presentation drawings for Tommaso. An earlier drawing in pen and ink with preliminary indications in red chalk was of *"Christ before Pilate"*, ca. 1515. Christ is almost de-emphasized, a device Tintoretto would often use, while a kneeling, gesticulating figure occupies the centre. A small drawing, ca. 1555-6, is a study of Aeneas with a child, either Cupid or a young attendant close beside him. This identification of the lesser figure is derived from the resulting painting, *"Mercury Exhorting Aeneas to Leave Dido"*, by Michelangelo's follower Daniele da Volterra in a private collection in Stockholm. However by this date the most famous painting of Aeneas was Raphael's *"Fire in the Borgo"*, ca. 1515, in the Stanza del l'Incendio in the Vatican named after it. The scene for this complex painting, illustrating conflated incidents over two millennia apart, set in a burning city that is both the Borgo, the area in Rome between St. Peter's and the river, and at the same time, Rome's mythological predecessor Troy. Aeneas, ancestor of Rome's founders, fled Troy as it was sacked. Raphael shows the hero carrying his father, Anchises, while his small son, Ascanius, walks beside him. Bernini in a later sculpture, 1619, in the Villa Borghese would take up this iconography. The Michelangelo/da Volterra version in its context can use only half of the iconography but with the added twist that in this case the small figure is not Aeneas' son but his half-brother Cupid. The flying Mercury addressing Aeneas recalls some of the more mannerist airborne Gabriels in Annunciations. The iconographies are interestingly entangled, the sprawling voluptuous Dido on the bed is clearly not appropriate in some respects, but the message of sexual abstinence is highly pertinent.

The other Michelangelo work in the last room was a late, intensely moving *"Crucifixion"*, 1555-60, in black chalk, which shows signs of being executed by the old man's trembling hand. Tommaso was present at Michelangelo's deathbed.

Timothy Alves

Colloquium on the Book in the Low Countries

Scottish Centre for the Book, Edinburgh Napier University

(in association with the National Library of Scotland)

29th April 2010

The Colloquium on the Book in the Low Countries brought scholars from Belgium and Holland to Scotland to present papers that will eventually appear in a forthcoming volume by the Scottish Centre for the Book. The papers explored various aspects of publishing and book history and had a special focus on international links. Most of the papers were Early Modern but I will also briefly mention the papers which covered later periods since they also touched on Early Modern themes.

Christiaan Coppens (Louvain) opened the day with 'Book Production in the Southern Netherlands for the English Market in the Sixteenth Century'. Coppens revealed that there was a lively and closely linked trade in books between Flanders and England from the end of the fourteenth century on and that these links peaked during the sixteenth century and had an influence on Elizabethan Renaissance culture. Printers in Antwerp printed books in English for the English market. Authors like Thomas More sent their work to Flanders to be published: the first edition of his *Utopia* was printed at Theo. Martin's Louvain press in 1516. But it wasn't just books that were on the move. Despite the limitations placed on them by the English government to protect native businessmen, Flemish printers thrived in London. Some were refugees from Catholic persecution. The exchange worked both ways and after the executions of More and Fisher, English printers fled to Flanders. Even with the turmoil caused by religious persecution, printers and scholars maintained links throughout the period. They also took advantage of chances to print controversial literature. The continental productions were especially noted for their quality and the printers there developed a strong export market. English events, such as the executions, meanwhile, provided opportunities for propaganda production.

Stijn Van Rossem (Antwerp) explored the complexities of a specific type of book production in 'The Struggle for the Economical and Political Domination of Almanac Production in the Southern Netherlands, Antwerp, 1626-1642'. The Verdussens were a leading publishing family in Antwerp who were keen to corner specific markets. Hieronymus Verdussen wanted to create better printed and more accurate almanacs and tried to get a monopoly on their publication. The almanac was an essential for any Early Modern book buyer and was seen as an essential for life. They were cheap to produce and buy, disposable, and by their nature they encouraged repeat sales. They varied in quality and price. Verdussen wanted to standardise their production and charge a higher price for a better quality product and in 1626 he applied to the government for a monopoly on the production of a national, approved almanac which would be created by him and which would make all other almanacs illegal. The government eventually granted a monopoly for one year. The Association of Booksellers in Antwerp protested. Almanac production was a good money spinner and they also resented Verdussen's implication that his version was superior to their work. The monopoly proved to be difficult to enforce despite Verdussen sending his brother around the country to find illegal almanacs. The monopoly was eventually dropped and any printer could produce almanacs. Verdussen did, however, get a monopoly on producing chronicles in Brabant – another lucrative market – for ten years. The long-term impact was that the quality of almanac production improved and the economic importance of printed materials was recognised.

Kuniko Forrer (Amsterdam) presented some of her findings on her forthcoming PhD in 'Dutch Academic Theses: Taking Pride in Grey Literature: The Role of François Halma in the Late-Seventeenth Century'. The printed thesis was a part of the academic culture of the Dutch universities. There were two types of thesis. The *Disputatio sub praesidio* was part of the higher education programme, could be written by either the professor or the student, and was paid for by the university. The *Disputatio inauguralis* was written by a candidate seeking a doctorate and was paid for by the student. Students could use their printed theses as souvenirs or job applications. Many printers, such as the university printers at Leyden, the famous Elzeviers, took advantage of students by using worn types and cheap paper while having an unclear pricing structure. The usual pattern was that the student had no say in the final appearance of his printed work. François Halma (1653-1722), university

printer at Utrecht (1684-99), university printer at Franeker (1701-11), and printer to the States of Friesland (1709-22), wanted to change this injustice. He noted the complaints of students and set out a new contract at Utrecht in 1685 which offered students choices about the type used and the size of the type, fixed prices for paper, no extra charges for footnotes, choices about paper size and quality, and a guarantee of proof-reading. The resulting set format was a quarto-sized document of about eight pages (longer for philosophy). Students would also be treated with courtesy at his print shop and a copy of their theses would be delivered to the library for preservation. This system also benefitted printers since happy student customers would be certain to return when they wanted their future books published. Some students returned for additional copies of their theses later in life. Halma was the first to apply running titles and page numbers to theses and this was useful when they were collected and bound by the library. The theses took on a more book-like appearance and Halma's innovations in customer care helped his career.

Lisa Kuitert (Amsterdam)'s paper 'Gold Mine for the Printed Page: Dutch Printers and their interest in the Boer War' touched on the Early Modern period since the Dutch Golden Age was a theme for some of the late-nineteenth century publishers who helped to generate an enthusiasm for all things Boer. South Africa was not a Dutch colony but 'Boers' – Dutch speaking farmers – had settled there. In 1881 in Amsterdam a library was founded to collect material related to the Boers. This still exists and is a focus of Kuitert's research. The library holds 226 publications produced in the Netherlands between 1897 and 1905 relating to the Boers and especially to the Boer hero Paul Kruger. These ranged from memorial books, cartoons, songs, casualty lists, speeches, and lottery tickets for fundraising efforts. The publications tended to be pro-war and heavily illustrated. Dutch publishers exploited interest in the Boers in the Netherlands and even opened bookshops in South Africa. The irony was of course that the Boers tended to be uninterested in reading since they had other things to do. The end of the second Boer War and Kruger's death in 1904 put an end to Dutch interest in their 'kin'.

W. A. Kelly (Edinburgh) offered 'A Survey of pre-1801 Low Countries Imprint in the North of England: A Report of a Work in Progress'. Dr Kelly has been visiting libraries in the north of England to describe their collections. The Picton Library at Liverpool has an extensive horology collection with Dutch and French imprints. The University of Hull Library has the Leonard Foster Collection which includes seventeenth and eighteenth century works published in Dutch. Kelly has also visited the cathedral libraries at Leeds, Durham, Ripon, York, and Carlisle and the university libraries at Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, and York. Other institutions visited include the grammar school libraries at Newcastle and Chethams Library. Some of the libraries, such as at Carlisle Cathedral and at Ulster College, have only printed or card based catalogues so visiting them in person is essential for a full survey. Kelly's next planned visit was to the Bar Convent in York which should have a good collection of material from French presses. The survey is nearly complete with only three or four more locations to go and publication will follow the conclusion of the survey.

Adriaan v.d. Weel (Leyden)'s paper 'eRoads and iWays for the Digital Book in the Netherlands' looked to the future while considering national differences in attitude to receiving digital book technologies. In the Netherlands in 2009, 25,000 eBook readers and 65,000 eBooks were sold. However, 48,000,000 paperbacks were sold in the same year. The growth of the digital book market is small but steady. The industry is conflicted by issues of copyright and by working out what digital readers want and expect from eBooks. Meanwhile the historical contexts of the book in the Netherlands are also influencing the issue. The Netherlands has long been a protestant, urban, trade-based society and the physical presence of the book has a symbolic meaning. The book is seen as an authority. This idea harks back to the time when the Bible was the word of God and the material book has a special status which reflects this idea. The availability of texts in Dutch is also a concern. Will English language publishers dominate continental markets? While these issues are being considered, Netherlands eBook producers are offering their products in a wide range of styles and formats. Competition is rife. In Flanders, meanwhile, there is a single source and style for digital books and the industry is protected. In contrast to both, the development of digital book technology has been slow in Spain. The Spanish do not trust eBook channels and seem to be waiting for 'safe' options. The book and eBook markets are in a transitional phase in the Netherlands. (But it seems to me the continent is well ahead of the UK in considering the issues and technologies being developed. That Adriaan brought his latest eReader with him and that he's had several already tells its own tale!)

This fascinating series of talks deserved to be better attended and I hope the excellent speakers will all agree to publish their work in the printed volume which will be produced by the Scottish Centre for the Book. For more information about the Centre visit http://www.napier.ac.uk/randkt/rktcentres/scob/Pages/home.aspx.

Karen Baston

Have You Seen This Bookplate?

This is the bookplate of Charles Areskine of Alva, Lord Justice Clerk (1680-1763). Areskine was an advocate and judge in Scotland. He recorded the contents of his library in a manuscript which survives in the National Library of Scotland.

I am working on a doctoral thesis about Areskine's library and would be grateful to know of any examples of his bookplate which survive beyond those found in the Alva Collections of the National Library of Scotland and the Advocates' Library. (I have already recorded the details of these).

If you have seen this bookplate in a book, I would be grateful to know of its location. You can find out more about my research at http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/research/students/118.aspx.

Karen Baston (K.G.Baston@sms.ed.ac.uk)

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

Events 2009-2010

All events start at 6.30p.m. unless otherwise stated, and are followed by refreshments and questions

24th June 2010: Prof. Julian Swann (Birkbeck), 'Despotism, Public Opinion and the Crisis of the Absolute Monarchy', Birkbeck College, Room tbc; followed by our end of term party.

Saturday, 3rd July 2010: AGM and Student Conference, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, Room B20

Friday, 9th July 2010 'Fire, Plague and War Guided Walk' – details from Karen Chester

Events 2010-2011

29th October 2010: Dr John Ashdown-Hill, 'Edward IV's Marriage and the fall of the House of York', Room tbc

18th November 2010: Dr Andy Hopper, 'The Role of Treachery and Turncoats in Shaping Military and Political Strategies During the Civil Wars', Room tbc

9th December 2010: Prof. David Starkey 'English Royal Ritual and the Reformation in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', Room tbc

For further information on membership and activities contact the secretary, Anne Byrne: Membership is £5 for the year. Non-members may attend events at a cost of £3 each.

The Birkbeck Early Modern Society

AGM and 'Restorations' Conference

Saturday 3 July 2010, Room B20, Birkbeck, Malet St

10.00 Registration, tea and coffee in room B02

10.30 AGM

11.00 Robin Rowles: welcome to conference, introductions, opening comments

11. 10 Session 1:

Frank Ferrie, 'Piero della Francesca's *Madonna del Parto* (The Expectant Virgin Mary): A History of Decline and Restoration'

Liam Haydon, 'Christopher Wase and the Promise of Restoration in Royalist Translation 1649-60'

Discussion

12.40 Lunch (Room B02)

13.40 Session 2:

Marilyn Lewis, 'Cambridge Platonist networks in Restoration London'

Harman Bhogal, 'The Idea of Restoration in Demonological Thought: Deacon and Walker and the Doctrine of the Cessation of Miracles.'

Discussion

15.10 Concluding remarks

15.20 Wine reception (Room B02)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

This section concerns those events staged by other societies which we feel might be of interest to our membership.

Power and the State: Early Modern Perspectives

Birkbeck College, University of London

Tuesday, 13 and Wednesday 14 July 2010

All sessions: Clore Management Building, Torrington Square, Room 101

Day 1: Tuesday, 13 July

1.30 – 2.30	Coffee and registration
2.30 – 4.00	**Session 1. Statebuilding.** *Chair: Prof. Joel Felix* Dr Darryl Dee (Wilfrid Laurier, Ontario, Canada). Louis XIV and the Early Modern State Prof**.** Robert von Friedeburg **(**Rotterdam, Netherlands) The Fatherland of Laws: The Economy of Scale of Territorial Statebuilding in the Holy Roman Empire. A Comparison with Essex and Brittany
4.00 – 4.30	**Presentation: The European State Finance Database** Dr. Catherine Casson (Newnham, Cambridge)
4.30 – 5.00	Coffee break
5.00 – 6.15	**Keynote lecture**. *Chair: Prof. Julian Swann* Prof. Jim Collins Slaying the Hydra of Anarchy: France and the Invention of the Modern State (open to non-delegates)
6.15	Drinks reception
8.00	Conference dinner *Pescatoria, Charlotte Street* (£25 per head: please contact Laura Stewart to book your place by Monday, 5 July)

Day 2. Tuesday, 14 July

9.30 – 10.00	Coffee
10.00 – 11.30	**Session 2. Coercion**. *Chair: Prof. Steve Hindle* Prof. Christopher Storrs (Dundee). Power in the Early Modern Savoyard State Dr Hannah Smith (St Hilda's, Oxford). The Standing Army Debate on the English Stage, c.1689-1720
11.30 – 12.00	Coffee Break
12.00 – 1.30	**Session 3. The State and the Locality**. *Chair: Dr D'Maris Coffman* Prof. Steve Hindle (Warwick). Political Participation in the Early Modern State: The Incorporation of Local Elites in England, c.1500-1700 Prof. Maarten Prak (Utrecht, Netherlands). The Local State: Urban Governments and their Citizens
1.30 – 2.30	Lunch
2.30 – 4.00	**Session 4. Sinews of the State**: *Chair: Dr Laura Stewart* Prof. Joel Felix (Reading). Fiscal States in 18th century Europe: political models and debt policy Dr D'Maris Coffman (Newnham, Cambridge). Servants of New Jerusalem: The ideology and practice of the English Commonwealth excise establishment, 1649-1653
4.00 – 4.30	Coffee Break
4.30 – 5.45	**Round table** *Discussants*: Prof. Peter Campbell (Université de Versailles-St Quentin) Prof. David Feldman (Birkbeck, London)
5.45	Conference close Informal drinks

BOOK REVIEW

NON-FICTION BOOKS

I hope that many of you will send in your reviews of newly published books and the occasional old book. The only criteria being that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

Richard III's 'Beloved Cousyn': John Howard and the House of York
by John Ashdown-Hill
(The History Press)

In 1455 John Howard was an untitled and relatively obscure Suffolk gentleman in the affinity of his cousin John Mowbray, the then duke of Norfolk. Some thirty years later, at the time of his death at the battle of Bosworth, he had become Earl Marshal, duke of Norfolk, Lord Admiral and an extremely affluent man. And as the first Howard duke of Norfolk his direct line still occupies the ducal title today.

In this scholarly, enthralling, and well-written book, John Ashdown-Hill examines how Howard managed to obtain his power, prestige and wealth through his service to the House of York and in particular to Richard III. Meticuously researched, this book brings to life a key, yet much ignored, figure of the Wars of the Roses and emphasises his position within the Yorkist affinity with his differing relationships with Edward IV, Cecily Neville, and Richard III.

The key to Howard's spectacular career is his parents' marriage. His grandfather, Sir John Howard, made two good marriages which left the family with some money and land. However, it was the marriage of his son Sir Robert to Lady Margaret Mowbray, sister of the duke of Norfolk that ignited the family fortunes. Margaret almost

certainly married late and beneath her and against the wishes of her mother, the duchess. Their son John thus entered the Mowbray service and rose to become chamberlain to the duke. It also put him into contact with the house of York whose cause the duke espoused. John Howard fought for York at a number of battles and from the beginning of Edward IV's reign he combined service to the Mowbrays with diplomatic, military and administrative service to the crown, being appointed a king's carver in 1461. The author charts Howard's progress; knighted in 1461, raised to the peerage in 1470 and to a dukedom in 1483.

Dr. Ashdown-Hill makes use of the Howard household books to display family relationships and lifestyles. Howard enjoyed the usual pursuits of archery, hawking and hunting but also poetry, plays, cards, chess, music and books.

What also emerges is Howard's role in business, in particular that of merchant and ship owner, building up a large fleet, trading, and then deploying them in naval warfare. He revelled in innovation, promoting new products and practices in brick, pewter and clock making and especially in shipbuilding. The author provides incontrovertible proof that Carvel ships were first built by the Yorkists, and not by the Tudors.

Although Howard prospered under Edward IV it was not until the reign of Richard III that he enjoyed huge success. The author contends that Howard was treated shabbily by Edward IV who by two acts of parliament disherited Howard and his brother-in-law Lord Berkeley. By law the two men were joint heirs should Anne Mowbray die without issue but the king legislated to ensure that her titles and estates would remain with her young husband, Richard duke of York, Edward's younger son.

Dr Ashdown-Hill views Howard as a sort of father figure to the fourth Mowbray duke of Norfolk, and also to Edward IV and Richard III. Howard is shown procuring women for Edward IV and therefore a privy to the secrets of the king's bedchamber. Yet, according to Dr Ashdown-Hill, Edward IV was not the great womaniser of legend, rather this was part of the ploy to give the impression that the marriage to Elizabeth Talbot was nothing more than another of Edward's liaisons. The author contends that Howard was aware of the validity of the Talbot marriage and was

therefore prepared to back Richard, duke of Gloucester in his bid for the crown in 1483. There was of course a certain degree of self-interest as well, and Howard was amply rewarded by Richard III with the dukedom of Norfolk. This is more fully explored in Dr Ashown-Hill's book of Elizabeth Talbot reviewed in the Spring 2010 *Bulletin*. What cannot be denied is that both John Howard and his son the earl of Surrey served the new king loyally, both fighting for him at Bosworth with John Howard dying whilst leading the vanguard for his king.

What has emerged from Dr Ashdown-Hill's research is of an ambitious, shrewd and formidable man of remarkable ability with a wide range of interests. If Howard had survived Bosworth it is hard to imagine him serving the Tudor king, he was decent and loyal and possessed a conscience, this was not the type of person who prospered in Tudor times, and it is doubtful that Howard would have wished to serve a man like Henry Tudor.

Dr Ashdown-Hill has written a superb study of a major figure of the late-fifteenth century, meticulously researched, *'Beloved Cousyn'* brings out many fascinating details which have previously been overlooked, not least Howard's important and innovative role in developing shipbuilding and the navy. I would most definitely recommend this for any readers interested in the late-medieval period, and those with a general interest in English history.

John Croxon

‘Tis Quite a Whim’:

A Tale of One Earl, Two Horaces and Sundry Maltese Cats

Archibald Campbell, earl of Islay, was not one of Horace Walpole’s most favourite people. But Campbell was powerful and influential in the early 1740s and Walpole wanted to impress. The perfect opportunity arose in 1741 when Walpole mentioned some special cats at a dinner party and provoked Islay’s interest. Islay seems to have been keen on cats so Walpole set out to get him some.

The cats in question were from Malta. Today we would think of a Maltese cat as being short haired and blue. However, it seems it was not the colouring that eighteenth-century cat fanciers were after but the size. Walpole had a contact on the continent who could help so he swung into action immediately. The story of the quest for Maltese cats for Islay is chronicled in *Horace Walpole’s Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann*, vol. 1, ed. W. S. Lewis, Warren Hunting Smith and George L. Lam, vol. 17 of *The Correspondence of Sir Horace Walpole* (London and New Haven: OUP and Yale UP, 1954), which is the source of all of the quotes below.

Following the dinner party on 5th October 1741, Walpole wrote to his friend Horace Mann who was based in Florence. Mann was the British resident there and was well placed to fulfil Walpole’s request. Mann was an associate – and rival intelligencer and virtuoso – of Baron Philipp von Stosch whose remarkable cats were mentioned by Walpole at the party. Walpole thought Stosch might be willing to part with some of his special cats saying, ‘Lord Islay begged I would write to Florence to have the largest male and female that can be got; if you will speak to Stosch, you will oblige me, they may come by sea’ (p. 164).

Mann thought it might be a bit more complicated than that. He wrote back on 11 November 1741 and it is clear that he had given the matter some thought:

I must think about the cats. Stosch’s, in case he would part with them, won’t do, the males are castrated. I’ll speak to Bali Sansidomi [the Maltese official] to send for some from Malta, on condition (as I have promised Mr Chute) if they arrive safe in

England that he may have a kitten to supply the place of Jeffrey [i.e. Geoffrey, John Chute's cat who was much missed].

(p. 181-2).

Horace Mann

Walpole was happy with Mann's plan and wrote on 26 November 1741 that 'I forgot to thank you for your last post, for the songs, and your design on the Maltese cats' (p. 212).

On 22 April 1742, Mann reported that the cats were on the move and that five had arrived:

…they were six at their departure from Malta but one died in passage, to make amends for which another kittened yesterday morning of three. I did not design that they should have been brought from Leghorne, which was done by mistake of Bali Sansidomio. They must go back again when I hear of any ship being on its departure. I shall send but six, for which number the case is made, and shall be contented if half the number reaches England; I suppose Lord Islay will be so too. (p. 392)

Islay's career, meanwhile, was in turmoil after the election of 1741 when his political ally Sir Robert Walpole – Horace's father, of course - lost his grip on parliament. But in May 1742, Walpole thought the arrival of the cats might cheer up Islay:

I laughed much at the family of cats I am to receive: I believe they will be extremely welcome to Lord Islay now, for he appears little, lives more darkly and more like a wizard than ever: these huge cats will figure prodigiously in his cell: he is of the dingy nature of Stosch' (pp. 419-20).

Horace Walpole

But transporting the cats was proving to be a difficult and Mann began to doubt if they were even worth sending. On 3 June 1742 he wrote:

No opportunity yet to get the Maltese cats embarked. I am sure you will think them not worth the trouble of receiving them. Stosch tells me that his finest are Florentines; indeed I can find nobody, not even some *cavalieri* from Malta, that ever heard their cats were esteemed. They are the size of others, and Stosch tells me that all favorite [sic] cats that are well fed grow large. On examination I really find it is only to be particular that he calls his cats Maltese, though he had some from Malta, but they are now all of a mixed breed, and yet they are larger than those I have had come thence on purpose. You'll see them soon unless they are taken by the Spaniards (pp. 433-4).

Walpole was beginning to regret putting his friend through so much trouble and admitted that the circumstances had changed since he originally requested the cats. He wrote on 10 June 1742, when Islay's influence was low, that:

I am quite sorry you have had so much trouble with those odious cats of Malta; dear child, fling them into the Arno, if there is water enough at this season to drown them; or I'll tell you, give them to Stosch, to pay the postage he asked of them – I have no ambition to make my court with them to the old wizard (p. 452).

But communications were slow and Mann reported on 1 July 1742 that the cats were in transit but …indeed they are not worth the trouble. You'll see nothing in 'em but what is to be met with in cats of all nations. One of those that came from Malta died and I have supplied its place with one that you have seen at Stosch's' (p. 462).

Mann was delighted to have fulfilled his side of the cat transportation plan when he wrote to Walpole on 8 July 1742:

I have at last the pleasure to tell you that I have sent the cats away, and expect to have the captain's receipt by next post. I am sure my dear Sir you won't think them worth receiving. No old woman in a stagecoach could have more preparations for their journey than these pusses. The person that was employed to put them on board the only ship that would take them, wrote word last post of their safe arrival, but that the captain had made fresh difficulties because their case was so big. Then he wanted some security for the payment of the freight, saying he had often carried things for noblemen in the past but had had a great deal of trouble in going to the other end of the town and had frequently not been able to get a farthing. I am your caution for four guineas, much more than I am sure that you'll find them worth – indeed my dear child 'tis quite a whim' (p. 474).

It was a week later on 15 July 1742 that Mann wrote: 'I am sure you'll say it is horribly provoking that in answer to my very letter that forbids me sending the odious cats I send you the captain's receipt for them…You must drown them in the Thames since they escaped the Arno' (p. 482).

Archibald Campbell,

Earl of Islay in 1744 as the 3rd duke of Argyll

Walpole was only able to apologise saying on 14 July 1742: ‘I am quite sorry for all the trouble you have had about the Maltese cats; but you know they were for Lord Islay, not for myself!’ (p. 497).

For all their talk of drowning the ‘odious’ cats it is clear that neither Walpole nor Mann would ever have done such a thing. The cats had arrived in England by 21 July 1742 when Walpole wrote to Mann: ‘Oh! the cats! I can never keep them, and yet it is barbarous to end them all to Lord Islay: he will shut them up and starve them, and then bury them under the stairs with his wife’ (p. 506). Walpole was referring to Islay’s unsuccessful marriage to Mary Whitfield. The couple had separated early in the marriage and Mary died – of natural causes – in 1723. Islay did not remarry but had a long-standing affair with Mrs Anne Williams in London.

The Maltese cat correspondence between Walpole and Mann ends with the letter of 21 July 1742 and I have yet to determine if Islay ever received a gift of cats from Walpole or if Mr Chute ever got his kitten.

Detail from *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*, 1753.

Walpole's Tribute to Selima at Strawberry Hill

Engraving by Charles Grignion after Richard Bentley.
From designs by Richard Bentley for *Six Poems* by Mr T. Gray,

published by Richard Dodsley.

Walpole's association with cats is much better known from the poem his friend Thomas Gray wrote to console him when one of his pets tragically died in 1747. 'Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes' pays tribute to the beautiful tabby Selima who as the title suggests drowned in a goldfish bowl while chasing the fish. Her name may have a Maltese connection: Sliema is a town on the northeast coast of Malta and *sliema* means 'peace' in Maltese. (However, the cat in question may have been called Zara or Fatima instead. But these are still names from the east so they might just suggest an exotic origin.) Was Selima one of the Maltese cats sent to Walpole by Mann in 1742? We'll probably never know but it is interesting to consider the possibility that one of the most famous animals in literature could have had a more interesting background than might be supposed.

The fatal vase can be seen in the exhibition at the 'Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum until 4 July 2010. For more on Selima's legacy in art and literature see Christopher Frayling's beautifully illustrated *Horace Walpole's Cat* (Thames and Hudson, 2009).

Karen Baston

FICTION BOOKS

The criteria for fiction books is the same as that for non-fiction book reviews; that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.
John Croxon

The Bones of Avalon by Phil Rickman (London: Corvus, 2010)

I have been a fan of Phil Rickman for many years. He is perhaps best known for his series of supernatural crime novels set in the Welsh Borders and featuring the Reverend Merrily Watkins. Rickman is, in fact, the only author I have ever sent fan mail to and I'm happy to say he sent a gracious response. So I was delighted to find that he has turned his talents to historical fiction and even more delighted to find that his latest book is a winner.

The Bones of Avalon is Rickman's first foray (I hope!) into the world of Dr John Dee. It is 1560 and the recently crowned Elizabeth wants to reinforce her ancestry by locating and venerating the bones of her illustrious ancestor King Arthur. She sends Dee to Glastonbury with her favourite Robert Dudley with the mission of finding the bones and bringing them to London so that she can re-bury them in splendour.

Dee is wary. Who has put Elizabeth up to this and why? Do the bones actually exist or are they like the fake relics of the old religion? Why are they so important to the queen? He and Dudley travel under cover and arrive in a town still divided by the effects of the Dissolution. The former monks have made new lives for themselves in the town but some of them may be hiding old allegiances. And it isn't long before Dee finds himself in the middle of a murder investigation and in love with the prime suspect, a female doctor whose mother may have been a witch. In a world where people believe in magic and dreams, Dee is one of the ones without the gift. His

knowledge is purely academic and this makes him an excellent narrator. He can believe in the mystical but he'd rather investigate matters beyond their immediate appearances. Rickman sticks to the history but also succeeds in creating a very likeable and believable Dee.

Since this is a crime novel, I don't want to give too many clues away. Suffice it to say that Dee is right to be worried and there is a very devious plot against the queen. You may guess it along the way but you will enjoy following the clues. Meanwhile, I want to praise Rickman's dialogue and characterisation. Rickman wisely avoids using 'ye olde' language and lets his speakers' words flow with his usual gift for conversation as seen in his other novels. This is a concern Rickman addresses in his notes following the story but he need not have worried. The final effect is fresh and lively. His characters are very realistically portrayed and real historical people blend effortlessly with fictional characters. Regular readers of Rickman will be pleased to find some of his key themes – mysticism, local community life, and Welshness – are present in this new setting and are handled with their usual deftness.

This is a very modern Early Modern story and a pleasure to read. If there is such a thing as Early Modern holiday reading, this is it.

Karen Baston

THE SUMMER QUIZ

1. Which ruler died in the defence of Constantinople on the 29th May 1453?

2. To what post was Sir John Howard appointed on the 28th July 1461?

3. Prior to the Reformation, what happened on ‘Collop Monday’?

4. Which couple wed in secret at Greenwich on the 22nd June 1610?

5. Which battle was fought on the afternoon of the 23rd October 1642?

6. What happened on the 29th May 1660?

7. Which artist died in Antwerp on the 30th May 1640?

8. Born in Hertfordshire in 1640, whom did Sarah Jenyns marry in 1677?

9. Which social reformer wrote the pamphlet ‘Truth Lifting Up Its head Above Scandals’ in 1648?

10. Which mathematician, born in Surrey in 1660, introduced the ‘x’ symbol for multiplication?

11. Why was Mary Dyer hanged in Boston on the 1st June 1660?

12. Who wrote *‘Micrographia’* in 1665?

13. Which scientist and surgeon was born in Long Calderwood, near East Kilbride, Lanarkshire on the 13th February 1728?

14. Which inventor and mechanical engineer was born in Greenoch, Refrewshire o the 19th January 1736?

15. What discovery did Henry Cavendish reveal in his 1766 paper ‘On Factitious Airs’?

16. What was opened in Goodman’s Fields, London on the 28th May 1742?

17. Which politician and governor-general of India was born in Ireland on the 20th June 1760?

18. What was illegal to wear in Britain between 1746 and 1782?

19. What was Mozart’s final composition before his death in 1791?

20. Which architect was born on the 4th June 1801?

Answers on the following page

ANSWERS TO THE SUMMER QUIZ

1. Constantine XI Palaeologus, last Byzantine emperor
2. King’s carver
3. Every last scrap of meat was eaten prior to Lent
4. William Seymour and Arbella Stuart
5. Edgehill
6. The monarchy was restored in England
7. Peter Paul Rubens
8. John Churchill, later 1st duke of Marlborough
9. Gerald Winstanley
10. William Oughtred
11. For repeatedly defying a law banning Quakers from the colony
12. Robert Hooke
13. John Hunter
14. James Whatt
15. Hydrogen
16. Britain’s first indoor swimming pool
17. Richard Wellesley
18. The Highland Dress
19. *Requiem in D Minor*
20. Sir James Pennethorne

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FOUNDED 2006

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